

FIG Leaves

Volume 11 Issue 1

January 2002

January Meeting

What should FIG be doing in 2002?

This will be a meeting to discuss the future of FIG. We want to hear your complaints as well as the things you think we are doing right. Mostly we want to hear ideas about how to do a better job in the future.

To set the stage we will review some recent activities. We will report on FIG's membership and financial situation. We will also review the reasons the FIG Board decided to make Camp Quest an independent corporation with its own Board of Directors. We will tell you about our plans to bring our Web site, gofigger.org, up to date.

We want your views on the topics we have had for our meetings during the past year and what kind of topics you would like to hear in future meetings. We would particularly like you to recommend speakers whom you believe would be available to talk to FIG.

FIG Leaves is one of our most important functions. How do you like the content of your newsletter? Our outgoing editor, Martha Ferguson, will tell you about the policies she has followed. Our incoming editor, Idelle Datlof, will tell you some ideas she has for changes in the newsletter.

Should FIG be a more activist organization? If so, in what way? Since this year is the 200th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's letter in which he used the term "wall of separation" we are planning to revive our wall of separation this year.

Well, you get the idea. Come and tell us what we should be doing to make FIG a more effective organization -- both for the members and for the community.

The discussion will be led by FIG's President Philip Ferguson. Your other officers and your editors will be present to hear and discuss your ideas. Write Philip.Ferguson@fuse.net if you have ideas and cannot attend.

ANNOUNCING CAMP QUEST 2002

Camp Quest, the secular summer camp, is now accepting registrations from prospective campers, and applications for unpaid staff positions, for Camp Quest 2002.

This will be our 7th consecutive year of operation.

Camp Quest is the first residential summer camp in the history of the United States for the children of secular humanists, humanists, freethinkers, atheists, etc.

Camp Quest was started by the Free Inquiry Group, Inc. (FIG) of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, and has been operated continuously by FIG since 1996.

With the blessings (pardon us) of FIG, Camp Quest has recently become

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January Meeting

FIG in 2002

Tuesday, January 22, at 7:00
Vernon Manor Inn

February Potluck

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an independent national humanist organization in its own right, with a board of directors drawn from several different national freethought organizations. Most of the board members have worked as staff at Camp Quest.

This year we have a new location -- YMCA Camp Campbell Gard, near Overpeck, Ohio. The dates are June 22nd to June 29th, 2002. Staff arrive June 21st.

BIG NEWS: There is now another Camp Quest -- Camp Quest of the Smoky Mountains. It is near Knoxville, Tennessee, in the Smoky Mountain National Forest, and is fully approved by Camp Quest. It is the first of a number of Camp Quests we hope to set up across the United States. It is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Institute for Humanist Studies (IHS). The dates for the first year of Camp Quest of the Smoky Mountains are June 1st to June 9th, 2002.

Yes, you can attend either or both camps. Each will be similar and each will be different.

The fee for either camp is \$550 for one camper, and \$500 for each additional sibling from the same family unit. Ages are 8 to 13 for campers, and 14 to 17 for our Counselor in Training (CIT) program. Same fees for either program. Minimum staff age is 18.

Apply early to avoid disappointment for a camp experience that combines reason, science, and critical inquiry with such traditional camp things as swimming, crafts, nature study, and camp food.

The two invisible unicorns are still there -- with a prize, as yet unclaimed, of a godless \$100 bill for any camper who can prove they aren't there. Are they going to be at the new camp as well? Better ask, or, better yet, come find out.

Edwin Kagin (edwin@edwinkagin.com)
Director Camp Quest

Here is contact information on this truly unique experience:

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<http://www.Camp-Quest.com>

and / or

Camp Quest of the Smoky Mountains
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Letter From the Editor



Dear FIG Members:

January marks a change in editors at Fig Leaves. I will gradually be assuming editorial responsibilities from Martha Ferguson; we will be a "tag team" until I learn the ropes and can do a credible job. I want to thank Martha for her encouragement and forbearance for my efforts during this transition. Being fairly new to the Board and to FIG, I am eager to learn more about the complex network of organizations, publications, and web sites that express the voices of those of us with a non-mythic understanding of the world. There are many words and titles that can be included in this group, i.e., secular, humanist, atheist, agnostic, rational, skeptic, to mention a only a few. My personal goal in joining FIG is to enjoy the experience of connecting with like-minded people. Isolation can be particularly demoralizing when you are part of a minority. My goal for the newsletter is to showcase a sampling of the connections that exist in the nation beyond our local group. Many of you may already be familiar with some or many of them, but I hope my exploration and sharing will be of some benefit nevertheless. Please e-mail me with suggestions, comments as I proceed with this idea. This search for new voices may take up some space that will displace some old favorites, but I hope the net result will be positive. I would also like to hear from you out there with ideas to make Fig Leaves something you turn to with enthusiasm when it arrives in your mailbox.

Idelle Datlof, Editor

(figeditor@choice.net)

FIG Leaves Volume 11, Issue 1, January 2002 - Editors welcome thoughtful articles, letters, reviews, reports, anecdotes, and cartoons. Submit in electronic format via Internet to figeditor@choice.net or on disk or typewritten via mail to Editor, FIG Leaves, P.O. Box 8128, Cincinnati OH 45208. Contributions received before the first Tuesday of the month will be considered for publication that month. All material printed in FIG Leaves may be reproduced in similar publications of non-profit groups which grant FIG Leaves reciprocal reprinting rights as long as proper credit is clearly attributed to FIG Leaves and the author. Opinions expressed in FIG Leaves are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect opinions of the editor or the Free Inquiry Group, Inc., its board, or officers. © 2000 The Free Inquiry Group, Inc. FIG Board of Directors: President: Philip Ferguson, Vice President: Michele Grinoch, Secretary: George Maurer, Treasurer: Joe Levee, Members: Nurit Bowman, Martha Ferguson, Helen Kagin, Tim Kelly, Gary Weiss, and FIG Leaves Editor: Idelle Datlof.

November Meeting Review

The speaker for this meeting was Richard Hartnett, Professor of Political Science at UC. He started by explaining that his presentation would not be about terrorism per se but about the security environment and in the context of that environment what we will be facing post September 11.

He went on to recall a meeting he had attended in December of last year at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory focusing on future threats from globalization during the next 10 years. This meeting consisted of government officials and scientists invited to give input.

It was presided over by former Secretary of State, George Schulz. At the end of the meeting he was quoted as saying, "OK, I'm sufficiently scared."

To build a context for where he was going, Hartnett shifted to a succinct analysis of George Orwell's thesis in his best known work 1984. Orwell posited the relationship between techno-progress and its effect on the relationship between the individual and the state. Techno progression would lead to the empowerment of the state over the individual eventuating in the totalitarian state. In Hartnett's view Orville got it wrong. Techno-progression in the last 50 years empowered the individual relative to the state and the overall impact of technology has been to empower the individual in general.

The Internet in the 90's focused as transformative, positive and benign. In terms of security, all of this progression was problematic - the negative side of Bill Gates' world.

Individual empowerment includes not only knowledge but actual capabilities the end result of which might be that it takes fewer people to do greater harm.

There has always been an inverse relationship between being able to do great acts of harm and the ability of small groups to do it. The effort needed to achieve the harmful result would tend to expose these people before they had the opportunity do it.

If your weapons were knives , the number of people needed would be great; if muskets, fewer people but still a sizeable number; if cannon and artillery, a little easier.

The ability to do this required state participation until recently, in terms of logistics, planning, organization ,etc. In terms of security , we have tended to focus on states and war through the prism of states. Until at last post-World War II and during the cold war we had reached a culmination where the push of a button could eliminate the world.

On the benign side, technological progression can aid in the practice of medicine and overcoming disease but on the negative side can produce chemical and germ warfare. The trend line is that scientific knowledge exists to develop weapons of mass destruction and it is becoming easier to effect this using smaller numbers. Applying this concept to Sept. 11: A few people with no state participation, not using a weapon but technology developed with a non destructive purpose, were able to produce a lot of destruction.

There have always been the disaffected in society but they have been discounted as a force because they did not have the wherewithal to affect society in any dramatic way.

The process of globalization , empowering the individual in knowledge and capability is moving us to a world where the disaffected can no longer be discounted. Heretofore, the disaffected leader was communicating only with his own group. Now with the techno-advance, he can speak to millions from an isolated space: e.g. Osama Bin Laden. The people he speaks to are only a small fraction of society and the people he selects to carry out his projects are an even smaller fraction. If Orwell is scary; Orwell in reverse is a lot more frightening.

The likeliest candidate at risk is the United States. This is not due to ideology, culture, or policy. The simple reason is that the United States is the most powerful country in the world. In acting out against anybody, the message resonates more significantly if you take on the top of the pyramid. No one is going to attack Fiji. In world politics Fiji doesn't carry the weight. Thus the basic reason for such attacks has little to do with clashes of cultures but with the distribution of power. This becomes the target of the disaffected. This is the negative side of globalization.

The implications of this will evoke a response by the state. The laws being considered in Congress with respect to civil liberties would not have been considered 6 months ago, but they represent at most marginal change. States that have advanced the most technologically are the states where civil liberties have also advanced. The scale of civil liberties and the scale of the most advanced technological progress are the same. The States in which civil liberties flourish will have to grapple with the security dilemma pf the few whether it is Timothy McVeigh or the disaffected flying planes. This faces us during the next 5-10 years .

In answering a question about what motivates a suicide bomber , Hartnett had this to say:

The profile of the prototypical suicide bomber was that he was poor, uneducated, alienated. That has been a myth. The primary motivating factor has been grievement. In the Palestine/Israeli conflict it has been the loss of a family member or someone close. They have built a system where the surviving family is well taken care of . In human history we have seen examples of self sacrifice and it crosses cultures. It has nothing to do with a particular religion or culture. The Japanese kamikazi pilot was not reading the Quran.

After this exchange a member of the audience opined that in the room faced with the situation that faced the passengers on the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania would have done the same as some of the passengers on the plane had reputedly done without regard to their own personal safety. Weak human beings can be motivated to self sacrifice and different individuals will be motivated differently.

In answer to a question about attempted blackmail of the US by Bin Ladin and how far would the US go to resist it, Hartnett replied that the empirical/historical evidence for blackmail is pretty weak. States historically

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Atheist Support Network (ASN) Being Established

Following the recent incidents involving Atheist students - one with God Bless America and the other Boy Scouts recruitment in school time, we have decided in NY to set up a network to support Atheist parents, students and adults who are finding their non-beliefs belittled, their values ignored, and worse.

Donna Cayot and Chris Morton are working to get volunteers, to collect data of cases and issues that have been or are being dealt with, and trying to provide advice, support, successful approaches that can be re-used etc, etc.

I am calling for Atheist volunteers who might be able to help develop the network and also for those of you who have been derided, or threatened, or ignored, or whose children have been derided, ignored or threatened so that

we can work together to collect data which others can use.

We are also looking for attorneys who might help us, and we will be requesting advice from other organizations.

We have a website in its infancy at www.virtually-real.net which will be developing as we go along and which will form the holding system for all information. Sometime in the New Year we will be forming a board, and the board will design procedures for the network. The whole idea has come from those who have had to "go it alone" and who want to help others like themselves. This, of course, a national issue.

Would you like to help?

Chris Morton

NYS Director of American Atheists

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are very concerned about prestige. States will do things not because they directly affect their actual power but because it affects their reputation for that power. There was really no vital national security interest in Southeast Asia that put at US security at risk. There was that indirect threat that if we didn't stand up to communism there, it would infiltrate the whole of Southeast Asia, the Philippines and on across the Pacific.

The reverse dynamic would hold in a blackmail threat. An explicit threat of blackmail would have to be resisted because you could not trust the other side to keep any sort of agreement resulting.

The probable goal of the September 11 attack was to provoke an overreaction by the United States resulting in regional conflict in the Middle East. Compare this to the event that started World War I. A small precipitant event, the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand brought on a massive conflagration. Although the Serbian Black Hand could not overthrow the Austro-Hungarian Empire directly which was their goal, the event they engineered caused the conflagration that eventually did bring it down and as a result created the separate state of Yugoslavia.

It seems to have been something like this that Al Qaeda had in mind if the US had reacted the way they anticipated. However the Bush administration contrary to the image they represented during the first 6 months in office, did a 180 degree turn and engaged in coalition building with Western States as well as with Muslim States such as Egypt and Pakistan and Russia in a controlled reaction that prevented Al Qaeda from reaching its desired end.

This presentation produced a lot of participation but because of spatial limitations and recording complications it has not been possible to include every question individually, but the answers to many of these have been included in this write-up.

George Maurer

December Meeting Review

Before the meeting started, Inez Klein announced that the speaker had donated a copy of Who's Who in Hell to FIG and the book would be raffled off during the course of the evening.

The speaker, Warren Allen Smith, began by tracing his personal evolution from a 14 year old church pianist in a small town in Iowa where most of the residents were Methodists to his role as the author/editor of the encyclopedic Who's Who in Hell.

When he entered college he flirted for a brief time with nihilism moving from there to agnosticism and upon meeting a professor who was a Unitarian to deism.

He was drafted into the army during World War II and sent to the European Theater of Operations. Upon discharge he enrolled at the University of Chicago during the time of Robert Maynard Hutchins and the Great Books Program. Being dissatisfied with the requirements and lack of structure in that educational experiment he returned to the University of Northern Iowa and majored in English. While there he founded the first Humanist Club. Upon being told that he needed two faculty members to be advisers, he selected the Unitarian and for the second one he approached his biology teacher who at the time was failing him and encountered his first atheist.

Following that he enrolled at Columbia University in New York while taking advantage of the educational opportunities afforded by the GI Bill. While there his faculty adviser was Lionel Trilling, the noted professor and author. Upon being asked what his thesis would be, Warren, having just read Dr. Faustus by Thomas Mann said he had run across the word "humanism" and not knowing what it meant, thought he would pursue the meaning as a line of research. Trilling gave him the go-ahead. He started out by writing to Thomas Mann asking for an explanation of what this particular word meant to him. To his surprise he



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received a reply in which a reference was made to George Santayana as a proponent of naturalism. He thereupon wrote to Santayana then living in an Italian convent run by an order of nuns and questioned him as to his current position on naturalism. He received a reply in which Santayana reaffirmed his position as a naturalism and explained that his living arrangements were strictly a matter of convenience.

While at Columbia, Warren founded another Humanist Club and snared John Dewey as his first member. He still has the \$1 check Dewey gave him for membership dues.

He continued to write to anyone he could think of including Bertrand Russell, John Steinbeck, Albert Camus, Albert Einstein. Camus died before he could respond and Einstein didn't answer. But all the while he was accumulating data.

He was also learning about what was out there. He finally became associated with the Humanist organizations through the American Humanist Association and its magazine, *The Humanist* as the book review editor. Through this association he was able to secure an entrée into a wider population for his data collecting.

When Paul Kurtz founded the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism after having been discharged as editor of *The Humanist*, Warren turned to Secular Humanism, finally becoming an associate editor of the magazine of Secular Humanism, *Free Inquiry*.

He facetiously referred to the title of his presentation. He would talk about "Miracles and God." The "god" he referred to was a Macintosh computer called G-A-W-D. This enabled him to convert his card file he had been assembling over the years containing the accumulated data to a computer file for easier manipulation and in alphabetical order.

He described his association with Taslima Nasrin, the Bangladeshi gynecologist, against whom a fatwa was declared because of a book she had written deploring the treatment of women in Islam. She attributed the proclamation of the fatwa to a network controlled by Osama Bin Laden.

He also described the difficulty in getting a publisher interested in publishing the book once his manuscript was completed. He finally located a publisher, Lyle Stewart of Barricade Books 2000, who expressed an interest once it was explained what the book contained. They agreed to publish it at \$125 per copy and for every book sold, Warren would receive a royalty of approximately 10-15%.

After reviewing some of the reviews and interviews he has undergone promoting the book, he looked to the future and what he is working on presently. He is currently "cutting and pasting" data culled from *Who's Who in Hell* for another book to be called *Celebrities in Hell*.

The winner of the raffle was announced as Philip Ferguson, president of Free Inquiry Group, who then generously donated the book to FIG for use, by the members.

George Maurer

Opinions, News from the Nation

Two-Hundredth Birthday (and one) of a Precious Legacy

Thomas Jefferson's Famous Letter Declaring a "Wall of Separation between Church and State"

By Ed Buckner, Executive Director, Council for Secular Humanism

[This article may be reprinted freely, provided only that its author, Ed Buckner, and source, *The Secular Humanist Bulletin for Winter 2001/2002* are acknowledged.]

It would probably startle and infuriate Thomas Jefferson to learn that, even after 200 years, his letter to the Baptists of Danbury, Connecticut, is still controversial and often misused and abused. That letter, dated 1 January 1802, was the one that declared that the "whole American people" had erected a "wall of separation between Church and State" by adopting the First Amendment. (The letter is reprinted in full at the end of this article.)

Jefferson sent his letter as President only after having the U.S. Attorney General (Levi Lincoln, who was assuredly no John Ashcroft) and others review it. Jefferson intended the letter to explain and reaffirm his views on religious liberty and the Constitution. Those views firmly supported a strict separation, though at the time only with regard to the federal government. Jefferson sent his letter in response to an October 1801 letter from a Baptist congregation that urged him to defend a constitutionally mandated strict separation of church and state (Connecticut and several other States did not have religious liberty at the time).

Those who have claimed that Jefferson's letter did not support strict separation of church and state are completely rebutted by Jefferson's own words, in that letter and in other writings. Some of those claims are persistent even if unfounded and deserve to be refuted.

There are those who present (and then "defeat") a false, straw-man claim that the famous letter was not anti-religious and that it must therefore have been pro-religious. Jefferson never sought to establish the government as in any sense anti-religious or anti-clerical though his own personal letters demonstrate repeatedly that he had little personal respect for the clergy and churches of the day. For example, he wrote, "The clergy, by getting themselves established by law and ingrafted into the machine of government, have been a very formidable engine against the civil and religious rights of man" (as quoted by Saul K.

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Padover in Thomas Jefferson on Democracy, 1946, p. 165). He also wrote, "In every country and every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own. It is easier to acquire wealth and power by this combination than by deserving them, and to effect this, they have perverted the purest religion ever preached to man into mystery and jargon, unintelligible to all mankind, and therefore the safer for their purposes" (letter to Horatio Spofford, 1814). Jefferson declared of the French, "The clergy and nobles, by their privileges and influence, have kept their property in a great measure untaxed hitherto. They then remain to be squeezed, and no agent is powerful enough for this but the people. The court therefore must ally itself with the people." (Letter to Richard Price from Paris, 8 January 1789. From Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 14 [8 October 1788 to 26 March 1789], Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958, p. 422.)

One final example of Jefferson's disdain for religion and the clergy: "History I believe furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government. This marks the lowest grade of ignorance, of which their political as well as religious leaders will always avail themselves for their own purpose" (letter to Baron von Humboldt, 1813).

Another claim is that Jefferson was only concerned about entangling the federal government and religion, implying he approved of aid to religion from State governments. Charles Colson, the Nixon aide who became famous in the Watergate scandal and then launched a career with Prison Ministries, cites allegedly scholarly proof of this in a Web article. The Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, that Jefferson wrote and James Madison guided through the Virginia legislature, along with Jefferson's letters, conclusively prove otherwise. Included in that state law are these words of Jefferson's: "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities." Jefferson's bill became law on January 16, 1786. (From Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 2 [1777 to 18 June 1779], Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950, pp. 545-547.) Jefferson was prouder of having written this bill than of being the third President or of such history-making accomplishments as the Louisiana Purchase. He wrote, as his own full epitaph, "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, And Father of the University of Virginia." Edwin S. Gaustad in *Faith of Our Fathers: Religion and the New Nation* (1987), p. 49, wrote, "He [Jefferson] rejoiced with

John Adams when the Congregational church was finally disestablished in Connecticut in 1818; welcoming the resurrection of Connecticut to light and liberty, Jefferson congratulated Adams "that this den of priesthood is at length broken up, and that a protestant popedom is no longer to disgrace American history and character.?"

Jefferson also almost certainly did not, as some Christian-nation mythologists like David Barton have claimed, give a speech or write a letter asserting that the wall was intended to be only a one-way wall protecting churches from government but not vice versa. The alleged Jeffersonian words were "That wall is a one directional wall. It keeps the government from running the church but it makes sure that Christian principles will always stay in government." That purported wording is repeated by many Christian-nation mythmakers, but no evidence at all can be found for it, and it is wildly inconsistent with extensive writings known with certainty to be Jefferson's. Jefferson once called himself a "real Christian" (letter to Charles Thompson, 9 January 1816), but he also made it quite clear that he meant by that only that he admired Jesus as a man. Jefferson wrote (letter to William Short, 31 October 1819), for example, that he did not believe in "The immaculate conception of Jesus, his deification, the creation of the world by him, his miraculous powers, his resurrection and visible ascension, his corporeal presence in the Eucharist, the Trinity; original sin, atonement, regeneration, election, orders of the Hierarchy, etc." Two days before his 80th birthday, Jefferson added a bit more about what he did not believe about Jesus in one of his famous letters to John Adams: "And the day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the supreme being as his father in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter. . . . But we may hope that the dawn of reason and freedom of thought in these United States will do away [with] all this artificial scaffolding" (11 April 1823, as quoted by E. S. Gaustad, "Religion," in Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson: A Reference Biography*, 1986, p. 287.)

Those who want to pretend that Jefferson's commitment to liberty is a limited (pro-religious or pro-Christian or "one-directional") commitment are clearly mistaken. But anyone, of whatever religious or irreligious view, who wants religious liberty protected will join in celebrating in 2002 the bicentennial of Thomas Jefferson's famous letter to the Danbury Baptists.

To Nehemiah Dodge and Others.

A Committee of the Danbury Baptist Association, in the State of Connecticut

Washington, January 1, 1802

GENTLEMEN: The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist Association, give me the highest satisfaction. My duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of my constituents, and in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the

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discharge becomes more and more pleasing.

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies between a man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith and worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for protection and blessing of the common Father and Creator of man, and tender you for yourselves and your religious association, assurance of my high respect and esteem.

Thomas Jefferson

Sources for more information (in addition to those cited in the text; Web-sites listed separately afterwards):

Boston, Rob. "Sects, Lies, and Videotape," Church and State, April 1993.

Boston, Rob, Why the Religious Right is Wrong About Separation of Church and State, Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1993.

Boyd, Julian P., ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950 (various years for different volumes).

Buckner, Edward M. and Michael E. Buckner, Quotations That Support the Separation of State and Church, 2nd Edition, Roswell, GA: Atlanta Freethought Society, 1995.

Kramnick, Isaac and R. Laurence Moore, The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Menendez, Albert and Edd Doerr, compilers, The Great Quotations on Religious Freedom, Long Beach, CA: Centerline Press, 1991.

Seldes, George, ed., The Great Quotations, Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1983.

Web-sites:

<http://members.tripod.com/~candst/tnppage/arg3.htm>
(on refutation of the "one-directional" claim)

<http://www.khouse.org/articles/political/20000501-219.html> (Colson's claims)

<http://w3.trib.com/FACT/1st.jeffers.2.html> (complete copy of the letter from the Danbury Baptists to Jefferson and of his reply)

<http://www.usconstitution.net/jeffwall.html> (another copy of Jefferson's letter, showing his original spelling, etc.)

<http://www.chuckbaldwinlive.com/jefferson.html> (copy of Washington Times article reporting on alleged limited, political nature of Jefferson's letter)

<http://www.thevrwc.org/historical/JeffersonWall.html> (site that claims Jefferson meant otherwise in his letter and

was really pro-religious)

<http://www.atheists.org/flash.line/jeff1.htm> (report on the American Atheists site, refuting recent claims of Jefferson's pro-religious intentions)

Opinions, News from the Nation

Here is Tony Hileman's response to Bush's recent Thanksgiving address followed by the text of that address.

November 27, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the members of the American Humanist Association, I want to thank you for bringing to the nation's attention the significance of gratefulness during this time of national crisis. Americans enjoy a degree of freedom, justice, and liberty unparalleled in human history. We agree with your Thanksgiving proclamation's reliance on President Eisenhower's acknowledgement of our collective obligation to not only defend the enduring principles of freedom, but also to preserve the ideals of liberty and justice that allow such freedom to thrive. We truly owe a debt of gratitude to the intrepid founders of our nation who had the courage to construct such a bountiful form of government, and the women and men who have defended its basic principles with equal courage.

However, it is particularly disheartening that you chose our national day of thanksgiving to exclude the tens of millions of Americans who do not share your supernatural interpretation of reality. By limiting the "free, faithful, and fair-minded" to those who "give thanks to God" you leave out those who believe passionately in our individual and collective ability to make the world a better place through our own cooperative efforts. By reserving your appreciation of those "who have opened their hearts to those in need" to "people of faith" you separate rather than bond a diverse American community struggling for a "deeper unity and stronger resolve."

If we are to overcome the considerable challenges faced by our nation and humanity, our government must depend on its people and its system of justice, and not rely on the intervention of supernatural powers. We are the source of our own strength in this time of trouble. It is up to us to cope with the changed circumstances wrought

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by those who adhere to extreme and outmoded forms of belief that place supernatural values above human life. We have this responsibility and ability.

Mr. President, on behalf of the American Humanist Association, the oldest and largest organization promoting Humanism in the United States, I ask you to use the influence of your office to bring us together as compassionate, caring people who long for "patience, resolve and wisdom" and are willing, though our own efforts, to work toward that common end. Be equally inclusive of those who do not share your supernatural beliefs, but who share a desire for universal peace and justice for all.

We have seen the results of placing dogma above deed. Let's put creedal differences aside and with respect for the sacrifice and contributions of all work together toward the realization of a world that achieves the ideals we strive for. That's an aim that engenders hope and, when realized, one for which we can truly be thankful.

Sincerely,

Tony Hileman
Executive Director

Thanksgiving Day Proclamation
By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

Nearly half a century ago, President Dwight Eisenhower proclaimed Thanksgiving as a time when Americans should celebrate "the plentiful yield of our soil . . . the beauty of our land . . . the preservation of those ideals of liberty and justice that form the basis of our national life, and the hope of international peace." Now, in the painful aftermath of the September 11 attacks and in the midst of our resolute war on terrorism, President Eisenhower's hopeful words point us to our collective obligation to defend the enduring principles of freedom that form the foundation of our Republic.

During these extraordinary times, we find particular assurance from our Thanksgiving tradition, which reminds us that we, as a people and individually, always have reason to hope and trust in God, despite great adversity. In 1621 in New England, the Pilgrims gave thanks to God, in whom they placed their hope, even though a bitter winter had taken many of their brethren. In the winter of 1777, General George Washington and his army, having just suffered great misfortune, stopped near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to give thanks to God. And there, in the throes of great difficulty, they found the hope they needed to persevere. That hope in freedom eventually inspired them to victory.

In 1789, President Washington, recollecting the countless blessings for which our new Nation should give thanks, declared the first National Day of Thanksgiving. And decades later, with the Nation embroiled in a bloody civil war, President Abraham Lincoln revived what is now an annual tradition of issuing a presidential proclamation of Thanksgiving. President Lincoln asked God to "heal the

wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and Union."

As we recover from the terrible tragedies of September 11, Americans of every belief and heritage give thanks to God for the many blessings we enjoy as a free, faithful, and fair-minded land. Let us particularly give thanks for the self-less sacrifices of those who responded in service to others after the terrorist attacks, setting aside their own safety as they reached out to help their neighbors. Let us also give thanks for our leaders at every level who have planned and coordinated the myriad of responses needed to address this unprecedented national crisis. And let us give thanks for the millions of people of faith who have opened their hearts to those in need with love and prayer, bringing us a deeper unity and stronger resolve.

In thankfulness and humility, we acknowledge, especially now, our dependence on One greater than ourselves. On this day of Thanksgiving, let our thanksgiving be revealed in the compassionate support we render to our fellow citizens who are grieving unimaginable loss; and let us reach out with care to those in need of food, shelter, and words of hope. May Almighty God, who is our refuge and our strength in this time of trouble, watch over our homeland, protect us, and grant us patience, resolve, and wisdom in all that is to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 22, 2001, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage Americans to assemble in their homes, places of worship, or community centers to reinforce ties of family and community, express our profound thanks for the many blessings we enjoy, and reach out in true gratitude and friendship to our friends around the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Opinions, News from the Nation

The following letter was published in the *Charleston Post and Courier*.

Once again a letter writer (Oct. 18) expresses the view that we have "freedom of religion, not freedom from religion." He agrees with Councilman Tim Scott that the "Ten Commandments should be posted in every public building in the United States."

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Permit me to ask a couple of basic questions. How can we have freedom OF religion without also having freedom FROM religion? Would you like to see posted in every public building in the United States a message from the Koran exhorting all to pray to Allah, or from the Gita, the book of Guru Granth Salub, or a passage from one of 700 other holy books? Neither would I.

As Americans, you and Councilman Scott are guaranteed the freedom to urge whatever religious views you want on others and to believe and practice any religion you choose. But you cannot use governmental power to promulgate your religion. The difference between Afghanistan (or Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia) and the U.S. is not that one is a Muslim nation and the other is a Christian nation. The difference is that one government is theocratic and the other is secular, meaning free of governmental religious encroachment. If we wish to keep our religious freedom, based on individual and often distinct religious views, then we must resist those who would like to impose their beliefs on the rest of us.

Posting the Ten Commandments in government buildings allies the government in an official way with two creeds, Judaism and Christianity, and sends an unmistakable message to Americans who hold other religions or no religion that they are second-class citizens. These include up to 30 million non-religious Americans, 3 to 5 million Muslims, and several million adherents of Eastern religions.

How can this ongoing controversy be resolved? I propose a simple solution that both honors our democratic principles and reminds us of the curbs on governmental abuse of power. Why don't we display our American Bill of Rights on public buildings? We would still be posting 10, and we Americans can all support and celebrate these 10. Or can we?

Herb Silverman

Opinions, News from the Nation

Alabama Judge Wins "Wallbanger 2001" Award - Lieberman is Runner-up for Scheme to Subsidize Church Repairs

Falwell, Robertson A Wacky Third, Says Atheist Group American Atheists today announced Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore as the recipient of its annual Wallbanger Award, with Sen. Joseph Lieberman coming in at a tight second place.

The Atheist civil rights organization presents the annual award to that individual or group doing the most to undermine the "wall of separation" between church and state spoken of by Thomas Jefferson and other Founders of the Republic.

Moore clinched the award when he ordered the stealth placement, under cover of night, of an enormous,

5,280-pound granite monument to the Ten Commandments in the Alabama Judicial Building. "This action illustrates Judge Moore's utter contempt for the constitutional separation of government and religion," declared Ellen Johnson, President of American Atheists. "No Atheist, freethinker, or even members of non-Christian creeds can feel welcome in Moore's courtroom because of his intolerant action."

Tied for third place, and thus deserving Dishonorable Mention are televangelists Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, for blaming the terrorist attacks of September 11 on gays, nonbelievers, women seeking abortions and other alleged ne'er-do-wells.

Ron Barrier, Spokesman for American Atheists, said that the pair "are so steeped in illusion they can't tell the difference between fantasy and reality. Apparently they hadn't heard of a fellow named Osama bin Laden, an Islamic religious fanatic who is married, believes in Allah, and promotes as rigid a religious agenda as these two who market Christianity."

Sen. Joseph Lieberman received an "also ran" in the Wallbanger Awards, for his scheme to use public funds in order to repair and renovate "historic" churches.

For further information:

<http://www.atheists.org/flash.line/alabam14.htm>
("Roy Moore's war on separation -- another Commandments display")

<http://www.atheists.org/flash.line/faith38.htm>
("Lieberman calls for public funds to repair 'historic' churches")

American Atheists is a nationwide movement which defends the civil rights of nonbelievers, works for the separation of church and state, and addresses issues of First Amendment public policy.

American Atheists, Inc. - P.O. Box 5733 - Parsippany, NJ
(908)276-7300

Opinions, News from Ohio

Dear NCSE Supporters & Friends,

I'm writing to you to alert you to a new Intelligent Design advocacy group that has formed in your state to force "Intelligent Design Theory" into the science standards now open to public review. Bernie Franks, a member of the Science Writing Team for the Ohio Department of Education, wrote and informed NCSE of this new effort.

The group, Science Excellence for all Ohioans (SEAO), is sponsored by the state chapter of the American Family Association. Their web site at <http://www.sciohio.org/> provides a great deal of information about their efforts, including a seminar on intelligent design scheduled for Friday, December 14th, at the Ohio Union Lounge of Ohio State University, 1739 N. High St.,

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Columbus.

Mr. Franks plans to attend the event and asks that anyone else interested in attending contact him at franksgroup@fuse.net. Mr. Franks is also interested in hearing from parties interesting in countering the efforts of the ID advocates.

Other initiatives that SEAO is planning is the introduction of a bill reading in part: "To enact section 3313.6012 of the Revised Code to require that, whenever the theory of evolution is included in the instructional program of a school district or educational service center, the scientific evidence both supportive and not supportive of the theory be included." Their web site lists State Representative Linda Reidelbach as the bill's sponsor.

This is clearly an attempt to bring ID or creationism into Ohio state's public school science classes.

Also posted on their web site is a document outlining their proposed changes to the standards. It can be found on their web site at: <http://www.sciohio.org/start.htm>

Included in their recommendations are the removal of any reference to the age of the earth and citations from the writings of anti-evolutionist Michael Denton, and ID advocate Michael Behe.

NCSE will continue to work with you and other concerned parties in Ohio to see that your state maintains the integrity of its science standards. The vote is still a long way off, December of 2002, but we feel it is far better to get active now to counter their efforts rather than wait until the vote is closing in on us before we start playing catch up.

We also urge you to start a dialogue with fellow members and activists so that you can present an organized voice for quality science education in your state. As always, NCSE will be here as a resource of information and advice on how best to resist the efforts of creationists and their efforts. Remember, we often depend on our supporters to be our ears and eyes on the ground. So if you come across media reports, articles about this issue, or any other information that will help NCSE track events please pass them on.

If you have any questions or further information concerning this issue please don't hesitate to contact me.

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Opinions, News from Ohio

Kagin in Debate on the Existence of God

Edwin Kagin, attorney, published author, former college English Instructor, Presbyterian Minister's son, Eagle Scout, founding member of the Free Inquiry Group, Inc. (FIG) of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, and Director of Camp Quest, the first residential summer camp for the children of atheists, humanists, and other freethinkers, has agreed to engage in a live debate on the issue of whether or not there is a God (exact wording of debate topic not yet known).

This debate will take place on Wednesday, January 30, 2002, at 7:00 pm, in room 128, Pearson Hall, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. The debate will be hosted by the Forensics Department, and it is jointly sponsored by the Organization of Atheists and Agnostics of Miami University and by a Christian Fraternity.

Speaking for the existence of God will be Dr. Ben Voth, Director of Forensics, and professor in the Department of Communication, of Miami University. Dr. Voth appears to be a formidable opponent. He is a debate judge at the national level, and the advisor and coach for the Miami University forensic debate team, which has performed with distinction in national and international tournaments.

Edwin has had wide formal and informal debate experience. In High School, he was on the debate team that won the Kentucky state championship. He won oratory contests in High School and college, and he was on the winning Moot Court team each year of law school. He has been a featured speaker at both regional and national meetings of a number of freethought organizations.

This promises to be a fun evening.

You are invited and encouraged to attend and to bring guests. At such events, the Christian student groups, and local churches, always seem to manage to pack the audience with theists to jeer at any speaker or debater who dares challenge their belief system, so it is important for atheists and agnostics to be represented. Otherwise, the Christians can give the impression that virtually everyone believes as they do. If they could have their way, maybe everyone would.

Here are the directions to Miami University: http://www.ucm.muohio.edu/About_Miami/visitingmiami/index.cfm Pearson Hall is located in Oxford, Ohio, on the Miami University Campus. It is on the Northwest side of the intersection of High St. and Patterson Ave. Patterson Ave. is also known as State Route 27.

Authority has every reason to fear the skeptic, for authority can rarely survive in the face of doubt.

-- Robert Lindner, quoted from [Cyber-Nation](http://www.cyber-nation.com)
<<<http://www.positiveatheism.org/hist/quotes/qframe.htm>>>



Book Review

American Exorcism: Expelling Demons in the Land of Plenty

by Michael W. Cuneo
(New York: Doubleday, 2001)

One might think by now, in the 21st century, the idea of demons inhabiting the human mind and person would have landed on the junk heap of discarded para-normal ideas. In fact, I have used Jesus' exorcising demons at times as a short hand refutation of the Bible. Since there are no demons, something with the Gospels must be wrong. Turn that around, since Jesus exorcised them, demons must exist, and hence exorcisms are needed, wanted, and must be performed.

Michael Cuneo is a sociology professor at Fordham University in New York, and an expert researcher in the subject of religions. He traced down the history of modern exorcism, describes the present scene, and has himself attended and observed exorcisms. At the same time, he makes it quite clear he does not for one moment believe in the existence of demons. The symptoms of the afflicted all seemed to him, "fully explainable in social, cultural, medical, and psychological terms." (p. 275)

By the end of the Second World War demons had been all but forgotten, and exorcisms in the Roman Catholic church had become exceedingly rare and secretive events. Protestant churches had never practiced these rituals and may have regarded them as part of that "popish" excess the Reformation had overcome. It was the popular culture of TV and movies which revived the cult. Cuneo traces modern exorcisms to the 1971 novel *The Exorcist* by William Peter Blatty, and to the movie released two years later. The novels of Malachi Martin, an ex-priest, and M. Scott Peck, a psychiatrist, promoted the demonology further. So did *Satan Is Alive and Well on Planet Earth* by the prolific fundamentalist author Hal Lindsey. "In fact, it isn't much of an exaggeration to say that exorcism today is actually the invention of the popular entertainment industry the product, above all else, of Hollywood hype and Madison Avenue hucksterism." (p. 70)

Exorcism ministries have a problem distinguishing between demons and illness. It is not always easy or even possible to distinguish among sickness of the spirit, which calls for repentance, physical illness, which requires medical help, and sickness of the emotions when psychological counseling is needed. Certain syndromes became particularly attractive to demonologists, perhaps because they were not real in the first place. Multiple Personality Disorder was indistinguishable from demonic possession, who knows what that other person looking out of your eyes might be?

Satanic Ritual Abuse in the past or present surely must be demonic and call for a thorough exorcism. Related to that is the well worn fable of Recovered Memory Syndrome, in which clients accuse their parents of mistreating them in childhood. All of these feed into the exorcism world.

Pentecostal and evangelical Christians have a particular

problem accepting demonism. Their faith specifies that anyone who truly accepts Jesus into their hearts can not sin, so how could they be possessed by devils? This hindrance to exorcism too was overcome, and today the protestant exorcism scene is widespread, active, and lively. Usually protestant ministries devoted to expelling demons refer to the activity as "deliverance." Mass deliverances are practiced, national conferences are held, even "self-deliverance" can get a respectful hearing. Satanism is still alive, still cunning and organized, and just as dangerous as ever. (p. 209) Exorcism remains active, fascinating, effective and widely practiced.

This book is the definitive history of modern exorcism. A must read if you are interested in this topic or in popular religion in the United States. Thoroughly footnoted, I learned about a plethora of books and authors I had scarcely known about. There exists an entire large literature about god, demons, speaking in tongues, charisms, and other activities in popular protestant religion which rarely is reviewed or mentioned in the secular media.

Wolf Roder

Science Book-Club Meetings for 2002

All meetings are at the downtown Cincinnati Public Library in meeting room 3A on the 3rd floor at 2:30 pm on 4th Sunday of each month unless otherwise specified.

January 27 - "A Beautiful Mind: A Biography of John Forbes Nash, Jr., winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, 1994" by Sylvia Nasar

February 24 - "The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World" by Michael Pollan

March 24 - "Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies" by Jared Diamond

April 28 - "The Universal Computer: The Road from Leibniz to Turing" by Martin Davis

May 20 - Monday evening at 5:30 "The Road Since Structure: Philosophical Essays 1970-1993" by Thomas Kuhn, edited by James Conant and John Haugeland,

June 23 - "Asimov's Chronology Of Science And Discovery" by Isaac Asimov

July 28 - "Animal Minds: Beyond Cognition to Consciousness" by Donald R. Griffin

August 25 - "The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity" by Roy Porter

September 22 - "The Mismeasure of Man" by Stephen Jay Gould

October 27 - "Extinct Humans" by Ian Tattersall and Jeffrey H. Schwartz

November 24 - "E=MC²" by David Bodanis

December 15 - Sunday at 2:30 "Seven Daughters of Eve" by Bryan Sykes