

FIG LEAVES

Volume 16 Issue 9

September 2007

September FIG Meeting: *Sunday, 23 September 2:00 PM at the Vernon Manor*

There will be a grand buffet style brunch at 12:30 PM at the Vernon Manor. People can let Shawn know they will attend by e-mail; smj145@gmail.com or phone; 513-404-8191. However, since we don't have to worry about space or timing with the brunch, it is open to all.

The Reinforcement of Religious and Superstitious Belief

Speaker: Justin Perry

Since Skinner's (1947) article on superstition in pigeons, much research has been focused on these processes in both animals and humans. Research has focused primarily on ritualistic human behaviors, i.e., a sports fan wearing a lucky sock during the games of his favorite team. There has been much less focus on religious based superstitious belief and behavior as seen through the perspective of Skinner. This presentation will provide a review of previous research relating to Skinner's work. Then will continue with current and future research that is being completed and its relation to basic religious superstition. The presentation will conclude by posing the argument that religious belief and behavior is contingent on schedules and types of reinforcement.

Our speaker for September will be Justin Perry, a graduate student at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. This presentation is based on the research and

October Meeting - Sunday, October 28, 2007 7:00 PM

Jack London: Author And Heretic

Speaker: Timothy J. Madigan, Ph.D.

Jack London (1876-1916) remains one of the most-read of all American novelists. In his short life he managed to write such classic novels as *The Call of the Wild*, *John Barleycorn*, *Martin Eden*, *The Sea Wolf* and *The Iron Heel* (a dystopian work that influenced George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*), as well as countless short stories, newspaper articles and plays.

Raised by a spiritualist mother, from whom he later became estranged, London was always an unconventional thinker. An avowed socialist until shortly before his death, he considered himself to be an atheist, and he was always critical of organized religion. His views on women, racial matters, and politics remain controversial. Tim Madigan will discuss the continuing relevance of London's life and work, especially his uneasy mixture of rugged individualism and concern for the downtrodden, exemplified in his book *The People of the Abyss* and his essay "How I Became a Socialist."

Tim Madigan teaches philosophy at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York and was formerly the editor of *Free Inquiry* magazine. He is one of our favorite speakers, having spoken to FIG at our initial meeting in 1991 and almost every year since.

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Events

September Potluck

Alert! - Date change!

Wednesday, September 19, 2007,
6:30 PM at the home of

September Meeting

Sunday, September 23, 2007, 2:00 PM
at the Vernon Manor
400 Oak Street, Cincinnati, OH

October Potluck

Tuesday, October 8, 2007,
6:30 PM at the home of



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All species of animals were on Noah's Ark,
(including ice worms.)
All animals were vegetarians before Adam's sin.
Science is wrong and mythology is truth.
Believing something makes it true!

COME TO NORTHERN KENTUCKY: LEADING THE RETURN TO THE DARK AGES



FIG Leaves - Thoughtful articles, letters, reviews, reports, anecdotes, and cartoons are very welcome. Submit in Electronic format via the internet to:

figleaves@fuse.net;

or on disk or typewritten via mail to Editor, FIG Leaves, P.O. Box 19034, Cincinnati, OH 45219. Contributions received before the first Friday of the month will be considered for publication that month.

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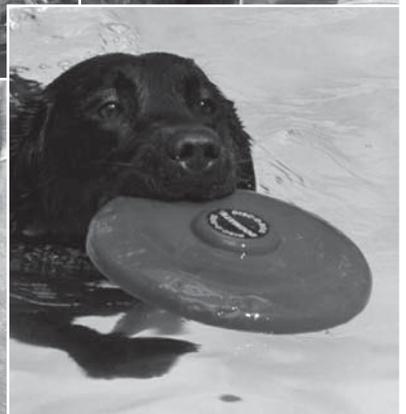


August Picnic!



Great Food!
 Great Talk!
 Great Chefs!
 Lots of Water!
 Lots of Sun!
 Lots of Smiles!

A great time all around!
 Thank you to our hosts
 Edwin & Helen!





Rationalist International expresses shock and deep concern about the attack on Bangladeshi author Taslima Nasreen today (August 9) by the radical political outfit **Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen** (MIM) at the Hyderabad Press Club. She was releasing the Telegu translation of her book *Shodd*. Taslima Nasreen

is an Honorary Associate of *Rationalist International*.

MIM activists, led by three state Legislative Council members (MLAs), raised slogans against Taslima and flung chairs at her and others attending the function. However, no injuries have been reported so far. MIM leader Akhtar Khan, an MLA, said: "She is enemy of Islam, she is a black spot on Muslims. We cannot bear anyone talking against Islam. She has written books against Islam. We will not tolerate her in Hyderabad."

Taslima was rescued by the police and journalists present at the press club and was escorted to the airport. Three radicals have been detained by the police for questioning. Taslima is living in exile for the last twelve years after death threats forced her to flee Bangladesh. She is an outspoken champion of equal rights for women and a fearless fighter against religion. Taslima has faced numerous death threats from Islamic radicals. Recently, in March 2007, an Indian Muslim group offered a bounty of 500,000 rupees for her beheading.

– *Rationalist International* (9 August 2007)

Attacked Bangladeshi writer facing incitement charges

Richard Lea, *Guardian Unlimited*,[©] Guardian News and Media Limited 2007

Legal proceedings have been launched from all sides as the case of the Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin, attacked last week at the launch of her book in southern India, takes on a political dimension. The author herself faces up to two years in jail if found guilty on a charge of inciting religious tensions, launched by local police at the weekend.

Proceedings have also been launched against the three local politicians (MLAs) from the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) party who took part in the attack at the press club in Hyderabad last Thursday.

The police are also investigating remarks made by the MIM leader, Akbaruddin Owaisi, widely reported

to have threatened the author with death, as well as the leader of the MIM's local rivals, the Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) party, who is reported to have claimed that the attack was an attempt by the MIM to foil a plan to kill the writer outside the press club.

Writs are also to be filed against the MLAs involved in the attack by local citizens' groups who had condemned the attack and criticised the police response. But with local elections due early next year, the issue is fast becoming a political flash-point, with the MIM widely expected to use a fatwa against Nasrin as a tool to mobilise the muslim vote.



Nasrin shelters behind a supporter as the MIM activists and politicians disrupt the meeting in Hyderabad. Photograph: Noah Seelam/AFP

Hindustan Times, Kolkata, 17 August 2007

A week after Muslim fundamentalists assaulted Taslima Nasreen in Hyderabad, some Muslim leaders here revived an old fatwa against her, telling her to leave the country and offering an unlimited amount of money to anybody who would kill her.

Imam Barkati of the Tipu Sultan mosque, and leaders of the Majlish Banchao Tanjim (MBT) made the announcement during Friday prayers. "If she does not leave within a month, she will face dire consequences. We have also asked the government not to renew her visa and deport her," MBT spokesperson Majid Ullah Khan said. The MBT is a breakaway group of the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, which had attacked the author in Hyderabad.

"Taslima has spoken against Islam and Prophet Muhammad and we will go to any extent to eliminate her," Khan said. He added that the MBT would meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi to demand Taslima's ouster.

Taslima, on her part, refused to be cowed. "I am here with the permission of the Indian government and will stay here till the government wants me to leave. I will





not leave because some people are threatening me," she said. She added that such a fatwa was illegal and the announcers should be arrested. "This kind of statement about unlimited rewards does scare me because anyone with greed might try to harm me," she admitted.

Chief Secretary Amit Kiran Deb refused to comment on any increase in Taslima's security, Police commissioner Prasun Mukherjee said: "We are keeping tabs on all developments. As far as security is concerned, adequate steps have been taken."



At Last, a Comic Book Atheist Hero

Matthew Chapman *Huffington Post*, 8 August 2007

Pat Tillman, an extraordinarily square-jawed football player who gave up a lucrative professional life to go and fight for his country, was at first hailed as a hero by a military eager for good publicity. When it was discovered Tillman died as a result of "friendly fire" -- he was shot at close range in the forehead, which

seems a little too friendly -- his family pressed hard for a more thorough investigation.

Lt. Colonel Ralph Kauzlarich, an officer with responsibilities for Tillman's unit, complained that his relatives were being so insistent because, like Pat, they were atheists. They could not come to terms with his death. From their perspective, after all, Pat was merely "wormdirt". In other words, if they believed in God and an afterlife they would be more compliant.

An interesting point.

America, the most religious country among all the developed nations, does have a puzzling willingness to tolerate injustices which, particularly given the country's great wealth, should be considered intolerable. If God exists, he's doing a lousy job, so much so that one wonders if life might improve if we stopped believing in him and started doing some of the heavy lifting ourselves. Might Americans, for example, suddenly see that it is insane not to have a health care system that works, or that there is something wrong about a country wherein some people are billionaires while others can barely afford to eat? In short, might reality snap into focus?

You may argue that one thing has nothing to do with the other, but you can't have it both ways. You can't say that religious faith has a real effect and at the same time say that extracting it would have no effect.

Of course, people can and do have it both ways. When prayers are answered, God is credited and thanked. When God fails, the devotee questions his own faith not God's existence. Heads God wins, tails you lose. Exempt from this equation -- by definition, in my view -- is an accurate analysis of existence. To quote Voltaire, "Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities." If you want to read a compendium of religiously engendered "atrocities" read Christopher Hitchens's superb book, *God Is Not Great*, which reminds you of them in acumulatively shocking detail.

Religion causes harm, says poll

Richard Brooks; London *Sunday Times*; 2 September 2007

Nearly half the British think that religion is harmful, according to a poll carried out by YouGov. Yet more than half also believe in God "or something." The YouGov poll commissioned by John Humphrys, the broadcaster and writer, found that 42% of the 2,200 people taking part considered religion had a harmful effect. "One reason might be the publicity attracted by a handful of mad mullahs and their hate-filled rhetoric," writes Humphrys in his new book, *In God We Doubt*.

Only 16% of those polled called themselves atheists; 28% believed in God; 26% believed in "something" but were not sure what; and 9% regarded themselves as agnostics - like Humphrys himself, who had a religious upbringing in Wales but calls himself a "doubter." He writes:

Even though the dominant faith - by a massive margin - is Christianity, only 17% thought the influence of religion was beneficial. That is even fewer than those who claim that they believe in a personal God. And yet when we asked which of the main religions was 'most effective' in getting its message across, most thought it was Christianity. Only 10% cited Islam compared with 32% who said Christianity.

In the survey 43% said they never prayed, 31% hardly prayed, and 10% prayed every night. "More than half of those who say they believe in a personal God cannot be bothered to pray to him every night," writes Humphrys.



Because I have written on the subject of religion, I often talk to people about faith. I rarely meet anyone who thinks as I do. Even at the skeptical end, I usually find, if I probe a little, that people believe “there has to be something,” some force, some supernatural meaning. Finally, and always, comes the fear of oblivion. There must be some kind of afterlife. “This can’t just be it,” is the final plaintive but insistent appeal.



Why not? What evidence exists for any of these ideas? Why this God as opposed to that one? If one is invented, why not all? But reason is no match for fear and never will be. Perhaps if it is fear itself that one must fear (and I do -- fear so often turns to violence), then maybe fear itself is what should be attacked. If attacking the idiocies of faith has no chance, perhaps an appeal to good, old-fashioned American machismo will do the trick instead.

Here I return to Pat Tillman. When Tillman went to war, he knew he was alone and finite. When he contemplated the possibility of getting killed, he did not see angels and fluffy clouds beyond that moment, but utter darkness. He required no guarantees of ultimate survival before he jumped in. In fact, according to credible reports, the very last words he spoke were to a nearby soldier who was lying on the ground crying out to God for help. “Would you shut your (expletive) mouth?” yelled Tillman. “God’s not going to help you. You need to do something for yourself, you sniveling...”

With his comic-book good looks and dialogue to match, perhaps Tillman can provide a role model for young atheists. A real hero with real courage, he not only refutes forever the lie that there are no atheists in foxholes, but more than that provides an opening for a far more radical thought: atheism, in and of itself, is courageous, and faith, in and of itself, is cowardly.

Political Theology:

Why is the news all about religion? I received an angry e-mail from a reader this week complaining that religion now shows up in every issue of *What's New*. Well, maybe not every issue, but he has a point. *WN* is about science and politics. In happier times religion got almost no mention. What changed? The cover story

in the August 19 issue of the *New York Times Magazine* tells us. “The Politics of God” by Mark Lilla, is adapted from his book *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics and the Modern West*, which will be published next month. We in the West have our own fundamentalists, Lilla acknowledges, but we “find it incomprehensible that theological ideas still stir up messianic passions, leaving societies in ruin.” He goes on to quote from an open letter President Ahmadinejad of Iran sent to President Bush last year. It closes with: “Whether we like it or not, the world is gravitating towards faith in the Almighty, and justice and the will of God will prevail over all things.”

Why empathy comes naturally to humans. A frequent theme in mail I get from fundamentalists is that without religion there would be no reason for people to be good. I find this shocking. Do these people long to rape and pillage, but refrain only because God is watching? *The Wall Street Journal* today has an article by Robert Lee Hotz on the discovery of “mirror” cells in the motor cortex that reflect the actions and intentions of others as if they were our own. They cause us to identify with the characters in a novel, or suffer when we watch others suffer on the evening news. If we are good, it is because we see ourselves as part of the human race and the happiness of others makes us happy.

 - *What's New* by Robert Park, 17 August 2007

Exists there a soul? The journal *Science* today reports new results on the experimental induction of out-of-body sensations. This curious experience is more often associated with the tabloid media. You may recall a *New York Times* story by Sandra Blakeslee about a year ago (3 Oct 06) in which a Swiss neurologist induced the effect by mild electrical stimulation of the angular gyrus, a region of the brain in the parietal lobe involved in a number of processes related to language and cognition. The effect is attributed to discrepancy between the actual position of the body and the mind’s perceived location. The Swiss group has now induced the out-of-body effect without brain stimulation or hallucinogenic drugs by fitting the subject with display goggles that show a video image of the person from a different perspective. This research is important in part because out-of-body experiences, particularly when associated with near-death, are often cited as evidence of a soul. The odd belief that the



half-million embryonic stem cells left over from in-vitro fertilization have souls is behind objections to using them in research rather than sending them to the autoclave.

The amygdala: if we have a soul, this must be it! I consulted with two Catholic theologians on the faculty of a nearby seminary, who explained that the soul is the “spiritual essence” of a person. After much discussion, “spiritual essence” seemed to be associated with empathy, though Catholic priests use different words. Our emotional response to sensory input is determined by the amygdalae, two almond shaped groups of neurons located deep within the medial temporal lobes. Embryos, I note, don’t have amygdalae.



Also reported today, Shinya Yamanaka, one of Japan’s leading stem cell scientists, will join the Gladstone Institute of Cardiovascular Disease in San Francisco, where his work will be funded in part by California’s stem cell initiative. This is good news, of course, but we note that he’s recognized for persuading skin cells from mice to behave like stem cells. We’ve lost years while stem-cell research has been diverted to circumventing religious objections to the use of human eggs or embryo

- *What's New* by Robert L. Park, 24 August 2007

Humanists and the Trap of Atheism

A Guest Column by Vir Narain in *HumanistNetworkNews.org*, 15 August 2007

It is perhaps not surprising that the worldwide rise in religious antipathies, most notably between evangelical Christianity and radical Islam, is now being reflected in a growing stridency between atheists and rationalists. In November 2006, what is regarded as the first New Atheist conference, “Beyond Belief: Science, Religion, Reason and Survival,” was held at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in California. In April 2007, possibly as a counterpoint to the conference in California, the New Humanism Conference was held at Harvard.

Although it is perhaps true that a large proportion of humanists would describe themselves as atheists, the humanist movement has never considered atheism (construed as a rejection of all concepts of God) as a

necessary part of the humanist outlook. According to the Minimum Statement adopted by the International Humanist and Ethical Union,

Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives.... It is not theistic. It does not accept a supernatural view of reality.

The sentence “It is not theistic” needs elaboration, and it has been suggested that it should be recast, “It is not theistic, in the sense that it ignores the various claims about the existence of God as having no relevance to the practical conduct of human affairs, except that it categorically rejects the idea of a rewarding and punishing God who intervenes in human affairs.” In other words, the humanist movement rejects the God of the moralists while ignoring the God of the philosophers as having no relevance to the conduct of human affairs.

The so-called “strong atheist” movement proposes, “I do not know, or care, what your concept of God is, I hold it to be false.” This smacks of a dogmatism quite alien to the humanist ethos. It can perhaps best be described as aggressive atheism. Pragmatic humanism is concerned with only those beliefs and attitudes which have a bearing on the conduct of human affairs. Belief in the existence of an anthropomorphic God who rewards and punishes, and responds to prayers, strikes at the very roots of the humanist worldview, which is based on the autonomous nature of morality.

The God of Spinoza, Whitehead or Einstein is of no interest to humanists. A total rejection of all concepts of God advocated so fervently by the New Atheists is not only logically untenable, but also unnecessary -- and essentially counterproductive -- from the humanist point of view. Perhaps what we need is a return to the large and tolerant vision of the founders of the humanist movement.

Vir Narain is the chairman of the Indian Humanist Union and editor of its quarterly journal, *The Humanist Outlook*.

From *Humanist Network News*, the weekly e-zine of the Institute for Humanist Studies: www.humaniststudies.org

.....
• *Quote*
• If there is a supreme being, he’s crazy..... Marlene Dietrich.
• *Unquote*
.....



DR. SUESS TYPE RESPONSE TO INTELLIGENT DESIGN WATCHMAKER POEM

Now most people know that watches in pockets,
 Are made of different stuff than eyes in eye sockets.
 A watch doesn't have wings, or flippers, or feet,
 A watch isn't something another watch might just eat.
 A watch doesn't live in a nest, cave, or hive,
 And that is because a watch isn't alive.
 If you can get that small detail resolved,
 You can see why it's dumb to say life hasn't evolved.
 And pretend that making a watch for a wrist,
 Is just like making an arm or a fist.
 And pretend people were made and clearly designed,
 Because life is complex and sometimes refined.
 Life didn't happen by magic or plan,
 Like thinking some dirt was turned into a man.
 And some folks believe, and this is no fib,
 That the first woman was made from first dirt man's rib.
 Evolution happened and it isn't true,
 That people were made by some god from some goo.
 Let's say that you took about ten quillion rabbits,
 All alike in their looks, and their hops, and their habits.
 And that about half were colored bright snerfell,
 And that about half were colored dark murfell.
 And if they made babies those snerfells and murfells,

Some of those babies would be colored snerfell.
 And some of those babies would be colored murfell,
 And some of those babies would be in between.
 In some brand new colors no rabbit had seen,
 Maybe some would be colored a pleasing snerplean.
 Or maybe some awful disgusting murgreen,
 And some might be lovely and some quite obscene.
 And if the rabbits thus colored should make some
 more rabbits,
 With only those rabbits with their color habits.
 A new color for rabbits would finally evolve,
 And the colors they started out with would dissolve.
 And be completely replaced after enough time,
 With snerplean or murgreen not made out slime.
 And enough time and enough rabbit ranges,
 Could make in those rabbits amazing new changes.
 Until they perhaps were no longer rabbits,
 But maybe some new type of postrabbitodabits.
 A new kind of life we could not invent in our mind,
 As new as a timepiece some watchmaker might wind.
 But made from the life force creationists mock,
 Who think life is something as dead as a clock.
 So don't be confused by people who lie,
 Who think truth is found in a book from the sky.
 If it weren't for science we wish they could see,
 We would all have to use candles to watch the T.V.

-- Edwin Kagin, March 24, 2007

Irish Humor: Going to Church

John O'Reilly hoisted his beer at his regular pub and offered the following toast: "Here's to spending the rest of me life, between the legs of me lovely wife!" That won him top prize at the pub for the best toast of the night! He went home and proudly told his wife, Mary, "I won the prize for the best toast of the night." "Aye, did ye now," said Mary. "And what was your toast?" Thinking quickly, John said, "Here's to spending the rest of me life, sitting in church beside me wife." "Oh, that is very nice indeed, John!" said Mary.

The next day, Mary ran into one of John's drinking buddies on the street corner. The man leeringly chuckled and said, "John won the prize the other night at the pub with a toast about you, Mary." "Aye, he told me," said Mary, "and I was a bit surprised meself. You know, he'd only been there twice in the last four years. Once he fell asleep, and the other time I had to pull him by the ears to make him come."

SCIENCE BOOK CLUB: 2007 Schedule

Science book club as in past years plans on meeting at the Cincinnati Downtown Library on the 4th Sunday of each month at 2:30pm in Room 3A, except on the 3rd Sunday because of holidays or other conflicts as noted below:

- Sept. 23** - *The big splat, or, How our moon came to be* by Dana Mackenzie
- Oct. 28** - *Facts and mysteries in elementary particle physics* by Martinus J.G. Veltman
- Nov. 18 (3rd Sunday)** - *What we believe but cannot prove : today's leading thinkers on science in the age of certainty* edited by John Brockman
- Dec. 16 (3rd Sunday)** - *The Republican war on science* by Chis Mooney





BOOK REVIEW II

Against All Gods: six Polemics on Religion and an Essay on Kindness
by Anthony C. Grayling
review by Cal McCrystal in *The Independent*
(2007)

Being of a religious bent, I happen to worship the jellyfish. It is attractive to the eye. It patrols our beaches protectively, reserving a stinging chastisement for those who would deny its powers. Unlike the Christian Holy Trinity, its three divine parts are bonded visibly: Ectoderm, Endoderm and, in between, Mesoglea. It is universal, and those of us who commune with it do so clad in a respectful vestment, *vestis umidus* or wet suit. Our name for the jellyfish is Juju.

That is not to say that other religions are inferior. I am well aware that jealousy between faiths can lead to unnecessary bloodshed, so I rarely proselytise on behalf of my own silent god. Praying to Juju, I recite the uplifting words: "Allow me to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters."

On the other hand, always open to conversion, I am impressed by Anthony Grayling's idea of forming a religious group "based on belief in the divinity of garden gnomes". Virtually everything in Grayling's little book (64 pages; small enough to be a Sunday School catechism) makes sense, particularly when he asks if he should be entitled to public money for a school in which children can be brought up in garden gnomism, "together with a bishop's seat in Parliament perhaps?"

Grayling, a renowned philosopher and prolific author, is a non-believer (he prefers the word "naturalist" to "atheist"). I long ago chose reason over Romanism but, although I am often impatient with the outlandish claims of faith and the zeal of the superstitious, I seldom feel tormented by them (Humanists might adopt the plea, "Forgive them for they know not what they do").

Here, though, one senses a fury behind Grayling's polemics. This is perfectly understandable since, as he observes, the debate "has become an acerbic one - and worse". Apologists for faith, he says, are an evasive community in a "mist-shrouded domain" of sophistry. Fair

enough, but much more dangerous than religious faith is how the faithful are prepared to defend their beliefs ("faith is what I die for, dogma is what I kill for").

Should we naturalists respect the supernatural? No, says Grayling, for "to believe something in the face of evidence and against reason - to believe something by faith - is ignoble, irresponsible and ignorant, and merits the opposite of respect."

This, along with other recent excitations against religious taboos, faith schools, et al (notably Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion*), raises a few holy heckles, but I'm not sure that it will make much difference to human gullibility, which has continued to fuel faith from an antediluvian age. Besides, other factors often come into play, as in Northern Ireland where people gain religious strength and fervour from their adversaries. Likewise in Britain, a dramatic or belligerent swelling of the ranks of fundamentalist Islam would almost certainly prompt a Christian rush to the altar for those lethal dogmas.

It can be argued that religion is massively punitive and grotesquely mutilative. That certain gods insist on circumcision, clitorodectomy, dunking in water and speaking in "divers" tongues, or impose codes based on brute-man's tribal spirit of vendetta or reprisal ought to be well behind us. Surely it's as much beyond human acceptance that we be tyrannised by invisible and intangible things such as gods and devils, than that we should genuflect to garden gnomes - or jellyfish. To dress our bodies, decorate our heads, adorn our dinner tables in celebration of the belief that a god "chose" us for special benediction; to scourge our flesh with whips in an annual abattoir; to yield to the mystical and nasty imperative of caste; to stone to death hapless "sinners" in expiation of their "sins" - all fly in the face of intelligent, contemplative humanitarianism.

If steaming Islam (for example) gives you the vapours, then please turn to Grayling's conclusion for your sedative. "What we are witnessing is not the resurgence of religion, but its death throes," he says. Having begun to use their newly assertive elbows, Muslims are being mimicked by Sikhs and Christian evangelicals. Although Grayling doesn't mention it, there also are intimations of increased twitchiness among Jews and Roman Catholics.

An abreactive and abrasive period lies ahead. The author predicts that "as a factor in public and international affairs [religion] is having what might be its last - characteristically bloody - fling."

⌘



September Potluck:
WEDNESDAY Sept. 19, 2007 6:30 PM
 October Potluck:
 Tues. Oct. 8, 2007 6:30 PM



September Meeting
 Sunday, Sept. 23, 2007
 2:00 PM



FIG Leaves
 P.O. Box 19034
 Cincinnati, OH 45219

FIG

Our Purpose

The Free Inquiry Group, Inc. (FIG) is a non-profit organization founded in 1991. FIG is allied with the Council for Secular Humanism as well as an affiliate of the American Humanist Association and of the American Atheists.

Though most of our members are secular humanists, we welcome to our meetings anyone interested in learning about or furthering our purpose.



To foster a community of secular humanists dedicated to improving the human condition through rational inquiry and creative thinking unfettered by superstition, religion, or any form of dogma.

In accordance with our purpose, we have established the following goals:

- To provide a forum for intelligent exchange of ideas for those seeking fulfillment in an ethical secular life.
- To develop through open discussion the moral basis of a secular society and encourage ethical practices within our own membership and the community at large.
- To inform the public regarding secular alternatives to supernatural interpretations of the human condition.
- To support and defend the principles of democracy, free speech, and separation of church and state as expressed in the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.

For more information, write the Free Inquiry Group at the address above, e-mail figinfo@gofigger.org, or visit our web site at gofigger.org or freeinquirygroup.org.