



April

2010

The Humanists of Ft Worth meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Unitarian Universalist building 901 Page Ave at 7 PM



From The Chair

On June 12, 2009, Noam Chomsky gave a historic address at the Riverside Church in New York before a crowd of over 2,000. A dvd of this talk, as well as an excellent introduction by the

brilliant newslady of Free Speech TV, Amy Goodman, will be shown at our April meeting, the 14th, at 7 p.m.

Chomsky offers a powerful analysis of the current economic crisis and its structural roots; the continuity in U.S. foreign policy under Barack Obama; and the class interests driving U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

Be thinking of officers you want elected for our new fiscal year because our annual business meeting will be held in May. I hope several of our members will give serious thought to chairing our chapter for I shall not be a candidate for re-election. At that time we'll also return our program to discussions of great agnostics and free-thinkers. Speaker and subject will be listed at a later date.

Dick Trice



Bet You didn't know the road to Hell is paved And Hell is Frozen over



Court Upholds 'Under God' in Pledge of Allegiance

It also says 'In God We Trust' is fine on money March 11, 2110 A federal appeals court in San Francisco today upheld the use of the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and "In God We Trust" on US currency. The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals panel rejected two legal challenges by Sacramento atheist Michael Newdow, who claimed the references to God disrespect his religious beliefs.

"The Pledge is constitutional," Judge Carlos Bea wrote for the majority in the 2-1 ruling. "The Pledge of Allegiance serves to unite our vast nation through the proud recitation of some of the ideals upon which our Republic was founded." In a separate 3-0 ruling, the court upheld the "In God We Trust" motto on coins

US Supreme Court To Hear Westbury Baptist Church Case

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court is getting involved in the legal fight over the anti-gay protesters who show up at military funerals with inflammatory messages like "Thank God for dead soldiers."

The court agreed Monday to consider whether the protesters' message, no matter how provocative and upsetting, is protected by the First Amendment. Members of a Kansas-based church have picketed military funerals to spread their belief that U.S. deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq are punishment for the nation's tolerance of homosexuality.

The justices will hear an appeal from the father of a Marine killed in Iraq to reinstate a \$5 million verdict against the protesters, after they picketed outside his son's funeral in Maryland.

A jury in Baltimore awarded Albert Snyder damages for emotional distress and invasion of privacy, but a federal appeals court threw out the verdict. The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said the signs contained "imaginative and hyperbolic rhetoric" protected by the First Amendment.

Other signs carried by members of the Topeka, Kan.-based church said, "America is Doomed," "God Hates the USA/Thank God for 9/11," "Priests Rape Boys" and "Thank God for IEDs," a reference to the roadside bombs that have killed many U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The case will be argued in the fall.—The case is Snyder v. Phelps, 09-751.



Scientology Exposed Again !

At the beginning of April 1952, 42 year old L. Ron Hubbard packed his belongings into the back of his yellow Pontiac convertible and headed out of Wichita with his teenage bride of four weeks beside him. Their destination, one thousand miles to the west, was Phoenix, Arizona, where loyal aides had already put up a sign outside a small office at 1405 North Central Street, announcing it as the headquarters of the Hubbard Association of Scientologists.

Phoenix was so named because it was built on the ruins of an ancient Indian settlement on the Salt River, which had risen like the legendary phoenix. Hubbard, who had had more than enough of Wichita, could not think of a more appropriate location for the rise of his astounding new “science.”

The word Scientology was derived from the Latin *scio* (knowing in the fullest sense) and the Greek *logos* (study). Hubbard erroneously believed it to be his own invention: but curiously and coincidentally, almost twenty years earlier in 1934, a German scholar by the name of Dr A. Nordenholz had written an obscure work of philosophical speculation titled *Scientologie, Wissenschaft und der Beschaffenheit und der Tauglichkeit des Wissens* (Scientology, the Science of the Structure and Validity of Knowledge). It was unlikely, however, that Hubbard was plagiarizing Dr Nordenholz - the book had not been translated into English and Hubbard's knowledge of German was rudimentary.

From L. RON HUBBARD Messiah or Madman?

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~dst/Library/Shelf/wakefield/us-02.html>

L. Ron Hubbard wrote the 1950 bestseller *Dianetics, the Modern Science of Mental Health*. This inspired a layman-oriented mental health movement which, ultimately, developed into Scientology, the most profitable of the money-making new religions.

Surrounded by adoring teenyboppers, uniformed in mini-skirts, bikini tops and high heeled boots, Hubbard was a bigamist who masterminded Watergate-style break-ins. He was an opium addict who secretly regarded himself as the successor to Aleister Crowley, self-proclaimed "Beast 666." These are but some of the facts about the man covered in this unusual biography.

From the N Y Times March 7, 2010 by Laurie Goodstein

Defectors Say Church of Scientology Hides Abuse

CLEARWATER, Fla. — Raised as [Scientologists](#), Christie King Collbran and her husband, Chris, were recruited as teenagers to work for the elite corps of staff members who keep the Church of Scientology running, known as the Sea Organization, or Sea Org.

They signed a contract for a billion years — in keeping with the church's belief that Scientologists are immortal

They worked seven days a week, often on little sleep, for sporadic paychecks of \$50 a week, at most.

But after 13 years and growing disillusionment, the Collbrans decided to leave the Sea Org, setting off on a Kafkaesque journey that they said required them to sign false confessions about their personal lives and their work, pay the church thousands of dollars it said they owed for courses and counseling, and accept the consequences as their parents, siblings and friends who are church members cut off all communication with them.

“Why did we work so hard for this organization,” Ms. Collbran said, “and why did it feel so wrong in the end? We just didn't understand.”

They soon discovered others who felt the same. Searching for Web sites about Scientology that are not sponsored by the church (an activity prohibited when they were in the Sea Org), they discovered that hundreds of other Scientologists were also defecting — including high-ranking executives who had served for decades.

Fifty-six years after its founding by the science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, who died in 1986, the church is fighting off calls by former members for a Reformation. The defectors say Sea Org members were repeatedly beaten by the church's chairman, David Miscavige, often during planning meetings; pressured to have abortions; forced to work without sleep on little pay; and held incommunicado if they wanted to leave. The church says the defectors are lying.

The defectors say that the average Scientology member, known in the church as a public, is largely unaware of the abusive environment experienced by staff members. The church works hard to cultivate public members — especially celebrities like Tom Cruise, Joh Travolta and Nancy Cartwright (the voice of the cartoon scoundrel Bart Simpson) — whose money keeps it running.

But recently even some celebrities have begun to abandon the church, the most prominent of whom is the director and screenwriter Paul Haggis, who won Oscars for “Million Dollar Baby” and “Crash.” Mr. Haggis had been a member for 35 years. His [resignation letter](#), leaked to a defectors' Web site, recounted his indignation as he came to believe that the defectors' accusations must be true.

“These were not the claims made by ‘outsiders’ looking to dig up dirt against us,” Mr. Haggis wrote. “These accusations were made by top international executives who had devoted most of their lives to the church.”

Want more? go to:

<http://www.statesman.com/news/nation/scientologist-couples-odyssey-ends-in-schism-divorce-326316.html>

<http://www.xenu.net/>

<http://www.tampabay.com/specials/2009/reports/project/>

Scientology web site

<http://www.scientology.org/home.html>

The Gnostic Gospels

The 52 texts discovered in Nag Hammadi, Egypt include 'secret' gospels poems and myths attributing to Jesus sayings and beliefs which are very different from the New Testament. Scholar Elaine Pagels explores these documents and their implications.

In December 1945 an Arab peasant made an astonishing archeological discovery in Upper Egypt. Rumors obscured the circumstances of this find--perhaps because the discovery was accidental, and its sale on the black market illegal. For years even the identity of the discoverer remained unknown. One rumor held that he was a blood avenger; another, that he had made the find near the town of Naj 'Hammádi at the Jabal al-Táریف, a mountain honeycombed with more than 150 caves. Originally natural, some of these caves were cut and painted and used as grave sites as early as the sixth dynasty, some 4,300 years ago.

Thirty years later the discoverer himself, Muhammad 'Alí al-Sammán; told what happened. Shortly before he and his brothers avenged their father's murder in a blood feud, they had saddled their camels and gone out to the Jabal to dig for **sabakh**, a soft soil they used to fertilize their crops. Digging around a massive boulder, they hit a red earthenware jar, almost a meter high. Muhammad 'Alí hesitated to break the jar, considering that a **jinn**, or spirit, might live inside. But realizing that it might also contain gold, he raised his mattock, smashed the jar, and discovered inside thirteen papyrus books, bound in leather. Returning to his home in al-Qasr, Muhammad 'All dumped the books and loose papyrus leaves on the straw piled on the ground next to the oven. Muhammad's mother, 'Umm-Ahmad, admits that she burned much of the papyrus in the oven along with the straw she used to kindle the fire.

A few weeks later, as Muhammad 'Alí tells it, he and his brothers avenged their father's death by murdering Ahmed Isma'il. Their mother had warned her sons to keep their mattocks sharp: when they learned that their father's enemy was nearby, the brothers seized the opportunity, "hacked off his limbs . . . ripped out his heart, and devoured it among them, as the ultimate act of blood revenge."

Fearing that the police investigating the murder would search his house and discover the books, Muhammad 'Alí asked the priest, al-Qummus Basiliyus Abd al-Masih, to keep one or more for him. During the time that Muhammad 'Alí and his brothers were being interrogated for murder, Raghíb, a local history teacher, had seen one of the books, and suspected that it had value. Having received one from al-Qummus Basiliyus, Raghíb sent it to a friend in Cairo to find out its worth.

Sold on the black market through antiquities dealers in Cairo, the manuscripts soon attracted the attention of officials of the Egyptian government. Through circumstances of high drama, as we shall see, they bought one and confiscated ten and a half of the thirteen leather-bound books, called codices, and deposited them in the Coptic Museum in Cairo.

But a large part of the thirteenth codex, containing five extraordinary texts, was smuggled out of Egypt and offered for sale in America. Word of this codex soon reached Professor Gilles Quispel, distinguished historian of religion at Utrecht, in the Netherlands. Excited by the discovery,

Quispel urged the Jung Foundation in Zurich to buy the codex. But discovering, when he succeeded, that some pages were missing, he flew to Egypt in the spring of 1955 to try to find them in the Coptic Museum. Arriving in Cairo, he went at once to the Coptic Museum, borrowed photographs of some of the texts, and hurried back to his hotel to decipher them. Tracing out the first line,

Quispel was startled, then incredulous, to read: "These are the secret words which the living Jesus spoke, and which the twin, Judas Thomas, wrote down." Quispel knew that his colleague H.C. Puech, using notes from another French scholar, Jean Doresse, had identified the opening lines with fragments of a Greek **Gospel of Thomas** discovered in the 1890's.

But the discovery of the whole text raised new questions: Did Jesus have a twin brother, as this text implies? Could the text be an authentic record of Jesus' sayings? According to its title, it contained the **Gospel According to Thomas**; yet, unlike the gospels of the New Testament, this text identified itself as a **secret** gospel.

Quispel also discovered that it contained many sayings known from the New Testament; but these sayings, placed in unfamiliar contexts, suggested other dimensions of meaning. Other passages, Quispel found, differed entirely from any known Christian tradition: the "living Jesus," for example, speaks in sayings as cryptic and compelling as Zen koans: **Jesus said, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."**

What Quispel held in his hand, the **Gospel of Thomas**, was only one of the fifty-two texts discovered at Nag Hammadi (the usual English transliteration of the town's name). Bound into the same volume with it is the **Gospel of Philip**, which attributes to Jesus acts and sayings quite different from those in the New Testament:

. . . the companion of the [Savior is] Mary Magdalene. [But Christ loved] her more than [all] the disciples, and used to kiss her [often] on her [mouth]. The rest of [the disciples were offended] . . . They said to him, "Why do you love her more than all of us?" The Savior answered and said to them, "Why do I not love you as (I love) her?"

Other sayings in this collection criticize common Christian beliefs, such as the virgin birth or the bodily resurrection, as naïve misunderstandings. Bound together with these gospels is the **Apocryphon** (literally, "secret book") of **John**, which opens with an offer to reveal "the mysteries [and the] things hidden in silence" which Jesus taught to his disciple John.

From **The Gnostic Gospels**
by Elaine Pagels
Vintage Books, New York



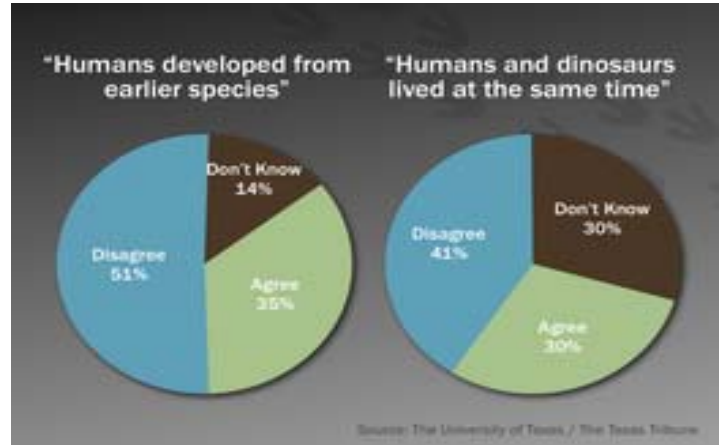
Elaine Pagels teaches religious history at Princeton

Proof that Neanderthals are not a vanished species

Nearly a third of Texans believe humans and dinosaurs roamed the earth at the same time, and more than half disagree with the theory that humans developed from earlier species of animals, according to the University of Texas/Texas Tribune Poll.

The differences in beliefs about evolution and the length of time that living things have existed on earth are reflected in the political and religious preference of our respondents, who were asked four questions about biological history and God:

- 38 percent said human beings developed over millions of years with God guiding the process and another 12 percent said that development happened without God having any part of the process. Another 38 percent agreed with the statement "God created human beings pretty much in their present form about 10,000 years ago."
- Asked about the origin and development of life on earth without injecting humans into the discussion, and 53 percent said it evolved over time, "with a guiding hand from God." They were joined by 15 percent who agreed on the evolution part, but "with no guidance from God." About a fifth — 22 percent — said life has existed in its present form since the beginning of time.
- Most of the Texans in the survey — 51 percent — disagree with the statement, "human beings, as we know them today, developed from earlier species of animals." Thirty-five percent agreed with that statement, and 15 percent said they don't know.
- Did humans live at the same time as the dinosaurs? Three in ten Texas voters agree with that statement; 41 percent disagree, and 30 percent don't know.
- The questions were devised by David Prindle, a University of Texas government professor who authored a book called *Stephen Jay Gould and the Politics of Evolution*, about the late evolutionary biologist. "The end in mind ... is to establish the relationships, not just to get raw public opinion," he says. "We can do some fancy statistical stuff. ... Is it religion driving politics or is politics driving religion? My hypothesis is that religious views drive politics."
- The most common religious denominations in the survey were Catholic and Baptist, with 20 percent each, followed by nondenominational Christians, at 10 percent, and Methodists, at 6 percent. Eight percent chose "spiritual but not religious," and 7 percent chose "other." Only 6 percent identified themselves as atheist or agnostic. An overwhelming majority said their religious beliefs were extremely important (52 percent) or somewhat important (30 percent). Only 35 percent go to church once a week or more; 52 percent said they go once or twice a year (29 percent) or never (23 percent).



The results recall a line from comedian Lewis Black. "He did a standup routine a few years back in which he said that a significant proportion of the American people think that the 'The Flintstones' is a documentary," Prindle says. "Turns out he was right. Thirty percent of Texans agree that humans and dinosaurs lived on the earth at the same time."

Obama's Faith-based initiative still on shaky 1st Amendment ground Susan Jacoby

In a widely publicized speech in July 2008, candidate Barack Obama pledged that "if you get a federal grant, you can't use that grant money to proselytize to the people you help and you can't discriminate against them--or against the people you hire--on the basis of their religion." President Obama has not kept that promise with his Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which has continued Bush administration policies of allowing religious groups to receive huge amounts of federal money while proselytizing and continuing to hire only members of their own faith.

This month, on the first anniversary of Obama's executive order establishing his new faith-based office, an ad hoc group called the [Coalition Against Religious Discrimination](#) wrote a formal letter to the president asking him to make good on his campaign promises and overturn the Bush-era regulations.

[The Coalition](#) includes a broad array of secular and religious organizations--among them Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Secular Coalition for America, the American Jewish Committee, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, B'nai B'rith International, and the United Sikhs. The letter urged the president to prohibit religious organizations from discrimination in hiring in federally funded social projects and ensure that those who turn to faith-based services are not subjected to unwanted proselytizing or religious activities as a condition of receiving aid.

This was an extremely mild letter, in view of the fact that these groups have waited patiently, and largely in silence, for more than a year and that the Obama administration could reverse the Bush rules today by executive order.

The Chilean Earthquake and God's Wrath

by Jeff Schweitzer Marine Biologist and Former Clinton White House Science Advisor

As the world reacts to the monstrous earthquake off the coast of Chile, one voice remains curiously quiet. Without Marion Gordon "Pat" Robertson to guide us, we are unable to decipher why god has caused this particular calamity.

According to religious prognosticators, sinners will suffer the wrath of god in the form of earthquakes as biblical punishment for their errant ways. The declarations and explanations of such divine calamities always come after the fact, but let us not have such annoying details get in our way.

Nobody is more out front in decoding god's will than Robertson; he declared that the devastating earthquake in Haiti was a consequence of Haitians making a pact with the devil. Robertson also believed that Hurricane Katrina was god's punishment for legalized abortion; and that Florida's weather woes are due to the state's support for Gay Days at Disneyland.

So we must therefore ask the great "broadcaster, humanitarian, author, Christian, businessman, statesman" from Lexington, Virginia, for what sins did the citizens of Anchorage, Alaska, suffer for the quake of 1964? I remember not any declaration of god's intent from that event. And now of course we must query Robertson on the divine meaning of the massive earthquake in Chile. Perhaps their sin is naming a country after a pepper, and then misspelling it.

These most recent efforts to interpret god's intent based on man's experience raises the question of how well we have done historically in predicting or deducing the divine plan. A favorite is to claim knowledge of the End of Days as a consequence of natural events. Predictions of the

Apocalypse or its equivalent have in fact been a common theme throughout history. But the record for accuracy is not particularly pretty. An error rate of 100% (after all, we are still here) should call into question the legitimacy of the enterprise, but alas, that is not the case. The likes of Pat Robertson never tire of pretending to know the mind of the infinite being conjured from their imagination. Let's see how we've fared over the past 150 years.

Xhosa Girl

In South Africa, in 1856, a young Xhosa girl went to fetch water at a local stream. There, she claimed to meet strangers from the spirit world. Excited, she returned with her uncle, Umhlokaza, who spoke with the same spirit world reps. From this encounter, Uncle Umhlokaza came back with an important message.

At the time of this ghostly meeting, the Xhosa tribe was battling the English. The spirits told Umhlokaza that to succeed in driving out the foreigners, his tribesman must kill every animal in their herds, and destroy every kernel of corn so carefully stored in their granaries. The spirits promised him that if his tribesman followed these instructions, heaven on earth would be theirs. Dead loved ones would return, fat cattle would rise from the earth, corn would sprout in abundance, sickness and troubles would be banished and the old would become young and beautiful again.

With such great promise, backed by the authority of the spirit world, Umhlokaza's orders were carried out, resulting in the slaughter of two thousand cattle and destruction of all grains. Instead of earthly paradise, the Xosa experienced a famine so deadly that the tribe nearly ceased to exist.

Branch Davidians

In 1990, a Houston teenager by the name of Vernon Wayne Howell moved to the sleepy wind-swept town of Waco after dropping out of high school. There he changed his name to David Koresh, explaining blandly that he was the reincarnation of both King David and King Cyrus of Persia. David did not stop there, further claiming he was in fact the Messiah, appointed by god to rebuild the Temple and destroy Babylon. At least 131 of Howell's Branch Davidians were convinced enough to ensconce themselves in his compound, yielding to him their daughters as young as 12 to be impregnated by the Messiah. That episode ended badly, as we all know.

Heaven's Gate

In 1997, 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult took their own lives, dying in shifts over a few days in late March. Some members helped others take a deadly mix of Phenobarbital and vodka before consuming their own poisonous cocktail. Why did these people die? Members of the cult believed the prophecy of Marshall Applewhite, who claimed that the comet Hale-Bopp was the long-awaited sign to shed their earthly bodies, which they called "containers." By leaving their containers behind, followers would be able to join a spacecraft traveling and hiding behind the comet, which would take them to a higher plane of existence.

Everybody outside of that cult would agree that the guy had a screw loose. But in fact, Applewhite had good precedent in broadly accepted religious lore. Gnostic Christians believed that Jesus not only knew about, but encouraged, Judas to betray him so that Judas "could sacrifice the man that clothes me." Jesus apparently wanted to shed his container. Either Jesus was crazy or Applewhite was not.

Credonia Mwerinde

In Uganda, in March 2000, somewhere between 200 and 500 members of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments committed suicide by setting fire to their church. The congregation apparently forgot about the commandment concerning "thou shall not kill." These people died because the sect anticipated the end of the world, expecting a visit by the Virgin Mary on the Friday they self-immolated. She never showed up. The prophet in this case was Credonia Mwerinde, a former prostitute.

Joseph Smith

In the early 1800s, in Palmyra, New York, a local boy claimed he could divine the location of ground water, as well as treasures buried by Indians. Persuasive as a snake-oil salesman, farmers paid him \$3, a princely sum then, to find buried riches on their land.

The boy, Joseph, used "magic stones" to discover the sites of this bounty. When he inevitably failed to find either water or treasure, he would leave town, often with "encouragement," and move on to other fee-based treasure-hunting activities.

After a particularly large and humiliating failure in the Susquehanna Valley, near Damascus, New York, Smith stayed on to court a local gal, Emma Hale, in spite of community accusations that he was a "charlatan." In the spring of 1826, a group of unhappy customers went further and brought formal charges against Joseph, claiming he was nothing but an imposter. He was subsequently convicted of "glass gazing," an outlawed form of fortune telling. Emma's dad, Isaac, was one of the duped treasure hunters who testified against Joseph, so he was not pleased by the courtship of his daughter by this convicted criminal.

He considered Joseph to be arrogant, fraudulent and lazy. Those who knew Joseph best claimed, "He could utter the most palpable exaggeration or marvelous absurdity with the utmost apparent gravity." Others said that Joseph was "in particular considered entirely destitute of moral character and addicted to vicious habits." But Joseph was persuasive to some, and Emma eloped with him in January 1827. To reconcile with his estranged father-in-law, Joseph promised to lead a more honest and honorable life, and to help Isaac on his farm.

Instead of working in the field, however, Isaac found Joseph spending all his time indoors. When he finally investigated, he discovered his son-in-law muttering long phrases from the Bible, with Emma sitting behind a curtain writing down Joseph's ramblings.

Joseph explained that he had found two ancient golden plates by digging in a spot to which he had been led by an angel. He claimed the plates were written in "reformed Egyptian." Fortunately, the two plates conveniently came with their own set of Rosetta stones, allowing him to translate the symbols to English, which explained his indoor activities. Joseph Smith was translating the ancient Book of Mormon.

The "ancient" part might be in question, though, since the book agitated against such contemporary institutions as Freemasons, and even Catholicism. Sadly, the plates mysteriously disappeared before the dates could be authenticated. In fact, Joseph declared that instant death would be the result for anybody but him looking at the golden plates.

Nobody but Joseph, the fraudulent diviner from Palmyra, ever saw the plates. Only through the tainted word of a convicted con man do people know of the existence and content of those disappeared golden tablets. So terribly odd that such a monumental discovery would be hidden and destroyed rather than proudly shown to the world to prove that god's word had been found at last.

Are the claims of Joseph Smith any less bizarre than those of Marshall Applewhite or David Koresh, different as those other prophets' ventures turned out? Without large numbers, Mormonism might be considered just another lunatic cult

as it was by many Americans in the 19th Century -- with a foundation little or no different from Heaven's Gate or the Branch Davidians. But the power of faith to overwhelm rational thought is not to be underestimated. Mormonism is now one of the fastest-growing religions in the world, with proselytizing missionaries pursuing their task with passion and zeal in every corner of the globe

William Miller

In 1831, or thereabouts, a minister by the name of William Miller began predicting the coming of Christ, based on his unique interpretation of the Bible. He started preaching his message of doom and redemption in New York (again!), but quickly made his way south and west. Some claim he gave over 3000 sermons on the advent of the end of the world. As a consequence of Miller's sermons, fifty thousand so-called Adventists waited for the end, predicted to occur in the summer of 1843. Many sold all their worldly possessions in anticipation of the big day. When the world kept on trucking, leaving the still-alive followers destitute and homeless, Miller claimed he had miscalculated the date, leaving tens of thousands of Adventists waiting anxiously, as their descendents still do today.

Jehovah's Witnesses

In 1966, the Jehovah's Witnesses predicted in *Life Everlasting in the Freedom of the Sons of God*, a book by the society's vice president Frederick Franz, that the world "six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975..." That prognostication must have caused some chagrin in 1976 when Armageddon was again delayed, particularly because leadership had encouraged members to sell their homes and property in 1974.

The failed prophecy of 1975 continued a long tradition started by Charles T. Russell, who founded the Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1879, he claimed that 1914 was the big year in which the world would be destroyed. When the year ended quietly, Russell changed the date to 1915. He died in 1916, when Joseph Franklin Rutherford took control of the organization. Upon taking the reins, Rutherford prophesied that in 1918 god would destroy churches and their members, and that by 1920 every "kingdom would be swallowed up in anarchy." As December 31 rolled around, he reset the date to 1925. We are still here.

With such an embarrassing history of failed predictions and miscues from reading god's intent from human experience, one would think Pat Robertson too chagrined to keep up the tradition. But no, like Miller, or Franz or Applewhite before him, Robertson believes he has a special phone line connected directly to god's chamber that gives him special insight. So we pause with bated breath to learn why god has decided to smite Chile; and we're still waiting to hear what grave sins the citizens of Anchorage committed to witness the land split apart in 1964. Pat, we're standing by.



Catch more of Jeff on:

<http://twitter.com/JeffSchweitzer>

Another Republican gay-bashing “family values” politician exposed!

Early Wednesday morning, (March 3, 2010) State Sen. Roy Ashburn (R-Calif.) was pulled over and arrested for drunk driving. Sources report that Ashburn -- a fierce opponent of gay rights -- was driving drunk after leaving a gay nightclub; when the officer stopped the state-issued vehicle, there was an unidentified man in the passenger seat of the car.



Ashburn has issued an apology for the incident:

"I am deeply sorry for my actions and offer no excuse for my poor judgment. I accept complete responsibility for my conduct and am prepared to accept the consequences for what I did. I am also truly sorry for the impact this incident will have on those who support and trusted me.

<http://www.kvsun.com/articles/2010/03/06/news/update/doc4b8eafddc03a8942593583.txt>

I met Charlie Crist last night

by Michael Middlebrooks on March 6th, 2010, 11:56 am

Last night as I was leaving a pizzeria in Downtown St. Pete, I ran into a small group of people around Florida Governor Charlie Crist who was campaigning for a US Senate run. So, I walked over waited a moment to gain his attention and shook his hand. As we were shaking hands I asked him if he really believes that the letters he sent to Jerusalem prevent hurricanes from hitting Florida.

His smile immediately dropped and he replied "Who's more powerful than God." That wasn't really an answer so asked him again to which I got a similar reply. While this was happening one of his people put a "Charlie Crist for US Senate 2010" sticker on me. Then when I told Charlie that I did not believe in God he turned beat red and ripped the sticker off of my chest. He did a 180 to start shaking other peoples hands, and turned to scream over his shoulder that he feels sorry for me.

I feel that Charlie Crist will not make a good senator. Apparently he has no interest in representing non religious constituents, in fact he does not even want their support (as evidenced by him removing the sticker from my person). He also feels no need to justify his belief that his letters can deflect hurricanes.

I urge everyone to consider this when voting in the 2010 senate



What a coincidence! - Someone with the same name as the president, born on the same day, and in Hawaii of all places. What are the odds?

CERTIFICATION OF LIVE BIRTH

STATE OF HAWAII
HONOLULU

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
HAWAII U.S.A.

CERTIFICATE NO. [REDACTED]

CHILD'S NAME
BARACK HUSSEIN OBAMA II

DATE OF BIRTH
August 4, 1961

HOUR OF BIRTH
7:24 PM

SEX
MALE

CITY, TOWN OR LOCATION OF BIRTH
HONOLULU

ISLAND OF BIRTH
OAHU

COUNTY OF BIRTH
HONOLULU

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME
STANLEY ANN DUNHAM

MOTHER'S RACE
CAUCASIAN

FATHER'S NAME
BARACK HUSSEIN OBAMA

FATHER'S RACE
AFRICAN

DATE FILED BY REGISTRAR
August 8, 1961

OHIM 1.1 (Rev. 11/01) LASER This copy serves as prima facie evidence of the fact of birth in any court proceeding. (HRS 336-13(b), 336-19)

ANY ALTERATIONS INVALIDATE THIS CERTIFICATE

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