



**The Ft Worth Humanists meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. The gathering site is the Unitarian/Universalist Building 901 Page Ave. Prior to the meeting, several of us dine at Luby's Cafeteria, 2800 8th Ave. at 5:30 P M. All are welcome to join us!**

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## Bigoted Ford dealership isn't actually sorry for its non-Christians "should sit down and shut up" ads

Remember Kieffe & Sons, the California Ford dealership that ran a radio ad saying that they were Christians, and non-believers could therefore "sit down and shut up" and stop demanding separation of church and state?

Remember how they apologized for saying this really dumb thing? They take it back.

The owner of the dealership says that he was forced to issue the apology by Ford, and he doesn't stand behind it, and he only issued it to appease "blog-lo-dites."

"I don't regret the sentiment at all," said Kieffe, who bought the 48-year-old dealership from his father in 1974. "It's what we believe."

Kieffe & Sons has sites in Mojave and Rosamond.

The dealer's Web site Thursday bore a statement about the ad that included an apology "to all who were offended."

Kieffe said he'd been contacted by Ford Motor Co. after the manufacturer heard complaints from numerous "blog-lo-dites."

Remember, this guy doesn't actually attend church

## Teen from faith healing family dies at home

GLADSTONE, Ore. — A 16-year-old boy whose parents rely on prayer instead of medical care has died following an illness marked by stomach pains and shortness of breath, authorities said.

Officers and a deputy medical examiner were called to the family's house about an hour after the boy's death late Tuesday afternoon, said Sgt. Lynne Benton of the Gladstone Police Department. Gladstone is located south of Portland.

Benton said the boy was surrounded by family when he died and a board member of the Followers of Christ church contacted the authorities.

The boy got sick about a week ago and — like all members of the religious order — did not receive medical attention. His condition worsened Sunday and members of the church gathered for prayer, Benton said.

An autopsy is planned.

In March, the boy's 15-month-old cousin, Ava Worthington, died at home from bronchial pneumonia and a blood infection. Her parents, Carl and Raylene Worthington, also failed to contact a doctor and are awaiting trial on criminal charges in her death.

No arrests have been made in the latest case, but the information will be forwarded to the Clackamas County District Attorney's Office for review, Benton said.

Oregon lawmakers passed new laws striking down legal shields for faith healing parents after several children from the Followers of Christ church died in the 1990s.

## Small group is fueled by faith to pray for lower gas prices

Excerpted from the Toledo Blade June 21, 2008

As cars surged steadily down McCord Road, a familiar melody rose from the circle of people beside the gas pumps at the Exxon-Mobil station on the corner of Hill Avenue.

"He's got the gas prices, in His hands. He's got the gas prices, in His hands ..."

Heads bowed and hands clasped, Rocky Twyman and the congregants of his small worship session hoped to do what the country's leaders haven't: Put an end to the steep increase in national fuel prices.

"God is telling us to stop depending on ourselves so much and trust in Him," said Mr. Twyman, founder of Pray at the Pump. "Bush can't solve this. McCain and Obama are not going to be able to solve this."

Paul Aduba, pastor of Toledo's Anglican Church of the Pentecost, feels that Mr. Twyman's mission provides an valuable opportunity to put beliefs into practice.

"The problem with this country is called microwave Christianity," Mr. Aduba said. "You put it in, two minutes, it's done. Nobody wants to toil. Nobody wants to pray."

Before the prayer, the Rev. Mike Fortune, pastor at Toledo's First Seventh-day Adventist church, drove congregants in a lap around the station. The enthusiasm in the van was palpable.

"Diesel?" he asked. "OK!" the others responded. And they were off, filing out of the van in a chorus of whoops and shouts.

The event drew a diverse crowd of about 15 people, the "largest group yet," according to Mr. Fortune.

Some worshipers wore shirts with messages that read: "The church has left the building.

Gone outreaching." Some were parents with teenagers or small children in tow. Some were in town from as far away as Washington.

"We know You love us like crazy, Lord. We just ask in Your name if You will work and intervene," said Mr. Fortune, as he looked toward the sky. "We also want You to bless this gas station and its owners."

As Mr. Fortune spoke, the crowd erupted into "Amen" and other murmurs of approval. Mr. Aduba rocked on his heels.

Michael Hood of Holland was driving home after picking up his son from summer school when he saw people clustered at a gas station. He had read about the Prayer at the Pump movement and decided to join in.

"I truly believe that the people who are behind this - big gas companies and so forth - don't care about the people. It's just about how much money they can make, and how far they can push gas prices before there is a public outcry," he said.

While the group prayed, two trucks pulled up to the pumps. The drivers left without filling their tanks with gas.

"I just lost a diesel sale, so I'm not happy about that," said an employee of the gas station, who asked not to be named. "The owner said he would love to lower gas prices, but those people really need to target the corporations. It's the refineries, not us."

Yesterday the price of gas at several Toledo-area stations hit \$4.09 a gallon. The national average for regular fuel was \$4.075 a gallon, according to AAA. Since Mr. Twyman's project began in April, the price of gas has climbed rather than declining.

Ed note: Another example of the power of prayer . . . . amen

## Although a majority of Americans say religion is very important to

**them**, nearly three-quarters of them say they believe that many faiths besides their own can lead to salvation, according to a survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

The report, titled [U.S. Religious Landscape Survey](#), reveals a broad trend toward tolerance and an ability among many Americans to hold beliefs that might contradict the doctrines of their professed faiths.

For example, 70 percent of Americans affiliated with a religion or denomination said they agreed that “many religions can lead to eternal life,” including majorities among Protestants and Catholics. Among evangelical Christians, 57 percent agreed with the statement, and among Catholics, 79 percent did.

Among minority faiths, more than 80 percent of Jews, Hindus and Buddhists agreed with the statement, and more than half of Muslims did.

The findings seem to undercut the conventional wisdom that the more religiously committed people are, the more intolerant they are, scholars who reviewed the survey said.

“It’s not that Americans don’t believe in anything,” said Michael Lindsay, assistant director of the Center on Race, Religion and Urban Life at [Rice University](#). “It’s that we believe in everything. We aren’t religious purists or dogmatists.”

The survey confirms findings from previous studies that the most religiously and politically conservative Americans are those who attend worship services most frequently, and that for them, the battles against abortion and gay rights remain touchstone issues.

“At least at the time of the surveys in 2007, cultural issues played a role in political affiliation, and economic issues less so,” said John C. Green, an author of the report and a senior fellow on religion and American politics at Pew.

“It suggests that the efforts of Democrats to peel away Republican and conservative voters based on economic issues face a real limit because of the role these cultural issues play.”

The survey, which is based on telephone interviews with more than 35,000 Americans from May 8 to Aug. 13, 2007, is the second installment of a broad assessment Pew has undertaken of trends and characteristics of the country’s religious life. The first part of the report, published in February, depicted a fluid and diverse national religious life marked by people moving among denominations and faiths.

According to that report, more than a quarter of adult Americans have left the faith of their childhood to join another religion or no religion. Every denomination and religion lost and gained members, but the survey indicated that the group that had the greatest net gain was the unaffiliated. Sixteen percent of American adults say they are not part of any organized faith, which makes the unaffiliated the country’s fourth-largest “religious group.”

The new report sheds light on the beliefs of the unaffiliated. Like the overwhelming majority of Americans, 70 percent of the unaffiliated said they believed in God, including one of every five people who identified themselves as atheist and more than half of those who identified as agnostic.

“What does atheist mean? It may mean they don’t believe in God, or it could be that they are hostile to organized religion,” Mr. Green said. “A lot of these unaffiliated people, by some measures, are fairly religious, and then there are those who are affiliated with a religion but don’t believe in God and identify instead with history or holidays or communities.”

The most significant contradictory belief the survey reveals has to do with salvation.

(Continued on page 4)

Previous surveys have shown that Americans think a majority of their countrymen and women will go to heaven, and that the circle is wide, embracing minorities like Jews, Muslims and atheists. But the Pew survey goes further, showing that such views are held by those within major branches of Christianity and minority faiths, too.

Scholars said such tolerance could stem in part from the greater diversity of American society: that there are more people of minority faiths or no faith and that "it is hard to hold a strongly sectarian view when you work together and your kids play soccer together," Mr. Lindsay said.

But such a view of salvation may also grow out of doctrinal ignorance, scholars said.

"It could be that people are not very well educated and they are not expressing mature theological points of view," said Todd Johnson, director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. "It could also be a form of bland secularism. The real challenge to religious leaders is not to become more entrenched in their views, but to navigate the idea of what their religion is all about and how it relates to others."

As past surveys have shown, this report found that Americans who prayed more frequently and attended worship services more often tended to be more conservative and "somewhat more Republican" than other people. Majorities of Mormons and evangelicals say they are conservative, compared with 37 percent of Americans over all. (Twenty percent say they are liberal, and 36 percent say moderate.)

## **Dobson accuses Obama of 'distorting' Bible June 23, 2008**

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) - As Barack Obama broadens his outreach to evangelical voters, one of the movement's biggest names, James Dobson, accuses the likely Democratic presidential nominee of distorting the Bible and pushing a "fruitcake interpretation" of the Constitution.

The criticism, to be aired Tuesday on Dobson's Focus on the Family radio program, comes shortly after an Obama aide suggested a meeting at the organization's headquarters here, said Tom Minnery, senior vice president for government and public policy at Focus on the Family.

The conservative Christian group provided The Associated Press with an advance copy of the pre-taped radio segment, which runs 18 minutes and highlights excerpts of a speech Obama gave in June 2006 to the liberal Christian group Call to Renewal. Obama mentions Dobson in the speech.

"Even if we did have only Christians in our midst, if we expelled every non-Christian from the United States of America, whose Christianity would we teach in the schools?" Obama said. "Would we go with James Dobson's or Al Sharpton's?" referring to the civil rights leader.

Dobson took aim at examples Obama cited in asking which Biblical passages should guide public policy - chapters like Leviticus, which Obama said suggests slavery is OK and eating shellfish is an abomination, or Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, "a passage that is so radical that it's doubtful that our own Defense Department would survive its application."

"Folks haven't been reading their Bibles," Obama said.

Dobson and Minnery accused Obama of wrongly equating Old Testament texts and dietary codes that no longer apply to Jesus' teachings in the New Testament.

"I think he's deliberately distorting the traditional understanding of the Bible to fit his own worldview, his own confused theology," Dobson said.

"... He is dragging biblical understanding through the gutter."

Dobson reserved some of his harshest criticism for Obama's argument that the religiously motivated must frame debates over issues like abortion not just in their own religion's terms.

## **Louisiana passes first anti-evolution “Academic freedom” Law.**

A number of states have been considering laws that, under the guise of "academic freedom," single out evolution for special criticism. Most of them haven't made it out of the state legislatures, and one that did was promptly vetoed. But the last of these bills under consideration, the Louisiana Science Education Act (LSEA), was enacted by the signature of Governor Bobby Jindal yesterday. The bill would allow local school boards to approve supplemental classroom materials specifically for the critique of scientific theories, allowing poorly-informed board members to stick their communities with Dover sized legal fees.

The text of the LSEA suggests that it's intended to foster critical thinking, calling on the state Board of Education to "assist teachers, principals, and other school administrators to create and foster an environment within public elementary and secondary schools that promotes critical thinking skills, logical analysis, and open and objective discussion of scientific theories." Unfortunately, it's remarkably selective in its suggestion of topics that need critical thinking, as it cites scientific subjects "including, but not limited to, evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning."

Oddly, the last item on the list is not the subject of any scientific theory; the remainder are notable for being topics that are the focus of frequent political controversies rather than scientific ones.

The bill has been opposed by every scientific society that has voiced a position on it, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science. AAAS CEO Alan Leshner warned that the bill would "unleash an assault against scientific integrity, leaving students confused about science and unprepared to excel in a modern workforce."

Jindal, who was a biology major during his time at Brown University, even received a veto plea from his former genetics professor.

"Without evolution, modern biology, including medicine and biotechnology, wouldn't make sense," Professor Arthur Landy wrote. "I hope he [Jindal] doesn't do anything that would hold back the next generation of Louisiana's doctors."

Courts in Pennsylvania and Georgia have both ruled that laws which single out evolution serve no secular purpose and are evidence of unconstitutional religious motivations. Those precedents, however, do not apply to Louisiana, and it's possible that the LSEA will either be ruled constitutional or remain in force for years before a court rejects it. That will leave the use of supplemental scientific material to be determined by local school boards in the intervening years and, if boards in Florida are viewed as evidence, they are likely to be spectacularly incapable of judging scientific issues.

In vetoing similar legislation in Oklahoma, Governor Brad Henry suggested it would end up "subjecting them [school officials] to an explosion of costly and protracted litigation that would have to be defended at taxpayers' expense." In essence, Jindal is inviting local school boards to partake in that explosion without committing the state to paying the inevitable costs.

## **Can't Darwin and God get along?**

Of course they can, argues physicist and theologian Karl Giberson, if only many believers were more sophisticated and atheists less dogmatic.

July 1, 2008 | With biologist [Richard Dawkins](#) leading the way, many scientists today are locked in an unending match of whack-a-mole with Christian creationists, who insist that God created heaven, earth and humanity in its present form, and with disciples of intelligent design who want to expel evolution from its scientific prominence in public schools. If you've been following the battle, you might be inclined to believe that Americans are faced with a choice between believing in God and scientific fact..

(continued on page 6)

In his new book, "[Saving Darwin: How to Be a Christian and Believe in Evolution.](#)" + Karl Giberson calls this a false choice. A professor of physics at Eastern Nazarene College, and director of the Forum on Faith and Science at Gordon College, Giberson believes in evolutionary theory as adamantly as he does in God. For Giberson, evolution and Christianity are not in competition but complement one another.

Holding equal disdain for creationists who read the Bible literally and scientists who disregard God altogether, Giberson seeks a middle way, and attempts to resuscitate Darwin's reputation as both a religious man and a scientist. In conversation, Giberson possesses a boundless inquisitiveness typical of many scientists, but also displays the wry wit of a seasoned polemicist. He seems to know how to counteract your best arguments before you have even made them.

#### **Why does Darwin need to be saved?**

He has been vilified in American evangelical culture and even more broadly than that. Yet his important contribution to science reaches into theology and religion, and so it's important to rehabilitate him so that you can't simply call something Darwinist and have people say, "Oooo, that smells bad."

#### **Why do misconceptions about Darwin persist?**

Because in the latter part of the 20th century, evolution became identified with negative social agendas, and some very effective polemicists like [Henry Morris](#) and [Ken Ham](#) convinced people that evolution was responsible for the breakdown of the family and drug abuse and all manners of evil. Christians who tend to see satanic or sinister influences behind those things were only too ready to demonize Darwin and say he had an agenda to destroy their faith. In their eyes, Darwinism destroyed belief in God the creator.

For more cut and paste:

[http://www.salon.com/books/atoms\\_edden/2008/07/01/saving\\_darwin/index.html](http://www.salon.com/books/atoms_edden/2008/07/01/saving_darwin/index.html)

**This will be my final effort at editing your newsletter. I've enjoyed my run, but it's time for someone else to take over the reins.**

**Ray**

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