

http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/willis_e_elliott/2007/10/ants_are_not_bugs.html

"Ants are not bugs!"

ON FAITH - WASHINGTON POST - WILLIS ELLIOTT

Preachers are indignant *against* what offends what they *refor*. I felt that indignation in E.O.Wilson when I heard him snort, "Ants are not bugs!" It's the first thing I thought of when I read the new "On Faith" question:

"In his 'letter to a Southern Baptist pastor,' biosociologist E.O.Wilson warns: 'An alliance between science and religion, forged in an atmosphere of mutual respect, may be the only way to protect life on earth.' Is such an alliance necessary? Possible?"

Next, I thought of *another* Southern Baptist—Al Gore—as a Nobel Peace Prize winner for protecting life on earth. Then I remembered two other Baptists of the South who were awarded Nobel Peace Prizes as fighters for human dignity: Martin Luther King Jr. and Jimmy Carter. And I recalled that Wilson himself has a Southern Baptist background. And that Roger Williams, who founded Rhode Island, the only state of the United States to be founded on complete religious freedom, was a Baptist preacher. And I remembered the influence of the Baptists on Thomas Jefferson, resulting in the Virginia declaration of religious liberty, the predecessor of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. And I recalled Jefferson's letter to Connecticut Baptists, from which we got the phrase "the separation of church and state." And I remembered that Baptist vision and money founded the University of Chicago, whose faculty has been awarded more Nobel Prizes than any other institution. (What's with these Baptists?)

Back to the indignation of ex-Southern-Baptist E.O.Wilson. At age 9, he discovered that an ant is a world, not a bug. In the Christian language of his people, an ant is a creature, not a thing. And I've no doubt that he sang this Sunday school song dignifying all creatures: "All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small; all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all."

"An ant is not a bug!" It is a creature with the dignity and "grandeur" of its origin in the mind and hands of "the Creator." In that sentence, I italicized "grandeur" and "the Creator" because they occur in the last paragraph of the first edition of Darwin's THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES. When in subsequent editions "the Creator" was dropped, "grandeur" was weakened. Heaven became only the sky, creation became only nature, creatures became only things, *ants became only bugs*.

But **grandeur** is a word Wilson prizes. We cannot save our fragile planet from "the sixth extinction" without a new convergence and cooperation between heart and mind, religion and science. In CONSILIENCE: The Unity of Knowledge (1998), he said "as empiricism is winning the mind, transcendence continues to win the heart." For the sense of grandeur, "people need a sacred narrative" (such as the Bible provides). Wilson believes that if written with sufficient poetic force, "an evolutionary epic" might provide the needed grandeur. No scientist since Darwin has done more for grandeur than he, the coiner of the word and the developer of the discipline of "sociobiology."

But now Preacher Wilson, after full expression of his indignation that in our culture ants have lost their grandeur and are only bugs, tells us that planetary degradation will soon reach its Armageddon stage. Repent, you eco-hell-bound sinners, for devastation is soon (within 40 years) upon us! He concludes his sermon with hope for a saving, grandeur-producing "alliance between science and religion, forged in an atmosphere of mutual respect."

Mutual respect. When Wilson and theologian Harvey Cox began their 40-year careers of teaching at Harvard, on Sunday mornings the five churches and the chapel near Harvard Yard were empty: no respect for religion. Now, those churches are full! Not that Harvard faculty and students have got religion and gone fundamentalist; but there's a new openness to religion, in Wilson's phrase "the theology of the searchers." Describing himself as "a provisional Deist," he says "some creative force determined the parameters of the universe when it began," and a "prime mover" is "likely." A course repeatedly taught by Cox and Stephen Jay Gould (the wistful agnostic who gave us "punctuated evolution") was consistently mobbed.

Enjoy the *irony*. The louder the shouting of the religion-hating "new atheists," the greater the "mutual respect" between religion and science, whose converging is producing a new grandeur. Wilson is especially impressed with the rising eco-concern among evangelical Christians, and called Ed Brown's OUR FATHERS WORLD (2007) "a beautiful and inspiring book." Care for the creation is an implicate of belief in creation. Long ago Wordsworth put the hope this way: "Let knowledge grow from more to more but more of reverence in us dwell; that heart and mind, according well, may make one music as before, but vaster."

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 25, 2007; 9:32 AM

Comments

Please report offensive comments below.

Yes Dr Elliott

I echo Yoyo's appreciation of your engagement and your erudition.

There will continue to be many things we see differently, but...

Good contest. Well parried.

Henry

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | OCTOBER 31, 2007 8:40 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Elliott;

Thanks for your last response...I appreciate it,
and will be re-reading and reflecting on it..

I like the way you take us atheists on.

You're quite a guy, and very smart.

Respectfully...yoyo

POSTED BY: YOYO | OCTOBER 30, 2007 11:33 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

HENRY JAMES:

No, I did not slap at "scientific materialism." Materialism is philosophy, not science. My phrase was "dogmatic materialism." That is the "authoritarian and arrogant" teaching that reality = matter PERIOD! It's an instance of what logic calls the nothing-but fallacy. This reductionist philosophy has enslaved science-as-currently-taught, so (e.g.) we have pop-articles on the human mind as nothing but the brain in action (an unscientific, unprovable, chicken-&-egg assumption: neither philosophy nor science is competent to say which came first, mind or matter).

Real science opposes this narrow-minded dogmatism (which I call fundamentalism on the left). Yes, matter FLOWS (Big Bang, geology, bio-evolution); but humanity also REACHES beyond matter for the transcendent, for the beyond, for the more-than--the traditional word for the reaching & the reached-for being "spirit." (So in my booktitle, FLOW OF FLESH, REACH OF SPIRIT.)

Philosophically, THEISM is the belief in the consciousness-continuity between us reachers & the reached-for. "God" is the traditional word for this reached-for: God and we are personal.

("Personal" is the traditional word for consciousness in self-awareness.) Theism & materialism are irreconcilable.

Not so with ATHEISMS. All atheisms, including Buddhism, are compatible with materialism. So why wouldn't the practioners of scientism be comfortable with Buddhism (at M.I.T. or anywhere else)? Furthermore, many scientists not captive to dogmatic materialism go along with scientific pronouncements: all dogmatists, regdless of their dogma, are intolerant of dissent. Today, scientism is regnant; I hope science (in nonarrogant, humble, "mutual respect" with religion) will be regnant tomorrow.

Finally, I agree with you that my "respondents here have been of high intelligence, well above average learning, and generally sound reasoning."

Your impression that I thought otherwise derives from two additional facts: (1) My respondents are, in comparison with me, generally ignorant of religion (in which I have five earned degrees, including two doctorates); (2) The conversation is on my home-field: the "On Faith" blog's subject is religion. I assume that when I participate in conversations on blogs other than religion, my ignorance shows. (Nothing wrong with being ignorant unless one denies or tries to conceal it.)

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 30, 2007 4:23 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

YOYO:

You should get out more into the real world where religion is both creatively & destructively (9/11 & all that) on the increase.

In the real world, people do not have the love affair with science that you have. God gave us humans the power to doubt as well as to believe, & more & more people have doubts as to whether science is more good news than bad. For example, without the workings of science, the world would not be facing the nuclear threat (which increasingly distorts domestic & global politics) or the population bomb, which within 40 years (E.O.Wilson says) may have done irreparable damage to the biosphere.

Get that? Not some millennialist carrying a sign reading "THE END IS NEAR!" But a scientist in effect wondering whether science will turn out, on balance, to have been more bad news than good.

As you know, Christopher Hitchen's latest book is in effect carrying a sign reading "RELIGION IS POISON!" Facing the two bombs (nuclear & population), can you not see that the rational content of a sign reading "SCIENCE IS POISON!" competes well with Hitchen's sign?

And when the first nuke explodes in the U.S.A., you're going to see many carriers of the "SCIENCE IS POISON!" sign. Your sunny view of the future of science is, well, "silly."

Now you know why I put "silly" in quotation marks. I picked it up from your phrase "silly supernatural nonsense." It's a game two can play. Hitchens lost his cool & exploded when (in his 10.22.07 King's College debate with Dinesh D'Souza) he was accused of silly supernatural nonsense.

As for Wilson, he'd not want to partner with you. He's appealing for "mutual respect" between science & religion, & you're back there with those who hold religion in "contempt" (as your post implicitly admits). In your attitude, you even predate A.D.White's 1896 two-volume THE WARFARE OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION WITHIN CHRISTENDOM: he said the warfare should be over.

Recently (2001), R.J.Coleman made an advance on White by use of the analogy of sibling rivalry: COMPETING TRUTHS: Theology and Science as Sibling Rivals. And last week on "On Faith," Rabbi A.Steinsaltz said it simply & splendidly (to get it, click on "All Panelists").

Your last sentence--"Long live science, and common sense."--is close to a 1793 "Terrorist" French Revolutionary slogan. From that irrational-antireligious "common sense," we got the word "terrorism." The idea that we could get rid of terrorism by getting rid of religion is, well, "silly."

BETTY:

We both love the OED, which you claim gives a bad name to "dogmatic." But that is only after the first three meanings, which are positive. The negative connotation comes in 4A: "asserting dogmas or opinions in an authoritative or arrogant manner."

An atheist Buddhist, you say that you "do not have respect" for opinions you judge to be "absurd, unjust, superstitious, medieval..." Since you render that judgment immediately after mentioning your atheism, I take it that that judgment includes my theism....

...in which case I must say to you what I just said to Yo-Yo: E.O.Wilson couldn't use you as a partner in his appeal for "mutual respect" between science & religion.

You are incorrect in saying that I applied the term "dogmatic" "to those who criticize fundamental religionists." I am in the category of those who criticize fundamental religionists, but I'm not "dogmatic" about it. But I did/do claim that dogmatic materialism is fundamentalism on the left, with the parallel narrow mindset, "authoritative and arrogant" (to use the OED's words).

To see this mindset, one need only read the (1933) Humanist Manifesto, which aimed to capture American public education for scientism in the form of evolutionism (which is, expressly, the dogmatic-materialist version of evolution). The fact that this aim has been largely realized makes it difficult for people like you to recognize dogmatic materialism when you see it: a fish doesn't know it's in water.

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 30, 2007 1:29 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Blaming the Audience

Dr Elliot is correct that he has received something less than universal approbation in this discussion.

If I were he, I would adopt his tactic as well: "my audience is just not well-educated enough to understand and appreciate the erudition and wisdom in my position" I would say, as Dr Elliot has essentially said.

Hogwash.

Dr Elliot's respondents here have been of high intelligence, well above average learning, and generally sound reasoning.

It is Dr Elliot's positions that are lacking in intellectual, spiritual, and moral force.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | OCTOBER 30, 2007 10:59 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Ironies of Spirituality

Dr Elliot's slap at "scientific materialism" was made in a crack to Betty, who informs us that she is a Buddhist.

Buddhism is probably to most highly evolved spiritual *discipline* in the world, and over 2,500 years old. And greatly respected by the neuroscientists at MIT and elsewhere.

The Baptist religion is medieval by comparison, even though it is much younger.

The last thing one needs for spiritual development is Christianity.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | OCTOBER 30, 2007 10:55 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Elliot
your backhand slap at Dogmatic Materialism is silly.

The overwhelming majority of scientists, and the overwhelming number of educated non scientists who read science, are anything but dogmatic in any sense of the word (that is, if you use the OED as I do).

It is sloppy to reflexively apply the term to those who criticise fundamentalist religionists.

POSTED BY: BETTY | OCTOBER 30, 2007 10:22 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Elliot

sorry to disappoint you,
but I am a Buddhist
and therefore, as did the Buddha
I do not believe in a supernatural God.

As a Buddhist, I have loving kindness towards all of my fellow humans. Many ideas held by humans are absurd, unjust, superstitious, medieval. I do not have respect for those ideas or practices.

Buddhists (and atheistic scientists and secular humanists) are just as moral, and promote moral societies, at LEAST as well as believers do.

POSTED BY: BETTY | OCTOBER 30, 2007 10:11 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Willis

You say;

"Too bad: most of the comments on my column have been part of the problem rather than part of the solution: they have shown contempt for religion".

Well doesn't that tell you something?

It should tell you that the world is changing, agnosticism and atheism is on the rise. Religion is seen as silly supernatural nonsense by a growing number of people.

In the real world this is becoming obvious. As you live in an environment surrounded by religion, you assume religion is everywhere. This is not true.

You should get out more. People have had enough of supernatural claptrap.

Religion has outlived its usefulness. Long live science, and common sense.

POSTED BY: YOYO | OCTOBER 30, 2007 9:56 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

BETTY:

All fundamentalisms, including scientism (dogmatic materialism) are unworthy of intellectual respect (though a particular fundamentalist may be, in nonintellectual ways, worthy of respect; & every human being is worthy of respect for the dignity of being "made in the image of God").

Do you agree?

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 29, 2007 11:30 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

in response to Dr Elliot's spurious claim that science is a child of Christianity, here is Pam's post on another column:

May I suggest a book for anyone who thinks that science is a Western invention - or even arose from the golden age of Grecian thought?

Read Dick Teresi's "Lost Discoveries - the Multicultural Roots of Modern Science from the Babylonians to the Maya."

I think you'll find it eye opening.

Here's the publisher's synopsis:

"In the tradition of Daniel Boorstin, the co-founder of Omni delivers an original work of history that demonstrates why modern science rests on a foundation built by ancient and medieval non-European societies.

Lost Discoveries explores the mostly unheralded scientific breakthroughs from the ancient world - Babylonians, Egyptians, Indians, Africans, New World, and Oceanic tribes, among others, and from the non-European medieval world. By example, the Egyptians developed the concept of the lowest common denominator and the Indians developed the use of zero and negative numbers. The Chinese observed, reported, and dated eclipses between 1400 and 1200 B.C. The Chinese also set the stage for later Hindu scholars, who refined the concept of particles and the void. Five thousand years ago, Sumerians were able to assert that the earth was circular. Islamic scientists fixed problems in Ptolemy's geocentric cosmology. The Quechuan Indians of Peru were the first to vulcanize rubber.

This first comprehensive, authoritative, popularly written, multicultural history of science fills in a crucial gap in the history of science."

POSTED BY: HJ | OCTOBER 29, 2007 11:22 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

deserves Opprobrium
for her typo "oppobrium".

POSTED BY: BETTY... | OCTOBER 29, 2007 10:33 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Elliot

Many elements of many religions are worthy of "mutual respect."

Many elements of many religions are worthy of opprobrium.

The Southern Baptist Convention is frequently deserving of the latter.

Should we show respect for:

1. a deliberate ignorance of the science on environmental threats, and a corresponding disdain for science.
2. the dismissal of evolution as just a fantasy, and as the cause of moral relativism.
3. the ignorant, bigoted, and unjust attitudes towards gays that the SBLC fosters.
4. the firm belief on the part of 80% of fundamentalist Christians that the earth was created 6,000 years ago.

The SBLC is certainly entitled to their medieval attitudes and practices. Those attitudes are not entitled to respect in the modern world, any more than the sacrifice of virgins or the practice of slavery is entitled to respect in the modern world.

Intelligent and humane people like Henry and myself respect enlightened believers, and feel that the ignorant attitudes mentioned above constitute a serious threat to our country and the world, and must be fought vigorously. You may call that contempt for religion. It is not contempt for Unitarians or enlightened Episcopalians and reform Jews. But it is sincere fear of the awful consequences of medieval religious attitudes and practices.

POSTED BY: BETTY | OCTOBER 29, 2007 10:05 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

HENRY:

Sorry! Checking, I found it was (Jon Donovan said) Waldo who said religion is on the wane.

You missed my point. You said it was that "the poetic expression of Grandeur will heighten motivation to save the earth." I repeat what I said (in my column's final paragraph): The convergence between religion and science "is producing a new grandeur." The convergence, of course, requires the "mutual respect" Wilson mentions in his letter to the Baptist preacher. Also in my last paragraph, I show that Wilson exhibits respect, from the science side, in calling an evangelical statement of eco-concern "a beautiful and inspiring book."

HJ:

You & Henry have the impression that religion's waxing is only among the less-educated. Two astonishing things about China just now is the steep increase in science & the fact that in the past score of years, the Christian population of China has increased tenfold.

Since science is a product of Christian civilization, we shouldn't be surprised at the simultaneous appearance of those two facts about China today.

Christianity teaches that since God's mind appears in what he has made--the deeper truth about nature is that as the Creator's work, it is "creation"--(1) we Christians are motivated to study the world as an exploration into God's mind (see Romans 1:20 in the New Testament); (2) since the human mind is a creation of God within the whole creation, we Christians believe in the continuity between the human mind & the rest of creation: the human mind is competent to explore & understand "nature" & use the resultant knowledge; (3) since we have discovered that at least one structural component of creation-nature is mathematics, the continuity principle leads us to conclude that mathematics is one aspect of the mind of God; (4) the Bible calls on us to worship God with all our mind, so science is one form of worship; (5) the Bible says God intends our joy, which is a major motivation in science (so, as I've said, Darwin in the last paragraph of his first edition associates "the Creator" with science's experience of "grandeur" in nature-creation). (To feel this grandeur, you might read THE LANGUAGE OF GOD by the head of the Genome Project, Francis Collins. The book includes the account of his conversion from atheism to Christianity.)

BETTY:

Today's scientists have been miseducated to believe that there are "laws" in nature, so no one should believe in a personal deity who violates those "laws" to "answer" prayer by "miracles." ("Answer" is Leuba's 1914 verb). The great modern philosophers of science reject that anthropo-metaphor ("laws" being a term for human politics). Science can speak only of "regularities," which are open to exceptions & interruptions.

Further, today's scientists have been miseducated to believe that (as Christopher Hitchens cutely puts what he also believes), "the absence of evidence is the evidence of absence": since there's no scientifically acceptable evidence of God, no god. In his 10.22.07 King's College debate with Hitchens, Dineesh D'Souza showed how ludicrously arrogant is the illogic of that sentence.

If the polls on what scientists believe were read in the light of scientists' miseducation, new & more sophisticated questions could be asked with the possibility of their producing quite different results.

In the meantime, our culture faces a tragic, unnecessary standoff. The less scientists believe in religion, the less the American people (some 90% religious) believe in science. For example, more Americans believe in the virgin birth of Jesus than believe in evolution.

Stupidly, scientism (the materialist philosophy taught in our public schools) is shooting science in the foot. Scientism is doing a good job of showing disrespect & even contempt for religion, & religion has been returning the compliment. That is the basic situation which motivated E.O. Wilson to write that letter to that Baptist preacher.

Too bad: most of the comments on my column have been part of the problem rather than part of the solution: they have shown contempt for religion.

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 29, 2007 5:17 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Scientists Tend to NOT believe in God

Since I never trust Henry's fictions, I decided to check his claim about scientists and God myself. I found the following: darned if Henry isn't right this time.

"During the 20th century, three polls questioned outstanding scientists about their attitudes toward science and religion. James H. Leuba, a sociologist at Bryn Mawr College, conducted the first in 1914. He polled 400 scientists starred as "greater" in the 1910 American Men of Science on the existence of a "personal God" and immortality, or life after death. Leuba defined a personal God as a "God to whom one may pray in the expectation of receiving an answer." He found that 32 percent of these scientists believed in a personal God, and 37 percent believed in immortality. Leuba repeated basically the same questionnaire in 1933. Belief in a personal God among greater scientists had dropped to 13 percent and belief in immortality to 15 percent. In both polls, beliefs in God and immortality were less common among biologists than among physical scientists. Belief in immortality had dropped to 2 percent among greater psychologists in the 1933 poll. Leuba predicted in 1916 that belief in a personal God and in immortality would continue to drop in greater scientists, a forecast clearly borne out by his second poll in 1933, and he further predicted that the figures would fall even more in the future.

Edward J. Larson, professor of law and the history of science at the University of Georgia, and science journalist Larry Witham, both theists, polled National Academy of Sciences members in 1998 and provided further confirmation of Leuba's conjecture. Using Leuba's definitions of God and immortality for direct comparison, they found lower percentages of believers. Only 10 percent of NAS scientists believed in God or immortality, with those figures dropping to 5 percent among biologists.

POSTED BY: BETTY | OCTOBER 29, 2007 1:22 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Waxing and Waning

Dr Elliot writes: "Enjoy the irony. The louder the shouting of the religion-hating "new atheists," the greater the "mutual respect" between religion and science, whose converging is producing a new grandeur."

Now I admit that Cambridge is different than the rest of the country, as our Virtue-Monger Bill Bennett has reminded us,

but in this Nobel-studded landscape thick with "elite" scientists, very few of them believe in God. And the number seems to be decreasing.

So I would elitistly conjecture.

Religion is Waxing among the relatively uneducated.

And Waning among the more intelligent/more educated.

CF the recent study of "elite scientists" who are members of the American Academy.

I for one take little cheer in the rise of Fundamentalist, Taliban style Islam.

If that is Waxing Religion, let's melt it. Peacefully of course.

Religion without a supernatural God is great. Superstition is not helpful to the survival of the planet. And alliances with Southern Baptists are still not going to increase the Grandeur Quotient.

POSTED BY: HJ | OCTOBER 29, 2007 12:47 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Elliot

I take your point that the poetic expression of Grandeur will heighten motivation to save the earth.

MY point was that *fundamentalist* southern baptists aren't going to provide it. Nor does Wilson expect them to.

BTW, it wasn't I who said religion is on the wane. Sadly, you are correct as a general matter. It is not. The non-wane is largely with fundamentalist, reactive segments of the world's population.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | OCTOBER 29, 2007 12:24 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

HJ:

Your "Grandeur? Humbug" is irrelevant to what my column said, which was that the converging of religion and science "is producing a new grandeur."

In ex-Southern-Baptist Wilson, readers will find the humbug that "believers in traditional religion" are not open "to explore beyond" conventional understandings of the world & of humanity. Teaching this morning, I explained how the scientific method was used, by the Baptist preacher who started the University of Chicago, to understand the Bible. With an almost unlimited supply of Baptist money, he built the world's outstanding science faculty, which to date has won more Nobel Prizes than the faculty of any other school. (It's one of the schools I did a doctorate in, & nowhere else in the world have I experienced such eager intellectual freedom.)

Where does Wilson go when he wants ACTION on saving the environment? Back to the Baptists, that's where.

WALDO:

The reason I failed to respond to Henry's point that "religion is on the wane" was that I considered it out of the ball park of reality. Never in the life of anyone now alive has religion been ON THE RISE, worldwide, as much as it is right now. And the notion that "rationality" is on the other side from religion is dependent on a shriveled understanding of "reason."

You say you "hope" I read Henry's post. No problem, I read all comments on my columns. In his CANTERBURY TAILS, Chaucer describes a clergyman as "eager to learn and eager to teach."

I'll make it stronger: nobody uneager to learn is worthy of teaching. I read y'all in hope of learning.

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 29, 2007 12:29 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Henry

Great post! Wow. So the good Doctor Willis got it wrong huh? Why am I not surprised?

I read one of Wilson's books back in the 70's, and liked what he was saying. He influenced the way I saw things at that time. I couldn't remember where he stood on religion, but it would figure that he would be at least skeptical of the god thing.

I must grab one of his books from the library and refresh my understanding of his ideas.

I hope Dr. W. reads your post.

Regards

POSTED BY: WALDO | OCTOBER 28, 2007 10:58 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Jon Donovan;

Really well said (your comment at 5:47pm)

I too have noticed the not too subtle climb down, by religious folk, who use the word god to stand for anything they choose it to stand for; anything from a newborn baby's cry, to an opening rose, or blade of grass, or a raindrop sliding down a window pane. It's all god.

You angered the choleric Willis E. Elliott as you knew you would. You're lucky he didn't bite your head off. But I notice he failed to respond to your point that religion is on the wane.

It's my thinking too that religion will not last for ever. Reason will bury it, sooner or later.

The forward momentum of rationality can not be halted.

POSTED BY: WALDO | OCTOBER 28, 2007 10:44 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Wilson has No Use for God or Religious Beliefs

below from an interview at beliefnet.com with EO Wilson. Read the whole interview and you will see that Wilson sees NO GRANDEUR in Religious Views, and much in Scientific views. Dr Elliot may, but Wilson doesn't.

Q. from beliefnet: So you don't see the need to invoke a traditional Judeo-Christian God to give purpose to these religious experiences?

Wilson: I don't see any such need. In fact, I think it's a waste of time, in the sense that we could be doing so many more interesting and valuable things with our minds. What traditional religion gives you is a fixed set of statements about the world and the origin and the meaning of humanity. These statements are easily learned, and in the context of personal relations or in tribal ceremonies, they evoke a deep sense of satisfaction.

Those responses of the brain have been programmed by millennia of evolution because of their survival value. There should be more to the human experience. So long as we are bound by loyalties to a particular religion's dogmatic beliefs, we are not free in many sectors of human thought and experience to explore afield and more deeply.

I find it far more interesting and satisfying to explore beyond, within the constraints of what we find out ourselves about how the real world works, the fuller explanation of what humanity is, where it comes from and its meaning. This freedom is not open to believers in traditional religions. That search, which may never be fully satisfied or found with success, is one of the best intellectual and spiritual endeavors of which the human mind is capable. That is essentially, if you would like to call it that, my religion.

POSTED BY: HENRY | OCTOBER 28, 2007 9:34 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The Trodlyditic Ignorance of Southern Baptists

Two quotes from 1) the President of the Southern Baptist Convention, and 2) the official journal of the Southern Baptist Convention. These people are intellectual barbarians. Grandeur? Humbug.

"Evolutionary theory stands at the base of moral relativism and the rejection of traditional morality."

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Ph.D., is the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary -- the flagship school of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"The Kansas State Board of Education's decision Aug. 11 to reject the theory of evolution as the central thread of biological studies could go a long way toward unraveling the scientific community's case for the origin of life, says a Southern Baptist professor of Christian theology.

Hal N. Ostrander, associate dean and professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's James P. Boyce College of the Bible, Louisville, Ky., and a biblical creationist, said the long-supported evolution theory is being dismantled slowly by an argument for "intelligent design" the theory that life came about intentionally and not by chance because it's too complex to be explained any other way.

"This triumph for anti-evolutionary forces in the Kansas schools may herald great changes ahead, probably making it all the more difficult to sustain the cherished evolutionary paradigm as a unifying scientific concept not only in Kansas but elsewhere too," Ostrander said."

article in SBLC Journal.

"

POSTED BY: HJ | OCTOBER 28, 2007 9:09 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Elliot

thank you for clarifying your argument. It does now make more sense to me.

I certainly agree with you that Wilson is an eloquent and exceptionally integrative voice. I suspect Wilson has less regard for the belief system of today's Southern Baptists than he has the desire for an alliance of convenience to further the cause of climate control.

A significant component of my lack of respect for the world view of Southern Baptists is their approach to evidence, knowledge, and truth. A majority read the bible literally, and think that evolution is an elitist hoax. They can be described, on an objective basis, as deliberately ignorant of major advances in scientific thought.

They have so far been a veritable danger to the survival of the planet due to their incomprehension and avoidance of the evidence about climate change. And that is the habitual stance of that church and its members.

Bravo if they can come around: I hope they, and convicted felons, and current Bush Administration political appointees, will all join the alliance to fight Global Warming.

As far as any grandeur in Southern Baptist rhetoric or literature, it seems to me so negligible as to be unefficacious. Give me Shakespeare or Wordsworth any day.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | OCTOBER 28, 2007 8:46 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

HENRY JAMES:

You are correct that a discourse whose sentences make sense but whose totality doesn't--well, it's fair to call such a discourse "meaningless."

The discourse you so judged was my "Ants are not bugs!" column. The reason you failed to perceive its coherence, & therefore meaningfulness, is that you were unable to follow my reasoning, & therefore described it as "idiosyncratic."

The flow of my reasoning is that in American history, the Baptist emphasis on freedom (with Jefferson & E.O.Wilson & Rhode Island & the University of Chicago) appeared in Wilson's letter to a Baptist preacher, appealing for "an alliance between science and religion...to protect life on earth." In my last paragraph, I affirm that such an alliance can produce "a new grandeur."

Now, sir, you may not like what I'm saying. But your assertion that it lacks coherence is proof at least that you were not willing to give me a fair reading; I hope it is not that you are a poor reader.

So far, no commenter on my column has mentioned E.O.Wilson's concern for an alliance of science & religion for a new approach to eco-concern. Am I to conclude that none of you is interested in science or the environment?

JON DONOVAN:

You have it backwards. E.O.Wilson's letter and my column are not about "religion is seeking accommodation with science." The NEWS in his letter is that it is science begging religion in the interest on an "alliance."

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 28, 2007 6:57 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Doctor Elliott.

Despite what you say, science appears to me to be going one way while religion is going nowhere.

Though you single out certain great minds who happen to have been raised religious, there are fewer and fewer of these around as that

generation dies off.

Atheism is on the rise. Check the bestseller lists.

Religion has always impeded science, and still does whenever it can.

I see religious influence declining.

The enormous difference between life now, and life a hundred years ago, hints at the difference we can expect over the next hundred years.

In 1900 religion had much stronger grip on the way of life in the west than it has today. Especially in Europe. It is OK today to be atheist. It is easy to live a life untouched by religion, where a hundred years ago that would have been difficult.

In the year 2100 I feel sure that religion will barely exist. People are getting smarter.

Science and scientific writers are taking on the supernaturalists; who are a drag on science and rational thinking; not to mention the ones who are trying to blow us up.

It says it all, that religion, science's mortal enemy, is now seeking accommodation with science, on an equal footing; but it has nothing to offer that can't be found elsewhere.

The momentum is against religion; against the massive inertia of religion, whose credibility relies on people being indoctrinated as children into believing in a supernatural superman and life after death.

It cannot survive the increasing emphasis on rationality in the unfolding modern world.

POSTED BY: JON DONOVAN | OCTOBER 28, 2007 5:47 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Rafael

yes, the Dr is about the most disagreeable poster/columnist I have run into.

but don't leave: you are a breath of reason and humanity whenever you contribute.

POSTED BY: HJ | OCTOBER 28, 2007 11:53 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Elliot: Are you serious?

You write

"You've contradicted yourself. If you couldn't figure out "what the heck" I was talking about, how could you know it was "meaningless"?"

Among the things you don't understand are

1. When I, America's greatest novelist, write "what the heck", I am being ironic. You fail to acknowledge (get?) the irony.
2. When I say I don't know "what the heck" you are talking about, I don't mean that I don't understand each particular sentence. I mean that your sentences add up to no coherent point. I.e., they are "meaningless," without meaning or import.
3. My brother wrote the most esteemed book on Religion ever written, and I helped him edit it, so your inclusion of me in your defined class of those who are ignorant about religion is laughable.

He also tells me, Harvard Philosopher that he is, that your "logic" in one of your own devising, both in your column and in your response to me.

And I DO think you are insulting me. Whether you intend to or not. Your idiosyncratic logic and undeservedly self-congratulatory stance leads you to many acts of literary scattershooting, resulting in a number of unintended consequences.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | OCTOBER 28, 2007 11:41 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Yes, you interact with the posters, and in doing so show yourself to be a rather nasty fellow. I'll find somewhere else to interact, thanks.

POSTED BY: RAFAEL | OCTOBER 28, 2007 12:23 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

You are my favorite panelist. You actually interact with all the posters (or are the commentators?). Good job.

I liked your comments about suffering, secondary and primary. It was a new look (for me) of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

POSTED BY: HOMESOWER | OCTOBER 27, 2007 11:57 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

HENRY JAMES:

You've contradicted yourself. If you couldn't figure out "what the heck" I was talking about, how could you know it was "meaningless"?

But I thank you for your (unintended) reminder that on this blog, I'm not talking to people conversant with both religion and science: I must write more simply. And I hope you don't think I'm insulting you! I know so little about so much, but--like everybody else--I do know much about some things.

NORRIE HOYT:

No problem with your POSITIVE exposition of Buddhism. My problem was with your merely NEGATIVE statement about life's objective being "the cessation of suffering."

And you are correct that Christianity has, in the Cross of Christ, a POSITIVE view of suffering, matching the analysis of the human problem as sin (a relational condition) rather than only suffering (an individual condition)--the Buddha's superficial diagnoses. We Christians see human suffering as secondary: primary suffering is the suffering we cause God by our sin. And we believe that when we come to repentance for our sin, God's suffering frees us from our sin & restores our relationship with God.

Two very different world-stories: Bible & sutras. As a child, you were taught the first. I hope you return.

RAFAEL:

My first word was "Preachers." Subject, sermons--not, as you took it, lectures. You lectured me on the difference between ants & bugs, & (wrongly) assumed that in his statement--the title of my post--E.O.Wilson was lecturing. With such a poor reading-start, you (understandably!) found me "undecipherable."

Preacher Wilson, in his letter to that Baptist preacher, invited him to co-preach a sermon on our planet's bio-crisis--a sermon possible if the two preachers have "mutual respect" for science and religion. That you find "undecipherable"?

Next, I show an historical mix of freedom, environmental caring, Nobel Prizes, research education, Wilson's background, Wilson's letter, Jefferson's letter, the First Amendment, Rhode Island, and Baptists. And in case the reader missed the thread in this paragraph, I added "Whats with these Baptists?" Sir, you may have found this paragraph uninteresting, but did you find it "undecipherable"?

And to make understanding easier for poor readers, I underlined this bridge: "Care for the creation is an implicate of the creation." Clear enough?

And did you find "undecipherable" Darwin's connection (in his final paragraph, first edition) of "grandeur" and "the Creator"? Of course you disagree with Darwin & me; but you evade the historical fact of Creator/grandeur when you guess that the grandeur would have been recognized without what you call "fanciful religious myths."

Since your note did not change my mind about your arrogant ignorance, I repeat my use of you as an example of the decline of religious knowledge in the American populace. (No insult intended.)

VIE:

Please spell out what you mean by "intellectual hubris" in my case. There is NO area of scholarship in which I know everything (though it could have been said, when I received my earned doctorates, that in their dissertations I knew more than anybody else about the next to nothing that the dissertations were about).

And as for "the east coast religious establishment," I live 1,750 miles from the east coast.

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 27, 2007 9:49 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr Elliot has Supernatural Powers of Induction.

Because a poster here finds the Doctor "indecipherable", the Doctor is able to generalize that this indicates a profound ignorance of religion in the land.

Are you a psychic too, Dr Elliot.

As far as his reference to "religion-haters"

If the Doctor used his august reasoning powers, he might surmise that, Hitchens to the contrary, most people who do not believe in God do not "hate" religion.

I Hate the anti-gay bigotry of many religionists. I hate what the Catholic Church does to prevent AIDS prevention in Africa. etc.

But I, like most atheists, don't Hate religion. I am a Buddhist: i practice loving kindness.

By the Way, the Doctor's slap at Buddhism was a condescendingly ignorant slap. Nice correction to the Doctor, Norrie Hoyt.

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | OCTOBER 27, 2007 7:21 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Vie,

I live in Louisiana now...imported from the North East. Believe me bombast is epidemic from coast to coast and from sea to shining sea. lol

terra

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | OCTOBER 27, 2007 6:47 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Terra,
I stand corrected. We've got our blowhards in the mountain west as well.

POSTED BY: VIEJITA DEL OESTE | OCTOBER 27, 2007 12:58 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Vie,
Don't blame it on the coast sweetie...

terra

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | OCTOBER 26, 2007 5:25 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

If this kind of intellectual hubris is typical of the east coast religious establishment, I'm glad to be out here in the sticks. Dr. Elliott, is there any area of scholarship in which you do not feel you know everything?

POSTED BY: VIEJITA DEL OESTE | OCTOBER 26, 2007 1:42 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Senator James Inhofe happens to be on C Span right now making a speech in the Senate about Global Warming...there is no such thing.

Bush made this man the Chairman of Standing Committee on Environment and Public Works
He is now the Ranking member.
and he was the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate Change, and Nuclear Safety

And he does not believe in Global Warming.

So what's our chances of making improvements and saving this world because he is a Rapture Christain. After all if you believe that the world is ending and you are going to rise to heaven...why worry about this earth? After all only us Heathens will be left behind. Thank Goddess.

Tell me...this administration is operated on Faith...and so far its been a dismal failure. Personally I think science needs nothing else. Religion can not be proved, what does it have to do with science?

and he is talking and talking and talking...Gore is getting burning ears I am sure.

Lets keep religion out of science and teach science to the religious.

terra

POSTED BY: TERRA GAZELLE | OCTOBER 26, 2007 1:02 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Yes all of God's creatures do have purpose in life even Ann Coulter. Bet she sells alot of cereal while threatening judges, terrorism I tell you, terrorism.

Looking at history of Church and Science there seems to be a hate first then love relationship. Issac Newton sold properties of gravity to Catholics through pointing out that he was merely explaining in detail the magnificance of the Creator. I mean the earth tilts on its axis slightly giving a season of growth to one hemisphere while giving rest to the other, Al Gore would have never thought of that one I bet.

In Saudia, a King is trying to create a new cultural Atlantis. Opposed by a fundamental society he has dedicated 12 Billion dollars to the advancement of society through scientific inquiry including men and women. Reminds me of the Phonecians, their legacy, the letters of this measely post.

Would it surprise some that penicillen, or anti-biotics in general were opposed by some of a previous generations ? Oh no, we don't want to play God by saving millions and millions of lives do we ? Well geez, maybe helping to perverse life or to enhance life would be a goal of the Creator ? And so why not help through scientists and physicians to make life betterer.

With limited scope of life some things just cannot be seen. Was nuclear warfare created to end the last great world war and nothing else ? Did nuclear technology advance science and life in numerous non-military fields ? Was the space race really a non-destructive means of advancing science ?

I will give a hint. Those elders much wiser than me opted for NASA rather than the military to advance science beyond our own atmosphere.

Recently, some parties tried to fund the development of a human strain of avian flu virus legislating in the middle of the night trying to hide that research through an exemption to FISA. That plan was probably illegal on domestic and international bases. More importantly, it reminded some of the development of military grade strains of Anthrax.

And so, a test for me is to carefully weigh advancements for both good and bad consequence. And we cannot not make any objective findings while some still try to hide the truth and nothing but the truth, so help us GOD.

POSTED BY: HANK WHATEVER | OCTOBER 26, 2007 11:12 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

My bad, though I'm still correct about ants not being bugs for a different reason. As a biologist, I'm certain this irks Wilson too.

In any case, I stand by my statement that your post was largely undecipherable. In addition I now see you took the opportunity to insult me, who took time to read your post, by chalking up the lack of clarity to my ignorance. You should know that communication always involves a sender and a receiver, and that a good teacher never blames the impudent pupil for the lack of clarity in his message.

You seem to put removal of the word "Creator" on par with how ants have been robbed of their grandeur by casting them as mere bugs. As any biologist knows, there is plenty of grandeur in the design of organisms and in the beauty of a mechanism like natural selection for achieving that design without needing to resort to fanciful religious myths. The grandeur is there with or without your creator.

POSTED BY: RAFAEL | OCTOBER 26, 2007 1:26 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Dr. Elliott,

Permanent cessation of suffering only occurs in connection with becoming enlightened, when the sentient being attains a perfect awareness of everything, and enjoys continual bliss (nirvana).

Not too different from the Christian heaven is it, except that the inhabitants of nirvana have a much greater awareness than those in heaven, and they may even opt to leave that blissful state to return to one of the realms of suffering to help those who are still stuck there.

I like it that, unlike Christianity, Buddhism does not exalt suffering. As the Buddha said, all beings seek happiness and to avoid suffering, and he showed us a path to that end.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | OCTOBER 26, 2007 12:33 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

thank you for a meaningless missive
Mr Elliot.

what the heck were you talki=ng about????

POSTED BY: HENRY JAMES | OCTOBER 25, 2007 11:33 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

RAFAEL:

Sorry! I thought Wilson's "snort" would tip you off to his defending the dignity of ants over against the general populace's revulsion of them as "bugs" (the common term for "obnoxious" small crawling-flying animals, as Webster puts it). I saw him "snort" this in Harvard's museum of entomology, and then go on to give the explanation I've now given you.

Your other misunderstanding is more serious. In finding my answer to this week's "On Faith" question "undecipherable," you confirm the sad fact that Americans are becoming more ignorant of religion (including, of course, religious language).

PASSERBY:

Scratching my head, too. "Angry and indignant" about WHAT and/or at WHOM?

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 25, 2007 10:15 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Why are you so angry and indignant, Mr Elliot? Scratching my head here!

POSTED BY: PASSERBY | OCTOBER 25, 2007 9:41 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I think you misunderstand Wilson's statement, and have based an entire indecipherable comment on your misunderstanding.

Ants are in the order Hymenoptera. True bugs (that's really a common name for a group of organisms) are in the order Hemiptera.

Ants are not bugs in the same way that cats are not canines. They are categorized in separate groups according to their evolutionary affiliations.

POSTED BY: RAFAEL | OCTOBER 25, 2007 9:24 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Molley the Lamb?

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | OCTOBER 25, 2007 9:17 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

MOLLY:

You have misread the Bible (Leviticus 11:21-22).

Please stay after science class for a lecture on how to read the Bible.

NORRIE HOYT:

What a low view of the purpose of life, only to "experience a permanent cessation of suffering"!

POSTED BY: WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 25, 2007 8:45 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Well, it's certainly potentially a bit of progress if some religions that have been holding up environmental ...progress with claims that science and environmentalism are 'idolatry.'

A key distinction between 'environmental doomsaying' and apocalyptic thought is that there's actually something we can do about all this: we mustn't let the consequences and potential consequences of our material actions be seen as yet another form of an inevitable death and judgement from above... even where the likes of Bush have been trying to greenwash their heel-dragging and even counterproductive policies, now that even through the mass media they can't deny global warming isn't happening, they've shifted to a tack of claiming 'We aren't responsible' (and therefore by some moralistic logic can't do anything about it, or that somehow it's not a good idea to put some serious brakes on the still-increasing amounts of greenhouse gas we're emitting.)

Funny how many people who insist that 'God's gonna end the world real soon' nonetheless try and mock environmentalists as crying 'The sky is falling!' yet still vote for people who want us to have our collective heads in the sand about all this.

That said, the churches have helped do much of the damage, and they do have the ability to speak on the urgency of 'cleaning up our acts' in a real and scientific sense.

Speaking as someone who *does* kinda represent an Earth-Goddess, ...this is not what the science here is based on.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | OCTOBER 25, 2007 1:32 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

IN RE: ANTS, BUGS AND CREEPY CRAWLIES:

Buddhism has a better description of these fellows than even science does:

Buddhism considers them to be, not "creatures", but "sentient beings", having the same inner Buddha-nature as humans, with the same potential to attain enlightenment, to escape the endless round of death and rebirth, and to experience a permanent cessation of suffering.

POSTED BY: NORRIE HOYT | OCTOBER 25, 2007 12:27 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The question is not whether an ant should be called a bug or not.

The question is why would we consider religion to weigh in on science when the Bible clearly states that insects have four legs? All insects have six legs, that's what makes them insects.

Thank you, science. You get an A.

Religion, you need to stay after class for some remedial education before you can contribute to discussions about the real world.

POSTED BY: MOLLY | OCTOBER 25, 2007 11:08 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

BGone

Any time one extremist philosophy takes over the way right-wing Christianity has here, it is a threat to society and to religion. The tax exemption is a travesty, I agree. As a devotee of the world's oldest multinational corporation (the Catholic Church) I'm not sure such preferences do much good for real faith. And I'm sure that the institutional hardening that any kind of official status encourages is bad for our dealings with each other -- both among Christians and in the "world."

POSTED BY: VIEJITA DEL OESTE | OCTOBER 25, 2007 1:35 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Stuart:

A Jefferson quote: "It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."

What Jefferson didn't anticipate is the evangelical strangle hold on the US government ever developing. As it stands your pocket is picked and picked over and over again. You're being taxed and the money goes to churches. If you object they'll break your leg or worse.

You've heard this before no doubt. Only religion owns real estate in the USA. All other RE is rented from the government, RE taxes that religions have been exempted from paying. That doesn't establish religion, wink-wink. And the tax deduction for "gifts to God" does not establish religion either. It's just a figment of Jefferson's imagination.

POSTED BY: BGONE | OCTOBER 24, 2007 2:26 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"rising eco-concern among evangelical Christians"

- and especially Baptists should be done with the minimum effort. All you gotta do is tell them to "be concerned." They vote as directed, a little more religiously disciplined than any of those great democracy pushers had in mind. Don't you think?

What does religion have to bring to any party that science is a part of? Nothing.

What does science have to bring to any party religion is a part of? Give religion an air of legitimacy - cause the peanut brains to think religion is knowledge - say things like, "see, they're talking to the scientist and straightening them out about all sorts of things science has wrong, God creating the universe, Adam and Eve, stem cell research..."

The Bible is a proved hoax. You're beating a dead horse.

POSTED BY: BGONE | OCTOBER 24, 2007 2:16 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I'm utterly confused by this piece, what is the point? Theology is even more irrelevant to science than at any time in history, what is the purpose of this alliance between scientists and religionists?

Do the scientists need the church propagandists to validate their findings? Or does the church need science to maintain its relevance? I don't understand what you're positing here.

A Jefferson quote: "It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."

POSTED BY: STUART | OCTOBER 24, 2007 11:39 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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