



# Humanists Hawaii

NEWSLETTER

October 2006

*October meeting at Krauss Hall  
Double Bill*

*October 29, 2006  
10:30 a.m.*

*Krauss Hall 112  
University of Hawaii*

## *HH-member-made video: The October 5 Rally*

*HH members take to video cams*

*A dvd showing*

Several months ago, HH president Andi van der Voort attended the class at Olelo Community Television enabling her to become a producer of community based tv shows using Olelo equipment. Hearing about the experience, Michael Mueller became enthused about using videos to stimulate controversy on current issues and thereby publicizing the Humanist image locally as well as informing the citizenry.

Michael and Dave Mielke went as members of the community organization Humanists Hawaii and took the course on becoming volunteer video producers for Olelo (Olelo, incidentally, means "community").

Michael and Dave recorded and Michael edited the "World Can't Wait" rally against the various nefarious activities of the Bush administration. Individual citizens and representatives of numerous organizations told of activities they considered illegal and/or immoral. Several people speechified and some sang songs.

Working long hours with Olelo's equipment, Michael (with minor assistance from Dave) edited the several hours of video into a one-hour program. His video is now ready for its premier.

You can be among the first viewers of the first Humanists Hawaii video.

## *and . . . Let's talk about the many amendments to Hawaii's Constitution and Honolulu's City Charter*

Copies of [Charter](#) questions and [Constitution Amendments](#) are too long to include in this letter, but they're available on the net, through governmental bodies and the daily newspapers. I'll refer to the Charter questions by number and give a lump "no" to the Constitutional amendments.

So many amendments are suggested to our basic civil documents that I fear we're using the amendment process as a cover for the controversial – and probably dangerous – initiative process. For this reason I usually advocate opposing Charter and Constitution amendments. This time, we're expecting to have a Constitutional Convention shortly. Why don't we just wait for that for the ConCon?

However, that said, there are a few I like:

I plan to vote "no" on Charter Question 1, but we're

asked to select an "alternative" from Question 2 even if we reject 1. So, I'll pick Alternative B as less disruptive.

Questions 3, 4 and 8 are clearly attempts to use the amendment process to do initiatives. Their causes might be reasonable, but the Council should take care of conservation, affordable housing, curbside recycling, walking and riding bicycles. Putting such things in the Charter muck up the Charter and make it difficult to change the laws should that become necessary. That's a problem with initiative too. I'll vote "no" on these questions.

Questions 5 and 9 through 12 suggest useful-sounding structural changes to the Charter. I'll vote "yes" for them.

Then probably "no" for the rest. What do you think? My opinions aren't set in stone – yet.

## Humanists Ask: “Does Congress Hate Our Freedoms?”

*American Humanist Association*

When the U.S. Senate voted September 28 to pass the Detainee Treatment and Trials Bill, it took the moral low road in the so-called war on terror. On October 17, President George W. Bush concluded the descent by signing the bill.

“How can we stand up for freedom around the world by abandoning our freedoms at home?” asked Mel Lipman, president of the American Humanist Association. “And how can we say we want freedom to ring worldwide if we won’t ourselves recognize the human rights of foreign nationals?”

The Military Commissions Act of 2006 allows the executive branch of the federal government to try “alien unlawful enemy combatants” under a lower standard of justice than would be applied to U.S. citizens – despite a stated goal of the Bush administration to spread human rights and the American democratic ideal all over the world.

“Expanding the reach and influence of American values--those principles that underlie our Bill of Rights – is a truly noble ideal that is only undermined by the hypocrisy Congress has just displayed,” added Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the AHA, “We have no moral claim to our inalienable human rights if we

don’t believe everyone is entitled to them regardless of their nationality, philosophy, or criminality. And while there are those in the world who, as Bush has declared, ‘hate our freedoms,’ we can’t counter their influence by imitating them. So why have our legislative leaders, by their votes yesterday and today, suggested that we who they represent hate those same freedoms ourselves?”

The legislation passed by the Senate and signed by the President also tampers with other basic human rights. It makes certain types of coerced evidence [evidence gained by torture] admissible, prohibits detainees from invoking the Geneva Conventions as the source of their rights, denies access to the U.S. court system for detainee *habeas corpus* appeals, and declines to treat as crimes “outrages upon personal dignity, particularly humiliating and degrading treatment,” which are banned under international law.

“We used to say, ‘It can’t happen here,’” said Mel Lipman, referring to a loss of freedom and growth of government power. “But now it has happened. [This] is a step that never should have been taken and must be reversed as soon as possible.”

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## Humanists Determined to Stop Public Expression of Religion Act

*American Humanist Association*

On September 26, the House of Representatives yesterday passed the so-called Public Expression of Religion Act (HR 2679) by a vote of 244-173. This bill, introduced by Rep. John Hostettler (R-IN), would eliminate compensation fees awarded to attorneys who succeed in proving that the U.S. Constitution has been violated regarding a church-state matter.

“This legislation is nothing more than an attempt at backdoor corrosion of church/state separation,” commented Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association. “Congress knows a bill permitting the government to put the Ten Commandments in front of courthouses or mandating prayer in public schools would be unconstitutional. This legislation offers the next best thing by preventing the average citizen’s access to the legal tools necessary to challenge those violations.”

Establishment Clause litigation often is very complicated and time consuming; most lawyers simply don’t have the resources to work on these cases on a pro-bono basis. Thus, passage of this law would severely limit the ability of average citizens to use the legal system to remove unconstitutional religious expressions and objects from the public sphere.

Moreover, “In these cases compensation is only awarded when the plaintiff wins, which is a common practice in the legal system,” said Mel Lipman,

president of the American Humanist Association and a constitutional law attorney. “What makes these particular cases different for Rep. Hostettler is his belief that government should be free to promote religion without consequences even though that is a clear violation of the Establishment Clause. Somebody needs to remind the majority of House members that they swore an oath to uphold the Constitution.”

Hostettler has been a previous supporter of legislative measures that would allow for religious organizations to play a greater role in government. In 2002, he supported The House of Worship and Political Speech Protection Act (HR 2357), which would have altered the tax code to allow religiously affiliated groups to carry out political campaign activities and still maintain their tax-exempt status. The motion to suspend House rules to allow consideration of this measure was defeated and the bill was rejected.

With passage in the House this bill now moves to the Senate. “The American Humanist Association is committed to defeating this bill in the Senate,” added Speckhardt. “After all, if legal fees can be denied to attorneys defending religious liberty, which one of our freedoms will be next? Will there be no more legal fees for free press and free speech cases?”

## Iraq for Sale

In a letter writer to MoveOn members, David Mann told about the new Robert Greenwald film, *Iraq for Sale*. Some selections follow:

For two years, I risked my life in the Iraq war. I'm writing to invite you . . . to see what I saw over there . . .

Why do I know this film is so powerful? Because I'm in it. Here's a little more about my story.

I am the child of a career Army man, and when it came time to decide what to do after high school, I knew I wanted to follow the same path. In 2003 and then again in 2005, my unit was deployed to Iraq.

As a maintenance unit, we were responsible for repairing everything and anything soldiers used to do their jobs and stay alive: weapons, radios, trucks, computers – you name it. So you can imagine our shock, weeks after getting to Iraq, when we were ordered to hand our mission over to private contractors employed by Halliburton.

But there's a catch: Halliburton had neither the training nor the equipment to take over our mission. Most of the contractors had no previous knowledge at all of our equipment before coming to Iraq. One of the contractors I "trained" was not even remotely familiar with radio systems, but had been a missile systems repairman while he was in the Army.

Because our unit no longer had a mission, we were forced into other things that we weren't trained to do. Mechanics found themselves on guntruck missions escorting convoys between bases. Many of us were forced onto guard duty while the contractors fumbled through our old jobs getting paid way more than any soldier. I spent months checking ID cards at the Post Exchange and Recreation facility.

I felt helpless and awful, like I was letting down my fellow soldiers while they were being put into life-threatening situations with unsafe equipment, and there was nothing I could do about it.

Since I returned to the States, I've learned more about why all that happened – about how the Republicans gave Dick Cheney's old company all these huge contracts and didn't care at all how it endangered us soldiers. And now, there is something I can do about it – I can speak out.

. . . there's something you can do about it, too. You can come and bring your friends to watch this amazing movie, (my story is just one small part of this shocking film), and spread the word about what's really happening . . . make a few simple reminder calls to progressive voters in key districts to help win these elections.

. . . the only way we can keep our soldiers safe is by electing leaders who will put our safety above the profit of their corporate friends.

If you're interested in seeing – or showing – this dvd, see, call or email Dave Mielke.

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See scheduled events, pictures of officers and current and archived newsletters at our website: [www.hawaii.humanists.net/](http://www.hawaii.humanists.net/)

If you'd like to receive your personal email at the prestigious Humanists.net address, contact WebMaster Mike at the address or phone number above.

## HH's Meeting Place Room 112 Krauss Hall

Driving on Dole Street past the University, turn mauka on East West Road then ewa on Correa Road. Drive to the end and turn makai toward the circle with the big tree. There's free parking on part of the circle, on the other side of Krauss Hall and various lots around campus. The entrance to Krauss Hall 112 is at the Diamondhead end of the lily pond.

We'll have an HH sign by the door. Hope to see you all.



# An Urgent Call by Scientists to . . . Defend Science

Statement by [www.defendscience.org](http://www.defendscience.org)

In the United States today science, as science, is under attack as never before.

The signs of this are everywhere. The attacks are coming at an accelerating pace, and include frequent interventions by powerful forces, in and out of the Bush administration, who seem all too willing to deny scientific truths, disrupt scientific investigations, block scientific progress, undermine scientific education, and sacrifice the very integrity of the scientific process itself – all in the pursuit of implementing their particular political agenda. And today this dominant political agenda is profoundly allied and intertwined with an extremist (and extremely anti-science) ideological agenda put forward by powerful fundamentalist religious forces commonly known as the Religious Right. These fundamentalists now have extensive influence and representatives in major institutions of the US government, including Congress and the White House. This itself goes a long way toward explaining why science itself is under such unprecedented attack.

It is commonplace under the current Administration for the government to deny funding, censor scientific reports, or in other ways undermine scientific research which might turn up facts which they don't want to hear; to manipulate, distort, or outright suppress scientific findings they find objectionable; to attempt to reshape government scientific panels to obtain policy recommendations on issues ranging from health to the environment, based less on actual scientific findings than on the requirements of the Administration's agenda.

The situation is so serious that more than 6,000 scientists have already signed the "Restoring Scientific Integrity" statement of the Union of Concerned Scientists, which denounces the Bush Administration for "abuse of science"; and Scientific American published an editorial under the title: "Bush-League Lysenkoism: The White House Seeks to Bend Science to Its Will."

## CONSIDER THIS:

- » Particular Christian fundamentalist "moral codes" are increasingly imposing restrictions on what kinds of questions can be investigated by scientists and what kinds of answers scientists can come up with. HIV-prevention studies have come under attack for even attempting to study prevalent sexual practices. Funds have been cut and researchers have faced intimidation and harassment from fundamentalists inside and outside of government who insist that scientific study of HIV/AIDS begin and end with the demand for "abstinence-only" programs – regardless of the human and social cost. Research into human sexuality in general has been suppressed and faulty studies and outright disinformation about the effectiveness of condoms and other birth control methods have been promoted and disseminated by the Administration. The Department of Health and Human Services is known to have deleted from its web site scientific health information which conflicted with the Administration's "abstinence-only" approach to sex education . . . THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- » Entire new fields of scientific inquiry, like stem-cell research, with potential for path-breaking medical breakthroughs, are denied federal funds because of fundamentalist religious objections . . . THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- » Scientists whose findings conflict with corporate interests or policies of the Bush Administration face threats of retaliation or denial of funding. There have been "gag orders" forbidding government scientists from talking publicly about important scientific questions and, at times, even mentioning terms like "global warming." In studies by government scientists on global warming and its potentially devastating consequences for the planet and humanity, titles of reports have been changed and whole sections deleted by high political officials. There are repeated efforts by government officials to over-rule scientists on such things as which plant and animal species to include on the "Endangered Species" list, which natural habitats are in critical need of preservation, how to set air and water quality standards, and so on . . . THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- » In a practice many have denounced as "Scientific McCarthyism," scientists who are candidates for scientific advisory boards and panels have been asked how they voted or whether they support particular policies of the Administration, and some have been denied appointments because of their political views. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- » Official government-run bookstores at the Grand Canyon have carried books promoting as fact the literalist Biblical notion that the Grand Canyon was formed only a few thousand years ago by "Noah's Flood," in direct contradiction to the overwhelming geological evidence and scientific consensus that the Grand Canyon contains rocks that are billions of years old and that the Canyon itself was carved out by a river, over a very long period of time, millions of years ago . . . THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

And that is not all: Here we are in the 21st century, and the head of the government himself, George W. Bush, refuses to acknowledge that evolution is a scientific fact! THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

The President claims: "On the issue of evolution, the verdict is still out on how God created the earth," and then sits smugly by while Creationists carry out an assault against evolution in classrooms, museums, libraries, government bookstores, and even IMAX movies and science theaters.

No, Mr. President, the verdict is NOT out on evolution. EVOLUTION IS A FACT – IT IS ONE OF THE MOST WELL-ESTABLISHED AND WELL-DOCUMENTED FACTS IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE. TO DENY AND ATTACK EVOLUTION IS TO DENY AND ATTACK ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL FACTS ABOUT ALL OF NATURE AND REALITY AND ONE OF THE MOST CRUCIAL FOUNDATION STONES OF ALL OF MODERN SCIENCE. Evolution is not a matter of "controversy" in the scientific community: It is recognized as a fact by the overwhelming majority of scientists in the US and throughout the world. Evolution is just as well-established as the fact that the earth goes around the sun – a scientifically-demonstrated truth which, several centuries ago and for some time, was also opposed and even viciously suppressed because of a religious inquisition, resulting in great harm to science and to humanity. We cannot, and will not, allow the same kind of thing to happen with the scientific fact of evolution.

Therefore, we, the undersigned scientists and members of the scientific community, are issuing this urgent call to everyone in society to take up the challenge to DEFEND SCIENCE.

To be clear: Many who continue to hold religious beliefs can and should rally to this call to DEFEND SCIENCE. This is not about science trying to destroy religion. It is about defending science from a specific right-wing political agenda which, coupled with a fundamentalist, Biblical-literalist religious ideology, is setting out to implement a program that will fundamentally pervert and undermine science and the scientific process itself.

Individual scientists may be atheists or agnostics, or may hold various religious beliefs; and their politics range over the full spectrum of political views. But one thing the overwhelming majority of scientists have in common is their understanding that, when conducting

scientific investigation and applying the scientific method, it is essential to use as a starting point previously accumulated scientific knowledge – the storehouse of well-established scientific evidence about reality which has previously been arrived at through concrete and systematic scientific observation and experiment and has been subjected to rigorous scientific review and testing. This is what we scientists stand on as our foundation when we set out to further investigate reality and make new discoveries. This is how science has been done and how it has advanced for hundreds of years now, and this has allowed science to benefit humanity in countless ways.

Genuine science never proceeds from, or uses as its starting point, any set of subjective "beliefs," "opinions" or "faith-based edicts" handed down by religious or secular authorities and proclaimed to be beyond human questioning, testing and investigation. To bring into the scientific process assumptions, religious or otherwise, which were not arrived at by scientific methods, and which by definition cannot be tested by scientific methods, would destroy science as science.

In conclusion: We must refuse to accept a situation where scientific inquiry is blocked or its findings ruled out of order unless they conform to the goals of the government, to corporate interests and to the ideology of religious fundamentalists; where dogma enforced by governmental and religious authority takes the place of science; where the scientific approach of seeking natural explanations for natural phenomena is suppressed. We must insist on an atmosphere where scientists are allowed to seek the truth, even when the truth conflicts with the views and policies of those in power, and where the scientific spirit is fostered, where science education and the popularization of the scientific method are valued, where people are encouraged to pursue an understanding of how and why things are the way they are; where all that has been learned by humanity so far, all that has repeatedly been tested and found to be true, serves as the starting point for further investigation of reality.

IT IS UP TO US. IT IS TIME TO TAKE A CLEAR AND DECISIVE STAND IN DEFENSE OF SCIENCE. THIS IS OF CRUCIAL AND URGENT IMPORTANCE NOT ONLY FOR SCIENTISTS BUT FOR PEOPLE THROUGHOUT SOCIETY, FOR HUMANITY AS A WHOLE AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

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**COWARDICE, n.** A charge often leveled by all-American types against those who stand up for their beliefs by refusing to fight in wars they find unconscionable, and who willingly go to prison or into exile in order to avoid violating their own consciences. These 'cowards' are to be contrasted with red-blooded, 'patriotic' youths who literally bend over, grab their ankles, submit to the government, fight in wars they do not understand (or disapprove of), and blindly obey orders to maim and to kill simply because they are ordered to do so – all to the howling approval of the all-American mob. This type of behavior is commonly termed 'courageous.'

– Chaz Bufe, *American Heretic's Dictionary*

## Secular Humorism

To dispel the rumor that Humanists dislike religion, I present some religious stories – contributed by Ed Corl.

### Pearly Gates 1

Bill Clinton, John Kerry and George Bush are captured by terrorists and told they will be executed by a firing squad at dawn the next morning.

As the sun is rising the next day, Clinton is placed against the wall. Just before the order to shoot him is given, he yells, "Earthquake!" The firing squad panics. Bill jumps over the wall and escapes in the confusion.

John Kerry is second. He's placed against the wall, the squad is reassembled and John ponders what his old pal Bill has done. Before the order to shoot is given, John yells, "Tornado!" Again the squad falls apart and Kerry slips over the wall, making his escape.

The last person, George W. Bush, is placed against the wall. He thinks, "I see the pattern here, just scream out a disaster and hop over the wall."

As the firing squad is reassembled and the rifles raised, he smirks his famous smirk and yells, "Fire!"

### The Leprechaun & Golf

A guy is out on the golf course when he slices his ball into the woods. He goes in search of it, and finds a leprechaun lying unconscious next to his ball. He picks up the leprechaun and revives him.

"Are you okay?" the golfer asks.

The dazed leprechaun assures the golfer that he's fine, then sighs resignedly.

"Okay, you caught me. What do you want for your three wishes?" he asks.

The golfer is shocked. "I don't want any wishes. I just wanted to make sure you were all right!" And with that, the golfer stands up, waves and walks away.

The leprechaun thinks for a second "You know, that guy was all right. I'm gonna give him his three wishes anyway. I'll just give him the three most requested wishes: I'll improve his memory, his finances, and his sex life." The wishes granted, the leprechaun skips off into the woods.

A year later, the leprechaun is collecting mushrooms and he sees a golfer coming down the fairway. He's about to run when he realizes it's the same guy. He waves and goes out to talk to him.

"Hi," the leprechaun says. "Remember me?"

"Sure," says the golfer. "You're that leprechaun I hit with the golf ball last year. How're you doing?"

"I'm fine. By the way, how's your memory?"

"You, know it's really amazing, but since I met you, I never forget anything! Phone numbers, names, directions. My mind has been like a steel trap."

"That's pretty good," says the leprechaun. "How're you doing financially?"

"That's another thing," says the golfer. "Every time I put my hand into my pocket I pull out another \$100 bill. It's incredible!"

"Excellent!" says the leprechaun. "And how about your sex life?"

"About once a week!" boasts the golfer.

"Once a week? That's all?" says the stunned

leprechaun. "That's not that great."

Says the golfer: "Well, that's pretty good for a priest in a small parish."

### The Mule

Moishe had a wife named Gitel, who nagged him unmercifully. From morning until night for the 65 years they had been married, Gitel was always complaining about something. The only time he got any relief was when he was out buying and selling junk and scrap metal with his old mule.

One day, when Moishe was negotiating a deal with another junk dealer, Gitel brought him lunch. Moishe drove the mule into the shade, sat down on a stump and began to eat his lunch. Immediately after saying his *broches* (blessings), Gitel began nagging him. Complain, gripe, nag, nag; it just never stopped.

All of a sudden, the old mule lashed out with both hind feet and caught Gitel smack in the back of the head, killing her dead on the spot.

At the funeral the next day, one of the Rabbis noticed something rather odd. When a female mourner approached Moishe, he would listen for a minute, then nod his head in agreement; but when a male mourner approached him, he would listen for a minute, then shake his head in disagreement.

This was so consistent, the Rabbi decided to ask him about it.

After the funeral, the Rabbi asked his old and dear friend why he nodded his head in agreement with all the women, but shook his head in disagreement with the men.

Moishe said, "Well, the women would come up and say something about what a good person my wife was, or how she was such a good cook or devoted wife, so I'd nod my head in agreement."

"And what about the men?" the Rabbi asked.

"They wanted to know if the mule was for sale."

### Pearly Gates 2

A Man died and went to heaven. As he stood in front of St. Peter at the Pearly Gates, he saw a huge wall of clocks behind him.

He asked, "What are all those clocks?"

St. Peter answered, "Those are Lie-Clocks.

Everyone on Earth has a Lie-Clock. Every time you lie the hands on your clock will move."

"Oh," said the man, "whose clock is that?"

That's Mother Teresa's. The hands have never moved, indicating that she never told a lie."

"Amazing," said the man. "And whose clock is that?"

St. Peter responded, "That's Abraham Lincoln's clock. The hands have moved twice, telling us that Abe told only two lies in his entire life."

"Where's Bush's clock?" asked the man.

"Bush's clock is in Jesus' office. He's using it as a ceiling fan."

## Some AHA releases

# E. O. Wilson Asks Humanists to Cross Boundaries

American Humanist Association

Edward O. Wilson, the 1999 AHA [Humanist of the Year](#) is on a mission to save the environment by seeking the help of evangelical Christians. And the leadership of the American Humanist Association has pledged its support for Wilson's ecumenical cause.

"He has broadened our thinking," said AHA President Mel Lipman. "Instead of just questioning many of the faithful for their otherworldly focus, we now want to join hands with them in an urgent moral cause we both can share."

"Though evangelicals refer to the environment as the Creation while we Humanists consider it our only home, both of our traditions deeply value it," added Roy Speckhardt, AHA's executive director. "The Bible speaks of God giving humans dominion over the earth and, in turn, responsibility for it. Humanists speak of humanity's evolutionary connection with the earth and hence the obligation of us all to be good stewards. In practice, these two ideals amount to the same thing."

The AHA has long advanced the cause of the environment and has conferred its prestigious Humanist of the Year Award on such environmental activists and leaders as Ted Turner, Lester R. Brown, Werner Fornos, Carl Sagan, and Buckminster Fuller. But, in doing so, it has sometimes antagonized evangelicals.

Said Lipman: "Wilson's new book, *The Creation*, has led us to recognize and honor the diversity among Christians of all types, and of religious people in general. And we see that the goal of saving and protecting the world that we share is bigger than our differences."

## Humanists Applaud Court Raising the Bar for Scouts

American Humanist Association

On October 16, 2006, the Supreme Court affirmed the California Supreme Court's unanimous decision that a Boy Scouts of America branch may be treated differently from other nonprofits due to the BSA's exclusionary policies. As a result, the Berkeley Sea Scouts will no longer receive free use of a public boat slip due to the group's policy of denying membership to atheists and gays.

Said Roy Speckhardt, AHA executive director. "People are entitled to their own beliefs – religious or otherwise – but they are not entitled to public funds to support the discriminatory practices of those beliefs."

The case, *Evans v. City of Berkeley*, was first brought before the courts after Berkeley city officials told the Sea Scouts that they must pay for a berth at the marina. In order to retain their berthing subsidy they were told they must break ties with the Boy Scouts or disavow the policy against atheists and gays. The Sea Scouts refused, claiming that such a provision violated their free speech rights.

"This is not an issue of free speech," declared Mel Lipman, president of the AHA. "The Sea Scouts are perfectly free to say what they wish, but the city of Berkeley may withhold funds from groups that discriminate on religious grounds. Just as the state may deny financial support to organizations that discriminate on the basis of race or gender, so may they deny support to those groups that favor one religion over others or religion in general over no religion."

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2000 that the Boy Scouts have the right to ban openly homosexual scout leaders.

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Do you think that humans should search relentlessly for truth, that they feel compassion for all humankind and determine and promote what is right?

Do you think people can live meaningful, responsible and ethical lives without the need for believing in supernatural beings or places?

Would you like to join a group that shares your thoughts. Humanists – generally – believe these things.

If you'd like to join Humanists Hawaii, please complete and mail this form with a check for your annual membership fee of \$25 if you're single, \$40 if you're a couple, to: Marcia Lambeth at 825 Coolidge St. #310 Honolulu HI 96826.

Dr/Mr/Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

***The God Delusion*** by Richard Dawkins. 416 pages. *Houghton Mifflin*, October 18, 2006, hardcover, \$27.00.

[Discover magazine](#) (Sept. 2005) recently called [Richard Dawkins](#) "Darwin's Rottweiler" for his fierce and effective defense of evolution. The readers of [Prospect](#) (Nov. 2005) magazine voted him among the top three public intellectuals in the world (along with Umberto Eco and Noam Chomsky). Now Dawkins turns his considerable intellect on religion, denouncing its faulty logic and the suffering it causes.

In an interview with Gordy Slack in [Salon.com](#), April 30, 2005, Dawkins explains, "A delusion is something that people believe in despite a total lack of evidence. Religion is scarcely distinguishable from childhood delusions like the "imaginary friend" and the bogeyman under the bed. Unfortunately, the God delusion possesses adults, and not just a minority of unfortunates in an asylum. The word "delusion" also carries negative connotations, and religion has plenty of those."

Religion's negative connotations arise because true believers in religions believe without no evidence. Dawkins continues, "People brought up to believe in faith and private revelation cannot be persuaded by evidence to change their minds. No wonder religious zealots throughout history have resorted to torture and execution, to crusades and jihads, to holy wars and purges and pogroms, to the Inquisition and the burning of witches."

In *The God Delusion*, Dawkins critiques God in all his forms, from the sex-obsessed tyrant of the Old Testament to the more benign (but still illogical) Celestial Watchmaker favored by some Enlightenment thinkers. He eviscerates the major arguments for religion and demonstrates the supreme improbability of a supreme being. He shows how religion fuels war, foments bigotry, and abuses children, buttressing his points with historical and contemporary evidence. In so doing, he makes a compelling case that belief in God is not just irrational, but potentially deadly.

This is an impassioned, rigorous rebuttal to religion, to be embraced by anyone who sputters at the inconsistencies and cruelties that riddle the Bible, bristles at the inanity of "intelligent design," or agonizes over fundamentalism in the Middle East? or Middle America.

In January of this year, Britain's Channel 4 aired [The Root of All Evil?](#), a two-part exploration of religious faith hosted and narrated by Richard Dawkins. *The Root of All Evil?* follows Dawkins as he travels to some of the world's religious centers—among them Jerusalem, Lourdes, and Colorado Springs—to observe services and to interview leaders and followers of various faiths.



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