

Well Educated

On more than one occasion, Joseph Pearce has written an essay based on a bumper sticker he has seen. Sitting in traffic he saw one that declared: "What you call the Liberal Elite, we call being well educated."

The woman in the car in front of him obviously wanted to teach him and us a lesson. She is well educated, and we presumably are poorly educated if we don't agree with her politics and perspective. After all, we know that well-educated people tend to vote for Democrats. The less educated tend to vote for Republicans. She and many of her liberal friends probably believe they know better how to run your life than you do.

Joseph Pearce writes that her problem is that "her education is not as good as she thinks it is." She is educated in our secular system. That means she probably learned nothing about theology. She may know next to nothing about God. She may not even believe there is a God, but probably couldn't defend her atheism or agnosticism anyway.

"If she was educated in our secular system, she will know nothing of philosophy." If she does know something about philosophy, she probably concluded that there is no philosophy worth taking seriously before René Descartes." She won't know anything about the philosophy of the Greeks or of any Christian philosopher.

"If she was educated in our secular system, she will know nothing of history." If she does know anything, it will be viewed from her own twenty-first century perspective or from the perspective of those who taught it to her.

“If she was educated in our secular system, she will know nothing of great literature.” Once again, if she does know anything about literature, it will be from her own twenty-first century pride and prejudice or from those who taught it to her.

In summary, we should see that to be “well-educated” today means to be ignorant of theology, philosophy, history, and the Great Books of the world. Joseph Pearce rightly calls this the arrogance of ignorance.

This blog post originally appeared at pointofview.net/viewpoints/well-educated/ on Dec. 27, 2016.

Church and Poverty

The church in general, and evangelical Christians in particular, has been helping people in poverty. But you wouldn't know that if you attended a roundtable discussion of poverty at Georgetown University. President Obama made lots of critical comments, but I wanted to focus on just one of his statements.

The president was critical of churches focusing so much time on social issues and so little time on poverty. He wanted “faith-based organizations to speak out on” the issue of poverty and stop being obsessed with what he called “reproductive issues” or same-sex marriage.

Evangelical Christians do have concerns about abortion and same-sex marriage, but that hasn't kept them from also doing a great deal to help the poor. In fact, Christians are the most generous with their time, treasure, and talents. Also,

conservative people are more generous than liberal people. In previous commentaries, I have quoted from the extensive research done by Arthur Brooks in his book, *Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth about Compassionate Conservatism*.

What about the institutional church? In term of disaster relief, the Southern Baptist Convention spent more than \$6 million. It was the third largest provider behind the Red Cross and Salvation Army. And that is just one Protestant denomination.

An op-ed in the *Washington Post* by Rob Schwarzwald and Pat Fagan concluded that: “the evangelical relief group World Vision spent roughly \$2.8 billion annually to care for the poor.” They added: “That would rank World Vision about 12th within the G-20 nations in terms of overseas development assistance.” And I might mention that World Vision is just one evangelical ministry. “Groups such as Samaritan’s Purse, Food for the Hungry, World Relief and many others provide hundreds of millions of dollars in anti-poverty programs at home and abroad.”

The church has been one of the most effective social outreach programs in history, even if the president doesn’t think so.

This blog post originally appeared at pointofview.net/viewpoints/church-and-poverty/ on May 26, 2015.

Biblical Interpretation

Earlier this month at the meeting of the International Society of Christian Apologetics there was a robust discussion of inerrancy and hermeneutics. Those are scholarly words for the

belief that the Bible is without error and needs to be interpreted according to sound practices of biblical interpretation.

There is a practical aspect of this debate that affects you and the way you read and interpret the Bible. If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you have probably had someone ask: Do you take the Bible literally? Before you answer, I would recommend you ask that person what they mean by literally.

Here is a helpful sentence: "When the literal sense makes good sense, seek no other sense lest it result in nonsense." Obviously the context helps in understanding how to interpret a passage.

After all, the Bible uses various figures of speech. Jesus told parables. Jesus used metaphors and proclaimed that He is the vine, the door, and the light of the world. There are types and symbols and allegories. If you are reading a section in the Bible that describes historical events, you expect the historical record to be accurate. If you are reading poetic literature like the Psalms, you should not be surprised that God is described as a shepherd, a sun and a shield.

Here is another helpful sentence: "When the literal sense does not make good sense, we should seek some other sense lest it lead to nonsense." We should reject a literal sense when it contradicts the moral law, physical law, or supernatural law.

When Jesus says in Matthew 5:30 to cut off your hand, that is not to be taken literally because it violates moral law. When Jesus talks about those who swallow a camel in Matthew 23:24, that violates a physical law. When we read in Jonah 3:10 that God repented or changed His mind, we know that violates a supernatural law, because God does not change His mind (Numbers 23:19).

But in most cases, we are to read the Bible in the literal

sense because seeking some other sense will result in nonsense. That's just common sense.

April 23, 2015

Myths About the Bible

Newsweek began 2015 with a [cover story on the Bible](#). In the lead article, we get a heavy dose of liberal theory and secular skepticism about the Bible. But the author is correct in arguing that [very few Americans are biblically literate](#). Many Christian ministries have documented this through various surveys as well as lots of anecdotal stories.

Two writers with *The Federalist* decided to follow the lead of *Newsweek* and write about ["The Eight Biggest Myths About the Bible."](#) Here are just a few of the cultural myths so many have accepted.

Many people believe the Bible teaches: "money is the root of all evil." That is not what Paul taught (in 1 Timothy 6:10) which says: "For the love of money is a root all kinds of evil." The Bible does not condemn money or wealth, but does admonish us to be generous and not to make money an idol.

Another myth is the pervasive belief that Christians are never to make moral judgments. One of the most quoted verses these days is Matthew 7:1. Jesus says, "Judge not, that you be not judged." He is not telling us not to make moral judgments. In the following verses, he explains that we are not to be hypocritical. We may only see the speck in another person's eye and not notice the log in our own eye.

One of the current myths being spread by many atheists is that the Bible condones slavery. This is hard to accept if you just

look at history. Most abolitionists in this country or Great Britain were Bible-believing Christians. Paul Copan has chapters in many of his books addressing the misunderstanding of the concept of debt-servanthood or indentured servitude that is nothing like slavery. He also addresses another one of the myths listed: that the God of the Old Testament is an Angry Tribal Deity.

Newsweek is correct that much of America is biblically illiterate. And the writers in *The Federalist* are right that many have accepted these cultural myths about the Bible. That is why we need to study God's Word and take the time to read some good books that destroy these myths.

January 23, 2015

Faith and Charity

Here is an interesting fact. Families in San Francisco give almost exactly the same amount to charity each year as families in South Dakota. Arthur Brooks talked about this in his book, *Who Really Cares?* He went on to explain that these two communities were very different. They were separated by not only geography but by many cultural differences.

Their donations to charity also represented a significant difference due to income. The average San Francisco family made (back when the book was written) nearly twice as much each year as a family in South Dakota. Put another way, an average South Dakota family gave away 75 percent more of its household income each year than the average family in San Francisco. When Brooks asked an executive of a foundation in South Dakota why people in her state gave so much more, she had a simple answer: religion.

People of faith give much more than secular people. In his book, he divides Americans into four groups to show their differences in giving to charity.

Religious conservatives are the largest group of the four. They represent 24 percent of all Protestants, 19 percent of Catholics, along with a number of other religious groups. This group is most likely to give money to charity and they give away the most money.

Religious liberals are the smallest of the four groups. They are almost as likely to give as religious conservatives. They are a little less likely to volunteer.

Secular conservatives are much less likely to give to charity. They are also much less likely to volunteer or help people in need. Secular liberals are the second largest group and have the highest average income. Nevertheless they are poor givers, even to secular charities they might be expected to support.

The obvious conclusion is that faith makes a big difference in whether someone gives time or money to a charity.

This blog post originally appeared at pointofview.net/viewpoints/faith-charity/ on December 9, 2014.

Liberated Women and their Daughters

April 21, 2011

Over the last few decades, social commentators have written about the lack of modesty in the current generation and the reasons for it. A recent contribution to the discussion came

from an [op-ed](#) by Jennifer Moses entitled “Why Do We Let Them Dress Like That?” She talks about women of a liberated generation who now wrestle with their eager-to-grow-up daughters and their own pasts.

She attempts to answer a simple question: “Why do so many of us not only permit our teenage daughters to dress like this—like prostitutes, if we’re being honest with ourselves—but pay for them to do it with our AmEx cards?” It’s a good question. When you see a young girl dressed provocatively, you have to wonder who paid for it. After all, a young girl usually doesn’t have the financial means to pay for the outfits she wears. So why does Mom go along with this?

Jennifer Moses has an answer. “We are the first moms in history to have grown up with widely available birth control, the first who didn’t have to worry about getting knocked up. We were also the first not only to be free of old-fashioned fears about our reputation but actually pressured by our peers and the wider culture to find our true womanhood in the bedroom.”

While those experiences could actually be used by moms to warn their daughters of the dangers of a promiscuous lifestyle, they do just the opposite. These feminist don’t want to be considered hypocrites.

And the mothers are conflicted. Jennifer Moses talks about a mother she knows with two mature daughters who said: “If I could do it again, I wouldn’t even have slept with my own husband before marriage.”

The Bible teaches in 1 Timothy 2:9 that “women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control.” Even secular social commentators have talked about a [“return to modesty.”](#)

Jennifer Moses helps us understand why teaching modesty to this generation of young girls have become so difficult for

their mothers. It's time for mothers to stop worrying about being called hypocrites and start acting like mothers. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.

Men With Bibles

September 2, 2011

God works in miraculous ways to get His Word to believers who need it. I thought I might share a story I read years ago in a book entitled *Unsolved Miracles*. John VanDiest of Multnomah Publishers compiled a number of stories, and the following one I think would be of great encouragement to you.

"In a village in the mountains of Iran, a number of new believers heard that they could find out more about Jesus if they could get the book the Christians called the Bible. One night, a man had a dream that if he went down to the highway, some men would come by who would be able to give him a Bible.

"The next day, he gathered a little offering of money from among the believers in the village, and made his way down the mountainside to the highway that ran through the area. He sat on a rock and began to wait.

"Some time later, two men in a car just 'happened' to pick up a shipment of Bibles across the border. They were driving along the same highway when the steering on their car suddenly locked. They couldn't move it more than an inch.

"They finally nudged the steering wheel just enough to get the car over to the side of the road. They got out and put up the hood to figure out what was wrong. A man sitting on a nearby rock called out to them, 'Are you the men with the Bibles?'

“Stunned that this man should know, they admitted, ‘Well, yes we do have Bibles.’ The old man gave them all the money he had collected, bought as many Bibles as he could, and made his way back to the village.

“The men with the Bibles then went back to determine what was wrong with their car, but could find nothing. They shrugged their shoulders, got in, and drove away.”

Isn't that a wonderful story? I believe it is just a glimpse of the wonderful ways God is getting His Word to His people even in remote parts of the earth. I'm Kerby Anderson, and that's my point of view.

Under God

Oct. 25, 2013

Every year there are lawsuits attempting to remove the phrase “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance or to remove “One Nation Under God” from our coins. But where did the phrase originate? Anyone who was supposed to memorize Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address could probably answer that question.

When Lincoln traveled to that Pennsylvania town in November 1863 to dedicate a national cemetery, he used the opportunity to define (we might even say, to redefine) the nature and purpose of this “great Civil War.” He concluded his speech by saying “that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

There is some indication that Lincoln added the words “under God” while sitting on the stage since they are not found in

the copy of the speech he carried to the ceremony. All who heard the speech agree that he used the words “under God” and it is found in subsequent copies of the speech that he wrote out in longhand.

It is possible that Lincoln adopted those words from George Washington (either indirectly or directly). One of Lincoln’s favorite books as a child was Parson Ween’s biography The Life of George Washington. The phrase is used in a description of Washington’s death.

It is also possible that Lincoln also knew of George Washington’s orders to the Continental Army. Washington’s written orders said “The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this army.” On July 9, 1776 he directed that Declaration of Independence be read aloud to the troops so that they would know “that now the peace and safety of the Country depends, under God, solely on the success of our arms.”

Today we often use the phrase “under God” and it worth knowing about its rich history. Let us pray that the anti-God forces never remove it from our country. I’m Kerby Anderson and that’s my point of view.

Science or Religion?

October 3, 2013

The latest debate about science textbooks has surfaced a typical complaint about the scientific basis of intelligent design. Critics of intelligent design say that it is not science because it cannot be falsified. But nearly every critic then goes on to argue that intelligent design has been

falsified. Obviously it can't be both falsifiable and non-falsifiable at the same time. Such is the level of argumentation against intelligent design.

✖ But there is another argument I find even more fascinating. It is that intelligent design cannot be considered science because it has religious implications. As I point out in my book, *A Biblical Point of View on Intelligent Design*, just because an idea has religious (or philosophical implications) shouldn't necessarily disqualify it from scientific consideration. There are significant religious and philosophical implications for Darwinian evolution. Consider just a few of these.

Oxford biologist Richard Dawkins believes that Darwinian evolution provides the foundation for his atheism and claims that "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."

Daniel Dennett says: "In the beginning, there were no reasons; there were only causes. Nothing had a purpose, nothing has so much as a function; there was no teleology in the world at all."

Princeton bioethicist Peter Singer argues that we must "face the fact that we are evolved animals and that we bear the evidence of our inheritance, not only in our anatomy and our DNA, but in our behavior too."

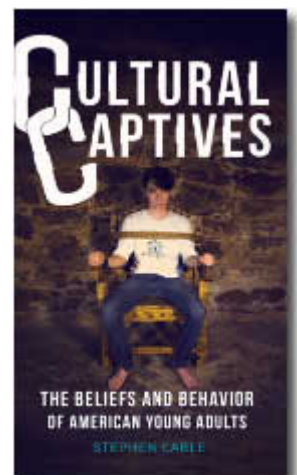
Each of these men draws religious or philosophical inferences from the theory of evolution. Does that disqualify evolutionary theory? Is evolution unscientific because there are religious and philosophical implications? No. Likewise, intelligent design's possible implications should not render it unscientific.

Cultural Captives

June 14, 2013

Despite what you have heard, Christian young people are not doing fine. That is the conclusion of Stephen Cable in his new book, *Cultural Captives: The Beliefs and Behavior of American Young Adults*. [Stephen Cable](#) serves as Senior Vice-President of Probe Ministries.

As I have mentioned in previous commentaries, the percentage of people generally who check “none of the above” for religious preference is increasing. That is especially true of young people. In fact, the percentage of emerging adults who do not claim any affiliation with Christianity rose from 20% in 1990 to over 37% of the population today.



Stephen Cable found that only 14 percent of born-again, emerging adults combine a biblical worldview with biblical practices, such as reading the Bible or attending church. He also found that less than 2 percent of born-again, emerging adults apply a biblical worldview to life choices. In other words, only this small percentage has biblical beliefs on topics ranging from abortion to sex outside marriage to science and faith.

This is a major reason why Probe Ministries has developed an integrated strategy aimed at reversing these trends. The learning experience involves an entire church congregation over a seven-week period and includes sermons, videos, original music, and additional material for individuals and

small groups.

Stephen Cable's book is a wake up call to the church. We need to reverse these ominous trends and do it quickly before the trends become even worse.