

FIG LEAVES

Volume 13 Issue 6

June 2004

June Meeting: Tuesday, 22 June

Title: New Religious Threats to American Freedoms

Speaker: Zachary Miner

In America today there is little more dangerous to the values of freethinkers and skeptics of religion than attempts to tear down the wall of separation between church and state. Freedom of, and from, religion has been a revered part of American life for over two centuries, but recent movements have worked to chip away at this founding principle. While the Newdow Pledge case is being considered by the Supreme Court, it is important to take a look at some of the other attempts by the Religious Right to tear down the wall and bring religion into public life.

One of the most ominous of these attempts is the *Mind Siege* movement, which is based upon a book of the same name by right-wing Christians Tim LaHaye and David Noebel. In their book, they present the argument that secular humanism is a religion which has taken over America's educational system, and further suggest that Christianity should be allowed in the schools to counter this secular plot. In his talk, Zachary Miner will show clips from *Mind Siege*'s companion video series, present the arguments made by LaHaye and Noebel, and explain why the *Mind Siege* movement should be of concern to secularists and freethinkers.

Zachary Miner is a Campus and Community Organizer with the Center for Inquiry -- an international educational organization promoting the scientific outlook and its implications for society's most cherished beliefs -- where organizations such as the Council for Secular Humanism and CSICOP are headquartered. He travels and lectures widely on issues surrounding the Christian Right. The Council for Secular Humanism will be sending out letters to over 200 Free Inquiry subscribers in the area with information about Miner's talk and about FIG.

July Meeting: July 27, 2004

Speaker: Wolf Roder

What's the good of Mercator's North Poles and
Equators, Tropics, Zones and Meridian Lines?

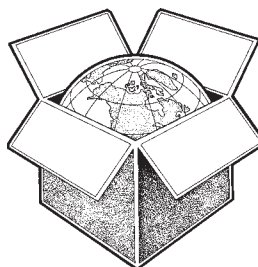
So the Bellman would cry:

And the crew would reply,

"They are merely conventional signs!"

– Lewis Carrol, *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876)

Some things are really impossible and will never be done by god or governor. Professor Emeritus Wolf Roder will tell you what can and what can't and generally talk about maps, and why some of them look like oddly shapes hearts, lozenges, eggs, ovals, and just plain rectangles may make poor maps.



Inside

	<u>Page</u>
May Meeting Report by George Maurer	2
Honoring the Insects	4
Prayer Study Flawed	5
End-of Life Choices	6
<i>The Case for Humanism: An Introduction</i> by Lewis Vaughn & Austin Dacey	
Book Review	7

Events

June Potluck

Tuesday, 8 June 6:30 PM
at the home of the
Joe & Barbara Levee

June Meeting

Tuesday, 22 June 7:00 PM
at the Vernon Manor
400 Oak Street,
Cincinnati, Ohio

July Potluck

Sunday, 11 July 2:00 PM
at the home of the
Philip & Martha Ferguson

July Meeting

Tuesday, 27 July 7:00 PM
at the Vernon Manor
400 Oak Street,
Cincinnati, Ohio



May Meeting Report

Mark Twain on Religion

by Tim Madigan, Director University of Rochester Press

Tim started off his talk but outlining what aspects of Twain's work he would address, namely his lesser known writings particularly those dealing with religion.

He related how he belonged to an informal group in Rochester, NY, who called themselves the Mark Twain Gang. He went on to say that Rochester was an appropriate place for this type of venture because it was between Buffalo, where Twain had his last job and Elmira, where he did much of his writing, spent his summers with his wife and children, and where he and his wife are buried. He also mentioned that there is a group in Buffalo who are trying to establish a museum to honor him because most of the cities where Twain spent any time have such a museum. But much of what Twain had to say about Buffalo was not very favorable.

Much of Twain's more controversial work was published posthumously. His daughter Clara who was his literary executor didn't want some of these works to be published. It is even debatable that he, himself, wanted some of these works to be published. He may have just been letting off steam.

Certainly it was with a different voice than many people who were familiar with his more humorous writings knew. A book published in 1962, called *Letters from the Earth*, contains many of these darker writings of Twain. In fact, Tim remarked, he knew someone who has worked with Mark Twain papers who claimed many of his writings had not been published even today. Shelley Fishkin, a scholar very much involved in Mark Twain studies recently brought out an unpublished play called *Is He Dead?*

Tim then used a seminar he had attended to usher in a discussion of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. The seminar's purpose was to honor the 100th birthday of Bing Crosby. A friend wanted to attend and Tim agreed to go along. Tim remembered that Bing Crosby had appeared in the movie version of Twain's book so he decided to read a paper about how the movie differed enormously from the novel. It turned out the person chairing the session had edited the novel for publication. In fact, a lot of the material in Tim's paper was cribbed from this chairman. He also told Tim that many of his students are surprised because the novel is not what they thought it would be. Parts of the novel are very dark. When Twain planned the novel, he didn't anticipate it would turn into a serious critique of religion. To write the book, he did a lot of research and the more research he did, the angrier he became. He has passages in which he describes the burning of witches, the persecution of people who have different belief systems. The hero, Hank Morgan, lets all his workers know that within the confines of his factory they are free to believe whatever they want. As a result they start the Protestant Reformation several centuries early. The first edition of the book contained cartoon illustrations unrelated to the stories. One of these showed a Bishop kicking a king who in turn was kicking a duke who was kicking a peasant; the moral being that it was the peasant who got the shaft. In later editions the cartoons were removed as being too controversial.

When Mark Twain returned to the US in 1900 after almost a decade in Europe, he turned even more to social criticism than previously. One example was his *War Prayer*. Tim quoted it extensively; the final paragraphs are illuminative of this criticism,



FIG Leaves - Editors welcome thoughtful articles, letters, reviews, reports, anecdotes, and cartoons. Submit in Electronic format via the internet - figleaves@fuse.net; on disk or typewritten via mail to Editor, FIG Leaves, P.O. Box 19034, Cincinnati, OH 45219. Contributions received before the first Friday of the month will be considered for publication that month. All material printed in FIG Leaves may be reproduced in similar publications of non-profit groups which grant FIG Leaves reciprocal reprinting rights as long as proper credit is clearly attributed to FIG Leaves and the authors and do not necessarily reflect opinions of the editor or the Free Inquiry Group, Inc., its board, or officers.

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albeit obliquely:

O Lord, our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle – be Thou near them! With them—in spirit—we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord, our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells: help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste to their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to ring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sport of the sun-flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, strain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

Another aspect of Twain of particular interest to FIG members are his sharp critiques of religion. He was able to use humor to point up some flaws in the Old and New Testaments and dramatized the way religion keeps people from thinking and making their own judgments. He insisted at times that he was the true Devil’s Advocate. He explained no one ever came to the defense of Satan and so he was going to. He does this in many of his writings, but Tim’s favorite in this respect is *Letters from the Earth*. In it is a quarrel in heaven and Lucifer is banished for a brief time. He wanders around and comes to this planet called Earth. He writes letters back to Gabriel and Michael saying that this place is peopled by weird beings who have a view of heaven that has left entirely out of it the supremest of all his delights, the one ecstasy that stands first and foremost in the heart of every individual of his race – and of ours—sexual intercourse!

Finally he writes: I will tell you a pleasant tale which has a touch of pathos. A man got religion and he asked a priest what he must do to be worthy of his new estate. The priest said “Imitate our Father in heaven; learn to be like him.” The man studied his Bible carefully and diligently and then with prayers for heavenly guidance, instituted his imitation. He tricked his wife into falling down stairs. She broke her back and she was invalided for life. He betrayed his brother into the hands of a sharper, robbed him of all and landed him in the

alms-house. He inoculated one son with sleeping sickness, another with hookworm and another with gonorrhoea, he furnished one daughter with scarlet fever and ushered her into her teens deaf, dumb and blind for life and after helping a rascal seduce the remaining one, he closed his doors against her and she wound up in a brothel cursing him. Then he reported to the priest, who said that was no way to imitate his Father in Heaven. The convert asked wherein he had failed because he had read the Old Testament and that seemed to be what God does. But the priest changed the subject.

Tim next turned to a consideration of Twain as a philosopher. As such, he was taken more seriously in Europe than in his own country. One of the last works he wrote was never published in his lifetime. *The Mysterious Stranger* is a novella set in the Middle Ages and it is not humorous. It is an interesting exploration of whether we are free. Twain thought we are all determined in some way, and that we are not truly in control of our lives. The main character in the book is Satan, not the Biblical one but *his nephew*. He encounters three Bavarian youths who alone can perceive him. He tells them he is there to investigate human freedom or if man is not free at all. Toward the end of the story one youth asks Satan to save a falsely accused priest. Satan is reluctant; because he tells the youth, whenever he does get involved in a human fate there are unintended consequences. He further elaborates that if God answered prayers, people would not be happy with the outcomes. Satan finally accedes to the request and he does interfere, assuring the youth that the priest will be very happy. Then he makes the priest go insane and so he is found not guilty.

Finally the youth asks Satan “what about the future?” Tim then quoted from the story; here is what Satan says:

I know your race. It is made up of sheep; it is governed by minorities seldom by majorities. It suppresses feelings and beliefs and follows the handful that makes the most noise. Monarchies, aristocracies, religions are all based on a large defect in your race, an individual’s distrust of his neighbor and a desire for safety or comfort’s sake to stand well in his neighbor’s eyes. Institutions will always remain and will always flourish, always oppress you, affront you, degrade you because you will always be and remain slaves of minorities. There was never a country where any of the people were in their secret heart loyal to any of these institutions.”

That quote will conclude my report.

– reported by George Maurer



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In the time of the Cicadas we Honor the Insects:

The great geneticist and secular humanist J. B. S. Haldane was once asked by a reporter what he thought god intended with the world. Which led Haldane to comment, why do reporters always ask biologists to comment on god, and question preachers about biology. On the question itself, he said god must have a special love for insects, for he made so many of them.

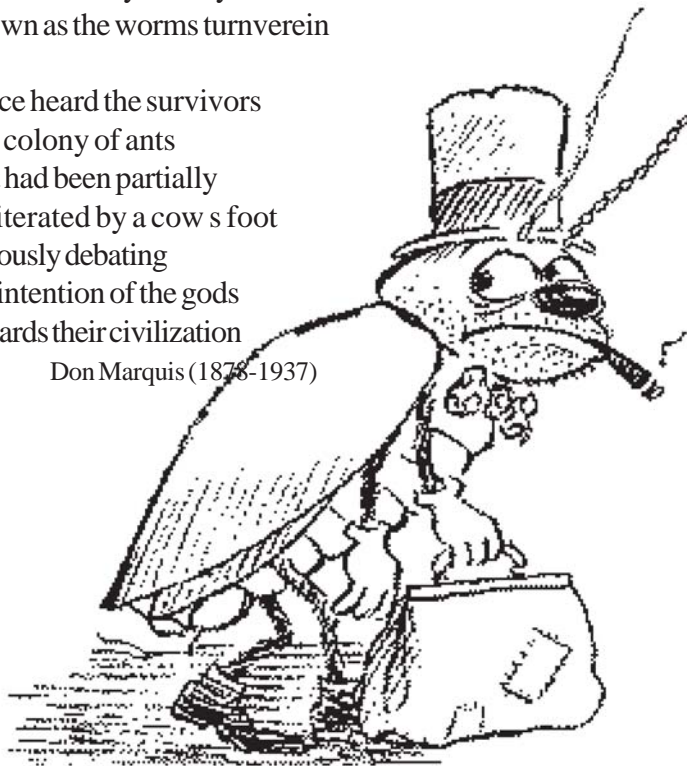
Thoughts of Archy, a cockroach

i do not see why men
should be so proud
insects have the more
ancient lineage
according to the scientists
insects were insects
when man was only
a burbling whatsit

insects are not always
going to be bullied
by humanity
some day they will revolt
i am already organizing
a revolutionary society to be
known as the worms turnverein

i once heard the survivors
of a colony of ants
that had been partially
obliterated by a cow s foot
seriously debating
the intention of the gods
towards their civilization

Don Marquis (1878-1937)



Ode to the Periodic Cicada

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Good morning to sweet solitude!
Stretching awake before the sun is up.
Birds outside singing their interlude.
Blissful silence only birds disrupt.

But I know, in my back yard,
A hidden menace lurks in the trees.
Waiting for the sun to show its card,
Sitting still quietly, not seen.

Slowly rising sun will now bring,
A distant, hollow wooden sound.
Birds in the trees above still sing,
The hidden menace still lurks all around.

The first one buzzes on a nearby branch,
Another buzz answers that raspy call,
More buzzes spread to each branch,
All at once, buzzing erupts from them all!



Infusing its warmth is the sun overhead,
Big black bugs in the trees come alive,
Beady red eyes on each side of its head,
Flex silky wings as they ready to fly.

Heat radiates as the sun heads down,
Trees are alive with an ear splitting sound,
Now being heard all over town,
Big black bugs buzzing, flying around.

With the setting sun on the horizon far,
Big black bugs in the trees start to settle,
Buzzing recedes below the sound of a car.
The soothing of cocoa, I put on the kettle.

The cool clear night has come,
Twinkling stars in the sky do shine,
As blissful silence surrounds my home,
Settle to sleep in silence so fine.





From: E-Skeptic # 21 for 25 May 2004 (www.skeptic.com) This important report from Skeptic Bruce L. Flamm, MD, Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of California, Irvine, (Bruceflamm@aol.com)

Prayer Study Flawed and Fraud Columbia University prayer study author pleads guilty to felony charges

In the horrible days following the destruction of the World Trade Center by Islamic zealots many Americans prayed for a miracle or a sign from God. Such a miracle apparently occurred and was widely documented in newspaper and magazine articles. On October 2, 2001 the New York Times reported that researchers at prestigious Columbia University in New York found that infertile women who were prayed for became pregnant twice as often as those who did not have people praying for them. The study's results were absolutely miraculous.

In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) is the most advanced form of infertility treatment currently available and represents the last hope for women with severe infertility. Therefore, any technique that could increase the efficacy of IVF by even a few percent would be a medical breakthrough. Yet the Columbia University study claimed to have demonstrated, in a carefully designed randomized controlled trial, that distant prayer by anonymous prayer groups increased the success rate of IVF by an astounding 100%.

Days later an article published in newspapers around the nation stated that Rogerio Lobo, chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at Columbia and the study's lead author, told Reuters Health that, "Essentially, there was a doubling of the pregnancy rate in the group that was prayed for." ABC News medical editor and Good Morning America commentator Dr. Timothy Johnson reported that, "A new study on the power of prayer over pregnancy reports surprising results; but many physicians remain skeptical." The following facts related to the Columbia University prayer study confirm that those physicians who doubted the study's astounding results had extremely good reasons to be skeptical. It will be interesting to see if ABC's Dr. Johnson, a medical doctor who also serves as an evangelical minister at the fundamentalist Community Covenant Church in West Peabody, Massachusetts, will report or ignore the following shocking information.

The study's three authors were Kwang Cha, Rogerio Lobo, and Daniel Wirth. Dr. Cha, has left Columbia University and refuses to return phone calls or letters about the report. Dr. Rogerio Lobo, identified by the New York Times and ABC News as the report's lead author, now claims to have not been involved with the study until after its completion and to have provided only, "editorial assistance". Dr. Lobo also refuses to return phone calls or letters about the study. If the report's lead author did not conduct the international prayer study, who did?

The remaining author is a mysterious individual known as Daniel Wirth. Mr.

Wirth has no medical degree but does have a long history of publishing studies on mysterious supernatural or paranormal phenomena. Many of these studies originated from an entity called, "Healing Sciences Research International" an organization that Mr. Wirth supposedly headed. This entity's only known address was apparently a Post Office Box in Orinda California. Wirth holds an MS degree in the dubious field of "parapsychology" and also has a law degree.

In October 2002, Mr. Wirth, along with his former research associate Joseph Horvath also known as Joseph Hessler, was indicted by a federal grand jury. Both men were charged with bilking the troubled cable television provider Adelphia Communications Corporation out of \$2.1 million by infiltrating the company, then having it pay for unauthorized consulting work. Police investigators discovered that Wirth is also known as John Wayne Truelove. FBI investigators revealed that Wirth first used the name of Truelove, a New York child who died at age 5 in 1959, to obtain a passport in the mid-1980's. Wirth and his accomplice were charged with 13 counts of mail fraud, 12 counts of interstate transportation of stolen money, making false statements on loan applications and five other counts of fraud. The federal grand jury concluded that the relationship between Wirth and Horvath extended back more than 20 years and involved more than \$3.4 million in income and property obtained by using the names of children who died more than 40 years ago.

Incredibly, at the time of the indictment, Horvath was already in jail charged with arson for burning down his Pennsylvania house to collect insurance money. The FBI investigation revealed that Horvath had previously gone to prison after being convicted in a 1990 embezzlement and false identity case in California. Interestingly, the investigation also revealed that he had also once been arrested for posing as a doctor in California. It appears that the "doctor" who performed biopsies on human research subjects in Wirth's paranormal healing studies may have actually been Mr. Horvath impersonating a doctor. Horvath was a co-author on another of Wirth's bizarre studies in which salamander limbs were amputated and found to grow back more quickly when "healers" waived their hands over the wounds.

Both Wirth and Horvath initially pled innocent to the felony charges and over the next 18 months their trial was delayed six times. However, on May 18, 2004, just as the criminal trial of the United States v. Wirth & Horvath was finally about to begin, both men pled guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud. Apparently a plea bargain had been made and many of the charges had been dropped. Wirth and Horvath will be sentenced in September and they each face a maximum of five years in federal prison. In summary, one of the authors of the Columbia University prayer study has left the University and refuses to comment, another now claims to have not actually participated in the study and also refuses to





comment, and another is on his way to federal prison for fraud. Fraud is the operative word here.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of this entire sordid saga can be summed up in one question: How did a bizarre study claiming supernatural results end up in a peer-reviewed medical journal? We may never know because the editors of the *Journal of Reproductive Medicine* also refuse to answer calls or respond to letters about this study. Worse yet, the entire study remains posted on their internet site and the public has been given no reason to doubt its validity. It must be emphasized that, in the entire history of modern science, no claim of any type of supernatural phenomena has ever been replicated under controlled conditions. The importance of this fact can not be over-emphasized. One would think that medical journal editors would be keenly aware of this fact and therefore be highly skeptical of supernatural claims. In any case, the damage has been done. The fact that a "miracle cure" study was deemed to be suitable for publication in a scientific journal automatically enhanced the study's credibility. Not surprisingly, the news media quickly disseminated the miraculous results.

In reality, the Columbia University prayer study was based on a bewildering study design and included many sources of error. I have already summarized many of the study's potential flaws in two critiques published in the *Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine*. But worse than flaws, in light of all of the shocking information presented above, one must consider the sad possibility that the Columbia prayer study may never have been conducted at all. It remains to be seen if the news media will find the above information to be newsworthy.

End-of-Life Choices

Cincinnati now has its own chapter of the End-Of-Life Choices organization. On Saturday, May 15, Judy Snyderman welcomed everyone attending the initial meeting and introduced the group of individuals who were responsible for launching this new group, including FIG board member Joe Levee. A group from Louisville came to gather ideas on how to get their own group started and Linda Lyman, from the Miami Valley Chapter shared some experiences from her one year old group.

Program ideas were solicited and lots of interesting suggestions and discussion took place including the issues of living wills, hospices, powers of attorney, policies in Catholic facilities, and the critical importance of the doctor-patient relationship at the end of life.

We have all heard of situations where hospitals balk at following the patient's directives. It was suggested that you should ensure that your doctor is fully supportive of your directives because, if so, he can help overcome the hospital's reluctance. If your doctor can't change the hospital, End-of-Life Choices will send an advocate to seek to influence the hospital's position.

One focus of the group remains the need to help make people aware of all the choices and options available, especially if pain and suffering diminish their quality of life beyond what is tolerable. It was pointed out that Europe generally has a much more enlightened view of these issues and one attendee shared that if this country does not make significant advances she has, if circumstances require it, made arrangements to be flown to her native Switzerland where she is confident her end of life wishes will be respected.

In addition to education, this group also wants to help make this plane flight unnecessary by working on legislation. Linda Lyman asked for us to help pass a law which will ensure palliative care be available in all nursing homes and medical facilities in Ohio. In addition to pain control, palliative care addresses all other end of life issues the patient might have.

In conclusion we watched a very touching video, *Gentle Endings*, in which actual families told their own stories about dealing with these difficult issues; made even harder by the lack of progressive legislation. And finally we enjoyed refreshments and had the opportunity to meet and continue the discussion informally.

The End-of-Life Choices group agreed to meet quarterly. For more information call Judy Snyderman at 573-9787 or e-mail her at mmjudy@aol.com.

-- reported by Margaret O'Kain

Quote
• If there is a supreme being, he is crazy.
• — Marlene Dietrich (1901-1992)
.....
Unquote

Nominations for the FIG Board of Directors:

Eight members must be elected to bring the Board to its full strength of twelve. As directed in the Bylaws, the Board has prepared the following slate of candidates. Additional nominations will be accepted from FIG members at the June meeting. The election will take place at our meeting in July. The nominees must be FIG member-

- Philip Ferguson
- Michele Grinoch
- Inez Klein
- Joe Levee
- Donna Loughry
- George Maurer
- Bill O'Kain
- Bryan Sellers



Donna Loughry has been proposed because she has become the FIG web master and also partners with Wolf on the publication of FIG Leaves. Bill O'Kain will be a candidate to take over the position of Treasurer.



BOOK REVIEW

The Case for Humanism: An Introduction
by Lewis Vaughn and Austin Dacey
(Rowman & Littlefield, 2003)

This is really the textbook for Humanism 101, a basic philosophy course. Before all else the purpose of this book is to let us acquire an accurate and thorough grasp of the ideas of humanism. It is designed as a text or supplementary material for a college course. Each chapter ends with study and discussion questions, suggestions for research problems, and a list of further readings. I would recommend this book strongly for anyone trying to obtain a comprehensive view of humanistic thought.

The book is laid out exceptionally clearly. Early on the authors provide 17 propositions which they intend to investigate. Examples look like this: (p. 9)

- 2. Are we merely physical systems with brains, but devoid of immaterial souls?
- 7. Morality cannot be based on anything supernatural or on the nonrational.
- 12. Does science undermine supernatural religion?
- 13. Is there any warrant for believing in any of the traditional god or gods?

The authors go out of their way to define the specialized terminology needed for philosophy in general and specifically for an examination of humanist thought. In fact, for humanism itself they give no less than five definitions (p. 7.) Humanism is a worldview or life stance which relies on science and naturalism and emphasizes human beings as the actors and creators in the world. Human reason alone enables us to make sense out of the real world, to develop democratic societies, and to invent justice and ethics.

Although humanistic ideas undoubtedly existed before classical antiquity in China and India, for us humanism is generally thought to have begun with the ancient Greeks. The Greeks were the first to investigate questions of nature and mathematics as problems for their own sake, – the beginning of *basic* science, rather than knowledge for some practical end. They also questioned the existence of the gods, and whence derive our ideas of right and wrong. To Socrates (470-399 BCE) the unexamined life was not worth living, and the questions of politics and ethics were good and ends in

themselves.

Humanism died or was suppressed during the long ages of Christian church dominance when God and the Pope dictated what was good and right. Only the Renaissance revived the brilliant explosion of classical Greek thought and culture. In this period also, the concept of humanism, as a culture made by man, was invented. In the 18th century the Enlightenment enthroned human reason as the great liberator which taught us to question the dictates of church and government. To Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804) the unreasoned life was a kind of slavery.

The authors of *The Case for Humanism* carefully explicate the thought and arguments of humanistic authors as they developed. They are meticulous to inform us exactly who, that is which writers and philosophers of the past and present, were opposed to humanist thought or contradicted the ideas of humanism. In fact, the authors either summarize the arguments of their opponents, or, extremely usefully, quote them at length in side boxes. Thus, they gradually build up a general history of philosophical thought to show exactly where humanistic philosophy and arguments fit and interacted with related philosophical ideas. We gradually learn to appreciate the great extent to which humanist thought has shaped our modern world and society.

Major topics discussed in the realm of this philosophy are: what is human nature, do we have freedom of choice and how is that possible, what is the moral life, how can we discern truth and knowledge. Through most of history humanism has struggled with the god question, and with the contest between religion and science. Is there any knowledge besides and beyond the knowledge acquired by reason and with the bodily senses? A final chapter is devoted to the very active and modern issue of humanistic thought in society and politics.

– Wolf Roder

Just a Note

- A Generous Offer by Brant Abrahamson from our
- speaker on the Hebrew Bible on 27 April 2004.
- Any FIG member interested in the history of the *Hebrew*
- *Bible* can receive a written script of his April 27 FIG
- meeting lecture (16 pages) and/or the 13 lesson series (94
- pages) that his colleague and he developed for young adults.
- Send an e-mail request to teacherspr@aol.com or a post
- card to Brant Abrahamson, 3731 Madison Avenue,
- Brookfield, IL 60513. Include your postal address and
- specify “script” and/or “lesson series.” There is no charge.



June Meeting: Tuesday 22th 7 PM

July Potluck: Sunday 11th 2:00 PM



FIG Leaves
P.O. Box 19034
Cincinnati, OH 45219

FIG

Our Purpose

The Free Inquiry Group, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1991. FIG is allied with the Council for Secular Humanism as well as an affiliate of the American Humanist Association and of the American Atheists. Our members are mostly secular humanists. However, we welcome to our meetings anyone interested in learning about or furthering our purpose.

To foster a community of secular humanists dedicated to improving the human condition through rational inquiry and creative thinking unfettered by superstition, religion, or any form of dogma.

In accordance with our purpose, we have established the following goals:

- To provide a forum for intelligent exchange of ideas for those seeking fulfillment in an ethical secular life.
- To develop through open discussion the moral basis of a secular society and encourage ethical practices within our own membership and the community at large.
- To inform the public regarding secular alternatives to supernatural interpretations of the human condition.
- To support and defend the principles of democracy, free speech, and separation of church and state as expressed in the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.

For more information, write the Free Inquiry Group at the address above, e-mail figleaves@fuse.net, or leave a message at (513) 557-3836. Visit our web site at gofigger.org