

THE ATHEIST VOICE

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Prodigal son Frank Schaeffer roasts Religious Right

Rob Boston
AMERICANS UNITED

It's always interesting when a high-profile Religious Right activist has a change of heart.

Consider Frank Schaeffer. The name may not be familiar to you, but Schaeffer's father, theologian and Presbyterian pastor Francis Schaeffer, was pivotal in the creation of the Religious Right. As John W. Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute wrote recently, "In fact, without the influence of Francis Schaeffer, who often was prodded into action by Frank, the so-called Christian Right of today would not exist."

Whitehead asserts that Francis Schaeffer's books *How Should We Then Live?* and *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* "set the tone and agenda for the emerging Christian Right" and that without them "it is highly unlikely that people such as Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, James Dobson, Tim LaHaye and others would have had the political influence they wield." (Frank Schaeffer later made both books into films that were hugely influential in the evangelical community.)



Frank Schaeffer's new book *Crazy for God* (Cover shown above) has shed a new unflattering light on the rise of the Religious Right.

Frank Schaeffer shared his father's opinions and, as an adult, worked alongside him. He had an insider's view of the rise of the Religious Right. Father and son were there at the movement's birth and worked with some of its biggest names.

What does Frank Schaeffer think about the Religious Right these days? Let's just say he's not a fan. He refers to Robertson as "a lunatic" and says Dobson is "a power-

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SOCAS

GA reconstructionist may get to see 'Rock City'

Jeremy Leaming
AMERICANS UNITED

A longtime Atlanta megachurch leader with ties to the extreme Christian Reconstructionist agenda is under a criminal investigation for possible perjury.

Earl Paulk Jr. was pastor of Chapel Hill Harvester Church (now called the Cathedral at Chapel Hill), at one time one of Atlanta's largest congregations. But in recent years, he has become mired in litigation that is garnering media glare and exposing a web of misdeeds and heartache.

Paulk's charismatic church, which

included a television ministry aired on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, once had a congregation of more than 10,000. But critics of the Religious Right were especially interested in Paulk's ties to Christian Reconstructionism. That ultra-Calvinist theology argues for dismantling America's secular democracy and creating a nation governed by an ultra-fundamentalist version of "biblical law."

Paulk gave a forum to Christian Reconstructionist theorists such as Gary North, who argue for imposing the criminal code of the Old Testament. They want to apply the death penalty for homosexuals, adul-

terers, fornicators, witches, incorrigible juvenile delinquents and those who spread false religions. North thinks stoning is the biblically preferred means of execution.

Paulk's standing as a celebrated spokesperson for the theocratic movement, however, has been shaken because of accusations of sexual misconduct and other unsavory behavior. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported recently on a deposition from Paulk's granddaughter in which she accused the now-80-year-old preacher of sexually inappropriate behavior toward her and her friend when they

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THE BACKSIDE OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Long Before Rove

ED WALLACE

Today we wonder what our political moves in the Middle East will bring this country and the world. Peace, more terrorism, higher or lower priced oil? Will they give us the ability to control whose economy grows in the future? The fact is that no one knows for sure; anyone who tells you they have all the answers is out of their mind.

Once upon a time, however, there was a reasonable chance for peace in the Middle East. One Texan understood the mess that Britain was creating and, as one of our president's closest political advisors, told him the quagmire he was getting us into. His name was Col. Edward Mandell House. House, a seventh son of a seventh son, was

born in Houston on July 26, 1858. His father, a banker and plantation owner, had fought with General Burleson during the fight for our Republic; as House wrote in 1916, "My father lived long enough to see Mexico become Texas, join the Union, leave the Union and return once again."

Even as a young man, House seems to have been affected by the Civil War, by the lawlessness that hit Houston and his father's successful businesses. He recalled many nights when his father stood protecting his cotton warehouses with a shotgun. In time, after the war, House and most of his brothers joined the Ku Klux Klan. But in those days, Klan membership was something politically active young men did.

House would be a lifelong Democrat. He went to college at Cornell, but had to leave before graduation due to his father's death. And, although he inherited wealth, House longed for a career in politics. Not as a candidate, but as a man who made candidates.

House was successful, for it was he who handled the reelection campaign for Governor James S. Hogg in 1892; in return Hogg gave him the honorary title of Colonel. House went on to advise the next two Texas governors.

However, by 1910, House wanted to move on to national politics. Uprooting his family, he moved to New York, where the very next year he was introduced to Woodrow Wilson. The two immediately hit it off, and House was instrumental in getting Wilson

elected. Remember, 1912's presidential race was three-way between Wilson, Taft and Roosevelt. It was House who managed to get William Jennings Bryan's support for Wilson, insuring his landslide election. Wilson then allowed House to help pick his cabinet, which is why it included three Texans. And for the next seven years, Col. Edward Mandell House was Wilson's closest friend and chief political advisor.

In fact, in both 1915 and 1916, it was House that Wilson sent to Europe to try to negotiate peace between the warring parties. He failed, and the war dragged on. Still, by 1917 it was almost imperative that America enter the war. There was just one problem; anti-imperialism in America was

still high, a political reality left over from the Spanish American War and the Filipino Insurrection. Wilson's public persona was that of a man of peace, and his public platform was self-determination for all mankind within their political boundaries. Remember, once we entered that war, our battle cry was that we were "making the world safe for democracy."

That wasn't necessarily true. Wilson, a supremacist, had no intention of forcing countries to abandon the colonies they already had; he just didn't want them to have any more. But, say we entered the war positioned as an enlightened people trying to set the poor and downtrodden free. If, after the war ended, said downtrodden folks found out that secret agreements had long been made that would further our allies' colonial aims, we'd look like nothing more than a bunch of hypocrites.

Wisely, then, House and Wilson told the British that before America entered that war, Britain would have to come clean: The Allies had to disclose all previously negotiated treaties they had made as to any territorial acquisitions they planned to keep after the conflict. As it turned out, the British, French, Russians and many Arab factions had agreed to so many treaties that the disclosures fairly flooded Washington. Their agreements planned the new world order they would have helped put in place once Germany and the Ottoman Empire had been defeated.

One such document produced for Washington, the Sykes Picot Treaty, divvied up the Middle East. This is an important point: When he read that treaty, Col. House told the President that its implementation would begin a series of non-stop wars in the Middle East that would never end. Writing to British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour about this deceptive agreement, House asserted, "It is all bad, you are doing nothing more than making the Middle East a breeding place for future wars." That's right, back in 1917 one perceptive Texan accurately foretold how those countries' future would look.

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Edward Mandell House
(Library of Congress)

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Historic civil rights group recognizes Nontheists' struggle

SECULAR COALITION

The Secular Coalition for America has become the newest member of the oldest and most respected civil rights organization in the United States. As one of eight new members joining the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) this year, the Secular Coalition for America will work with the LCCR in its mission to unite all Americans as one nation true to its promise of equal justice, equal opportunity and mutual respect.

Recognition that the nontheistic minority must be included in the struggle for civil rights marks a milestone. There are several religious groups within LCCR's coalition, but the Secular Coalition for America is the first nontheist (atheists, humanists, and other Americans without a god belief) advocacy group to be included. Both organizations agree that religious freedom as protected by the Bill of Rights must also include the freedom to practice no religion.

Secular Coalition Director, Lori Lipman Brown, said, "This decision says as much about the LCCR and its willingness to acknowledge and include nontheists as it does about the Secular Coalition and its recognition of our theistic allies who support our rights."

A total of eight groups were added to the LCCR's coalition at their most recent board meeting:

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN); Center for Responsible Lending; Citizen's Commission on Civil Rights; DC Vote; Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA); Matthew Shepard Foundation; Paralyzed Veterans of America; and the Secular Coalition for America.

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights is the nation's premier civil rights coalition, and has coordinated national legislative campaigns on behalf of every major civil rights law since 1957. LCCR consists of more than 192 national organizations, representing persons of color, women, children, labor unions, individuals with disabilities, older Americans, major religious groups, gays and lesbians and civil liberties and human rights groups.

The Secular Coalition for America was established in 2002 as a 501(c)4 lobbying organization to increase the visibility and respectability of nontheistic viewpoints in the United States, and to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all (www.secular.org).

Metroplex Atheists

New Business Meeting Time

METROPLEX ATHEISTS HAS MOVED THE TIME OF ITS REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING TO 1:00 P.M. THE MEETINGS ARE STILL HELD ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH.

THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED AT:

GRAPEVINE FIRE HALL

**SOUTHWEST CORNER OF HUGHES AND MERLOT AVE,
 GRAPEVINE, TX**

House – From page 2

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, although both England and France had agreed to who got what, Prime Minister Lloyd George was doing everything he could to screw France out of any of the treaty's promised lands. House was stunned; he more than anyone seemed to understand Britain's duplicity - Albion's perfidy. House then went to work helping Wilson draft his 14 Points. See if this sounds familiar: Wilson made sure to underscore the point that he was fighting governments, not the people they enslaved. Point Twelve of his declaration stated that the Middle East should not be divided among the belligerent powers. And that those ruled by the Ottoman Empire should become autonomous once the fighting ended.

In September of 1917, House assembled a committee to formulate America's plans for a postwar world, code-named the Inquiry. Part of the study gave credence to the fact that, to protect its colonies in Asia, England wanted to control a solid line of countries from Egypt to India in the Middle East. Knowing Lloyd George's game plan, House wrote to Wilson, "The English naturally want the road to Egypt and India blocked, and the Prime Minister is not above using us to further this plan."

Wilson, his political career on the line, held to his high vision for the new world. House would travel with him to the Paris Peace Conference after the war; House would be our spokesperson and negotiator when Wilson was absent. He was disgusted with the proceedings, writing, "People and provinces were indeed bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty, as if they were chattels or pawns in a game." Now, here's what really happened. The British did want the Middle East to complete their empire from Egypt to India. They didn't want the French to have Syria, as they didn't trust the French army in the northern regions.

England had already come up with the lunatic plan to move the Muslim Caliph from Constantinople to Mecca; that's why the British aligned with the Emir of Medina and Mecca, Sharif Hussein, in fighting the Turks. The British believed that if they

had the ultimate Muslim religious leader in their back pocket, and the center of their religious fatwas were moved to Arabia, then that Arab group would be the stabilizing force for the entire region. And favor the British. Sound familiar?

Gets better: Hussein was the sworn enemy of the Wahhabi, a fundamentalist group of warriors that also allied with the British. You know this extreme sect as the breeding ground for most of the 9/11 hijackers. Now, here's what you didn't know: The leader of that Wahhabi tribe was Ibn Saud. As in Saud-dee Arabia. There's your connection. Today's Royal Family in Saudi Arabia continues to protect the Wahhabi in their country for a good if hidden reason: They're kin.

And guess who made that mess for us? The British, because they gave that region to the Wahhabi, double-dealing Hussein because they believed that his violent sect was in decline and would be manageable. Sharif Hussein, the Emir of Medina and Mecca, had to settle for something else. He had three sons, Faisal, Ali and Abdullah.

Faisal, an Arab, would be forced on the French to run Syria; they'd throw him out shortly thereafter, and the British would install him as King of Iraq. Abdullah would be given Transjordan, today just Jordan. Even then, though, there was a problem with the Palestinian region. It had been promised both to the Arabs and, by the Balfour Declaration, to the world's Jews as their future homeland. Colonel House knew the British had double-dealt both the Palestinians and the Jews and foresaw trouble forever on that deal also. Here's what you didn't know: At the Peace Conference, the British tried to force the Palestinian Mandate on America. That's right, they just wanted to wash their hands of that one by putting us in charge of that region. Mark Sykes, the young politician who had drawn up all these plans secretly during the war, was spared his share of guilt in this underhanded backstabbing. He wisely died of the Spanish Influenza during the conference.

The British promised the Kurds their own country, then reneged and bombed them for an uprising demanding their rights. Saudi Arabia was given to the Wahhabi

sect under Ibn Saud. Faisal was dumped on the French in Syria and then put in as a British puppet King in Iraq; and House and Wilson came up with the most brilliant plan of all.

Send representatives into the Middle East and ask the people, the average citizens, how they wanted to set up their own governments and draw their own national boundaries. The British very cleverly brought forth only those who agreed with the British partition. House finally told Wilson it was time to compromise; they were getting nowhere.

America turned down the responsibility for the Palestinian region. On the other hand, Wilson became furious with his best friend Col. Edward House, who told him that he'd been had and Congress would never approve anything as deceptive as this as a basis for the League of Nations. Further, House reiterated his position that, based on the British plans, war would be the continuous state of affairs in the Middle East. Wilson sent House home and never spoke to him again. House was right. Congress turned down Wilson's plans. The British enforced their arbitrary boundaries for Middle Eastern countries; and wars have been continuous and the fight between Israel and Palestine continues to this day.

The Saudi Wahhabi gave Al Qaeda their recruits. The Baath political party was formed to overthrow Faisal's son in Iraq in the late fifties. Syria hates the west; the Kurds still want a country. Persia got a pro-West leader and became Iran, and you know what happened there. Britain spun Kuwait out of Iraq, and twice Iraq has fought to get that country back. Once in 1961, although everyone seems to have forgotten that fight.

Wilson stood firm on fairness for the Middle East and was crushed by Congress and the duplicity of the British Prime Minister. But there was once a time when a former Klansman from Texas, Col. Edward House, was the most influential advisor to the president, saw through the deception and knew how to bring peace to the Middle East. And no one listened.

Eighty-four years later, the wars continue. Eighty-four years later, no one is listening still to the words and wisdom of Colonel Edward Mandell House.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Ads in presidential campaign call for protection of religious freedom

AMERICANS UNITED

For the first time in a presidential election and on the eve of the New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries a new series of television and newspaper ads is being launched to urge presidential candidates to protect religious freedom.

At a time when presidential candidates in both political parties are injecting religion into their campaigns at unprecedented levels, the new ads are designed to help provide a clearer understanding of where candidates stand on key issues at the intersection of religion and politics. The ads are scheduled to lead up to the New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries later this month.

First Freedom First, a joint project of Americans United for Separation of Church and State and The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, is launching the new print and TV ads to encourage voters to ask presidential candidates their positions on a wide range of issues, from end-of-life options to protecting the right of all Americans to worship...or not.

The first advertisements feature legendary actors Jack Klugman and James Whitmore and are designed to remind candidates and voters that religion has a place in American life, but not as a political tool.

The Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, noted, "The separation

of church and state is what makes America a great nation. At their core, the ads are designed to prompt important conversations about where candidates stand on the critical issue of religious liberty as enshrined in the First Amendment."

Lynn continued, "All Americans, whether religious or not, have a right to know where candidates stand on issues that have a real, direct impact on their lives, such as sound science, academic integrity and protections against religious discrimination. The ads and related questions on the First Freedom First Web site are designed to help start the discussion between voters and candidates."

The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, president of The Interfaith Alliance Foundation, said, "Religion has played an unusually large role in the 2008 election, and unfortunately, it has been used as a gimmick or a divisive tool rather than a unifying force. First Freedom First focuses on important issues that are at the intersection of religion and public policy issues that our next president must be prepared to deal with."

In the TV and print ads, Jack Klugman

and James Whitmore raise such questions as, "Who will decide my end of life care: politicians and religious right leaders, or my doctor and me?" The ads also ask candidates what they will do to protect the right of all Americans to worship...or not.

"The ads are designed to prompt important conversations about where candidates stand on the critical issue of religious liberty"

Rev. Barry W. Lynn,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
AMERICANS UNITED
FOR SEPARATION
OF CHURCH AND STATE

The First Freedom First Web site features ten sample questions for voters to ask candidates, such as "Do you think public schools should sponsor school prayer or, as a parent, should this choice be left to me?" and, "Do you think my pharmacist should be allowed to deny me doctor-prescribed medications based on his or her religious beliefs?"

Klugman noted that he volunteered to participate in the ad campaign, say-

ing, "I think these ads speak for a lot of people, both believers and non-believers, who understand that this country is founded on a basic respect for everyone's right to believe whatever they want. It's time we got back to principles that have always made America a great democracy."

The ads, produced by Progressive Media Agency, will run up to the primaries in New Hampshire and South Carolina.

EVOLVE

www.metroplexatheists.org



SOCAS

Gov. Leavitt attempts to make Utah government 'Holy and Just'

Joseph L. Conn
AMERICANS UNITED

According to transcripts of the sessions, the governor, his top staff and trusted advisers met at the governor's mansion to discuss holy scripture and how its principles could be incorporated into government policy. The meetings were opened with prayer.

Sounds like the Religious Right's dream, right? Surely, Pat Robertson, James Dobson and Tony Perkins will be shouting hallelujah from the housetops at this revelation.

Ummm. Maybe not.

The meetings in question were in Salt Lake City. They were led by then Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt - a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) - and the holy book was not the Bible, but the Book of Mormon.

According to a story in the Salt Lake Tribune last Sunday, Leavitt and top advisers met in 1996 to discuss how "just and holy" Mormon principles could be brought into governance. The article was based on transcripts of the meetings retrieved from the Utah state archives.

The newspaper said the sessions took place at 7 a.m. before work began. Participants talked about accounts from the Book of Mormon dealing with Korihor, the Gadianon Robbers, Alma and Mosiah and King Benjamin.

Those in the room sought insight, the Tribune reported, "into what LDS scripture defines as the proper role of government and discuss[ed] how they could be communicated in a 'bilingual' manner to a secular audience."

According to the Salt Lake daily, the principles the group settled on - free agency, accountability, equality, stewardship, marriage, unity, goodness, heritage, worship, safety and a sense of order - were not "overtly religious," but they apparently had an impact on policy in Leavitt's second term.

The governor launched a campaign to strengthen marriage and supported a ban on adoption by unmarried couples. He made changes to state welfare and indigent health insurance programs and spoke of social forces beyond government that he called the "Economics of Goodness."

Leavitt, who serves today in the Bush administration as head of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, wasn't happy with the newspaper's account. He tried to get the state archivist to remove the transcriptions

from public access, arguing that the thoughts expressed by participants may be "personal, in some cases even sacred."

But that's just the point, isn't it? Should government officials base public policy on their personal "sacred" beliefs rather than the interests of the people? The answer, in a diverse nation that separates religion and government, is "No!"

The Utah archives turned down the request to lock up the transcripts, and Leavitt says he has not held comparable meetings in his role as a federal official. (Before his current post at HHS, he was administrator at the Environmental Protection Agency.)

The events reported this week took place over 10 years ago, but they are an object lesson in why we need separation of church and state in America. Government should be based on the public interest, the safeguards and provisions of the U.S. Constitution and the will of the people, not the personal religious beliefs of Mike Leavitt, Pat Robertson, James Dobson or anyone else.

Those in the room sought insight "into what LDS scripture defines as the proper role of government and discuss[ed] how they could be communicated in a 'bilingual' manner to a secular audience."

Reported by Salt Lake



***Metroplex Atheists:
No fire and
brimstone required***

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Son – From page 1

crazed political manipulator cynically abusing his followers.” He calls the late Jerry Falwell an “unreconstructed bigot.”

Consider these choice quotes from Schaeffer's recently published book, *Crazy for God: How I Grew Up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back*:

- “What I slowly realized was that the religious-right leaders we were helping to gain power were not ‘conservatives’ at all, in the old sense of the world. They were anti-American religious revolutionaries.”
- “Pat Robertson... would have had a hard time finding work in any job where hearing voices is not a requirement.”
- “Dad could hardly have imagined how they would help facilitate the instantly corrupted power-crazy new generation of evangelical public figures like Ralph Reed, who took money from the casino industry while allegedly playing both sides against the middle in events related to the Abramoff Washington lobbyist scandal.”
- “Long before Ralph Reed and his ilk came on the scene, Dad got sick of ‘these idiots’ as he often called people

like Dobson in private. They were ‘plastic,’ Dad said, and ‘power-hungry.’”

- “There were three kinds of evangelical leaders: The dumb or idealistic ones who really believed. The out-and-out charlatans. And the smart ones who still believed - sort of - but knew that the evangelical world was sh*t, but who couldn't figure out any way to earn as good a living anywhere else.”
- “Dad seemed lost in a depressed daze. He had recently been saying privately that the evangelical world was more or less being led by lunatics, psychopaths, and extremists, and agreeing with me that if ‘our side’ ever won, America would be in deep trouble.”

Ouch. Opponents sometimes accuse Americans United of being too critical of the Religious Right, but these days it seems some of the most pointed barbs are coming from people like Schaeffer, Whitehead and syndicated columnist Cal Thomas. (Thomas, a former Moral Majority employee, coauthored *Blinded by the Might: Why the Religious Right Can't Save America* in 2000.)

In a recent interview with Whitehead, Schaeffer discussed his break with the Religious Right, remarking, “I personally came to believe that a lot of the issues that were

being latched onto by the Christian Right, whether it was the gay issue or abortion or other things, were actually being used for negative political purposes. They were used to structure a power base for people who then threw their weight around.”

He continues, “The other thing I began to understand is that in dismissing the whole culture as decadent, in dismissing the public school movement as godless, in talking about anybody who opposed them as evil, the Religious Right was only a mirror image of the New Left....What gets left out is a basic discussion about the United States and the reality of living here, the freedoms we enjoy and the benefits of a pluralistic culture where people are not crushing each other over beliefs.”

Elsewhere in the interview, Schaeffer says that banning all abortions is unrealistic, criticizes the Religious Right for gay bashing and calls George W. Bush “arguably the worst president in the history of the United States.”

Advocates of church-state separation won't agree with everything Schaeffer has to say, but the interview is well worth a look. It's a helpful reminder that people from all walks of life oppose the goals of the Religious Right - including some folks who know it best because they once saw its ugly inner workings up close and personal.

WWII & Korea:
James Hardwick (Ret), Navy

Korea:
Chris Gregory, Air Force

Iraq:
Brian McIntosh (Ret), Marines
Shawn Ruzek, Marines
Deanne Dice

To the 'Atheists in foxholes' proudly serving the United States:
Thank you for your unselfish sacrifice so that we may all live in a safer world.

www.atheistfoxholes.org

BOOK REVIEW

Citizen Tom Paine

John Hattan

METROPLEX ATHEISTS

Yeah, *Citizen Tom Paine* by Howard Fast is a rather old book. 1943 to be exact. But hey, how often do you get a chance to read a revolutionary war-era novel about someone who's considered a friend to both freedom-lovers and freethinkers?

The book covers the period of Paine's life from his first trip to America (sanctioned personally by Ben Franklin) to his death, covering his involvement in the Revolutionary War, his return to England, his life and imprisonment in France, and his return to America where he died virtually forgotten by his former compatriots and reviled by the locals for *The Age of Reason*.

Paine's now-classic indictment of Christianity doesn't play much of a part in the novel. *The Age of Reason* wasn't written until Paine's waning years when his days of revolutionary rabble-rousing were behind him. Paine's first great work, *Common Sense*, and the part it played in the Revolution is the prime plot-mover in *Citizen Tom Paine*. His little book/pamphlet was the most popular work of its time. It was read by everyone in America. Revolutionary soldiers read copies of it around campfires. Every rural farmer had a copy on his fireplace mantel next to his Bible.

It was also widely pirated. If Paine had the wherewithal to hire his own press and printers, he likely would've been a rich man. It was clearly not written for profit, though. It was written to do the exact job that it did - start a revolution intended to cast off the shackles of monarchy.

Paine didn't just write a book intended for others to follow while he himself kept to the rear echelons. He was himself a soldier working under the command of General George Washington, and he shared the

conditions endured by the soldiers fighting for a free United States.

And, in short, things sucked. His little book ended up being pressed into service repairing soles of shoes when it wasn't being read.

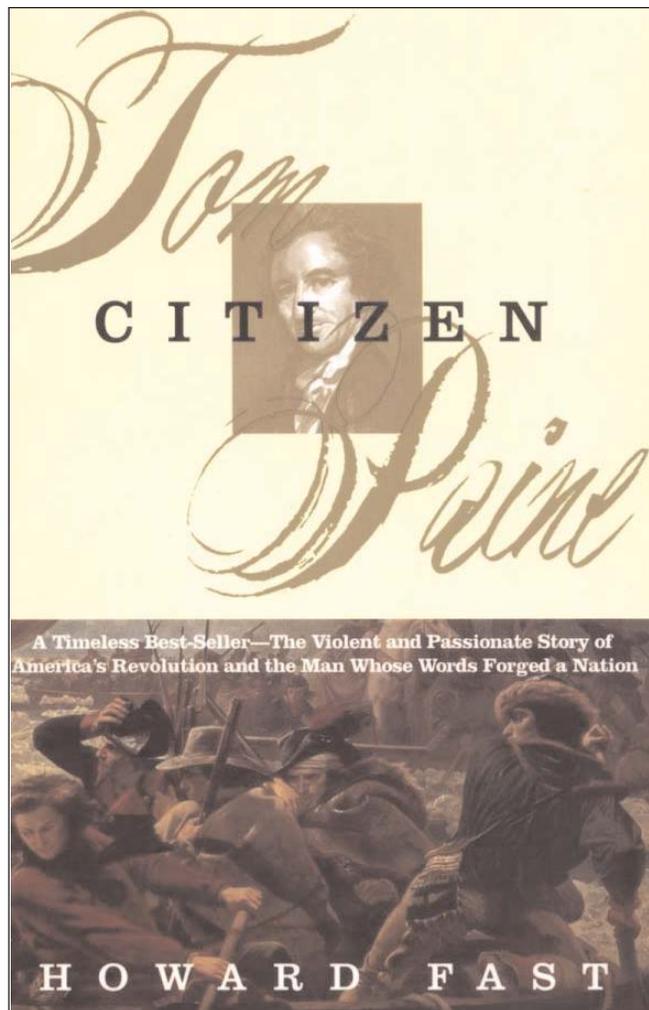
Strangely enough, Paine didn't even seem to want to enjoy the results of the revolution he helped to create. Once things were finally settling down in the new colonies, rather than settle down as a "founding

father", taking up a life of farming, or maybe enjoying some book-royalties, he made for England with the intention of drumming up support for the new republic across the sea. While England tolerated his existence despite his anti-monarchy stance, it was clear that he left for France about one step ahead of the law.

The book did answer a few questions I had about Paine. Specifically I never understood why he would've been rounded up and imprisoned in France to await the guillotine despite being a friend of the revolution and a sworn enemy of monarchies. Turns out that he was basically collateral damage in France's post-revolution roundup of all rabble-rousers and folks who could conceivably make it difficult for the new rulers to get their way. No spoilers here, but Paine managed to make himself useful enough in prison and was still well enough known in the US to keep himself from being executed

until "The Terror" had passed. Not that his ten month stint in prison did much for his health. By the time of his release, he was a broken man without a home or even a country. All he had going for him was a tract of farmland in Pennsylvania given to him as a reward for his services to the American Revolution. Unfortunately for Paine, *The Age of Reason* had preceded him to America, and the locals around his farm didn't much like the idea of "the devil himself" living in their midst.

Interestingly, *Citizen Tom Paine* repeatedly describes *The Age of Reason* as Paine's rebuttal of French atheism. Atheism was apparently as pervasive in the French Revo-



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To arrange a speaking engagement, please email the Metroplex Atheist Director:
director@metroplexatheists.org

lution as deism was in the American, and Paine thought it to be unreasonable compared to his own “reasonable” deism. Having read Paine's book, I can certainly see the condemnation of atheism here and there, but if *The Age of Reason* is a condemnation of anything, it's of fundamentalist Christianity. While Paine's problems with atheism get a couple of sentences here and there, Christianity is absolutely raked over the coals. It was a strange disconnect in Citizen Tom Paine that the author several times describes how *The Age of Reason* is intended to fix

the little red wagons of the atheists, but the book itself is clearly nothing of the sort, and there is no mention at all of any backlash from atheists (and I'm not aware of any) but plenty of condemnation from the Christians that continues even to this day.

Read the Amazon reviews of *Age of Reason* if you don't believe me.

In a recent blog-entry, I described this book as a “rum-soaked novel about an important rum-soaked rabble-rouser in the rum-soaked time of our rum-soaked founding fathers”, and that's a fact. There's loads of drinking in

Citizen Tom Paine. In fact, it almost becomes a game to find the alcohol reference on whatever page you're reading. Notwithstanding, Citizen Tom Paine is a surprising page-turner for its topic, but the topic also makes it infuriating. Paine was a prime-mover of the American Revolution, was a great friend of freedom, and should have been elevated to the places occupied by his compatriots Washington and Jefferson, but he found himself at best ignored and at worst reviled.

Then as now, peoples' memories are short.

Rock – From page 1

were both pre-teens. Paulk has denied those allegations.

The deposition is a part of lawsuit lodged against Paulk by former church staff members. Mona Brewer, the Atlanta newspaper reports, claims that Paulk used his church position to coerce her into a sexual relationship. Charisma magazine notes that Brewer argues that the relationship lasted for 14 years and that Paulk had convinced Brewer that her salvation depended on her having sex with him and “other members of the church community [and] leaders of other churches as well as his family members, sometimes with other individuals observing the sexual acts.”

Paulk, the periodical reports, has denied Brewer's accusations, but admitted to a consensual affair with her. Charisma adds

that at “least three other women have come forward with claims similar to Brewer's.”

Paulk, who was once dubbed the “most visible and well-known leader” within the “Dominion theology” movement by writers Thomas D. Ice and H. Wayne House, no longer leads a powerful megachurch. Today he sometimes speaks at the church, but the diminished congregation is led by his son, the Rev. Donnie Earl Paulk.

Donnie Earl grew up believing that the elder Paulk was his uncle, but a court-ordered DNA test revealed that belief to be false. Paulk is actually Donnie Earl's father. Donnie Earl's mother is married to Earl Paulk's brother. (Flannery O'Connor couldn't make this stuff up.)

During court proceedings, Earl Paulk denied under oath that he had a sexual relationship with his sister-in-law, and that

apparent prevarication has now led the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to look into possible criminal charges.

That truth, however, has not publicly shaken Donnie Earl's confidence in the senior Paulk. He told Charisma that he loves Paulk “unconditionally” and that he remains “my uncle [sic] and one of my spiritual guides in my life.”

The vast majority of Paulk's followers, however, are not as loyal. According to the *Journal-Constitution*, Paulk's congregation has dipped to fewer than 2,000.

I'm not sure what the moral of this story is, if it has one. But at a minimum Earl Paulk may want to repudiate his dalliance with Christian Reconstructionism. The movement does call for the death penalty for adulterers, and stones in Georgia are not hard to find.



TEMPTED?
www.metroplexatheists.org

ATHEISTS ARE COMING TO A RESTAURANT NEAR YOU

Since you can't come to a Metroplex Atheist event, why not have Metroplex Atheist events come to you?

We now have a Metroplex Atheists Meet-up Group on www.meetup.com. Over the years we've had many folks lament that they couldn't come to a MA social event because of time/location of our normal Wednesday get together.



Why not start one of your own?

If you have a good meeting place and you're willing to show up to be somewhat of a host, then just contact Metroplex Atheists and we can put an announcement out on the web.

All it takes is for you to say, "Hey, why don't we meet at X?" and show up!

We'd like to have a number of social groups that meet informally (because, let's face it, the business meetings are only just so much fun). The real fun lies in meeting other like minded people.

Where do YOU want to meet up?

UPCOMING EVENTS

Business Meeting

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING:

What: Meeting to decide general business of the group and to discuss current events
Date: Third Sunday of the month
Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Place: TBA

Social Meetings

DALLAS / PLANO ATHEIST MEETUP DAY:

What: Meet with other local Atheists to talk about your beliefs
Date: Every Tuesday
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: TBA; For locations near you visit: atheists.meetup.com

MA ATHEIST MEETUP:

What: 'My dinner with Atheists,' social time with a bunch of heathens
Date: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, (& 5th) Wednesday
Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Place: J. Gilligan's Bar & Grill (Meet on the grill side)
 400 E. Abram Street
 Arlington, TX

MA ATHEIST MEETUP:

What: 'My dinner with Atheists,' social time with a bunch of heathens
Date: 1st Wednesday of the Month
Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Place: Blue Danube
 2230 West Park Row
 Pantego, TX

THE 34TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN ATHEISTS:

What: Join us for a weekend of workshops, panels, talks by noted speakers and other activities. Minneapolis is also one of the premier tourism destinations in this part of the nation, so you'll want to consider making your Conference visit an extended weekend.
Date: March 21-23, 2008
Time: TBA
Place: Minneapolis, MN
<http://www.atheists.org/conference>

To have your events listed email:
The Atheist Voice Editor at
editor@metroplexatheists.org

Are you searching for Atheists in the metroplex?

Join in the discussions at the DFW Atheist Talk group.
groups.yahoo.com/group/DFWatheistTalk/

January 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Atheist Meetup Day	2 Blue Danube	3	4	5
6	7	8 Atheist Meetup Day	9 J. Gilligan's	10	11	12
13	14	15 Atheist Meetup Day	16 J. Gilligan's	17	18	19
20 Reg. Meeting	21 M. L. K.	22 Atheist Meetup Day	23 J. Gilligan's	24	25	26
27	28	29 Atheist Meetup Day	30 J. Gilligan's	31		

February 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5 Atheist Meetup Day	6 Blue Danube	7	8	9
10	11	12 Darwin Day AMD	13 J. Gilligan's	14	15	16
17 Reg. Meeting	18	19 Atheist Meetup Day	20 J. Gilligan's	21	22	23
24	25	26 Atheist Meetup Day	27 J. Gilligan's	28	29	1

March 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3	4 Atheist Meetup Day	5 J. Gilligan's	6	7	8
9	10	11 Atheist Meetup Day	12 J. Gilligan's	13	14	15
16 Reg. Meeting	17	18 Atheist Meetup Day	19 J. Gilligan's	20	21	22
23	24	25 Atheist Meetup Day	26 J. Gilligan's	27	28	29
30	31	1 Atheist Meetup Day	2 Blue Danube	3	4	5

***THE ATHEIST VOICE* is a bi-monthly publication of Metroplex Atheists.**

For more information, please visit our website: www.metroplexatheists.org

To submit an article or letter to the editor, please email us.

The Atheist Voice Editor: editor@metroplexatheists.org

THE ATHEIST VOICE
 c/o Metroplex Atheists
 7100 Boulevard 26 , Suite 304
 Richland Hills, TX 76180

Deliver to:

'Because we must. Because we have the call. Because it is nobler to fight for rationality without winning than to give up in the face of continued defeats. Because whatever true progress humanity makes is through the rationality of the occasional individual and because any one individual we may win for the cause may do more for humanity than a hundred thousand who hug superstition to their breasts.'

— Isaac Asimov, when asked why he fights religion with no hope for victory

WHY DO WE FIGHT?