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Evangelicals, Global Warming, and Intellectual Freedom and Integrity

By Calvin Beisner, Ph.D.

*The great Russian scientist and human rights activist Andrei Sakharov wisely said: Intellectual freedom is essential to human society—freedom to obtain and distribute information, freedom for open-minded and unfearing debate, and freedom from pressure by officialdom and prejudices.the only guarantee against an infection of people by mass myths, which, in the hands of treacherous hypocrites and demagogues, can be transformed into bloody dictatorship. Freedom of thought is the only guarantee of the feasibility of a scientific democratic approach to politics, economy, and culture.*

Doctor, that was a great quote. You do know Sakharov was an Atheist don't you? When put into proper context, that quote, though it doesn't specifically mention religion, is directed at it.

*But freedom of thought is under a triple threat in modern society—from the deliberate opium of mass culture, from cowardly, egotistic, and philistine ideologies, and from the ossified dogmatism of a bureaucratic oligarchy and its favorite weapon, ideological censorship.*

Doctor, you left out the main culprit ... religion. I think that was intentional.

*Therefore, freedom of thought requires the defense of all thinking and honest people.*

Doctor, that kind of leaves you Ghost Worshippers out in the cold, doesn't it?

No rational person would ever describe "you people" as either 'thinking' or 'honest'.

*If you have a hard time thinking vast numbers of even intelligent people can succumb to “mass myths,” recall America's home value boom and bust and other bubbles (e.g., the Dot-Com Bubble, the South Sea Bubble, the Darien Scheme, and the Tulip Mania).*

Actually Doctor, I don't have a hard time understanding how vast numbers of educated people, like PHD's, can succumb to mass myths because about 80% of Americans still worship invisible ghosts.

*You might consider such political mass myths as Marxism, Fascism, and Nazism.*

Doctor, those were not mass myths. They were quite real forms of government. Now your religion ... THAT is a mass myth.

*One of the great dangers of mass myths is the pressure they impose for conformity. Sometimes the pressure is only social. Sometimes it becomes political, as when NASA scientist and leading global warming alarmist James Hansen says, “CEOs of fossil energy companies … should be tried for high crimes against humanity and nature.”*

Doctor, climatology is not a mass myth. But the attack on science by those with vested interests is specifically designed to promote a mass myth on the ignorant masses.

*Sometimes, as Hansen seems to hope, it even becomes legal, as when the Soviet Union criminalized opposition to Lysenkoism (belief in the heritability of acquired characteristics).*

Doctor, nice false analogy. Lysenko's theory was anti-science. Hansen's is confirmed science.

*Last week I reported on comments by two plenary speakers at the Evangelical Theological Society’s annual meeting. The more I reflect on what they said, the more amazed I am:*

*•“Trust the scientists,” they said.—As if all scientists agreed!*

Doctor, actually they do. There IS a scientific consensus that global warming is mainly manmade. That's why you people must engage in a dishonest campaign to fool the ignorant masses into believing your lies ... because you can't fool the scientists.

*As if the history of science offered no instances of major reversals of major, not to mention minor, theories, and scientific “facts” remained forever set in stone.*

Doctor, you are trying to convince others to challenge the scientific consensus based on the fact that sometimes theories are replaced or discarded.

*•“Remember Galileo! … [We should revise] our understanding of Scripture in the light of science.”—As if the Bible weren’t its own supreme interpreter!*

Doctor, Galileo had scientific proof on his side, as do modern day climatologists. Galileo was right - the Bible was wrong. Modern day climatologists can prove they are right - and that means ... your Bible is wrong.

*•Cornwall Alliance and I are “Playing silly games with pseudo science.”—Can either speaker name a single place in all of Cornwall’s documents in which we present as scientific an argument that is unscientific—that is analogous, say, to an astrological or alchemical or magical argument?*

Doctor, I would put my money on astrology or alchemy before I would bet on the ancient collection of gruesome fairy tales that you live your life by.

*•We should “not to try to meddle in stuff we don’t know anything about”—So on what grounds can someone who confesses he doesn’t know the science himself accuse the Cornwall Alliance and me, whose publications demonstrate wide and deep scholarship in environmental (especially climate) science, of “playing silly games with pseudo science?”*

Doctor, your demonstrations of "wide and deep scholarship in environmental science" have failed to convince the only people qualified to judge "wide and deep scholarship in environmental science" ... the environmental scientists themselves.

*There’s more. The speakers were shocked that I would stand against the consensus of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), national academies of science, and various professional scientific associations that have embraced catastrophic anthropogenic global warming.*

Doctor, they may have been shocked by your audacity, but most of us just find your arrogance, pathetically funny.

Hey Doc, I notice that these Evangelicals were all bashing the snot out of you and your dishonest little organization. I usually don't have much nice to say about them, but in this case, they did good.

*Again, … physical science is not one and invariable in its contents. There have been a multitude of scientific theories that cannot be reconciled with each other. The Ptolemaic and the Copernican astronomies are examples. … Christianity, on the other hand, has had substantial invariability.*

Doctor, and that's what provides the nails for your coffin. It is still stuck in first century science and morals. Much of the world has moved on ... obviously many still remain mired in ancient ignorance.

*•Whatever happened to the day when a man who stood alone (though I don’t) was respected for his courage and integrity, for his determination to be convinced only by evidence and not by vote?*

Doctor, you are convinced, by your own admission, by the Bible, not by evidence. Scientists did not reach a consensus through a vote but by doing what you claimed to have done, by examining the evidence.

*•Whatever happened to the British Royal Society’s motto, Nullius in verba, roughly translated, “Take no one’s word for it”?*

Doctor, yet you take the Bible's word for everything. The Bible said the sun froze in the sky for 24 hours. I would call that science. Are you calling your God a liar? Then you must believe it.

You know Doctor, that last little gem about the sun ... proves that "you people" are certifiable.

*•Whatever happened to the day when one of St. Athanasius’s disciples could say to him, “Athanasius, the whole world is against you!” and Athanasius could respond, “Then it is Athanasius contra mundum [against the world]”—and the people of God admired him?*

Doctor, as you just admitted, Ghost Worshippers admired him. Rational people just laughed.

*Perhaps these two scholars would ridicule Athanasius, as they did the Cornwall Alliance, for standing contra mundum.*

Doctor, it all depends on what brand of snake oil he was sellin'.

*But did not the Apostle Paul say, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect”. And did not the Apostle John say, “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you”?*

Doctor, you are quite the little nutjob aren't you?

Even Evangelical Christians think you're a bizarre little man.

*Might Cornwall Alliance’s scholars be able to discern precisely because we are committed to standing with the truth of Scripture and testing all things, despite what the world says?*

Doctor, "testing all things?" I think we both know that "all things" include everything *except* your Bible.

*Would you help us continue getting our message out despite such opposition?*

*Free debate is essential to the preservation of liberty, and free debate depends on a willingness not only to tolerate but also to respect disagreement and nonconformity.*

Doctor, except in cases like yours, where the disagreement and nonconformity are dishonest and based on superstitious nonsense.

*How do mass myths like climate alarmism arise?*

Doctor, through the accumulation of evidence. That's why it is dishonest of you to call them mass myths. But knowing what you believe it is easy to understand why you do: you are simply projecting your own mass myth onto others.

*For the history of some of them, and for explanations of the crowd psychology that drives them, see two classics: Charles MacKay’s Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds and Gustave Le Bon’s The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind. How can you avoid being caught up in mass myths? Some help can be found in Humphrey B. Neill’s The Art of Contrary Thinking, Thomas Gilovich’s How We Know What Isn’t So: The Fallibility of Human Reason in Everyday Life, and H.W.B. Joseph’s Introduction to Logic.*

Doctor, what you fail to realize is that all those references you just provided teach people how to escape religion and other false beliefs. They don't apply to proven scientific fact.

*But most important is the teaching and example of Martin Luther, who at the Diet of Worms, pressed to recant his criticisms of Roman Catholic doctrine, responded, “Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils [or national academies, scientific societies, and global bureaucracies!], for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen"*

Doctor, Martin Luther was one of the most disgusting human beings to ever write down his bigoted, anti-Semitic, racist crap. The fact that you could quote such a subhuman source demonstrates the level that your mind operates at.

Doctor, your PHD in Scottish history has obviously ill-prepared you for existence in a rational world. However, using it to launch a career in theology has obviously been very lucrative for you. May you continue to thrive, as your Christian world continues to slowly melt away before your eyes - at least, according to every poll I've seen.

And thanks for showing everyone that, while a PHD is certainly an achievement worth striving for, it is no guarantee that the one who earns it, will become any more rational ... than when they began.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Oceanic Crust Breakthrough:

Solving a Magma Mystery

Oceanic crust covers two-thirds of Earth's solid surface, but scientists still don't entirely understand the process by which it is made. Analysis of more than 600 samples of oceanic crust by researchers reveals a systemic pattern that alters long-held beliefs about how this process works, explaining a crucial step in understanding Earth's geological deep processes.

Magmas generated by melting of Earth's mantle rise up below the oceanic crust and erupt on Earth's surface at mid-ocean ridge systems, the longest mountain ranges in the world. When the magma cools it forms basalt, the planet's most-common rock and the basis for oceanic crust.

It has long been assumed that the composition of magmas erupting out of mid-ocean ridges is altered when minerals that form during cooling sink out of the remaining liquid, a process called fractional crystallization. In theory, trace elements that are not included in the crystallizing minerals should be little affected by this process, and their ratios should be the same in the erupting magma as they were in the original magma before cooling. If this is true, trace element ratios in magmas erupting at mid-ocean ridges should represent those of the original parental magma that formed deep in Earth's mantle. However, this process doesn't account for the high abundance of trace elements found in samples of basalt from mid-ocean ridges around the world, so the reality of the situation is obviously more complicated than previous theories indicated.

Using the extensive array of samples and advanced modeling, researchers demonstrated that the concentration of trace elements is due to the process by which the magma is cycled through the oceanic crust prior to being erupted on the sea floor at the mid-ocean ridges.

Magma collects under Earth's surface in a pool of liquid rock called a magma chamber. Each chamber is frequently flushed with new magma, which mixes with the old magma that was already there, and then this blended magma erupts out onto the ocean floor. Following the influx of new magma and eruption, the remaining magma undergoes fractional crystallization. This means that minerals are separated out from the magma as it cools. However, these minerals contain only minor amounts of the trace elements. As a result, trace elements build up in the magma over time, as the magma chamber is continually replenished by new magma coming in to the system. These new findings will permit scientists to explore the conditions of mantle melting and production of the Earth's most-common rock.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

ALDOUS HUXLEY (1894 – 1963) 69 years

He was an English writer and one of the most prominent members of the famous Huxley family. Best known for his novels including Brave New World and a wide-ranging output of essays, Huxley also edited the magazine Oxford Poetry, and published short stories, poetry, travel writing, film stories and scripts. He spent the later part of his life in the United States, living in Los Angeles from 1937 until his death in 1963.

Huxley was a humanist, pacifist, and satirist. He later became interested in spiritual subjects such as parapsychology and philosophical mysticism, in particular Vivekanda's Neo-Vedanta and Universalism. He is also well known for his advocacy and consumption of psychedelic drugs.

By the end of his life Huxley was widely acknowledged as one of the pre-eminent intellectuals of his time.

“If we must play the theological game,

let us never forget that it is a game.

Religion, it seems to me, can survive only

as a consciously accepted system of make-believe . . .

You never see animals going through

the absurd and often horrible fooleries

of magic and religion . . .

Asses do not bray a liturgy to cloudless skies.

Nor do cats attempt, by abstinence from cat's meat,

to wheedle the feline spirits into benevolence.

Only man behaves with such gratuitous folly.

It is the price he has to pay for being intelligent

but not, as yet, quite intelligent enough.”