



NEWS & NOTES

■ Hearings began Wednesday for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2009 (ENDA), a bill that was first introduced in 1997 but has been successfully resisted in Congress. This time, supporters of the bill believe that they have enough votes in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate to pass ENDA into law. President Obama has also indicated that he would be likely to sign ENDA into law. Dr. Frank Wright and Craig Parshall of National Religious Broadcasters testified that ENDA would “impose a crippling burden on religious organizations” as it prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of “actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.” The bill contains an exemption for religious groups, but in past legal actions faith-based organizations (such as World Vision)

Impact is published for First Baptist Concord in response to the Christian Life Committee emphasis on moral, public policy and religious liberty issues.

Internet sources and newsletter archives are posted at:

www.fbconcord.org/impact

Your input is welcome and may be left with the church office or email bwarmack@comcast.net

Editor: Bruce Warmack

had to prove that they were religious in nature, purpose, or function as it was not apparent in the services they performed. *Christian Post*, 9/24

■ **Christian News**-wire reports that an estimated two million students gathered for the 20th annual See You at the Pole event Wednesday. Students gathered at their school's flagpole to pray for their school, their community and their country. The event began as a student-initiated movement, and has won several court battles challenging its location on school property. *RT*, 9/24

■ Tens of thousands of people on Wednesday kicked off 40 Days for Life, which addresses the abortion issue through daily prayer vigils outside clinics in 212 cities, including Knoxville. The national campaign began just two years ago and already more than 215,000 people in 240 cities across the country and overseas have been mobilized. According to organizers, participants are not looking to protest or to stir up conflict or confrontation and are allowed only one sign stating they're praying to end abortion. In response, Planned Parenthood has asked supporters to “defend women's health” during the “40 days of harassment.” *Christian Post*, 9/24

■ Nearly 50 Christian leaders, who collectively repre-

sent 28 million Americans, called on the U.S. and other world leaders to take urgent action to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Signers of the Sept. 22 letter to Congress warned that a nuclear-armed Iran would “almost certain[ly]” spark an arms race in the Middle East. Among the prominent names who signed the letter are Pat Robertson, Charles Colson, Johnny Hunt, current president of the Southern Baptist Convention; and John Hagee. Former SBC presidents, a representative from Focus on the Family, and presidents of Christian universities are also signers. *Christian Post*, 9/23

■ Several thousand Muslims convened on the Capitol grounds for a peaceable day of prayer Friday, voicing their religious fervor and solidarity with American values while ignoring scattered protesters of other faiths. The estimated 8,000 in attendance chanted and used carpets, blankets, jackets, and plastic tarp as the traditional ground cover on which they knelt in prayer. A sermon afterward urged all Muslims to “God bless America” and avoid the “trap” of hating anyone, particularly Christians and Jews. At remote locations, distanced far away from the proceedings and under the watchful eyes of uniformed and plainclothes Capitol Po-

lice, scattered groups of Christians used microphones and public address systems to voice their displeasure with the Muslim event. *Fox News*, 9/25

■ As many as 60,000 people representing over 300 churches and 65 youth organizations gathered last Sunday for an hour of prayer in New York City's Times Square. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg proclaimed to be “Prayer in the Square Day” and called the hour of prayer a “powerful symbol of unity.” Hosted by Times Square Church all denominations were represented and no personalities or ministry were showcased. *Christian Post*, 9/22

■ Christian pollster George Barna weighed in on the health care debate this week, asserting that Jesus would support some kind of universal coverage. Based on the Bible stories, Barna said the health care strategy exemplified by Jesus called for “people to help people.” But ultimately, it is God's people, or collectively the Church, who are responsible for caring for the poor and sick, Barna maintained. *Christian Post*, 9/22

■ The *Christian Post* reports that American skeptics? those most likely to identify themselves as “none” in religious affiliation? are growing. According to a follow-up of the American Re-

ligious Identification Survey released Tuesday, “Nones” now makes up 15 percent of American adults, with more than one-fifth (22 percent) of young adults falling into this category. American Nones embrace philosophical and theological beliefs that reflect skepticism rather than overt antagonism toward religion. Of the Nones, 27% believe in a personal God, while 35% are agnostic. Only 7 percent are atheists. *RT*, 9/23

■ Megachurches aren't the only worship houses launching multi-site campuses, according to a new research by Geoff Surratt and Greg Ligon. According to their research, multi-site churches are in nearly every major U.S. city and state, and almost one in ten Protestant worshippers attend a multi-site church in the United States or Canada. Up from 300 in the year 2000, there are currently 3,000 multi-sites in the country. At the same time, average seating capacities in megachurches have largely remained the same, growing only minimally from 1,709 to 1,794. Looking into the future of the multi-site movement, the authors predict: international campuses will help transform approaches to missions, Internet campuses, and some multi-site churches becoming mini-denominations. *Christian Post*, 9/21

■ Religion News Service reports that A South Carolina parish that split from the Episcopal Church in 2004 can keep its church property, the state's Supreme Court has ruled. The ruling is a rare legal victory to conservative dissidents. Applying “neutral principles,” South Carolina's Supreme Court ruled that All Saints Church at Pawley's Island, which dates to the early 18th century, had secured ownership to the property in 1902, well before the Episcopal Church instituted its trust rules in 1979. *RT*, 9/24

■ The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) publicly acknowledged the “honest and sincere disagreements” over homosexuality in the church in a new draft report. The denomination, however, stopped short of allowing each church to determine its approach to the question, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church moved last month. *RT*, 9/25

■ ABC will be launching a new special series Thursday that will examine how the Ten Commandments are being applied in today's world. Starting with “Though Shalt Not Commit Adultery,” ABC News' Nightline program will tackle each commandment during its “The Ten Commandments” series, looking at what they mean, and how they apply to life in the 21st century. Featured

will be Chick Fil-A CEO Dan Cathy, who will explain why being closed on Sunday makes great business sense for “Remember to Keep the Sabbath Holy;” “Dr. Death” of New Zealand, who will talk about euthanasia for “Thou Shalt Not Kill,” and people from Egypt and Israel who will talk about the commandments and how they came to be for “There is Only One God.”

Christian Post, 9/23

■ ASSIST News Service reports that a Christian nurse in England may face disciplinary action after refusing to remove a cross necklace bearing a cross. She has worn the cross since her confirmation 38 years ago, and has worked at the same hospital for 31 years. The 54-year-old nurse has worn the cross during her entire employment, and her supervisors have only now said they believe it is a safety issue and a “health risk” even though other staff are allowed to wear chains.

RT, 9/23

■ Coral Ridge Presbyterian members overwhelmingly voted to keep their senior pastor, Tullian Tchividjian. A vocal minority managed to

call a vote Sunday at the megachurch, charging Tchividjian with departing from the church’s traditions and not specifically addressing political issues. In a statement, Tchividjian thanked the church for its support. “Change is difficult for any institution, but it is especially difficult for a church which has known only one pastor [the late D. James Kennedy] in its 50-year history and I understand that,” he said. RT, 9/22

■ A three-year drought in Kenya has left up to four million Kenyans dependent on food and water aid. As crops have failed and the water shortage as worsened, food prices in some places have more than doubled. The drought has now spread to neighboring Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and Djibouti, jeopardizing the delicate political structure of the region. RT, 9/25

■ A funeral for a Coptic Christian gruesomely killed on a village street north of Cairo by a Muslim assailant last week turned into a protest by hundreds of demonstrators in Egypt. After mutilating and beheading the vic-

tim, the assailant drove to two more villages and stabbed others there. A British spokesman for the Copts said Egypt has encouraged the type of “radicalization” that has “recently escalated to a worrying tempo.”

Christian Post, 9/23

■ ASSIST News Service reports that Muslim residents of Gojra, Pakistan, have demanded that Christians who have been accused of provoking violence be arrested. The violence ended in seven Christians being burnt alive by a Muslim mob on Aug. 1. Heavy contingents of police have been deployed around the local Christian colony, apparently to prevent further violence. RT, 9/24

■ Under pressure from the central government, local Chinese officials from Fushan city secretly offered to pay \$219,000 (1.5 million yen) in damages to the megachurch it leveled last week. The central government reportedly fears that if the incident is made widely known then it will mar the 60th anniversary celebrations of National Day on Oct. 1. Officials finally agreed verbally to pay 1.4 million yen, if the church members promise not to construct a religious building in the future. The incident occurred on Sept. 13 when some 400 people in police suits raided the “Good News Cloth Shoes Factory,” which served as the site for the Fushan Church.

Christian Post, 9/23

'Signature in the Cell'

by Chuck Colson

A landmark book about intelligent design has hit the bookstore shelves. I'll tell you about it.

In recent years, there have been several important books about intelligent design that go to the debate about evolution and the origins of life. Bill Dembski's *The Design Inference* was first. Then along came Darwin's *Black Box* by Michael Behe, showing the irreducible complexity of the cell, which casts grave doubts on Darwinian evolution as an explanation for life and higher life forms.

Now we've got *Signature in the Cell* by the Discovery Institute's Dr. Stephen Meyer.

I'm going to warn you up front: *Signature in the Cell* is not light reading. If you are not conversant in molecular biology, you might feel a bit overwhelmed at times.

But this is a profound, hugely important book for anybody interested in the scientific debate of our times—the origins of life. I feel it's so important that we have posted an excerpt of the book at our website, BreakPoint.org, along with links to materials that will help you understand the main points of *Signature in the Cell*.

So what lies at the heart of Dr. Meyer's *Signature in the Cell* is the concept of information. And, as scientists have learned, the very building block of life—molecular DNA—is a vast storehouse of information. Information in the form of a four-character chemical alphabet that, when precisely arranged, provides the “instructions” for forming proteins and the structures that living cells need to survive.

The key here is “precisely arranged.” I take three random English letters, say “O,” “G,” and “D.” The letters are building blocks for words, but they mean nothing unless arranged properly. If you arrange them one way, they spell “God.” Arrange them another way, and you get “dog.” In order to convey

INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE

useful information, the letters have to be arranged precisely.

And that's what DNA does. It contains and transmits the extraordinarily complex, precisely sequenced chemical code of life—a code that atheist Richard Dawkins has likened to computer code. Indeed, Bill Gates has said that “DNA is like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any software ever created.”

Could such an “advanced” code, or “software for life,” have happened by chance? Well, as Dr. Meyer shows, given the vast complexity of information required to create the 250 proteins necessary to sustain the simplest living cell, the probability that life originated in the primordial soup by chance is beyond astronomically slim—only 1 in 10 to the 41 thousandth power!

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made

But here is your takeaway, and I'll let Dr. Meyer do the talking: “Our uniform experience affirms that specified information—whether inscribed in hieroglyphics, written in a book, encoded in a radio signal, or produced in a simulation experiment—always arises from an intelligent source, from a mind and not a strictly material process.”

“Indeed,” Dr. Meyer concludes, “it follows that the best, most causally adequate explanation for the origin of the specified, digitally encoded information in DNA is that it too had an intelligent source.”

No wonder most evolutionists refuse to debate intelligent design.

Thanks to Dr. Meyer, the debate about the origins of life is entering a new phase. Maybe we could say, for the chance theory of creation, that is, the writing is on the wall.

©2009 Prison Fellowship Ministries. Reprinted with permission. “BreakPoint with Chuck Colson” is a radio ministry of Prison Fellowship Ministries.

ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

★★ NEW MOVIES

	Quality	Moral	Age	
<i>Surrogates</i>	PG-13	+3	-1	T/A
<i>Fame (2009)</i>	PG	+2.5	-1	T/A

A- Adult, T-Teen, OT- Older Teen

Film “Quality” is an estimate (+1 to +4) of appeal for the intended audience or age group. “Moral” rating ranges from extremely objectionable (-4) to very good (+4).

previewonline.org & movieguide.org