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A Skeptical View of Exorcism and Deliverance (Part II)

By **Danny Barnett**

I wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Virginia Vaughn, Pat Reeder, and Laura Ainsworth of the North Texas Skeptics and Harry Guetzlaff of the Trinity Foundation for supplying me with research materials for this report.

(This is the 2nd part of what we expect to be a four-part series.—Ed.)

A couple of months ago, I discussed my experience at a public exorcism performed by Bob Larson at a school in Arlington, Texas. Ironically, Larson scheduled the mass deliverance on the night before I was to give a speech for the North Texas Skeptics concerning exorcism. I therefore came to Arlington not only to witness exorcism first-hand, but also to inform people about my upcoming speech. Immediately after the service concluded, people started pouring out of the school and walking past me as I offered handbills announcing the lecture to anyone who was interested.

Most people who took a flyer simply thanked me as they passed by, but one young man stopped and read it all the way through, asking what was going on and if Bob Larson was supposed to make an appearance. When he got to the end, he looked up at me and asked in a quiet, serious tone, "Are you a skeptic?"

I replied that I was, but that I was also a Christian. I explained to him that my presentation was simply debating whether or not evil spirits were responsible for the events we witnessed in that auditorium. After a moment, without saying anything else, the young man slowly folded up his copy of the handbill and walked away. I could be wrong, but he sure looked scared.

This series on exorcism and deliverance has been written especially for people like that young man, people who have been taught not to question the claims of their religious leaders. Almost as soon as I began investigating the modern deliverance movement, I started amassing a lot of information suggesting that this business of casting out demons doesn't measure up. To understand the arguments against deliverance, however, it is necessary to understand the nuts and bolts of deliverance. We've got a lot of ground to cover, so grab a snack and fasten your seat belts.

Diagnosing Demon Possession

Earlier, I explained how some exorcists saw the act of casting out demons as a form of healing. In his book *Deliver Us From Evil*, Don Basham recorded these words from his friend and mentor, Derek Prince:

You will notice that people in the New Testament who were delivered of demons were apparently ordinary folk living ordinary lives, but who had some particular problem. One had an 'unclean spirit' – probably a struggle with lust. Another was crippled by a 'spirit of infirmity'; another a 'deaf spirit'; another a 'blind spirit.' But the afflicted person apparently functioned normally in other ways. ¹

What has also been revealed in that statement is the way in which exorcists identify most demons: not by name, but instead by an attribute of some kind. As deliverance ministers Frank and Ida Mae Hammond explained it:

A demon is identified by its nature. A *demon of hate* is called "hate." Each demon is a specialist. A hate demon does not foster lust – he only promotes hatred. When demons are commanded to name themselves, they will usually name themselves in identity with their nature, e.g. *rebellion, cursing, indifference*, etc. ²

The Hammonds have compiled an extensive list of demons in their 1973 book, *Pigs in the Parlor*. This isn't the only list of demons ever compiled, but it's probably the most influential. Some of the demons listed by the Hammonds include *Destruction, Hatred, Fear, Vanity, and Confusion*. In fact, the Hammonds have filled two-and-a-half pages of *Pigs in the Parlor* with demoniac identities. H.A. Maxwell Whyte, a deliverance minister from Canada, took the concept to its furthest logical exponent by stating, "There seems little doubt that every accident, misfortune, quarrel, sickness, disease, and unhappiness is the *direct* result of the individual work of one or more wicked spirits." ³ This view caused author and anti-cult activist Lowell D. Streiker to get concerned, especially after looking at the Hammonds' list of demons:

Virtually every unwanted emotional reaction (ranging from "bitterness" to "embarrassment"), every disease (especially mental illness), and every possible use of the mind (including "intellectualization" and "rationalization") are demons that must be identified and expelled from the believer in deliverance sessions. ⁴

Let's take a look at some of the other demons listed in *Pigs in the Parlor*. ⁵ Are you a wife with a mind of your own? You may be possessed by a demon of *Anti-submissiveness*. The Apostle Paul encouraged wives in Ephesus to submit to their husbands; unfortunately, wife-beaters and control freaks through history have repeated that exhortation as though God Himself declared it. Maybe you're possessed by a demon of *Masturbation*. I'm sorry, but I can't find anything in Biblical writings where this practice has been forbidden by divine law. Are you Moravian, Quaker, or Greek Orthodox? The Hammonds have listed a demon of *Doctrinal Error*; being devout Baptists, they might have looked at you as a possible candidate for exorcism. The list goes on and on.

Some of the attempts to categorize demons may be considered humorous, but the apparent influence of demons over their mortal victims is a very serious matter. Of the various recorded manifestations of demoniac possession, one of the most violent occurred in 1949 during Father William S. Bowdern's lengthy exorcism of a boy named "Robbie" in St. Louis. During the exorcism, Robbie spat in the faces of priests, hurled obscenities, spoke Latin (a language that Robbie never learned), punched Bowdern in the testicles, urinated on himself, and developed deep scratches all over his body that seemed to come of their own accord. ⁶

Not all demoniac manifestations are this violent, however. In *Pigs in the Parlor*, for example, Frank Hammond discussed the appearance of a very unusual demon:

During a pre-ministry interview a young minister disclosed that he had been obsessed with worldly dancing and that he would "rather dance than eat". When the *demon* of worldly dancing was called out, the man began a rhythmic pantomime. His body began to sway rhythmically, his hands moving back and forth in a clapping motion, and his mouth was moving as though singing although no sound was coming forth. ⁷

There is no such thing as a "short list" of symptoms of demoniac infestation. Aside from purely subjective designations

as "worldly dancing," a composite list of symptoms taken from various deliverance manuals and treatises includes the following: violent behavior, depression, phobias, addiction to drugs (including alcohol and tobacco), sexual promiscuity and/or perversion, supernatural strength or abilities, mental illness, aversion to anything overtly Christian (including churches, hymns, and the Bible), and attempts to commit suicide.

How Demons Enter

If demons inhabit an individual, how did they get there in the first place? Deliverance ministers are in agreement as to several root causes of demoniac infestation. Involvement with the occult is seen as one of the most common causes. The use of horoscopes, tarot cards, ouija boards, runestones, and the like are seen as excellent ways to become possessed. According to Richard Ing, a deliverance minister from Hawaii, mere ownership of any occult paraphernalia can spell trouble; "These cursed things bring strange diseases that doctors cannot diagnose, divorces, rebellious children, arguments, accidents, and oppression."⁸ It should be noted that Ing also claims that statues of the Virgin Mary, paintings of Roman gods, and even little ceramic frogs can produce the same effect.

Why frogs? Frank and Ida Mae Hammond explained, "These are classified among the creatures mentioned in Deut. 14: 7-19 as being unclean and abominable. They are types of demon spirits."⁹ So much for God looking down upon Creation and saying, "It is good." If a suspicious object that may invite demoniac infestation is found in someone's house, exorcists always advise that person to get rid of it at once. It breaks my heart to think that somewhere a young child may be crying because his stuffed doll of Kermit the Frog was thrown away by superstitious parents.

Various deliverance ministers have also claimed that rock music, turquoise jewelry manufactured by Pueblos, role-playing games such as Dungeons & Dragons, and horror fiction novels are also capable of defiling homes and making their occupants miserable. Eddie Smith is pastor of the Houston House of Prayer and coordinator of the U.S. Prayer Track of the A.D. 2000 & Beyond Movement; he has also built up a reputation as an exorcist who has cleansed demons out of houses as well as people:

Over the years my wife Alice and I have had the privilege of helping many Christians do spiritual housecleaning. We've thrown out literally thousands of dollars worth of personal possessions – clothing, jewelry, artwork, books, tapes and more – that God revealed were a defilement to them and to their homes.¹⁰

Some also believe it is possible for people to receive demoniac spirits through curses placed on them by their foes. Stan Madrak, a Vietnam veteran and deliverance minister currently based in Mississippi, explained why so many of his comrades in arms suffer from psychological problems: "During the war, and maybe even today, the Vietnamese people placed VOODOO and WITCHCRAFT curses on their 'enemy'."¹¹ Maybe it's just me, but I had always associated Voodoo with west Africa and Haiti rather than southeast Asia.

Many deliverance ministers also warn people to avoid any participation in Oriental martial arts; Rebecca Brown, an exorcist who claims to be an expert in freeing people from Satanic cults, has stated that "Most people are already infested with demons by the time they reach the level of a brown belt." Such demons, according to Brown, are acquired through the various postures used in martial arts, which she regards as incantations: "From very ancient times such hand and body signing has been used to summons [*sic*] demons. You will see this type of activity extensively used by Heavy Metal Rock Music stars."¹²

One of the most controversial avenues to demoniac possession is trauma. Bob Larson discussed this on his radio program in April 1998:

People wrongly think that the nature of the volition's role in opening one up to demonic possession is absolutely, critically necessary on a conscious level...One of the best openings of demon possession or demonic oppression is under severe tragedy and trauma that may come about as a result of nothing the person has done...it sort of short-circuits the opening to the gateways of the human mind and emotions and creates a state of vulnerability.¹³

More than any other form of trauma, the problem of childhood trauma is most often cited by exorcists. Frank and Ida

Mae Hammond have stated that "Without question the majority of demons encountered through ministry have entered the persons during childhood." ¹⁴ In Part I of this series, I discussed how Larson ministered to a teenage boy who may have been infected with a demon of Witchcraft before he was born. Larson, the Hammonds, and other deliverance ministers accept the idea that a fetus can be possessed by demons through the misdeeds of its parents; according to the Hammonds, "Evil spirits have no sense of fairness." ¹⁵

Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) is often mentioned when childhood trauma is discussed; there are various urban legends of underground Satanic cults whose members wield tremendous influence and engage in unspeakable violence, especially against children and women of childbearing age. Discussions of SRA and deliverance sometimes involve another phenomenon: a controversial medical diagnosis called multiple personality disorder (MPD). This disorder supposedly manifests in those who have experienced intensive abuse in childhood. In his 1996 book, *In the Name of Satan*, Bob Larson discussed how MPD relates to possession:

In the realm of multiple personalities, there are good alters and bad alters. Good alters are the part of the person's consciousness that has acknowledged Christ as Savior. Bad alters, for one reason or another, refuse to make that spiritual surrender. Sometimes bad alters are just spiritually unconvinced identities. At other times these portions of the person are possessed by a demon. ¹⁶

It then becomes necessary to find the "bad" alters, cast demons out of them, and then lead them to salvation, which sometimes causes the alters to reintegrate into the subject's core personality and therefore vanish. Rebecca Brown disagrees: "Sexual molestation is always a part of satanic ritualistic abuse. This is because demons are most easily placed in the child through the act...<>All children who have been abused in satanic rituals <>are demon possessed. Even if they are the children of Christian parents." ¹⁷ Any "multiple personalities" encountered during therapy, according to Brown, are actually demons. ¹⁸

Notes

1 Don Basham, *Deliver Us From Evil*. 1972; Chosen Books; Grand Rapids, MI. Thirteenth printing; 1996; pg. 103.

2 Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, *Pigs in the Parlor*. 1973; Impact Books; Kirkwood, MO; pg. 111.

3 Whyte, H.A. Maxwell, *Dominion Over Demons*. 1973; Banner Publishing; Monroeville, PA; pg. 66.

4 Lowell D. Streiker, *The Gospel Time Bomb*. 1984; Prometheus Books; Buffalo, NY; pg. 116.

5 Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, *Pigs in the Parlor*; pp. 113-115.

6 Thomas B. Allen, *Possessed: The True Story of an Exorcism*. 1993; Doubleday; New York, NY; pp. 166-194.

7 Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, *Pigs in the Parlor*; pg. 50.

8 Richard Ing, *Spiritual Warfare*. 1996; Whitaker House; New Kensington, PA; pg. 79.

9 Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, *Pigs in the Parlor*; pg. 142.

10 Eddie Smith, "It's Time for Some Spiritual Housecleaning." *Charisma*; February 1998; pg. 68.

11 Stan Madrak, *End-Time Deliverance Center* Web site; <http://www.demonbuster.com/indexpg2.html>.

12 Rebecca Brown, M.D., *Prepare for War*. 1992; Whitaker House; Springdale, PA; pg. 140. (Previously published in 1987 by Chick Publications; Chino, CA.)

13 *Talk Back with Bob Larson* radio broadcast; April 8, 1998.

14 Frank and Ida Mae Hammond; *Pigs in the Parlor*; pg. 24.

15 Ibid.

16 Bob Larson, *In the Name of Satan*. 1996; Thomas Nelson Publishers; Nashville, TN; pg. 138.

17 Brown, *Prepare for War*; pp. 216-217.

18 Ibid., pg. 213.

The third eye

By Pat Reeder

Because we have an important article in this issue from Danny Barnett, this will be an abbreviated column, and many thanks to Danny, both for writing such an excellent article and for making it so long that I don't have to work as much.

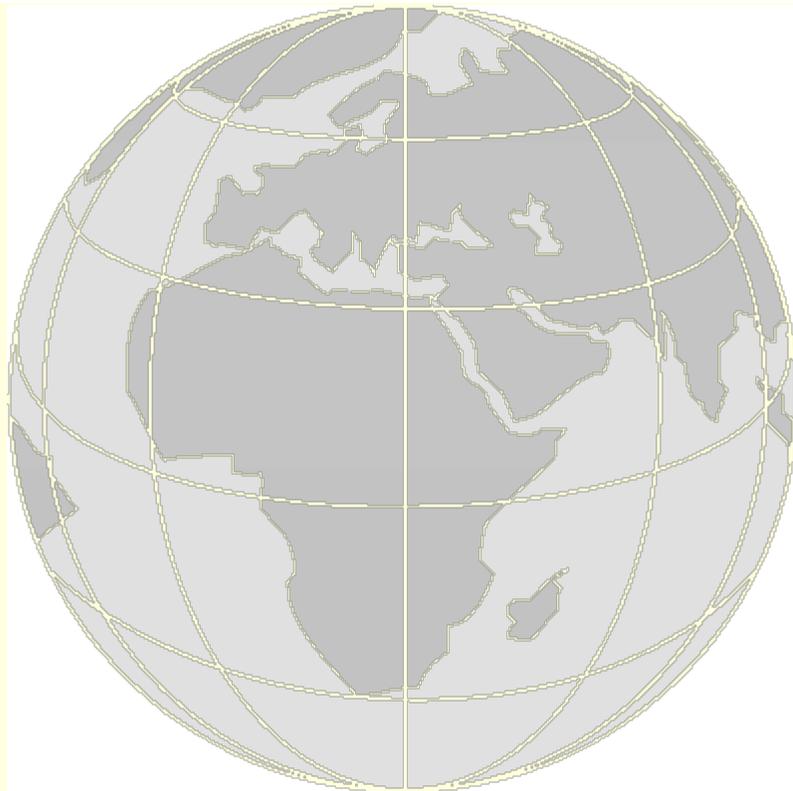
At this writing, it is blisteringly hot here in Central Texas, and this shocking fact has not escaped Vice President Al Gore, who has noticed with alarm that the closer we got to July, the warmer it became. To someone of Al's scientific abilities, this obviously means that the Earth is in an irreversible, cataclysmic warming trend due to the greenhouse effect. (This leaves me wondering if our Christmas vacation is fated to be ruined by shrill administration claims that the Earth has entered an irreversible cooling period, and a new Ice Age is upon us).

The unusual, but not unprecedented, summer heatwave has given rise to lots of similarly silly pronouncements from the media, which perhaps can be chalked up to sunstroke.

To cite just one example, in Larry King's *USA Today* column (the column in which ellipses are used to signify Larry staring at a wall for long periods of time and waiting for something resembling a thought to form), Larry asked whatever happened to those "wackos" who said global warming wasn't taking place, and jeered, "Check outside." To which I'd reply: those wackos are still hard at work in their meteorological labs, and Larry should check his calendar (that thing hanging just to the left of the spot on the wall he's staring at right...now) to see what month it is.

Larry probably got his climate info from Al Gore, who has been blaming everything from the summer heat to the Florida forest fires on global warming (not El Nino and La Nina, which are far more likely culprits), and making all sorts of doomsday pronouncements in order to promote passage of his Kyoto global warming treaty. For instance, he pointed to recently revealed ancient Chinese crop and weather records to claim that the average temperature in China has risen noticeably in the past 500 years.

The problem with that claim (aside from the total lack of thermometers in the 15th Century) is that the Chinese records go back 2,000 years, but Gore chose to start his comparison at 500 year ago. At that time, China was in a mini-Ice Age, with average temperatures up to four degrees cooler than today. Prior to that, between 800 and 1300 A.D., temperatures were hotter than they are now. But it's tough to panic the populace by shouting, "The climate is almost as warm as it was 1,000 years ago!"



Gore also pointed to new record high temperatures as being "evidence for global warming" that "keeps piling up, day after day, week after week." Well, something's piling up, but it isn't evidence for global warming.

Dr. John Christy of the University of Alabama's Earth System Science Laboratory in Huntsville noted that the temperature records alluded to by Gore come from the National Weather Service, and are not complete. For a more full and accurate comparison, it's necessary to consult local weather records, which go back 100 or so years. Doing so, you would discover that Gore's claim that June 1998 was the hottest June on record wasn't true, at least not in Huntsville. While there's no denying it was a scorcher, June was still hotter there in 1914, 1921, 1936, 1943, 1952 and 1953. And our grandparents LIKED it that way, dagnabbit!

Of course, none of this is to say that we shouldn't all do our bit to reduce greenhouse gases, by, say, not taking huge private jets to global-warming conferences in Japan. And to end on a positive note, I personally think it is admirable that while lesser mortals have been talking about the weather since the dawn of time, Al Gore is sincerely determined to be the first person to really do anything about it.

...

And now a few short takes on the news...

A federal judge in North Carolina threw out the EPA's report classifying secondhand cigarette smoke as a Class A carcinogen. This is the report that all those laws against smoking, both in and out of doors, are based on. The judge ruled that the report was more political than scientific, and that the EPA had monkeyed with the test results in order to arrive at a desired predetermined conclusion. In other words, there is no scientific proof that if someone lights up a Lucky 20 feet away from you at a sidewalk cafe, you are going to catch cancer germs and die.

Anti-smoking activists immediately questioned the judge's impartiality, since he is from tobacco-loving North Carolina. In his defense, it should be noted that if the EPA report were correct, the judge should've been dead years ago.

(Disclaimer: before you start accusing me of being a tool of the tobacco industry, please note that my father smoked, both my parents died of cancer in their 60s, and I hate cigarette smoke and tobacco companies with a seething, purple-

hued passion. But I also hate restrictive laws based on lousy science and outright lies. So what can you do?)

Next month, a team of monster-hunters will scan Norway's Seljord Lake with state-of-the-art underwater cameras and imaging equipment, trying to verify the existence of the Seljord serpent, or as I like to call him, "Cecil, the Seasick Seljord Serpent." This is a giant snake (or eel or snail or slug, depending on the witness) which has allegedly been spotted in the lake for 250 years. The lead researcher said many locals have seen it but are afraid to say so for fear of being ridiculed in public. But, he said, "These lakes are less researched than the backside of the moon. Who knows what's there?" My guess: bashful Norwegians.

Finally, if you just can't get over the death of Princess Diana, followers of Indian guru Bhagwan Rajneesh can cure you in just one hour. To dispel grief over Diana, they suggest you start with "deep, chaotic breathing," which should be followed by "total catharsis," or the throwing out of all that has been stirred up by the breathing (be sure to bring a bucket). You must then jump up and down with arms raised while shouting the mantra "Hoo!" Finish by "celebrating through dance." I don't know if this will relieve your Diana trauma, but I'd certainly pay to watch it. Sounds a lot like "Lord of the Dance."

Well, there's much more I could write about, but it's just too darn hot. Damn this global warming! It makes me lazier than any man in recorded history.

Pseudoscience in France

by John Blanton

All right, the US of A has become notoriously limp of brain, if you believe everything you have read in this rag recently. However, we had heard there was at least one place in the world with a greater number of mental cogs in idle, and we decided (remember, we were thinking of you) to check it out.

So, it was off to Paris.

Didn't take long. A brief outing on a sunny Friday afternoon with our cameras, and we had what we were looking for. See photo 1 and photo 2.



Photo1: Dr. Rebecca Rotnemer obviously specializes in acupuncture and homeopathy. No big deal here--we have a lot of that, plus chiropractic in the US. Greg Aicklen spotted this and took the picture. The old guy? C'est moi.



Photo 2: This is obviously a common sight in France, where homeopathy finds (we think) greater favor. After all, where is Jacques Benveniste's laboratory? NTS VP Greg Aicklen is seen here at the famous Place Pigalle.

OK, this does not count as a scientific study. Two data points do not a trend make.

We went knowing the reputation France (and the rest of Europe) has for this sort of stuff, and, of course, we found what we were looking for. I wonder what we would find if we took a similar stroll in Dallas.

That sounds like a great project for this fall. Paris two days before the beginning of summer is tolerable. Dallas in the middle of summer is not.

We will let you know what we find.

Has science found God?

The Hawaii Rational Inquirer

by Vic Stenger

We have seen a spate of such media reports recently, inspired by a whole host of meetings, magazines, books, and other activities bankrolled by the financier John Templeton. Templeton, a devout Christian, is trying to bring religion and science together.

Nothing wrong with scientists having dialogues with theologians, but it is stretching things quite a bit to imply that science has somehow begun to find evidence for God. Most of the scientists who participate in the Templeton activities are already believers and their product is a mix of good old fashioned Christian apologetics, with some newly-fashioned apologetics tossed in.

In fact, the great majority of scientists remain non believers, in almost the exact opposite proportion to the general public. A letter from E.J. Larson and L. Withamin the July 23 issue of Nature contains the results of a survey of members of the National Academy of Sciences (USA) showing that 72% are outright atheists, 21% agnostic and only 7% admit to belief in a personal God. Figures from an almost identical survey in 1914 and 1933 show a steady decline in theism.

The new apologetics exploits the latest version of the argument from design. The so-called "anthropic coincidences" are used to assert that the constants of physics are so finely-tuned for the formation of life that they could never have happened by accident. It's William Paley's old Blind Watchmaker argument applied to the cosmic stage.

Of course, no one really knows what other forms of life might have occurred with other values of physical constants. It is notoriously difficult to calculate a probability based on a sample of one.

An absolutely delicious explanation for the anthropic coincidences has been suggested by physicist Lee Smolin in his

recent book, "The Life of the Universe." Smolin, an expert on quantum gravity, argues that new universes are created inside black holes. The daughter universe gets its "genes" (i. e., the constants of physics) mutated, and so is slightly different from its mother. (No sexual relations between universes are necessary.) Darwinian natural selection of the constants then takes place, with those universes having greater black hole production being favored in the cosmic struggle for survival.

Believe it or not, Smolin's idea makes a testable prediction: a connection should exist between black hole production and the formation of complexity that can lead to some form of life.

Coincidentally, the cover story of *U.S. News* issue of the same day as the *Newsweek* article was called "Is Ours the Only Universe?" It mentions Smolin's notion, but does not carry it further. Instead, the story is accompanied by a boxed article labeled "Cosmic Designs: Scientists and theologians discover a common ground" that gives the fine-tuning argument once again.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to see the battle between creationists and evolutionists move from biology to the cosmos?

More Dawkins

And here's what one scientist, Richard Dawkins, had to say about science and religion in this summer's issue of *Free Inquiry*:

"Much of what people do is done in the name of God. Irishmen blow each other up in his name. Arabs blow themselves up in his name. Imams and ayatollahs oppress women in his name. Celibate popes and priests mess up people's sex lives in his name. Jewish *shohets* cut live animals' throats in his name. The achievements of religion in past history - bloody crusades, torturing inquisitions, mass-murdering conquistadors, culture-destroying missionaries, legally enforced resistance to each new piece of scientific truth until the last possible moment - are even more impressive. And what has it all been in aid of? I believe it is becoming increasingly clear that the answer is absolutely nothing at all. There is no reason for believing that any sort of gods exist and quite good reason for believing they do not exist and never have. It has all been a gigantic waste of life. It would be a joke of cosmic proportions if it weren't so tragic."

At least the guy can write.

Junior SKEPTICS

Fans of the Simpsons will know that Lisa often is seen reading "Junior Skeptic" magazine. Now, Skeptic Magazine has announced the foundation of a real Junior Skeptic, geared to the younger set. The early issues will appear as inserts in the regular magazine. Tentative plans call for Emily Rosa, the schoolgirl who debunked Therapeutic Touch on the pages of JAMA, to appear on the first cover.

Heaven-O From Kingsville

A fellow named Canales in Kingsville, Texas, has launched a campaign to get people to adopt "heaven-o" instead of "hello," since the latter contains the cuss word "hell". He actually got the Kleberg county commissioners to designate "heaven-o" as the county's "official greeting." That's how employees at the courthouse now answer the phone.

(Thanks to Lisa Williams. Or was it Lisa Simpson?)

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Tenured fruitcakes should go

by Roahn Wynar

Most people who follow the tenure review debate don't seem to realize how pathological some academics can become. We don't have a problem with professors taking their pack off after promotion, or even revealing secret political views. It's the ones who immediately eat their own brains that we are worried about. Being controversial is always acceptable; simply being stupid is not.

The following is a list of tenure review poster children that should make everyone agree that a university should retain the right to terminate the employment of fruitcakes.

Dr. Courtney Brown, Emory University.

A political scientist, Brown is a former Peace Corps volunteer and has written three peer-reviewed books on the application of chaos theory to political science. Perhaps nonlinear mathematics is what threw him over the edge in 1995 when he became a "Scientific Remote Viewing Instructor" at his new Farsight Institute. Teaming up with Ed Dames, a former remote viewer for the military who claimed at one point that a pathogen aboard Hale-Bopp would begin destroying all plant life on Earth in 1998, he was the first to sound the alarm that vengeful aliens were about to arrive on the comet.

He utterly abandoned any attempts to meaningfully measure his ability to see across space and time. Emory can't as easily abandon Brown, because he is protected by the almost-invincible tenure system.

Dr. John Mack, Harvard University.

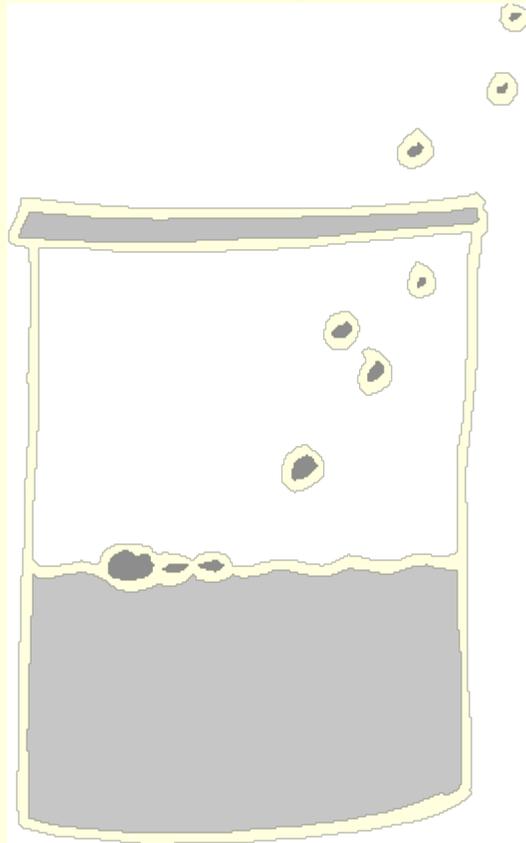
Mack, a Harvard psychology professor, believes that we are being abducted by aliens — because his patients told him so. He has written several hit books on the subject and made such inscrutable statements as "My own impression is that we may be witnessing an awkward joining of two species, engineered by an intelligence we are unable to fathom, for a purpose that serves both of our goals with difficulties for each. I base this view on the evidence presented by the abductees themselves." (From page 414 of his 1995 book *Abduction*.) His Harvard University connection is held like a talisman by all his followers. He also (legitimately) boasts a Pulitzer Prize for a book written in 1977 about Lawrence of Arabia.

That book may have gotten him in the door at Harvard, but without tenure review how could they push him out?

Stanley Pons, University of Utah.

This professor fell in love with a little glass cell that supposedly pumped out more energy than it absorbed. How? A nuclear reaction stimulated by a novel chemical process he called "cold fusion." Rushing to announce his discovery, he blithely skipped the peer review process by ignoring the journal Nature's request for further details. After making his big splash he was chased into a corner by his peers and forced to submit his little cell to actual scientific tests. When the cell failed miserably and obviously, he invented a series of ad hoc explanations to excuse himself. Unable to fire him

because he held tenure, it looked like Utah was going to be the national laughingstock of science for years to come.



Happily, however, Toyota hired him, and when last heard of, Pons was continuing his experiments in a company-sponsored lab.

Dr. Aileen Kishi, University of Texas.

Dr. Kishi has been the tip of the spear for all the quack medical modalities now in vogue in the nursing profession. Instead of providing the rigorous framework of honest research that the public expects of a university professor, she has followed every gimmicky breeze that blows through the crazy and complex world of health care. She has uncritically brought aromatherapy, energy fields, magic water and overpromoted herbs to Central Texas nurses, all with the full power of the University name behind her. Don't expect her to stop, however; "academic freedom" arguments will probably prevail, and all Texans will pay the price of her salary and that of any damage done by her misled pupils.

Whatever form tenure review takes, it should be designed to stifle gross stupidity, not inventiveness or controversy. Also note that in some fields inventiveness and controversy are hard to distinguish from stupidity, so we claim that tenure review in, say, theater or journalism — or even English literature — is not required.

Wynar is a physics graduate student.