

secular idaho

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Valley Freethinkers, ID Society of Reason,
Cosmos Coffee Club., HumanKind,
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Free Thought Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason www.tvcor.org.

August 2015 www.tvcor.org.

CELEBRATING OUR FREETHINKERS

Jeanette Ross

In the 1930's, Unitarian ministers and scholars were at the front of calls for secular rights and a more just society. From its beginnings in the nineteenth century, when ministers and congregants rejected the supernaturalism found in traditional beliefs, they continued to meet in buildings that often looked like churches minus the steeple, and the order and style of its gatherings has varied from the ways of Christian churches mostly in the wording of its hymns and the progressive homilies of its ministers. Oh, and they include a humanist organization.

Go ahead, circle the churchy words in the previous paragraph. A little off-putting? Reminded you of something you once found restrictive? "Amen" translates as "yes."

Then consider this. At its most recent gathering of thousands, the yearly General Assembly, The Unitarian Universalists made a historic call for the entire organization, bottom to top, to reconsider how it might be more free-thinker friendly.

Why bother? Have we not discarded the cross, Biblical emphasis in our religious education programming? When did you hear mention of the ten commandments unless it was a joking reference to "ten recommendations"? When did you hear mention of sin, or good versus evil without a raised eyebrow and a kindly remonstrance, "I don't do dichotomies." Don't we already have wine at our potlucks, big signs welcoming LGBTQ participation? Don't we end our prayers with "blessed be," as well as "amen"?

Wait, what about the business of prayers, anyway?

UU Humanists have long felt that many more would enjoy the lively companionship and shared values of a UU group. We suspect that the biggest impediment to gathering more like-minded souls is simply lack of awareness out there. For a start, we need to reach out and welcome those who don't know what we can offer.

The recommendations of the 2015 UU Humanists are relatively modest. Let's make an effort, they say, and then let's make space. As we gather new people into our individual congregations, then in our usual fashion we can talk about what form we wish to take.

This requires a blend of courage and modesty. Previous new members have arrived with churchy baggage they wish to shed, and yet find some comforting parallels. Their children learn about community faiths in person, not through a book; they participate in demonstrations and marches. They learn that religious language can be worthwhile if it helps to name genuine needs. They learn what they have in common with others who hold very different beliefs.

Today's unchurched have a wider variety of backgrounds. They may have already questioned their family or community's religious beliefs. They may check "none" in the various forms that ask, and that's it, done. None of the old obsessions or stories or miracles matter, so why bother with outdated institutions that attempt to control us and impose their notions of morality?

My own reasons begin with the practical. Good music, good coffee, stimulating conversations, friendship. My rule of thumb is simple and fits many situations: Keep company with people you admire. Not all, of course, are UUs.

Another reason is situational. This nation is cracked and suffering. Ideologies, fixed beliefs, sit like a boil on the heart of many perfectly lovely people. A whole country has learned to ignore the likelihood that it contains broken pieces (The second amendment, good idea at the time, has led to unspeakable abuses; slavery allowed a body of people to see themselves as victims of a federal government that provides unacknowledged benefits. Bullies who crave respect demand opportunities to be avenged. And marketers of grudges, political, commercial, religious, you name your example, have found buyers. This at a time that the planet demands our attention. No one of us can make a difference alone. We need an institution that welcomes thoughtful, self-critical daring freethinkers. Can I have an amen?



Humanists of Idaho, a chapter of American Humanist Association & Council for Secular Humanism, is a nonprofit corporation promoting ethical, democratic, and naturalistic Humanism through public awareness, education and community involvement. We have met 4th Mondays, Jan-Nov, in upper room of the Flicks, Boise. Open discussion and dining at 6:30pm; business 7pm; program 7:30pm pm. Our next meeting will be August 17. **More at meetup page, see below.**

President's Message

It was a nice day for the 4th of July parade – not too hot and a little cloudy. The turnout was fair, as large crowds blanketed both sides of the parade route. Our entry consisted of a car pulling a trailer, with a few people riding in the trailer and more walking behind. Most of us carried signs focused on Free-thought, that we shifted back and forth so that the crowd on both sides of the street could see them. We had a few hecklers, as expected, but most responses were positive. This being our fourth year in the parade, I think people are beginning to accept that we are here to stay.

The featured speaker at our June HOI meeting was Jessie Berner of the International Rescue Committee. Jessie is a medical case worker for IRC, helping refugees meet their medical needs. (She brought another case worker with her, Dauda Kandola, from Republic of Congo. The IRC in Boise provides newly arrived refugees with social services, medical case management, job readiness classes and job placement, women and youth programs and a host of other activities to support refugee well-being and integration into the Boise community.

To date, the IRC in Boise has resettled nearly 1,000 refugees into Boise coming from Afghanistan, Burma, Bhutan, Burundi, Iraq, Sudan, Congo, Uzbekistan, Russia, Somalia and a host of other countries. Refugees bring with them a desire to build a new life along with a wealth of cultural and linguistic diversity that adds to the richness of the Boise community. The IRC is looking for both volunteers and donations to help refugees integrate into the community. For more info on IRC Boise, and how you can help out, visit their website at: <https://www.facebook.com/IRCboise?fref=ts>

HOI is still considering meeting options, including new meeting dates and times as well as a possible new venue. The Flicks is a great place to meet, but the stairs can be a challenge for some. There is a poll setup at our meetup.com page, where you can mark your preferences. Drop in and let us know what you think.

Officers for Humanists of Idaho

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website manager Gary Mitchell gdog05@gmail.com Find more at www.meetup.com/Humanists-ofIdaho.

Our August meeting will still be at the usual time and place – 6:30 PM, third Monday of the month, Flicks Theater. Hopefully by then we will have some sense of new direction.

Mark your calendars for September 18-20, as we will again have our booth up at the Hyde Park Street Fair. For those new to Boise, HPSF is an annual event of arts, crafts, entertainment, great food, and a lot of fun. While much of the action will be located in Camel's Back Park (that is where our booth will be), the celebration continues south on 13th St, through the Historic Hyde Park business district.

Plan to come on down with the family and friends for a fun day in the park. A call for volunteers to help staff the booth through the fair will go out in late August.

Sarah Fisher from Idaho Fair Housing will be our featured speaker at HOI's August 17th meeting. Hope to see you all there.

D G Van Curen President, Humanists of Idaho

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C of Southern Idaho Secular group see Facebook "Secular Student Alliance at CSI". For Freethinkers Twin Falls Contact is Erica, erical@eaglemail.csi.edu

COSMOS COFFEE CLUB conversation v begins at 6:30pm 1st & 3rd Mondays at Papa Joe's. Contact Sander Karas at <http://www.meetup.com/CosmosCoffeeClub>

Humanists in Idaho Falls meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Ask Doug at gerstner_doug@yahoo.com

Idaho Society of Reason is part of Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason. <http://meetup.com/nontheist/events>

Local Objectivists meet monthly, last Wed 6pm at varying restaurants. Ask Tim Scharff at scharffdesignworks@icloud.com

Meet An Atheist or several, socialize 2nd Tuesdays, typically at The Reef. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IdahoAtheist/>

Human KIND project

<http://www.human-kind-project.com/>, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/humankindproject2014>

"The Magic of Reality" By Richard Dawkins

Richard Dawkins is a superbly talented person - a scientist and a writer. He is also famous to some of us (and notorious to others) for his very effective activism for atheism. But in "The Magic of Reality", he used his prodigious gift for communications for the benefit and enlightenment of young people in this book aptly subtitled "How We Know What's Really True". It belongs on the bookshelf of any student at the junior high school level and above.

Dawkins' objective is summed in his subtitle, "How We Know What's Really True", and in this book, he effectively addresses the topic. His twelve chapters ask questions such as "What Is Reality? What Is Magic", "Why Are There So Many Different Kinds of Animals", and "What Is A Rainbow?". Each chapter begins by presenting a few well-chosen myths about the chapter's topic from the world's various cultures. Then Dawkins provides an explanation of the science that studies and answers the questions while simultaneously dispelling the myths. Using intermediate level English readily understandable to his audience, Dawkins leads his readers through various disciplines of science as he proceeds from chapter to chapter. He touches upon biology and evolution, chemistry, physics, a bit of cosmology, and geology in a manner that makes the subject matter understandable and attractive to the young reader. Along with the science instruction, Dawkins introduces his readers to the pioneers and other important scientists who have given mankind the broad and deep understanding of our world and the sciences that explain it.

Dawkins teaches at a second level within the chapters to instill in his readers an understanding of the basic scientific method,

and how to question with healthy skepticism. These secondary lessons will give a young person the basis for rational thought and a healthy curiosity about science. Dawkins does not proselytize for atheism in this book, but he does not skirt the third rail issues of science such as Darwinian evolution and a 13.5 billion year old cosmos. He provides cogent explanations to instill the science that demystifies each one. Other secondary lessons include how to accept and trust science, and to accept the limitations that one person will have for understanding more than a small area within the vastness of modern scientific knowledge. And Dawkins' text will encourage some of his readers to join the world's scientists in adding to the store of knowledge currently extant. Hopefully, the rest will become rational informed citizens in support of science and the products, both physical and intellectual, that it will provide them.

"The Magic of Reality" is not only an intellectually pleasing book to read, but a beautiful book visually, thanks to its being profusely illustrated by Dave McKean. He is very experienced in several motifs, including graphic novels, albums, comics and book covers, and designing characters for Harry Potter films. All of this experience provides him with the ability to teach and entertain in tandem with his author, Richard Dawkins.

Richard Dawkins has done a great service for tomorrow's people by giving them an effective start in becoming responsible young citizens with this book. We owe him a sincere "thank you" for taking time to sow seeds for the future of a better informed mankind. Our progeny will need every bit of help they can muster to address the challenges to come.

Wally Keltner



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The Abortion Debate

As the next election cycle rapidly approaches, the very divisive debate over the issue of abortions ramps up, with two camps – pro-choice and pro-life – drawing lines in the sand as they both push all-or-nothing agendas, leaving so many of us caught in the middle. To begin, I would like to clarify my position on the issue.

I do not believe that abortion should be used solely as a convenient means of birth control. On the surface one might argue that I am, therefore, anti-abortion, a label that I admit is not all that inaccurate in the pure form.

So, why don't I just jump on board with the pro-life side, which is also anti-abortion? At issue here is a matter of common sense vs. an irrational, rigid, no exceptions agenda. First, the pro-life crowd predominantly favor banning all abortions – period, while I would advocate for a rational list of exceptions and compromises. At the top of the list is life of the mother.

No woman should be forced to risk her own life to bring an unplanned pregnancy to term. Compromise exceptions might include things like pregnancies from rape or incest, and other mitigating circumstances. A one size fits all policy simply does not fit within the realm of the complexity of life. And rather than legislation to ban abortion services immediately, without exception, I would favor a transitional format that would include implementation of common sense reforms designed to reduce abortion demands over time, which brings us to the next, and most important, point.

The illogical and hypocritical stance of the pro-life crowd holds that “Abstinence Only” should be the whole of the human biological curriculum in schools and that unmarried persons, especially teenagers, should not have access to contraception. Conversely, I would hold that the way to reduce, and possibly even eliminate, abortion demand in America is to follow the methods proven to reduce abortion demands around the world. This includes providing medically accurate, comprehensive sex education in public schools, beginning in the pre-teen, pre-puberty years, and easy/free contraceptive services for ALL sexually active people, including and especially teens.

By giving people medically accurate information about human reproduction, as well as access to contraception without restriction, unplanned pregnancies greatly diminish in number. It is impossible to address the issue of a high abortion rate, without addressing the issue of the high rate of unplanned pregnancies. The pro-life crowd promotes adoption over abortion, which seems to be a viable alternative to abortion in dealing with an unplanned pregnancy. Unfortunately, that solution ignores one of the greatest threats to life on earth in this century – Human overpopulation. As population increases, the need for more land and resources for human consumption increases, while the natural habitat for other life forms declines. As strange as it may sound, we are on the verge of overpopulating ourselves into extinction. Planning for life in the 22nd century requires reigning in global birth rates in the 21st. Therefore, the solution to both problems – abortion and overpopulation – is the same. Preventing pregnancies makes good sense, while trying to figure out how to provide for all the children of unplanned pregnancies does not.

D G Van Curen

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HumanKIND community page to join:

<https://www.facebook.com/humankindproject2014> Group page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/436333686513039/>

Boise State

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“Heretic” By Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Our nation exhibits its misunderstanding of today’s Islam in numerous costly and disappointing ways. One need only review ill-fated bellicose excursions in the Middle East, the media’s coverage of most things Islamic, and comments from family friends and neighbors. Our contact with Islam too often yields ruined lives, squandered resources, continuing deterioration of Middle Eastern stability, and tragic occurrences within the western nations.

“Heretic” author Ayaan Hirsi Ali offers the reader a first-hand look at modern Islam and its followers. She is an adult exile from the cruel and oppressive world of Islam as practiced in North Africa and the Middle East. She was born in Somalia to what may be that country’s equivalent of a middle class family. Through her teen years, her family also lived in Saudi Arabia and Kenya. She experienced mainstream Islamic treatment in her education, her family environment, and in her arranged marriage. Her early memories include her dedication to Islam, her abuse and misogyny by her family and teachers, and her very unwelcome skepticism about her religion and treatment as a female Muslim. Her triumph was to escape during a trip to join her unwanted new husband in Canada, and to seek asylum in the Netherlands. There she obtained an education and became a member of parliament before relocating to the United States for more safety from the death threats of her family and some Islamic fundamentalists. She has transformed herself from an oppressed child, to professor, atheist feminist and intellectual.

The author, in her earlier works “Infidel”, “Nomad” and “The Caged Virgin”, worked diligently to share her firsthand knowledge of Islam and her personal experiences in the countries where she resided. In this book published in 2015, she focuses upon the subtitle, “Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now”. Her premise is that today’s Islam is incompatible with modernity and that this situation is unlikely to improve unless five specific changes occur within the religion. She does valuable service for the reader summarizing Islam as it is practiced today and how this practice is tied to the interpretation of the Quran and other sacred literature. Her explanations are well researched and supported by citations in the book’s notes. Neither the author nor her writing is politically correct about the nature of Islam, its shortcomings, and the suffering it is causing on a global basis. The operative words are “blatantly outspoken”. The author places contemporary Muslims in categories characterized by their nature and objective.

BSU SSA is a home for secular students., encouraging critical thought, open, rational, scientific examinations of the universe and our place in it. We believe ethics and morality can be based on humanistic and rational values. We present a positive view of various -isms and non-religious worldviews through debates, workshops, speakers, movies, book club, discussion, and social gatherings.

Fall 2015 officers

Lindee Neumeier - President, Colin Fenello - Treasurer
Kendra Sanford - Secretary

Traditional categorization by sect – Sunni, Shia, Kurd, etc. – are set aside. Here. The first set contains the “Mecca Muslims” the majority of today’s Muslims. They behave much like their Prophet and his followers during their ten years in Mecca. His efforts were peaceful and evangelical as he and his followers proselytized and nurtured the new religion. The Mecca Muslims are devout and fundamentalist, but eschew violence. However, Mecca Muslims are not compatible with today’s world because of conflict with the rationalist, secular and individualistic values of modern Western society.

The author’s second set of Muslims are the “Medina Muslims, a minority group that mimics the Prophet and his followers after they left Mecca and marched to Medina. Hirsi Ali declares the Medina Muslims, although fewer in number than Mecca Muslims, they are more problematic. They demand a world living under sharia law and completely unchanged from Seventh Century Islam. Further, it is a requirement that they impose their Islam upon everyone else. They find violence a tool to achieve their aims and if they are not an individual practitioner of it, they condone its use by others to achieve the final triumph. Medina Muslims give us ISIS, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda. The author cites a population of 48 million Medina Muslims – about 3% of all of Islam. The world’s Medina Muslims are the target of the author’s book and its espoused transformations of Islam.

Hirsi Ali calls her third set the “Modifying Muslims”. These are a fragment of all Muslims, its dissidents. They, like the author, see the problems within Islam and are willing to campaign for change. They are the skeptics and intellectuals who brave death to oppose the mainstream of Islam.

To live harmoniously with others, the author says that the status of the Quran as immutable word of god and infallibility of Muhammad as last divinely inspired messenger must change. The claims of sharia as comprehensive system of law governing spiritual and temporal realms must be abandoned. Islam’s emphasis upon the after-life interferes with the here-and-now world. The concept of jihad as holy war prevents recognition of the needs of others. And like ideologies everywhere Muslims must shed their obligation to command right action and judge and forbid what they believe wrong.

Wally Keltner



Huumanists meet 3rd Sunday, 11:15am, at Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship library, next on June 21. Sages: June 11 and 25, 9:30am for no-host breakfast and programs, at Kopper Kitchen, near the Boise airport.

SAGES meet August 13 at their usual place, the back room of the Kopper Kitchen off Vista, for no-host breakfast and presentation.

This morning our intrepid guide to theater, Chuck Lauterbach, has moved from the director's role to center stage, where he will share the story behind his most recent book. Jolly Della Pringle was one of the most able and beloved of the traveling performers who lightened life on the western frontiers. She settled in Boise when she gave up life on the road (and in Hollywood). Chuck knows his heroine and her life and gladly shares.

BUUF's Humanists will meet at the usual time and place, third Sunday, August 16, at 11:15 for socializing, discussion starting by 11:30. We are on an arts journey, this time sharing tales or other visions of dystopia, other worlds, future times. Ask Jeanette at jross@fortboise.org any Q's.

Sources of Humanism, from Crane Brinton

summary from Jeanette Ross

Harvard Historian Crane Brinton begins his story of the modern world with a reminder that our beliefs of who we are and how we relate to one another have their beginning in the obsessions of privileged male citizens of several Greek cities. These men put a high value of lives of intellectual investigation and conjecture, shared with others of their class. They reveled in long nights of conversation and they valued moderation— they mixed water in their wine.

We know because they wrote and shared in letters, in public lectures. They considered notions of what is humanity's fate/destiny/direction, sense of purpose (if any) and considerations of the Good, True, Beautiful and Useful. Seldom, today, do we hear these as questions open for discussion. More often they are expressed as if they were common opinion, or as 'ritual' public language in sermons and speeches, in documents as *'liberty and pursuit of happiness'* and *'separation of church and state.'* Dr. Crane does not denigrate the idealizing and ritualized prioritizing of such language; he saus this expresses 'metaphysical' needs for meaning and purpose. They suggest how we fit into our place.

Several centuries of invasions, the creation and then the destruction of the Roman empire, was followed by a new kind of study, the reconsideration of Greek accomplishments that had been saved for us by northern Africa's efforts. This was the beginnings of our university systems.

New technology in England encouraged trade with other countries. Industrially-produced cloth was cheaper than hand-woven; tea from China favored alert factory workers; alert workers wanted tea and tea sets...) Our travel led to awareness of previously unfamiliar cultures and presented merchants and professors at Oxford with 'multanimity,' aware of metaphysical systems varying from our own.

This continuing engagement is a source for our strength and our anxiety and sense of vulnerability. English merchants were able to exploit tea pickers in India, but the ideas shared in English coffee shops encouraged a growing belief in rights and dignity inherent in humanity of any culture or belief.. culminating with John Locke's belief in the inherent rights and dignity of each person.

Locke's writing is found today in the library of Thomas Jefferson and is built into our nation's constitution. They encouraged another revolution, too. French coffee shop conversation shared the inequities of their political system (nobles and churchmen paid no taxes).

Today's recipients of rights to vote, to chose legislators and government administrators, to gain knowledge of our history and that of other peoples, does not prepare us to accept smaller slices of the world's economic pies. The Chinese so exploited by Great Britain's tea trade have learned much from us. We don't like it very much.

This provides uneasy tension, discomfort when we suppress awareness of a need to bring our privileges to those we don't understand or respect or agree with. We can no longer dismiss others as 'less than' ourselves. The modern age exhibits a trend to bring more social groups, genders and races under the umbrella of our ritual language, expressed as right to vote, to be free of harassment and protected by rule of law.— to assemble, speak aloud our private perspectives as if they were universals [*so irritating when we don't agree!!*] to print what we believe, associate with those who agree with us .

August 2015

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Crane Brinton's definition of Humanism

from *The Shaping of the Modern Mind*: 'HUMANISM' is an umbrella term for those who rejected medieval theology, with its naïve acceptance of supernatural stories, reification of religious reports and deference to authority. To start they lacked agreement on a (positive) description of their own position or uniqueness. They shared: a rejection of previous restrictions in multiple situations, media; a formal written language, an agreed-upon idealized version based upon writings of Cicero (p 25) for written exchanges; a set of standards and models for rhetorical expression and logical presentation of arguments (from Montaigne, Bacon, others; for historical writing, criticism (example: exposing the Donation of Constantine as a forgery by pointing out the anachronistic references); expectations for defense/support of a statement, for sorting out, recognizing speculative thought; a revised form of Gothic architecture varying by location.

Humanism brought a re-visioning of art based upon the idealized naked human form, as interpreted in oil painting and sculpture; a continued development of the personal voice in literature; and particularly the imaginative writings of Petrarch, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Cervantes and others. CB identifies two strains of humanism, the spare (classical theater of Racine, for example; English poets seeking universal, well-ordered verse (rhyming iambic pentameter, let's say). And it set ritual formulas for churches, also, including UUs. Contrast is an 'exuberant' style of artistic expression, in writing. One more commonality: a rejection of the mind/body sinful/pure duality. Humanist early on (Cellini, Rabelais, Shakespeare..) celebrated the whole person with desires, appetites, adventures and a spirit of daring. They include honesty, truth-telling even when recognizing one's own errors. *Humanist virtues are personal rather than cultural.*

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Humanism emerged at the same time as the formation of the modern State. Even as absolutist rulers tightened grips on kingdoms becoming nations, threats, warnings, punishments increased—along with fervently expressed ritual assertions. Divine rights of kings! Quoting scripture for support! CB, laconically, "the devil also can quote scripture." P 45 Order maintained by royal declaration was supported by circular logic. No god protected Charles I of England; in the time between this and the coming of, then departure of Oliver Cromwell, one James Harrington formed a club, the Rota, that promoted his republican ideals in London coffeehouses. The second Charles, fearing the power of freely exchanged conversation, had Harrington cast into the Tower of London, possibilities related to exchange of ideas, systematizing of meetings to maintain and expand on any selected topic, and the benefits of secret ballots were carried away to return elsewhere.

Notes from J Ross

On the beginnings of what we call history.. From A History of the World in Six Glasses by Tom Standage

Summary by J Ross

How did we get to where we are, and with what effort? What errors? Over what obstacles, with what gifts and opportunities? **Herodotus**, born to a family of prosperous merchant at a port city, one of Persia's gates to the Mediterranean, wanted to understand the clash of the titans of the day, Persia and Greece. He gathered stories and artifacts, organizing them into lectures that brought him honors and rewards. He published his life work as *Histories*, saying in the preface "This is the showing-forth of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that neither what has come to be from man in time might become faded, nor that great and wondrous deeds, those shown forth by Greeks and those by barbarians, might be without their glory; and together with all this, also through what cause they warred with each other." The influence of Homer and common opinion shows when H. speaks of the role of the gods in causing conflict. Still, he set the task: to investigate, organize findings, to seek causes and consequences—and to judge. There is, we recognize, a temptation to write at a slant, stitch together a cloak of justification and privilege. Canaanite traders came up with the method we use to record language. Their Hebrew cousins used this to record tales of their heroes and exploits, all explained as acting out the will of their own chief deity. Young Thucydides attended a lecture by Herodotus and wept with excitement. Perhaps more importantly, Thucydides, when a retired general from Athens, wrote his history, a year-by-year description of the Peloponnesian war between Sparta and Athens. Historians today follow the standard set by Thucydides, gathering evidence from geography, geology, weather, conditions and social structure, temperament and aspiration of rulers and more.

Stories of heroic ancestors and miraculous events we describe as folklore, not history..

Humanists of Idaho

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From **Wally Keltner's** review of "**Heretic**" by **Ali Hirsi Ali**

The thrust of Hirsi Ali's book is that Islam must reform itself to become compatible with today's other religions and cultures. Specifically, she cites these five basic areas for Islam to change and to transform Islam and bring it into harmony with the modern world:

The status of the Quran as the last and immutable word of God and the infallibility of Muhammad as the last divinely inspired messenger.

Islam's emphasis upon the afterlife rather than the here-and-now

The claims of sharia to be a comprehensive system of law governing both the spiritual and temporal realms.

The obligation upon ordinary Muslims to command right and to forbid wrong.

The concept of jihad or holy war.

In her readable text, the author's ideas are well presented and her logical process of problem analysis and the associated corrective action plan are logical. Hirsi Ali is slightly optimistic, since she sees tangible evidence of a budding upheaval in Islam. She reminds the reader that Islam has never undergone a Reformation and Enlightenment as did Christianity. There is no Muslim equivalent of Martin Luther. While the author's glint of optimism did not infect this reader, I heartily endorse her efforts in "**Heretic**" and the information and education it provides. A wide readership will benefit us all.