

## President's Message

Mark your calendars. Our annual Holiday Party is Saturday, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, beginning at 5PM. If you have any books lying around in need of a home, bring them along to the party. Donated books will go to a variety of destinations, from a women's jail to assisted living facilities. Sometimes a good book is all that is needed to brighten someone's day. For more information and specific details about the Holiday Party, check with our meetup and/or Facebook pages. Hope to see you there.

Bad news on the internet front. The national organization will no longer host our local [humanistsofidaaho.org](http://humanistsofidaaho.org) website. The ISP is scheduled to go dark on December 1<sup>st</sup>. If we are going to continue to have a local website, we will need to find a new ISP to host us. As we have a tiny budget, pay sites might be out of our reach. Options will be discussed at our November board meeting. Hopefully we can find a solution to keep our internet presence alive. Of course, our meetup and Facebook pages won't be affected either way. Stay tuned, and wish us luck.

As we move forward, and consider possible new directions, I would ask everyone to take a moment and give serious thought to what changes we might consider, to make Humanists of Idaho more appealing and more effective. Do you know of something we have been doing in the past that we maybe should do differently in the future? Can you think of something we haven't done in the past that might give us new direction and renewed enthusiasm going forward? Suggestions can be made using meetup messaging, or by contacting me directly at [CelebrantVan@gmail.com](mailto:CelebrantVan@gmail.com). Our next board meeting is November 20, and this will be one of our topics for discussion. Any and all input is welcome.

D. Van Curen, President, HOI

## ***EARTH is Calling: it's an Emergency*** J Ross

The good news, we will all feel better if we take the call. That's what humanist and artist Mark McGinnin tells us in his thoughtful little book, [The Restoration of our Common Home](#): summary of and commentary on Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter on the Care of our Common Home.

Evidence is all around us. Human activity has changed the earth's dynamics in ways that will damage an ecological system that supported all existing life forms. Causes have been studied and identified. Excess use of fossil fuels has contributed to warming of the oceans and air. This has changed overall temperature and weather patterns toward greater extremes.

Fuels energize industrialization, mechanization, increased international trade and technical innovation. Trade and global manufacturing have increased wealth and consumption. Without regulations and from increased living standards has come greater desire for consumer goods—and competition between nations to join a competition in construction to display wealth and increase production that produces more display and consumption.

Dedication to scientific research has also increased, and has studied the multifarious factors that contribute to global warming. They have identified an accelerating dynamic which, if continued, will cause disruptive changes.

The greatest source of change is a consequence of warming of ocean waters, which have absorbed the carbon dioxide that is a by-product of burning oil, coal and other fossil fuels. Shorelines are home to great numbers of earth's human population, which will suffer from depleting ocean food sources, rising water levels, and severe, destructive storms. Many great seaports and cities, including our own, will experience these conditions, as well. We may not be able to reverse these trends but we can slow them and compensate for the injustices that will follow. We can contribute to 'collective healing,'

## ***Does our Environmental Protection Agency Protect Us?*** [Tom von Alten](#)

A [Draft FY 2018-2022 Environmental Protection Agency Strategic Plan](#) was published in early October, with a comment period ending on October 31. The EPA's stated mission is "To Protect Human Health and the Environment" (that sounds nice) with three "strategic" goals:

- \* The first core mission is to deliver real results to provide Americans with clean air, land, and water.
- \* Second mission is to rebalance the power between Washington and the states, to create tangible environmental results for the American people.
- \* The third is to administer the law as Congress intended, to refocus the Agency on its statutory obligations under the law.

In slightly more direct language, the plan is to fold up the federal tent and let somebody else lead, to "sharply refocus EPA on its role of supporting the primary implementers of environmental programs—states and tribes—by streamlining programs and processes, reducing duplication of effort, and providing greater transparency and listening opportunities, enabling the Agency to focus on its core mission work." Which is to... you know, protect human health and the environment.

For the core mission, there are objectives to improve air quality, provide for clean and safe water, revitalize land and prevent contamination, and ensure safety of chemicals in the marketplace. But that business of "administering the law *as Congress intended*" keeps popping up. As Scott Pruitt imagines Congress intended? There's the "common sense" chestnut buried in there, too. And, "the rule of law must also be built on the application of robust science.

There are multiple bullet lists of what the EPA will do over the next four years, but one little item is included only by implication:

**Over the next four years, the EPA will pretend that climate change is a hoax and has nothing whatever to do with "robust science" or its mission.**

**Idaho Society of Reason has now joined with Humanists of Idaho.** <http://meetup.com/nontheist/events> They meet 2nd Sunday in Boise, 4th Sundays Nampa at noon. Watch for any changes.

**Objectivists** meet last Wed 6pm , varying restaurants. Contact is Tim Scharff , [scharffdesignworks@icloud.com](mailto:scharffdesignworks@icloud.com)

Surprisingly, [the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan](#) has not been flushed down the Memory Hole yet. (Don't wait too long to follow that link!) There were *five* strategic goals in that one, starting with **Addressing Climate Change and Improving Air Quality**. This:

Climate change poses risks to human health, the environment, cultural resources, the economy, and quality of life.<sup>1</sup> These changes are expected to create further challenges to protecting human health and welfare. Many effects of a changing climate are already evident and will persist into the future regardless of future levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. For example, average U.S. temperatures are rising, snow and rainfall patterns are shifting, and more extreme climate events—like heavy rainstorms and record high temperatures—are already affecting society, human health, and the environment. Potential climate change impacts may also make it more difficult to achieve clean air goals. To better protect human health and the environment, EPA must recognize and consider the challenge a changing climate poses to the environment.

The reference: Thomas R. Karl, Jerry M. Melillo, and Thomas C. Peterson (eds.). 2009. [Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States](#) (Cambridge University Press). Goal 1, Objective 1.1 was **Address Climate Change**.

"Minimize the threats posed by climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and taking actions that help to protect human health and help communities and ecosystems become more sustainable and resilient to the effects of climate change" with specific targets for GHG reduction in buildings, industry, transportation systems, and so on. Scott Pruitt doesn't think Congress intended any of that. Never mind the parade of record temperatures (triple digits in southern California, hurricanes, wildfires and coastal flooding. The plan is to DO NOTHING. Strategically.

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**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. See the meetup page for calendar of events.

### **Officers for Humanists of Idaho**

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### **Earth's Emergency Call** *continued from page 1*

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis suggests that responses must be both global and individual. Two Global Summits have been held. The nations gathering for these agreed on the nature of the problem and the causes. They agreed on efforts to assist and encourage decreases in carbon dioxide production but did not manage a mechanism that would enforce the self-chosen goals of participants.

What remains: individual commitments to reducing consumption. The dynamics of trade have led to an immoral state with ever greater distance between those protected by wealth and those who live unsettled, impoverished lives. The wealthy have, among many other advantages, a choice in where and how to live. Lower consumption means less demand that will dis-incentivize growth. This might motivate citizens to press for commitments to set goals. Those who are not dependent on exploitive systems can step outside and assess the system as well as the damage. This may work because, as Pope Francis suggests, excess consumerism does not satisfy. Here as with other addictions, one fix only leads to ever more neediness and encourages mistrust of those are seen as competitors. A simpler life, he says, is more meaningful as well as ethical.

McGinnis, as artist and writer, comments movingly on other advantages to a simpler life. There is pleasure and comfort in connecting to each other, which is certainly more likely if we are not scrambling to succeed at someone else's cost. And we may pause, allow ourselves to enjoy the natural beauty around us, knowing that we are adding to, not subtracting from ordinary wonders. Recognizing the ways we have contributed to damage and committing to change can encourage humility and gratitude, and counteract a celebrity culture that is limited to admiring the achievements of others.

A small power can be good.

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### **Tom's Comment to the EPA:**

Comparing the 2014-2018 strategic plan and this new draft, the goals have been modified from specific actions informed by the mission ("To Protect Human Health and the Environment") into coded administrative meta-goals. The business of "rebalance and refocus" is promoted ahead of addressing climate change, improving air quality, protecting America's waters, cleaning up communities, advancing sustainable development, ensuring the safety of chemicals, preventing pollution, and protecting human health. What were goals are packed into "deliver real results to provide Americans with clean air, land, and water."

This plan goes further than that: it avoids even the MENTION of the single most pressing "external factor and emerging issue" that threatens the mission of the Agency, which is to say the health and welfare of the American public. The July, 2015 [Department of Defense Report on Security Implications of Climate Change](#) concluded that global climate change is "a present security threat, not strictly a long-term risk. We are already observing the impacts of climate change in shocks and stressors to vulnerable nations and communities, including in the United States, and in the Arctic, Middle East, Africa, Asia, and South America. ... [E]ven resilient, well-developed countries are subject to the effects of climate change in significant and consequential ways."

In order to be useful (let alone credible), the EPA's strategy, goals, and objectives must reflect this central, scientific fact concerning our environment.

As extreme temperature records continue to be set year on year, and as the devastation from 2017's hurricanes in the Gulf Coast, Florida, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands, as extreme fire events in the western United States all show, the threats from global climate change are and will be multifarious, life-threatening, and expensive. Economic and climate refugee crises will become more extreme as well. Disease epidemics have been and will be further exacerbated.

## **Demons in our Dark Places** Jeanette Ross

Elaine Pagel's book, The Origin of Satan provides a perspective on the origin of Christianity as well as on her primary topic, the demonic Power feared by Christians from the time of Roman domination in west Asia to the present.

Satan is a quintessence of a spirit feared in many cultures, climes and times. The Sami, my mother's people, had shamens who could enter the spirit world, the unseen dimension inhabited by demons who, like Jehovah, could bring storms that might destroy their human creations on a whim or a grudge. The gods were expected to be no better or worse than humans below; Zeus' eye would wander when a pretty maiden walked by, while the stoic Sami feared storms and ice.

What fascinated Elaine Pagels is how Jehovah's willful jealousy and punishments, which dominate (infect?) the books we call the Old Testament, dissolve in the sunny affection of the fellow we call Jesus. Jesus called his followers to pay off Roman rulers as required (giving money to the temple in support of Rome's gods was good enough, as worship goes). And yet, Jesus cautioned, keep the old ways of your ancestors, keep your heart pure. The kingdom we yearn for is essentially a clean conscience. Jesus' cousin John went further, creating a ceremony of cleansing that became so popular that the local Roman mobster, like a jealous god, had John beheaded.

Here's the scene as Pagels describes it. Roman control of the proudly independent Hebrew motley (they were a put-together tribe) created the kinds of problems, physical and emotional, that are treated with opioids today. Believing your people to be special, then suffering indignities of foreign rule produced what now look like hysterical outbreaks— paralysis, and the opposite, tearing off one's clothing and running about screaming.

Jesus' first teaching took place on a sabbath at a synagogue in Capernaum. Jesus is confronted by a shouting man who labels him a holy messenger of god sent to destroy everyone. When Jesus calls for the unclean spirit to leave the man, the man becomes silent. Observers spread the word that Jesus commands demonic spirits. Jesus was quickly overwhelmed with the local sick and demon-possessed, who flooded in or were carried into the house where he spent the night. Jesus went apart to pray early the next morning, but the sick were massing and waiting for him. When he slipped out of town he was pestered by a leper on the road begging to be touched, that's all. Jesus, touches the man, saying, "don't talk about this, please," but it was hopeless.

Back in Capernaum, Jesus was mobbed. Four men carrying a paralyzed man tore a hole in his roof to drop down their friend for a cure! Jesus sweetly tells the paralytic that his sins are forgiven, for which Jesus is accused of blasphemy, of claiming to have a god's power. Jesus' response: all humans have the power to forgive themselves. Jesus then tells the man to pick up his mat and leave— which the man does.

Jesus and several others were invited to eat at the home of Levi, one of his dedicated followers. Many of those around him were rejected as 'sinners' (including women who had served as temple prostitutes of the rival faith) and Rome's tax collectors. A cleric for his own people, a Pharisee, asked why he ate with rejects. Jesus repeated a popular saying that it's the sick who need a doctor. This was later Christianized into a belief that Jesus was sent by a god to 'save' those who Jesus himself said could save themselves.

Another cleric asked why Jesus and his followers did not observe fasts. His ironic answer: This is a feast of good news! You are forgiven! The kingdom is here. If you're at a wedding, with the groom, you don't fast, do you? And this good news is like young wine, meant for young skins (implying that you'd simply split apart, you old goat, if I told this good news to you.)

The book of Mark chapter 3 tells us that by the time Jesus went to Galilee he was mobbed by the sick and crazy at every step, the sick shoved at him, grabbing for him, the crazy ones bowing down to him as the son of god, even though he asked them not to do this. He retreated up a mountain and called for a group of twelve followers/disciples to join him in healings. He seems resigned to his role and in accepting it, he shows acceptance of the belief of his times: "God can give this power and so, if I've got it, God gave it to me." And further, once he has it he can share it with his disciples. He's going full on.

Jesus' family was concerned by reports of huge crowds around him and rumors that Jesus called himself a god— which was blasphemy. A scribe insisted that only one with the power of the chief of demons, Beelzebul, could cast out demons. Jesus' reaction was ironic: why would the prince of demons defeat one of his princelings? Furthermore, whoever accuses a good man (like me) of containing a demonic spirit is also committing blasphemy. And fine, my biological mother is outside the door doubting my sanity. These friends who stand here with me, they are my family now. Ready to cast out demons. Jesus then climbed into a boat and offered parables to those listening on shore. He used the parable of the seed needing fertile soil to grow— adding that personal desires and miseries (the 'cares of the world') can be such a distraction that seed won't grow.

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## AT MEADOW LAKE LODGE Jeanette Ross

I was on my way to a retirement facility, subbing for another storyteller, Joy Steiner.

Streets were laid out for a planned housing addition of a hundred or so acres that included several handsome 'Lodges' for seniors of means. As I drove in, I found no pattern to the swerving, curling paved streets and two ambitious roundabouts. Timing is everything. The housing bubble burst, leaving one campus of several enormous buildings styled as lodge hotels, ruling a ghost community only complete with plantings around the retirement facility, then in all directions stretches of mown straw-pale lawn under the control of perfect curbs, with the cluster of a dozen or so homes in the south-east corner. I saw hay bales behind the residential buildings for 'seniors,' evidence of at least some benefit from the acres of grass. I explored my way through to find the entrance and just as blindly picked my way out; afterwards I could not recall the path either way. As I drove through I passed several brown skinned men in uniforms using trimmers to make precise edgings along curbs bravely clasping their dying lawns.

Maybe a dozen individual residences clustered in the south east corner of the attempted development. I hadn't found the right entrance or right building. I was meant to be in the Independent Living Lodge. A man out walking his dog led me inside to a receptionist, then, with her help, leading me through the employee passageway (painted concrete, joints showing, no carpet, no paintings or mural art on walls) to another building, another receptionist, who pointed toward the lunchroom where my contact, Ann Upchurch, waited with eight women, most of them in wheelchairs.

I began by encouraging memories from their younger years. Donna spoke first, recalling a train ride from her home in Nebraska to Los Angeles. She was 14 years old, escorted part way by her 17 year old brother who had been drafted and was on his way to military camp. She was needed to babysit the 5 year old daughter of another brother while her sister-in-law worked a night shift. She finished the ride alone and made the planned connection with her sister-in-law, stayed all summer, but then wanted to return for high school. Her sister-in-law brought her to the station, purchased the ticket, and left. When Donna tried to board she was told that a general needed her seat so he could join his troops and JDonna was left on the now-dark platform. She had no-one to call and telephones weren't that available. She remembered the trolley she needed to catch to get to her brother's house and got there, but it was locked, with nobody home. Donna knew that her sister-in-law's mother lived near-by, found that house with the aunt fortuitously still up. The aunt took her in and Donna was able to board the next day for the long ride home. Donna added that she boarded with a family in a nearby town for high school that fall, and because she was a little shy she had no one to tell of her experience, which was remarkable, yes, but she doesn't think of it as particularly bad.

Jean sat propped in her wheelchair, severely crippled and twitchy. She spoke slowly of her early teens living in Caldwell at the same time as Donna's story. Her best friend and friend's mother took the train to Portland for the summer; this particular year Jean was invited to take the bus to stay with them for their last week, then return with them on the train. Her Greyhound bus blew a tire on the way. Everyone got off and sat in the sun for hours while the driver found a phone and relayed the news to the Boise station. There, a search had to be made for another tire in these rationed times. By the time a tire arrived and the bus was on its way, their arrival in Portland was very late. The Portland station had been told of the delay but not Jean's family back in Boise. A rule in force in this time of war required the bus stations to lock doors at a late hour; Jean and many other passengers were locked inside. She was rescued at 6am. The hostess of the house where she was staying was anxious about thieves and invaders, hid Jean's hard-earned spending money and return money in the best, safest place she could think of—the oven—where it was accidentally, of course, burnt. The woman did reimburse Jean, who went on to a week of adventures in Portland. On the way back the train cars were packed with soldiers. She and her friend struggled to their seats, then put up their bags. After this their beds were made up by porters. In the morning when they reached for their bags, Jean's was gone, never to be found.

Loretta spoke of her first travel, to board for high school in another Iowa town. She graduated from high school, then college, and taught in many nearby towns. Wages during the depression were very low, but farm girls were thrifty. She went to the Chicago fair of 1936 and in the 1960's went to Russia with another teacher. Contracts were strict, but no local eyes would report a teacher with a suitcase and train ticket. And when she returned, that was small town news!

Mary, slender and bright-eyed, had nine brothers and three older sisters. "We were poor, but I didn't know it." She vividly remembers her only new coat. "It was plaid, green and white. One of my brothers was very kind and gave it to me, telling everybody that this time I wasn't getting something cut down or remodeled, He was a sophomore in high school, I was in elementary grades." She said, "I don't remember if I helped pick it, but I'll never forget that coat." Did she stay in touch with that brother? "I did until the day he died."

When I said "a penny for your thoughts" to Fran, she said, "I want out of here. Everyone here is very kind, and the food is excellent. But we are trapped here." I was sympathetic. I saw my mother lose independence when she moved to assisted living. Despite her discontent, Fran listened to others, then cheered and applauded when I told Velma Coons' story, how Velma tutored her husband so he could pass Idaho merit exams and earn a state job. I told Ruby's story, too, of teaching contracts that forbade being alone in public places. Circumvented when Ruby bought a car and drove her friends to a nearby town for dinner.

The kitchen crew was setting up for another meal. It was time to go. No nurse arrived to help Fran. She sighed softly and pulled up a pant leg to show purplish swollen skin, more trunk than calf and ankle. Her skin was scaly, reptilian rather than fleshy. It's what she has, accepts. She's protected from the awfulness of this by her pessimism and passion.

### **SAGES: PICASSO and his Catalonian roots**

Pablo Picasso lived and painted in Barcelona before he moved on to Paris and beyond. His years in Catalonia provide a glimpse into his early career and the "Blue Period." Dario Bol-lacasa is our tour guide at the next meeting of the BUUF Sages, 9:30 am, Thursday, Nov. 9, at the Kopper Kitchen (2661 Airport Way). Newcomers are welcome! Join us for friendly conversation and a no-host breakfast. Contact Tom von Alten (tva@fortboise.org or 208 378-1217) for more information.

*BUUF Humanists meet for conversation 3rd Sundays, in the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship library, next on November 19. Sages meet 9:30am, 2nd Thursdays in November and December at Kopper Kitchen, near the Boise airport..*

### **BUUF Humanists October 15 2017 Jeanette Ross**

A few of us considered the question of how we manage, what we say and can't say, as part of a humanist minority, in a dominantly Christian society. This is most acutely a dilemma for those with Christian family members who are convinced that we are not only different, but also wrong, wrong, wrong. John confesses that when the subject of faith emerges and his interlocutor is Christian, he inquires as to the substance and placement of the options in an afterlife. This raised some interesting questions in my mind. Where, exactly, is that heaven imagined two thousand years ago, and what might stay up in those ever-shifting clouds? Wouldn't it be rather cold, and how would our bodies adapt to lack of atmosphere?

We considered the Mormon conviction that there are planets aplenty and available out there. How, then, have they avoided detection by Hubble? Of what substance are the fully-bodied souls moving through space without any evidence? If everyone is waiting for resurrection at the same time, won't it be a show watching flesh re-gather on all those dry bones? Plus, where the heck is hell, and how do we get there? If it's the center of the earth, shouldn't we have some evidence of earth openings, maybe a siting or so of a deep fissure, fire and brimstone that miraculously doesn't pour out the way we expect. It is pretty hard to explain any of this when earth demonstrates so few cracks in the laws of physics, and in the case of entrances to hell, no space for them in cities with big populations that also have plenty of sinners.

Logic hardly helps here. What we now call fundamentalist beliefs are the norm. Their church, established in Boise by his grandfather, was their social as well as faith community. As a college student he started to question his family's beliefs. He was 'something of an invert,' he says, and remembers asking himself 'What is the structure of my life without our youth meeting on Friday nights? How will I live my life if I don't believe this anymore?' He has seen his family close itself around a literal acceptance of doctrine, including his mother, who once read his book on world religions. The book described common beliefs in virgin birth of cultural heroes, for one instance. 'She had gone to our church all her life, and her spouse and friends believed as she did. She settled down and continued in the usual way and did not speak of this again with her son.

John is most concerned about consequences of a society that does not support the scientific work that has brought the prosperity benefitting the science-doubters. He sees no improvement ahead, either, given the country's present leadership and the influence of media, including social media. He reads a science journal, The New Scientist, published in England. This weekly periodical has many features that show researchers moving to Shanghai and Europe to continue their research, given losses of funding here. We decided that this would be worth investigating in our group; **John will gather a few issues** for us to discuss at our November meeting.

Dan is a history reader. He observed how the notions embedded in Christian faith have changed as they passed beyond the words of Jesus. He is not a literalist, given the many versions of stories from the life of the various authors and their subjects, the tendency to use the name of an admired earlier figure (real or also re-imagined.) He took a class with Elizabeth Greene, reading and discussing a book by Karen Armstrong. As Rick has seen in his own family, fundamentalism as we know it today is a recent phenomenon. In earlier times, stories were accepted as metaphor.

I considered the original question, how to talk to someone holding beliefs I do not take literally, in a very different way. The previous day I attended an all day event for leaders of Boise's neighborhood organizations, and gathered some working strategies that have broad application. A former mayor of Seattle, Norman Rice, offered guidance on how to find consensus and purpose in a community with highly divergent personal interests, backgrounds, faith and resources. He builds from expressions of concern and needs to find common solutions that allow personal differences to remain, perhaps to be shared and mutually accepted.

Our noon entertainment was a standup comedienne, Mormon mother of four, who concluded her set by sharing what she has learned from her brother's gatherings for improv. She likes the 'yes, and..' as a way of interacting with others. An assumption of the improve style is that each person builds on what came before, not to 'top' it or trump it, but to make a positive addition. Consider the effect of negative reactions. "No" closes off discussion and can be used to discredit and intimidate others. When we respond with 'yes, and..' we make room for more and even better contributions from everyone, including ourselves.

I reflected back on this and our earlier 'humor' based upon a narrow approach to her faith for purposes of mockery. What good is lost by focusing on differences related to the unseen and perhaps unknowable?

## Inventing Demons and Saviors Jeanette Ross

Jude Nagurney Camwell, in the Daily Kos, recently discussed a book that has relevance today. In [Bush on the Couch](#), by Dr Justin A Frank, 2004, the author and psychologist Melanie Klein describe how a neglected, brutalized child can, as a still-damaged adult, rise to a position of leadership far beyond such an individual's ability to govern. Dr. Frank applies this to George W Bush and his 'die-hard fans,' believers, morphed into tea partiers who turned their hero's flaws into virtues and in the process created and then reinforced their own reality.

GWB exhibited a cluster of qualities: lack of compassion, demonizing the helpless and needy, renaming and redefining many aspects of reality (especially those challenging his assumptions), dualistic thinking and inability to recognize or admit to errors, mistakes large or small. Frank identifies commonalities between those who attract intensely loyal followers who persist despite contrary evidence, accept sacrifices demanded of them as believers, even as the costs to themselves and many others increase. Such leaders (including Jim Jones, David Koresh, Joseph Smith) often had early childhood anxieties, unmet needs, experienced severe punishments and other cruelties. The author references Melanie Klein's psychoanalytic work. Klein said that of those she had studied. An infant's desire for connection to his caretakers allows it to accept ambivalence, faults, to accept the explanation that he has a capacity to do harm—they are alert to the mental state of others. A baby cannot manage either positive or negative states.

Change, potentially good or bad, is destabilizing, triggering anxiety, which can be relieved by either unrealistic positives or negative fantasy resolutions. Escapist fantasy states have extreme outcomes—imagined resolution is destruction of one dimensional enemies who don't deserve pity; any who object or ask for clarity or even offer additional information can be labeled as evil-doers. These unrelieved needy children blame themselves for disasters even as they create new ones with rebellious acts. Posing horrific scenarios, an inability to imagine positive outcomes after bad incidents or other extreme scenarios. Bush and DJT both make excessively perseverate, repeating assertions, GWB more as a nervous twitch, DJT working to convince us.

Adults who did not learn self-regulation have contradictory and extreme characteristics, grandiose yet hyper-alert and easily destabilized. They speak in generalized positives as well as negatives as they insistently see themselves as good and others as bad, dangerous, undesirable.

Fearful fantasies and nightmares create an urge to destroy emerges in adults who were threatened and without protection from distressed circumstances; in adulthood they suffer guilt, shame, and relieve this anxiety with extreme punishments, threats and demeaning, demonizing, sarcasm toward others unable to retaliate. [GWB was six when his younger sister Robin died of leukemia; no funeral was held and GWB was not told until after his sibling was buried. His mother, Barb, has described her mother as beautiful, eccentric, depressed, cold, critical and punitive woman who 'ragged' Barb for being plump and homely. Barb has also acknowledged that she was a child bully, sarcastic and mean. The children of such adults are encouraged to entertain the parents with smirks and clowning. Those without stability crave certainty, ritual, habit; GWB exhibited no curiosity when being briefed, was frenetic, and spoke in formulaic phrases, as "no doubt in my mind that..'. Children of distress live with anxiety, fear of disapproval and withdrawal of attention as well as overt threats and punishments.

Some effects on brain structure and capacity: rigidity interferes with processing; new information is lost. There is poor concentration and inability to parse irrelevant from relevant information. Looks of parental concern, approval and affection stimulate frontal lobe development. Children who can't self-regulate can't solve complex problems. Managing anxiety takes tremendous energy; none is left for new ideas, or growth. New information, especially that which does not fit into established memes or fixed explanations overstimulates and threatens; they are ignored, suppressed, avoided just as they make the imagined world more dangerous. Like GWB and DT, such children were and remain defiant and impulsive, poor at learning prescribed information. Risky acts and snap decisions continue from childhood. GWB was, in private and public, inappropriate, dismissive and hypervigilant. His work record before his presidency was "spotty—he jumped around, flailed and failed. He preferred being briefed to reading; he had symptoms in his speech that suggested dyslexia (joking to cover anxiety). There is an avoidance of feelings and language that references feelings. This aversion to recognizing, expressing feelings accompanies hypervigilance to emotion of others with whom the child or adult interacted interferes with language related to emotion and complex expression. (Disrupting conversation with jokes is symptomatic of ADHD, but the joking reflects a low level of empathy, although education can help here).

*Concluded on page 8*

*Religious faith and damaged childhoods, from page 7*

**Melanie Klein on religion and reliance on magical Thinking:**

For the anxious, some magical thinking, belief in the unseen, can promise meaning, purpose and order in a chaotic world. This is protection against abandonment; Gods promise what parents don't deliver. Religion also provides formulas that avoid independent thought, a shield of certainty with deflective power, a simple wall between good and evil. The comforts of faith don't need any basis or evidence; they are 'verified' by their protection against imagined catastrophes. They offer a placebo effect, for what is wished to be true and simplify the world of concern.

For non-scientific people, the world is filled with AGENCY. Undesirable parts of the world of reality are ignored, excluded and yet remain as ghosts in every shadow. Groups have their own benefits, substituting their recitation of concerns and repetition of promised protection, with a dollop of satisfaction for being on the right side of a world-shaking battle between good and evil. Reality tests are temptations of the evil ones. "The more tenaciously a group arms itself with a fixed belief, the more fragile it becomes when confronted with anything that might cause anxiety or inner conflict. People with fixed beliefs are fragile. Christianity ignores the law of retribution... what goes around, comes around. Retribution, a dominating force in the Middle East, continues among those with power over others. GWB used signing statements, abrogation of international treaties. Exceptionality implies a belief others want what we have. Grandiose talk justifies violence against the vulnerable. Patriotism equates obstinate bravado. Trump reifies flag saluting, adding dog-whistle support of white nationalists to denigrate everything that lies below his capacity to control.

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