

Saints and sinners: Reviewing the evolution debate

With the controversy over teaching evolution in public schools is heating up again, it may be a good time to resubmit a proposal I first made 20 years ago.

The debate centers on the place that evolution, creationism and the Johnny-come-lately theory of "intelligent design" should have in the public-school curriculum.

My solution to the argument is to change just one word in how we frame the issue. We need only substitute the word "tell" for the word "teach."

The word teach has the connotation of indoctrination — of implanting information and ideas which are to be learned and absorbed.

We teach our children the 3 R's and good manners with the end in mind that such instruction will sink in and be applied in their lives. We teach brotherhood and tolerance so that those who are taught will be led to follow these be-

liefs. So, it is natural that parents who believe in evolution do not want their children to be "taught" creationism.

But teaching and telling are two different things. Couldn't we tell our children about evolution, creationism and the "intelligent design" theory without scaring anyone into feeling we are trying to take over their minds one way or the other?

As a parent, I want my children to know about the theory of evolution. I also want them to know — as part and parcel of being educated persons — that there are a lot of people who don't believe in evolution — who believe the world and humankind were created as the Bible says.

I want them to know how such a view of the origin of the world got started and what legitimacy, if any, it may have — both from a scientific standpoint and as a way of stating a truth



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● saints & sinners

which science alone can only dimly hint at.

It is not that evolution is necessarily untrue. It is just that, if humanity is a special creation of God, then the artist — which the author of the creation story in Genesis most certainly was — may do a better job than the scientist of getting us to see this.

To "tell" — not "teach" — this to schoolchildren is not to indoctrinate them with any particular philosophy. It is to get them to understand how it is that we have two or more opposing

philosophies of the origin of man and the world. We may need them all.

Some, like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), want creationism out of the schools, particularly out of science classes.

The fundamentalists are determined to prove that the creationist view is every bit as scientific as the evolutionist view. That is why today's breed of creationists call themselves "scientific creationists."

While most scientists, looking at the earth's geological column, conclude that the many thousands of feet of rock strata were deposited over millions of years, the "scientific creationists" take the position that, in a great cataclysm like the flood in Noah's time, these strata could have been deposited rapidly in a short period of time. They thus have no trouble in going along with the Bible reckoning that the earth may only

be about 10,000 years old.

The new player in this debate is the "intelligent design" theory which holds that a mind or intelligence — which may or may not be God — must have had a hand in the creation of humanity and the universe since anything so complex and wonderful could not have resulted from random forces at work in nature as Darwin held.

Whichever of these theories is true, it is probably worth saying that science's insistence that all truth conform to the letter of scientific truth is impoverishing us. Science, of course, must be true to itself. But, it must not, on that account, rule out all other expressions of truth. Symbols such as angels or the Bible story of creation, seek to express truths that cannot be adequately apprehended in any other way.

Let's tell this to our children.

Fledgling Utah-based church melds wine making, sexuality, meditation

By Patty Henetz

Associated Press Writer

SALT LAKE CITY — Claude Nowell was a 30-year-old graphics salesman and practicing Mormon who says he was just trying to relax after work when the hairless, blue, otherworldly beings first came to him.

The 1975 visitation lasted about 10 minutes — enough time to transport Nowell to a quiet place where an enormous pyramid stood on a green lawn under a blue sky filled with stars.

When he came to, Nowell immediately suspected his druggie co-workers had spiked his late-afternoon doughnut.

But then, Nowell claims, there were more visitations from the blue beings — leading him to decide that he had been chosen to propagate Summum, a belief system incorporating wine-making, mummification and sexual

ecstasy. His fledgling group of adherents now meet in a pyramid-shaped temple in Salt Lake City.

Nowell, who in the early 1980s changed his name to Summum Bonum Amon Ra and goes by Corky Ra, said that since Summum's establishment in 1975, 250,000 people have received its teachings — though the movement is little-known, even among those who study new religions. No official membership rolls are kept, he said, nor does the movement collect offerings or accept donations.

Ra attended Brigham Young University and graduated from the University of Utah, where he majored in business and philosophy. He is a former Southern California aerobics instructor with tanned skin, clear green eyes and an 18-inch ponytail trailing down his back.

Ra said he never wanted the belief

system to be called a church (and there is no supreme being in his teachings). But when his group first applied for his nonprofit organization status, he said, the Internal Revenue Service designated it as a church.

"We have always felt it to be a philosophy, but the government has always called it a religion," Ra said. The designation has allowed the group to hold a state permit to make and distribute sacramental wine.

The pyramid temple, made of anodized copper over steel with sides 40 feet wide at the base, sits in a one-acre compound in an industrial zone just off an interstate in Salt Lake City. The temple is open to the public each Thursday night for meditation and philosophy instruction.

Three mummified animals encased in bronze sit in the entryway. Uphol-

stered sofas and chairs form a discussion circle directly beneath the pyramid's apex, 26 feet overhead. The sacramental wine is fermented in a gleaming stainless steel vat set behind the furniture.

During the 77-day fermentation process, those who espouse Summum meditate for the wines so they will contain spiritual concepts. The wines are then aged from one to 15 years.

State law forbids shipment of the wine, so Summum adherents in other states have become licensed liquor distributors to ship the product.

Ra said at least 250,000 bottles have been given away to people who have undergone a screening process that involves reading about Summum and learning how to meditate.

Adherents use the wines, also known as "liquid knowledge" and "nectar-pub-

lications," to enhance seven types of meditation, including the one serving Summum's paramount belief: the power of sexual ecstasy.

Summum's take is that copulation played a vital role in creation of the universe, and that all progression and evolution happens through sexual ecstasy.

With Summum, sexuality is not merely an avenue to enjoyment. "It's there for meditation," Ra said. "But when you have that ecstasy, that's creation itself. We call it the state of becoming god. It's not something you would do at a brothel or only for procreation."

The vital role of sex in Ra's beliefs is evident in decorations in the pyramid, including candleholders molded to look like sex organs.

Ra's assistant, Ron Temu, a licensed funeral director and embalmer, also

does mummifications, which Summum prefers over burial. Comparing their beliefs to ancient Egyptian creeds, Summum teaches that even after death there remains an ethereal bond between body and soul.

Mummification costs about \$8,000 for animals and starts at \$63,000 for humans. None of the 147 people who prepaid have died yet, Ra said.

Douglas Cowan, a professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and an authority on new religious movements, said none of the major scholarly organizations that research such groups have a listing for Summum.

However, he said the Utah group has similarities to other new movements, such as the Raelians, founded about 30 years ago by a French racecar driver who mixes Judeo-Christian teachings with UFO experiences.



Pleasant Home Church

Bible Baptist Church
Pastor: Don Crutcher
 Fifth & Broadway
 899-7368
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
 Worship Service: 10 am
 Evening Service: 6:30 pm
Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 pm

Calvary Gospel Church
Pastor: Rev. Steve Rains
 Fourth & College • 899-3605
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
 Morning Worship: 10:30 am
 Evening Worship: 6:30 pm
Wednesday: Family Night: 7 pm
 Adult Bible Study and Youth Group
Saturday: Prayer Meeting: 5-7 pm
If you would like to receive a free newsletter, please call the church office.

Church of Christ
 401 Caldwell
 899-6185
Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 am
 Worship Service: 10:45 am
 Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm

Church of the Nazarene
Pastor: Matthew Delp
 Third & Caldwell
 899-2080 or 899-3797
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
 Worship Service: 10:50 am
 Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 pm

First Baptist Church
Pastor: Bud Chester
 Fifth & Center • 899-3450
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
 Morning Worship: 10:30 am
 Evening Worship: 6:30 pm
Tuesday: Mens' Prayer Group: 6:00 am
Thursday: Night Bible Study: 7:00 pm

Seventh Day Adventist Church
 1160 Cattletrail
Pastor: Arlin Cochran • 785-332-2888
Saturday: Sabbath School: 9:30 am
 Worship Service: 11 am

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Pastor: Loren Strait
 Eighth & Arcade • 899-5233
Sunday: Worship Service: 10:30 am
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
Activities: Junior High & High School Youth Groups,
 Adult Bible Study, Choir, Men's and Women's Groups,
 Devotions Study, Monthly Fellowship
Special Notice: Handicap Accessible, Hearing
 Assistance Equipment and Infant and Toddler
 Nurseries Available

First United Methodist Church
 1116 Sherman
 899-3631
Pastor: Rev. Carol Moore-Ramey
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
 Worship Service: 10:30 am

Sonrise Christian Church
 Ninth & Caldwell • 899-5398
Minister: Tony Kafka
Youth Minister: Doug Bean
Sunday: Worship Service: 9:30 am
 Sunday School: 10:45 am
Wednesday:
 Junior/Senior High Meeting: 7 pm
 Adult & Children's Classes: 7 pm

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
 13th & Sherman • 899-6161
Pastor: Scott Grimshaw
Sunday: Sunday School: 8:45 am
 Worship Service: 10 am
Wednesday: Confirmation: 6 pm

Kanorado
United Methodist Church
Pastor: Leonard Cox
 399-2468
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
 Worship Service: 10:15 am

Goodland Bible Church
 109 Willow Road • 899-6400
Pastor:
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
 Morning Worship: 11 am
 Evening Worship: 6 pm
Wednesday: Call for location

Grace Fellowship Church
 104 E. Hwy 24 • 899-6423
Pastor: Bob Snyder • Residence: 899-0134
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am
 Worship Service: 11 am
 Wednesday 6:30 pm
 "Building on Firm Foundations"

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
 13th & Center
 899-2115 or Rectory 899-2114
Priest: Father Charles Schneider
Deacon: Gretchen Talitha
Adult Forum: Sunday : 8:30 am
 Morning Prayer: 9:30 am 1st & 5th Sundays
Holy Eucharist: 2nd, 3rd, & 4th Sundays: 9:30
 Sr. Warden for emergencies during the week 899-2067

Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-Day Saints
 1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO • (970) 664-2470
Sacrament Meeting: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:45 am
Priesthood/Relief Society: 11:30 am

Word of Life Foursquare Church
 223 E. 10th
 899-5250
Pastor: John Coumerilh
Sunday: Worship Celebration &
 Kids' Church: 10:30 am

United Methodist Church
Brewster:
Pastor:
 Worship Service: 10:45 am CST
 Sunday School: 9:45 am CST
Winona:
Minister: Rev. Bob Winters
 Worship Service: 9 am CST
 Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

Iglesia Del Dios Vivo
 La Luz Del Mundo
 Spanish Speaking Church
Minister: Esteban Ortiz B.
 1601 Texas • 899-5275
Daily Prayer: Sunday thru
 Saturday: 5 am & 6 pm
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Pastor: Father Daryl Olmstead
 307 W. 13th • 899-7205
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 4:30-5 pm Saturday or by appointment
Mass Schedule:
 Saturday: 6 pm
 Sunday: 8 am and 10:30 am
Spanish Mass:
 1st & 3rd Sunday: 2 pm

Pleasant Home Church
 Serving the rural community for over 100 years
 Rt. 1, Box 180 • 694-2807 • 3190 Road 70
Pastor: Jim Cress
 899-5784
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 Sunday School: 10 am
 Evening Service: 6 pm

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