

1: Challenging Ignorance on Islam: a Ten-Point Primer – Global Issues

*A primer of ignorance [R. P Blackmur] on www.enganchecubano.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Posthumously published, assembled from lectures and essays by the noted poet, critic and teacher.*

This joyful fact has been experienced by millions of Buddhists for over two and a half thousand years and is a living reality today. This introduction is in two parts. The first is a brief outline of the main tenets of Shin Buddhism and the second follows up on some of the themes in the first half about which readers may have further questions. We are happy to be of assistance to readers and invite you to write to us if you have anything more you would like to discuss. All quotations from the writings of Shinran - are taken from the Shin Buddhism Translation Series published by the Hongwanji International Center. A Brief Outline of Shin Buddhism For Shin Buddhists, the true nature of things is a lively wisdom and compassion that resonates in the lives of ordinary people. This wisdom and compassion takes form as Amida Buddha. Sanskrit is the classical language of India where Buddhism first arose. Amida is not limited to a specific point in history although knowledge of him first arose from Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, who appeared in India in the sixth century B. Shakyamuni gained enlightenment after a long quest for the solution to the problems of spiritual evil and suffering in the world. As a result of his enlightenment, Shakyamuni was able to address the needs of each person who came to him to listen to his teachings. To ordinary people, especially those who were unable to follow him in his monastic way of life, he explained how Amida Buddha could bring everyone, without exception, to Buddhahood which is the highest level of human fulfilment. The final objective for Buddhists is to become a buddha because buddhas have perfect understanding, are completely free of attachments and therefore always act in ways that are genuinely beneficial. This objective meets the highest aspiration of the human heart. We remain spiritually and morally immature and ill-at-ease until we are fully developed and perfected buddhas, full of love, kindness and freedom from fear and anxiety - transcending the thrall of birth and death. Furthermore, Shakyamuni explained that Amida has attained enlightenment in the deep boundless past and has achieved his purpose for us. Amida also made vows in relation to us, people stranded in the realm of ignorance. These are the vows of infinite light and infinite life. Light is wisdom, and life is the compassion that results from perfect wisdom. Shinran gives a very succinct definition of Shin Buddhism which we find in several places, for example in his poems wasan: Amida vowed that his Name would be heard "throughout the ten directions," Larger Sutra 7 that is, everywhere, and that those who say his name, entrusting themselves to him, will be born in the Pure Land and attain Buddhahood *ibid*. The name of someone we love may evoke fond memories and longing but the Name is Amida Buddha - active in our lives and our consciousness. The six Chinese characters are still the main written form of the principal image in Shin Buddhist temples and home shrines. Indeed, the correct iconic representation of Amida Buddha is really his written Name: In Shin Buddhism, if statues and pictures of Amida Buddha are used, these are actually graphic representations of the Name. This is the eighteenth of his forty-eight vows. Nembutsu people live in the Light and Life of Amida Buddha and see their own reality as distinctly different from his. Because Amida is fully enlightened, we become ever more deeply aware of our own profound ignorance: Although we may practice meditation and seek to control our desires in order to free ourselves, we begin to become aware of the intractable nature of our karmic evil and of our bondage to self-centredness. Even the good we do can become a source of spiritual pride and arrogance that may frustrate any progress we make. Shin Buddhism encourages us to heed the bidding of Shakyamuni in the Larger Sutra, and to relinquish all of our spiritual needs to Amida Buddha. In so doing we accept the Vow will, mind or intention and the Name of Amida "Namu Amida Butsu" and, therefore, our ultimate destiny - Buddhahood, Nirvana. When this happens, our life becomes a joyful adventure, characterised by a sense of indebtedness. The difficulty many of us have is in accepting that we are really taken in by wisdom and compassion just as we are: All of us have an unendurably painful dark side: Worse, we are profoundly ignorant and constantly shocked at our own insensitivity. Within ourselves, we discover the existential pain that afflicts us all in this "Last Dharma Age", the age of mappo. Yet the nembutsu can be with us in all situations, joyful or painful, without exception. This is why Amida has given us his

Name. Shinran refers to the Primal Vow as the "Great Ocean" because it takes in and accepts all people, no matter who they are, just as countless life-forms live in, and depend upon, the ocean. Shinran demonstrated from the writings of Mahayana sages, down through the ages, that nembutsu is "the call of the Vow that commands us to trust it". The person whom Amida accepts in his Great Vow is not the person we show to the outside world but the person even we ourselves would rather not see. However, since the time of the great Shin Buddhist master Shan-tao, who lived in seventh-century China, it has been clearly understood that the Pure Land is, in fact, Nirvana or Buddhahood - ultimate realisation of transcendence; in Buddhist terms "extinction of birth and death". A Buddha is free of all attachment and aversion and has realised the true nature of things: For this reason, he or she understands other people perfectly and moves to free them from the delusions that keep them in suffering and anxiety. So it is that our goal does not end in self-absorbed bliss but in reaching out to others to help them as well. In the way that Shakyamuni returned to ordinary human society after his Enlightenment, Amida Buddha initiated - in his Twenty-second Vow - our "return" *genso* to this world, so that we may become active in leading others to Enlightenment "so that the boundless ocean of birth-and-death be exhausted". However, the Shin Buddhist way of developing a genuine understanding of the teaching is through "hearing the Dharma"; *monpo*. In order to "hear", we should study Shin scriptures and listen to Shin teachers. We listen for deep meaning and do not merely cling to the words. Although language is an important vehicle in conveying the teachings, it can be ambiguous and misleading when dealing with subtle and profound realities. This is why every school of Buddhism insists on a thoughtful approach to life. What is the Pure Land? He is a manifestation of the absolute and supreme reality which is known in Mahayana Buddhism as the Dharmakaya. The Dharmakaya completely transcends time and space but is also, at the same time, to be found in all things and within all sentient beings. It constitutes the fundamental essence of all existence and possesses, pre-eminently, the qualities of absolute wisdom, compassion and bliss. It is the principal aim of Mahayana Buddhism to ultimately attain, for oneself and others, blissful and eternal union with this reality - a state more commonly referred to as Nirvana. In itself, the Dharmakaya remains unknowable and imperceptible to our ordinary human faculties of sense and cognition. One can only be made aware of it through *prajna* which is an intuitive power capable of seeing things as they are, undistorted by the influence of ignorance and the myriad passions that afflict us constantly. As only very few people have had the capacity and strength to cultivate *prajna* through meditation and other practices, the Dharmakaya, in its dynamic compassion, has chosen to manifest itself in a form more readily accessible to the multitudes of suffering and ignorant beings - a form that allows all people to share in its inexhaustible blessings, wisdom and power. This form is Amida Buddha. Amida Buddha and the Dharmakaya are, in fact, identical, differing only in function. In Mahayana Buddhism, the Buddha is said to possess three bodies. This is the doctrine of *trikaya*. The first body is the Dharmakaya of which we have already spoken. The second, the *Sambhogakaya*, is any manifestation of the supreme reality in the transcendent realm that serves as a tangible object of meditation or worship - Amida Buddha, for example. There are also many other Buddhas that serve this function but Amida remains pre-eminent for reasons that will become apparent later. The third body, the *Nirmanakaya* is, in turn, a manifestation of the higher bodies and takes the form of Buddhas and sages in the physical world where the greatest number of people might derive benefit from their teaching. The historical Buddha of our era, Shakyamuni or Gautama who lived in India, is considered by Shin Buddhists as a manifestation of Amida Buddha revealing the Mahayana sutras to our world - in particular, those concerning Amida Buddha and his Vows. A powerful king, on hearing the teaching of the Buddha, awakens the aspiration for the highest, perfect Enlightenment. He renounces his kingdom and throne and becomes a monk, taking the name of Dharmakara. In his desire to liberate all sentient beings from suffering and delusion, he makes a number of vows forty-eight in total in the presence of the Buddha Lokeshvararaja. These vows are aimed at his becoming a fully awakened Buddha and establishing a transcendent realm, the Pure Land, where ideal conditions are to be found for attaining Enlightenment and Nirvana. Through dint of extraordinary Buddhist practices spanning many aeons such as deep meditation, cultivation of profound wisdom, exercise of selfless compassion, kindness and charity, Dharmakara eventually fulfills all his vows, becoming the Buddha of Infinite Light Amitabha whose realm is Sukhavati Land of Utmost Bliss. Since that time, Amida has led

countless beings to his Pure Land through simply having them entrust their salvation and enlightenment to his care. The story of Dharmakara should not be seen merely as an allegory with a didactic purpose; but it is not necessary to insist that it details a series of historic events, either. Rather, it is an affirmation of the vast processes involved in the task of human transformation and enlightenment. Furthermore, the law of karma dictates that such processes cannot take place independently of the realm of samsara. In the Mahayana understanding of things, Nirvana and samsara are inseparable. Although the descriptions of the Pure Land that we find in the sutras eg. Presented in such a way, the idea of enlightenment becomes a more intelligible and attractive focus of aspiration to those who would otherwise remain baffled by the highly abstruse and abstract notions sometimes employed by Buddhist philosophers. The Buddha employs all means available to him to bring people to an understanding of his wisdom and compassion. The highest realities that can be conceived are often better explained and assimilated through recourse to rich symbolism rather than through literal description which is largely impossible in such matters anyway. When the tradition speaks of Amida, the Pure Land, suffering sentient beings etc. The Buddha and his land of bliss are essentially one and the same reality, these terms merely designating different functions or aspects of the Dharmakaya. Similarly, Amida and we cannot be said to be separated by anything other than an illusion comprising our blind passions such as greed, anger and ignorance, all of which are karmically determined. This omnipresence of the supreme reality is also called Buddha-nature and it is only in virtue of this very quality that we share with the Buddha that one can speak of the possibility of attaining final union with him at all. For most people, however, burdened, shackled and blinded as we are by our great karmic weight, the realization of this essential identity will not be possible until our complete enlightenment in the Pure Land at the point of death. The Light of Amida Buddha is infinite because there is nowhere it does not reach and nothing that it does not penetrate, including the darkest depths of our minds and hearts. This light illuminates the nature of the world and helps us recognize the extent of our profound attachment to our own egos and to the real gulf that, in so many ways, separates us from the Buddha. This light also serves to ferry us safely over the stormy waters of our imperfect existence and to purify us of all the defilements that would ordinarily bar our entry into Nirvana. Shinjin is not enlightenment but rather its guarantee in the life to come. It does serve, however, to give us a deep insight into the tenacity of these attachments and to recognise them for what they are. With time, this awareness works to loosen the tight grip the ego usually has on our lives without, in any way, eliminating it. This is a natural consequence of recognizing that the only true reality is Amida by comparison to which the endless solicitations of the ego are seen to be only so many ephemeral illusions fated to impermanence. In this sense, shinjin enables one to deal with the vicissitudes of life by giving one access to a greater reality that transcends the unstable flux of samsara and to which we can turn for refuge and illumination. Shin Buddhism develops the logical implications of this doctrine and insists that we cannot rely on our unreliable and fickle egos ie. By relying thus on the Buddha alone, our realization of Buddhahood is assured since there is nothing that can impede the will and power of the Absolute itself. So how does one attain shinjin?

2: A primer of ignorance: www.enganchecubano.com: R. P Blackmur: Books

A primer of ignorance by Blackmur, R. P and a great selection of similar Used, New and Collectible Books available now at www.enganchecubano.com

Voices Trump and History: Ignorance and Denial Ever since Donald Trump became President I have believed his greatest threat to our society and to our democracy is not necessarily his authoritarianism, but his essential ignorance - of history, of policy, of political process, of the Constitution. Saying that if Andrew Jackson had been around we might not have had the Civil War is like saying that one strong, aggressive leader can shape, prevent, or move history however he wishes well into the future. Leadership does matter in crises. It truly mattered that Franklin Roosevelt won the election of and at least had a new plan to help the country fight its way out of the Great Depression. It truly mattered that John Kennedy and a small group around him were determined to act short of nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis of Those three Presidents and the advisors around them were students of history in their own ways. Presidents adrift without historical knowledge are dangerous. And this comes from the President of the United States! Under normal circumstances if a real estate tycoon weighed in on the nature of American history from such ignorance we would simply ignore or laugh at him. But since this man lives in the White House and wields the constitutional powers of the presidency and the commander in chief we have to pay attention. As for historical analogies and understanding, our President seems incapable of even getting something wrong in reasonable or interesting ways. I wish I could say this is funny and not deeply disturbing. Perhaps his grasp of American history rather reflects his essential personality, which seems to be some combination of utter self-absorption, a lack of empathy, and a need to believe in or rely upon hyper individualism. He further has an instinct for how and why so many white Americans were uncomfortable or downright furious that a black man could be elected President. And we must give him credit for capturing the political sentiments of the displaced and the neglected in our globalized economy and in our identity-obsessed culture. They do need a voice. To pull that off as a celebrity billionaire may say more about the culture and social values we have all participated in forging more than it says about him. Trump has political instinct but little in the way of political knowledge of either institutions or history. Why does this matter? Well, if a President makes history, which he can and does on any given day, he should know some history. He must be able to think in time, to think by analogy, precedent, and comparison. He needs perspective in order to find wisdom. Decisions ought never be made in a vacuum. They are dangerous examples of ignorance in high places. And we must not let this kind of presidential mis-use and denial of history become normalized or merely the object of humor. Satire is our only tool sometimes, but good satire has always been a very serious weapon at the end of the day. Jackson was too important in American history to be so loosely and ignorantly invoked by the President. For students of the Civil War era, we might even conclude, contra Trump, that had Jackson lived to the time of the Civil War, not only would he have not prevented the conflict, his fellow Tennessean, General Nathan Bedford Forrest, the notorious cavalry leader, might have been out of a job. The historical profession might consider petitioning the President to take a one or two month leave of absence, VP Pence steps in for that interim, and Trump goes on a retreat in one of his resorts for an educational sabbatical. If he must be President for three and a half more years, we need him to be able to make sense when he speaks of the past. Sometimes CEOs or university presidents need a break from the daily grind. A crash course in reading, or perhaps just in watching documentary films, about the history of American foreign policy as well as the history of slavery and race relations in particular could be the core of the curriculum. Some biographies, a good history of women and gender, a genuine tutorial on the Civil Rights era, and even a serious digestion of good works on the Gilded Age and the New Deal legacies might be required. And finally, a primer on Constitutional history would be essential too, and might make that second month necessary. This alone could garner the United States again some confidence and respect around the world. And, one further thing, no tweeting on educational leave. There will be a test at the end of the term. We are all creatures of both our experience and our education broadly defined. But to resist learning and expertise, to reject or simply appropriate a past as nothing but a tool

for manipulating the present is at best contempt for knowledge. Perhaps President Trump will be the gift that keeps on giving to historians, the source of open invitations to try to help the public that is listening to learn more about America as we endlessly fight over its future paths. But a President without a sense of history is a dangerous thing. We need to keep watch on the White House and its denizen lest his pronouncements make history deniers as lethal as climate change deniers. As in personal memory, so also in the collective memory that historians assemble, resist, narrate and interpret, the past is that thing we cannot live without, but also sometimes the thing that is hard to live with. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do. It could scarcely be otherwise, since it is to history that we owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations. But history can be both pleasurable and perilous, terrifying and uplifting. Baldwin left a stunning definition of what it means to have a sense of history. Terkel stopped Baldwin and asked: This is a great liberation for the struggling, suffering person who always thinks that he is alone. It has in some form happened before. The problem we may have with President Trump is that he does not know what he does not know. He seems to like to go it alone, *sui generis*, a tough and angry Andrew Jackson ready to slay dragons in his reality show presidency. Our problem is presidential historical ignorance, power imagined and wielded without bearings or perspective. Presidents can be and feel very alone with ultimate decisions. But they are not without historical consciousness and knowledge, unless they choose to be. For Presidents, history should be part of their daily bread, nutrition to sustain the weary, the basic equipment of their trade.

3: Gary Leupp's "Challenging Ignorance on Islam: A Ten-Point Primer for Americans"

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

A Primer of Malpractice Law To avoid medical malpractice, it is important to understand what malpractice is. The following primer gives the law of medical malpractice in a nutshell. He is an author and frequent keynote speaker on leadership, patient safety, health system reform, and medical liability reform. Remember, the primer below attempts to explain the terminology of the law. To avoid medical malpractice, it is important to understand what malpractice is. Accept If someone is not your patient, that individual cannot sue you and win for negligent medical care. Physicians, in most circumstances, still have a right to decide whether or not an individual will be accepted as a patient. There are exceptions, such as the emergency room physician who has contracted to treat all individuals presenting to that emergency room department. Breach A breach or violation of the standard of care is a necessary element to constitute malpractice. See discussion of standard of care below. Cause The breach of the standard of care must directly cause injury to the patient. The law calls this "proximate cause". Damage There must be injury to the patient that can be proven and this injury must have directly resulted from substandard care given to the patient. Malpractice is a violated duty causing harm. Unreasonableness This is my one word definition of malpractice if you are asked to distill malpractice to its essence. Standard of care Definition: To do what a reasonable physician would do with the same or similar patient under the same or similar circumstances. Need for an expert: To determine the standard of care; to determine if the duty was breached in the B part of the ABCD rule. A physician is required to give reasonable care. The expert determines if the treating physician met the standard or failed to meet it. Exceptions to the need for an expert to determine standard of care a. Suppose someone tells you of an incident and asks you whether it would be considered *res ipsa loquitur*. If your response after hearing the tale is "Oh, my God! She sued him and the jury, after looking at her, awarded damages, not for negligent care, but for breach of contract! Be careful what you promise. Watch out for promotional brochures, billboards, or other advertisement that may make you liable for promises. Remember that legal liability can be imposed without a written contract under the legal theory of detrimental reliance. Know the importance of special medical malpractice laws in the state in which you practice. Examples of states with medical malpractice laws favorable to the practice of medicine and care of patients: California, Indiana, Texas, and Louisiana. For more information, read an article I co-authored discussing the states with a favorable limitation of liability law, This article also documents which states have had their laws ruled constitutional by the courts and gives tips on the constitutional issues. More details about three of the states with a favorable law: Periodically it is up for challenge. Prescription in Louisiana Statute of limitations Can file suit up to one year from discovery of the alleged malpractice, but no more that three years from the event. This applies to infants also. The reason for that statement is not just the cap on non-economic damages: The real quantum leap was the very important change in the Texas constitution that was made by the voters on September 13, with the passage of Proposition This constitutional change states that the legislature has the right to set caps on non-economic damages in medical liability cases. When caps on damages are overturned in a state, it is because of wording in the state constitution. Thus, by changing the constitution in Texas it eliminates the long wait in constitutional challenges and eliminates the anxiety of insurers that they will set rates too low because ten years later the cap is overturned and they have not collected enough money to pay the claims. See the Texas Medical Association press release at: Best Viewed with West Esplanade Ave.

4: Ignorance Is Not Bliss: A Primer for Authors - Protect Your Work and Yourself by Patricia Reding

Patricia Reding, intellectual rights lawyer and YA author, wrote Ignorance is Not Bliss: A Primer for Authors as a handbook and guide to legal issues affecting writers. The book is well organized, has plenty of examples, and explains legal terms in ways we can all understand.

Christianity is a faith where God sent his Son to die for you. People with power and influence in the U. Some of it is rooted in conscious malice, and ethnic prejudice that spills over into religious bigotry. But some is rooted in sheer historical and geographical ignorance. This is a country, after all, in which only a small minority of high school students can readily locate Afghanistan on the map, or are aware that Iranians and Pakistanis are not Arabs. As an educator, in Asian Studies, at a fairly elite university, I am painfully aware of this ignorance. But I realize it serves a purpose. It is highly useful to a power structure that banks on knee-jerk popular support whenever it embarks on a new military venture, at some far-off venue, on false pretexts immediately discernable to the better educated, but lost on the general public. The generally malleable mainstream press takes care of the rest. Some of them may indeed support the venture, cynically asserting that the advertised pretext fulfills some sort of valid function, regardless of the lies and distortions that surround it. I think of the calculated, extreme exaggeration of the number of Kosovar victims of Serbian forces as the bombing of Yugoslavia began. Raw material for a made-in-USA version of fascism. So I have prepared this little primer on Islam for Americans suitable for ages 13 and above, so appropriate for high school use, dealing not with its theology so much as its general character as an important force in the world, presently encountering unprecedented, unprincipled attack from various quarters. Islam has been around for approximately years. Established on the west coast of Arabia years before European settlement in America, and spreading rapidly throughout Southwest Asia and North Africa soon thereafter, it was not designed as an anti-U. The basic teachings or requirements of Islam are not difficult to grasp. They constitute the "Five Pillars of Islam": They believe of it precisely what Jews and Christians believe of their scriptures: Indeed, we should think in terms of the "Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. Muslim population is estimated between 5 and 8 million; U. Jews between 5 and 6 million. The consequences of a protracted religious war, pitting Christians and Jews against Muslims, are highly unpleasant to consider. Muslim scripture counsels respect for these communities, and indeed, in the history of Islam, within Islamic societies Jews and Christians have fared FAR better than non-Christians in Christendom. On the other hand, until recent times, Christian intolerance prevailed throughout Europe. It calls for the destruction of "infidels," meaning principally Arabs who, during the time of Muhammad, practiced idolatry and polytheism. It, and the Muslim religion, should be studied and understood objectively, dispassionately. Its violent rejection of idolatry, however offensive to the modern, secular, humanist mind, is hardly unique. It can be compared to the ferocious suppression in Christian Europe of paganism often associated with witchcraft. The Hebrews put all the people of Hazor to the sword they "wiped them all out; they did not leave one living soul. A personal favorite of mine, from Psalm, refers to the Babylonians: Islamic "fundamentalism" is not a species apart from other fundamentalisms, including the Christian, Jewish, and Hindu varieties. They are all anti-modern, anti-science, anti-intellectual, rarely harmless and potentially if not necessarily fascist. They demand belief in received dogma, inscribed in texts, rather than open-ended scientific inquiry. They either legitimate the existing order, or call for a return to a past social order in which class and gender relations were properly sorted out in line with the Divine Will. Some including non-religious people in or from Muslim countries criticize Islam appropriately, in my view for what they consider backward and reactionary features. This is not the place to deal with such criticisms, nor am I the right person to do it. I will merely observe what many others have observed: Christendom underwent the Enlightenment-an evolution towards secularism, rationalism, and scientific thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries-which the Islamic world, in general, has not yet experienced. To become "modern" more specifically, to become capitalist, the West had to become more ideologically tolerant. But our own Enlightenment is not irreversible. Recent changes in U. The American people are, I submit, far more threatened by Christian fundamentalism than its Islamic counterpart. And for a Pentecostalist Christian like

John Ashcroft, who believes every word of the Bible literally, to inveigh against Islam as he has is to use the English proverb the "pot calling the kettle black. Remember Lawrence of Arabia? Later, the British boosted the Saudi royal family patrons of the Wahhabi school of Islam, usually described as among the most conservative, embraced by Osama bin Laden as well as the Saudis in general into power. The Reagan administration was in love with fundamentalist Islam, so long as it served its purposes. The California-based company Unocal was cordially negotiating right up to Sept. Nearly absolute support for the settler state of Israel in its relationship with the indigenous Palestinian people. Imposition of brutal sanctions on Iraq, contrary to logic and morality. Maintenance of bases throughout the Persian Gulf, in defiance of local sensibilities and interests. Many are, indeed, uncomfortable with some aspects of American behavior, as are most people in the world, from Central America to Japan. But a Zogby International poll, released June 11 of this year, shows that in nine Muslim countries, including Bangladesh and Malaysia, the most admired foreign country is the U. Rather, it began with the influx of foreign Jews into the region after World War I, which became a flood as a result of the Holocaust, and with international support resulted in the formation of Israel as a specifically Jewish state in The Arab-Israeli conflict is not, fundamentally, about Islam, or a clash between Islam and other faiths, but about this-worldly land grabbing, settlement, dispossession and oppression that has enraged the Muslim world, as it should enrage any thinking, moral human being. Unfortunately, fundamentalist Christians in this country tend to depict this history of injustice as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, and they will brook no dissent when it comes to the Zionist cause that they have embraced as their own. In understanding Islam, Americans should give some thought to one of the pivotal episodes in world history, the Crusades, or Wars of the Cross, that ripped up the Holy Land between and During these two centuries, European Christians seeking to "win back for Christendom" territory that had fallen to the Muslim Turks-territory that had been ruled by Muslims since the early seventh century anyway, on terms generally agreeable to Jews and Christians as well as Muslims-committed unspeakable atrocities. In July Jerusalem was conquered, the Roman Catholic soldiers massacring all the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants, including women and children. In comparison, the behavior of the Muslim armies was chivalrous, the twelfth-century Kurdish leader Saladin in particular winning high praise from Christians and Muslims alike for his humanity. Hence his amazingly dim-witted reference to the "War on Terrorism" as a "Crusade" last September a statement that produced immediate, widespread outrage in the Muslim world. No offense intended, no doubt. But such ignorance, in action, in a world where religious prejudice generates idiotic action from Belfast, to the Balkans, to Gujarat, to the Moluccas, is perilous ignorance indeed. He can be reached at:

5: Austrian Economics: A Primer | Mises Institute

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Challenging Ignorance on Islam: It appeared on the Counterpunch web site. It is an article looking at some of the basics of Islam and challenging some misconceptions as well as comparing some aspects to Christianity. It is quite a passionate article, so beware! The original location of this article can be found at <http://www.counterpunch.com>. Christianity is a faith where God sent his Son to die for you. Attorney General John Ashcroft, interview on Cal Thomas radio, November 2001. Islam is a very evil and wicked religion, wicked, violent and not of the same god as Christianity. Islam is Evil, Christ is King. Allegedly written in marker by law enforcement agents on a Muslim prayer calendar in the home of a Muslim being investigated by police in Dearborn, Michigan, July 2001. People with power and influence in the U.S. Some of it is rooted in conscious malice, and ethnic prejudice that spills over into religious bigotry. But some is rooted in sheer historical and geographical ignorance. This is a country, after all, in which only a small minority of high school students can readily locate Afghanistan on the map, or are aware that Iranians and Pakistanis are not Arabs. As an educator, in Asian Studies, at a fairly elite university, I am painfully aware of this ignorance. But I realize it serves a purpose. It is highly useful to a power structure that banks on knee-jerk popular support whenever it embarks on a new military venture, at some far-off venue, on false pretexts immediately discernable to the better educated, but lost on the general public. The generally malleable mainstream press takes care of the rest. Some of them may indeed support the venture, cynically asserting that the advertised pretext fulfills some sort of valid function, regardless of the lies and distortions that surround it. I think of the depiction in the media of the "Rambouillet Accords" concerning Yugoslavia in as "the will of the international community," when one Contact Group member, Russia, rejected the U.S. I think of the calculated, extreme exaggeration of the number of Kosovar victims of Serbian forces as the bombing of Yugoslavia began. The lies surrounding that bombing were obvious to anyone studying the situation, but even some rather progressive academics were all for "Operation Allied Force. Raw material for a made-in-USA version of fascism. To understand the contemporary world, we all need to know something about Islam-beyond the inane contribution of the Attorney General cited above. So I have prepared this little primer on Islam for Americans suitable for ages 13 and above, so appropriate for high school use, dealing not with its theology so much as its general character as an important force in the world, presently encountering unprecedented, unprincipled attack from various quarters. Islam has been around for approximately 1400 years. Established on the west coast of Arabia years before European settlement in America, and spreading rapidly throughout Southwest Asia and North Africa soon thereafter, it was not designed as an anti-U.S. The basic teachings or requirements of Islam are not difficult to grasp. They constitute the "Five Pillars of Islam": They believe of it precisely what Jews and Christians believe of their scriptures: For religious and secular scholars alike, it is absolutely clear that Islam stems from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Indeed, we should think in terms of the "Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. The point is for better or worse Muslims have a whole lot more in common with the dominant religious trends in the U.S. Muslim population is estimated between 5 and 8 million; U.S. Jews between 5 and 6 million. The consequences of a protracted religious war, pitting Christians and Jews against Muslims, are highly unpleasant to consider. Muslim scripture counsels respect for these communities, and indeed, in the history of Islam, within Islamic societies Jews and Christians have fared FAR better than non-Christians in Christendom. On the other hand, until recent times, Christian intolerance prevailed throughout Europe. It calls for the destruction of "infidels," meaning principally Arabs who, during the time of Muhammad, practiced idolatry and polytheism. It, and the Muslim religion, should be studied and understood objectively, dispassionately. Islam emerged very quickly, and within decades united under its banner-the banner of monotheism the various tribes of Arabia. Its violent rejection of idolatry, however offensive to the modern, secular, humanist mind, is hardly unique. It can be compared to the ferocious suppression in Christian Europe of paganism often associated with witchcraft. The Hebrews put all the people of Hazor to the sword they "wiped them all out; they did not leave one living soul. A personal favorite of

mine, from Psalm , refers to the Babylonians: Islamic "fundamentalism" is not a species apart from other fundamentalisms, including the Christian, Jewish, and Hindu varieties. They are all anti-modern, anti-science, anti-intellectual, rarely harmless and potentially if not necessarily fascistic. They demand belief in received dogma, inscribed in texts, rather than open-ended scientific inquiry. They either legitimate the existing order, or call for a return to a past social order in which class and gender relations were properly sorted out in line with the Divine Will. Some including non-religious people in or from Muslim countries criticize Islam appropriately, in my view for what they consider backward and reactionary features. This is not the place to deal with such criticisms, nor am I the right person to do it. I will merely observe what many others have observed: Christendom underwent the Enlightenment-an evolution towards secularism, rationalism, and scientific thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries-which the Islamic world, in general, has not yet experienced. To become "modern" more specifically, to become capitalist , the West had to become more ideologically tolerant i. But our own Enlightenment is not irreversible. Recent changes in U. The American people are, I submit, far more threatened by Christian fundamentalism than its Islamic counterpart. And for a Pentecostalist Christian like John Ashcroft, who believes every word of the Bible literally, to inveigh against Islam as he has is to use the English proverb the "pot calling the kettle black. Remember Lawrence of Arabia? Later, the British boosted the Saudi royal family patrons of the Wahhabi school of Islam, usually described as among the most conservative, embraced by Osama bin Laden as well as the Saudis in general into power. The Reagan administration was in love with fundamentalist Islam, so long as it served its purposes. The California-based company Unocal was cordially negotiating right up to Sept. Nearly absolute support for the settler state of Israel in its relationship with the indigenous Palestinian people. Imposition of brutal sanctions on Iraq, contrary to logic and morality. Maintenance of bases throughout the Persian Gulf, in defiance of local sensibilities and interests. Many are, indeed, uncomfortable with some aspects of American behavior, as are most people in the world, from Central America to Japan. But a Zogby International poll, released June 11 of this year, shows that in nine Muslim countries, including Bangladesh and Malaysia, the most admired foreign country is the U. Rather, it began with the influx of foreign Jews into the region after World War I, which became a flood as a result of the Holocaust, and with international support resulted in the formation of Israel as a specifically Jewish state in Jewish settlement and terrorism well-documented by the Jewish Israeli historian Ilan Pappé resulted in the displacement of , Palestinian Arabs including both Christians and Muslims. The Arab-Israeli conflict is not, fundamentally, about Islam, or a clash between Islam and other faiths, but about this-worldly land grabbing, settlement, dispossession and oppression that has enraged the Muslim world, as it should enrage any thinking, moral human being. Unfortunately, fundamentalist Christians in this country tend to depict this history of injustice as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, and they will brook no dissent when it comes to the Zionist cause that they have embraced as their own. In understanding Islam, Americans should give some thought to one of the pivotal episodes in world history, the Crusades, or Wars of the Cross, that ripped up the Holy Land between and During these two centuries, European Christians seeking to "win back for Christendom" territory that had fallen to the Muslim Turks-territory that had been ruled by Muslims since the early seventh century anyway, on terms generally agreeable to Jews and Christians as well as Muslims-committed unspeakable atrocities. In July Jerusalem was conquered, the Roman Catholic soldiers massacring all the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants, including women and children. In comparison, the behavior of the Muslim armies was chivalrous, the twelfth-century Kurdish leader Saladin in particular winning high praise from Christians and Muslims alike for his humanity. Hence his amazingly dim-witted reference to the "War on Terrorism" as a "Crusade" last September a statement that produced immediate, widespread outrage in the Muslim world. No offense intended, no doubt. But such ignorance, in action, in a world where religious prejudice generates idiotic action from Belfast, to the Balkans, to Gujarat, to the Moluccas, is perilous ignorance indeed. He can be reached at:

6: Trump and History: Ignorance and Denial | National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

Challenging Ignorance on Islam: a Ten-Point Primer for Americans By Gary Leupp Counterpunch, July 24, We should invade [Muslim] countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity.

It is said with mild embarrassment and a desire to close a chapter of Church history with which many Catholics feel uncomfortable. Those who claim that indulgences are no longer part of Church teaching have the admirable desire to distance themselves from abuses that occurred around the time of the Protestant Reformation. They also want to remove stumbling blocks that prevent non-Catholics from taking a positive view of the Church. As admirable as these motives are, the claim that indulgences are not part of Church teaching today is false. This proved by The Catechism of the Catholic Church, which states, "An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishment due for their sins. This means that no Catholic is at liberty to ignore or disbelieve in them. The Council of Trent stated that it "condemns with anathema those who say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them. The pious use of indulgences goes back centuries, far beyond the Council of Constance, into the early days of the Church. The principles underlying indulgences extend back into the Bible itself. Catholics who are uncomfortable with indulgences do not realize how biblical they are. The principles behind indulgences are as clear in Scripture as those behind more familiar doctrines, such as the Trinity. Before looking at those principles more closely, we should define indulgences. In his apostolic constitution on indulgences, Pope Paul VI said: Sin results in guilt and punishment. When a person sins, he acquires certain liabilities: Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" Is. This idea of guilt clinging to our souls appears in texts that picture forgiveness as a cleansing or washing and the state of our forgiven souls as clean and white: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" Ps. Judgment pertains even to the smallest sins: Punishments are both temporal and eternal. The Bible indicates some punishments are eternal, lasting forever, but others are temporal, lasting only a time. Eternal punishment is mentioned in Daniel Temporal penalties may remain when a sin is forgiven. When someone repents, God removes his guilt "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" [Is. One passage demonstrating this is 2 Samuel 12, in which Nathan the prophet confronts David over his adultery: God forgave David, to the point of sparing his life, but David still had to suffer the loss of his son as well as other temporal punishments. God states that, although he pardoned the people, he would impose a temporal penalty by keeping them from the promised land. Later Moses, who is clearly one of the saved see Matt Thieves may obtain forgiveness, but they also must engage in restitution. Protestants realize that, while Jesus paid the price for our sins before God, he did not relieve our obligation to repair what we have done. Protestants also admit the principle in practice when discussing death. Scripture says death entered the world through original sin Gen. When we first come to God we are forgiven, and when we sin later we are able to be forgiven, yet that does not free us from the penalty of physical death. Even the forgiven die; a penalty remains after our sins are forgiven. This is a temporal penalty since physical death is temporary and we will be resurrected Dan. A Protestant might say that God gives temporal penalties to teach a sinner a lesson, making the penalties discipline rather than punishment. There are three responses to this: The Church has shown this since its earliest centuries and by prescribed acts of penance as part of the sacrament of reconciliation. God blesses some people as a reward to others. Suppose a father prays for his seriously ill son and says, "Dear Lord, if I have pleased you, then please heal my son! Intuitively we recognize this is a valid prayer that God sometimes answers positively. But we do not need to stop with our intuitions: Scripture confirms the fact. God further told Abraham he would have nations and kings come from him, that God would make a covenant with his descendants, and that they would inherit the promised land Gen. This principle is also in the New Testament. Paul tells us that "as regards election [the Jews] are beloved for the sake of their forefathers" Rom. God remits temporal penalties suffered by some as a

reward to others. When God blesses one person as a reward to someone else, sometimes the specific blessing he gives is a reduction of the temporal penalties to which the first person is subject. I will not do this during your lifetime, however, for the sake of your father David; it is your son whom I will deprive. Nor will I take away the whole kingdom. I will leave your son one tribe for the sake of my servant David and of Jerusalem, which I have chosen" 1 Kgs. God lessened the temporal punishment in two ways: God was clear about why he did this: This is an example of God lessening a punishment for the sake of one of his saints. Other examples are easy to think of. Paul noted, "As regards the gospel they [the Jews] are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" Rom. God remits temporal punishments through the Church. God uses the Church when he removes temporal penalties. This is the essence of the doctrine of indulgences. Earlier we defined indulgences as "what we receive when the Church lessens the temporal penalties to which we may be subject even though our sins have been forgiven. In the early Church penances were sometimes severe. The Church also recognized the duration of temporal punishments could be lessened through the involvement of other persons who had pleased God principle 5. Sometimes a confessor[10] or someone soon to be martyred would intervene and ask, as a reward to the confessor or martyr, that the penitent have his time of discipline lessened. This was how the Church recognized its role of administering temporal penalties principle 6 ; the role was simply part of the ministry of forgiveness God had given the Church in general. Scripture tells us God gave the authority to forgive sins "to men" Matt. Jesus told them, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" John If Christ gave his ministers the ability to forgive the eternal penalty of sin, how much more would they be able to remit the temporal penalties of sin! As the context makes clear, binding and loosing cover Church discipline, and Church discipline involves administering and removing temporal penalties such as barring from and readmitting to the sacraments. Therefore, the power of binding and loosing includes the administration of temporal penalties. God blesses dead Christians as a reward to living Christians. From the beginning the Church recognized the validity of praying for the dead so that their transition into heaven via purgatory might be swift and smooth. This meant praying for the lessening or removal of temporal penalties holding them back from the full glory of heaven. If it is reasonable to ask that these penalties be removed in general, then it would be reasonable to ask that they be removed in a particular case as a reward. For this reason the Church teaches that "indulgences can always be applied to the dead by way of prayer. Judah and his men "turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out" 2 Macc. The reference to the sin being "wholly blotted out" refers to its temporal penalties. The author of 2 Maccabees tells us that for these men Judah "was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness" v. If they were not in mortal sin, then they would not have eternal penalties to suffer, and thus the complete blotting out of their sin must refer to temporal penalties for their superstitious actions. Judah "took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. There is a difference between the way indulgences are obtained by us in this life and the way in which they are applied to the dead. They no longer can receive sacraments, including penance, and the Church does not have authority to release their temporal penalties. All it can do is look to God and pray that he will lessen them. This is a valid form of prayer, as 2 Maccabees indicates. We may have confidence that God will apply indulgences to the dead in some way, but the precise manner and degree of application are unknown. Who are the parties involved? There are four parties: The first pleased God and moved him to issue a reward, providing the basis for the indulgence; the second requests the indulgence and obtains it by performing the act prescribed for it; the third issues the indulgence this is God working through the Church ; and the fourth receives the benefit of the indulgence by having his temporal penalties lessened. Potentially, all of them. The Church recognizes that Christ and the saints are interested in helping penitents deal with the aftermath of their sins, as indicated by the fact they always pray for us Heb. Fulfilling its role in the administration of temporal penalties, the Church draws upon the rich supply of rewards God chose to bestow on the saints, who pleased him, and on his Son, who pleased him most of all. Although immense, their rewards are finite, but his are infinite. God himself instituted the pattern of temporal

penalties being left behind. They fulfill valid functions, one of them disciplinary. If a child were never disciplined he would never learn obedience. Just as repentance and faith are needed for the remission of eternal penalties, so they are needed for the remission of temporal penalties. Pope Paul VI stated, "Indulgences cannot be gained without a sincere conversion of outlook and unity with God."

7: Challenging Ignorance on Islam

Battledore is an obsolete word for a hornbook used as a child's primer. Not to know the letter from the book signified utter ignorance. Not to know the letter from the book signified utter ignorance.

The primer does contain some Islamic content, but in much of it he just vents his social and political views. How much does Leupp know about Islam? Having read his primer I conclude that he knows very little. Will a reader learn much about Islam after reading his primer? It is not a "primer" in the true sense of the word. Sources are given in green font. Words in brackets [] are mine. A few paragraphs into the article Leupp states his focus: Let me ask the reader: How will you be able to accurately describe its "general character"? You can mix two chemicals together and observe their reaction, but never understand why the reaction occurred. A case in point: Mideast Muslims claim to have Quranic support for terrorism but Muslims in the West say the Quran does not support terrorism. One or the other is wrong. We need to understand the theological stimulus that causes devout Muslims to murder thousands. Leupp wrote that Islam was What Leupp omits is that Islam spread primarily through the sword. It spread by the sword because Muhammad taught that it should. Muslim armies conquered most of Arabia. Various tribes were coerced into submitting to Islam under threat of war. They went west and conquered North Africa, Spain and southern France. They pushed east and conquered the lands of present Pakistan, Afghanistan, and much of the Indian subcontinent. They even penetrated into China. There are some lands that did peacefully convert to Islam, such as Indonesia and Malaysia. However, they are the exception. Muhammad never taught that there would come a day when his followers should lay down their weapons. A "general character" of Islam is that it is an aggressive, domineering faith. They were motivated warriors spreading Islam through jihad. Allah drew the ends of the world near one another for my sake. And I have seen its eastern and western ends. And the dominion of my Unimah would reach those ends which have been drawn near me and I have been granted the red and the white treasure and I begged my Lord for my Ummah that it should not be destroyed because of famine, nor be dominated by an enemy who is not amongst them to take their lives and destroy them root and branch Leupp lists the "five pillars" of Islam and concludes his paragraph with: There is much more to Islam besides the five pillars. Islam is a complex religion filled with concepts, rules, and rituals. Some are very threatening to non-Muslims. For example Muhammad taught offensive warfare in the Quran. Make war upon such of those to whom the Scriptures have been given [Christians and Jews] as believe not in God, or in the last day, and who forbid not that which God and His Apostle have forbidden, and who profess not the profession of the truth, until they pay tribute out of hand and they be humbled. Leupp made a significant error here. The largest of the Muslim groups, the Sunni, draw from among tens of thousands of Hadith, and a handful of biographical documents. Among the collections of Hadith, there are six that are recognized as primary. They are considered the six canonical collections of hadith. Out of these six two are recognized as foremost: These collections number some several thousand Hadith each. They can be found online. The Quran in and of itself is somewhat worthless when it comes to in-depth understanding of Islamic theological concepts. The Hadith and Sira are used to fill in the details. Below are some quotes from various Hadith. Muhammad said, "May Allah curse the Jews and Christians for they built the places of worship at the graves of the prophets. He said this while dying in the arms of his wife Aisha]. The climate of Medina did not suit them, so the Prophet ordered them to go to the herd of milch camels of charity and to drink, their milk and urine as a medicine. They did so, and after they had recovered from their ailment became healthy they turned renegades reverted from Islam and killed the shepherd of the camels and took the camels away. The Prophet sent some people in their pursuit and so they were caught and brought, and the Prophet ordered that their hands and legs should be cut off and that their eyes should be branded with heated pieces of iron, and that their cut hands and legs should not be cauterized, till they die. The Prophet said "If a house fly falls in the drink of anyone of you, he should dip it in the drink , for one of its wings has a disease and the other has the cure for the disease. Let the reader judge their fidelity for himself. Muslim population is estimated between 5 and 8 million. Actually, three of the most recent, independent surveys indicate that the actual Muslim population in America is around 2 million. I am aware of the other

statistics. Four years ago, I had one Muslim "expert" tell me that there were actually 16 million Muslims living in America! Muslim scripture counsels respect for these communities. If I praise you on Monday, and curse you on Tuesday, am I "counseling respect for you"? In the end, Muslim scripture demands the subjugation and domination of Christians, Jews, and all non-Muslims. Here is verse 9: Such are their assertions by which they imitate the infidels of old. How perverse they are! This Quranic passage was one of the last passages spoken by Muhammad. It calls Jews and Christians "perverse". Christians and Jews do not consider being called "perverse" a sign of respect! The Quran says many things. It is necessary to know the scope, context, and applicability of the passages. That is because there are verses that were "abrogated" canceled by other Quranic verses. There is some truth to this, but it is certainly not true in all cases. One only has to read about how Muhammad treated the Jews in Medina to see that they did not fare well. Historically there have been times of severe persecution and oppression of Jews and Christians throughout the Islamic lands. At times the oppression was negligible, and at times entire groups of people were massacred. Here is another generalization covering some years. Muslims from North Africa attacked and conquered Spain starting in 711. There was rarely one big happy Muslim family ruling over Spain. The Muslims there were often divided and fought wars amongst themselves. Additionally, Islamic Spain was often at odds with other Islamic domains. These were the Almoravids, see [http: Massacres of Jews and oppression of Christians did occur in Muslim Spain. Further, there is much more to Islamic history besides their rule over Spain. Why neglect the rest? In early Islamic times in Iraq, Christians who briefly accepted Islam were murdered for leaving Islam. Among them were many Christians who had accepted Islam, but when dissension had developed in Islam had said, "By God, our religion from which we have departed is better and more correct than that which these people follow. Their religion does not stop them from shedding blood, terrifying the roads, and seizing properties. Al-Khirrit met them and said to them, "Woe unto you! Do you know the precept of Ali regarding any Christian who accepts Islam and then reverts to Christianity? By God he will not hear anything they say, he will not consider any excuse, he will not accept any repentance, and he will not summon them to it. His precept regarding them is immediate cutting off of the head when he gets hold of them. Muslims also murdered the Caliph before Ali, Uthman. At one point the Muslims fought in Mecca and the Kaba was damaged and burned! Does the above look like a flourishing society? It calls for the destruction of "infidels," meaning principally Arabs who, during the time of Muhammad, practiced idolatry and polytheism. Here more half-truths presented as the whole story. Previously I quoted 9: But if they repent and perform prayer and give required alms, then leave their way free. In later times some rulers allowed polytheists to pay jizya to save their lives. Below is an example of how Muhammad treated Christians not long before his death.](http://www.ancient.eu/article.php?id=1000)

8: Muryoko: Journal of Shin Buddhism

Ignorance Is Not Bliss: A Primer for Authors - Protect Your Work and Yourself is a nonfiction guide for writers written by Patricia Reding. Reding is an attorney specializing in Intellectual Property as well as being an educator and an author.

Share via Email Had Ben Miller taken up teaching, he could have inspired a generation to take up science. Gianotti is the physicist in charge of the experiment at the Large Hadron Collider where this unveiling was made. She added "surprise, surprise" to the end of that sentence, not as a damp squib, or faux humility, nor a beg for more grant money. She said these words because she understands that science is a process not a bank of knowledge, and the hard work is yet to come. In genetics, our Higgs moment came in with the completion of a draft of the human genome, the 3bn-letter genetic code of an average person. That opened up myriad new avenues, rather than closing a scientific chapter, as many reported at the time. Not knowing stuff is what gets scientists drooling. Stuart Firestein, a teacher and neuroscientist, has written a splendid and admirably short book about the pleasure of finding things out using the scientific method. He smartly outlines how science works in reality rather than in stereotype. His MacGuffin "the plot device to explore what science is" is ignorance, on which he runs a course at Columbia University in New York. Although the word "science" is derived from the Latin scire to know, this misrepresents why it is the foundation and deliverer of civilisation. Science is to not know but have a method to find out. It is a way of knowing. Firestein is also quick to dispel the popular notion of the scientific method, more often than not portrayed as a singular thing enshrined in stone. The scientific method is more of a utility belt for ignorance. Certainly, falsification and inductive reasoning are cornerstones of converting unknowns to knowns. But much published research is not hypothesis-driven, or even experimental, and yet can generate robust knowledge. We also invent, build, take apart, think and simply observe. It is, Firestein says, akin to looking for a black cat in a darkened room, with no guarantee the moggy is even present. But the structure of ignorance is crucial, and not merely blind feline fumbling. The size of your questions is important, and will be determined by how much you know. Therein lies a conundrum of teaching science. Questions based on pure ignorance can be answered with knowledge. Scientific research has to be born of informed ignorance, otherwise you are not finding new stuff out. Packed with real examples and deep practical knowledge, Ignorance is a thoughtful introduction to the nature of knowing, and the joy of curiosity. Miller, like O Briain, Tim Minchin, Chris Addison and principal investigator Robin Ince, is part of the phalanx of comedians for whom science is a thing of wonder, and a source of material. Unusually for this scientifically literate group, Miller conducted postgraduate research, though never finished his PhD in quantum physics. It is clear he adores the wonder revealed by science, describing his book as a "science orgy". It sort of bothered me how casually he bounced through high-energy particle physics, DNA, evolution and the human genome, but only because I find it hard to do the same. But no bother, books like these should act like gateway drugs for the incurably curious. The styles are parsecs apart but there is a clear link between these two books: Many of these I can answer.

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