

# Religion and science in school, a topic for debate

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For thousands of years, people have studied and contemplated the reason of our existence and whether humankind was created by an unforeseen power with a purpose. These mind-boggling questions are inescapable when tested against scientific findings. Though every person has his or her own way of handling faith and science, there is an undeniable struggle to combine these ideals. With the advancement in scientific technology and the discussion of environmental and political issues, the combination of religion and science will continue to be hotly debated.

On Feb. 18, the scientific community met at the annual seminar held by the American Association for the Advancement of Science where a symposium titled, "Evangelicals, Science, and Policy: Toward a Constructive Engagement," discussed this controversy.

"Advances in neurobiology and psychology continue to challenge our conceptions of self, mind, and free will," William Newsome, neuroscientist and National Academy of Sciences member from Stanford University, said. "And these advances have important ethical implications."

Due to these ethical

implications, religious groups often shun certain scientific information, such as information on the greenhouse effect and climate change. According to Newsome, although religious views need to be upheld, the

question of our existence, some scientists believe that the human mind created a god in order to create a false sense of security.

"The concepts of a benevolent shepherd, a universal plan, an afterlife,

modern philosophy, was a Roman Catholic who created his system by asking what could be known if all else were doubted, which supports the famous quote: "I think therefore I am."

On the other hand, in order

both are worthy of respect,"

Although every person deals with religion differently, this struggle has created tension in state school systems. After Arkansas and Louisiana passed state laws requiring creationism to be taught in public schools instead of evolution, the Supreme Court ruled these laws unconstitutional in the 1987 *Edwards vs Aguillard* case, declaring that public schools could not teach creationism because it specifically advanced one religion. However, teachers may define evolution as an unproven theory.

Regardless, some parents don't want their children learning about evolution because they do not believe that evolution is real. Despite the national ruling, parents still contact schools about this topic and express their concerns with evolution. According to a 2005 poll conducted by the ADL, 56 percent of Americans want to see creationism taught alongside evolution.

According to Oregon State Law, "schools may not refuse to teach evolutionary theory in order to avoid giving offense to religion nor may they circumvent these rules by labeling as science an article of religious faith." However, the controversy between teaching creationism and evolution in public schools still remains. Now the real question is, will this opposition change public curriculum or not.

## Helping out the environment proves helpful and rewarding

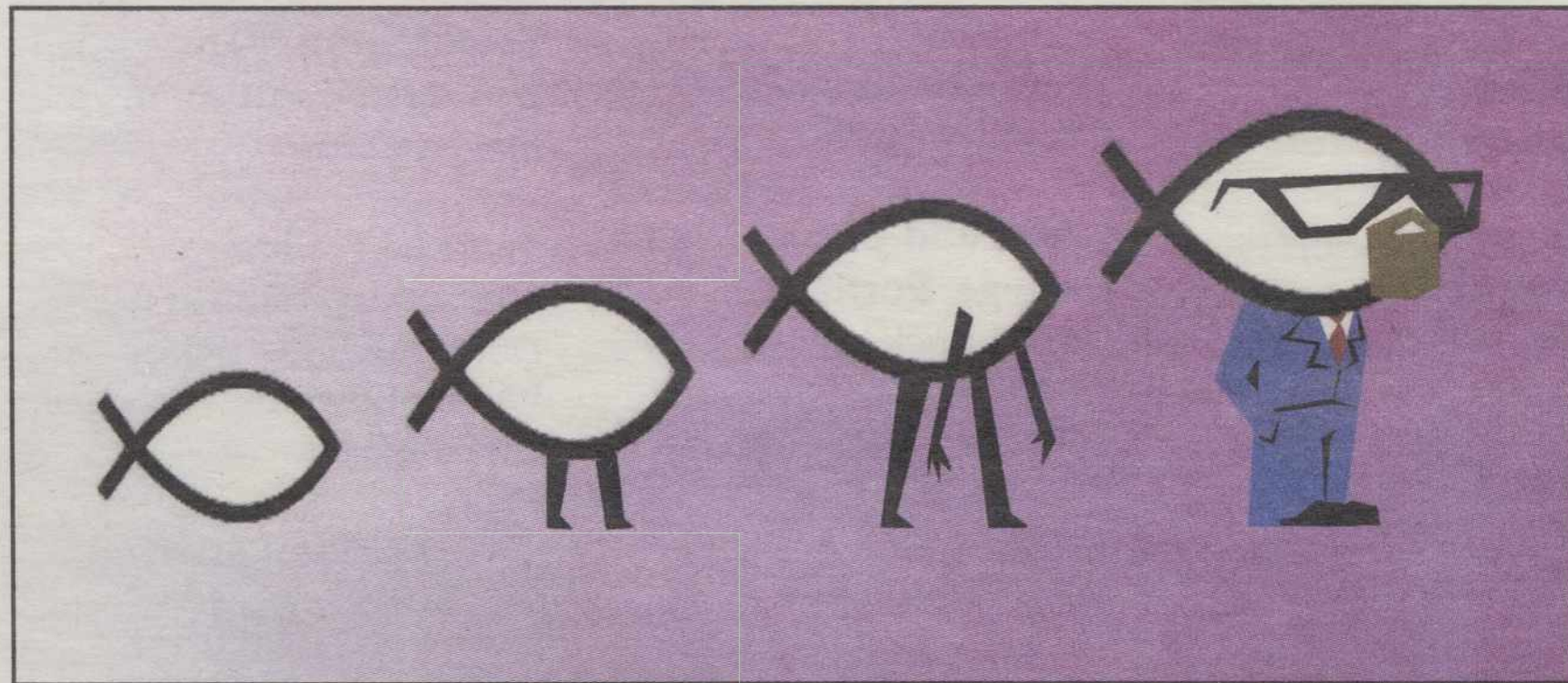
Environmental tips

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7) **Reduce waste by cutting back on the use of disposables.** It's easy to use throw away cups, plates, wrappers and utensils, but it only creates more waste in the landfills. We can save more trees by using less paper products, and we can keep more plastics and styrofoam out of the landfills by using less throwaway items.

8) **Pay attention to what you recycle or throw away.** Going green is a lifestyle. Paying attention to what you can reduce, reuse and recycle is a simple way to make the most of our products from cradle to grave.

9) **Find ways to recycle.** Nearly everything can be recycled, check out Metro's website, <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/> for more details on recycling programs in your area and more information on recycling.



advancement and the benefits of understanding scientific data need to be accepted as well.

"If science proves some belief of Buddhism wrong, then Buddhism will have to change," Tenzin Gyatso, Dalai Lama, said. "In my view, science and Buddhism share a search for the truth and for understanding reality. By learning from science about aspects of reality where its understanding may be more advanced, I believe that Buddhism enriches its own worldview."

Delving deeper into the

or just deserts, ease the pain of being a human; these comforting thoughts make us feel better," Steven Pinker, Harvard professor, said.

"There's an element of truth to this, but it is not a legitimate adaptation is explanation, because it begs the question of why the mind should find comfort in beliefs that are false."

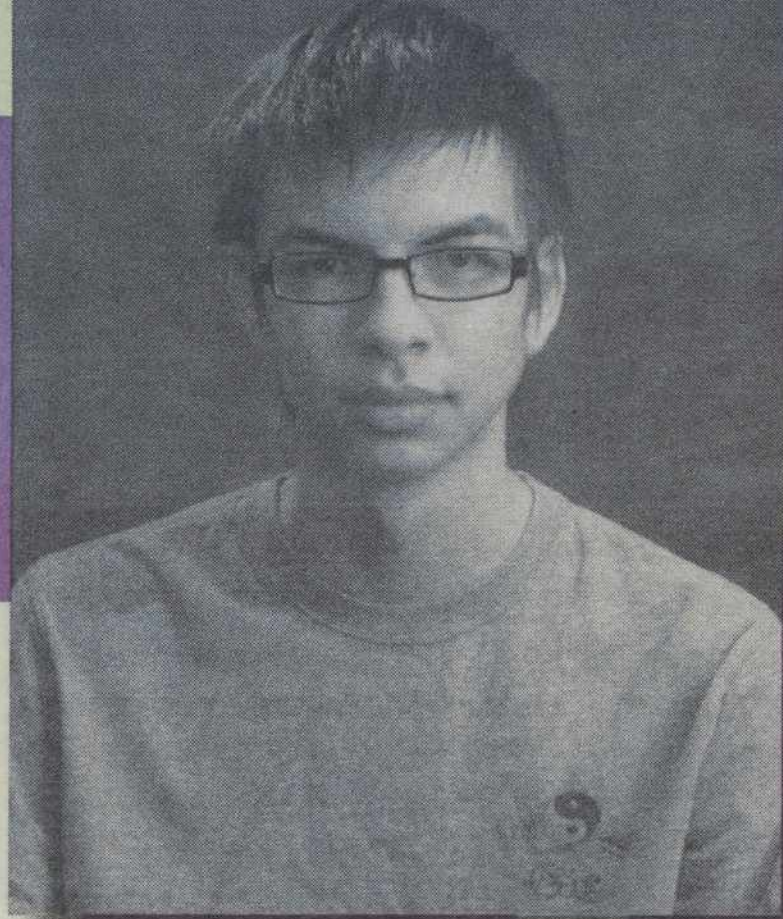
Contrary to the skeptics, scientists have successfully combined science and religion in the past. Basing his entire scientific methodology on God, Rene Descartes, also known as the father of

to maintain their scientific and religious perspectives, some scientists believe that science and religion need to be separated because they each require different mindsets.

"Science and religion are two windows that people look through trying to understand the big universe outside, trying to understand why we are here. The two windows give different views, but both look out at the same universe," Freeman Dyson, physicist, said. "Both views are one-sided, neither is complete. Both leave out essential features of the real world. And

## BEST ANSWERS ON THE BLOG

1.



Q: How did you like the outcome of the Civil War?

A: "It would have been better if we let the confederate rebels be, but I suppose we needed the cotton."—Alexander Lanz, senior

2.



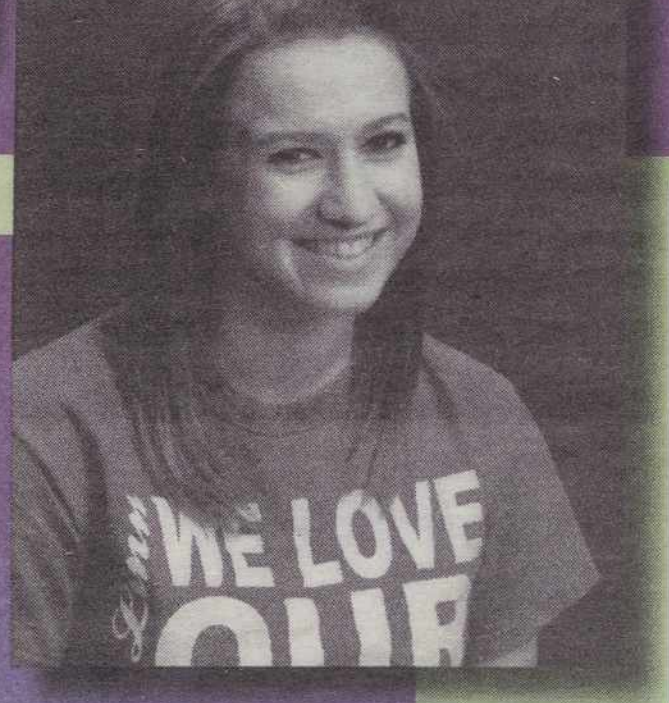
Q: What do you think of our new banner?



A: "The face freaks me out..."

—Amanda Rucker, senior

3.



Q: How do you prepare for the holiday season?

A: "Christmas music is all it takes. The second those songs hit the radio everyone's mode changes and the spirit of Christmas surrounds people."

—Kaitlin Andrus, junior

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