



Spiritual Humanism

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Good News Everyone

Newsletter # 31- *The Church of Spiritual Humanism*

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A person might think that there is just not enough good news in the world today. That's simply not true. As newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst said more than a century ago, "You furnish the pictures. I'll furnish the war." It's just as true today as it was 120 years ago. It seems that the more shocking, bloody, and horrible a story is, the more eyeballs it gets. This goal of the news publishers is to push the bad news on all of us.

There are two particular problems here. First, being constantly bombarded with negative ideas primes

your brain to think negative thoughts. There is some evidence that being exposed to words associated with specific moods will alter your attitude in the direction of that disposition. Understandably, if you don't want to be overwhelmed with negative emotions you must limit your exposure to media that profits from bombarding you with them.

Second, I need to comment on what I call the Kardashian Syndrome. In many ways media content creators work in collusion with the most awful specimens of humanity. These newsmakers gain money and power by incessantly being a front page, top story. In order to stay there each new item they come up with must be more outrageous, awful and shocking than the last.

Nicolas Henin was held captive by the Islamic State for a 10 months. Through his ordeal he became intimately familiar with them and their internal strategy. His most important take away of his experience is that giving IS attention in the media makes them more powerful in the eyes of potential followers. Henin stated that the media and government officials serve the purposes of IS by painting them as the worst terrorists of all time. In doing so they increase the prestige of IS and provide them with free publicity.

We do need to be informed of the awful things in the world, except perhaps the Kardashians. But we must not let them overwhelm the narrative of the story of humanity.

IN THE NEWS

Sweet drug clears cholesterol, reverses heart disease-and was found by parents.
Here's how parents of kids with rare disease found what may be a blockbuster drug.
by Beth Mole – Apr 7, 2016

Two parents' quest to save their twin daughters' lives from a rare, degenerative genetic disorder may end up saving and improving the lives of millions.

After digging through medical literature and fitting pieces of data together, the non-medically trained couple contacted German researchers and suggested that a chemical called cyclodextrin may be able to treat atherosclerosis—the hardening of arteries with cholesterol-rich plaques, which is a precursor to heart attack, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases.

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The findings, published Wednesday in *Science Translational Medicine*, suggest that cyclodextrin—a drug already approved for use in humans by the US Food and Drug Administration—may be highly effective at treating and preventing heart disease.

see full story at arstechnica.com/science/2016/04/sweet-drug-clears-cholesterol-reverses-heart-disease-and-was-found-by-parents/

EDITORS NOTE:

This is very much like the Lorenzo's Oil story except that it may benefit many more people. A common food additive might save a large part of the approximately 17 million people that die of heart disease every year.

READERS WRITE IN

Nice to see the newsletter back in action! However, I must say that the above lines from the newsletter struck a discordant note for me; while technology can have an uplifting effect, it is not an unalloyed good. We must be careful in embracing it. Technology gives us vaccines and telescopes but it also gives us weapons and climate change. Progress, too, is slippery — progress for whom? Along what axes? Each technology that we wish to unleash upon the world must be carefully considered. Who will it help? Who will it hurt? How will it change us? What doors will it open, what doors will it close?

– Tim M.

REPLY

I agree that we must be ever vigilant in assessing the impact of our actions on the world around us. There are real negative costs. But the genie is out of the bottle and there is no way to put it back. On balance this is a good thing. The manifold benefits of civilization would be impossible without technology and its inherent costs. We need to find the means of maintaining a proper balance between the two.

~RZ

CONCLUSION

Once again I want to remind you that as an ordained member of our church you can help support us by purchasing from our online store <http://www.spiritualhumanism.org/shop/> which features Clergy Packages, Ordained Minister ID cards <http://spiritualhumanism.org/shop/id/> and clergy supplies. The Ordination Certificates <http://spiritualhumanism.org/shop/ocert/> are printed on acid free paper for extra long life, and Clergy Wallet ID Cards are a fantastic way to be a card carrying Spiritual Humanist. The Officiant's Manual includes information on celebrating the solstices, sample ceremonies, etc., and the companion CD is packed with information. The fees charged for these packs are our only income and help defer the cost of the web site, advertising, PO Box, and fund the promotion of a religion based on reason.

RA Zorger

President, The Church of Spiritual Humanism

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