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**Oklahoma DOMs endorse  
'Baptist Faith and Message'**

By Bob Allen

OKLAHOMA CITY (ABP) -- Directors of missions in Oklahoma have endorsed recent changes to the Southern Baptist Convention's official faith statement and encouraged local churches to do likewise.

A statewide directors-of-missions fellowship went on record Aug. 25 in a resolution "supporting the June 14, 2000, revision of the 'Baptist Faith and Message,' and particularly Article I, 'The Scripture.'"

The resolution further encourages pastors and church members "to seriously consider adoption" of the latest version of the faith statement. Earlier "Baptist Faith and Message" editions came out in 1925 and 1963, and an article on family was tacked on in 1998.

Tom Owens, president of Oklahoma's directors of missions, told Baptist Press the resolution's key concern was to affirm the SBC stance on Scripture.

"If we lose the ability to state commonly held beliefs among Southern Baptists, then we have lost the basis for our evangelism," Owens said. "We would have no message left."

Directors of missions work with a number of churches in a defined geographic area, typically one or more counties, but hold no ecclesiastical authority over Baptist churches, which are self-governing. Still, moderates called the resolution an attempt to pressure churches that oppose the new faith statement to leave both the SBC and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

Mainstream Oklahoma Baptists, an organization representing a moderate minority in the overwhelmingly conservative state, responded by announcing a series of public forums beginning Sept. 7 to discuss differences between the old and new "Baptist Faith and Message" statements.

"Before your church and/or local association adopts the 2000 'Baptist Faith and Message,' we encourage you to study it carefully," advised an announcement on the group's Web site.

Tighter language on the Bible has drawn most attention in discussions pro and con of the new "Baptist Faith and Message." The 1963 statement defined Scripture as "the record" of revelation and said the criterion for interpreting the Bible is Jesus Christ. The new statement describes the Bible as "God's revelation of

himself to man." It now says, "All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is himself the focus of divine revelation."

Those might seem like minor distinctions to the uninitiated, but they have created a stir among many Baptist leaders. Supporters of the new language say it was needed because pastors and professors have in the past denied the Bible is literally true. Critics say the new statement turns the Bible into an idol by placing it on a level equal with Jesus.

Some churches have severed ties with the SBC over the change, and the denomination's largest state affiliate, the 2.7 million-member Baptist General Convention of Texas, may reduce funding to the SBC over doctrinal differences.

Nearly three months since its adoption, the new "Baptist Faith and Message" remains a hot topic. Among recent developments related to the controversy:

-- At least two more churches have announced they are cutting SBC ties.

Mountain View Baptist Church, a small congregation in Crossville, Tenn., called the statement "contrary, in significant portions" to the congregation's Baptist beliefs, according to a report in the Tennessee newspaper Baptist and Reflector.

"While we are aware that the new statement of faith is not enforceable upon us, it is the decision of the church that since such a strong majority of the convention approved the new document, the Southern Baptist Convention is no longer a suitable partner for us in our mission endeavors," said a resolution adopted by the church.

A church in Missouri also recently joined the exodus. Wornall Road Baptist Church in Kansas City voted Aug. 16 to end its 79-year-old affiliation with the SBC, according to Word and Way, the Missouri Baptist news journal.

-- Other churches, meanwhile, including the large First Baptist and Prestonwood Baptist churches in Dallas and the small First Baptist Church of Pampa, Texas, have endorsed the changes. At least one Texas association, Henderson Southern Baptist Association, has also come out in favor of the new statement.

-- The Baptist Center for Ethics, an independent agency in Nashville, Tenn., produced a series of Sunday school lessons on the new "Baptist Faith and Message."

"When the Southern Baptist Convention revised the 1963 'Baptist Faith and Message' statement in Orlando, it moved away from being a confessional body of faith toward a creedal one," BCE Executive Director Robert Parham wrote in a preface to the curriculum.

The BCE curriculum, which can be downloaded for a charge from the Internet, "is our constructive, fast-track attempt to equip churches with a resource to address changes in the 1963 statement," Parham said.

Baptist Press responded with an article describing the BCE's curriculum writers as "a virtual who's who of anti-SBC sentiment," and suggesting its timing was in part an effort to help moderates win elections in Baptist state conventions this fall.

In an e-mailed response, Parham said the Baptist Press story "contained factual errors, placed a quote out of context and smeared lesson contributors with guilt by association."

-- The evangelical magazine Christianity Today, meanwhile, gave qualified approval to the new "Baptist Faith and Message."

"We applaud most of the changes as they will discourage the liberal drift experienced by other large denominations," said an Aug. 7 editorial titled "Do Good Fences Make Good Baptists?"

"At the same time, we wonder if the SBC has gone too far, both in seeming to eliminate discussion of some beliefs and in alienating opponents," the magazine continued.

## **Baptist Center for Ethics launches BF&M curriculum**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- A moderate Baptist ethics agency has launched an online series of Sunday school lessons to foster discussion in churches of recent changes to the "Baptist Faith and Message."

The Baptist Center for Ethics, an independent agency in Nashville, Tenn., posted the undated, 13-week course, "Real Baptists: Spotlighting Changes in the Baptist Faith and Message," on its Web site Aug. 30.

"When the Southern Baptist Convention revised the 1963 'Baptist Faith and Message' statement in Orlando, it moved away from being a confessional body of faith toward a creedal one," BCE Executive Director Robert Parham wrote in a preface to the curriculum.

The BCE curriculum, which can be downloaded for a charge from the Internet, "is our constructive, fast-track attempt to equip churches with a resource to address changes in the 1963 statement," Parham said.

The lessons, written by 14 different contributors, don't deal with all of the 18 articles in the new "Baptist Faith and Message," adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention June 14 in Orlando, Fla. But they include some of the topics that have generated the most debate, including the inspiration of Scripture and the place of women both at home and in church.

In the preface, Parham, who has a Ph.D. in ethics, said phrases dropped from a preamble to the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" radically altered the document's intent.

Among language missing in the new version is: "The sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures." Another omitted phrase in the old version explained that Baptists have regarded confessions of faith as "a consensus of beliefs" that "have never been regarded as complete, infallible statements of faith, nor as official creeds carrying mandatory authority."

That the new statement is intended as a creed, Parham contends, was illustrated in two statements. During debate over the changes, a seminary president said Southern Baptists would "expect" denominational employees to share these beliefs. Another official said the revisions affirmed, "You don't have a right to believe whatever you want to believe and still call yourself a Southern Baptist."

In a lesson titled, "Reading the Bible with Jesus' Help," Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, compares a sentence in the 1963 version, "The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ," with a sentence that replaces it in the new, "All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is himself the focus of divine revelation."

"The new sentence is acceptable on its own merits," Wade writes, "but it is not acceptable as a substitute."

Wade says the old sentence focused on "criterion," which he defines as "the guiding principle, the standard, the benchmark" by which Scripture is understood.

"Plainly said, the new 'Baptist Faith and Message' removed Jesus from the exalted place as the one who guides our interpretation of Scripture," he continues. "To say Jesus is the criterion for interpretation of Scripture does not demean Scripture. It is rather the strongest affirmation possible for the truth of the Bible."

In another lesson discussing the new "Baptist Faith and Message" declaration that, "While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture," David and Jane Hull review Bible passages that would seem to challenge that view.

Looking at the entire New Testament, and not just a few selected verses, the Hulls, both staff members at First Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn., contend: "There is significant evidence to show women did speak, preach, teach and lead in churches." They further observe that some of the apostle Paul's words used to support the "Baptist Faith and Message" article on women preachers "were not even applied to all churches in New Testament times, much less for all time."

In a lesson challenging an article calling for wives to "graciously submit" to their husbands, Baptist Standard Editor Marv Knox argues instead from the Book of Ephesians for "mutual submission" by both husbands and wives.

The lessons, which are available only via the Internet, can be downloaded from the BCE's Web site, [www.baptists4ethics.com](http://www.baptists4ethics.com). Using the honor system, customers will indicate how many copies of the curriculum they intend to distribute and will be billed accordingly. Users will then be assigned a password allowing them to download the material.

Both a student's guide and a leader's guide are available.

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-- By ABP staff

## **Mississippi volunteers build 'bridges of hope' in Delta**

By Jim Newton

TCHULA, Miss. (ABP) -- More than 100 volunteers from a dozen churches joined forces in late July with Grace Community Church in Tchula, Miss., bent on "building bridges of hope and change" in the poverty-stricken Mississippi Delta.

Most were part of a weeklong mission project sponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi, the first of a series of ministries planned for short-term missionary volunteers.

About 30 volunteers led a vacation Bible school for about 90 children. Another 30 volunteers performed construction work. About 25 took part in a one-day health fair. About 15 others organized and sorted clothing and household goods for a sale at a church-sponsored thrift store in nearby Lexington. Several others did construction work at a Christian Women's Job Corps site.

Mississippi CBF coordinator Bradley Pope of Clinton termed the project "highly successful." He said it was the first step toward establishing an ongoing CBF volunteer-missions program in Mississippi.

"We are planning to sponsor some kind of volunteer-construction project one Saturday of each month to continue the work in Tchula and at other African-American churches in Mississippi," Pope said. "We will start small and build an ongoing program, focusing first on three counties in the Delta, which are among the 20 poorest counties in the U.S."

Shaye Smith, a member of Northminster Baptist Church in Jackson, said she was so touched by the children involved in Bible school that she and several other women want to mentor some of the children in an ongoing, one-on-one ministry in the future.

"It broke our hearts to see the homes where these children live," Smith said. "One of the little girls cried the day we had to leave. We want to do more than just lead a VBS for them."

Six children received Christ during the Bible school, said John Hendrix, pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Clinton.

When the Bible school ended, Hendrix invited 16 teenage boys to swim in the hotel pool where he was staying, to help him celebrate his 65th birthday. Most had never been in a pool before and didn't know how to swim. Still, Hendrix said, the boys loved it and didn't want to leave the water.

Construction volunteers did framing and wiring to remodel a former furniture store for use as a church, said Bill Stewart, a lawyer and engineer from Clinton. He commended volunteers for their work and said local people will enjoy the facilities.

"There was also a tremendous value in the fun and fellowship the volunteers experienced in working together," Stewart said. "We learned it really is better to give than to receive."

Richard Joiner, a construction volunteer from Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in Tupelo, amazed and inspired others with his ability to do construction work despite the fact that he is blind. Joiner, who is also an auto mechanic, said he could drive nails by "feeling" rather than "seeing."

Don West, a professional carpenter from Tupelo, said he worked two days with Joiner on another project before he realized Joiner couldn't see. "His eyes are his fingers," West said.

Another message of hope came from Johnny Cooks, administrative assistant to Mississippi Gov. Ronnie Musgrove. Cooks is a former All-American football player at Mississippi State University who played 10 years in the NFL.

Cooks, who said he grew up in a shotgun house in Leland, urged Tchula youth to get an education and be the best they can be but to never forget their roots. He showed off his Super Bowl ring but said his high school and college diplomas were even more valuable to him.

Stewart, who organized the construction teams, said the greatest need in Tchula is for jobs and economic development, because young people there have "no hope" of finding a job locally.

Stewart said he is working with others on a long-range project to try to establish a poultry processing plant in Tchula. The group has written a grant that is being reviewed by the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development.

The construction project also included finish carpentry and cabinets at the New 2U Thrift Store in Lexington, where Christian Women's Job Corps will teach women job skills.

Jean Hunt of Clinton said volunteers gave four or five pickup trucks of clothing, toys, and household goods to the thrift store, sorting and pricing the merchandise for sale.

The worship center at Grace Community Church was rearranged July 29 for a health fair, with about 30 professional volunteers providing medical services to more than 100 Tchula residents -- mostly women and children.

Landa Strum of Clinton, director of corporate communications for Mississippi Blood Services in Jackson, coordinated the health fair, which provided health-risk assessment, tips to stop smoking, immunizations for children, blood tests, breast-cancer screenings, back safety and scoliosis evaluations, cardiovascular and stroke evaluation, and other medical services.

At the breast-cancer awareness table, volunteers Anne Powers and Lucy Rushing -- who themselves are recovering from breast cancer -- told women how to qualify for free mammograms at a nearby hospital. They gave each woman a ribbon and pink carnation to symbolize the importance of annual checkups.

At the smoking-cessation table, Mary Pheifer tested smokers for carbon-dioxide levels to indicate how smoking affects oxygen intake. Dentist George Taybos conducted oral examinations to look for early indications of cancer.

"There are tremendous medical needs here in Tchula, and these people need much more than just an annual health fair," Taybos said.

Pope said that the mission project was just the first of many the Mississippi CBF is planning throughout the state.

## **Cost of discipleship \$3 billion a year?**

By Craig Bird

(ABP) -- Scene I: Ancient Rome. Two strangers meet on a dusty road. Miles pass in polite conversation. Slowly and cautiously, oblique references to religious ideas slip in. Both sense a spiritual kinship but are wary of mentioning it. After all, Christianity is a crime punishable by death.

The sun is high and hot, so they stop to rest. The discussion moves from the latest war news to the price of bread to problems of the Roman Senate. The younger man pushes his walking stick through the dust as he talks, tracing a gently curved line.

The older man glances at the mark, then into the eyes of his new acquaintance and quickly around to see if anyone else is watching. With his own staff he draws a mirror image of the first mark, connecting the lines at one end but intersecting at the other. The two lines together form a crude drawing of a fish, a word used as an acronym in the underground sect's ancient Greek language for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

"He is risen!" exclaims the older man. "He is risen indeed!" comes the reply.

In excited whispers they arrange to meet the next evening. One will show the other the secret passages to the Christians' hiding place in the catacombs.

Scene II: Modern Rome. Two American tourists meet while waiting to clear customs. One wears a \$50 golf shirt with a fish logo. The other sports a sky-blue baseball cap emblazoned on the crown in scarlet with the acronym, WWJD?

"Cool shirt," says one. "Great hat," says the other. They shake hands, exchange names and agree to meet the next day for cappuccino, "after we tour the catacombs."

What a difference two millennia make.

The cost attached to that original Christian icon was certain and severe. Display the secret fish symbol in the wrong place or at the wrong time and it could cost you your life.

In the 21st century, the cost for the individual Christian is much cheaper, and can even be paid with a credit card.

Multiplied by millions of consumers who now openly adorn themselves with the symbols of their faith, however, today's price tag for Christian imagery has reached proportions unimaginable to early disciples. Clothing, jewelry, bumper stickers and related merchandise bearing religious messages generate an estimated \$3 billion a year.

But the spiritual value of those purchases is debatable, even among fellow believers.

Many say "Christian wear" is an effective witnessing tool. Others use derisive terms like "Jesus junk" and say it does more harm than good, especially if the actions of Christians don't match the message on their shirts.

Some things haven't changed over the centuries. Now, as then, Christian symbols remain a means of identifying "friendlies" in a dominant culture that is hostile to religious "fanatics."

But what was once a furtive code for a persecuted religious minority is now a mainstream fashion statement. Christians can wear their faith not only on their sleeves but also on their heads, around their necks, in their ears and on their backs. They can write with it, drink from it and listen to it.

The companies that sell such items uniformly say they create witnessing opportunities. "The average shirt is read 10,000 times!" touts Spiritual Wear on its Web site, [www.spiritualwear.com](http://www.spiritualwear.com). "You're just a click away from ordering some of the best Christian apparel available. Make a statement of faith with what you wear!"

"Proclaiming the Good News one tee at a time!" announces Kerusso Activewear. "With the right message and emphasis, a T-shirt can definitely help bring someone to Christ."

Living Epistles Apparel, whose Christian gear includes everything from clothes to mouse pads, describes itself as "a witnessing company dedicated to helping Christians creatively share the truth of the gospel and to create witnessing opportunities for Christians...." ([www.livingepistles.com](http://www.livingepistles.com))

The Internet is just the latest angle on Christian marketing, but the products have been available for years through Christian bookstores. In fact the exhibit hall at the annual Christian Booksellers Association is crammed with as many "accessories" as books and Bibles, which now account for only 40 percent of sales at the average Christian bookstore.

Do these products deliver what they promise? Are they effective for evangelism?

Opinions cover the spectrum. But most people interviewed for this story say such items probably do a better job of identifying and encouraging Christians than attracting non-believers to the claims of Christ.

"I have a couple (Christian T-shirts) that were gifts that I wear, but I don't think of them as anything but shirts," said Andrea Valenzuela, a 22-year-old Ecuadorian who works for Nyack College in New York. "I hope someone will read the Bible verse and ask about it. But I would rather have my walk and my life -- my works, my everyday living -- speak louder than some easy-to-pull-on T-shirt."

Even the minister who instigated the "What Would Jesus Do?" explosion looks forward to the time the profitable sheen wears off her concept.

Slightly over a decade ago, Reformed Church minister Janie Tinkleberg came up with the WWJD bracelets for her youth group. She didn't copyright the idea, so anyone is free to produce WWJD items. As a result, the emblem has become almost as pervasive in pop culture as the Nike logo. But she doubts the fad is advancing the gospel.

"I think it has diluted the message," she told the Knight-Ridder News Service. "I want the fad to fade so [the concept] will wind up where it belongs -- back with people wearing them who know what these little bracelets really mean."

Kelli Creswell, 24, a native of Charleston, S.C., seconds that motion. "I think sometimes it's all overdone," she said. "Like the WWJD bracelets, the idea is great, but after a while the meaning is lost, because it becomes more about fashion than witnessing."

An unscientific Internet survey conducted by the Christian magazine FaithWorks about the value of Christian gear received 40 responses. Overwhelmingly respondents said the top two reasons people wear Christian icons are to "witness" and "because it is fashionable."

Most, however, were skeptical of the witnessing impact. More than 70 percent said Christian gear motivates non-Christians to consider faith "sometimes" or "rarely." Fewer than 25 percent felt it was highly effective.

All of respondents knew what WWJD stands for.

Ironically, William Benoit, one of several college professors interviewed for this article, admitted he didn't know what the letters mean. But he otherwise concurred with the survey results.

"I suspect bumper stickers and bracelets have the most effect on two groups: the people who wear or display them, as a manner of self-expression, and those for whom it is a 'hot button' topic, either agreeing or disagreeing fervently," said Benoit, who teaches rhetoric, persuasive speaking, argument and advocacy at the University of Missouri-Columbia. "I doubt that the people in the middle are much influenced."

Tom Collinear, a communications professor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., said the growing popularity of Christian gear could "signal a search for meaning at a time when the headlines are about things like Columbine, on the one hand, and [dot.com/marry-a-millionaire/instant wealth](http://dot.com/marry-a-millionaire/instant-wealth) on the other."

Two professors at Baylor University represent the range of opinions among many evangelical scholars -- from benign approval to passionate endorsement.

Greg Garrett, who teaches religion and literature at the Baptist-affiliated school in Waco, Texas, said he doesn't care for such icons personally. But he knows, "Many people see it as providing a genuine opportunity to spread their faith."

"Good for them," Garrett said, "especially if they can do it without alienating the people they want to reach."

Betty Talbert, meanwhile, who teaches spiritual formation, is overwhelmingly supportive. "Since the time of (Roman Emperor) Constantine, it has been difficult for Christians to maintain their religious identity while being accepted as a part of the culture," she said.

"Wearing a religious symbol -- a cross, a fish or a WWJD bracelet -- is a way some of us testify to ourselves and to others that our commitment to Christ is about everyday living and not just Sunday worship," she continued.

"Personally I like religious bumper stickers," Talbert said. "The first time I put one on my car I did so with fear and trembling. I was a university professor who had just encountered Christ in a deep conversion experience. I knew that people might laugh at me, but I felt it was important to place a symbol of my new allegiance on my car."

Talbert said how a person feels about such public displays of Christian messages is more an issue of personal taste than theology. "I think it is very important not to judge those who do or do not display their religious commitments in their dress," she said. "One thing we know that Jesus would never do is treat a person with condescension."

Guy Mattox, a retired pastor from King George, Va., said Christian T-shirts gain the most value when they are baptized with the sweat of hard work. "If someone is wearing a shirt that says he is a follower of Jesus while he is replacing gutters or reshingling a roof or rebuilding a porch, then they are worthy of the name they are claiming," he said.

Nearly 40 years ago, Mattox presented his gas credit card for payment to a service station attendant who was in the process of exhibiting an impressive demand of profanity. When the man saw "the Reverend" in front of the name on Mattox's card, he apologized profusely.

Mattox went home, cut up all his credit cards and had them reissued without his clerical title. His reasoning? Christianity isn't viable if it can be detected only by a title on a card. "If there is not something about my life and my attitude that says I belong to Christ, then I don't deserve the honor (just) because I graduated from a theological seminary," he said.

Les Switzer, a seminary graduate and professor of journalism at the University of Houston, meanwhile, suspects there may be more behind the Christian gear craze than meets the eye.

The Protestant Reformation ended for many Christians the use of icons in worship and the sale of "indulgences," a method of paying cash as penance for sins. Switzer said he finds a parallel in today's Christian paraphernalia.

"Could I suggest that, in some convoluted way, this is an Americanized, sanitized form of indulgence?" he said. Spending money to "obtain an icon" in the form of a shirt or bumper sticker, he said, may help some Christians "deal with their sins, absolve them of guilt or at least to make them feel more comfortable?"

"It's kind of like a talisman," he said. "And of course most of us can't get along without one, whether it's in the form of a trinket, a cross or even a Bible."

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-- Craig Bird and his wife, Melissa, are child-care workers at a maternity home in Asheville, N.C. (c\_mbird@hotmail.com)

## 'Fish wars' take to America's streets

By Craig Bird

(ABP) -- Read any good fish lately?

The fish emblem has symbolized Christianity since late in the first century, when believers used it as a code to discreetly identify one another amid persecution.

Jesus, according to the Bible, had called the disciples "fishers of men," and the early Christians noticed that the Greek spelling of the word "fish" is an acrostic for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior."

The fish symbol was pretty much the exclusive property of Christendom for almost 2,000 years, until it began recently to show up on car bumpers, lapel pins, coffee cups and T-shirts. Soon, a challenger appeared. The familiar fish outline, in a tribute to evolution, had now grown feet, and the word "DARWIN" appeared inside.

The fish wars were on.

A California designer created the Darwin fish in about 1992. A Santa Cruz mail-order company called Ring of Fire now markets it. The company's Web site explains the popularity: "Many of our customers appreciate free-thought humor, seek the unusual, or simply enjoy exploring the tributaries beyond the mainstream."

Antagonism between atheistic evolutionists and fundamentalist Christians has fueled a fish war raging on America's bumpers, complete with escalating counter-attacks.

Creationists countered with a larger fish, labeled "TRUTH," gobbling up the smaller Darwin fish. The evolutionists' response, a crude depiction of fish procreation, is too tasteless to describe in print.

There are also peripheral imitators. One bumper sticker has an appropriately fatter-than-normal fish framing the word "BUDDHA." A "RASTA" fish has smoke swirling from a pipe in the fish's mouth, a tribute to the Jamaican sect that uses marijuana to alter the spirit. Then there's the fish "N CHIPS," which has more to do with fast food than faith.

Beyond that, there's the "What Would Jesus Do?" phenomenon, which also spawned the parody "WWBD?" bracelet, for "What Would Buddha Do?"

Communications expert Tom Lessl has been studying the fish wars. "In several respects, displaying the Darwin fish is the symbolic equivalent of capturing and desecrating an enemy's flag, an act of ritual aggression," said Lessl, an associate professor at the University of Georgia.

Emulating a religious symbol gives the Darwin fish "unique power to express ridicule in a vivid and symbolically pointed fashion," he said.

Lessl walked parking lots to find cars displaying Darwin fish and stuck survey forms under their windshield wipers asking three questions: Why did you put this emblem on your car? What audience did you hope to reach? What does the Darwin fish mean to you?

Out of nearly 140 surveys distributed, 51 completed questionnaires were mailed back.

"The fact that 66 percent of the respondents identified Christians as their target audience is the key to interpreting these themes," Lessl reported. "The apparent desire to deride this audience seems to be just as important as any serious message they want to communicate."

Some of the respondents insisted they were just being humorous. "I don't see it as anything but lighthearted," said one. Another wrote: "The last thing I would ever want to do is purposefully insult or hurt another human."

But another strongly supported Lessl's premise. "It's my way of saying: 'Creationists are [expletive] idiots,'" the respondent replied. "Get an [expletive] education. Humans are no better than chickens, redwoods, fireflies, earthworms, goldfish, algae or infectious salmonella just because we walk upright and have opposable thumbs."

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