

Time for a sequel to "Inherit the Wind"

The opera is over; the fat evolutionary biologist has sung. Intelligent design in public schools is dead.

The issue will never get to the Supreme Court, because there's nothing left to decide. The "wedge" strategy of ID advocates has failed. All we'll see from now on will be the dying twitches of its lifeless limbs as evangelical activists struggle in mad scientist fashion to revive it into something that might pass constitutional muster.

In 1987, the Supreme Court ruled that "creation science" could not be taught in public schools. Soon after that, ID rose up like Frankenstein, stitched together from body parts robbed from the grave of creationism. I have every confidence the next generation of evangelical activists will try to patch something together from the corpse of ID. That too will fail.

Still think ID has a future? Read Judge John Jones' opinion in *Kitzmiller v. Dover*. You can get it on my Web site at faginfamily.net/barry/jones.pdf. All 139 pages.

And what pages they are. Why ID is not science; Why teaching it is unconstitutional; Detailed accounts of school board meetings where elected leaders demand that people take a stand for Jesus; Textbooks like "Pandas and People" introduced into evidence, with "creation" words in old editions replaced with "design" words in newer ones; Funds diverted to school board relatives. There's something here for everyone.

In fact, the drama is so good somebody should make a movie of it. It'd be a great sequel to "Inherit the Wind." We could build it around the former school board president, and call it "Inherit the Windbag." Mel Gibson could direct. Well, maybe not.

I don't want to focus on the legal victory, though. There's been enough written about it, and the judge said everything about ID that you've read here before. What struck me about *Kitzmiller v. Dover* ought to strike fear into the hearts of any honest man:

Christians were lying for their cause.

Jones (a Bush appointee and a devout Christian) knew this, and he let 'em have it. ID advocates on the school board "lied outright under oath on several occasions." "The inescapable truth is that (both ID witnesses)



OPINION

BARRY FAGIN

Contributing columnist

lied at their depositions." And my personal favorite: "It is ironic that several of these individuals, who so staunchly and proudly touted their religious convictions in public, would time and again lie to cover their tracks."

I understand that Christians are not perfect people. We have that much in common. But I still want to know: Why would ordinary, decent Christians lie when they swore to tell the truth, "so help me God"?

I'd like to suggest that it was their attempt to engage the machinery of the state: To use law and the judicial process to bring about an outcome motivated by faith.

When state power mixes with religious power, the resulting electrical storm fouls your moral compass. When you are absolutely convinced that you are doing God's will, when everyone around you believes as you do, when you believe you will bring about the greatest spiritual victory the world has ever known, why should a little lie hold you back? Doesn't the end justify the means? Christianity, at least as I understand it, says no. But I bet it's mighty tempting once politics enter the picture.

I do not expect Christians to sit idly by when their rights are violated. Those of you who read me regularly know I support school choice and vouchers as a way for Christians to teach ID to their children in school. Even though I believe down to the core of my soul that they are deeply and profoundly wrong.

But I do expect Christians and anyone who thinks right and wrong are important to be aware of the terrible risks to integrity when the power of faith is shackled to the power of law. In the *Dover* case, it wrecked people's intellectual integrity by forcing them to believe, in Orwellian doublethink, that ID is not religious and the supernatural is scientific.

More importantly, it wrecked their moral integrity. ID advocates on the *Dover* school board lied — badly and often. That may not have been by design, but it certainly wasn't intelligent.

Dr. Fagin, of Colorado Springs, is a senior fellow at the Independence Institute. His column appears on alternate Thursdays. Readers may e-mail him at barry@faginfamily.net.