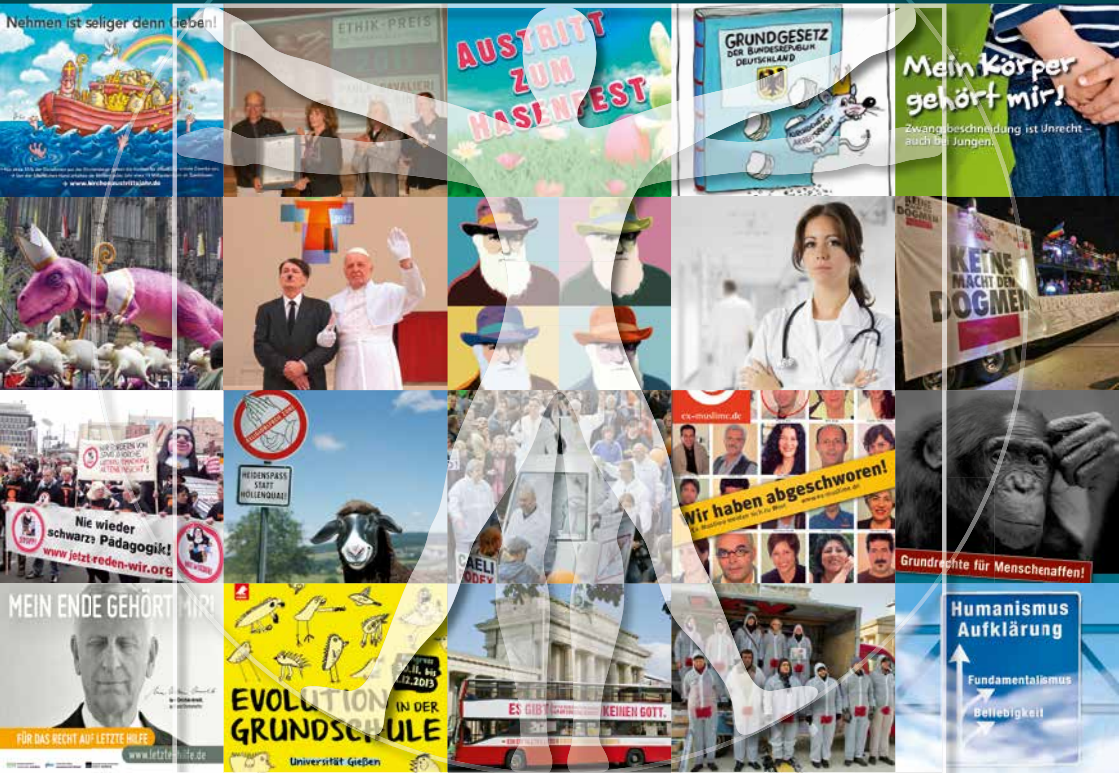


ENLIGHTENMENT

in the 21st century



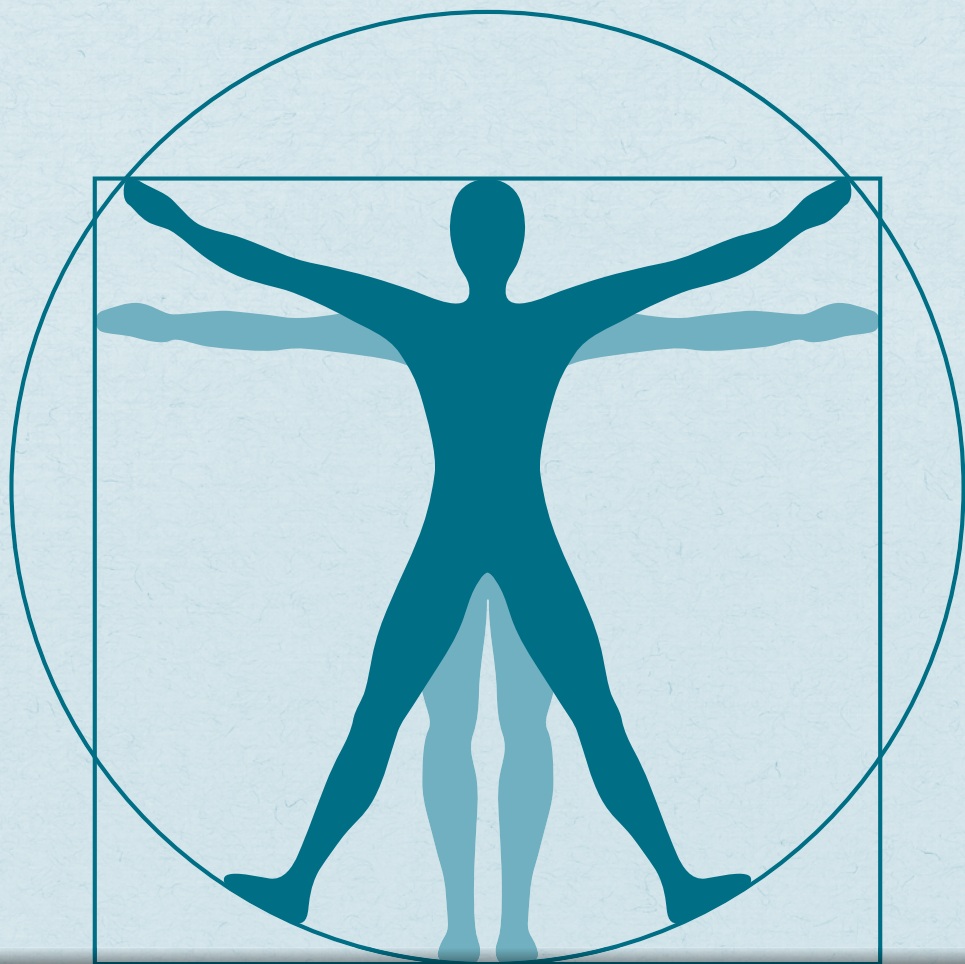
*“Anyone who is capable of splitting the atom and communicating via satellites, must possess intellectual and **emotional maturity**.*

*One of the ways this manifests itself is through the ability to **let false ideas die, before people must die for false ideas.**”*

Manifesto of Evolutionary Humanism



The Foundation...



*“The **Giordano Bruno Foundation**
is the spiritual leader of
all those who mistrust spiritual leaders.”*

Der Spiegel

Think-tank for humanism and enlightenment

What do the philosopher of science Hans Albert, the cartoonist Ralf König, the caricaturist Gerhard Haderer, the primatologist Volker Sommer and the children's authors Janosch and Max Kruse have in common? What unites the former leading SPD politician Ingrid Matthäus-Maier with the immunologist Beda M. Stadler, the astronaut Ulrich Walter and the neurophilosopher Thomas Metzinger? Or the evolutionary biologists Ulrich Kutschera, Axel Meyer, Eckart Voland and Franz M. Wuketits with the writers Esther Vilar and Karen Duve? The answer is that all are members of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung (gbs).

The gbs is a *think-tank for humanism and enlightenment* which is supported by numerous renowned scientists, philosophers and artists. The foundation's aim is to develop a viable *secular alternative to existing religions* and to help it become established in society. This aim is based on the insight that the complex challenges of the 21st century cannot be mastered by relying on the often religiously motivated paradigms of the past.

We need a *modern view* of the world, compatible with the *results of scientific research* (in, among other fields, cosmology, evolutionary biology and brain research), and which ethically is clearly oriented towards the *individual's right to self-determination* (as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).



*“**Evolutionary man** can no longer take refuge from his **loneliness** by creeping for shelter into the arms of a divinised **father-figure** whom he himself has created, nor escape from the responsibility of making decisions by sheltering under the umbrella of divine authority, nor absolve himself from the **hard task** of meeting his **present problems** and planning his future by relying on the will of an omniscient but unfortunately **inscrutable providence.**”*

Julian Huxley

Evolutionary Humanism

"We are not the crowning glory of creation, but the Neanderthals of tomorrow" – The Giordano Bruno Stiftung advocates the position of Evolutionary Humanism, formulated in the middle of the 20th century by Julian Huxley, the distinguished evolutionary biologist and first General Director of UNESCO, and further elaborated in recent years by, among others, Michael Schmidt-Salomon, executive spokesman of the gbs.

Evolutionary humanists strongly advocate the *values of enlightenment*: critical rationality, self-determination, freedom and social justice. However, they no longer view human beings as the "pinnacle of creation", but as the unintended product of natural evolution, different only by degree, not fundamentally, from the other life forms on Earth. As children of evolution, we too are just *"life that wants to live, in the midst of life that wants to live"* (Albert Schweitzer), a realisation that should lead to a more responsible way of treating non-human animals.

The ethical foundation of evolutionary humanism is the "principle of equal consideration of equal interests". Therefore discriminatory ideologies such as racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, or speciesism, and social-Darwinian or eugenic concepts, which are defended by some evolutionary theorists, are incompatible with a modern evolutionary humanism.



Giordano Bruno, painting by Wolfram P. Kastner (gbs Advisory Board)

*“Those who want to **judge properly** must be able to **let go of all the habits of belief** they have accumulated since their childhood.*

*The **popular opinion** is **not** always the one closest to **the truth.**”*

Giordano Bruno

The Foundation's Name

In 1600 Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake by the “Holy Inquisition”, after seven years of bleak imprisonment. He had dared to challenge the Church’s official view of the world and the special position of humankind and the Earth, by proposing a theory of an infinite universe and multiple worlds. His ideas were even more far-reaching than those of Galileo Galilei, who, not long after Bruno’s death, also found himself in the hands of the Inquisition (fortunately with a more lenient outcome).

Bruno’s methodology did not conform to that of modern science, and some of his mystical concepts are, in the light of modern discoveries, very hard to understand. Nonetheless, the validity of many of his theories is impressive, not only in the area of cosmology. His philosophy was far ahead of its time, and covered basic principles of a non-dualistic, naturalistic view of the world, as well as reflections on the idea of biological descent and on evolutionary-humanist ethics, including the rights of non-human organisms. Essential impetus for the development of modern criticism of religion can also be traced to Bruno.

All of the above facts contributed to the decision to name the foundation after Giordano Bruno, one of the great tragic heroes in the history of science and emancipation. After all, critical research requires not only intelligent thought, but also the courage to stand up for the truth.

*“Nothing **good** will happen
unless you
make **it happen.**”*

Erich Kästner

The Activities...



HEIDENPASS STATT HÖLLENGANG!

KÖLN 19. - 21. AUGUST 2005

GEGENVERANSTALTUNGEN
zum katholischen „Weltjugendtag“

www.gbsb.de



Humanismus Aufklärung

Fundamentalismus
Beliebigkeit

Leitkultur Humanismus und Aufklärung
Perspektiven Jahrestag 2006 für Deutschland

Offene Tagung Köln
2./3. Oktober 2005

Dt. JH-Tagesheim Köln-Deutz / Biegestraße 5

www.leitkultur-humanismus.de gbsb

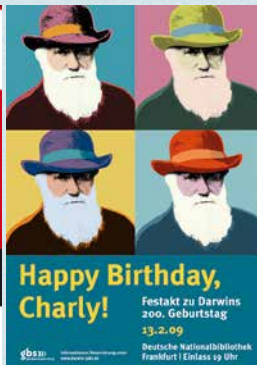


Kritische Islamkonferenz

„Aufklären statt verschleiern!“
Kritische Islamkonferenz
Der Islam als politische Herausforderung

UNIVERSITÄT KÖLN | 13. & 14. NOV. 2008
Kölner Institut für Politikwissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Islamwissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Soziologie
Kölner Institut für Ethnologie
Kölner Institut für Religionswissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Philosophie
Kölner Institut für Geschichte
Kölner Institut für Kunstwissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Musikwissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Theaterwissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Medienwissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Informationswissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Rechtswissenschaft
Kölner Institut für Wirtschaftswissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Sozialwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Geisteswissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Naturwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Ingenieurwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Architekturwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Designwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Sportwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Gesundheitswissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Pädagogikwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Psychologiewissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Biologiewissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Chemiewissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Physikwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Mathematikwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Informatikwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Technikwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Umweltwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Energiewissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Materialwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Lebensmittelwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Agrarwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Forstwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Fischereiwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Veterinärwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Pharmaziewissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Zahnmedizinwissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Gesundheitswissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Pflegewissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Gesundheitswissenschaften
Kölner Institut für Gesundheitswissenschaften

www.kritische-islamkonferenz.de



Happy Birthday, Charly!

Festakt zu Darwins
200. Geburtstag
23.2.09

Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
Frankfurt | Einlass 19 Uhr

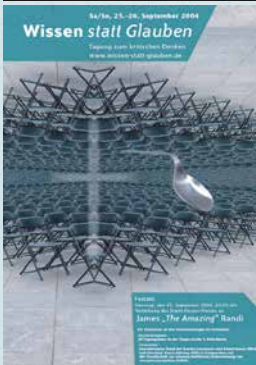
gbsb



Mein Körper gehört mir!

Zwangsbeschneidung ist Unrecht –
auch bei Jungen.

www.pro-kinderrechte.de



Wissen statt Glauben

Tagung zum 100. Geburtstag
des Philosophen Hans Reichenbach

14./15. Sept. 2008

James „The Amazing“ Randi

www.evokids.de



30.11. - 1.12.2013

EVOLUTION IN DER GRUNDSCHULE

OFFENE TAGUNG
für Lehrer, Eltern, Interessierte

www.evokids.de



Grundrechte für Menschenaffen!

Fr. 3. Juni 2011
Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
FRANKFURT
Einlass: 10:00 Uhr
Beginn: 10:30 Uhr

FESTAKT zur Verleihung des
ETHIK-PREISES
der Giordano-Bruno-Stiftung an
PAOLA CAVALIERI & PETER SINGER
Mitgliedern des GREAT APE PROJEKTS

www.gbsb.de



Jetzt reden wir!!!

Nie wieder
schwarze Pädagogik!

www.jetzt-reden-wir.org

**Heimkinder-Demo
in Berlin 15. April 2010**

Freitag, 15. April 2010, 12:00 Uhr

www.jetzt-reden-wir.org



MEIN ENDE GEHÖRT MIR!

Uwe-Christian Arnold
Uwe-Christian Arnold,
Arzt und Sterbehelfer

FÜR DAS RECHT AUF LETZTE HILFE

www.letzte-hilfe.de



Zentralrat der Ex-Muslime
EX
www.ex-muslim.de

Wir haben abgeschworen!
Ex-Muslime melden sich zu Wort

www.ex-muslim.de



21. - 22. Oktober 2006

Mathematikabende der TU Berlin
„Es gibt nichts Gutes,
außer: man tut es!“
Pflanzliche Heilmittel in Deutschland

www.granzschner-humanismus.de



Festakt
zur Verleihung des
**DESCHNER-
PREISES**
der Giordano Bruno Stiftung an:
**RICHARD
DAWKINS**

FR 12. OKT. 07

AULA DER UNIVERSITÄT FRANKFURT
Beginn: 18:30 Uhr
Einlass: 18:00 Uhr

www.deschner-preis.de



Deutscher Humanistentag 2013

30. April - 4. Mai 2013
Fliegende Bauten **HAMBURG**

GUT DUNK GOTT -
Auf dem Menschen kommt es an!

10 years of the gbs – an overview

Since the founding of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung, which was recognized as a charitable foundation on 15th April 2004, the debate about worldviews in Germany has undergone radical change. Two numbers serve to make this clear: In 2005, on the occasion of the Catholic “World Youth Day” in Cologne, the gbs and its co-operation partners were able to mobilize just 200 people to take part in a demonstration against the Catholic Church’s violations of human rights. In 2011, a demonstration “*No power to dogmas!*” saw a participation of 15.000 people, who came to protest against the Pope’s speech in the German Bundestag.

Such changes, of course, are not exclusively due to the Giordano Bruno Stiftung, but the gbs certainly made its contribution. Without the gbs, for example, the fate of abused and maltreated children in homes and boarding schools would not have been brought forcefully to the attention of the public; there would have been no debate about religious discrimination in the workplace; ex-muslims would not have been granted asylum in Germany; and humanist Islam critics, who denounce both xenophobia and reactionary defence of Islam, would not have the platform they do. Without the foundation, the debate about animal rights would not have been rekindled; there would be no initiative to teach evolution in primary schools; less vehement protests would have opposed the genital mutilation of girls and boys; and the plans of conservative politicians to restrict the right to self-determination in death would have met less intense criticism.

The success of the foundation relies not least on the 5700 people who support the work of the gbs intellectually, practically and financially, and on the now more than fifty regional and university groups that have grown out of the “Friends of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung”. Compared to the financial support that goes to the religious organizations, the means of the gbs are decidedly modest. But experience shows that even modest means can be used to achieve a great deal, if one sets the right accents at the right time. Remember: “Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.”

Humanism Enlightenment



Fundamentalism

Anything goes

*“It is clear that **each person** can **believe** what they want to, because **in the end** thoughts are free – **free, too, to be irrational.**”*

*However, **in the 21st century** this should **no longer have any influence on politics.** In the public political discussion it is **essential** that **secular standards** apply..”*

Manifesto of Evolutionary Humanism

Promotion of humanism and enlightenment as the mainstream culture

The Giordano Bruno Stiftung stands for the values of humanism and enlightenment, and protests whenever blatant infringements of these occur. During the controversy surrounding cartoons of Mohammed, the foundation started a widely noted *campaign for the protection of free speech and artistic expression*; it entered the debate about the circumcision of boys, arguing for the rights of the children; it supported the victims of human rights violations in German children's homes and boarding schools in their protracted battle for compensation.

Representatives of the gbs have joined the debate on assisted suicide to promote the *right to self-determination* at the end of one's life; and they have criticised the feebleness of attempts to remove creationism from the school curriculum. Many of the initiatives of the foundation involve opposition to "*cultural relativism*", i.e. to the assumption that people from different cultures do not necessarily benefit from the same protection of their human rights. (Many will recall is the controversial case in Frankfurt in 2007, in which a German judge effectively approved a Muslim man's right to beat his wife "on cultural grounds".)

According to the gbs, the violation of human rights should never be swept under the carpet with some kind of postmodern "anything goes" attitude. On the contrary, humanist principles and fundamental modern values should be defended. The foundation has been active in campaigns such as that against the "culturally legitimised" practice of genital mutilation and has supported the *International Committee against the Death Penalty* in its attempts to save people sentenced to death under Sharia law. In the case of Nazanin Fatehi, a 17-year-old Iranian woman, this was successful.



*“Whereas European **Christianity** went through the hard school of **The Enlightenment**, as a result of which it had to get used to more civil ways of interacting, **Islam**, despite admirable attempts in the 9th and 10th centuries, has mainly been spared such “**progressive harassment**.” We want to **contribute to changing this in a lasting way.**”*

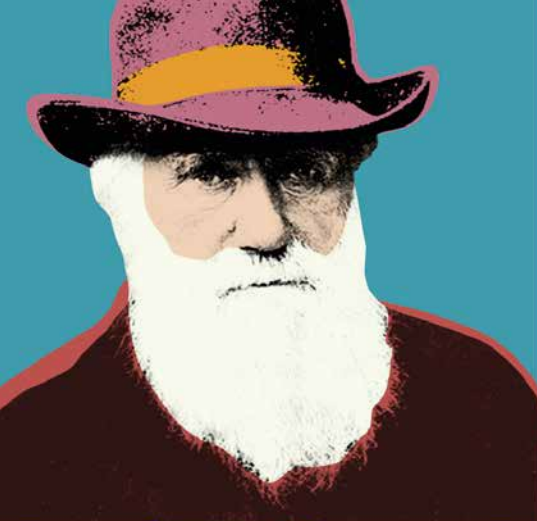
From the flyer “We have forsworn” of the Central Council of Ex-Muslims

“Enlighten rather than obscure!”

Human rights must apply *universally*; they do not differ from one culture to the next. Unfortunately, many abuses of human rights have long been accepted due to a “false tolerance”. In order to avoid accusations of xenophobia, many progressive thinkers have shied away from criticising religiously legitimised violence in the Muslim community. The founding of the *Central Council of Ex-Muslims* and its “We have forsworn” campaign, both of which received substantial support from the gbs, have led to a change in the situation.

The ex-Muslims, mostly refugees from Iran and Iraq, cannot be accused of xenophobia when they denounce honour killings, forced marriages, hostility to democracy and the religious indoctrination of children in the Islamic community. The political debate on integration, Islam and Islamism has thus taken on a new character, not only in Germany but far beyond its borders too. There are now ex-Muslim groups, based on the German model, in, among other countries, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA.

In 2008, in partnership with the Central Council of Ex-Muslims and other progressive organisations, the gbs initiated the first “*Critical Islam Conference*” under the motto “*Enlighten rather than obscure!*” The second conference followed in 2012 under the motto “*Self-determination rather than forced conformity*”. These events showed that there is a sensible “*third way, beyond the extremes of xenophobia and reactionary defence of Islam*”. This alternative has been taken up by liberal humanist sympathizers in Muslim countries too.



*“Whether one wants to or not, one has to make a choice:
**Either evolution or creation, enlightenment or obscurantism,
scientific knowledge or religious belief.***

*All attempts to **combine** the one with the other **have failed.**
Which doesn't surprise me:
after all, **one cannot be a little bit pregnant!**”*

From “Darwin’s speech of thanks”, National Library, Frankfurt 2009

Promoting a scientific world view

Those who support humanism and enlightenment are concerned to communicate not only *values*, but also *knowledge*. Sadly, many people still hold worldviews which, in light of modern scientific advances, can only be compared with the ancient belief that the world was flat. The Giordano Bruno Stiftung has therefore made it one of its goals to promote the *dissemination and acceptance of scientific knowledge*.

The foundation's first major conference, organised in 2004 in co-operation with the International League of the Non-religious and Atheists, revolved around the questions of "*Knowledge and Belief*". This theme has often been revisited subsequently. The year 2009 represented a particular highlight because it was Darwin Year – both Darwin's 200th birthday, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his ground-breaking book "*On the Origin of Species*".

The gbs made use of the double jubilee to draw attention, by various means, to the enormous impact that the theory of evolution has had on our view of the world. The foundation created the website www.darwin-jahr.de, the most comprehensive German-language Internet portal on the subject of evolution. The gbs also celebrated Germany's biggest Darwin birthday party in the German National Library in Frankfurt. In a joint project with the "tower of senses" ("*turmdersinne*"), the foundation organised an academic symposium in Nuremberg, with many prominent participants, which looked into the subject of "the fruitfulness of evolution".

In addition, representatives of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung played a significant part in the public debate on Darwin and modern evolutionary theory, on television, radio, in the press and at international conferences. The "pop art" picture of Darwin, designed by the gbs, appeared on the cover of various scholarly magazines. Video clips produced especially for Darwin Year ("*Children of Evolution*" and "*Suzy Smarty pants Explains Evolution*") enjoyed a positive reception worldwide. In 2013 the gbs took up the topic again with the project "*Evokids – Evolution in Primary Schools*".



HEIDENSPASS
STATT
HÖLLENQUAL!



Zentralrat
der Ex-Muslime



ex-muslime.de



Wir haben abgeschworen!
Ex-Muslime melden sich zu Wort
www.ex-muslime.de

*“Enlightenment is a nuisance:
when the world is illuminated,
its filth becomes more visible.”*

Karlheinz Deschner

Campaigns that cause a stir

The enlightenment movement is rarely short of good arguments, but is in need of some good PR. Especially in the media-driven society we live in, it's not enough just to have good arguments; they have to be communicated effectively to people. An essential part of promoting enlightenment is *provocation*. This word comes from "pro-vocare", to call forth or challenge, and that is exactly what we want to do. If we wish to *push society forward*, we must not be afraid of being called "pushy".

Many people have objected to gbs campaigns in the past, and that is certainly one of the reasons for their success. When the foundation set up a "*religion-free zone*" parallel to the Catholic World Youth Day, as a means of offering asylum to those fleeing the Catholic event, many Catholics were doubtless angered. However, this was the only way of effectively counteracting the otherwise uncritical reporting of the Pope in Germany. When the gbs started the "*We have forsworn*" campaign with the Central Council of Ex-Muslims, this enraged Islamic fundamentalists, who view renouncing Islam as a crime punishable by death. But the international headlines relating to the campaign gave critics of Islam (especially in the so-called Islamic countries) reason to hope that the rule of the Mullahs, Muftis and Imams can be broken in the foreseeable future.

Naturally, some Christians were indignant about the gbs campaign "*Evolution Day, not Ascension Day*" to mark Darwin Year. Yet this "heretical initiative" made sure that the theory of evolution finally came to be discussed outside the *ivory towers of academia*. (It is worth remarking that in an online poll conducted by the German current affairs magazine "Der Spiegel", more than 69 per cent of respondents were in favour of Ascension Day being renamed "Evolution Day".)



Anti-Pope demonstration "No power to dogmas!", Berlin 2011

*"Whilst the **two Christian churches** are firmly established as a result of the **"faltering separation"** of **State and Church**, as well as the corresponding **concordats** or contracts between the two, and while the **Muslims** also seem set to receive **State privileges** in future, **politics** appears to have no concept to offer **those without religious affiliation**.*

*This **glaring breach** of the **constitutional imperative** of a State that is **neutral with respect to world views** is something **we will no longer accept!**"*

From the KORSO declaration of principles

Representing secular interests

There are now more people in Germany with no religious affiliation than there are Catholics or Protestants. However, they do not receive the recognition they deserve either in politics or in the media. The Giordano Bruno Stiftung is attempting to rectify this deficiency. It played a leading role in the foundation of the *“Co-ordinating Council of Secular Organisations”* (KORSO: Koordinierungsrat säkularer Organisationen), which will represent the many millions of people who do not belong to a religious denomination.

In order to find out what the non-religious think, and which views of the world and political philosophies they share or don't share, in 2005 the gbs set up the *“Research group: world views in Germany”* (fowid: Forschungsgruppe Weltanschauungen in Deutschland), whose website can be found at www.fowid.de (in German). Here, numerous studies can be found relating to the social acceptance of religious and secular worldviews. This empirical knowledge is significant not only in the political sphere, where the population is assumed to have a much greater adherence to religion than is in fact the case, but also for the foundation, as it gives indications as to how best to pursue its work.

To give non-believers their own voice in the media, the gbs and the *German Humanist Society* (HVD: Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands) co-operated to set up the *Humanist News Service* (hpd: Humanistischer Pressedienst). The *hpd*, which is now an independent organization, presents humanist and free-thinking viewpoints, in order to raise awareness of them in politics and the media. The website www.hpd.de (in German) went online in October 2006. With several million page impressions per year, it is now the most important online-medium of the German secular scene.



Picture from the series "Being Human" by the photo-artist Yvonne Salzmann

*"When a **book** and a **head** collide and a **hollow sound** is heard,
must it always have come **from the book**?"*

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

Support for pro-enlightenment literature

The Giordano Bruno Stiftung supports critical literature and other books reflecting the spirit of enlightenment thereby helping them to stand out amidst the avalanche of new publications. It draws attention to interesting new releases and also works in co-operation with the German Internet shop *denkladen.de*, which offers exclusively humanist/enlightenment books, videos, posters (and more).

Through the gbs network of experts, a number of interesting book projects have been initiated. These include the book about church finances in Germany *"Violettbuch Kirchenfinanzen"* by Carsten Frerk and the study of Great Apes Confined in Zoos *"Lebenslänglich hinter Gittern"* by Colin Goldner. The gbs also produces its own book series, published by Alibri, and supports, amongst other things, the publication of the *"Manifest des evolutionären Humanismus"*, now also available in English as the "Manifesto of Evolutionary Humanism". The foundations headquarters served several times as the venue for presenting new books to the public: among others *"Archetyp"* (Ralf König), the final volume of the *"Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums"* (Karlheinz Deschner), *"Hoffnung Mensch"* (Michael Schmidt-Salomon) and *"Schatten über Europa"* (Ralf Bergmeister).

A very important, but sensitive area is that of children's books. The foundation was instrumental in the publication of "Which way leads to God? asked the little piglet" (*"Wo bitte geht's zu Gott? fragte das kleine Ferkel"*), which challenged the stronghold of religions in the nursery. This book caused a huge scandal, which very nearly led its being blacklisted.

After the successful rescue of the "Little Piglet", Michael Schmidt-Salomon and Helge Nyncke went on to publish two further books, "The Story of the Cheeky Dog" (*"Die Geschichte vom frechen Hund"*) and "Suzy Smartypants Explains Evolution" (*"Susi Neunmalklug erklärt die Evolution"*) which look at subjects traditionally reserved for adults in a manner appropriate for children. In 2013 a further book *"Urmel saust durch die Zeit"* by Max Kruse, member of the gbs Advisory Board, joined the collection. Its entertaining story is also a vehicle for teaching children the facts of evolution. More books of this kind are planned for the coming years.

Festakt

zur Verleihung des
**DESCHNER-
PREISES**
der Giordano Bruno Stiftung an:
**RICHARD
DAWKINS**



FR 12. OKT. 07

AULA DER UNIVERSITÄT FRANKFURT

BEGINN: 19:00 EINLASS: 18:30

* CAMPUS BOCKENHEIM, HAUPTGEBÄUDE
MERTONSTR. 17-21, 60325 FRANKFURT

REDEBEITRÄGE:

Prof. Dr. Richard Dawkins
Dr. Karlheinz Deschner
Dr. Michael Schmidt-Salomon
Prof. Dr. Franz M. Wuketits



www.deschner-preis.de



Grundrechte für Menschenaffen!

Fr. 3. Juni 2011
Deutsche
Nationalbibliothek
FRANKFURT

Einlass: 19.00 Uhr
Beginn: 19.30 Uhr

FESTAKT zur Verleihung des
**ETHIK-
PREISES**
der Giordano-Bruno-Stiftung an
PAOLA CAVALIERI & PETER SINGER
Initiatoren des GREAT APE PROJEKTS

Redebeiträge: Dr. Paola Cavalieri, Prof. Dr. Peter Singer,
Prof. Dr. Volker Sommer, Dr. Colin Goldner, Dr. Michael Schmidt-Salomon



Informationen/Reservierung unter: www.giordano-bruno-stiftung.de

*“There is also **another prize**, called the **Templeton Prize**.
The only specification of the quantity is
that it has **to be larger than the Nobel-Prize** money.*

*But I'm here to tell you today that if I were given a **choice**
between the Templeton Prize and the Deschner Prize,
I would go for the **Deschner Prize**.”*

Richard Dawkins

The Foundation's prizes

The Giordano Bruno Stiftung awards two prizes, each of them including a monetary award of 10.000 Euro: The "*Deschner Prize*" for outstanding contributions in the field of religious and ideological criticism, and the "*Ethics Prize of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung*" for the development of positive alternatives in the sense of evolutionary humanism.

In October 2007 the *Deschner Prize*, named after the writer of "polemic texts" Karlheinz Deschner, author of the "*Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums*" (*the Criminal History of Christianity*) was awarded for the first time. The recipient was the renowned British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, who received the prize at a ceremony at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt. The award rationale: With his pioneering work in evolutionary biology, and especially with his criticism of religion in the book "*The God Delusion*", Dawkins has made *an outstanding contribution to supporting secular, scientific and humanist thought*.

The "*Ethics Prize of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung*" was awarded for the first time in June 2011 at a prize-giving event in the German National Library. The Italian and Australian philosophers *Paola Cavalieri* and *Peter Singer* received the prize for their activities in the field of animal ethics, in particular as initiators of the *Great Ape Project*, demanding basic rights for these species. Supported by eminent primatologists such as Jane Goodall, the Great Ape Project demands for orang-utans, gorillas, bonobos and chimpanzees some of the privileges that have so far been reserved for humans: *the right to life, the right to freedom and the prohibition of torture*. In the award justification, the gbs drew attention to the fact that the *Great Ape Project* could serve as a door-opener for the further demands of the animal rights movement, since it sharpens our awareness of the fact that it is unethical to ignore the interests of living creatures simply because they are not members of our own species.

*“Sapere aude!
Have the **courage**,
to reason **for yourself!**”*

Immanuel Kant

The People...



Regional group representatives meeting at the Foundation's headquarters in 2014. The guest of honour: Moses with the 11th commandment: "You should pay for your Church Congress yourself!"

*"As **evolutionary humanists** we are **not** in favour of **centralized planning** and **fixed hierarchies**.*

*We orient ourselves more along the **lines** of the **grassroots revolution**. Our regional groups thus have a **free hand** in choosing their own **focal points** and **activities**.*

*This **has given** rise time and again to **marvellous project ideas**, which we at the **gbs-headquarters** would **never** have come up with **on our own**."*

Herbert Steffen (founder and president of the gbs)

Structure of the foundation

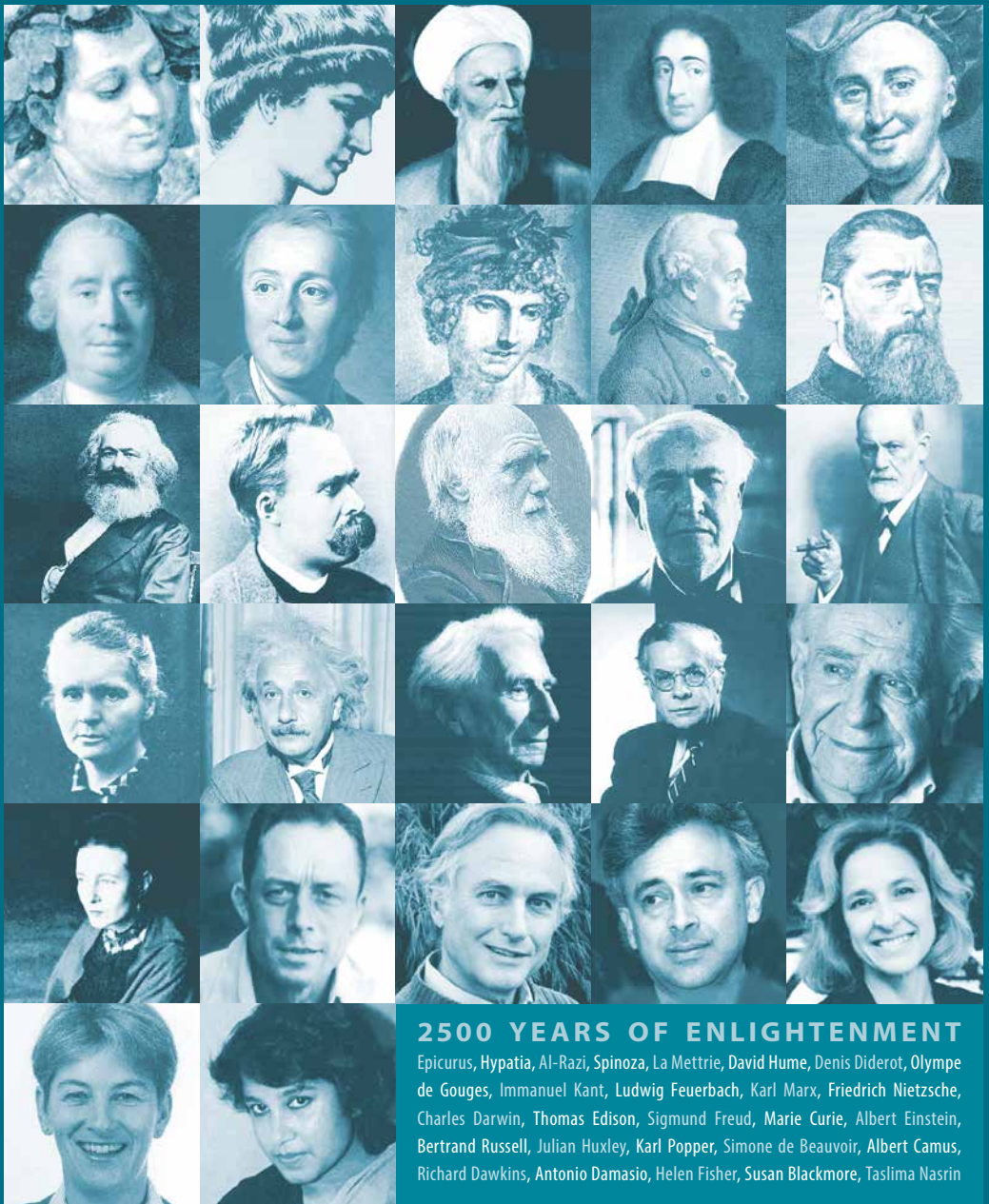
The Giordano Bruno Stiftung is composed, in accordance with the statutes, of three bodies: the *board of directors*, the *board of trustees*, and the *advisory board*. Also actively involved in the foundation are the *circle of benefactors*, the *friends of the gbs*, and the more than 50 *regional and university groups* in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

The board of directors comprises the two founders of the gbs Herbert Steffen (president) and Michael Schmidt-Salomon (executive spokesman). They are responsible for the political work of the foundation and are supported in this by a small team, including, among others, the business manager Elke Held and the secretary of the foundation Judith Liesenfeld. The board of trustees, which currently has seven members, monitors the work of the directors. It meets twice a year under the chairmanship of the philosopher Prof. Hermann Josef Schmidt and the mathematician Robert Maier.

Once a year, a large gathering at the headquarters in Oberwesel brings together not only the directors and trustees, but also about 30 members of the advisory board. At these meetings, the projects of the preceding year are evaluated, and the agenda for the coming year decided.

The “Friends of the gbs” is a group now comprising more than 5700 members from 30 countries. It supports the work of the foundation intellectually and financially. Out of its ranks have grown the 50 or more regional and university groups, some of which are now recognized charitable associations. They organize a wide range of events and activities on a local basis. To co-ordinate the activities of the groups and channel their ideas back into the heart of the organization, there is an annual meeting of the regional groups at the foundation’s headquarters.

Also held in Oberwesel is the annual meeting of the circle of benefactors. This is a group of people committed to donating Euro 5000 or more each year to the foundation. Not only through their donations, but also thanks to their constructive input, e.g. suggestions for projects, the members of the circle of benefactors are a vital fundament for the activities of the foundation.



2500 YEARS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Epicurus, Hypatia, Al-Razi, Spinoza, La Mettrie, David Hume, Denis Diderot, Olympe de Gouges, Immanuel Kant, Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Darwin, Thomas Edison, Sigmund Freud, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley, Karl Popper, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Richard Dawkins, Antonio Damasio, Helen Fisher, Susan Blackmore, Taslima Nasrin

“One head does not think alone.”

Karlheinz Deschner

Join us in promoting humanism and enlightenment

Help us spread the message of humanism and enlightenment so that these ideas become more strongly rooted in society! We welcome every single person who would like to support the aims of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung. There are several ways you can take part:

Become a **member of the Friends of the gbs**. This does not involve any financial commitment. Every member can decide themselves whether and how much they wish to donate. To become a Friend of the gbs you simply need to complete the application form in this brochure or on the gbs website.

1

Become active in your own area in one of our **regional or university groups**. If there isn't yet a regional group in your vicinity and you'd like to initiate one, please contact us.

2

Register on our website for the free **newsletter** and attend our **events**. If you have **contacts and acquaintances** interested in the issues, please discuss our aims with them. For this purpose our **brochures** can be ordered in larger quantities from the gbs headquarters.

3

Support our work with a **donation**. The Giordano Bruno Stiftung is a recognized charity meaning that donations are exempt from German income tax. (For an annual donation of Euro 100 or more, the gbs will automatically send you a written receipt. For smaller donations, the tax authorities need only a copy of the relevant bank statement.)

4

We are naturally delighted to receive all **endowments, gifts and legacies**. If you are considering joining the circle of benefactors, or would like to include the gbs as beneficiary in your will, please get in touch with the founder and president of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung, Herbert Steffen.

5



gbs headquarters in Oberwesel

Members of the foundation

Directors:

Herbert Steffen, Dr. Michael Schmidt-Salomon

Trustees:

Dr. Heiner Holtkötter, Robert Maier, Prof. Dr. Hermann Josef Schmidt, Shiro Sonoda, Bibi Steffen-Binot, Wolf Steinberger, Jacques Tilly

Advisory Board:

Hamed Abdel-Samad (Islam and Near-East expert), Prof. Hans Albert (philosopher of science), Andreas Altmann (writer), Prof. Christoph Antweiler (ethnologist), Christian Arnold (doctor, practitioner of assisted suicide), Dr. Pierre Basieux (mathematician, game theorist), Rolf Bergmeier (historian of antiquity), Prof. Dieter Birnbacher (philosopher, medical ethicist), Prof. Michael Braungart (process engineer, chemist), Prof. Dr. Martin Brüne (neurologist, psychiatrist), Dr. Gerhard Czermak (lawyer, author), Helmut Debelius (oceanographer, author), Karen Duve (writer), Prof. Theodor Ebert (philosopher, historian of philosophy), Dr. Carsten Frerk (political scientist, author), Dr. Colin Goldner (psychologist, author), Dr. Monika Griefahn (politician, sociologist), Gerhard Haderer (caricaturist, author), Prof. Eric Hilgendorf (lawyer, philosopher of law), Ricarda Hinz (documentary film-maker), Janosch (author, illustrator), Dr. Mathias Jung (Gestalt-therapist, philosopher), Prof. Bernulf Kanitscheider (natural philosopher, physicist), Wolfram Kastner (performance artist), Prof. Günter Kehrer (sociologist of religion), Ralf König (cartoonist, author), Max Kruse (writer), Dr. Heinz-Werner Kubitzka (scholar of religion, author), Prof. Ulrich Kutschera (evolutionary biologist, physiologist), Prof. Ludger Lütkehaus (literary scholar, author), Dr. Martin Mahner (biologist, philosopher of science), Ingrid Matthäus-Maier (politician, lawyer), Prof. Axel Meyer (evolutionary biologist, zoologist), Prof. Thomas Metzinger (cognitive scientist, philosopher), Philipp Möller (pedagogue, author), Adel F. Mohsin (pianist), Dr. Gisela Notz (social scientist), Prof. Heinz Oberhummer (nuclear- and astrophysicist), Prof. Rolf Oerter (developmental psychologist), Volker Panzer (journalist, presenter), Udo Pollmer (food chemist, science journalist), Prof. Holm Putzke (lawyer), Gerhard Rampp (teacher, president of the bfg Augsburg), Prof. Volker Sommer (anthropologist, primatologist), Prof. Beda M. Stadler (immunologist), Prof. Gerhard Streminger (philosopher), Assunta Tammelleo (former entrepreneur, political activist), Rüdiger Vaas (science journalist, author), Esther Vilar (writer), Prof. Eckart Voland (sociobiologist, bio-philosopher), Prof. Gerhard Vollmer (physicist, philosopher), Lilly Walden (actress), Prof. Ulrich Walter (physicist, astronaut), Helmut Walther (editor, president of the Association for Critical Philosophy), Prof. Isabell Welpé (economist), Prof. Ulla Wessels (philosopher), Prof. Franz Josef Wetz (philosopher), Prof. Gerhard Wimberger (composer, conductor), Prof. Franz Wuketits (evolutionary theoretician, author)

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Friends of the gbs:

Approximately 5700 people from 30 countries currently belong to the Friends of the gbs

*“Those who know **nothing**,
must **believe** everything!”*

Science Busters

10 Questions...



Ten questions and answers

The increased awareness of the Giordano Bruno Stiftung has led to numerous critical or even defamatory media reports. In most cases, the harsh criticism comes from the pens of theologians, even though this may not be obvious to the reader, viewer or listener, since the prejudiced reviewers often hide behind the mask of independent reporters. In this way, a number of misconceptions have crept in regarding the foundation, reflected in a number of enquiries to the management board. On the following pages, we are providing answers to the ten most commonly asked questions.

1

Is the Giordano Bruno Stiftung an atheist institution?

The label “atheist” is very popular with journalists, for reasons of its “smell of sulphur”, i.e. strong emotive impact in religious debates, but it is hardly a suitable word to describe the foundation’s philosophy. The gbs, like most of today’s leading scientists, represents a *naturalistic* rather than *atheistic* position. That is to say, we believe that the universe is can be explained rationally, and that no gods, ghosts, goblins or demons interfere with the laws of nature..

This in turn means that a definition of “God” which does not interfere with laws of nature (this is incompatible with creationist belief or miracles) would not contradict naturalism, even though many supporters of naturalism are

happy to do without the “inelegant god-hypothesis”. Incidentally, the idea that the Giordano Bruno Stiftung can be reduced to one-dimensional or even dogmatic atheism is disproved by the foundation’s name; it is known that Giordano Bruno was not an *atheist*, but rather a *pantheist*.

Is the gbs hostile to religion?

2

The foundation is *critical* of religion, not *hostile* to it. We regard religions as a *cultural treasure chamber of humanity*. As well as outdated views of the world and of morality, they also possess meaningful aspects that should still be respected today. However, a *critical, rational, secular approach to religion* is required to separate the valuable elements from the archaic errors and the associated, often barbaric “moral values”. Religions are works of mankind, just like all the other products and institutions that our species has created in the course of its cultural evolution. Consequently, religious texts should be regarded in the same critical manner as works of ancient philosophers, especially as the latter were ethically and intellectually superior to the former in many areas.

The basic problem of religions is that they tend to regard imperfect human utterances as “holy” and thus “sacrosanct”, which in the course of human history has led to enormous suffering. Even today, the resulting inquisitorial logic, “You will believe in it, or we will make you believe in it”, represents a *massive threat to the peaceful coexistence of humans*. As long as this danger still exists, criticism of religion will remain one of the most essential tasks of enlightenment.

Isn't the gbs confusing religion with fundamentalism?

We differentiate very clearly between *fundamentalist* and *enlightened* believers. In the same way that soft drinks are now available without sugar, thanks to enlightenment, which by and large has undoubtedly been assimilated by academic theology, there is now Christianity without hell and the devil. Such a tamed "light version of belief" is certainly *attractive*, but at the same time problematic: it is *logically inconsistent*. ("Jesus' sacrifice without hell and the devil is as meaningless as a football match with no opposing team!") Without some effective metaphysical threat, religious belief loses its crucial point, with the result that *liberal believers are in decline*, whilst fundamentalist groups are growing at a similar rate to those groups who no longer consider themselves religious.

We may regret that "enlightened belief" is increasingly losing its *role as arbitrator between thorough enlightenment and religious dogmatism*, but we must not ignore this fact. The reason why enlightened belief is losing its significance is clear: never before has the *gulf between scientific knowledge and religious belief* been so obvious as it is today. For example, to accept the Christian or Muslim god as creator of the earth, one would have to ignore at least part of our modern knowledge of evolution. This undermines the basis for any enlightened-belief movement, the effectiveness of which should in any case not be overestimated. It is a *short-term cultural phenomenon, very largely confined to Western Europe*, and in no way typical of what, worldwide, is or was understood by the term "religion".



Does the gbs promote “scientific fundamentalism”?

The accusation of scientific fundamentalism, frequently raised by defenders of faith, is a *contradiction in itself*. Science, in contrast to religion, is by definition open to new findings. As a methodology of *critical analysis*, it neither bases itself on “sacrosanct eternal truths” nor tries to find “unshakeable truth”. Anyone who were to believe dogmatically in specific results of scientific investigation would in doing so have betrayed the basic principles of scientific thinking.

Apart from this, the gbs does not take the view that an alternative to religion can be founded on science alone. It is not without reason that one of the foundation’s central mottos is, “*whoever possesses science, philosophy and art does not need religion*”. It must be clear that many important questions of life cannot be answered by scientific methods.

This does not mean, however, that religions are superior in these areas. Philosophical deliberation produces far more convincing results in e.g. ethical questions. And even when the cleverest arguments of philosophy fail, religion is not needed; for here we enter the sovereign territory of art, which is able to capture the “*poetic overhang of life*” that no scientific or philosophical analysis can.



Giordano Bruno Memorial
at the Campo de' Fiori, Rome

Isn't the gbs basically just as missionary as the religions? Doesn't the book "Which way leads to God?" clearly show that the gbs wants to indoctrinate children too?

The gbs naturally has the aim of reaching people. It wants to convince them that it makes sense *to strengthen the values of humanism and enlightenment* in society. However, the foundation does not claim to be in possession of the "one and only divine truth". Rather, it relies on the *principle of critical examination*, which demands that false convictions be discarded as soon as better arguments are available.



The children's book "*Which way leads to God?*" asked the little piglet" was conceived as an antidote to the existing and very real religious indoctrination (for example in Catholic nursery schools) and is intended to bring some *worldview pluralism* into the nursery. In numerous interviews, the authors made very clear that they would take the book off the market if the same were done with children's bibles, in which horror stories such as the Great Flood are told with all their gruesome details. However, the religious fraction felt unable to agree to this step. Consequently, the little piglet is still on its travels, to free children light-heartedly from the fear of divine retribution.

Giordano Bruno Memorial

by Alexander Polzin, Potsdamer Platz, Berlin
www.bruno-denkmal.de

Shouldn't we respect the religious convictions of others?

6

As humanists we naturally respect every human being as a human being. But some *convictions and actions* simply don't deserve to be respected. We must not overlook the fact that the religious convictions of many deeply religious people legitimise abuses of human rights (such as discrimination against women and homosexuals), and/or explain the world on the basis of nonsensical, totally outdated assumptions (such as the idea that humanity is the crowning glory of divine creation, which is diametrically opposed to the findings of evolutionary biology). To respect such inhuman or irrational beliefs would be a *betrayal of the values of humanism and enlightenment*.

Surely religions are necessary for us to form moral values?

7

It is a historically irrefutable fact that the fundamental rights we enjoy in modern democratic societies very largely did not come from religions; on the contrary, they had to be fought for in bitter emancipation struggles against the religions. Many values that we today take for granted, such as rationality, democracy or the right to self-determination, were developed as far back as the time of ancient Rome or Greece, but with the rise of Christianity disappeared for almost a millennium. It was not until the Renaissance, the period in which the ancient scripts were rediscovered, that ideas of individual liberty once more began to emerge in Europe.

In modern times too, it has been largely individuals with a critical attitude to religion who have promoted the development of values such as the equality of the sexes, ideas of social justice, freedom of speech and of the media, the right to sexual self-determination. The issue of human rights, for example, was pushed forward by Thomas Paine, a critic of religion, whilst a whole string of Popes condemned it as "insufferable presumption". Not until 1961 was the Pope of the time, Johannes XXIII, able to bring himself to proclaim a convoluted recognition of human rights. The Vatican remains, however, the only state in Europe that has not ratified the European Human Rights Convention. This is one example of many which show that a closer inspection of "Christian values" reveals them to be much less than the name suggests.

Wouldn't our social system collapse completely without the commitment of the churches?

Most of the Church's social welfare facilities in Germany (such as hospitals, old people's homes, children's homes, therapy centres) are financed completely by the state, the health insurance and direct payments from the beneficiaries. Only in a *small segment* (such as nursery schools and advice centres) do the churches have to pay a (minor) part of the costs themselves. This amount is *compensated for many times over* by the billions of Euros of subsidies that the churches receive every year from the state, i.e. taxpayer (over and above the special Church Tax levied in Germany).

Only very few German citizens realise that the salaries of many bishops, for example, are not covered by the Church Tax, but are paid for out of general taxes, including those of *non-believers*. If the unconstitutional privileges of the Churches were finally stopped, the state could save many billions of Euros each year, which could be used to the benefit of the public, e.g. for social and educational improvements.

Didn't National Socialism and Stalinism do far more damage in the 20th century than all the theistic religions put together? And aren't the latter necessary to prevent a relapse into barbarianism?

National Socialism and Stalinism were political religions, with all the characteristics of a belief system: they had "untouchable prophets", who claimed to have privileged access to the "absolute truth", "holy scriptures", which could never be questioned, hierarchical "priesthoods" that proclaimed the gospel, "heretics" who had the courage to question the dogma, and "Inquisitions" that persecuted the heretics without mercy.

Due to the many structural similarities between political and traditional "higher" religions, it is not surprising that established Christianity was not able to prevent the National Socialist dictatorship in Germany. In fact, apart from a few Christian resistance fighters, the Church was a central pillar of the Nazi system. Since some bishops and journalists have recently attracted attention

with their claims that atheism was to blame for the atrocities of National Socialism, it needs to be pointed out that “belief in a god” was something of a state doctrine under Hitler. The majority of Nazis professed themselves to be Christians, and a minority described themselves as “believers” in the sense of Himmler’s esoteric cult. Atheists, on the other hand, were viewed as undesirable, both in the Nazi Party and in the SS, since being “godless” was deemed to be an expression of the “putrefying Jewish spirit”.

This had far-reaching political consequences: associations of free-thinkers were outlawed immediately after the Nazis seized power (allowing the Protestant Church to use the former headquarters of the free-thinkers in Berlin to create a “*centre for the fight against godlessness*”, an initiative that had the full approval of the Nazis). Nazi Germany signed a fateful agreement with the Vatican, the “Reichskonkordat”, from which the Church still profits today! In the run-up to this agreement, it was the *Catholic Centre Party* no less that provided the necessary votes to carry the “*Enabling Law*”, which made possible the tyranny of the Nazis in the first place.

The gbs relies heavily on the theory of evolution. Doesn’t this amount to a legitimization of social Darwinism?

10

Charles Darwin revolutionized our view of the world more almost than any other single person. *It is only since Darwin’s time that we have begun to realize who we are and where we come from.* Unfortunately, *great ideas* are subject to *great abuse*, and the theory of evolution is no exception. We all know the terrible consequences of social Darwinism, especially in the first half of the 20th century. This cannot be glossed over.

However, it must be remembered that social Darwinism, which Darwin himself abhorred, represents a *gross distortion of the circumstances in nature*. The natural world does not by any means involve just the ruthless enforcement of selfish interests at the cost of others; altruism, solidarity and empathy can also be found here. Apart from this, social Darwinism is based on the so-called *naturalistic fallacy*, namely the ill-considered notion that the survival of the fittest in the wild (what is) is also “*what ought to be*”, i.e. supposedly implies a “right of the fittest”.

Anyone familiar with science will know that the theory of evolution is not in any way an attempt to say how the world *ought to be*, but rather an explanation of how the world *is*, and *why* it came to be that way. How we as a human society should use the theory of evolution is not contained within that theory. This is not a question of empirical science, but of *philosophical reflection*, and this is precisely where *evolutionary humanism* comes in.

Evolutionary humanists interpret the knowledge of evolution in a humanistic way, and are totally *opposed* to all models of social Darwinism, which are an abuse of Darwin's ground-breaking research, used in an attempt to legitimise inhuman living conditions. In agreement with the renowned evolutionary biologist Stephen J. Gould, evolutionary humanists firmly hold the rational conviction that *Homo sapiens* does indeed possess the potential to be *a particularly gentle, clever and creative animal*. So let us put everything into unlocking this positive potential! We do not know of course whether conditions can be changed in such a way that human history, thus far a record with long episodes of inhumanity, can in future develop in a more humane fashion. One thing we do know – from evolutionary theory in fact – is that *the world is in a constant state of change*. For humanists, who do not simply accept the suffering in the world, this can be seen as a genuine source of hope.



gbs headquarters in Oberwesel

*“Those who have
science,
philosophy
and art
need
no religion.”*

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Further information about persons (e.g. for the regional groups) can be found on our website

www.giordano-bruno-stiftung.de

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Herewith I/we apply to join the

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First name

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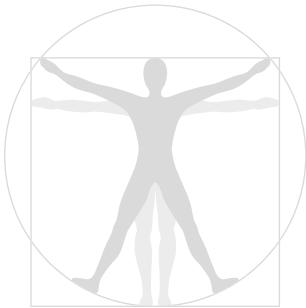
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Homepage

Profession/Interests

May the foundation
make your name and
that of your company/
organization known to
other Friends of the gbs?

Yes No



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Friends of the
Giordano-Bruno-Stiftung
Haus Weitblick
Auf Fasel 16
D – 55430 Oberwesel

Application for membership

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