

Truth Sheet #05-01

Discovery Institute and "Theocracy"

Overview: Periodically certain Darwinists make false and unsubstantiated claims that Discovery Institute advocates “theocracy” or is part of the “radical Christian right” or supposedly supports something called “Christian reconstructionism.” These charges are little more than smears, and they show the bankruptcy of the Darwinists’ own position. Rather than argue about the substance of the scientific debate over neo-Darwinism, all Darwinists can do is engage in baseless ad hominem attacks.

- Discovery embraces the American Founding’s principles of representative democracy and civil and religious liberty, including the principle of the separation of church and state. It has never supported in any way the idea of theocracy.
- Discovery Institute is not a religious organization. It is, and always has been, a secular public policy center . Accordingly, it has sponsored programs on a wide array of issues, including mass transit, technology policy, international trade, education, economics, and the environment.
- Throughout its history, Discovery Institute Fellows and staff have represented an eclectic range of religious views ranging from Roman Catholic to Jewish to mainline Protestant to agnostic.
- Discovery Institute Senior Fellow Dr. John West is author of *The Politics of Revelation and Reason: Religion and Civic Life in the New Nation* (University Press of Kansas, 1996), a highly-praised academic book that explains how America’s Founders defused the destructive age-old conflict between faith and politics by separating church and state and by insisting that religious believers enter the public square based on principles of justice and ethics shared by all citizens, regardless of their religion. According to West, the Founders created a system in which religiously-inspired idealism in public life can be a positive contribution to society so long as religious believers understand that politics is limited to the moral common ground they share with all other citizens.
- Far from promoting a union between church and state, Discovery Institute sponsored from 1994-1998 a seminar for college students (the George Washington Fellows Program) that advocated religious liberty and the separation between church and state.
- In 1995, Discovery Institute sponsored a conference on C.S. Lewis and Public Life, which examined, among other things, C.S. Lewis’s defense of natural law (the idea that human beings can know morality through reason and conscience, not just sacred texts), Lewis’s appreciation for the virtue of prudence, and Lewis’s opposition to the fallacious idea that political parties should be based on religion. You can’t get much further from theocracy than the message of this conference.
- Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture opposes efforts to teach creationism or religion in public school science classes. It encourages schools to teach students about the scientific debates over neo-Darwinism, not religious debates about the theory.