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Readers' letters: Sept. 9, 2007

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### **Bible covers matters that science avoids**

I was really taken aback when I read a letter to the editor announcing that the Bible is not a scientific document.

As a now retired Presbyterian parson, I never met anyone in my long ministry who thought it was! The idea is as ridiculous as someone grandly announcing that Shakespeare is not scientific.

Now, the Bible does contain "stories and fables" as the writer said, though I prefer parables to fables, which are really quite different. For the careful student or scholar, the Bible is not really a collection of stories. The whole Bible is one story.

I suggest to the writer or anyone else who is interested to read a slim book by N.T. Wright titled "Evil and the Justice of God." It is not an easy read but is well worth the effort. The Bible deals with matters that science avoids.

**Advertisement**      Shortly after the first explosion of the hydrogen bomb, a Las Vegas gambler lamented, "We discovered the secret of the sun, and made a bomb out of it." It is this dark side of human existence, the evil that haunts even our greatest ideas, that the Bible addresses.

Albert Einstein once said, "Religion without science is blind; science without religion is lame." Isn't it about time we quit the haggling and work together as the great scientist said?

**Bob Lawrence, Greenville**

### **Obama a standout among candidates**

Among the field of candidates for president on both the Republican and Democratic side, there is a long list of names we are all too familiar with. I've watched a few of the debates, and can only see one candidate who stands apart from the crowd. With the contentious issues of war, immigration, taxation, global warming, the economy, health care and terrorism ever present on the American mind, the crowd of candidates begins to thin out.

At a time when we need a message of hope and togetherness and the belief that all Americans can contribute to the greater good of our nation, only a few are left standing. Finally, when we listen for a candidate with a positive message, who takes no money from special interests and has established a remarkable grass-roots campaign, we are left with the senator named Barack Obama.

**Will Stephenson, Greer**

### **Reedy River's quality continues to improve**

I read with dismay your article on Aug. 13 on the supposed "awful" state of water quality in the Reedy River. While it's true that the Reedy is far from pristine, the article gave the misleading impression that the river is a polluted mess to be avoided at all costs. While that was certainly the case 30 or 40 years ago, it could not be farther from the truth today.

Thanks to the Clean Water Act of 1972, effective programs and regulations of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, and the hard work and perseverance of a large number of dedicated (and mostly unacknowledged) individuals and organizations, water quality in the Reedy has improved dramatically over the last few decades. This is one of the main reasons people are now attracted to the river, whether it's at Falls

Park, Lake Conestee or the Swamp Rabbit Rail-Trail.

To be sure, the Reedy faces huge challenges as land in its watershed continues to be developed.

Runoff from paved surfaces and construction sites is now the river's No. 1 water-quality problem. But progress is being made on this front as well. For example, the city of Greenville is currently putting in place a series of cutting-edge stormwater management regulations, a move that will reduce substantially the amount of pollution that runs off of city streets and construction sites. The county, too, is strengthening its stormwater program, and developers are showing increasing interest in lower-impact techniques. These changes, along with public respect and support for the Reedy, should keep water quality in the river on an upward trend.

**Jason Van Driesche, Greenville**

*The writer is the director of Upstate Forever's Clean Air and Water Program.*

### **Nation's civil rights secure our homeland**

This is in response to a Sept. 4 letter in which the writer states, in part, "... apparently civil liberties are more important than homeland security."

They had better be!

Our Founding Fathers understood the ways in which power corrupts, and they created protections for the sovereign states and their citizenry, called the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Some people don't mind when civil rights are taken away by the government (many are not even aware they have been), until they are personally affected. I can imagine that the letter writer would have an entirely different viewpoint if she or somebody she loves were held for years without trial.

Civil liberties are our homeland security. When we allow the federal government to strip the power from "we the people," we begin a disastrous journey. If we do not preserve and enforce our inalienable rights, we might come to learn that true "terrorism" lies within our own government.

**Gail A. Caley, Seneca**

### **Study tree ordinance before opposing it**

Re: a recent letter regarding the proposed county tree ordinance.

I am astounded at the harsh criticism of the proposed (and desperately needed) tree ordinance by those who apparently haven't bothered to read it! It's clearly designed to protect each of us and this special place we call home. The pronouncement that "the tree ordinance seems silly" applies more aptly to some opponents' misinterpretation of the ordinance. There has been no suggestion of the regulation of individuals' private property in the manner some imply.

Another thing I find curious is the repeated mention by critics of this ordinance in this and other publications, as well as on the radio, of "God-given constitutional rights." Do I have my religion and history terribly confused to believe that God is not, in fact, the author of the United States Constitution? Are the critics simply using this language to position a tree ordinance as an evil, thereby inciting passionate opposition? Residents of Greenville County, please take the time to understand the facts, and I believe you'll see that the ordinance is, in fact, in the best interest of every member of this community.

Please, go ahead and cut your grass whenever you'd like. We won't mind that noise. Take a deep breath (I sincerely hope you live in a well-treed area) and rest easy knowing that your constitutionally protected rights are safe.

**Katie Gallivan, Greenville**

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