

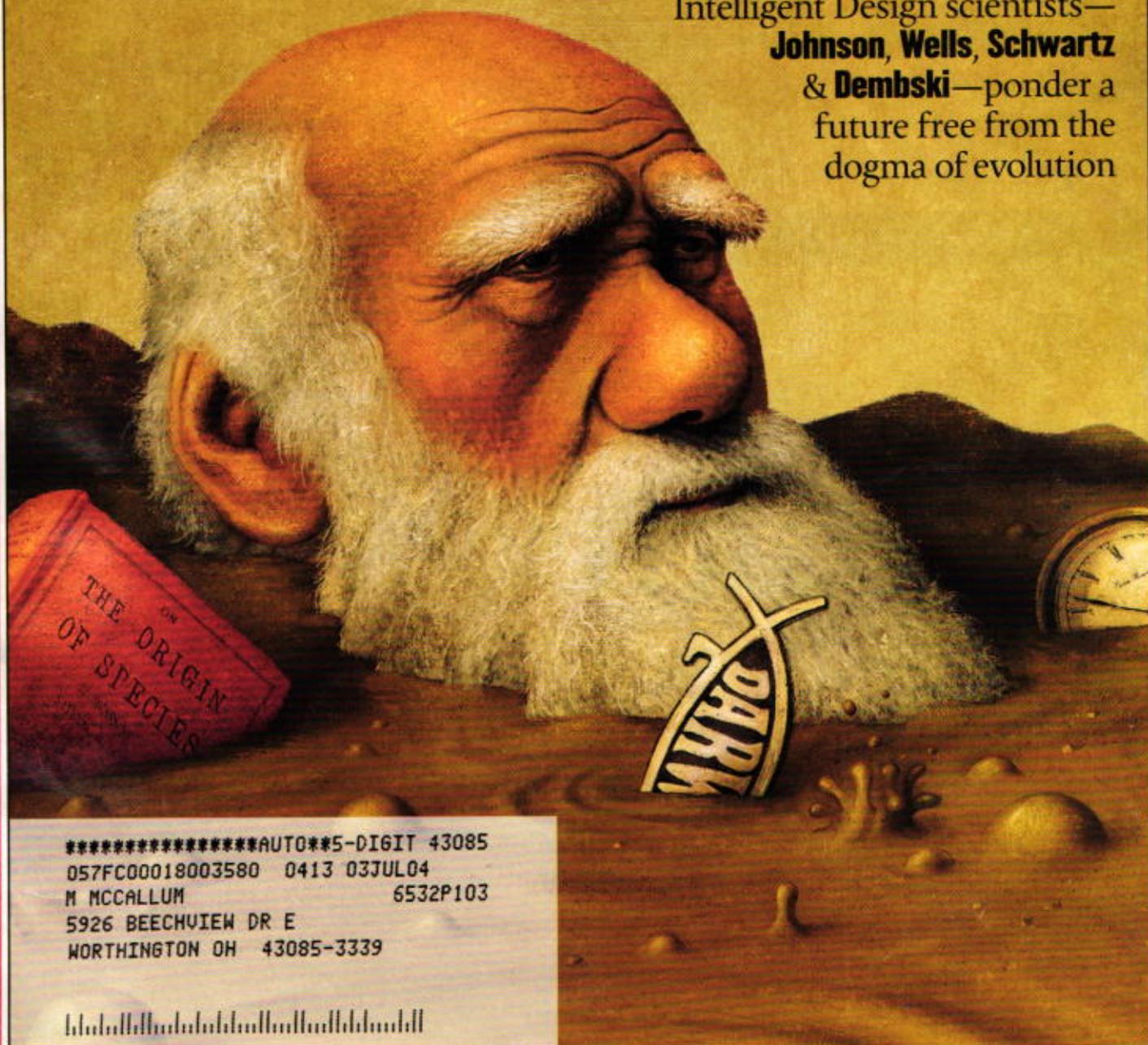
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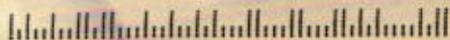
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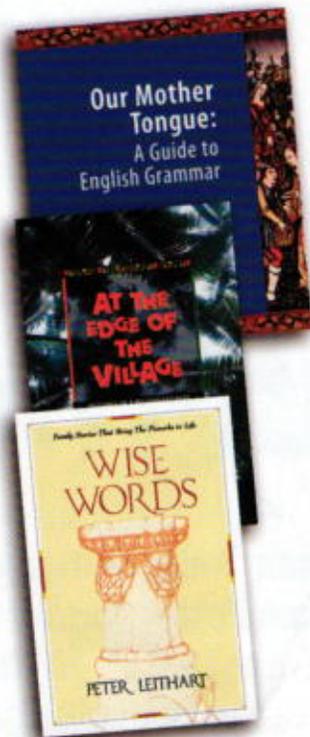
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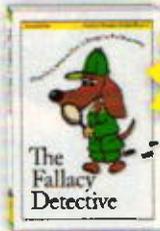
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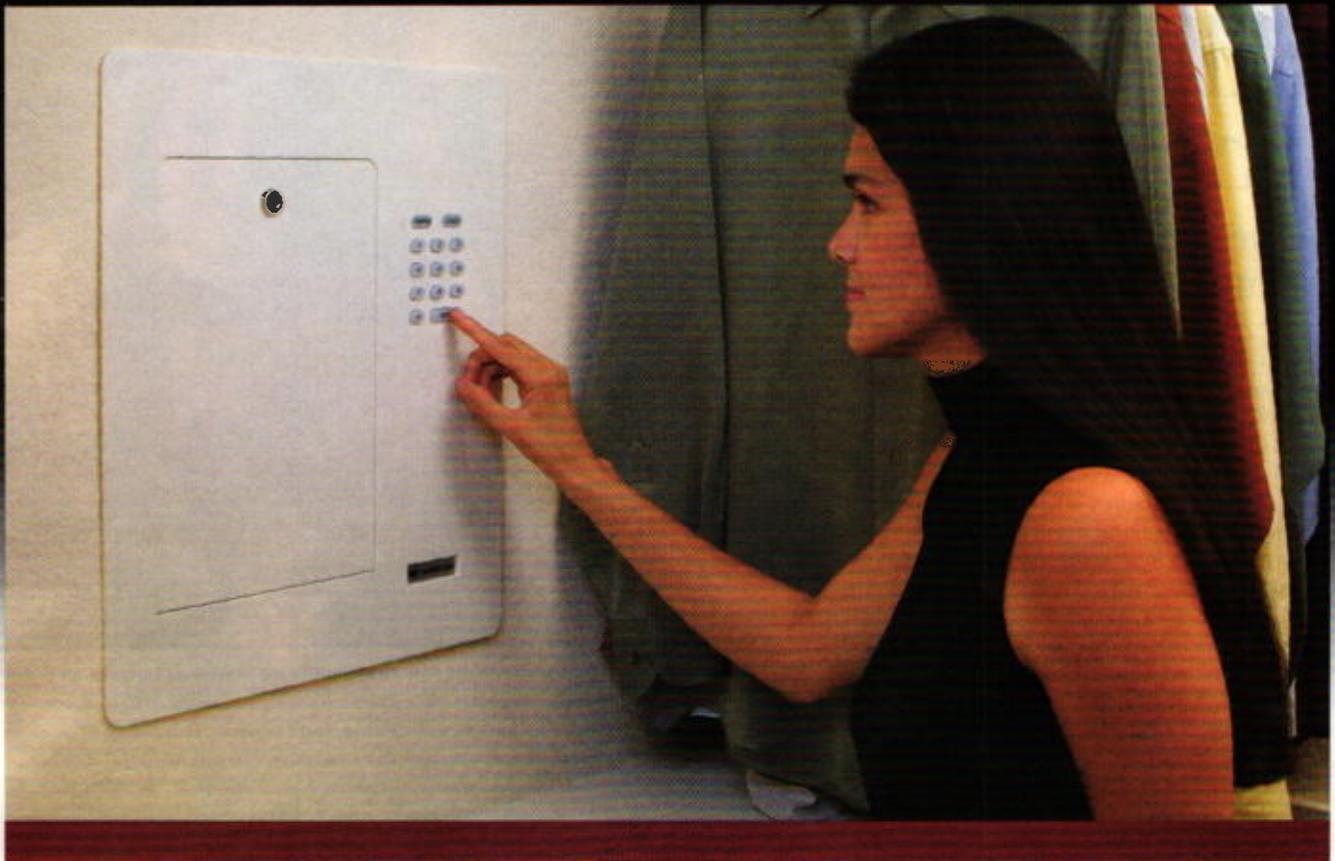
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WORLD

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All over but the brimstone

The push for homosexual marriage is not just coming from the courts

IF YOU WONDER WHY I HAVE CLAIMED HERE several times that we have already lost the battle over homosexual marriage, consider the tale of Michael and Tonya Hartsell of Wilmington, N.C.

The Hartsells, according to the Associated Press, were stunned—and angry—when their first-grade daughter last week brought home from her public-school library a book titled *King & King*, written and illustrated by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland.

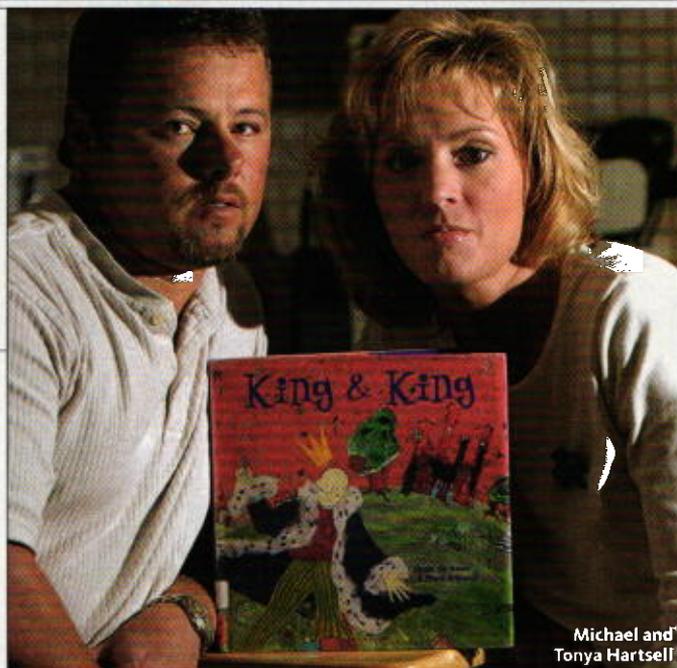
So as not to overextend our bias in the matter, let's defer to *Publishers Weekly* for a summary of the colorful 32-page story: "When a grouchy queen tells her layabout son that it's time for him to marry, he sighs, 'Very well, Mother. . . . I must say, though, I've never cared much for princesses.' His young page winks. Several unsatisfactory bachelorettes visit the castle before 'Princess Madeleine and her brother, Prince Lee' appear in the doorway. The hero is smitten at once. 'What a wonderful prince!' he and Prince Lee both exclaim, as a shower of tiny Valentine hearts flutters between them. First-time co-authors and artists de Haan and Nijland matter-of-factly conclude with the royal wedding of 'King and King,' the page boy's blushing romance with the leftover princess, and the assurance that 'everyone lives happily ever after.'"

"I was flabbergasted," Mr. Hartsell said. "My child is not old enough to understand something like that, especially when it is not in our beliefs." Mr. Hartsell and his wife said they would hold on to the book until the school library offered assurances that it would no longer be distributed. They are filing a written complaint in accordance with school policies. And they said they are considering transferring their daughter to another school.

The lack of outrage, however, from some other quarters was altogether telling.

The school librarian, of course, said she couldn't comment. The local school principal, Elizabeth Miars, said evenly that "What might be inappropriate for one family, in another family is a totally acceptable thing."

Publishers Weekly, after its summary, critiqued the book quite harshly—but not exactly in the manner you might have expected: "Unfortunately," *PW* says, "the multimedia collages are cluttered with clashing colors, amorphous paper shapes, scribbles of ink, and bleary brushstrokes; the characters' features are indistinct and sometimes ugly. Despite its gleeful disruption of the boy-meets-girl formula, this alterna-tale is not the fairest of them all. For a visually appealing and more nuanced treatment of diversity in general, Kitty Crowther's recent *Jack and Jim* is a better choice. Ages 6-up."



Michael and Tonya Hartsell

Meanwhile, Amazon.com's website is just as helpful as it can be, offering its "You Might Also Like . . ." feature to refer you to half a dozen other children's books promoting a homosexual agenda. Not the least of these recommendations is *King & King & Family*, published just this month, with this matter-of-fact invitation: "Join newlyweds King Lee and King Bertie on their journey into the noisy jungle. The kings are greeted by wild animal families, but the royal travelers suspect that something more significant awaits them in the trees. King and King soon discover that there's no adventure more wonderful than starting a family of their own."

"Activist courts" have properly come in for severe criticism by those in our circles who are alarmed by the attacks on traditional marriage. But we shouldn't kid ourselves. The dry rot in our foundations extends far beyond the courts. Michael and Tonya Hartsell were betrayed not just by their local elementary school, but by a whole national system of teacher education that for a generation has valued "diversity" more than it has valued the basic skills of a teacher. Virtually all of America's college and university systems—including way too many Christian institutions—are in on that treachery.

To the traitor courts and schools, you must also add the treason of corporate America. You can't blame a few wacko judges in Massachusetts or misled left-coast mayors for telling companies like *PW* and Amazon what they should approve and disapprove. The leaders of some of the big publishing, entertainment, and news conglomerates are just as much to blame. For many of the same reasons readers trust *WORLD* as an alternative news source, many of our readers turn to *WORLD*'s related God's World Book Club (gwbc.com) and other alternatives for a careful screening of books for kids.

We didn't arrive where we are all of a sudden. The frog's been in the pot longer than we think. And the number of cooks who've been turning up the heat is a whole lot bigger than most of us have realized. ☹