



Frank Cress is an Illinois native, and U.S. Air Force veteran who lives with his family in Northwest Indiana. He is in the software development profession and is currently in senior management at a large Chicago Illinois based firm. This is his second publication of social/political commentary.

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*Damned if Do, Damned if Don't* was thought provoking, funny, sad, and at times alarming, but always a great read. Frank's unique perspective on social, political, religious and racial issues definitely provides good food for thought, and his perspective on how things are, compared to how things should be has the potential to keep you up at night.

-Reverend Jeffery J. Chartos

GRIPPING! Like a master magician, Frank Cress conjures up images of days long gone and hopefully better days ahead.

-T. A. Langbartels  
Sigma Tau Gamma - Gamma Psi Chapter

Like great atheists before him - such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris - Frank Cress argues his case against god cogently and convincingly. But, uniquely, Cress does so from the perspective of a political conservative.

-Alex Patterson

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Reason For Life ● Further Social and Political Reflections of an American Conservative Atheist ● Frank Cress

# Reason For Life



Further Social and Political Reflections  
of an  
American Conservative Atheist

## Frank Cress

**Reason For Life**  
**Further Social and Political Reflections**  
**of an**  
**American Conservative Atheist**  
**by**  
**Frank Cress**



*Fultus™ Books*



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*Thanks to my parents for their nature and their nurture.*

*They alone provided for me the genetics, time and freedom to seek knowledge visited only briefly by the school system that generally failed to keep my interest. Their unique perspectives and experiences revealed to me a world full of interesting things that I needed to know. I thank them for not labeling their views or mine as left or right, but as perspectives based on rational reflection.*

# Acknowledgements

I need to offer many debts of gratitude to the people who helped shape this book over the last couple of years. Much of what I have put forth as original thought has actually arisen from and been honed by daily interactions with my closest professional, social and political confidants. Todd Langbartels, Billy Lapacek and Jeff Chartos specifically, but others too, provide encouragement by listening to my ideas, giving me new ones, agreeing, politely disagreeing and generally providing for me the reflection that keeps me honest on and track. I trust that those wells will not run dry should I need to revisit them as I am too set in my ways at this point to seek out new best friends. I credit my family for coping with my physical absence day after day in pursuit of career interests, and my logical absence night after night in pursuit of ideological answers.

# Introduction

*The words "I am" are potent words; be careful what you hitch them to. The thing you're claiming has a way of reaching back and claiming you.*

*~A.L. Kitzelman*

I am not a schooled scientist. I utilize the scientific method regularly to traverse the landscapes of both my professional and private lives. Most of us do, or should. This book contains some scientific commentary that has passed my admittedly sometimes-cursory scrutiny and on some occasions the greater scrutiny of others. Just as I am not a scientist, I am not sure that I am a philosopher either. I will provide philosophical perspectives, both my own and those of others. Philosophy seems to me to be opinion. So, maybe we are all philosophers in that respect.

This book, like my previous "Damned" book, contains both fact and opinion. Arguably, the reader could confuse represented fact for opinion and opinion for fact. Where I have wanted to make clear my intention, I have cited references, individuals or direct quotes in paragraph. I recognize externalized references in footnotes or at the end of a book give a reader a place to begin further research should he desire. As this book is not intended to be a great work of science, coupled with the reality that I do not have the means to employ a significant research staff, I have not provided such externalized references. I fought with this decision somewhat. In addition to the comparatively light nature of this work, I have another quite valid reason for omission of citation. It has occurred to me during my own reading and research, at least in the last 10 years or so, my behavior has changed. Both professionally and personally, I notice that if I truly want to delve into a particularly interesting or controversial passage, my starting point is now most often the World Wide Web. Utilizing

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the internet I can now, more conveniently, find things like direct quotes, varieties of publications or commentary on most anything I choose. Certainly, the reader/researcher must learn to recognize valuable, reliable sources and filter out the less trustworthy. The web is generally a pretty efficient, self-adjusting machine. The most credible information is usually pretty easy to find if you pay closest attention to the organizations and sites that are generally respected. Just as there is information on the internet that must be meted out, the same is true of content on the shelves of your local library. Researchers must always beware. I trust that readers of this book are more often than not connected to the internet in their homes and therefore will find the on-line information much more readily available and comprehensive than in a small town library or distant college or university. Of course, I still find printed books very valuable, as I hope you do, and continue to read them daily to gain deep familiarity with an author or subject. The simple fact is that the internet has put at the fingertips of most readers access to literally a worldwide library of information almost infinitely richer than any single traditional library. I would even bet that most readers first research books and authors on the internet before they purchase them (maybe on the internet, too) or borrow them from a library. Therefore, if you find either disagreement or sparked interest in something between these covers, I trust that you will seek enlightenment on the internet first.

As I set about to categorize each of my chapters as either religion or politics, I noticed that this is not so easy. Some chapters do not obviously fit into either one or the other, but more appropriately into both. That politics and religion are tightly intertwined is more evident than ever before in my accessible memory. In this country, the United States, the political right calls on religion for answers to today's pressing socio-political questions. They give god an opinion on such things as abortion, gay marriage, prostitution, creationism, intelligent design and evolution. In writings attributed to them, gods did not directly comment on these subjects (a confirmation of god's human, ancient historical origins) as revealed in the sacred texts, but believers twist the revealed words in ways that suit their political objectives and personal needs. Additionally, it came about that there were many pieces in this book that touched on our current war. Any way you

look at it, the war on terrorism, the war on Islam, the Iraq war, the war in the Middle East, or however you want to term it, is a war fueled by religious fervor. The political state of world affairs makes it impossible for me to strip from it religious ideology. They are the same.

My sense is that this connection has always been present, but that I just did not always take notice. Unquestionably, this has long been the case in the Middle East and with our Islamic neighbors. Recently it is more apparent to me because our worlds have collided--again. The average American, despite certain religious convictions, is not so resolute in belief to put it at the forefront in daily decision-making. Most tend live morally, ethically and reasonably without constant reflection to revealed texts. American theists choose their battles carefully so as to not focus too much attention or scrutiny in their direction. They do like to stir the pot when the stakes are low. I mean, who honestly cares about prostitution or gay marriage except for prostitutes (& Johns) or gays? Most American theists are apt to fight to abolish things that if abolished would not have an impact on their own lives. Not so with Islam. Muslims attack everything with their religious bullets. Women's rights, from voting to driving to travel to showing their faces in public, are daily concerns for the Muslim. Women are barred from participation in things that American women have taken for granted, often since the founding of our nation. Not just women are kept from free pursuit of happiness. Music, alcohol consumption, dancing and other sinful pursuits are universal taboos in the Muslim world. In Islam, religion is your life. Religion guides nearly your every move. As a Muslim you would not typically go more than a few hours without performing religious rituals. Surely there are extreme examples, but no society is immune from the backward thinking and anti-progress interests of religion. Everywhere dogma and life are hopelessly entangled. I think this is reflected in the chapters of this book. Hence, you will not see the religion vs. politics division like in my first book.

Like my first book, I did not set out to write on a specific theme. If there is a common thread other than conservative atheism, it is unintentional. This book is somewhat less about my foundational conservative atheist convictions and origins and more concerned with

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topics that I have encountered in the news or in everyday life. That said, it should be no surprise that this book is less autobiographical than my first. While there is no doubt that it contains insight into my character, the focus tends to be more consistently outward in observation and reflection on world affairs and humanity, with a few exceptions. This direction change was not an entirely intentional one. Instead, it came about as an evolution. The more personal and foundational details of my life were covered in my first book as I tried to provide background on how or why my views are what they are. As I compiled the words that would become the contents of this book I noticed a more desperate tone, and a more critical perspective. I do not attribute the difference entirely to a more sharply honed sense of awareness. I think instead that it came about because I perceive the situation in the world today is truly more desperate than at any other time in my entire life. The United States is engaged in a world war with Islam, an enemy that most of our own citizens still fail to recognize or identify. Religious dogma will not relinquish easily its position as the chief basis for incontestable suppression of progress.

At the same time, we are at war with ourselves. The phenomenon that we call “political correctness” effectively continues to erase the lines between right and wrong, the reasoned and the absurd. Perhaps half of our population is convinced that America is an evil, imperialistic aggressor. The popular media believes that our capitalist, representative democracy is the cause of the world’s ills when in fact it is the primary source of global stability. A world without a democratic United States as our founding fathers envisioned it is a world vulnerable to the depths of tyranny.

The solutions to our problems do not lie very far from the center of the line separating the political left from the political right, the blue from the red. The further left or further right you venture, the more you begin to lose sight of reason. Unfortunately, the most powerful and popular voices are, very often, all too far from the balance point. We are a nation being torn apart at the center. If you agree with my premise, you should find much confirmation and agreeable perspective in this book. If you disagree with my premise, I hope you will at least respect it as reasoned. Either way, if my words at times shake you, it is because I am trying to awaken you.

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