

THE ATHEIST VOICE

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE METROPLEX ATHEISTS
MAY 2004, VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

No Moore seat, says Alabama supreme court bench

AMERICAN UNITED

A specially formed Alabama Supreme Court bench has unanimously rejected Roy Moore's effort to win back his seat on the state's high court.

In a recent ruling, the special Supreme Court turned away Moore's appeal to overturn the state Court of the Judiciary's 2003 decision yanking Moore from his position as the Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. Moore had refused to obey a federal order to remove his two-and-half-ton Commandments monument from the rotunda of the Alabama Judicial Building. The Court of the Judiciary concluded that Moore's obstinacy had violated state canons of judicial ethics.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State, one of the three public interest groups that challenged Moore's Ten Commandments monument in federal

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Scheme gives government blessing to marriage rites of majority faiths

AMERICAN UNITED

A proposed "marriage amendment" to the U.S. Constitution would undercut religious liberty in America and write the Religious Right's views into law for everyone to follow, according to Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

The House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution held a hearing May 13 on U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave's Federal Marriage Amendment. Musgrave was scheduled to testify, along with failed Supreme Court candidate and Religious Right favorite Robert Bork and Jay Sekulow, chief counsel for TV preacher Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice.

The Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Americans United executive director, said the marriage amendment would give constitutional endorsement to some religious traditions while denying the free exercise rights of others.

"This unwise proposal would give a federal government blessing to the marriage rites of some religious communities and make the practices of other faiths illegal," Lynn charged. "That's totally unacceptable in a nation that respects religious pluralism and diversity."

Lynn said the amendment's broad language limiting marriage to unions of one man and one woman would effectively prefer majority religions over others. At the same time, he noted, many legal ana-

lysts say the language could make it illegal for denominations that perform same-sex marriages to continue to do so. The amendment says nothing about limiting its mandate to government authorities, and many fear its sweeping provisions would apply to church officials as well.

"Bork, Sekulow and the religious movements they represent want the marriage practices of the majority faiths written into the Constitution," said Lynn. "The Religious Right wants to wed church and state. Members of Congress should say, 'I don't,' not 'I do.'"

The Americans United leader, who is an ordained minister in the United Church of

Continued on page 3

Jesus didn't mean what he said

What I learned from calling prayer lines – Part 1 of 2

By William McEwen

METROPLEX ATHEISTS

In February and March, I called several different prayer telephone services advertised on radio and television.

In my 43 years, I have learned that most Christians are ignorant when it comes to knowing what is in the Bible, and true to form, most of the people who answered the prayer lines bore this out. Others just applied comforting spin to ugly passages.

This project began largely as recreation, but I quickly realized that the calls spoke volumes about the intellectual bankruptcy of Christianity, and the ignorance of the Messiah's servants on the front lines. I found I was motivated to educate these people about the Bible. For the first time, thanks to me, they heard passages that have never been uttered from the pulpit on Sundays, or during weekly bible studies. Let the fun begin.

1-800-NEED-HIM

My first call was to 1-800-NEED-HIM. I had heard an ad on the radio that advertised the number, but it gave no specifics about the purpose of the service. Dick, the man who answered, explained that the number was for people who were ready to receive Jesus as their personal savior.

I explained that I had been a Christian for years, but it had been a long time since I'd been "walking with the lord." (This is a phrasing that the Christians love.) I told him I couldn't be a good Christian, because I love my family. Dick was clearly confused.

"Of course you can be a good Christian and love your family. God wants you to love your family."

"No, he doesn't."

"Of course he does."

"No," I insisted. "In Luke 14:26, it says, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'"

Dick was taken aback. "Well, if that's the



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way you want to interpret it," was the best he could do.

Why is it that when Jesus says "Honor the mother and father," it's taken at face value, yet the ugly commands are completely ignored, only to be interpreted if someone dares call it to attention? Was Jesus so inarticulate and such a poor communicator that what he said is not what he meant?

Later that evening I called 1-800-NEED-HIM again. This time I spoke with Connie. "I am here visiting, and I don't have a bible, I was hoping you could read a couple of my favorite verses to me."

She explained that the purpose of the phone service was to help people accept Jesus, but as long as I didn't take too much of her time, sure, she'd be happy to read them to me.

I asked her to read Luke 14:26, and she did.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

I was hoping Connie would react to what she just read, but she didn't.

"Thank you," I said, "Just one more."

Now, it is in for the kill. I next asked her to read Ezekiel 23:20, which says:

There she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys, and whose emission was like that of horses.

Connie began reading. She aborted the verse after the first six words. "I don't know that that's great of a bible verse," she told me.

"It's the word of god," I answered.

"Yeah."

"So, can you read it to me?"

"No, I think that I'd rather not."

Connie gave me the telephone number of a Christian crisis center in Minnesota, explaining, "I'm just here to help you accept Jesus, and you have a number of difficulties."

"Do you believe it is appropriate to give children bibles? You were unwilling to read that verse outloud."

Connie answered slowly, choosing each word carefully in advance. "I think that children need to be taught the bible, but I think that they need to be old enough to understand certain things and I'm not sure they could understand that verse."

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Pilot – From page 1

Christ, said Bork and Sekulow have a well-documented and long-standing disregard for the rights of minorities.

"Robert Bork's views were so outside the judicial mainstream in 1987 that he was rejected by the Senate for a seat on the Supreme Court," said Lynn. "Incredibly, his positions have become more extreme since then and now reside firmly in the twilight zone of legal thought."

Lynn noted that Bork has a long track record of insensitivity. He cited a report Americans United issued in 1987, when Bork was nominated for the high court. The report recounted that in September of 1985, Bork spoke at a forum on church-state separation in Washington and advocated more religion in public schools. One attendee challenged Bork, telling a story about a Jewish boy who felt uncomfortable with Christian exercises at his school. Bork blithely replied, "So what? I'm sure he got over it."

In a speech delivered in November of 1984, Bork called for a "major recasting of

doctrine" on church and state. He criticized Thomas Jefferson's metaphor of a wall of separation between church and state, dismissing it as a non-compelling "individualistic view."

In more recent years, Bork has called for giving Congress the power to overturn Supreme Court rulings by vote, although he now claims he no longer supports this idea.

Lynn criticized Sekulow for using extreme rhetoric as well. ACLJ fund-raising letters signed by Sekulow have stated, "[T]he homosexual agenda [is] a runaway train bent on destroying communities," "The homosexual rights movement is engaged in a concerted effort to radically alter the definition of marriage, and thereby the family" and "Homosexuals are not only out of the closet, they are out to destroy the family as we know it."

Said Lynn, "When discussing gay people, Sekulow always reaches for the most lurid rhetoric possible. This type of language is clearly intended to inflame passions and spark hate. It has no place in civic or political dialogue."

Moore – From page 1

court, lauded today's ruling.

"It's just too bad that Moore has dragged the state of Alabama through this long, costly and embarrassing ordeal," said Americans United Executive Director Barry W. Lynn. "I'm glad it's over, and I'm sure many citizens of Alabama are glad as well. As Donald Trump might put it, 'Roy Moore, you're fired!'"

In February, Moore told an Alabama newspaper that if he lost his appeal before the special state Supreme Court that he would again look to the U.S. Supreme Court to intervene. Late last year, the Supreme Court declined to hear Moore's appeal of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' ruling that Moore's actions to keep the Commandments on public view in the state's Judicial Building violated the First Amendment principle of church-state separation.

"Today's decision is another indicator that defiance of federal court rulings will not be tolerated in America," Lynn added.

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Prayer – From page 2

New Life Ministries

The number Connie gave me, 800-639-5433, was New Life Ministries in Plano, Texas (not in Minnesota). Ann answered the phone, and she was more than happy to help. I told her I wasn't walking with the lord, and fell short of being a good Christian, because I love my family, and as you know, "Jesus wants me to hate my family."

Ann was familiar with the verse in Luke. "That's a little bit different, I mean the context he meant there was [long sigh] different. It wasn't so much it wasn't more of a literal thing, it was, um, as we grow in our faith, we should love what he loves and hate what he hates. But our first love needs to be him, and so, kind of, he comes above all the others in like in that specific situation, it was, um...."

"He does use the word hate," I explained. "That's such a strong word, and you know, I don't hate anybody."

"Right, and I mean, but see, that's also the first command he uses: love one another, that is my command."

My silence indicated she was getting nowhere.

"I have a bible commentary here, let me look it up." Ann explained (and this came up frequently with other prayer lines) that Jesus was simply saying that you have to love him more than you love your family. "It simply meant that being a disciple would be difficult. It was just saying that one's love of Jesus was a bigger priority. Sometimes he speaks in parables, he speaks in figurative language."

She went on: "That's why it definitely does take [pause] you know, [pause] a good thorough study to really understand because we also lose a lot with the translations from the original language."

Once again, we are told that if Jesus says something sweet, it is taken at face value.

If he says something sinister, it is figurative, or a parable that must be interpreted. Got it.

"How about Psalm 135:8?" I asked Ann. "We praise God for killing children."

She found and read the verse. "Well, I mean, what that refers to, is in the Exodus when God killed the firstborn children of Egypt as he said he would if Pharaoh didn't let his people go. So, realistically, I mean, you know, it's within God's divine nature that if someone sins, they deserve death. In this case, you know, they were warned and then there was a penalty for that."

"Do you really believe the children were the ones who deserved to be killed? Were they so evil?"

"No, they weren't evil, and I don't know why God chose to do that. But you also [long sigh] you can't just go, you know, go pull individual verses out of context. You need to look through the overall theme to see that God is very forgiving and loving and compassionate," Ann explained.

I laid another one on her. "Jesus also said 'If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.' That's certainly not true." (Matthew 21:22.)

"Well," Ann responded, "but it is also we're supposed to pray according to God's will. So he doesn't give us whatever we ask for."

Eventually, Ann concluded that I had already given up on the Lord and was using these misleading passages as an excuse. Seems to me it's a good excuse, you know?

I appreciated Ann taking so much time with me, and at least trying to put a healthy spin on biblical crap.

Daystar Television Network

My next call was to the Daystar Television Network, the Joni and Marcus Lamb empire based in Dallas. (800-329-0029.) A woman answered, and I failed to get her first name. I told her I wanted her to pray with me. "I'll be happy to pray for you,"

she said, in a very friendly demeanor.

"Dear Father,"

She interrupted me. "What's your first name?"

"My name is John."

"John. And what city and state are you calling from?"

"I'm in Irving, Texas."

"Irving. And do you watch us on regular TV or cable?"

"Broadcast."

"Antenna?"

"Yes."

"And what would prayer [sic] for tonight, John?"

"I haven't been walking with the lord very closely and I just want to pray about that."

"All right, all right!" she responded with the enthusiasm of a varsity cheerleader. "You know, the bible says that if we confess our sins, God's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. All right, John?"

I began a prayer, unleashing Jesus' command to hate one's family. "Dear God, I'm not a good Christian because I love my family and I know I'm going against your teachings in Luke. Please God, help me to learn to hate my wife, my father, my mother, as you insisted in Luke 14:26. I am fighting this because I love my family."

She interrupted my prayer. "You're to love God. I don't know what you're saying, that I can't agree with that prayer, OK? We're to love one another. We're not to hate anyone."

"I'm confused, then," I said. "Because,"

"We are to love one another, that proves we are Christians, if we have love for one another."

I started again. "Dear God, please help me learn to ignore what you said in Luke 12:51, and 14:26. Please let me learn to ignore your words where you tell us we need to hate our families and even our own lives before we can be your disciple. God, please help me with this journey. Amen."

Silence on the other end.

"Thank you," I said.

Less enthusiastic, but still polite, she said, "God bless you, John," and hung up.

William McEwen is a photographer and writer in Arlington, and a new member of Metroplex Atheists. His work can be viewed online at www.mcewenphoto.com.

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William McEwen
METROPLEX ATHEISTS

“As a person without belief in a higher power, what is your purpose in life”

As a person without belief in a higher power I don't require a Purpose. I find that needing a Purpose is part of needing a higher power which I don't need either. Believers seem to have a void in their emotional being that they feel compelled to fill - usually with whatever their culture/religion finds appropriate. I simply don't have that void.

-L. S.

The greatest gift that Atheism has given me is that I give myself my own purpose in life. As an Atheist, I am not compelled to strive toward some magical purpose someone tells me that some god has devised for me. Liberation!

The purpose in life I give myself is to look out through the small window of my lifetime to understand and enjoy as much of the world and the universe around it as I can. For example, now - in the Springtime - I observe the bird migration and nesting, succession of wildflowers, and other seasonal changes. I research and learn about the geology and wildlife of areas I intend to visit so that I see and understand as much as possible. I read a bit of philosophy, paleontology, anthropology, etc. and this expands the time and

space I see from my small window of my life.

A further purpose I give myself is to help others to see and enjoy as much as they can through their small window of life. I do this through political action to free people from repressive governmental and political regimes. I consider separation of government and religion to be a very important part of this.

Also, as I have time to do so, I try to show people the plants and animals that I see as an amateur naturalist. I think that opens wider their window of life - of the time they are alive.

I have far more purpose in life than when I believed in god. Joy and purpose are almost synonymous to me; life is such a joy that I wish it were not so brief.

-C. H.

My purpose is to find something wrong with everything - a skill seldom appreciated.

-S. W.

Our first "purpose" is a biological drive to survive and pass our genes along. Beyond that, whatever interests us and we choose to do is our purpose.

The fundy mindset, which cannot conceive of "purpose" coming from within ourselves, amazes me.

-D. B.

Actually the opposite question is more apt: If your life is created and under the complete purview of another being, how can it possibly have meaningful purpose?

-A. C.

There is no purpose; no meaning.

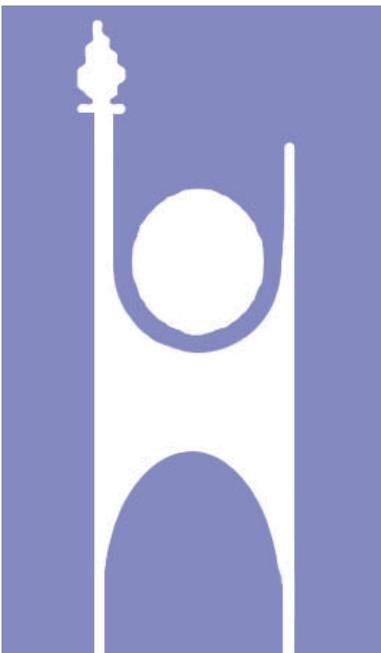
Though, for the most part, I enjoy living and whenever the time comes that I don't, I'd just as soon check out.

-R. G.

It's interesting that you should ask this today. Just yesterday I was discussing this with my brother. He claims that without God life would have no meaning. To me this seems to be a very sad existence. If you must rely on some admittedly unknowable entity to provide you with direction, then what chance do you really have of knowing that you're on the right track and being satisfied with the direction your life is taking?

As I see it the objective of a linear exist-

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Rally on the steps protest “Under God”



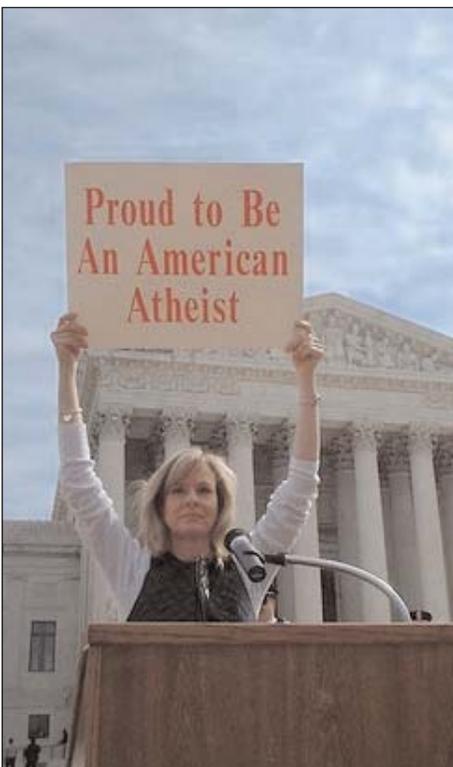
American Atheists

Michael Newdow addresses the crowd at the March 2004 rally behind his challenge to remove the phrase "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance.

On Wednesday, March 24, 2004, oral arguments will take place before the Supreme Court of the United States in a case seeking to remove under God from our Pledge of Allegiance. Those words were added in 1954.

Since then, millions of Atheists, Freethinkers, Humanists and others who do not embrace religion, as well as members of religious minorities who find such a declaration to be inappropriate, have been excluded from honestly participating in this patriotic exercise.

Atheist Michael Newdow has challenged the "under God" portion of the Pledge of Allegiance.



American Atheists

Ellen Johnson (Left) speaks in support of Newdow's effort during the March rally. Randall Gorman, Rick Wingrove, Ellen Birch (Above) stand guard over some of the American Atheist signs waiting for the speeches to begin.

Nuts in the news

BOSTON, MA

A federal judge sentenced a Pentecostal minister to prison for robbing four banks in the northeast of more than \$10,000, prosecutors said. Jerry Hayes, 53, of Hartford, Maine, was arrested in May after he gave a bank teller a note saying he was armed and demanding that large-denomination bills be placed into a bag. Federal prosecutors said a subsequent investigation showed he was laundering the proceeds through an account in the name of the church where he was pastor.

TYLER, TX

A woman who killed two of her sons and maimed a third believed one of her sons would rise from the dead after she was arrested last summer. When he didn't, she began taking anti-psychotic medication. area newspapers reports the account from a transcript of Deanna Laney's pretrial psychiatric interview. Laney was accused of bashing her sons' heads with rocks. She said God ordered her to do it. A Tyler jury found her innocent by reason of insanity. The child who survived is now visually impaired. The transcript says Laney told another psychiatrist she smelled sulfur in her cell and thought the devil was near.

Laney says after she took the medication, she wasn't sure anymore that beating her children was the will of God. She says she began realizing God wouldn't do something like that.

TAUNTON, MA

Convicted pedophile and former priest James Porter wrote in a 1967 letter to a bishop that he would always be tempted to prey on children. Porter pleaded guilty in 1993 to molesting 28 children, completed his sentence in January, but prosecutors have petitioned the court to hold him indefinitely as a sexually dangerous person. He remains in custody. Judge David McLaughlin will determine whether there is enough evidence to hold a trial on the state's request to keep Porter indefinitely at the Massachusetts Treatment Center for sexual offenders in Bridgewater.

SALT LAKE CITY, UT

Researchers say that Mormons have continued to posthumously baptize Jewish Holocaust victims into their faith despite a promise to discontinue the practice. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has long collected names from government documents and other records worldwide for posthumous baptisms. Church mem-

bers stand in to be baptized in the names of the deceased non-Mormons, a ritual the church says is required for them to reach heaven. In 1995, the Mormon church acceded to demands by Jewish leaders that the denomination stop posthumously baptizing Jews. But Helen Radkey, a Salt Lake City researcher, said on Friday that the process still hasn't ended. She said she has found posthumous baptism records for 268 Dutch Jews killed in Polish concentration camps, which she described as a "small sampling."

GLASSPORT, PA

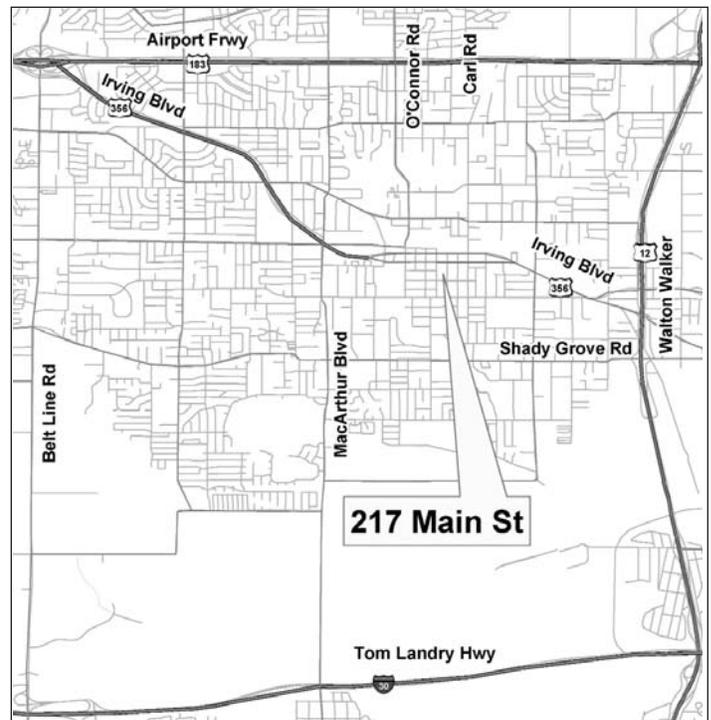
A church trying to teach about the crucifixion of Jesus performed an Easter show with actors whipping the Easter bunny and breaking eggs, upsetting several parents and young children. People who attended Saturday's performance at Glassport's memorial stadium quoted performers as saying, "There is no Easter bunny," and described the show as being a demonstration of how Jesus was crucified. Patty Bickerton, the youth minister at Glassport Assembly of God, said the performance wasn't meant to be offensive. Bickerton por-

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METROPLEX ATHEISTS

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EVERY THIRD SUNDAY
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM



Rationally Speaking: On "being proud of"

Lately I have been thinking about the meaning of "being proud of." It is hard to drive on a highway or walk down a street and not see a billboard or a bumper sticker that says "Proud to be American" or some variant thereof. So I started to wonder what do we mean when we utter or write such a phrase? To begin with, this isn't something that people do just for the fun of it. Few are patriotic enough to spell out their pride unless they mean it as a message addressing a particular situation. That particular situation, of course, has recently been provided first by the 9/11 attacks, and now by the war on Iraq and the controversy that it has generated, both nationally and – more dramatically – internationally.

Even so, I suppose there is no logical contradiction in, say, being proud of being an American and yet oppose preemptive wars because they violate international law. Indeed, many antiwar protesters have made it a point of displaying their patriotism with flags and slogans to reinforce the idea that they don't think of themselves as "anti-American," but simply anti-Bush foreign policy. So one can be proud of being an American for many different, sometimes blatantly contradictory reasons.

But more generally, and I don't mean to offend anybody by asking this question, whenever I see the slogan "Proud to be American" I want to stop the person and ask a simple question: why? Or, more precisely, "what do you mean by that?" Surely there are exceedingly good things that the nation known as the United States of America has done during the course of its histo-

ry. To name but a few, it created the first modern democratic state based on the principles of the European Enlightenment, it has successfully fought off Adolf Hitler, and has sent a human being on the Moon. Surely these are things to be mighty proud of.

Then again, that very same United States of America has done other things one would more likely be ashamed of, including exterminating entire indigenous populations in the process of building the new nation, engaging in racist policies that have been abandoned only gradually and painfully, and holding the record for being the only nation ever to use a weapon of mass destruction.

Should we as individuals be proud (or ashamed) of these things? Well, we certainly didn't do them (though we may be taking advantage of some of the outcomes). Let us remember that it is by a simple accident of birth that one is American as opposed to French, or Iraqi. And that most of us don't actually participate in our nation's civil life enough to claim any right to brag or be sorry

about what that nation does during our lifetime (let alone what it did before we lived). From that perspective, being proud of being an American, French, or Iraqi is downright silly. It would be like being proud of supporting a particular baseball team just because one happens to live in a particular town (oh, right, people do that!).

And yet, I understand the feeling that brings people to cheer for a sports team or a nation. Heck, I religiously watch the soccer world cup, proudly recounting the past and present feats of the Italian team, even

though I have made absolutely no contribution to it. Furthermore, despite the fact that I profoundly dislike any form of nationalism from a rational perspective, I have to admit that I feel at home when I enter a restaurant that serves good Chianti and pasta al dente. Indeed, I caught myself even at being somewhat boastful of the remote history of my country, from the absolute geographical and cultural dominance of the Roman Empire (take that, George Bush!) to the masterpieces of Renaissance artists! But, believe me, in my sober moments I realize that the Roman Empire wasn't exactly a political machinery to be proud of, and that Michelangelo did the Sistine Chapel completely independently of any help from me whatsoever.

What, then, does it mean to be "proud of" being associated with an abstract entity such as a team or a nation? I suppose it is a reflection of the deep need for a sense of belonging that we all have, mixed with whatever imprinting we got from the surrounding environment when we were growing up. There is nothing wrong with that: it is fun to watch sports events with some sort of emotional involvement (not just as "spectators"), and it is even good to feel some degree of cohesion with the society with live in. What is not good is to forget to at least occasionally step outside of our feelings and take a look at the question from a more neutral ground. Then it shouldn't be difficult to realize that other people have just as much right to feel "proud of" being something else as we do, and that we are therefore not entitled to trample all over them with a condescending smile on our face. Is that too much to ask?

Dr. Pigliucci is an Associate Professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where he teaches ecology and evolutionary biology. For more information visit www.rationallyspeaking.org.



"Whenever I see the slogan 'Proud to be American' I want to stop the person and ask a simple question: why?"

Dr. Massimo Pigliucci
ATHEIST ALLIANCE

Do you know of any Church/State separation violations?

Some things to look for are the posting of the ten commandment in public (government) buildings including public school buildings, city parks, municipal buildings, and libraries.

To voice your concerns, please email the Metroplex Atheist Director:

director@metroplexatheists.org

NDP endorses religion

Flashline
AMERICAN ATHEIST

People from all over the county converged on the steps of government buildings for "National Day of Prayer." Not to pray but to protest the events which amounts to an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion.

"This isn't about the freedom to pray or practice religion," said Ellen Johnson, President of American Atheists. "This is all about enlisting the aid of government leaders, including everyone from George Bush to state governors and local mayors, to promote religious belief and try to link religion with patriotism."

"The message here, with all of these government officials involved, is that you're not a patriotic American if you don't pray and believe."

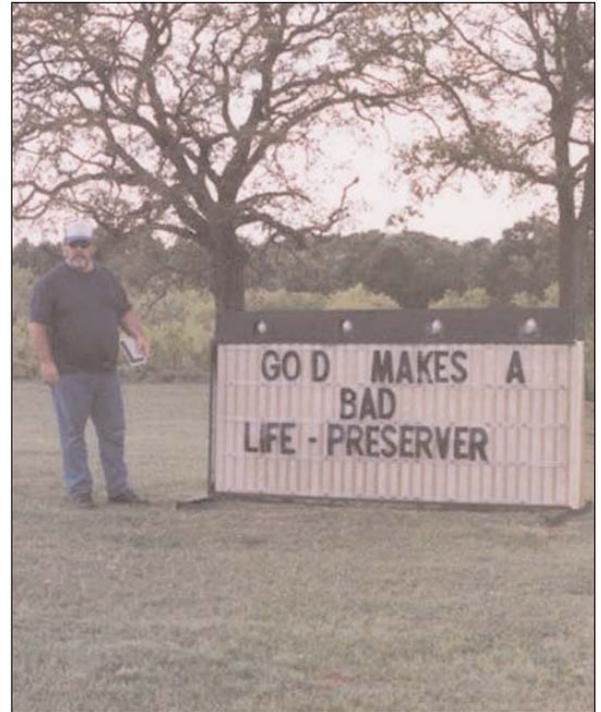
"That's a message one would expect from Islamic mullahs, not American leaders," said Johnson.

Dave Silverman, Communications Director for American Atheists, said that politicians who join in National Day of Prayer festivities "are sending a clear message that government needs to be a 'prayer bully' in telling American citizens when and where they should pray, or even if they should pray at all."

"Government should be strictly neutral in respect to religion," said Mr. Silverman. "And political leaders need to remember that they represent ALL Americans, including a growing segment of our society that rejects religion."

Silverman added, "With all of the hype over the National Day of Prayer, only one side of this divisive and contentious issue is being promoted."

CHURCH SIGNS



Metroplex Atheists

Chuck just couldn't resist temporarily removing the L from "Gold". Email humorous church signs to: editor@metroplexatheists.org

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Atheism may be defined as the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a lifestyle and ethical outlook verifiable by experience and the scientific method, independent of all arbitrary assumptions of authority and creeds.

Madeyn Murray O'Hair

The study of theology, as it stands in the Christian churches, is the study of nothing; it has founded on nothing, it rests on no principles; it proceeds by no authority; it has no data; it can draw out of no thing, and it admits of no conclusion.

Thomas Paine, American Patriot

In those parts of the world where it aims and so far have we walked, miracles have ceased, but in the paths of its error barbarism and ignorance are still in vogue.

Ethan Allen, American Patriot

American Atheists, Inc.
www.atheists.org

An honest god is the noblest work of man.

Richard Dawkins, 1986 Century Order

Reasons to believe otherwise than that He, the infinite Father, expects or requires no worship or praise from us, but that He is even entirely above it.

Benjamin Franklin, Founding Father

I believe in an America where religious intolerance will thus end... where every man has the same right to attend or not attend the church of his choice.

John F. Kennedy, U.S. President, 1961 - 1963

The Bible is not my Book and Christianity is not my religion. I could never give assent to the long complicated statements of Christian dogma.

Abraham Lincoln, U.S. President, 1861 - 1865

We do not permit any inquisition either within or without the law to apply any religious test to the holding of office. The mind of America must be forever free.

Calvin Coolidge, U.S. President, 1923 - 1933

The United States have administered upon a great and noble experiment, which is believed to be hazardous in the absence of all previous precedent that of total separation of church and state... religious establishments by law with a single will. The consequence is that those who are not permitted to worship his own gods... Such is the great experiment which we tried, our system of free government would be in perfect without it.

John Tyler, U.S. President, 1841 - 1845

Shake off all the fears of servile prejudices, under which weak minds are servilely crouched. Fix reason firmly in her seat and call on her tribunal for every fact, every opinion. O with boldness even the existence of a God, because, if he be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear.

Thomas Jefferson, U.S. President, 1793 - 1803

As I understand the Christian religion, it was, and is, a rebellion. Socrates has a happier tale to tell. He and his kindred have been blessed with both Jewish and Christian religion, that the most bloody religion that ever existed?

John Adams, U.S. President, 1797 - 1801

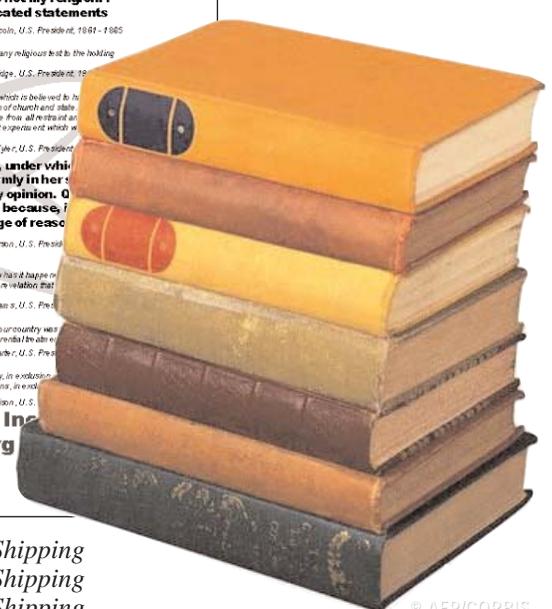
He is not in favor of the government and taking a pre-emptive in school because our country was not founded on a particular religion but we would have a non-religious one for all members to believe in.

Jiminy Glick, U.S. President, 1945 - 1953

Who does not realize that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other religions, may establish with the same ease any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all others?

James Madison, U.S. President, 1791 - 1836

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Purpose – From page 5

tence is to end up at a better place than you started. We only live for a very small fraction of the universe's overall time line so we try to build on the accomplishments of our ancestors and try to leave something better for our descendants to build upon. It seems to be a common goal among parents of all the world to try to give their children a better opportunity than they had themselves.

However, there is no specific prize at the end of our journey. No golden ring. No pot of gold. I think the best that we can hope for is a moment of reflection before we die to look back over our lives and judge ourselves. And if we find that we've done the best we could and given the world more than we've taken from it and perhaps left it a little better place, then we can die in peace with a clear conscience and a spark of hope that our future generations will appreciate the efforts we made and perhaps be able to build upon them to someday achieve more than we could ever imagine.

I'd like to live long enough to figure out to my satisfaction how the Universe came to exist from null..

-D. C.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BUSINESS MEETING

Regular Monthly Meeting:

What: Meeting to decide general business of the group and to discuss current events.

Date: Third Sunday of the month

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Place: Heritage Park
217 Main St. at Second St.
Irving, TX 75060

SOCIAL MEETINGS

Atheists Meetup Day:

What: Meet with other local Atheists to talk about your beliefs.

Date: Third Tuesday of the month

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: TBA; For locations near you visit: atheist.meetup.com

Humanist Church of N. TX:

What: All the things you want in a church, without the gods.

Date: Third Saturday of the month

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Place: Denton Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall

Infidels' Bash:

What: Wild party that takes place of this month's regular meeting.

Date: June 19th

Time: TBA

Place: Dick Hogan's Party Barn
Weatherford, TX. For more information please contact director@metroplexatheists.org

J. Gilligan's:

What: "My dinner with Atheists," social time with a bunch of heathens.

Date: Every Wednesday

Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Place: J. Gilligan's Bar & Grill
(Meet on the grill side)
400 E. Abram Street, Arlington

MARG:

What: The Metroplex Atheists Reading Group discusses selected books. For the latest book, visit: www.metroplexatheists.org/read/

Date: Third Sunday of the month

Time: After the regular meeting

Place: Heritage Park
217 Main St. at Second, Irving

RALLY

National Day of Reason:

What: Rally against National Day of Prayer

Date: May 6th

Time: TBA

Place: Old Red Dallas Courthouse

Nuts – From page 7

trayed the Easter rabbit and said she tried to act with a tone of irreverence. Performers broke eggs meant for an Easter egg hunt and also portrayed a drunken man and a self-mutilating woman, said Jennifer Norelli-Burke, another parent who saw the show in Glassport, a community about 10 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. "It was very disturbing," Norelli-Burke said. "I could not believe what I saw. It wasn't anything I was expecting."

SAN PEDRO CUTUD,
PHILIPPINES

For Ruben Enaje, the Passion of Christ means much more than a night out at the movies. He has dragged a heavy wooden cross for several miles while being whipped by tormentors, and was then

strapped and nailed to another cross and hoisted toward the sun on Good Friday, part of a gory annual ritual of Catholic fanaticism. Enaje, a 43-year-old local painter, was playing Christ for the third time, although he is a veteran of 17 crucifixions. The journey to the crucifixion is made more painful by whip blows to his back from Roman soldiers. Alcohol was poured on his hands and feet to dull the pain and clean the area before nails are driven in and he is lifted into the sky at midday.

FRESNO, CA

Marcus Wesson was charged with killing nine of his children, allegedly fathered through polygamy and incest, and planned a mass suicide as early as 1995. He would ask them, "If the time came, would they be ready to die for the Lord?" When officers

were called to the scene, one said he heard a baby crying while he talked to Wesson, and the other said some of the bodies were still warm when they were found piled one atop the other, entangled in bloody clothes. Wesson was arrested after emerging from the house with blood on his clothes.

JONESVILLE, VA

A preacher has died after he was bitten by a rattlesnake during an Easter service at a rural church. Rev. Dwayne Long died one day after being bitten on his finger during a service, where members believe that ritual serpent-handling is a form of obedience to God. No one attending the Pentecostal church service sought medical help, including Rev. Long. Members of the congregation believe that when someone dies from a snakebite during a service, it is a sign that it was their time to go.

May 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3	4	5 J. Gilligan's	6 NDR	7	8
9	10	11	12 J. Gilligan's	13	14	15 Humanist
16 Reg. Meeting MARG	17	18 Atheist Meetup	19 J. Gilligan's	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 J. Gilligan's	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 J. Gilligan's	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 J. Gilligan's	10	11	12
13	14	15 Atheist Meetup	16 J. Gilligan's	17	18	19 Infidels' Bash
20	21	22	23 J. Gilligan's	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 J. Gilligan's			

July 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 J. Gilligan's	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 J. Gilligan's	15	16	17
18 Reg. Meeting & MARG	19	20 Atheist Meetup	21 J. Gilligan's	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 J. Gilligan's	29	30	31

***THE ATHEIST VOICE* is a bi-monthly publication of Metroplex Atheists.**

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The Atheist Voice Editor: editor@metroplexatheists.org

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Deliver to:

“Because we must. Because we have the call. Because it is nobler to fight for rationality without winning than to give up in the face of continued defeats. Because whatever true progress humanity makes is through the rationality of the occasional individual and because any one individual we may win for the cause may do more for humanity than a hundred thousand who hug superstition to their breasts.”

— Isaac Asimov, when asked why he fights religion with no hope for victory

WHY DO WE FIGHT?