

PANViews



Newsletter of PA Nonbelievers, Inc., affiliated with American Atheists, Atheist Alliance International and the Council for Secular Humanism.

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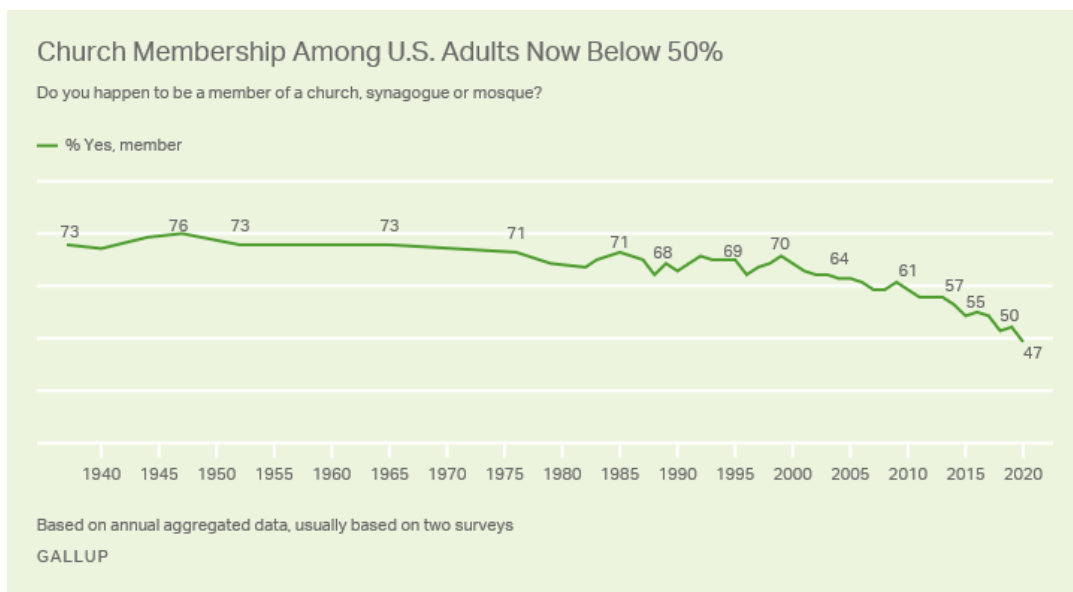
President's Report

Josh CruverKibi

We hope everyone who attended the American Atheists' online national convention enjoyed it and found it informative. As I have heard, some of our members really enjoyed the format and convenience of attending online. But, some of our members also missed the in person social aspect and activities of regular conventions.

Unfortunately, we have gotten word that Jubilee Day has been cancelled, citing that it would be logistically impossible to have safety protocols in place and practice safe social distancing. If anyone has ever attended Jubilee Day, it is one of the biggest one-day street events on the East Coast, so it makes sense. We still have some other tabling events possible, but there may be similar conclusions for them as well. So, we shall see.

On that subject, since many of our members are getting or have already gotten vaccinated, it is time to start having in person meetings again. Some of our groups have already started meeting in person again and practicing appropriate social distancing. Keep an eye out in May and June for in person meeting. We will also continue to have weekly online meetings on Wednesday. We have also started a new secular family group for discussing unique secular family concerns and to plan activities. If you are interested in participating send us an email or contact one of our board members.



This reflects church membership, not nonbelief, but the drop from 2000 to 2020 is still encouraging.

Atheist News in Pennsylvania– The Nation – The World!

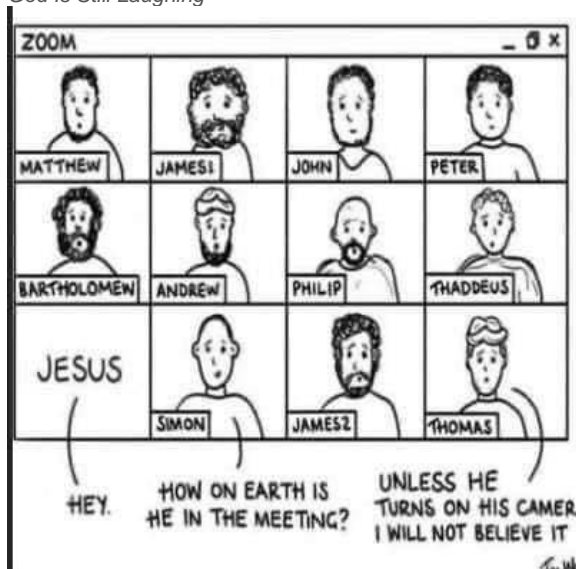
Victory Against Religious Tests

Many atheists have faced the awkwardness of an unexpected “so help me God” at the end of an oath. The Freedom From Religion Foundation, ffrf.org, has won a victory against one of the unnecessary inserts.

For some reason, the form that prospective voters had to sign in Alabama ended with a “so help me God.” An Alabama atheist brought this requirement to the attention of the FFRF, which sued the Alabama secretary of state. There was no way to register to vote, online or on paper, that did not include those words.

Alabama did not put up much of a fight. After the suit was filed, it amended its online and paper registration forms to include a check box that says, “OPTIONAL: Because of a sincerely held belief, I decline to include the final four words of the oath above.” The state subsequently went farther, and now allows prospective voters to cross out the four offensive words, and sent guidance to county registrars, explaining to them that this is okay. Victory for the good guys!

God Is Still Laughing



Blast From the Past

Remember, back in the day, when churches got all upset over Elvis? When rock 'n roll was the devil's music? It's the plot of the movie "Footloose."

Well, Seton Hall University is now embroiled in a controversy over heavy metal music. According to the New York *Post*, nypost.com, Seton Hall, a Catholic college in New Jersey, owns a student run radio station, WSOU. WSOU's motto is that it plays "the loudest rock in NJ and NY since 1986." It's run afoul of Catholic conservatives because it plays music, which, they claim, is "blasphemous, openly satanic, promote[s] sacrilege, promote[s] the murder and mutilation of women and children and the slaughter of Christians."

The Lepanto Institute, a conservative lay Catholic organization, has gathered hundreds of signatures on a petition demanding that the station change its format, or be shut down. "Lepanto," by the way was a 16th century naval battle between the Pope's Holy League and the Ottoman Empire.

Protestors have stood outside the station, praying the rosary. As might be expected the students running the station have not always been respectful. One of the protest organizers complained the students shouted, "Hail Satan!" at them, which the protestors apparently took seriously.

This isn't the first time the station has been criticized. Last year its programming was modified after a review conducted by students, alumni, and clergy. The protestors say that the changes didn't go far enough. The students working at the station defend their right to listen to music they like, and argue that lyrics alone don't lead to evil behavior. John Horvat, vice president of a conservative group, Tradition, Family and Property disagrees. His group has gathered 40,000 on a petition that asks Seton Hall "to stop promoting Satanism."

The protestors have a novel explanation of where this evil came from. According to Seton Hall's student newspaper, *The Setonian*, setonian.com, it's all the fault of former Newark archbishop Theodore McCarrick, who was defrocked by Pope Francis in 2019 because of McCarrick's many years of sexual abuse. The station started broadcasting in 1986, a flyer distributed by the protestors explains, right after McCarrick was appointed archbishop: "Seton Hall started broadcasting this sa*anic [sic] format in 1986, shortly after the appointment of serial homo-predator Theodore McCarrick, and continues airing this material from their radio station, 500 yards from the seminary from which McCarrick took his victims." An anti-WSOU website expounds on this theory: "One would think Seton Hall University would have standards preventing the airing of satanism on its radio station. But this is a university where its seminarians were served up to Theodore McCarrick for sexual exploitation. Organizations capable of this level of corruption are generally dominated by influences that upend norms of moral behavior."

There is no evidence that McCarrick had any involvement with Seton Hall's radio station, or even knew it existed.

Via Seth Andrews



Lot and his daughters at the dinner table.

Religious Favoritism in France?

France is proud of its tradition of laïcité, which insures strict separation between church and state.

But as the New York Times, nytimes.com, reports, there's an important exception. Under a 1905 law, no public money can be used toward building or maintaining religious facilities. However, that law excludes all religious buildings built before 1905, making them the property of the state. The state is responsible for maintaining those buildings, and congregations can use them for free.

The problem is, of course, that virtually all of those buildings are Catholic, so while France is officially neutral about religion, it is in fact the Catholic church's biggest landlord and guardian.

Given France's changing demographics, what this means is that France uses taxpayer money to support a shrinking religion, but contributes nothing toward its fastest growing religion, Islam. There are about 6 million Muslims in France, 10% of the population. They worship in 2,500 mosques that receive no governmental support. France has 3.2 million Catholics, with 45,000 church buildings, 40,000 of which are maintained by the French government. Muslims have turned to foreign countries with Muslim majority populations for financial help, which, predictably, has not been warmly received in France. A new law which aims to combat Islam extremism in France increases rules about secularism and tightens how foreign donations can come into France. For example, the new law would oppose funding for a proposed mosque in Strasbourg, because the some of the funding would come from Turkey.

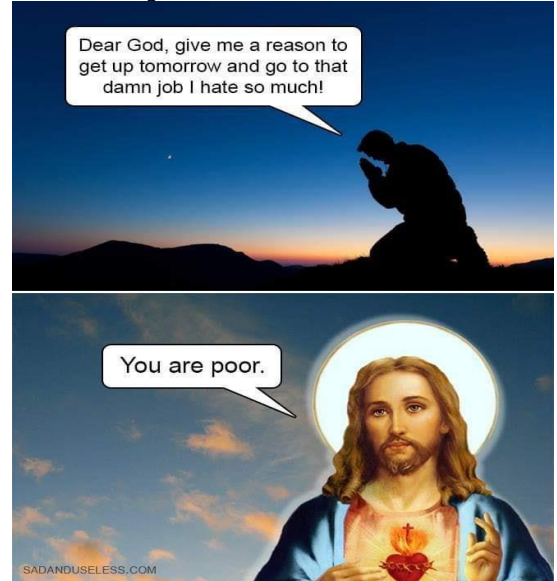
Other cities in France have turned down requests for funding for new mosques, while refusing to allow foreign donations. French officials admit there is no evidence linking mosques with foreign ties to terrorist attacks in France, but it does not seem likely the government of French president Emmanuel Macron will relax the financing rules.

Censorship Ends in Italy

Italy has strictly censored movies since 1914, almost the beginning of movies.

Dario Franceschini, Italy's cultural minister, is quoted on theguardian.com announcing the change. "Film censorship has been abolished. The system of controls and interventions that still allow the state to intervene in the freedom of artists has been definitively ended." From now on filmmakers will be responsible for classifying their own movies, based on the age of the intended audience. However, the government isn't giving up completely; a commission of 49 people, made up from the film community and various other experts, in education and animal rights, for example, will have to approve a film's classification.

Antinatalist vegans



An online exhibition promoted by the culture ministry reports since 1944, 274 Italian films, 130 American films and 321 from other countries have been censored. More than 10,000 had to make modifications, including movies by such masters as Federico Fellini. There was a school of thought that censorship actually attracted viewers, by publicizing how erotic the movies were.

Conflicts for Gay Christians

As the LGBT community becomes more accepted, and more public, Christian organizations are having difficulty accommodating their reading of the Bible to the needs of their participants.

Lee University, a Christian school in Tennessee, is a case in point. Insigthighered.com reports that Lee alumni have started a petition drive to protest statements made by university president Mark Walker. During a chapel service, Walker had reminded attendees the university's community covenant forbade same-sex relationships as prohibited by Scripture.

The alumni group sent an open letter, signed by 750 people, protesting Walker's remarks, saying that they "were and are harmful to queer students: their mental and emotional health; their physical safety; their relationship with the college, the church, and their peers; and their academic success." Given that according to its website, Lee was founded in 1912 as the Church of God Bible Training School, it is hard to imagine that its alumni really expected the school to be on the forefront of thinking about sexual orientation.

The problem started when Preston Sprinkle, president of the Idaho-based Center for Faith, Sexuality and Gender, spoke at Lee. The university has taken a video of Sprinkle's remarks down from its website, but attendees reported that he mentioned a friend who was born male, but identified as a woman, and experienced same-sex attraction. He said that the friend left the church

Chase avior



but subsequently came back, because of the love shown him by a pastor (Note: The article did not specify the nature of this love.)

The university's denomination, the Church of God, was not happy. It issued a statement noting that Sprinkle "addressed sexual orientation and homosexuality in a manner that was contrary to Scripture, Church of God doctrine and teachings." That was the gist of Walker's objections as well; during a chapel service, Walker said, "The biblical view of human sexuality teaches that the only biblically valid marriage is between one man and one woman and that God does not approve or condone sexual activity between individuals of the same sex, and it requires repentance.

But all sexual misconduct requires repentance. Pornography, adultery, fornication. All sexual behavior that violates Scripture requires repentance. All sin of any kind in any of our lives requires repentance." He emphasized that Lee students had to hold each other accountable for their behavior.

The Affirming Alumni Collective, a group of Lee LGBTQ+ and allied alumni, responded to Walker. Jared Powers and Rachel Lesler released a statement saying that it "was disconcerting" that Walker used a chapel service "to clarify the stance that we are not sure anyone was questioning. The stance very much felt like the university would be coming against LGBTQIA+ students."

Their statement continued: "The chapel was about repentance, which can be a very traumatizing experience for LGBTQIA+ Christians. Many of us have tried to 'pray the gay away' to a degree that it caused us to become depressed, and many spent years hating themselves because more than just being sinful, we ourselves are something 'different.' The framework of only being able to maintain salvation without repentance makes it clear that LGBTQIA+ people must either choose their identity or their faith -- a choice no other 'sinner' must make. The message also equated being gay to being an adulterer, used an ex-gay story shared by Dr. Sprinkle, and was reminiscent of conversion therapy rhetoric. The final piece in the message called for students to 'hold each other accountable' for their sin, which made many students afraid they may be targeted if they were to be their true selves."

Powers and Lesler asserted they have been contacted by many LGBTQ+ Lee students, asking for guidance. They also said the students have noted more "instances of hateful behavior" since Walker's remarks.

The article quoted a survey by College Pulse on behalf of the Religious Exemption Accountability Project (REAP), a national organization that opposes restrictive LGBTQ+ policies at religious colleges. The survey reported that 11% of students at Christian colleges with anti-LGBTQ+ policies consider themselves non-heterosexual. Most of these students have not publicly come out and unsurprisingly, are more likely than other students to report feeling anxious or depressed. (The survey noted that LGBTQ+ students at secular schools also report more anxiety and depression than straight students.)

Walker claims that he is not aware of greater hostility to any student after his chapel sermon, and that the school does not allow bullying behavior. His talk was not meant to encourage students to

confront other students. "When I said we will bring disciplinary action or correction I wasn't talking about random people doing that to other people. I was talking about it from the standpoint of the administration or those in leadership. It wasn't talking about any one group of people; it was talking about the student body as a whole."

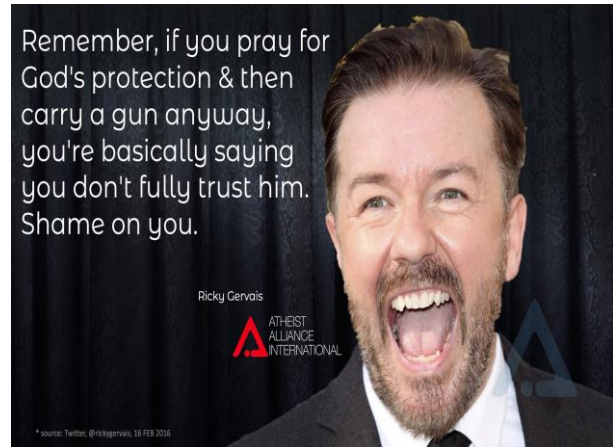
Walker and the Affirming Alumni group both said that they were not opposed to each other, Walker emphasizing that he was willing to listen to anyone who wanted to talk. The Affirming Alumni group issued another statement saying, "We all attended Lee and know what it was like to be a student there. We know college can be a trying time for many students, whether they identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community or not. If you add questioning your sexuality or gender into that mix, one can understand how lonely the experience can feel. Our group wants to bridge that gap -- to show students that not only can they thrive at Lee, but there is a whole beautiful community of Alum who are here to support them in any way we can. We also want to provide safe community resources, such as counseling and religious organizations, so students do not have to feel like they are navigating life alone."

Nice thought. But it's hard to see how Lee's position can be reconciled for people who want to live open LGBTQ+ lives. Or why they'd even try.

Another Muhammad Cartoon Controversy

Another teacher showed his class a cartoon of Muhammad. Is anyone surprised there was trouble?

A story on bbcnews.com describes what happened next. A teacher at the Batley Grammar School in West Yorkshire, England showed the cartoon, and protestors were outside the next day, demanding he be fired. The head teacher apologized, and said the teacher had been suspended, pending an investigation.



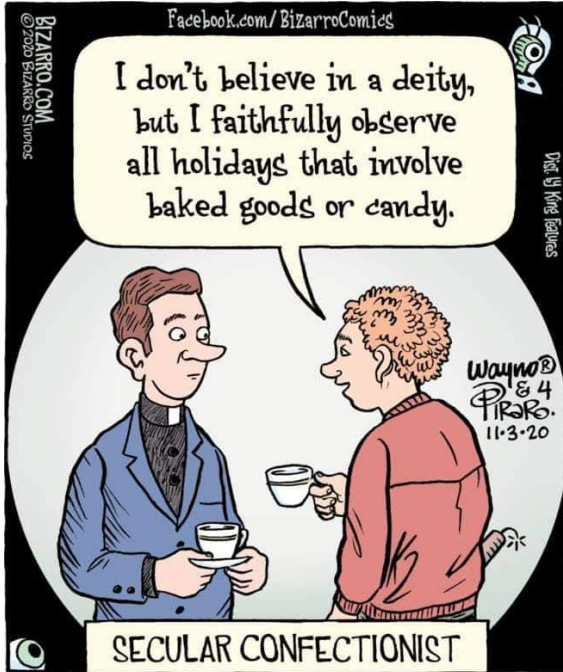
There were reports that the teacher was in hiding. A petition supporting the teacher has 70,000 signatures.

The Department of Education tried to see both sides. It is not acceptable to threaten teachers, it said. On the other hand, though, "They must balance this with the need to promote respect and tolerance between people of different faiths and beliefs, including in deciding which materials to use in the classroom."

Dr Abdul Shaikh, a local academic in Batley and Muslim activist, commented: "I was shocked like many Muslims in the town that Muslim school children's religious sensitivities were completely ignored by the schoolteacher who decided to show an offensive image that lampooned the noble Prophet Mohammed." It is worth noting that a 2015 Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) report showed that almost 75% of Batley Grammar's students were from a minority ethnic background.

The offending cartoon was originally from the French satirical newspaper, Charlie Hebdo. Of course, Charlie Hebdo cartoonists were murdered by Muslim terrorists in 2015.

The BBC interviewed residents of Batley a week or so after the protests started. One of the persons they interviewed, Abdul Ravat, said the population of the school was changing, and “the majority of the school is of a South Asian origin and of Muslim faith, so you've got to factor that into the equation. Why wasn't there someone internally asking that question in terms of the lesson plans? Given the context of your population, you should consider how it would be received.”



Encouraging Sign

Regis High School in New York City is a prominent all boys' Catholic high school. Its alumni include Dr. Anthony Fauci, and Saturday Night Live's Colin Jost.

According to the *New York Times*, nytimes.com, an investigation has shown that the school's president, Rev. Daniel Lahart, a Jesuit priest, engaged in “sexual misconduct” with several adults, including school employees. The chairman of the board of trustees, Anthony DiNovi, announced the findings to the school community via email, and further noted, “This conduct was nonconsensual, and moreover, continued notwithstanding express requests from the affected parties for the conduct to cease.” The board of trustees stated that Lahart would be fired.

What makes this story noteworthy, aside from the fact that it at least involves adults and not children, is that the board of trustees is firing Lahart. Regis is owned and run by the Jesuit religious order, not the Archdiocese of New York. The board of trustees on its own fired Lahart, without the involvement of the Jesuits. This is extremely unusual, and an encouraging sign.

All of the Catholic dioceses in New York state are currently being investigated by the New York attorney general, Letitia James, for their handling of sexual misconduct. The trustees' action in this case shows that perhaps at long last the message that these abuses can't be covered up forever is getting through.

Jerry Update

Jerry Falwell, Jr. still hasn't gone away. Liberty University is suing him, alleging that he breached his employment contract and conspired to withhold damaging information from Liberty's board of trustees.

Cnn.com reports the board thinks that when Falwell negotiated an extremely generous severance package, he was actively participating in the sex scandal that would precipitate his departure. (Remember, pool boy, pictures, etc.) He bargained for his severance knowing that he would likely be receiving it soon, the lawsuit states.

Liberty is seeking more than \$40 million in compensatory and punitive damages. Falwell was due to receive a \$10.5 million severance package over the next few years. He sued Liberty for defamation after being forced out, but he subsequently dropped the lawsuit.

May 2021

Jerry and his wife, Becky, are apparently still married. They have 3 children; one of them, a daughter, still attends Liberty. Which must be awkward, although not as awkward as having your loudly religious parents embroiled in a sex scandal.

Kathi Scully



Another Pastor, Another Sex Scandal

Another pastor, another wife, another boyfriend, another sex scandal. Only this time, the wife had her husband murdered.

The Kansas City *Star*, kansascitystar.com, explains. Kristie Evans called 911 to report that her husband had been shot in their bed. She had awakened to a “pop” sound, the smell of smoke, and her husband, David, bleeding from a hole in his head. She told the police that she ran outside of their home in Ada, OK, but saw nothing.

David’s church, Harmony Free Will Baptist, was shocked. Church members brought food to the house, and generally mourned the death of a popular pastor.

It didn’t take long for the truth to come out. A neighbor told the police he saw a white Ford Mustang parked in front of the Evans’ house, similar to one captured on surveillance video driving slowly past the house the night of the shooting. Kristie identified the car as belonging to a man she knew as Kahlil. The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation identified him as Kahlil Deamie Square.

Kristie confessed she and her husband had sex with Kahlil at a Super 8 motel several times. She slipped her phone number to Kahlil, and they stayed in touch, unbeknownst to David. While David went on a mission trip to Mexico a week before his death, Kahlil came to their house, and he and Kristie continued to have sex. Kristie also asked Kahlil to kill her husband.

She supplied bullets and a gun, and left the backdoor unlocked. Kristie told police she heard him come in, found him, and encouraged him to go ahead with the plan. She was delicate enough to stay in the living room until she heard the gun shot. Kristie waited for Kahlil to get away, and then called the police. Both Kristie and Kahlil are now in jail, awaiting trial.

According to kfor.com, Oklahoma News 4, Kristie told police that her husband had been verbally abusive. Residents are predictably stunned. “It’s just crazy, I just didn’t think it would happen here in my own hometown of Ada. It’s just crazy to hear that,” resident Gary Delozier said

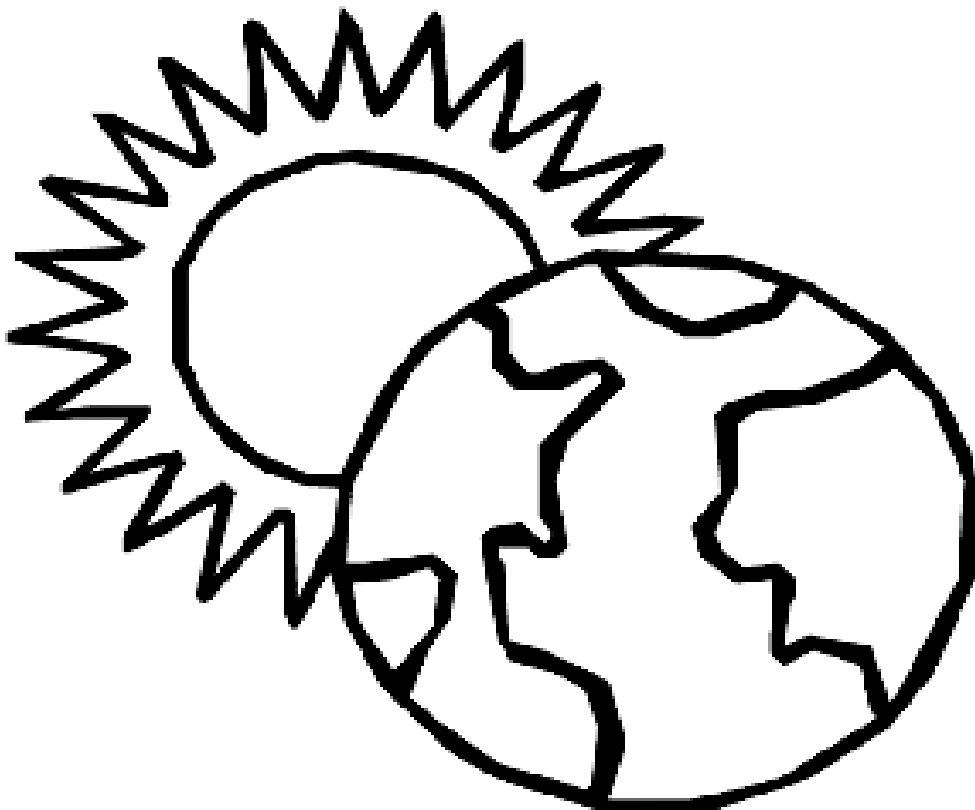
It's a Miracle!

A Florida (of course) man and his sons were indicted for selling \$1 million in industrial bleach, which they called "Miracle Mineral Solution" as a cure for COVID-19. But wait, there's more! They also claimed it cured cancer, Alzheimer's, diabetes, and herpes.

The New York *Daily News*, www.nydailynews.com, reports the concoction was sold from a "church" the Grenons created, Genesis II Church of Health and Healing. The Grenons knew that churches often avoid government regulation, and scrutiny; they thought hiding behind a church front would keep them from prosecution. Fortunately, they were wrong.

The FDA warns the product is not merely useless, but dangerous. It can cause severe vomiting and life-threateningly low blood pressure.

FUN!



Did you know? On January 8, 1851, physicist Jean Foucault demonstrated that the Earth rotates on its axis. The device he used in his Paris home to prove this is now known as Foucault's pendulum.

Word Search

Answer is at the end of PANViews



- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|
| AGREE | FRUSTRATED | RIDE BIKES |
| ANGRY | HAPPY | RUN RACES |
| ARGUE | HURT | SCARY STORIES |
| ARGUMENTS | INSEPERABLE | SLEEPOVERS |
| BEST FRIENDS | IS IT OKAY TO ARGUE | SOLVE |
| BIG FIGHT | LISTEN | SPLASHED |
| CALMLY EXPLAIN | MARK | STOMPED |
| CAMPOUTS | MIKE | TALK |
| COMPROMISE | MUD PUDDLES | TOGETHER |
| DIFFERENT IDEAS | OPINIONS | UNDERSTAND |
| DISAGREE | POINT OF VIEW | UPSET |

PAN News & Update

PAN had looked forward to participating in Mechanicsburg's Jubilee Day in June, but it has been cancelled.

Meetings –PAN is holding virtual meetings at 6:00 pm on Wednesdays for the time being. Get more information on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/panonbelievers.

Check on Facebook to verify which meetings are being held in person.

Carlisle – Fourth Friday of the month, 5:30 pm, Hops and Barley, 398 North York Street, Mechanicsburg

Chambersburg – Second Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm. Please check website/Facebook for location.

Harrisburg– First Wednesday of the month, 6:30 pm, Midtown Scholar, 1302 N. Third St.

Lancaster – Fourth Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm, Centerville Diner, 100 S. Centerville Rd.

Lebanon - Second Wednesday of the month, 7:00 pm, Batdorf Restaurant, 245 W. Main St., Annville

Reading – Third Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm, Oakbrook Brewing Company, 628 Park Avenue

York – First Sunday of the month, noon, I-ron-ic Coffee Shop and Art Boutique, 256 W. Philadelphia St.

How to Contribute to PAN

Giant Cards - We will have Giant grocery store cards available for purchase at PAN meetings. You pay face value for the card and use the face value at the store, but Giant lets PAN have 5% of that face value. If you shop at Giant, anyway, use the cards in lieu of cash and help PAN. What could be easier?



Pennies for PAN - Finally, we are happy to take money the old-fashioned way. You can give your tax-deductible contribution to a Board Member at one of our meetings or events, you can donate via PayPal on our website, www.panonbelievers.org, or you can mail a check to us at PA Nonbelievers, Inc. PO Box 702, York, PA 17405. Remember when you donate you can indicate what fund you want your donation to go to, you can find the list of our funds on the PAN website in the Donate section.

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Word Search Answer/Hints

The words below are listed with their starting row and column.

AGREE 5:11	FRUSTRATED 3:19	RIDE BIKES 21:13
ANGRY 22:21	HAPPY 4:21	RUN RACES 2:9
ARGUE 6:12	HURT 20:15	SCARY STORIES 11:4
ARGUMENTS 1:12	INSEPERABLE 13:9	SLEEPOVERS 19:10
BEST FRIENDS 6:17	IS IT OKAY TO ARGUE 1:3	SOLVE 12:8
BIG FIGHT 19:14	LISTEN 17:2	SPLASHED 2:3
CALMLY EXPLAIN 7:10	MARK 21:19	STOMPED 22:22
CAMPOUTS 15:9	MIKE 19:21	TALK 9:6
COMPROMISE 3:5	MUD PUDDLES 17:11	TOGETHER 11:14
DIFFERENT IDEAS 9:18	OPINIONS 16:15	UNDERSTAND 1:13
DISAGREE 4:18	POINT OF VIEW 18:12	UPSET 22:7