
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

PA Nonbelievers will be having our Annual Meeting online via Zoom on Saturday March 6th, from 12:00 to 2:00 PM. The invite and Zoom link to attend the PAN annual meeting will only be sent out to current members who have either started or renewed their membership for the 2021 year. Membership enrollment and renewal will be open for 2021 until February 27. You can start or renew your membership at our website: <http://www.panonbelievers.org/>. PAN currently have vacant board seats that need to be filled and some current board members whose term will be ending this year. If you are interested in joining the board let us know. If you are planning to run for a board position, be prepared to say a little about yourself and how you may contribute to the PA Non-believer mission.

PA Nonbelievers as an organization has clearly stated our values and expectations for our members. I've chosen this month to present PA Nonbelievers values and the types of members we would like to have, by drawing a clear comparison between PA Nonbelievers and those who participated in the capitol riots on January 6th.

I did not see any atheist or humanist flags waving at the capital riots, but I did see christian nationalist associated flags along with white supremacists and QAnon supporters. This may not have been all of the people who were at the riots that day, but it has since become clear that a large number of them were, and that other people who attended and others around the country supported what they did. The rise of christian nationalism and the similar ideological groups and the behaviors that we witnessed by these group members at the capital riots was not a surprise to many of us atheists who have been paying close attention to political, social, and historical events over the past 70 years. However, I feel this is a good opportunity to compare PAN values and morals, with the morals and values of those who participated in the January 6th insurrection.

Now, as I often point out, atheism is not a value or moral system, much to the ignorant chagrin of religious people who often speak to us in the community. It simply means no belief in gods. I will often tell people that they need to ask further questions to discover what each of our individual and group values are. PAN is a community of atheist, as well as agnostics, nones, humanists, rationalists, skeptics, existentialists, nihilists, LeVeyan satanists, ect..., which means there is a fairly wide range of potential values and moral beliefs held by our members. However, we do have a primary unifier between our members. We, to some degree, do not believe in or agree with the values and belief systems of the current or past organized religious groups that we are aware of in our society. Many of us also agree with the idea of separation of church and state and a secular system of government as is stated in the US Constitution and 1st Amendment.

Christian nationalists believe the complete opposite and have been trying to insert religion into our pollical systems and have been trying to amend the constitution for decades to make America a "christian nation". It is notable that this would make them constitutionally non-compliant and not

Most ppl don't understand why some atheists are so vocal. "If you don't believe, why do you even care?" We care because we're tired of superstition governing the minds of the general population, stifling progress, arguing against scientific reality, & perpetuating ignorance.

(Via Almighty Amadeus)

originalists, as many of them espouse. A quick read of the Constitution and it becomes clear that there is an explicit attempt by the founding fathers to not have one single national religion. In fact, several of the founding fathers were either deists or would now be considered agnostics, nones, or atheists. One particular christian nationalist organization is firmly aware of this fact, the National Reform Association, (formerly known as National Association to Secure the Religious Amendment of the United States Constitution). They have been trying to get an amendment to the constitution since 1864 to make the United States a "christian state".

With all of this being said, it could be possible for an atheist anarchist or atheist nihilist to have participated in the capital riots due to their values in part lining up with the other participants who wanted chaos, to supplant the government, bring about a coup, and or wanted to participate in any of the other nefarious behaviors that were witnessed and reported. It is also possible for a poorly educated atheist who may have low critical thinking skills, low metacognition for manipulation by others, may meet the criteria for the Dunning-Kruger effect, and believe in the QAnon conspiracies to participate as well. However, the hypothetical atheist anarchist, atheist nihilist, atheist QAnon conspiracist who supports or participated in behaviors or thoughts similar to the capital rioters would not line up with PA Nonbelievers stated and implied values and mission statement. They would be subsequently kicked out of our group and membership if said persons would be found to have participated or supported the capital riots that occurred on the 6th of January. Period!

PA Nonbelievers values and mission statements stand in stark contrast to christian nationalism and the other groups that participated in the capital riots. For example, the PAN organizations values of "skepticism" "rationalism", and "education" would disqualify a QAnon conspiracist from PA Nonbeliever membership, due to a clear disregard for all three values; if they believe there is a secret group of child molesting satanists running the government without any proof. A sceptic would conclude that this would be an extraordinary claim and would require extraordinary evidence. The rationalist would also find the claim credulous and without reason. The educated would be able to disprove all of the claims easily with some research. In particular, a LeVeyan satanist cannot be a pedophile, according to "the eleven satanic rules on the Earth" (the equivalent of the christian 10 commandments), due to having a specific rule "do not harm little children". It is notable to me, that setting a commandment to not harm children, did not make the cut in the christian bible, but setting a commandment to not covet other's possessions did.

One could even say that a hypothetical atheist anarchist or nihilist would be a poor example of an atheist as well, due the majority of the participants in the capital riots being motivated by christian nationalist values and goals. Which would not be in these atheist's best interests.

A humanist would also refuse to participate in or support the capital riots, due to our primary values being generally or implied to do no harm and to take personal responsibility for our behaviors. Many of the capitol hill rioters, appeared to have been surprised later when they were made to take responsibility for their various criminal behaviors. I have personally had many discussions and debates with christian apologists over the years on humanism being morally superior compared to biblical morality. Christianity requires submission to moral authority and abdication of personal

responsibility, which I would argue is a lower level of morality than humanism's philosophical expectation that one takes personal responsibility for all of their chosen behaviors and decisions. The fundamental moral and psychological flaw to submitting to authority, is that it leads one to be open to follow and behave as the authority in closest proximity and with the most authoritative voice to them dictates. What if that authority is not moral and does not have yours or others interests in mind as you submit to them? "Those who can convince you of absurdities, can make you commit atrocities." Voltaire.

But I digress, I felt it necessary to both promote PAN's values and make a statement on the deplorable acts of the insurrectionists at the capital riots. I find it easy and obvious to compare the values I hold to the capitol rioters. But I have been reading and watching that many christians have been struggling and trying to make statements on their values since the capital riots. They are struggling to explain and separate the 'moral' from the 'immoral' and what they actually believe and stand for versus what christian nationalist philosophies. Christian nationalism has clearly affected the religious and their value systems in this country to the point that maybe they do not even know what they believe anymore.

I, on the other hand, am an atheist humanist existentialist. And unlike christians, I did not have to do a gut check on whether I support my country and the Constitution; or whether I support christian nationalism instead. With the right morals and ethics, some decisions are so easy!

Atheist News in Pennsylvania – The Nation – The World!



Victory!

Years ago, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Freethought Society (NEPA) tried to buy space for the above ad on buses in the County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS). COLTS turned down the ad, saying it was "controversial." After much back and forth, NEPA sued, and won. And now they've really won: According to Hemant Mehta, The Friendly Atheist, friendlyatheist.patheos.com, COLTS has agreed to pay more than \$275,000 in attorney's fees to NEPA's attorney, the ACLU.

COLTS had shown wild inconsistency through the years. Although it passed a regulation that said it would not accept religious ads at all, in the time since NEPA's ad was rejected, COLTS had accepted ads from the following groups: St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church; St. Matthew's Lutheran Church; Christian Women's Devotional Alliance; Hope Church; Old Forge Times, an online blog that contained links to anti-Semitic websites, holocaust denial websites, and white supremacist websites. COLTS claimed that these religious ads weren't

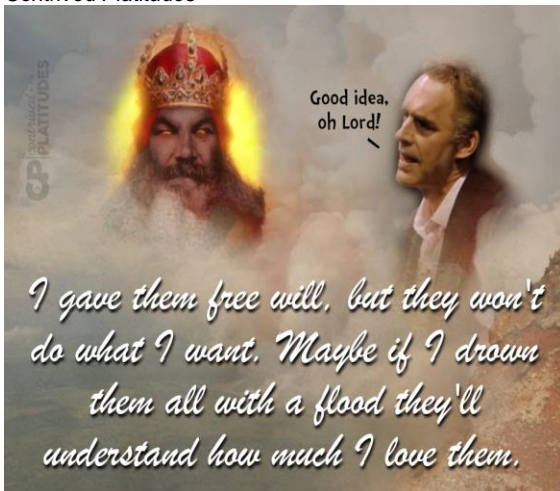
promoting God, just advertising churches. At one point COLTS did accept an ad that said "NEPA" but not "atheists," so clearly the word "atheist" made the ad toxic.

Eventually the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit ruled that COLTS' position was viewpoint discrimination, which violates the First Amendment.

COLTS will have to pay the attorney's fees from its general fund because its insurance excludes coverage for this type of lawsuit.

Jason Vacula, head of NEPA who was at the center of this fight, had the following comment: "It's about time the word 'atheists' can be displayed on advertisements in Northeastern Pennsylvania and hopefully the rest of the United States. That someone is an atheist or wants to advertise an atheist group should not be controversial. The word 'atheists' is not an 'attack on religion' as COLTS' solicitor claimed. People are leaving religion and want to be part of groups offering community and support. The NEPA Freethought Society, like other groups, should be allowed to advertise on buses."

Contrived Platiudes



SBA and Church/State Separation

American Atheists (atheists.org) is alerting the secular community to an issue with church/state separation.

As PANViews has previously reported, the Small Business Administration has provided more than \$7.3 million to churches and religious organizations under the Paycheck Protection Program. This is of course unconstitutional. The SBA now wants to change its rules so that it can continue to provide money to religious institutions.

The rule that formally prevents the SBA from doing this was enacted in 1996. The SBA now wants to eliminate the rule completely, so that there will be no constraints on their providing money to church and church related activities.

American Atheists requests that people opposed to this change send comments to the SBA by February 12, 2021. To do so, go to this website:

<https://www.atheists.org/2021/01/small-business-administration-religious-organizations-action-alert/>

Another Crooked Pastor

Another pastor more interested in making a buck than helping people? What a surprise. Kirbyjon Caldwell was the pastor of a Houston megachurch with ties to both Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. According to the New York Times, nytimes.com, he was one of the architects of a multi-million-dollar con.

Caldwell's largely African-American congregation was an attractive target for politicians. He spoke at the Republican National Convention in 2000, delivered the benediction at Bush's second inauguration, and officiated at Jenna Bush's wedding. Caldwell was part of a circle of Christian

pastors who prayed with Obama, and served on Obama's fatherhood and healthy families task force.

In the meantime he began running a scheme with another man, Gregory Alan Smith, a Louisiana investment adviser. The pair offered victims the chance to invest in Chinese bonds. These bonds had been issued by the Republic of China before the Chinese Communist party came to power in 1949. The current Chinese government does not recognize them, and they have no value, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission, except as collectibles.

Caldwell is not some naïve pastor, innocent of how investments work. He has a master's degree from the Wharton School of Business, and had worked in the financial industry.

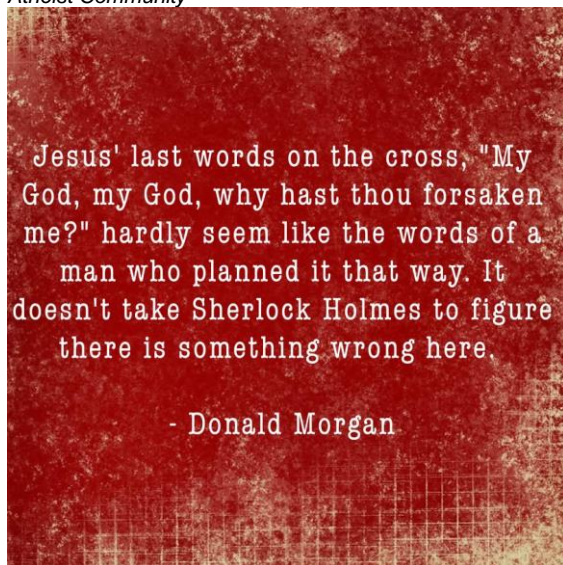
The investors, many of whom were elderly, were promised big returns, and encouraged to cash out other investments to buy the worthless bonds. They were told to wire money to accounts held or controlled by Caldwell. About \$3.5 million was transferred. Caldwell's cut was around \$900,000, which he used to pay off personal debts, including mortgages, credit cards, and personal loans.

By 2018, investors began to wonder when they would see a return on their investment. There was an investigation, and Caldwell and Smith were indicted. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud last March, and was sentenced to 6 years in prison. He was ordered to pay about \$3.5 million in restitution and a \$125,000 fine.

Didn't Caldwell realize people would eventually figure out the bonds were worthless? The UM News, umnews.org, reports that in his factual basis for a plea, he stated he did not at first understand that the bonds had no value – but then ignored repeated warnings about them.

Caldwell's church came to his defense. According to Houston's abc13.com the church issued a statement that claimed Caldwell has already made full restitution. Floyd LeBlanc, Chairman of The Windsor Village Church Family Personnel Committee, proclaimed "The Kingdom Building continues!"

Atheist Community



France's Secular Challenge

Secularism was one of the cornerstones of the French Revolution. This idea, *laïcité*, encompasses the thought that education will allow people from different backgrounds and beliefs to commit to French citizenship.

As a result, the *New York Times*, nytimes.com, reports, for example, that no French politician would ever say "In God we trust."

But the increased number of Muslim immigrants has led to accusations that *laïcité* is just an excuse to discriminate against Muslims.

Therefore, France established the *Laïcité Observatory* in 2013, to educate public officials and students about what secularism means. Nicolas Cadène runs the Observatory, as its general rapporteur. Cadène acknowledges that things are tense in France right now. "We are living a period of extreme tension in France. There's an economic, social, health, ecological and identity crisis,

aggravated by recent Islamist attacks. And in this context, you have a terrible fear of Islam that has developed.” This has led, he says, to pressure on him to repress any expression of Muslim identity.

Cadène sees problems in France’s reaction to Muslims. Neighborhoods, schools and churches are homogeneous; there is little social mingling. In particular, the inferior schools Muslim children attend limits their opportunities. This criticism of France has resulted to accusations that what the Observatory is doing is actually a “laïcité of appeasement,” more concerned with accommodating Muslims than espousing French values. The Observatory’s mandate is up for renewal in April, and its work may end.

Part of the problem is that there’s a dispute in what exactly laïcité means. Is it freedom of conscience, with the state neutral regarding religion? Or does it represent freedom from religion, something, the article says, “close to atheism”? Legislation has been proposed that would end funding and teachings of extremist Muslim groups. But the government is also preparing a “national consultation on discrimination” to look at expanding Muslim opportunity in France.

Christian History

Huffpost.com reports on an analysis it performed on 3 textbooks from Christian publishers Abeka and BJU Press, to see how these textbooks describe the last 4 years of US politics.

Essentially, Huffpost says, the books teach that the US is undergoing a serious moral decline that can only be fixed by conservative Christian policies. Huffpost estimates that around 2,400 Christian schools use these materials, or others like them.

Still Here? Silly Christians



Abeka was started by the people who founded Pensacola Christian College, which outlaws dancing and other “satanic practices,” like astrology. BJP is affiliated with Bob Jones University. Bob Jones, of course, lost its tax-exempt status in the 1980s because it banned interracial dating (which it did not reverse until 2000.)

Essentially, the textbooks espouse Christian nationalist beliefs: The United States is a Christian nation, with a special covenant with God, and a special responsibility to implement particular Christian ideas, or risk losing favor with God. The textbooks emphasize that the US is moving away from its moral center, with Christians fighting for the forces of morality.

The article quotes a passage from an 11th-grade U.S. history textbook from Abeka: “Although many false philosophies were popular in America before 2000, the new millennium heralded a dramatic acceptance of immoral ideology on a national scale. ... Three such philosophies are globalism, environmentalism, and postmodernism.” It goes on to say, “Believing religion — particularly Christianity — to be divisive, globalists discourage its influence on public life.”

The textbooks also replay the religious right’s greatest hits, dismissing evolution, suggesting that modern psychology is the brainchild of Satan. Of course, homosexuality is condemned. One Abeka textbook takes the novel position that “slaves seemed to be better investments than indentured servants.” Passages such as this make it hard to imagine how Americans will ever reach any kind of political unity.

Ex-Muslim Fights for Rights

A former Muslim who now fights for women's rights has been charged with "politically motivated" crimes in Tanzania. The Guardian, theguardian.com, reports that Zara Kay, a Tanzanian native who is now a citizen of Australia, has been accused of 3 crimes. Kay is the founder of Faithless Hijabi, which supports women who are ostracized or threatened if they leave, or even question Islam.

Kay was held by Tanzania police because of a tweet criticizing the Tanzanian president for his government's handling of Covid-19. In addition, she was accused of not returning her Tanzanian passport after she became an Australian citizen; she says she lost it. Finally, she was also accused of using a mobile sim card registered in the name of a relative. The International Coalition of Ex-Muslims say this last accusation has been used in other high-profile cases.

Kay was released after being held for 32 hours. The International Coalition of Ex-Muslims issued a statement calling on the Tanzania government to drop the charges, and allow Kay to leave the country. It also asked Australia to intervene on her behalf. Australian consular officials responded that it can visit prisoners, monitor their welfare and give them information about hiring lawyers, but it cannot provide legal advice, or otherwise intervene.

Kay was raised as a Shia Muslim in Tanzania, but stopped wearing the hijab when she moved to Australia for school in her teens. She later left Islam altogether, and has spoken in Australia on the topic: "Losing your religion can be hard, and for some, it can be fatal."

Tanzania is about 61% Christian, and 35% Muslim. It does not have blasphemy laws; Kay has been charged with sedition.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has asked its members and supporters to advocate for Kay's release. It provides the following information: The Tanzanian Embassy in the United States can be reached by telephone: (202)884-1080 (202)939-6125 (202)939-6127

Twitter: @tzembassyus

Email: ubalozi@tanzaniaembassy-us.org

Fax: (202)797-7408

Website: <https://tanzaniaembassy-us.org/>



Ireland, Again

Ireland's historic entanglement with religion continues to cause problems. Although usually the problems are with the Catholic church in the Republic of Ireland, mostly Protestant Northern Ireland has issues, too.

Northern Ireland legalized abortion in 2019, but that doesn't mean abortion is actually available. According to The New York *Times*, nytimes.com, The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has taken legal action against secretary of state, Brandon Lewis; the Northern Ireland Executive; and the Department of Health for Northern Ireland for failing to commission and fund abortion services.

Abortions have been hard to obtain, due to resistance from anti-abortion and church groups. Coronavirus has made the situation worse, overwhelming hospitals and health care workers. In the past Northern Irish women traveled to England for the procedure, but with virus travel restrictions, that is almost impossible.

The Department of Health has never issued any guidance on how to provide abortion services; in fact, the Department issued a statement saying that it was not required to commission abortions, and that any questions about the services should come from the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly – after public consultation. The Northern Ireland executive has yet to begin any such public debate. Critics say that the lack of action is due to the opposition to abortion from some of the country's political parties.

The past plight of unwed single mothers in the Republic of Ireland is well-known. However, many of the victims feel that the Catholic Church has still not been held sufficiently accountable.

Another report about the Catholic church run Mother and Baby Homes (different from the famous and horrific Magdalen Laundries) has been released. This report details 9,000 death of children at 14 of these homes over several decades. The rate of death for children in the homes is much higher than the general death rate of children over the same time period. The last of these homes was not closed until 1998. The commission was set up after the remains of about 800 babies and young children, buried in an unmarked mass grave at the site of a former Mother and Baby Home, were discovered. Survivors claim that records of the Homes are still hidden, and that the Catholic Church has not come been made to reckon with the human damage it caused.



Jesus Take the Wheel. Please.

PANViews has 2 new stories about drivers testing their faith while endangering everybody else.

Both of these incidents are reported by Hemant Mehta, the Friendly Atheist, at friendlyatheist.patheos.com. In the first, a 31-year-old Kentucky man drove into oncoming traffic and hit another car. While holding his 7-month-old son in his lap.

The driver of the second car died. Jesse Brown, the crazy driver, explained to police why he hit the other car.

His baby had died, Brown told the cops. Jesus told Brown that if he hit the other car, he would bring the baby back to life.

The baby is fine, was fine, and no one knows why Brown thought he was dead. Apparently, alcohol was involved.

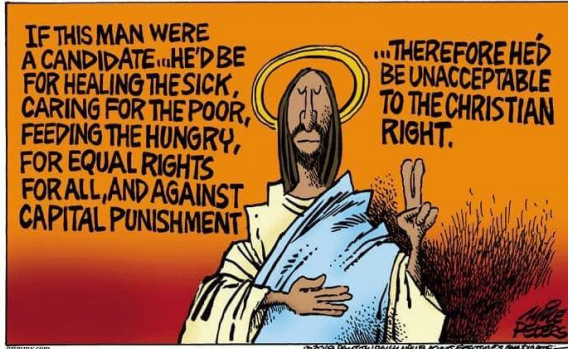
In the second story, Nadejda Reilly, 51, from Pennsylvania drove into oncoming traffic because God was testing her. She crashed, and 2 people in the other car were injured.

In her arrest affidavit, the state trooper wrote, "Reilly related God took care of her by not having her injured. Reilly expressed no concerns or remorse for the victims. Reilly also stated she did not care

if the other people were injured because God would have taken care of them.” She was charged with aggravated assault, among other things.

Auto insurers should start charging extra for church goers.

God Is Still Laughing



New Measures – Fewer Religious

Many polling organizations are struggling with the fact that fewer people answer the phone. The Pew Research Center always depended on random-digit dialing to invite people to participate in surveys conducted by a live person. Since that is no longer viable in 2014 Pew established its American Trends Panel (ATP).

As Pew reports at Pewforum.org, the ATP is a “nationally representative group of more than 13,500 U.S. adults recruited by phone or mail who have agreed to participate in online surveys conducted approximately once or twice per month.” Among other things, this change has resulted in a difference in the answers Pew receives when it asks about religion. Surprise – the online surveys report an America that is less religious than interview-driven surveys do.

Pew suggests that people are much more likely to describe themselves as religious when asked by a live person. Pew’s explanation of this phenomena isn’t surprising: “This is because, when representing themselves to another person, some people may (consciously or subconsciously) project a more highly religious image of themselves than when they are filling out a survey alone and unobserved. This ‘mode effect’ reflects, in part, that being religious has long been considered a socially desirable attribute in America.”

Another question, about how often the responder attends religious service, shouldn’t see a great difference, Pew theorizes, because the answer is a verifiable fact: the person either attended a religious service, or didn’t. But the difference between responses to a live person or to a computer still exists. Pew suspects that what the interview subject is *really* saying to the live person is, “I’m the kind of person who goes to church every week,” not necessarily that he actually *does* go to church every week.

Wouldn’t it be great if “nice” people didn’t think they had to lie about their religiosity?

Secular Voters on the Rise

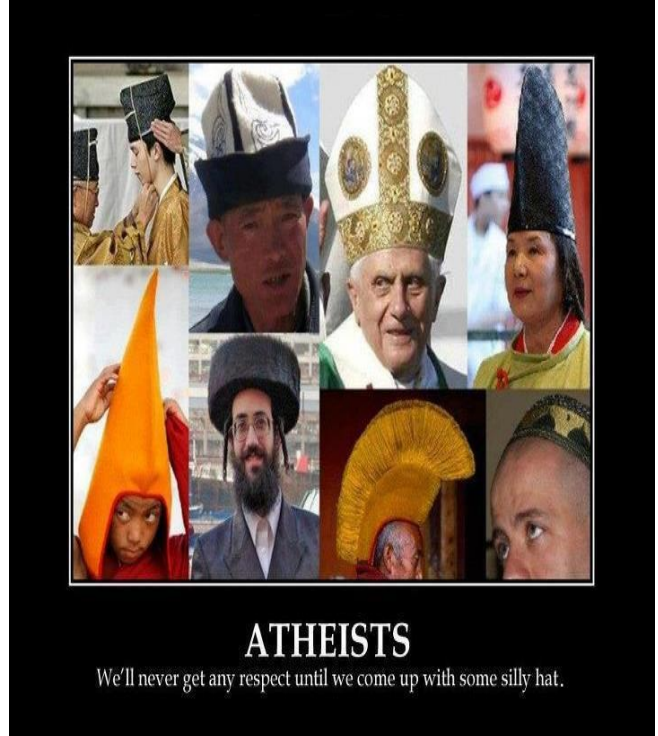
Secularists have long bemoaned the fact that we don’t vote in proportion to our numbers. Phil Zuckerman, writing for the Associated Press feature *The Conversation*, has a hopeful perspective. In a recent essay, “Seculars Becoming an Electoral Force,” posits that secularists are beginning to influence election results.

Zuckerman, of Pitzer College, describes himself as a scholar of the secular movement. He notes that national commentators have not paid much attention to the increase in nonreligious voters, from around 5% to 23% over the last 50 years.

He argues that it is a “semantic bamboozle” to describe religious voters as “values voters.” As PAN members know, nonbelievers have strongly held values, too. He presents several examples of secular issues succeeding in the last election.

For example, Washington state passed a referendum requiring that all public school students receive sex education. Washington is strongly secular: more than one-third are not religiously affiliated, more than one-third do not pray, and almost 40% do not attend religious services. Since studies show that nonreligious people favor sex education, it’s likely that the number of them in Washington helped this referendum to pass.

Oregon is another largely secular state. Its voters passed a measure to decriminalize the possession and personal use of drugs. Christian polling firm Barna reported in 2016 that 66% of evangelicals and 43% of other Christians think all drugs should be illegal, but only 17% on nones thought that.



Other examples include a successful ballot initiative in Denver, a notably secular city, that provides funds for programs that will fight climate change, with 62% of the vote. And California (again, a secular area) voters passed a proposition to fund stem cell research.

There’s more good news. Zuckerman quotes Hemant Mehta, The Friendly Atheist, as reporting that all members of the Congressional Freethought Caucus were re-elected, and another 10 state senators who are publicly secular, were voted into office, an increase from 7 two years ago.

Maybe soon politicians will realize there’s more than one kind of values voter.

Dead Man’s Rights

Religion has put the Supreme Court in an awkward situation. According to usatoday.com, it has blocked the execution of a Texas inmate who was not allowed to have a Christian priest at his side.

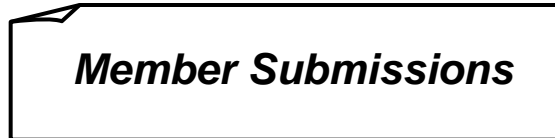
The problem started last year when another Texas inmate was denied the presence of a Buddhist priest at his execution. Why didn’t Texas let the Buddhist priest in? Texas has an approved list of Christian and Muslim clerics who may attend executions. Texas claims that allowing just any clergy person in the execution chamber would be a security risk. The Supreme Court decided with the Buddhist inmate last year. In response, Texas changed its rules and now refuses to allow any clergy in the execution.

So, the religious-leaning Supreme Court is responsible for denying religious consolation to persons about to be executed. In an unsigned order in the most recent case, the court said, "The District Court should promptly determine, based on whatever evidence the parties provide, whether serious security problems would result if a prisoner facing execution is permitted to choose the spiritual adviser the prisoner wishes to have in his immediate presence during the execution."

This isn't just a Texas issue. In a case before both of the Texas ones, the court refused to block the execution of an Alabama man because he was not going to be allowed to have a Muslim imam with him. The official reason was that the man made his request too late. The Court's conservative justices received a lot of criticism for that decision. In the Buddhist case, Associate Justice Brett Kavanaugh suggested barring all religious advisers: "As this court has repeatedly held, governmental discrimination against religion – in particular, discrimination against religious persons, religious organizations, and religious speech – violates the Constitution. What the state may not do, in my view, is allow Christian or Muslim inmates but not Buddhist inmates to have a religious adviser of their religion in the execution room."

The lawyer for Ruben Gutierrez, the prisoner who wanted a Catholic priest with him, stated his position: "Ruben Gutierrez believes that the presence of a Christian chaplain in the execution chamber will assist his passing from life to death and guide his path to the afterlife. Prior to April 2019, the state of Texas would have allowed this practice, as chaplains have been present for hundreds of executions in Texas. But Texas changed the rules."

It would seem logical for Texas to approve a few more religious figures, and let them all in. But logic seldom seems to operate alongside religion.



COVID CODEX

Priscilla Oppenheimer

Well we've gotten the word from the Pope
That it's Okay to take the vaccine.
Would we have any hope if he had said "Nope!"
No, we'd just quietly exit the scene.

But these clerics are still horrified:
Science made it from some fetal cell!
So we might end up fried if no shots are tried,
But at least we won't end up in Hell.

Season of Love?

Ally Consoli

As we approach the "Season of Love," we will all invariably be inundated with countless reminders in red, white, and pink of all the things we are expected to buy for our loved ones lest we show that we don't actually care about them. While the commercialism of this "holiday" is already bad enough, the religiosity makes the day so much worse! We see the passage from 1 Corinthians a lot this time of year. Like so many things in this book, it might look okay on the surface, but any second glance will present a different story.

Love might be patient and kind. Ask any couple who has survived their first fight. After all of the eye rolls, the arguments, the screams, if there is still love there you have demonstrated its patience. As for kindness, well, that stems from compassion and a recognition that, as social creatures, our survival is contingent upon helping others. Call it love if you don't know any better, and anyone

February 2021

seeking wisdom from the Bible has shown that they do not, but biology, anthropology, and humanism are closer to that truth.

Immediately following that is when it starts to fall apart. Ironically, most people can only quote the patient and kind part. A non-jealous love and a love to not be proud of to the point where you would want to boast about it are immediately where it loses me. Now, I'm not advising that every time your partner leaves the house you turn into a big green giant, because that's not love either. It's possession. But I am saying that if you don't ever get jealous, you may want to reevaluate how much you care. Even if that small twinge goes away immediately because you know that you love each other and nothing would happen that would test that, the feeling should still be there. Following that, why would someone in love not want to be proud or happy about it? Most romantic comedies have a "screaming from the rooftop" scene in them because they are so relatable! I think most of us can think about a time being in love and wanting everyone to know about it, casually dropping hints about it, not being able to shut up about how they make you feel... hopefully it's not just me showing my romantic side and others can relate. Yes? No? Crickets?

Now here is where I take a lot of issue. It does not dishonor others. Yep. Here it is. Love equals obedience. I hate this idea. I have fallen victim to it with the religious crowd. That is, since I've gotten married I automatically agree with everything my husband says or does. News flash: I don't. Honestly, I don't know any wife/girlfriend/fiancée who does. And, yes, that goes for the opposite gender as well. We don't always agree. I will usually support him, but sometimes the best thing a person can do in love is tell when you tell your partner when they're messing up! Love is very much self-seeking, because it always wants to find someone who feels it back. Otherwise you experience unrequited love. It works for Charlie Brown, but not for anyone in the real world. Pining, obsessing, and chasing someone who doesn't care about you back is no way to live.

Not being angered goes back to my earlier point about envy. If you never get angry with your partner, do you even care? Anger is a natural emotion of passion. Should you always be angry with them? I hope not. But I would be concerned with your level of passion for the other person if you never get angry at all. I do, however, agree with the line about not keeping a record of wrongdoings. That makes you look petty and, again, like you are intentionally finding fault with the other person. Why? People are people, and they make mistakes. If it's something that you can't deal with, you're better off leaving than staying with them only to make yourself angry. Who needs to live life like that? Besides, the adage of "don't go to bed angry," or the wisdom I got from my dad at my wedding, "don't wake up tomorrow to a fight you had yesterday," makes a lot of sense.

Love delighting in the truth? Really? In a book full of lies you want to talk about truth. Fine. The truth about love is that it is a complex emotion that hits all of us differently and cannot be summed up in a simple poetic response. There. That's your truth.

Love, unfortunately, does not always protect, trust, hope, and persevere. Sometimes it fails. At least fifty percent of the time that someone gets married from love, it fails. That is the reality of divorce. Love is sometimes not strong enough to protect against the other emotional turmoil within. Love cannot always lead to a trust that has been betrayed, sometimes repeatedly. A hopeful love without a return on action just sounds like more unrequited love, and that's not healthy. And, again, love does not always persevere and sometimes we fall out of love. Love is far more mature than this passage is making it out to be. Love evolves like everything else in this world. It can ebb and flow. Sometimes you may like your partner more than other times, but as long as there is still love you will continue to survive together. And love does fail.

The last part was the real head scratcher and anger inducer for me. Love can cease prophecies, silence tongues, and destroy knowledge? NO!! No, no, and no! Minds should always be curious, people should always be inquisitive, and answers should always be sought. Why must love crush a person's individualism? It doesn't, and shouldn't. The healthiest couples need their own activities, with others that they are able to share. Again, love is not equivalent to obedience. There is a difference. The woman does not have to stand behind the man, silent until spoken to, and avail

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herself of his success from his shadow. All people in love have the right to their own freedoms and passions. Their own thoughts and opinions. Their own sense of self. Otherwise, the first thing to "pass away" won't be knowledge, it will be love.

FUN!



Name: _____

Date: _____

Greek Mythology

M T G O D D E S S D E M E T E R A
 H Z Q S U E S E H T I R Y Q Y M V
 T E C Y C L O P S K T O O G O D K
 A C A O L Y M P I A N S S U E Z T
 R E N O I R O U G A S Y X F P H P
 T E L F S Z P D J S U B O J A T N
 A L S V R J E D D U P L W Z J K I
 R F E W E I R T W D M A Y S I N U
 U T L G T W S Y Z E Y S E M R E H
 S K C A S H E Y X M L G O C W P L
 D U A S N E U S X G O Q T Y A T V
 T W R U O L S E L S S N E H T A K
 L M E S M U P D O I M M O R T A L
 V N H A P V G A S U P M Y L O T M
 H Z F G V M Q H F W A N E H T A N
 T U B E I P O S E I D O N X G E Y
 F M G P V U N D E R W O R L D F O

immortal	Tartarus	Mt.Olympus	Olympians
Monsters	Medusa	Underworld	God
Goddess	Heracles	Orion	Demeter
Olympus	Fleece	Theseus	Perseus
Pegasus	Poseidon	Athena	Athens
Hades	cyclops	Hermes	Zeus



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

When the day dawns that we can have in-person meetings again, this is where and when they will be:

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.

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

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 let's 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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