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# 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*

The PAN Board hopes that everyone is having a good summer and enjoying more activities than you were able to do last year. We are having more in person PAN meetings and more diverse kinds of meetups and activities, so if you are interested check out our Facebook and Meetup pages to find the activities and times. We will also be having some tabling events this year, which will also be posted on Facebook and Meetup.

### ***Occam's Razor: Applied to the Psychology of Religious Cognitive Hobbling and lack of Cognitive Dissonance***

There appears to be a significant psychological disregard for the degree of hobbling or advantage that develops in the mind depending on the social, religious, or functional problem-solving skills that are given to a person early on and throughout their life. Can Occam's Razor be applied to develop hypotheses that are more functional and abductive than the old hypotheses based on low knowledge and absolutism, such as mystery, religion, and a priori disease models?

First a thought experiment. Imagine you and everyone you know are given a sack to stand and hop around in. You assume, by proximity and autonomy, that hopping around in sacks appears to be the best way for everyone to get around. Everyone you know is also taught social shame to stay within that sack and not try any other mode or techniques of movement in reality. But, then as a matter of experience, awareness, and time, you discover that you and everyone in your closed group are actually in a footrace competition with other groups and individuals. And not everyone is using a sack to hop around in for mobility. In fact, there are others using far more logical equipment, such as shoes, and techniques such as walking and running. Even crawling appears more efficient than hopping in a sack for some situations. You have never seen or thought that you could use any of these diverse techniques and equipment, because everyone you had ever known up to that point had hopped around in sacks. You also see that these other competitors are easily and handily using and adjusting their techniques to beat you, more often than not, as you trip and fall at the limits of a hobbling sack. How hard is it to psychologically cope as the cognitive dissonance sets in and within a hobbled sack, as you repeatedly lose, mysteriously, but in a reality different from what you were taught?

If those hobbled in sacks throw a tantrum and threaten the judges to let them start first, or else; do we look to see if they meet the criteria for Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Antisocial Personality Disorder? If they turn to drinking alcohol heavily, lose motivation, refuse to do previously fun activities, or start to have suicidal ideations after losing repeatedly at competitions in reality, do we look for diagnostic criteria for alcoholism or depression respectively? If they fall into a rage at the perceived unfairness to them and they perceive a strong sense of entitlement to hit or shoot the winning competitor, do we look for diagnostic criteria for Intermittent Explosive Disorder, Mania, or Schizophrenia? Is the psychological disease model the simplest explanation for behaviors, when

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there appears to be a dependence on environmental causality and the types of coping skills that have been learned and socialized?

We could apply Occam's Razor here to form more abductive hypotheses. Would the simpler hypothesis be: have the humans in the sack been hobbled, cognitively, by their autonomous religiously followed social belief system? The socialized religious sack appears to have hobbled what they are able to perceive, limited their experiential knowledge, reduced their ability and options to problem solve, stunted their emotional awareness and maturity to react appropriately to adversity, (or more accurately to reality), and has resulted in dysfunctional behaviors that may or may not meet the criteria for a psychological diagnosis, compared to the people moving outside of the hobbling sack. These hypotheses can be tested. The Occam's Razor solution to the above aberrant behaviors, would appear to be to not get into or put on a hobbling religious sack, when competing outside of a homogenous group.

Originally, the Occam's Razor hypothetical explanation for aberrant behaviors and psychology were a priori behavior, eugenic, born with, illness, and disease models. The social sciences have since found that all minds have a propensity towards confirmation bias, avoidance of cortisol or feeling stress, are very malleable to the environment, and cognition is significantly affected by our socioeconomic and acculturated experiences. Given the collected data and evidence of psychology over the last 100 years, why are we still diagnosing, labeling, and focusing on the frustrated and apathetic reactions of individuals and groups as diseases (anxiety, depression, alcoholism, etc....) when the cause of the frustration and the primary issue appear to be the unnatural socialized absolute imparities placed on a mind, that had evolved to be dynamic? It appears the collected social science evidence points to a simpler abductive hypothesis that religion and tradition has a regressive cognitive effect overall on the mind in both homogenous and dynamic social groups. It has been assumed, or the Occam's Razor, that a homogenous religious and traditional group appeared to be functional due to copying each other and acting the same. However, as societal homogeneity has decreased, the weaknesses of the cognitively religious and traditionally dependent minds have become more observable and obvious.

But why does our society not recognize the negative and globally hobbling effects on cognition and perception that appears to result from the inculcation of a rigid belief system early on and throughout one's life? Have we as a society become so used to watching everyone fall and tumble over ourselves, that we have even created logic and labels within this unnatural state of being cognitively hobbled? Is the very nature of trying to perceive the complex amalgam of perceptions through the cognitive veil of confirmation bias and avoidance of the existential unknown made it difficult for society to create cognitive dissonance for its traditions and religions?

Maybe Occam's Razor can be applied again through another tangible thought experiment. Imagine that religious belief and the resulting hobbling effects in reality are like tying a dog's front right foot up to their chest and seeing how the dog performs when you throw a ball. We can perceive and think that it would be normal and a realistic expectation to witness the dog trip a couple times on the way to fetch the ball. We may even conclude that the dog is high functioning and successful if it learns how to hop on the front left foot without tripping and falling over themselves. However, it is notable that the dog will need to move much slower on three legs and appears to have significant weaknesses in mobility due to a clear cause. But what if we, or society, had never seen the mobility, that was clearly better, without a hobbled front leg. Further, what if we or society did not see the dogs right leg strapped up to their chest, had only seen dogs with their front right leg strapped up, and had never seen a dog move as they should in their natural evolved state. Would we then assume the natural default state is a three-legged dog, just as our society assumes that a religion should be taught to everyone in a society or that everyone believes in gods, souls, and the spiritual? Let us forget for a moment that we should and would clearly know a dog able to move and chase a ball on four legs, as it had naturally evolved, would be better in all ways to an unnatural hobbled three-legged attempt. How corrupted would our perceptions have to be to not experience cognitive dissonance, when we label the frustrated reactions that the dog may have to being hobbled, such as biting at its hobbled leg, barking at the person who threw the ball, or laying down

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and giving up, as being the problem behaviors, instead of the original stressor of being hobbled unnaturally.

Is that not in essence what we have done in our human society, hobbled by socialized religious beliefs? Take any rigid tradition or religious belief and inculcate that rigidity to large groups of people that unnaturally hobble their cognitive ability and mobility to reason in a dynamic reality: hierarcies, caste systems, slavery, racism, sexual and gender roles, etc... When we fit individual unique minds into rigid unnatural socialized states and do not allow or teach them how to cognitively adjust to the rigid states given, what should we expect and what is the real psychological problem? If you were not taught coping skills, expected to comply with the hobbling imperative, and became aware of who or what had hobbled us, might we not lash out in frustration and try to hit the hobbler, yell at someone who does not recognize or care that we are frustrated or disenfranchised unfairly by an artificial socialized stratification, or maybe feel overwhelmed by the socialized imperatives and just give up? Society hobbled by rigid religious tradition, like the hobbled dog, may struggle without critical thinking and coping skills, to adjust to our hobbled selves and those around us. The Occam's Razor, and in essence the only problem in these situations with the easiest solution, would be to unhobble the dog's leg, and unhobble the mind by not learning or teaching rigid religious cognition in the first place.

Do not wear a religious sack when engaging in a foot race that is occurring in reality.

***Atheist News in Pennsylvania– The Nation – The World!***

**As If Jury Duty Weren't Bad Enough**

Fayette County, PA, had a unique jury duty summons. The bottom of the summons prospective jurors received had the following phrase: "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Romans 13:1 NIV."

The Freedom from Religion Foundation at FFRF.org points out what should be obvious to everyone, especially government employees: official government communications can't include Bible verses, or any other religious thoughts or quotes. A Fayette County resident notified the FFRF, and one of their staff attorneys, Chris Line, wrote to the Fayette County Jury Commissioners' Office: "The Supreme Court has long recognized that the First Amendment mandates governmental neutrality between religion and religion, and between religion and nonreligion. When the Jury Commissioners' Office shares passages from the bible, it violates this neutrality."

The Jury Commissioners' Office quickly tossed in the towel. It replied to FFRF: "Upon receiving your letter dated Dec. 18, 2020, the bible verse was immediately removed from all jury summonses. With respect to the government-mandated separation of church and state, no future summons will include the verse."

It's great the FFRF won this skirmish. But it's appalling it happened in the first place.

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**Pledge Battle Continues**

It's also appalling that some teachers still harass students who say the Pledge of Allegiance as it was written.

American Atheists, atheists.org, has won a victory in a lawsuit against a Texas teacher who freaked out when a Texas high school student objected to the Pledge. The student, Mari Leigh Oliver, had objected to the Pledge before. Texas law requires that students stand for the Pledge unless they have parental permission not to. Mari Leigh’s mother had notified the school that she approved of Mari Leigh’s position – she refused to say “under God” when reciting the Pledge, and stated that she thought the US did not necessarily guarantee “liberty and justice for all,” especially for people of color.

The school staff had been informed that she had permission to ignore the Pledge. However, according to the Middle Tennessee University Free Speech Center, mtsu.edu, Benjie Arnold, her 12<sup>th</sup> grade sociology teacher, ignored the rules. He assigned the class to write out the Pledge. Mari Leigh drew a squiggly line where “under God” would normally appear. Arnold told her in front of the class, “What you’ve done is leave me no option but to give you a zero, and you can have all the beliefs and resentment and animosity that you want.”

According to a recording of the class, Arnold didn’t stop there. He ranted about lack of patriotism, as well as about communism, supporters of Sharia law, foreigners who do not assimilate into American culture, and sex offenders. He offered to pay for students to move to Europe if they didn’t want to live in America, adding that they would have to pay him back double if they ever moved back. He finished by saying, “You know there’s a lot of things I complain about, so when it comes time in November, I go vote or I protest in writing and legal. Those are the ways we do it in America.”

American Atheists brought suit on Mari Leigh’s behalf. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals refused to grant the teacher qualified immunity.

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*"Ob, I know He works in mysterious ways, but if I worked that mysteriously I'd get fired."*

### A New Twist

Stories about sexually abusive priests are so commonplace that they barely rate notice. But here’s a new one: a well-known French priest and psychotherapist who used to be a Vatican advisor can explain why he has sex with other priests. To cure them of homosexuality, of course.

Leaving aside what this says about his romantic skills, Msgr. Tony Anatrella is now being tried in church court for inappropriate relationships with male clients, according to the National Catholic Reporter, ncronline.com.

There have been rumors about Anatrella for decades, the story reports. In spite of that, French dioceses sent seminarians suspected of being gay to him, so he could teach them to suppress those urges. He was banned from performing as a priest in 2018. Now 80, accusations began surfacing in the early 2000s. Anatrella has always denied the rumors, and in 2005, he is reported to have helped structure Vatican guidelines to keep gay men from becoming priests.

One of the earliest accusations was from a seminarian who had been sent to Anatrella for therapy. Anatrella said he could cure Lamarca of his homosexuality by having sex with him. A theologian wrote an article about Anatrella, disputing his theological arguments in 2006, and was surprised to receive letters from several men, claiming that Anatrella had taken advantage of them. It took a while, but the church appears to have finally reacted.

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## Death to the Cartoonist

Kurt Westergaard, the Danish cartoonist who started a worldwide firestorm with his cartoon of Muhammad, has died.

Abcnews.go.com reports that Westergaard died at age 86, after a long illness. In 2005 he drew Muhammad wearing a bomb as his turban for Jyllands-Posten, a Danish newspaper. In all, the newspaper printed 12 caricatures of Muhammad. While Muslims object to any depiction of Muhammad as sacrilegious, they were particularly offended by Westergaard's.

Angry and sometimes violent anti-Danish demonstrations broke out all over the world. Syrian mobs burned down the Danish embassy (and the Norwegian embassy, because the cartoons were reprinted in Norway). Westergaard received death threats, and needed police protection. In 2008 3 people were arrested for plotting to kill him, and as late as 2010 a Somali man broke into Westergaard's home with an ax and knife.

Economictimes.indiatimes.com quoted Westergaard about religion: "They say god created man in his own image; as an atheist, I think it's the other way: man created god in his own image."

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## The Liberty Way

12 former students and employees have sued Liberty University, claiming that the school's "weaponization" of its honor code, the Liberty Way, makes it "difficult or impossible" to report sexual violence.

According to the *Washington Post*, at [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com), the lawsuit says that sexual attacks, especially by male student athletes, are ignored, while women who report such attacks face retaliation.



Liberty, the Christian university founded by Jerry Falwell, responded in a written statement that the accusations are "deeply troubling, if they turn out to be true." The statement, provided to Religion News Service, went on to say that the claims "are the complete opposite of how the University's policies and procedures were designed to operate over the years." The Liberty Way incorporates a dress code, and rules about behavior; for example, drinking alcohol is forbidden. It also prohibits sexual harassment, discrimination, and assault as well as "sexual relations outside of a biblically ordained marriage between a natural-born man and a natural-born woman."

The lawsuit was first reported by ABC 13 News in Lynchburg, VA. It states that Liberty was aware that its policies and procedures "were enabling on-campus rapes." The school notes that the Way does include an "amnesty policy" to encourage victims to report violations without worrying about being punished for such behavior as drinking or extramarital sex.

However, according to the suit, in reality, women who were assaulted were warned that if they reported the assault, they would be disciplined for violating the Liberty Way. Liberty's Title IX office and campus police assumed the women had consented to sex unless they could prove otherwise. Some who came forward anyway were in fact fined or penalized under the honor code. Penalties

range from points, fines, community service to expulsion. One student claims after she became pregnant school officials told her she would be expelled if she didn't marry her boyfriend.

This lawsuit is not the only one that Liberty faces involving aberrant sex. Remember Jerry Falwell, Jr.'s steamy departure? (Pool boy, provocative picture, etc.) Liberty is suing Falwell to recover money he received upon termination of his employment. The Associated Press, [apnews.com](http://apnews.com), reports that Liberty claims Falwell negotiated a lucrative severance package knowing that his bad behavior was likely to become public and force the school to terminate him. Falwell claims the school is just trying to destroy his reputation. Sounds like they deserve each other.

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### **Grudging Reparations**

The Catholic Church's claim that it has tried hard to make up for its horrible treatment of indigenous children who were held in its boarding schools continues to be contradicted, according to the Canadian Broadcasting Company, [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca).

In 2005 the church signed the Indian Residential School Settlement agreement. The church agreed to try – make its “best efforts,” the agreement stipulated – to raise \$25 million for survivors. They fell a bit short. As of 2015, the Church had raised only about \$4 million. The church went to court and claimed it had tried its best. On July 16, 2015, a judge agreed and absolved the church of its legal obligation.

Okay, that looks bad. Here's worse: CBC found that the Church raised \$300 million for cathedrals and other buildings from 2005 to 2015.

The CBC notes that the actual figure could be higher; the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops declined to ask its member bishops for the information. The CBC calculated the figure from individual dioceses' websites, and other public sources.

The article notes that St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica in Toronto was renovated to the tune of \$128 million. It reopened in 2016, about a year after the Church said it had no more money for survivors.

The publicity about the treatment of indigenous children, including the discovery of mass graves, seems to have pricked the conscience of church officials. Star Blanket Cree Nation Chief Michael Starr and Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Chief Bobby Cameron want all fundraising for buildings to cease until the Church has met its obligation to pay the reparations in full, including a \$17 million campaign to renovate Holy Rosary Cathedral in Regina, Saskatchewan. Catholic bishops in Saskatchewan have restarted fundraising for school survivors, and their families. The 5 bishops in Saskatchewan issued a statement: "We have heard the strong request, from Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people in various quarters to initiate a new fundraising campaign to support survivors and engage more deeply in our own ongoing commitment and response to the Truth and Reconciliation process." Perhaps the church has been shamed into meeting its obligation.

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### **Unmentionable Problem**

Mormon women have a problem. Their so-called “magic underwear,” technically known as temple garments, are uncomfortable. The women cite “itchy hems, bunchy seams, pinching waistbands” and even yeast infections from non-breathable fabric, per the New York *Times*, [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com). Messages fly back and forth among Mormon women on social media about this issue.

Men and women both start wearing temple garments after their temple endowment, a membership ritual that occurs before members begin missionary service or marry. The church controls the design, manufacture and sale of the underwear, although they are not expensive. Most adult members wear them; in a 2016 poll, only 14% of respondents said that it was acceptable to stop wearing the garments because they were uncomfortable.

The article quotes Dr. Kellie Woodfield, an obstetrician-gynecologist who is a church member. The garments are usually made from synthetic fabrics. "If you're trying to optimize someone's gynecologic health, it's not recommended." She went on to explain that cotton is more breathable, but that cotton underwear is tighter and thicker. Dr. Woodfield thinks that this conversation is part of a larger battle for women within the male-dominated church. She added, "How the church responds to this movement is a really interesting litmus test for how much the church is starting to trust women."

Men and women originally wore identical garments, revealed from heaven, the church said. However, the design has been changed several times. Each piece has sacred symbols.

Church women share ideas for making the underwear more comfortable over the internet: some suggest turning the garments inside out (to avoid seams); some cut off tags, or remove the crotch fabric. It's become common for women to wear traditional underpants under the garments during their periods.

Discussions about the underwear happen over private Facebook groups, with some women defending the garments, and some hoping for improvements. But most of the women agree that they are uncomfortable talking about the issue – especially mentioning menstruation, and infections – with male leaders. Another problem is the women know outsiders make fun of "magic underwear," and they don't want to provide ammunition.

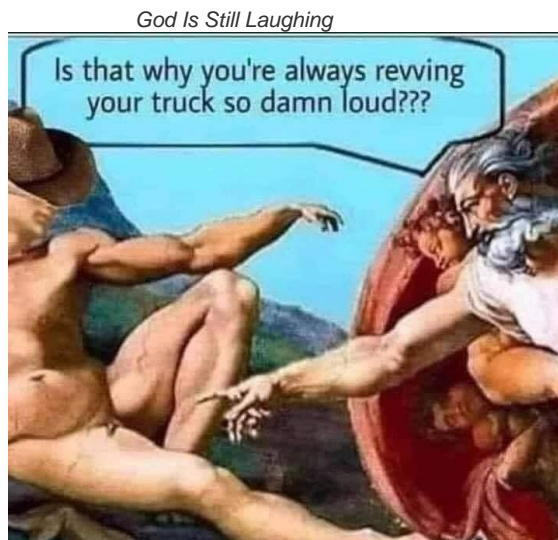
Some progress is being made. A woman approached a church designer with a 34-slide Power Point presentation about the problems. While nothing changed after the presentation, the church design team has asked for more feedback.

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### Rockin' Church

In the 1990s the Church of England had a great idea. Why not sponsor a religious service lead by a rock musician to attract younger members?

That was the thought behind the Nine O'Clock Service, or NOS, in Sheffield. The *Daily Mail*, [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk), describes what happened. Christian rock musician Chris Brain met Dr. George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury elect, in 1990. He pitched his great idea, and received the church's backing, including financial support. The services, or shows, had rave music, bikini clad dancers, and light shows.



Church hierarchy were thrilled by the attendance at the shows, so much so that the church actually ordained Brain. They pictured similar types of services all over the country.

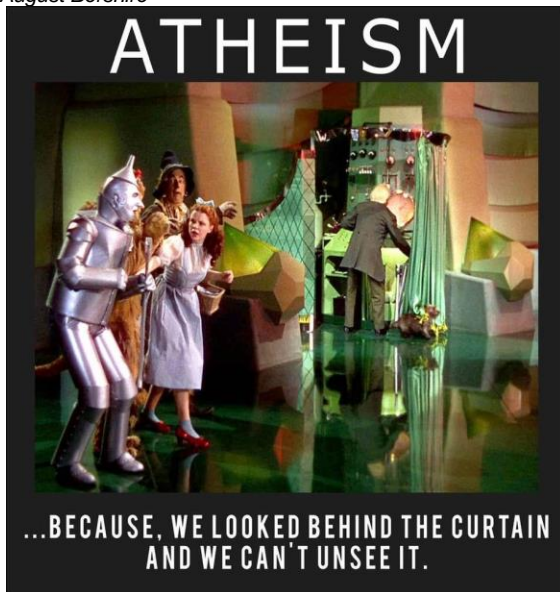
What could go wrong? By 1995 the church had received enough complaints to warrant an investigation. Among other things, investigators discovered that Brain had a “homebase team” of “postmodern nuns” whose duties included, among other things, putting Brain to bed at night. The BBC produced a documentary where a member of the group explained, “He would talk about how we were discovering a postmodern definition of sexuality in the church. It’s just language — language covering up the fact of what was really going on: one bloke getting his rocks off.” The Church of England shut down NOS in August 1995.

According to the article, the *Times* reported that at the time victimized members were thinking about suing the church because of its support of NOS. David Lunn, Bishop of Sheffield said the hierarchy had no responsibility for any issues.

There the situation rested, for 25 years. However, times have changed; people abused by religious, or even quasi-religious figures, are not so inclined to go away quietly. Former NOS members have contacted the Church of England to present abuse and exploitation claims. The *Times* quotes a solicitor who is representing NOS participants: “The Church of England has a moral and legal responsibility to those harmed by abuse in the Nine O’Clock Service and it must honour that and ensure that the appalling harm suffered by victims is properly acknowledged.”

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August Bershire



### Hobby Lobby History

The heavily Christian arts and craft chain Hobby Lobby ran a full-page ad in lots of newspapers on July 4 which tried to prove that the US government is based on Christian ideas. The ad was entitled, “One Nation Under God,” and included the Bible verse “Blessed is the Nation whose God is the lord.”

Newsweek.com described the ad’s content, which included quotes from former presidents who signed the Declaration of Independence. Newsweek pointed out that the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) found the quotes had been altered, or taken out of context.

For example, Hobby Lobby has John Adams saying: “We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion.” “Our Constitution was made only for religious and moral people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” The FFRF notes that Adams did say those words, but they did not directly follow one another. In the full context of the speech, the FFRF says Adams used “religious” and “moral” as synonyms.

Here’s the link to the FFRF’s explanation of the real quotes: <https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18058-ffrf%E2%80%99s-july-4-ad-counters-hobby-lobby-disinformation>

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### Fork You?

Member Jeannie Hess sends this gem, from [www.foodreference.com/html/art-history-fork-729.html](http://www.foodreference.com/html/art-history-fork-729.html). As Jeannie says, ain't religion great?



By the seventh century, small forks were used at Middle Eastern courts; one such fork, a small, gold, two-pronged tool, came to Italy in the eleventh century in the dowry of a Byzantine princess who married Domenico Selvo, a Venetian doge. After witnessing the princess use the fork, the church severely censured her, stating that the utensil was an affront to God's intentions for fingers. Thereafter the fork disappeared from the table for nearly 300 years.

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### Ark Encounter is Expanding

Kentucky's Ark Encounter is expanding! A 510-foot replica of Noah's ark is apparently not enough.

The Cincinnati *Enquirer*, [cincinnati.com](http://cincinnati.com), explains. The Ark Encounter plans to build a Tower of Babel on the park grounds in northern Kentucky. It expects that it will take about 3 years to research, plan, build – and raise money – for this new attraction.

Why are they building a Tower of Babel? A press release from the Ark Encounter explains that the Tower will “tackle the racism issue” by helping visitors “understand how genetics research and the Bible confirm the origin of all people groups around the world.” The press release didn't give any other details, or show what the attraction might look like. Of course, any real genetic research would conflict with the idea that all humanity is descended from Noah.

The Ark Encounter is of course the brainchild of Ken Ham, Australian Christian fundamentalist. This project has been at best a mixed blessing for Northern Kentucky. It was granted many tax breaks by Kentucky, and by the nearby city of Williamstown, based on the expectation that it would generate a lot of tourist dollars. According to an opinion piece in the *Enquirer* from February 2020, even Ham admits the boom never happened. "We would be thrilled to see a major economic impact for the town, but...that town's central business area is on the opposite side of the interstate from the Ark Encounter, half a mile from that interstate, and currently has no major hotels or restaurants." Maybe the Tower of Babel is the key to bringing the tourists in.

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God is Still Laughing



(By Ed Hall)

### Religion and Dirty Water

Last month's decision favoring a Catholic foster care agency in Philadelphia has already had an unexpected impact. The US Supreme Court sent back an appeal from an Amish group in Minnesota who are fighting a requirement to install septic systems.

The Associated Press, [apnews.com](http://apnews.com), explains. Both a trial court and the Minnesota Court of Appeals sided with the county on this issue, and the Minnesota Supreme Court declined the case.

The US Supreme Court sent the case back to the Minnesota Court of Appeals, instructing it to reconsider the case, in light of the Philadelphia decision.

The Swartzentruber Amish in southeastern Minnesota are among the most traditional Amish groups in this country. Fillmore County started requiring homes to have septic systems to dispose of wastewater from dishwashing, laundry, etc. in 2013. The Amish claimed that their religion did not allow for that kind of technology. Instead, they offered to use earthen basins with wood chips to filter water as it drains, which Montana and Wyoming have allowed. The county refused, and sought a court order to force 23 families to leave if they did not comply.

Judge Neil Gorsuch wrote the Supreme Court opinion. In it he quotes from the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, writing that the act “prohibits governments from infringing sincerely held religious beliefs and practices except as a last resort.” He concluded, “In this country, neither the Amish nor anyone else should have to choose between their farms and their faith.”

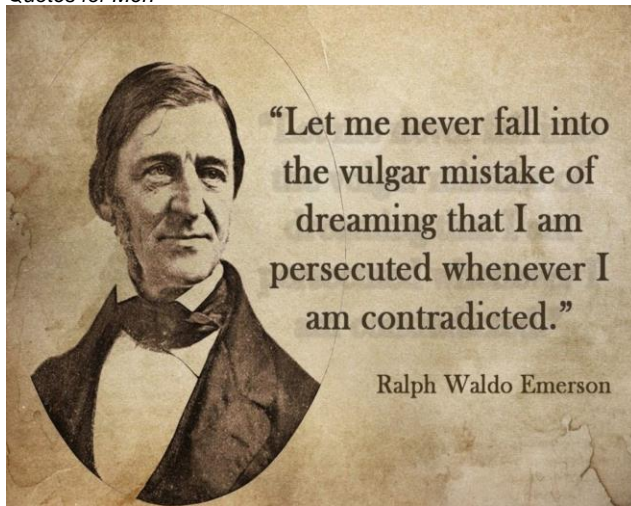
Have the Pennsylvania Amish ever had a similar issue? Yes, according to a post from January 2018 on amishamerica.com. An Amish family in Warren County fought for 5 years to keep from having to connect to a municipal sewer, because it required an electric pump. In a divided decision, Commonwealth Court said that the family must comply.

The family had been using an outhouse, because, they said, electricity violated their religious convictions. However, the court noted they used telephones, power tools, and had ridden in cars, without being shunned by their fellow Amish. The family counterargued that those uses were occasional, and did not require their connecting to the power grid.

In any event, it will be interesting to see what other repercussions will result from the Philadelphia decision.

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*Quotes for Men*



**The Long Wait is Over!**

PANViews' favorite movie franchise, the *God's Not Dead* oeuvre, is about to release a new installment. The plot is eerily similar to that of earlier editions: brave Christian fights against evil/atheistic/angry government bureaucracy, brave Christian wins.

Thechristianbeat.org provides a summary for *God's Not Dead: We the People*. Rev. Dave (a recurring character) defends a bunch of homeschooling families after a judge (spoiler alert: played by Fox News' Judge Jeannine Pirro) orders them to send their kids back to school.

None of the online summaries specified exactly what the parents were teaching that drew the ire of the court, although most PANViews readers could probably hazard a guess. Rev. Dave is called to Washington DC to testify “in a landmark congressional hearing that will determine the future of religious freedom in our country for years to come.”

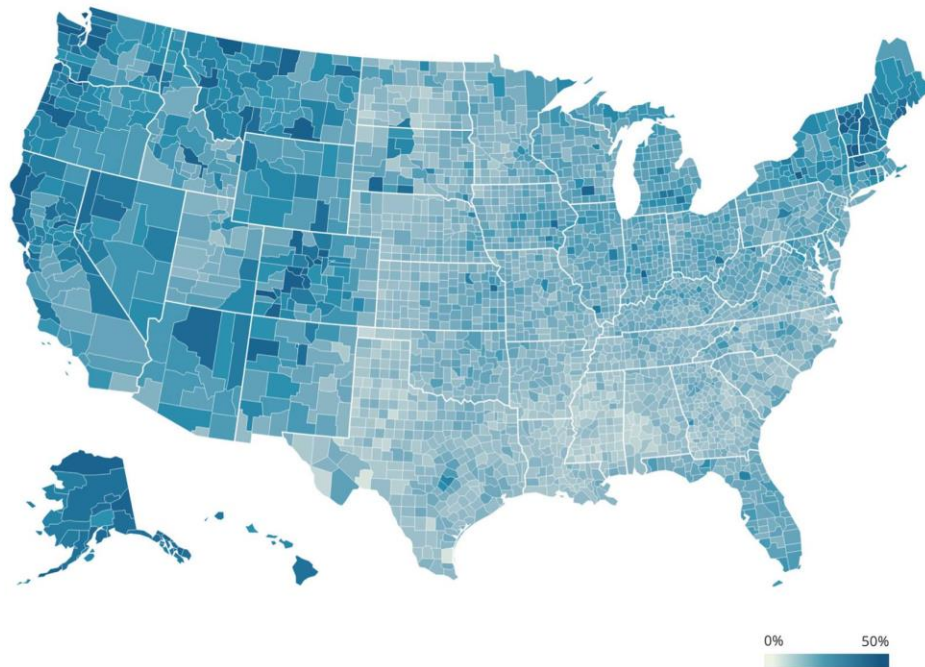
The film's makers have said that inspiration from the movie came from *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, according to thechristianfilmreview.com. This particular article also noted that there is a “surprise” appearance from Benjamin A. Onyango, who played Reverend Jude

in *God's Not Dead 3*. It's a big surprise, because Reverend Jude died in that movie, although that wouldn't seem to be a big hurdle for a *God's Not Dead* movie to overcome.

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**Courtesy of American Atheists, the map below shows one of the results of PRRI's 2020 Census of American Religion.**

**FIGURE 23. Religiously Unaffiliated, by County**



Source: PRRI 2020 Census of American Religion.

Go to the website to click on each county to see the percentage of religiously unaffiliated:  
<https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/eK6to/3/>

Here are the percentages for some Central PA counties: Adams, 27%; Berks, 23%; Cumberland, 21%; Dauphin, 25%; Lancaster, 20%; Lebanon, 20%; Perry, 25%; York, 25%.

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### **Intermarriage in India**

India's Constitution recognizes religious diversity. But that recognition never meant that intermarriage between religions was accepted. The New York *Times*, [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), explains that intermarriage, in addition to being rare, is increasingly becoming illegal.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, or B.J.P has sought to pass laws banning such marriages altogether in the Indian states where it is in power. Usually, supporters of the laws explain that they are necessary to stop "love jihad," the idea that Muslim men marry non-Muslim women to spread Islam. The B.J.P. promotes Hindu nationalism, and critics think the "love jihad" idea is just a way of stirring up anti-Muslim sentiment.

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Lawmakers in Uttar Pradesh have passed a law that makes religious conversion by marriage a crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison. 162 people have been arrested under the law, although there have not been many convictions.

4 other states have introduced or passed such legislation. Sikhs have joined Hindus in pushing for anti-conversion laws.

Women's rights activists have objected to the laws, pointing out that they rob women of their agency. "It is a fundamental right that women can marry by their own choice," said Renu Mishra, a lawyer and women's rights activist in Lucknow, the Uttar Pradesh state capital.

Vigilante groups have been set up across the country, who tip off the police when they hear about planned intermarriage. Lucknow has such a group, Bajrang Dal, or the Brigade of Hanuman, the Hindu monkey god. One of its members, Rakesh Verma, claims that it has filed dozens of complaints against Muslim men.

India's Constitution includes a right to privacy, which courts have interpreted to protect couples from harassment and violence from their families, or religious communities. However, a recent Pew Research Center study found that most people are opposed to intermarriage, especially for women. 80% of Indian marriages are still arranged. In 2018 India's Supreme Court ordered the government to provide safe houses for people who intermarry.

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*God Is Still Laughing*



### **Hand of God**

An Australian woman has been sent to jail for relying on the "hand of God" to save her 6-year-old daughter's life, according to [abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au).

The girl was saved by hospital staff after her father brought her in. She weighed 13.4 kilograms (approximately 29 lbs.) when admitted. Doctors testified that she was minutes from death.

The mother told the court she thought her daughter had flu or worms. Doctors found that she had undiagnosed type 2 diabetes.

The mother – who has 7 other children - represented herself. She claimed she had nothing to hide, and had admitted everything. She acknowledged that her daughter had been extremely ill.

But, she added, "God has promised healing."

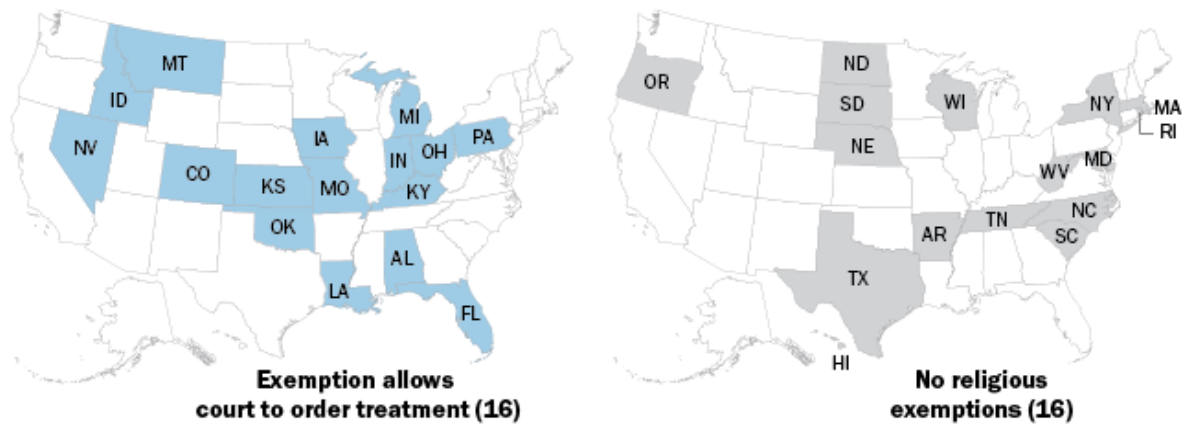
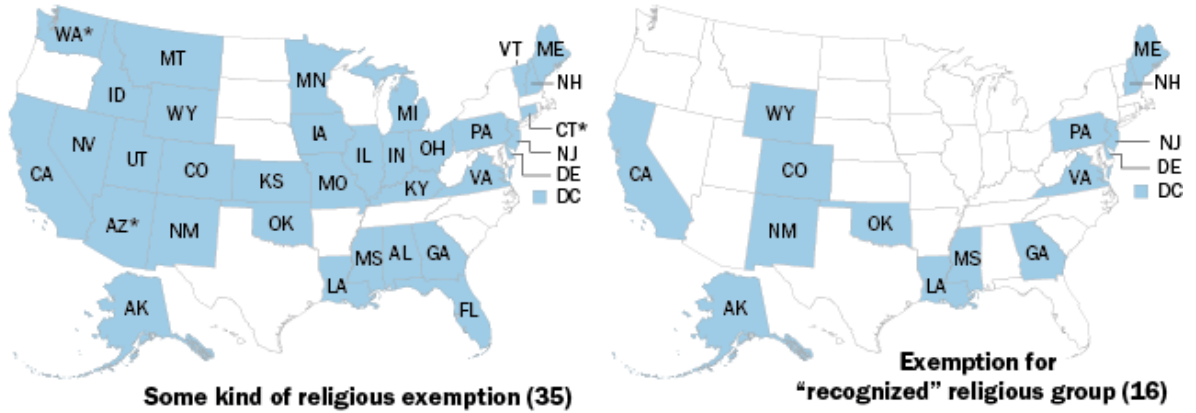
The girl is now well, with no ongoing complications. "I see the Hand of God in this," the mother concluded.

The jury found the woman guilty is just over an hour. When sentencing her, the judge said,

"It is necessary to impose a significant penalty in the hope to deter others from engaging in such objectively dangerous and unacceptable conduct whilst pursuing personal spiritual or religious beliefs."

**American Atheist note:** In more than 30 states in our country, the mother would have gotten away with killing her child. Why? These states have child negligence exemptions for faith healing. We must protect children and end these dangerous religious exemptions!

### 34 states and D.C. offer legal shield for parents who refuse medical treatment for children on religious grounds

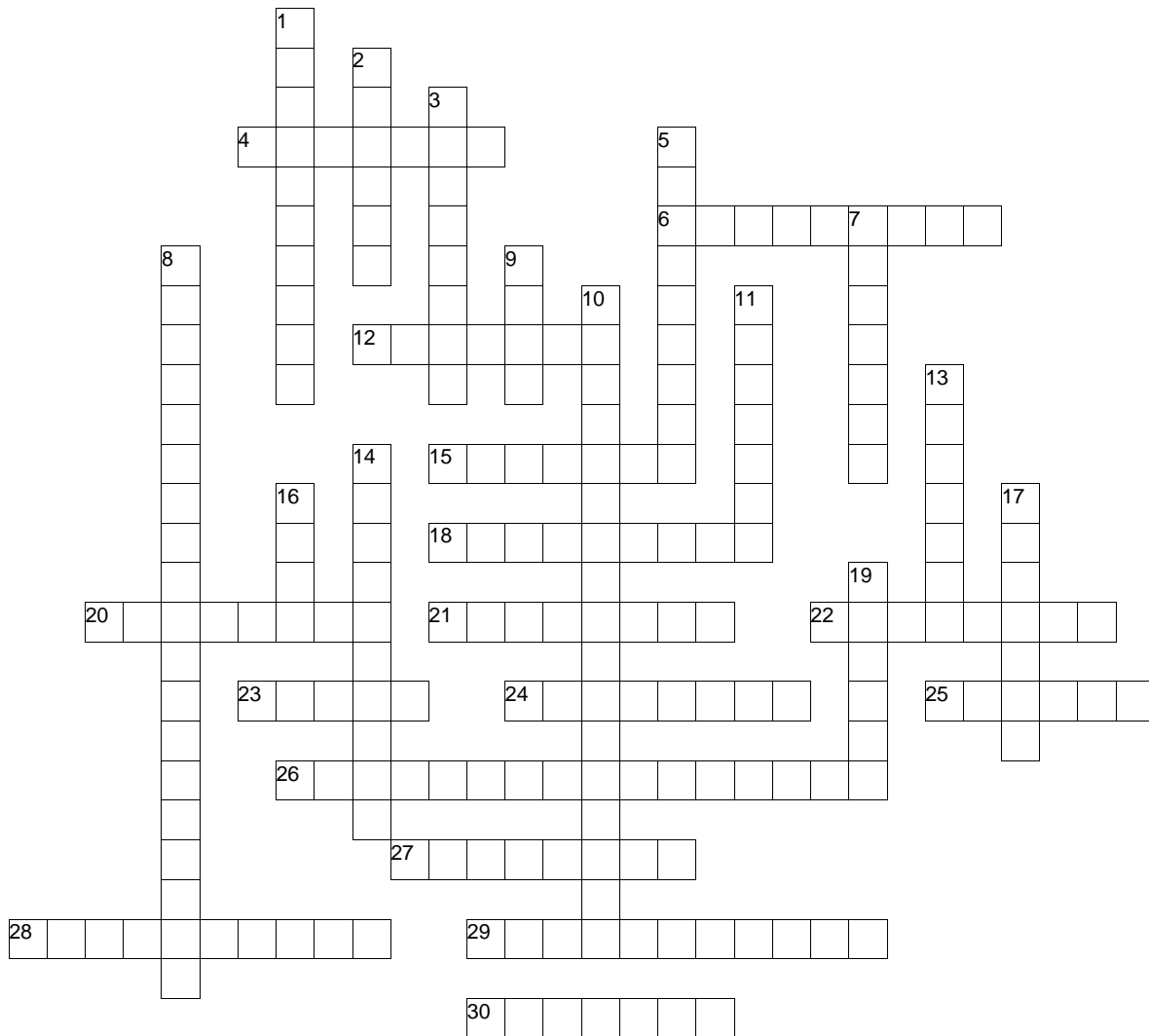


\*States with laws that specifically mention Christian Science.  
Note: Recognized category includes Pennsylvania, which specifies that beliefs must be consistent with those of a "bona fide religion." U.S. territories not shown.  
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

# FUN!



# The Scientific Method (solution at end of PANViews)



**Across**

- 4. To determine the extent, quantity or dimensions
- 6. To repeat a research study, usually with different participants and in different situations, to confirm the results of the original study
- 12. To notice similarities or differences
- 15. The methodological studying of the natural world through experimentation and verification of facts
- 18. A detailed series of steps to follow to perform an experiment
- 20. A feature of the experiment that does not change
- 21. To name or recognize something based on its properties
- 22. The collecting of information on a particular subject
- 23. To make a conclusion based on reasoning and observations
- 24. To group information into categories
- 25. Visual aids used by scientists to communicate results of an experiment
- 26. The process used by scientists to solve problems
- 27. Part of the experiment capable to change

**Down**

- 1. A scientific procedure undertaken to make a discovery, test a hypothesis or demonstrate a known fact
- 2. The outcome or conclusion of an experiment after a period of time
- 3. The first step in the scientific method is to define or identify the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. To form an idea as a result of the analysis of the data
- 7. A standard to compare with the results in an experiment
- 8. The variables that the experimenter changes to test their dependent variable
- 9. To cause favoritism or influence to experimental results
- 10. The variable that depends on other factors, also the variable that will be measured and affected during the experiment
- 11. To examine carefully and in detail to identify
- 13. To observe carefully and in detail
- 14. A statement predicting the result of a controlled scientific experiment
- 16. Evidence gathered through observations (especially

28. What a scientist writes summarizing the results of an experiment  
29. The action or process of examining something carefully in order to  
30. Indicate in advance on the basis of observation, experience or scientific reason
- during experiments)  
17. To record observations, research and other information related to the experiment  
19. To write down in permanent form for later reference

## ***PAN News & Update***

Join us at Olde Annville Days, **August 14**, 9:00 am – 2:00. An actual live event, with people.

**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](http://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– Midtown Scholar does not foresee hosting groups anytime soon. We are looking for an alternative location.

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, 256 E. Philadelphia St.

**NEW Meeting: Shrewsbury, The Village Coffee & Cream 44 S Main St., Sunday August 15, noon**

### ***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](http://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.

### **PAN Board of Directors**

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