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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*

Memorial Day is meant to honor and pay our respects to people who have died in military service to the United States. Memorial Day has its origins with people and groups paying respects to Union Soldiers who had died protecting the US against confederate soldiers during the Civil War as early as 1865. More American soldiers died during the Civil War than any other American war. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1868, General John A. Logan, the leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, designated the day, Decoration Day, meant for people to pay their respects, decorate, and lay flowers at the graves of fallen soldiers. Decoration Day only commemorated members of the American military who died in the Civil War until World War I, when it started to be used to commemorate other wars. In 1968, congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which changed the day to be known as Memorial Day and designated the last Monday of May as a federal holiday, to make it a 3-day weekend.

I think that part of paying respect for those who have fought and died in the service of the United States is that it is incumbent upon us who have survived or benefited from their sacrifice to do our part to prevent or reduce the potential of future loss of life. As humanists, war should be a last resort and philosophically and morally difficult to justify unless all other options have been exhausted. History is a great teacher, but if we as a society do not learn from the mistakes that led to our previous wars and deaths, how disrespectful are we to lay a flower at a grave one day, ignore the sacrifice, and engage in behaviors that create conflict, harm, and division the next day?

“Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.” Winston Churchill



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

**Santorum Goes Too Far**

CNN has said good-bye to Rick Santorum, a commentator on that network for many years.

What did he do or say? *USA Today*, [usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com), reports that when he was speaking before at a Standing Up for Faith & Freedom conference for Young America’s Foundation, Santorum told the audience that European settlers built America based on Judeo-Christian principles, and the teachings of Jesus. Making sure that no one missed his point, he added, “We came here and created a blank slate. We birthed a nation from nothing. I mean, there was nothing here. I mean, yes, we have Native Americans, but candidly there isn’t much Native American culture in American culture. It was born of the people who came here pursuing religious liberty, to practice their faith, live as they ought to live, and have the freedom to do so.”

America’s founding as a Judeo-Christian nation is a common belief, especially among the religious right. What upset CNN, and just about everybody else, was Santorum’s gratuitous insult of Native Americans.

Santorum quickly tried to backtrack, saying he "had no intention of minimizing or in any way devaluing Native American culture." CNN fired him anyway. Santorum noted that CNN had kept him on for several years, despite his making controversial statements in the past. This time, he told Sean Hannity, the network gave into the “left-wing outrage machine” and “cancel culture.”

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*Four Horseman of the Anti-Apocalypse: Dawkins, Dennett, Harris and Hitchens*



**Vaccination Common Sense**

Some states – including Pennsylvania – allow parents to refuse to have their children vaccinated, if they have a religious objection.

American Atheists ([atheists.org](http://atheists.org)) has announced that Connecticut has eliminated the religious exemption for school vaccination requirements. Anti-vaxxer parents and some religious organizations argued against the elimination, but the Connecticut legislature stood strong, and ignored the pressure.

For the record, in Pennsylvania the vaccination requirement can be waived “if the parent, guardian or emancipated child objects in writing to the immunization on religious grounds or on the basis of strong moral or ethical conviction similar to religious belief.” (Pennsylvania Code §23.84) Only California, Mississippi, West Virginia, New York, Maine and now Connecticut do not allow a religious or personal belief exemption.

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## Religious Weapon?

People in the US often use their religion as a weapon. Well, a student in Australia used almost killed a fellow student with a religious weapon.

A story at [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk) explains. A 14-year-old boy stabbed a 16-year-old male student twice in the stomach on their school grounds. Why did he have a knife? Because it's classified as a religious weapon by the Education Department.

The weapon was a kirpan, a miniature knife usually kept in a holster. It is one of the "five Ks" of the Sikh religion. The others are maintaining Kesh through uncut hair, wearing a Kara (steel bracelet), carrying a Kanga (a wooden comb) and wearing Kacchaera (cotton underwear). The kirpan must be carried by Sikhs to remind them of their duty to "uphold and defend the truth courageously." The 14-year-old was arrested and released on bail.

Other knives are banned in Australian schools; students carrying them can be suspended, or even expelled. The Daily Mail story noted that it is not clear if Sikh families are required to notify schools that their children will be carrying knives. The Australian Sikh Association has been seeking to amend an Anti-Discrimination Bill (2020) because, it said, Sikhs are often discriminated against for carrying kirpans.

In light of this incident, Australian officials are reviewing the exemption for schools. The principal of the school where it took place, Sonja Anderson, said, "We are currently working with community representatives to discuss how best to enable students to meet aspects of their religious faith and, at the same time, ensure our schools remain a safe place for students and staff."

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## American "History"

Philadelphia has a new attraction! The Faith and Liberty Discovery Center has opened at Fifth and Market Streets.

The first hint that this might not be a place PAN members will rush to visit (aside from the name, of course) is that it is run by the American Bible Society. An article in the Philadelphia *Inquirer* ([inquirer.com](http://inquirer.com)) notes that the center does not call itself a museum, but describes itself as an "attraction." There are a few displays (William Penn's Bible, for example) but it concentrates on high tech displays and activities.

*Still Here? Silly Christians*



The Center's executive director, Pat Murdock, explains its goal: "What we've attempted to do is bring to light the influence of faith and the Bible on the American story, particularly looking through the stories of people — we call them change-makers — people that were inspired, influenced, somehow, by the Scriptures, by their faith, to do something with their lives to help bring this American story to life." Murdock expands on this idea. "We ended up doing a value study on what the values are found in the Declaration, the Constitution, [William Penn's] Charter of Privileges, and the Bible. There's commonality. We found six values, there are many, but six surface: faith, liberty, justice, hope, unity, and love. Those actually became the themes of each of our galleries." Note that he puts "faith" first.

The attraction tells stories of about various famous Americans, emphasizing their Christian faith. George Washington, Martin Luther King, Sojourner Truth, among others, are featured in video stations that use quotes from the individual about their belief in God.

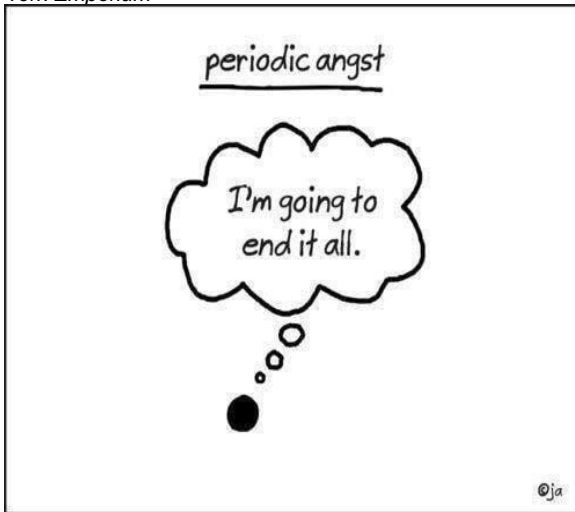
Unsurprisingly, real historians are skeptical about the emphasis on faith, and in particular, Christian faith. Many early leaders – for example, George Washington – do not appear to have believed in the divinity of Jesus.

“It’s not that [the Bible’s] history isn’t relevant,” noted Marci Hamilton, a professor and constitutional scholar at the University of Pennsylvania. But “the Bible did not play the outsize role that they are trying to give it.”

Murdoch insists that the center does not proselytize. However, that doesn’t stop them from requiring employees to sign an affirmation of Biblical faith – which includes a statement that marriage is between a man and a woman.

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York Emporium



### What Could Go Wrong?

Rod of Iron Ministries, a sect founded by Hyung Jin “Sean” Moon and Kook-jin “Justin” Moon has purchased a large compound in Texas, where they hope to protect their followers from the civil disturbances the two leaders believe are coming soon, according to thetrace.org.

The ministry has long been interested in guns. It owns a gun manufacturer, Kahr Arms, and last October hosted the Rod of Iron Freedom Festival, where election conspiracies were a main topic.

Sean was in the crowd at the January 6 insurrection, although there is no indication he personally participated in violence.

The one piece of good news about the Texas land purchase, at least for PAN members, is that Rod of Iron’s church is currently located in Newfoundland, PA, about 20 miles southeast of Scranton. Maybe this land purchase means the whole organization will be moving to Texas.

The group – which has been disavowed by the Unification Church as too crazy, which is saying something – was in the news in 2018, shortly after the Parkland High School shooting. According to npr.org, it held a mass service in Newfoundland, attracting hundreds of attendees who carried AR-15-style rifles, which they believe represents a “rod of iron” as described in Revelation 2:27, “he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” Locals were so spooked they cancelled classes at a nearby school.

Vice News, (vice.com) reports that Sean recently preached a sermon (which he calls “The King’s Report”) about the land purchase. As usual, he was wearing a crown of bullets, and had a golden AR-15. “It’s a dangerous time, and this is a place of refuge and retreat if our community needs it. Of course, in worst-case scenarios.” Nope, nothing to worry about here.

Priscilla Oppenheimer, who suggested this story to PANViews, has questions: How many Moons will keep rising? Having just had a supermoon, do we need any more?

### Religion and Covid in India

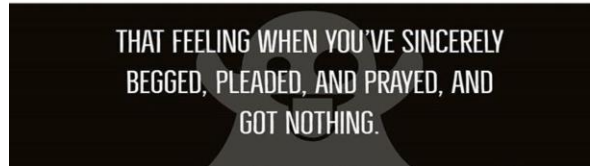
The world knows about the devastation Covid has wreaked in India. What's been less publicized is the role religion played in the disaster.

The BBC reports (bbc.com) that just as cases were starting to rise, the government of the Uttarakhand state allowed a religious festival, Kumbh Mela, to go on as planned. As part of the festival millions of Hindus descend on the city of Haridwar to step into the Ganges River. Hindus believe the river is holy, and that it will cleanse them of their sins.

Brigham Young's Dank Meme Stash



## HOLY GHOSTED



Doctors are not sure how many cases can be traced to the festival, although there were about 1,600 new cases among attendees during the first two weeks of April. Pilgrims report that there were no covid tests at the airport, or at Haridwar, and pictures show many maskless attendees.

In a related story, according to Reuters at Reuters.com, Indian doctors are warning against using cow dung to ward off covid. Hindus revere cows, of course, and have used cow dung to clean their homes and during prayer rituals for centuries. The state of Gurjarat has had believers going to cow shelters once a week to cover their bodies in cow dung and urine to boost their immunity, or to help them recover. Participants hug or honor cows as they wait for the dung and urine on their bodies to dry. They are then washed off with milk or buttermilk.

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### Mass Grave at Religious School

Canada set up boarding schools, run by religious groups, for indigenous children, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just as the United States did. As was the case in the US, the children at the schools were horrifically treated.

How horrifically? The *Washington Post*, washingtonpost.com, reports that a mass grave of 215 indigenous children, some as young as 3, has been found on the grounds of the Catholic-run Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia. The schools were established in 1890 and shut down in 1978.

The Canadian government was aware of issues at the school. A 1927 report from a medical health officer noted that a recreation room for younger boys was "most unsanitary" and had contributed to "numerous infections, colds, bronchitis and pneumonia during the past winter." The report stated that the outside toilets were "a distinct menace to the health of the children" and should be destroyed.

Children were separated from their families, often by force, and sent to the government-funded, church run schools in an attempt to assimilate them. They were not allowed to speak their native languages, and were often neglected and abused, both physically and sexually.

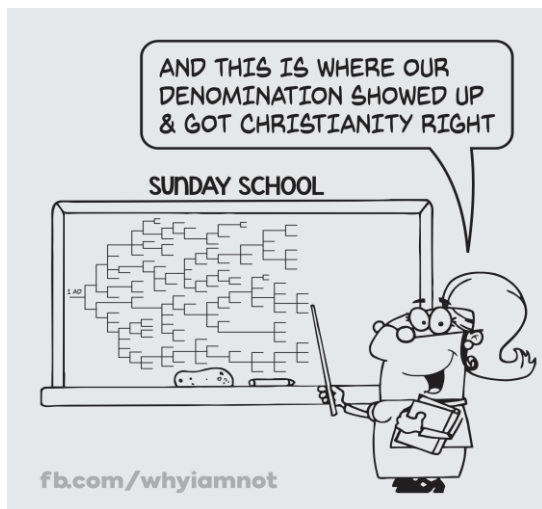
Canada established a Truth and Reconciliation commission that concluded the schools constituted "cultural genocide" in 2015. The commission's investigation showed that at least 4,100 children died at the schools. Because the schools were cramped and dirty, and the children underfed, diseases such as tuberculosis spread easily.

Some students committed suicide, or died because of hard labor, or while trying to escape. The schools often did not record the names of students who died, or notify their families.

The Toronto *Star*, thestar.com, further notes that a 2015 Truth and Reconciliation issued “Calls to Action,” one of which was to have Pope Francis apologize to survivors and their families. In 2018 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau personally asked the Pope to apologize, but he refused. After what was described as an “extensive dialogue” with Canadian bishops, Lionel Gendron, president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, stated that the Pope could not personally respond, because of the structure of the church. The letter did say that bishops should engage in “healing and solidarity” with indigenous people and to collaborate in “concrete projects” aimed at improving living conditions.

In addition, under the 2007 Indian Residential Settlements Agreement the Catholic Church is obligated to raise \$25 million for indigenous healing. The church has not honored this agreement.

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### **New American Bible**

Although it seems blasphemous to suggest that Christians need a new Bible, a Nashville marketer is getting ready to release one, on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11 attacks, according to the *Washington Post*, washingtonpost.com.

As the date suggests, this will be tailored to US tastes. The God Bless the USA Bible will include the US Constitution, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the lyrics from Lee Greenwood’s song, “God Bless the USA.” It already has 600 preorders at \$49.99.

Most of the preorders have come from Tennessee, Florida, Texas and – of course – Pennsylvania.

The Philadelphia *Tribune*, phillytrib.com, quotes Anthea Butler, a University of Pennsylvania professor and author of the book “White Evangelical Racism”, as noting that the Bible and government documents have often been used in discussion about American history. “Even if he didn’t mean it to be, this is one more flashpoint for trying to deal with the contentious points in America’s history.” She added that putting the Bible and the Constitution together in a book can present the texts as if they are both inspired by God. Which is probably the idea.

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### **Pope Francis Fights Corruption**

Well, maybe he can’t apologize for abusive treatment of indigenous children, but Pope Francis continues to battle corruption and graft in the Vatican.

According to newsweek.com, Francis has enacted a policy limiting work-related gifts to Vatican employees in excess of 40 euros (\$48, more or less.) Apparently Vatican employees are used to getting much more lavish tokens of appreciation. Francis will also now require that Cardinals and other Vatican employees must declare they are only investing in funds that are in alignment with Catholic doctrine, and that they are not under criminal investigation anywhere, or hiding money in tax shelters.

The Vatican will also require that new hires sign a declaration stating that they haven't been convicted of a crime, and aren't under criminal investigation. This declaration will have to be reaffirmed every 2 years.

Vatican-based Cardinals and other religious figures have traditionally received significant gifts to supplement their salaries. These gifts frequently come from clerics in wealthy dioceses. For example, the now disgraced founder of the Legion of Christ sent money to Vatican cardinals, who took the gifts even though it was well-known that he was a drug addict who sexually abused seminarians. Former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, also renowned for sexual escapades, sent money to key Vatican officials, leading to speculation that the gifts helped him avoid punishment. The Vatican investigated McCarrick in 2020, and found no evidence that his "customary gift-giving and donations impacted significant decisions made by the Holy See." Of course it didn't.

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*Atheist Humor*



### **Namaste, Alabama!**

Alabama has decided it is safe to have yoga classes in its public schools.

It's been almost 30 years since Alabama banned yoga, per CNN, [cnn.com](http://cnn.com). In 1993, the state Board of Education prohibited "any techniques that involve the induction of hypnotic states, guided imagery, meditation or yoga." It further defined yoga as a "method of religious training." That was the problem, of course; some Alabamians regarded teaching yoga as a sneaky way to convert kids to Hinduism.

Yoga instruction will be offered as an elective for K-12 students, if the local board of education agrees. The law makes it clear that this must be American yoga: the classes must be limited to poses, exercises, and stretching, all poses must have English names, and chanting, mantras and the use of the greeting "namaste" is specifically prohibited.

Some people are still worried. Becky Gerritson, executive director of the Eagle Forum of Alabama, a conservative group, says that yoga is not needed. She noted that kids already do stretching exercises and other forms of movement. In addition, Gerritson is worried that teaching yoga would include instruction in meditation and guided mindfulness, which she thinks amounts to teaching religion in public schools. She told CNN, "We should not be spending taxpayer money, resources and time teaching children Eastern spiritual practices."

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### **Muslim Can Believe Nonsense, Too**

A Muslim author in Algeria has been sentenced to 3 years in prison for offenses against Islam. What did he do? He speculated that the Quran might not be literally true.

That's not all; he also questioned standard Islamic practices. [Bbc.news](http://bbc.news) reports that 7 lawyers and an academic lodged complaints against Said Djabelkhir for disrespecting Islam.

Among other things, Djabelkhir said that the animal sacrifice during Eid (the festival that ends the month of Ramadan) was based on a pagan ritual; that the story of Noah's Ark, also in the Quran,

might not be historically accurate; and that the marriage of young girls in some parts of the Muslim world is not a good idea.

Islam is Algeria's official state religion, and it imposes penalties on "anyone who offends the Prophet or denigrates the dogmatic precepts of Islam, whether it be by writings, drawings, a statement or another means."

Djabekhir spoke to reporters after being released on bail: "The fight for freedom of conscience is non-negotiable. It is a fight which must continue." He has written 2 books on Islam, calling for reflection on the Quran, including distinguishing between parts that are history, and parts that are myths. He has been quoted in media reports stating that "the traditional readings [of the Quran] no longer meet the expectations, needs and questions of modern man."

His 3-year sentence could have been worse. Last year an anti-government activist was given a 10-year sentence when police found a copy of the Quran with ripped pages in his house. The sentence was later reduced to 1 year. Djabekhir plans to appeal.

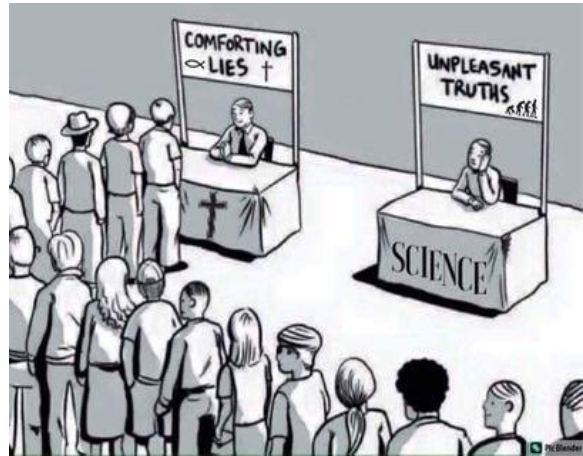
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### Completely Unsurprising Result

Remember the TV show *17, 18 and 19 Kids and Counting*? It was the supposedly heartwarming story of the Duggar family, fundamentalist Christians who couldn't stop having children.

The TLC show was canceled in 2015 when, surprise, surprise, it turned out the family wasn't all that ideal. The oldest child, Josh, was accused of molesting girls – including his sisters – when he was a teenager. In addition, married Josh's name popped up as a customer of the website Ashley Madison, which was designed for people who want to cheat on their spouses, when the website was hacked.

*Vladimir Djurdjevic*  
Atheist Humor



Josh went through a lot of Christian counseling, which apparently didn't work, because according to CNN.com, he's been arrested on federal charges related to the possession of child pornography. The US Attorney's Office in the Western District of Arkansas has charged him with two charges, one count of receipt of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. He could be sentenced up to 20 years in prison and fined up to \$250,000.

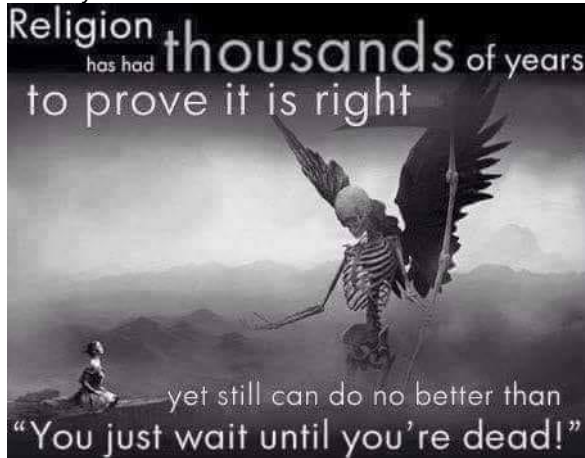
Duggar has pleaded not guilty. His parents posted the following statement on their website: "We appreciate your continued prayers for our family at this time. The accusations brought against Joshua today are very serious. It is our prayer that the truth, no matter what it is, will come to light, and that this will all be resolved in a timely manner. We love Josh and Anna and continue to pray for their family." (Anna is his wife.)

As appalling as these charges are, it's possible to feel a tiny grain of sympathy for Josh. His family had a weird, fundamentalist take on sexuality; Josh and his wife had a "chaperoned courtship" where they were never alone until they married. It's no surprise if his attitude toward sex is distorted.

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Courtesy of Mikki Weidman



### Crazy Covid Cure Leaves Cult Leader in the Trash

There are lots of cults out there that never break through to the general public. Followers of the leader of one such cult, Love Has Won, are being investigated after sheriff's deputies in Colorado found the mummified body of its leader, wrapped in Christmas lights, in a sleeping bag in the trash.

As reported by the *Denver Post*, denverpost.com, her followers identified the leader as Lia Carlson, although her first name is really Amy. Her fellow cultists call her "Mother God."

Law enforcement officials said that the body appeared to have been dead for a while, and may have been transported from California.

The group has caused trouble before. Members including Carlson were forced to leave Hawaii last year when they upset residents of Kaua'i by declaring Carlson goddess of the island and creator of volcanoes. Colorado officials report receiving many complaints about the group, alleging that it brainwashes its followers to steal their money. It supports itself by selling healing products on its website.

The death was reported by a man whose 2-year-old son was living in the house where the body was found. The boy was returned to his father's custody. A 13-year-old girl was there as well. 7 people present at the house were arrested, and charged with abuse of a corpse and child abuse.

After the arrests, a member posted a Facebook video saying that Mother God had "ascended." Carlson had previously told followers that she would "ascend" via a starship, or a portal in the ocean. Another member told the *Post* that the group had traveled to Hawaii because Mother God had cancer.

The [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk) provides more detail about Carlson's death. The cult had been selling colloidal silver as a cure for Covid, and, despite warning from US regulators, her son told *The Daily Beast* that she was ingesting "huge amounts" of colloidal silver. (The son is not a cult member.) The group sold the potion, which is a liquid with small particles of silver in it, under a business called Gaia's Whole Healing Essentials, LLC. It claimed that the product could boost the immune system, and recommended taking it 3 times a day, 5 times if covid symptoms appeared. It can cause silver to build up in the body, and can result in kidney damage, and can turn skin and other organs blue.

The house where Carlson's body is owned by the registered owner of Gaia's Whole Healing Essentials.

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### Everyone is Awesome!

In recognition of LGBT Pride, Lego has issued a 346-piece set using the 6 colors of the rainbow flag as its centerpiece. It will go on sale June 1, first day of Pride Month, for \$34.99.

[Christianheadlines.com](http://Christianheadlines.com) reports a muted response from Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. On his podcast, *The Briefing*, he said, "There's a hurt here that cries out for Christian attention. That hurt is at the deepest level of personal identity. That anxiety is at the deepest level of personal security. There's a pain and anxiety. There is very clearly a fear

June 2021

that is represented even in the voice of a child here for which the answer supposedly is the 'Everyone is awesome' Lego set," Mohler said. "... It's a reminder to us that there is a deep human need, and it is not unique to those who are now the intended purchasers of the 'Everyone is awesome' set. It's a problem that is common to all humanity, for whom the only answer is singular – Christ."



Mohler took a less nuanced stand on his website, according to [lgbtqnation.com](http://lgbtqnation.com). As part of what the article described as a 2,300-word rant, he condemns Lego for giving into corrupt "moral revolutionaries" who have "based their entire argument upon an idea of personal identity in which sexuality is the most important thing about you." He ends by saying, "Shame on the LGBTQ community for demanding this kind of affirmation."

Interesting that [Christianheadlines.com](http://Christianheadlines.com) posted the somewhat reasonable sounding podcast, but neglected to mention the angry and negative website rant.

*Still Here? Silly Christians*



We Didn't Invent Christian Hate Organizations  
We Just Support Them.

June 2021

# FUN!

*In honor of Pride Month*



# Ball and Triangle Math Puzzle

Can you figure out what the missing number inside of the triangle is for each of these sets of balls?



© puzzle-math.com

## Member Submissions

**Christian Poetry**  
*Cheryl Huber*

As many of you know, I earn spending money by playing the organ in churches. Along the way, lots of things happen to make my non-belief stronger. At my current post, a United Church of Christ, they use a 1986 hymnal that has many old hymns with poetry that either makes me laugh or makes my skin crawl. Here are a few examples:

1. From a hymn called "The Love of God". (God's love is apparently immense.)

“Could we with ink the ocean fill And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were ev’ry stalk on earth a quill And ev’ry man a scribe by trade,  
To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry,  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole Tho stretched from sky to sky.”

2. This one is called “There is a Fountain”. It’s about the meaning of the blood that came from Jesus when he was wounded before his death.

“There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood Lose all their guilty stains. ...  
E’er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme and Shall be till I die.”

3. In “Are you Washed in the Blood?”, we learn that this blood washes away your sins and turns your clothing white. It would seem that blood is able to act as bleach. The Lamb in this song means Jesus. Sometimes in Christianity, he’s referred to as a shepherd, because he takes care of his “sheep” but because he sacrificed his life, he is also the Lamb.

“Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?  
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? ... Are your garments spotless?  
Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

4. In “The Blood Will Never Lose its Power”, this cleansing blood goes all over the earth

“The blood that Jesus shed for me,  
Way back on Calvary; ...  
It reaches to the highest mountain.  
It flows to the lowest valley.  
The blood that gives me strength from day to day,  
It will never lose its power.”

5. You don’t always need blood to cleanse you, though. Sometimes breath can do it. This one is called “Breathe on me”.

“Holy Spirit, breathe on me, Until my heart is clean;  
Let sunshine fill its inmost part, With not a cloud between.  
Breathe on me, Breathe on me, Holy Spirit, breathe on me;  
Take my heart, cleanse ev’ry part,  
Holy Spirit, breathe on me.”

It’s a fairly easy way for a musician to make money, but you sometime have to keep your mind busy with other things while they talk and sing, so you don’t explode with laughter. Reason has no place here.

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### **Mass Scale Dunning-Kruger Effect**

*Josh CruverKibi*

The Dunning-Kruger Effect is a cognitive bias that results from people of low metacognitive ability tending to struggle with estimating their own ability and overestimating their true abilities. The brain is continuously trying to find short cuts in thinking to process information quicker and help prevent being overloaded with information. However, these learned short cuts can also form into biased or flawed logic short cuts. The Dunning-Kruger Effect is one of multiple potential biases, or short cut

thinking, that humans struggle with that can prevent us from perceiving reality accurately. Some other cognitive bias examples include, confirmation bias (a tendency to focus on and remember information that confirms previous perceptions and conclusions), framing effect (bias created due to external framing of gain versus loss), anchoring effect (biased cognition due to being influenced by a fixed initial or prominent comparison), belief bias (bias favoring preferred feelings and beliefs as opposed to objective facts), availability heuristics (bias due to inductive cognition or favoring the current or first recalled information), and in-group bias (bias favoring the perceptions and conclusion of people perceived as in one's own group). A person can have any number of these biases occurring at any time, but is significantly dependent on the individual learned life experiences. Our primary defense against personal bias is our metacognition, or awareness of how we personally think and process information, and our active personal engagement in trying to prevent our particular biases.

But what if social media and search engine algorithms are designed to exploit and amplify one's biases to increase engagement time and increase confidence in buying products? What are the societal, social, and cognitive side effects? What are the group, societal, and individual effects of low functioning metacognitive people developing a false sense of confidence for products and ideas that are delivered to them via algorithms designed to affirm or increase their confidence in buying a product (idea or item) or to increase engagement or time on product? Has social media and search engine algorithms created a Mass Scale Dunning Kruger Effect? I have formed these questions into hypotheses, though one can surmise that I have suspicions. There appears to be a correlation, but employing the scientific method could answer these questions.



## ***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](https://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 – Normally fourth Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm, Centerville Diner, 100 S. Centerville Rd. However, for June, it will be held on the fifth Wednesday, June 30.

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, June 6noon, I-ron-ic, 256 E. Philadelphia St. Will be live and in person!

**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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				? = 6
				? = 8
				? = 14
				? = 10