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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*

Hello fellow atheists, humanists, skeptics, agnostics. We are having four tabling events in the month of June (Old Annville Day, York Pride, Jubilee Day, and Lancaster Pride), so we need help setting up our tables, meeting and talking to people, selling items at the table during the event, and help taking down the tables, items, and tent. If you are interested in volunteering or helping at an event, please sign up on Facebook or Meetup and or please contact the head organizer of the event and let them know that you would like to help. This will help with organizing and coordinating needs at the tabling event. We usually get to the event an hour or two before the beginning to set up the table or the head organizer will tell you when they plan on setting up.

Thank you! And we hope to see you at an event!

### **Existential Purpose and Meaning**

An absurd question that we atheists, humanists, and agnostics are often asked is, how do we find purpose and meaning without a god or religion? The existential irony of an authority dependent person asking that question is that they are far less likely to know their personal purpose and meaning than we are. When a preacher, parent, politician, or some labeled authority figure tells you that your 'purpose' is to go to their church, worship and follow their god, have more children for their church, raise those children in their church, and repeat, wouldn't that be their purpose instead of yours? If you do what they want, wouldn't your purpose be to 'comply with authority'? What if you do not find purpose or meaning in doing what others want you to do or think?

The truth is we all struggle with finding or adjusting our sense of purpose and meaning over our lifetime. Being an atheist or agnostic really does not give any clarity as to what we might find purpose or meaning in. Our personal experiences and what we emotionally attach to during our lives will determine what we find purpose and meaning in (Schultz & Schultz, 2009). But sometimes we become distracted by the cultural and social demands we experience. Once we learn certain grouped behavioral expectations, we may struggle to focus on and clarify our own individual interests.

It is also easy to see why we struggle to focus on establishing purpose and meaning in our current world and experiences. Many of us no longer have to grow or forage our own food. Many of our jobs involve abstract concepts separate from experiencing a beginning and end for a product or application. We have cell phones that give us dopamine bursts on demand, and we experience social media trolls that inspire fear and anger more often than our real existential concerns.

Well, let me posit some humanist psychological theories and evolutionary theories to potentially ground this question for how we may find purpose and meaning over our lifetime. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of

needs supplies a good framing for necessity and *Australopithecus afarensis* may be a good reference for the lowly origins of our evolved sentience that may be creating confusion for us in this modern world.

Maslow postulated that all humans have an innate hierarchy of needs or drives. The most necessary physiological needs are to seek food, water, sex, shelter, and the perception of safety. Once we perceive that these basic needs have been met, we then progress to higher levels of need; a sense of belonging, love, sense of self and social esteem, and at the highest level, a need for self-actualization (Schultz & Schultz, 2009).

*Australopithecus afarensis*, a theoretical evolutionary ancestor of hominin that existed in Africa around 4.2 to 3 million years ago (Wood, 2005), would have been experiencing and living the most basic forms of purpose and meaning on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Survival. But they may have theoretically also started to experience and develop the neurological origins for our most basic existential contemplations beyond basic needs, as they were laying on beds of leaves, gazing at the stars, and embracing their pack mates and children. This bonding with others and contemplative extension into the environment, beyond reactive survival, may have theoretically evolved into the primary existence of the homo sapiens (the current evolved hominin). But do we homo sapiens recognize our overall graduation out of basic survival needs in our modern environment, and should we still maintain the perspective that our brains originally evolved from primarily reactions and survival?

In observing current great ape socializing and hierarchy, we can potentially glean the origins of authoritarianism and the existential comfort that one might perceive from having an alpha exert its dominance on the group. Like the great apes, some of the homo sapiens population may want to be told what to be and do so that they are for a brief time distracted by the immediacy of a pounding chest, as opposed to their real fears for the existential unknown deeper in the jungle. The authority dependent individual may perceive many of their needs being met, such as a sense of order and structure, feelings of belonging to the group, and a sense of esteem as the authority nods at their compliance and upturned palm of their hand. But the question to ask yourself, do you get a sense of purpose and meaning from compliance with another's desire, or can you discover your own sense of meaning and purpose throughout your life by being more attentive, curious, and aware of your own needs?

Humanistic and existential psychology emphasizes the need for intentional interaction with our environment and acting on our own freewill as we move away from the perception of basic reactive needs for food and survival. We also need to adjust our sense of needs as they change from day to day and over a lifetime. A child may find meaning from getting a particular Pokémon card or staying up an extra 15 minutes after bedtime, but this may not have the same purposeful impact when they are 30 years old. Day to day, year to year, any act that you can feel good about would meet the criteria for giving you a sense of purpose and meaning. Anything from drinking a cup of cool water after being outside on a hot day, to finding a good deal at the grocery store, doing maintenance on your home, getting flowers for your significant other, filling a birdfeeder regularly, cleaning a room, growing a garden, separating recyclables from trash, voting, going for a walk with your dog, working 2 hours of childcare into your busy schedule so that you can spend some quality alone time with your partner, volunteering at a food pantry, teaching children how to read, writing a book, working on activism to maintain the separation of church and state, ... etc. Any of these may mean something or nothing from one person to the next or may not give an individual a sense of purpose at the age of 15 but may mean everything to them at the age of 50. Accepting your sentience, being aware of what you enjoy, and adjusting it daily and over your lifetime are the keys to finding purpose and meaning in the life you live.

Schultz, D. P. and Schultz, S. E. (2009). *Theories of Personality*, Ninth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Wood, B. (2005). *Human Evolution, a very short introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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

**Satanic Temple Wins Again**

A Federal Judge ruled that Pennsylvania’s Saucon Valley School District must allow the Satanic Temple to hold After-School Satan Club meetings in the school district’s facilities, according to foxnews.com.

The underlying lawsuit brought by the ACLU is still being decided. The ACLU claims the district originally allowed the After-School Satan Club to meet on school property, but then changed its mind, claiming that the Club violated a policy that use of the facilities should not "interfere with the educational program of the schools."

This latest ruling is a preliminary injunction, requiring the district to allow the Club on its premises while the case is being adjudicated. The ruling stated, "When confronted with a challenge to free speech, the government’s first instinct must be to forward expression rather than quash it. Particularly when the content is controversial or inconvenient. Nothing less is consistent with the expressed purpose of American government to secure the core, innate rights of its people." Score one for Satan, at least for now.

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*Theists Say the Craziest Things!*



**National Day of Reason**

Every year nonbelievers are annoyed by the National Day of Prayer, when politicians waste time sucking up to religious leaders. The president issues a proclamation and there’s a nice breakfast. In case you wondered, nationaldayofprayer.org states that the mission of the National Day of Prayer is "to mobilize prayer in America and to encourage personal repentance and righteousness in the culture." Whatever that means.

Two congressional supporters of free thought, Congressmen Jamie Raskin (MD) and Jared Huffman (CA) have introduced a resolution to establish May 4 as the National Day of Reason.

According to Raskin’s website, raskin.house.gov, the goal is “to recognize and celebrate science, common sense and logic as essential preconditions for progress in our government and society at large.”

He continues, “At a time when authoritarians, demagogues and hucksters around the world are promoting conspiracy theories, irrationalism, bigotry and propaganda, it is more important than ever to defend truth and reason, which are central to a strong democracy. A National Day of Reason will bring our nation’s founding tenets of empirical inquiry, knowledge, facts and science to the forefront. These governing principles, central in the framing of our Constitution and to our democracy remain crucial as we navigate surging political extremism and a new digital landscape rife with mis- and disinformation.”

Reps. Pramila Jayapal (WA), Henry C. “Hank” Johnson (GA), Jerry McNerney (CA), Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC), Mark Pocan (WI), and Rashida Tlaib (MI) cosponsored the resolution.

American Atheists, the American Humanist Association, the Bayard Rustin Liberation Initiative, the Center for Freethought Equality, the Center for Inquiry, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, the Freethought Society, the Secular Coalition for America and the Secular Student Alliance have all endorsed this resolution.

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*New Yorker Humor*

### **The Taliban v. Pharmacies?**

*Ally Consoli*

The Taliban has launched an attack against their own people! I know, that’s not news. But this time, they’re coming after their pharmacies. As part of their efforts to stop the Western conspiracy to use their women to control the Muslim population, valiant Taliban soldiers are going door to door threatening midwives and pharmacies to stop providing life-saving medications. The Taliban’s Ministry of Public Health has not issued an official statement, other than to say that it’s all “fake news,” but others have reported a very different story.



*“Today, I’ll be cherry-picking from Deuteronomy.”*

In both Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif, pharmacies have been ordered since February directly by the Taliban to not keep any birth control medications on their shelves. Every pharmacy in the city is examined, at gunpoint, and many owners are too afraid to even sell the items that they already have in stock. Midwives are forbidden to teach about population control. As a result, women, especially those in poverty, are having more babies than they intend and are having them in a dangerously close proximity.

According to a recent human rights report, approximately 1:14 pregnancies ends in the mother’s death due to pregnancy-related complications. This is directly related to most Afghan women not being permitted access to basic maternal and family planning information. And since the Taliban have ceased female access to higher education, jobs, and restricted their rights to leave home in recent years, this knowledge disparity will only get worse. These women, and their fetuses, are put under unnecessary risks that modern medical science has already treated.

There really is no argument for this, as even their own work that they supposedly follow teaches against this. A Taliban official reported anonymously that the Quran supports contraception due to the woman’s need to space out her pregnancies and in the case of a threat to the mother’s life. Yet this has never been about enacting the will of religion; it is about enacting power over people. And the more this happens, the more the least of us will suffer the greatest.

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### **More Issues for Catholic Hospitals**

PANViews has written many times about the problems caused by the large number of Catholic hospitals in the US. They don’t often provide standard services, such as contraception, the morning-after pill, tubal ligations and vasectomies, and their end-of-life care follows Catholic religious law, not state law, or a patient’s advance directive. Even worse, the Catholic affiliation isn’t always clear, either by the name of the hospital, or even by checking the hospital’s web page.

Eadbhárd Power



According to the Associated Press, apnews.com, the Catholic Bishops have issued guidelines that explain how care for transgendered people will be provided. Brief summary: it won't.

The guidelines, titled "Moral Limits to the Technological Manipulation of the Human Body," states that Catholic hospitals "must not perform interventions, whether surgical or chemical, that aim to transform the sexual characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex, or take part in the development of such procedures."

The National Review, nationalreview.com, describes how complicated treatment decisions can become.

It notes that Catholic health-care rules forbid removing healthy organs or sterilizing a patient unless there is an underlying condition, such as cancer, which necessitates it.

The ACLU has filed suit when Catholic hospitals have refused to provide such treatment for transgender patients. But recently, a judge awarded summary judgment against a Maryland Catholic hospital, St. Joseph's, for refusing to remove a uterus of a patient who identifies as male. But there's a special reason: St. Joseph's is owned by the University of Maryland Health System, which makes it a public hospital. When UMHS purchased St. Joseph's it agreed to allow it to operate under the rules of the National Catholic Bioethics Center. The NCBC's guidelines have this to say about transgender procedures: "Gender transitioning of any kind is intrinsically disordered because it cannot conform to the true good of the human person, who is a body-soul union unalterably created male or female. Gender transitioning should never be performed, encouraged, or positively affirmed as a good in Catholic health care. This includes surgeries, the administration of cross-sex hormones or pubertal blockers, and social or behavioral modifications."

The hospital contends it is contractually obligated to follow those guidelines. But Maryland law – and the Affordable Care Act – call such refusals to provide care sex discrimination. In this case, the court classified gender dysphoria as a pathology, similar to cancer; since the hospital would remove a cancerous uterus, it had to remove the uterus in this case, too. The removal was based on medical need, not for elective sterilization.

The Catholic Health Association, with more than 600 hospitals and 1,400 other types of health care facilities, notes that more than one in seven US hospital patients receives care in a Catholic hospital. In Alaska, Iowa, South Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin, 40% or more of hospital beds are in Catholic facilities.

American Atheists recently notified members that it is working with Colorado state representatives to write the Colorado Patients' Right to Know Act. This Act would require that hospitals would have to inform patients specifically when they are denied health care for religious reasons. The Colorado Patients' Right to Know Act passed and will become law. 49 more to go!

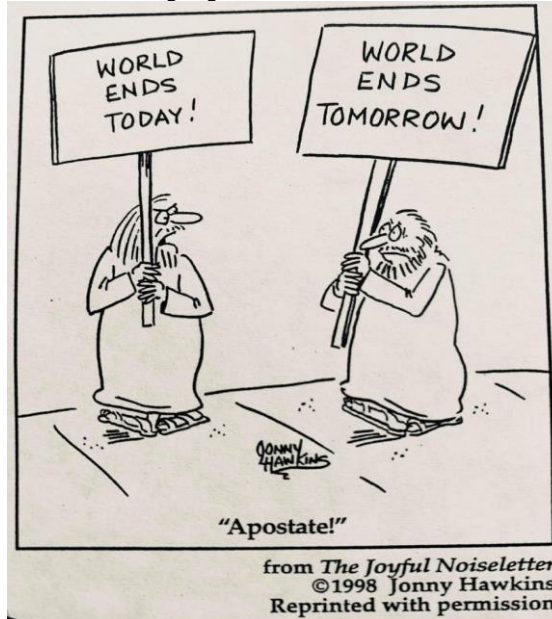
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### Blasphemy in Iran

According to CNN, cnn.com, Iran hanged two people who had been found guilty of blasphemy. They had been convicted of running online “anti-Islam groups and channels,” according to Mizan, Iran’s judiciary news agency.

The two men, Yusef Mehrdad and Sadrullah Fazeli Zare, were convicted of being members of a Telegram channel called “Critique of Superstition and Religion.” (The Telegram Channel website is an online repository of channels organized by topics and interests.) Channel members were accused of expressing opinions insulting Islam. An Iranian state agency claimed that Mehrdad was filmed burning the Quran.

God is Still Laughing



The US Commission on International Religious Freedom reports the men were denied family visits and phone calls while incarcerated. The United Nations have called on Iran to stop religious prosecutions, claiming that Iran is focused on dissenting beliefs and practices, including those of Christians and atheists. It stated: “Such state-sanctioned intolerance furthers extremism and violence. We call on the Iranian authorities to de-criminalize blasphemy and take meaningful steps to ensure the right to freedom of religion or belief.”

The organization Iran Human Rights, based in Norway, and Together Against the Death Penalty, based in France, report that Iran has held at least 582 executions this year, which is a 75% increase over last year, and the highest number since 2015. The report noted an increase in executions after the death of Mahsa Amini, the young woman who was died after she was taken into custody for not wearing a traditional Muslim head covering in public. Demonstrations protesting her death led to a brutal police crackdown.

The report found there was a “surge” of executions in Iran following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody in September. Amini’s death sparked a months-long national uprising, which was eventually quashed by a brutal police crackdown.

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### Cleaning Up the Streets

For the last few years, the Atheist Street Pirates have roamed the streets of Los Angeles, removing religious propaganda illegally placed on utility poles and overpasses.

The Washington *Post*, washingtonpost.com, now reports that they have spread over several states, with participants documenting and taking down illegal religious information. They have created a google map database with downloaded photos and locations of prohibited signage. The map has about 1,000 markers for signs reported, tracked or removed in Texas, Tennessee Georgia, Illinois and Kentucky. Items they have found include banners with American flags and the motto “Prayer Changes Things,” or “Jesus Saves” signs. Atheist Street Pirates parent organization, Atheists United, displayed many of the items they have found at an art exhibition in Los Angeles in April. Their goal is to convey the magnitude of the problem.

More than 130 signs stating “Jesus. The way. The truth. The life,” have been removed from intersections, public parks and freeway off-ramps in Los Angeles. While they are often just stapled and easy to remove, many are attached with roofing nails to telephone poles, and have to be pried off. While the origins of the signs is not usually known, a born-again street evangelist, Brett Farley, produces a lot of “Jesus Saves” posters. The article quotes an interview Farley gave to Axios in which he said he used to be an atheist (!) who started to make and distribute the signs as a way of spreading his new faith. Atheists United has tracked about 250 of his signs on their map. It doesn’t seem to be discouraging him.

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*Secular Coalition of America*



**Japan and LGBTQ Rights**

Japan is a largely secular country. Many follow the Shinto “faith,” but, according to the New York *Times*, nytimes.com, Shinto is more a system of cultural practices, as opposed to a religion. People go to Shinto shrines in January to pray for good luck, families celebrate family events at the shrines, and people look for blessings to give them luck in romance, school exams or job interviews. Shinto is an indigenous religion, with no real dogma or scripture.

However, the *Times* reports a national Shinto association, Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership, the political arm of an organization that oversees 80,000 shrines is trying influence lawmakers with conservative ideology, especially in regard to gay and transgender rights.

Japan is the only nation in the Group of 7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union. Yes, more than seven.) in which same-sex marriage is still not legal. That’s odd, because polls show that the Japanese widely support same sex marriage.

The Shinto group, along with other traditionalists, have pressured lawmakers to avoid any approval, however faint, for gay rights. The Shinto organization distributed a 94-page pamphlet last year at a meeting for Parliament members, which included a transcript of a lecture describing homosexuality as “an acquired mental disorder, an addiction” that could be fixed with “restorative therapy.” Another transcribed lecture in the pamphlet claimed that there was no systematic anti-LGBTQ discrimination, warning that “left-wing activists will use this as their weapon” and that there would be “an outburst of lawsuits.”

A lawyer for the Shinto group claims that the pamphlet quoted above does “not directly” represent the group’s views. But its website has posts that claim that “excessive protection of rights” and legalizing gay marriage as “movements to dismantle the family structure.”

Despite this, a parliamentary committee recently approved a bill stating there “should be no unfair discrimination” against LGBTQ people. This bill isn’t as strong as one that failed two years ago, the article said. As of this writing the bill does not appear to have come before Parliament.

It’s not just the Shinto. The religious right is important in elections, so they have more power than their numbers deserve. The man who assassinated Shinzo Abe, a former prime minister last year, was angry about Abe’s connection to the Unification Church, which the assassin held responsible for financial losses by his family. After Abe’s death, Japanese media discovered connections between the Unification Church and more than 100 members of Parliament. The Unification Church has campaigned against LGBTQ rights in Japan. The World Daily, a newspaper with ties to the church, opined that the current

LGBTQ bill “may trigger crime” and “trans women might invade women’s spaces.” The article noted that while there has been a lot of scrutiny about the Unification Church after Abe’s death, the Shinto association has escaped notice as it quietly tries to influence lawmakers. For example, it encouraged conservatives to continue a law requiring married couples to choose one last name and prohibiting female heirs from ascending to the imperial throne.

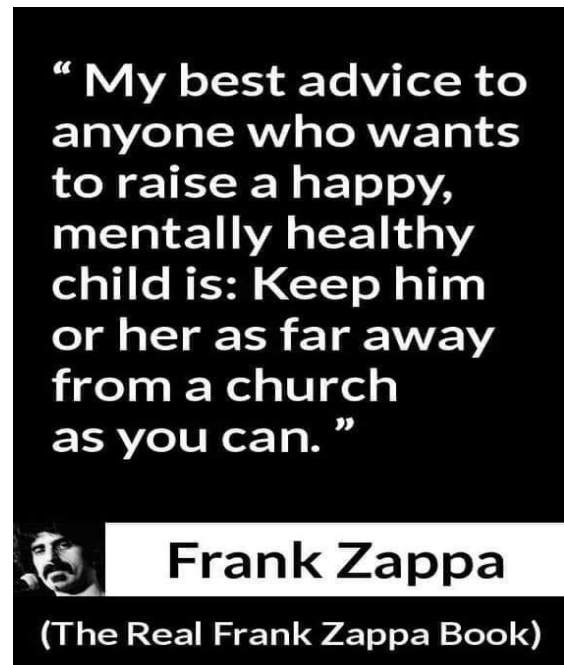
It’s amazing how religions all over the world seem to be afraid of the same things.

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### Another Football Coach, and Prayer

Sports in the US have a close relationship to religion. Coaches and players often attribute their success to God’s favor. (Funny, they don’t blame God when they lose.) The Supreme Court decision in *Kennedy v. Bremerton* brought even more attention to the sports and God relationship when it allowed a high school football coach to lead the team in prayer after games.

The issue of coaches, prayers and football came up again recently. This time the coach was Deion Sanders, a great player who is now coaching at the University of Colorado. The story, as written by J.T. Keith in the *Mississippi Clarion Ledger* and reprinted in [yahoonews.com](http://yahoonews.com), notes that Sanders left his coaching job at Jackson State in Mississippi for the job at Colorado because God told him to. Of course, the article points out, God had previously told Sanders to take the Jackson State position.



He was successful at Jackson State. Maybe that’s why nobody cared when his Instagram posts showed him praying with his team before practice, and during meetings and games. But then he went to Colorado, where people apparently felt differently. The Freedom from Religion Foundation wrote to the University of Colorado’s chancellor, copying in the athletic director, notifying them that Sanders had violated the law by engaging in prayer with staff and players. The letter said, “It is our understanding that on December 20, 2022, a staff member led other staff members in a Christian prayer to start an official meeting. More egregiously, on January 16, 2023, Coach Sanders directed a staff member to lead players and coaches in Christian prayer before a team meeting.”

Colorado responded appropriately. The school’s Office of institutional Equity and Compliance met with Sanders and clarified the rules about coaches, players and religious activities. The school told the *Deseret News* that Sanders was “very receptive to this training and came away from it with a better understanding of the University of Colorado’s policies and the requirements of the Establishment Clause.”

But of course, it didn’t end there. The First Liberty Institute, a law firm that specializes in religious freedom disputes, wrote to the university, specifically referencing *Kennedy v. Bremerton*, maintaining that Sanders must be allowed his constitutional right to religious expression. The situation hasn’t been settled.

As the article points out, one thing this situation shows is that Sanders isn’t in Mississippi anymore. It quotes a 2016 Pew Research study showing that 77% of Mississippians identify as highly religious, which



ties them with Alabamians for the most religious people in the nation. By contrast, only 47% of Coloradoans feel that strongly, ranking them as 41<sup>st</sup>.

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### Witches Still a Problem?

In India, apparently, they still are. The New York Times, nytimes.com, reports that India is trying to end the ancient practice of witch hunting. It's illegal, but it hasn't disappeared.

The article explains that in certain parts of India, when a problem arose – a crop failure, for example – villagers would look around for an explanation, and the explanation often was a witch.

Victims' advocates claim that witch hunting is more cynical today. It's used to oppress women and can provide cover to other motives: to grab land, or settle a score, or justify an attack.

Most of the problem is in indigenous tribal areas, although around a dozen Indian states have reported cases. Laws against witch hunting have been strengthened, and some areas have established memorials to victims, to emphasize that attacking them was wrong. The level of violence against the so-called witches ranges from awful to horrifying: they have had their nails pulled out, been forced to eat feces, been paraded naked, been beaten black and blue. Some have been burned or lynched. According to India's National Crime Records Bureau, from 2010 to 2021, more than 1,500 accused witches were killed. The state of Jharkhand recorded 854 witchcraft cases in 2021 – 32 of which resulting in death.

Jharkhand is trying to put a stop to this. It has established 25 witch-hunting prevention teams, and village-level committees work with victims, with centers to provide legal aid and a safe place to stay. Help desks work directly with survivors to make sure they are all right.

Still, witch hunting is a deeply held belief, and law enforcement remains a problem. A study of witch hunting in three states, including Jharkhand, found that police usually only acted in cases of murder or attempted murder. Jharkhand officials had a goal of ending witch hunting by 2023, but now have pushed that back to 2026.

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### Helpful Hints for the End of the World

David Jeremiah, davidjeremiah.org, is an evangelical Christian author, pastor at a megachurch, and television and radio personality. He has developed a "teaching series" and book, to help people understand current events as a sign of the coming end times. Studying his *The World of the End*, he assures us, will make us stronger believers and better ambassadors for Jesus.

He chose the title for the series to reflect that we may not be at the end of the world, but we are at the world of the end, "a time when Bible prophecy is intersecting with our culture, technology, unhinged morality, and worldwide strife as never before. "

To save PANViews readers the trouble of going through the series, here's a summary of the chapters, straight from Jeremiah's website:

Chapter 1 – Socialism: Are the public cries for shared wealth and government control a sign of the times?

Chapter 2 – Globalism: The world is getting smaller and more intertwined every day. Does the Bible predict this?

Chapter 3 – Pandemic: Are the illnesses, plagues, and pestilence of our day signs we are living in the Last Days?

Chapter 4 – Economic Chaos: Is our cashless society, cryptocurrency, and microchipping technology mentioned in Bible prophecy?

Chapter 5 – The Falling Away: The Bible predicts the falling away of the Church. Is that what we are seeing today?

Chapter 6 – End Times People: Would you be surprised to know the decay of character is a precursor for Christ's return?

Chapter 7– Cancel Culture: Does Bible prophecy predict a time when society tries to silence the voices of morality?

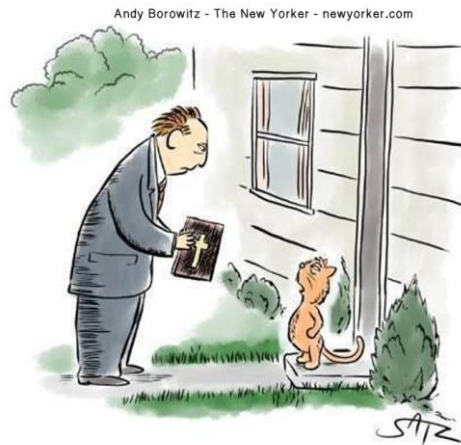
Chapter 8 – Spiritual Famine: Is the indifference to God being experienced in the world today a sign of we are living in the Last Days?

Chapter 9 – Jerusalem: What role does Jerusalem play in the End Times drama unfolding around us?

Chapter 10 – The Triumph of the Gospel: As the world reels from the turmoil of our time, could we be looking in all the wrong places and at all the wrong people to find peace? Is the Gospel the solution to our broken world?

This is a pretty standard list of end times signs, although he has updated it to include cryptocurrency, and cancel culture.

Jeremiah is doing quite well, by the way, for someone who appears to believe the end is nigh. According to [celebritynetworth.com](http://celebritynetworth.com), his net worth is \$50 million.



"I'm the only deity this house requires."

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### Christians Threatened by The Sims

*Ally Consoli*

"Gabba naguma habba na na op b aba!"

My Simeonese is a little rusty, but that's "My Body, My Choice!"

(FYI: *The Sims* is a social simulation game that allows players to create and dress characters called "Sims", build and furnish houses for them, and simulate their everyday lives.)

Yes, the precious land of the Sims, where early teens were taught that sex was a whirlwind cloud of laughter that produced a fully formed baby only moments later and that any fight could be ended with a single punch or a single joke is now the butt of Christian fundamentalist ire.

As a game, each new iteration of "The Sims" has tried to keep its pulse on updating avatars and environments as players request them, and they are never against the option of pursuing same-sex

relationships within the game. Well, now, in some of the latest modifications for “Sims 4,” the current iteration by producer EA Games, players can customize their avatars with top surgery scars, chest binders, shapewear, and medical wearables to showcase their transgender experiences.

While this was a big victory for the trans community, who celebrated being able to create characters that resembled themselves just a little bit more, the American Family Association (AFA) did not share in this good news. A vehemently anti-LGBT+ Christian fundamentalist group, they are condemning this move by EA games as another shot fired in the “everlasting war against absolute truth and decency.”

AFA is not done with their war; they believe that these Sims avatars are yet another way of heralding the apocalypse. The transgender population has become the new Satanic panic.

Funny, I think I’ve seen this character before... oh yeah! In “The Sims.” My avatar encountered a crazy person screaming about the apocalypse and insane conspiracy theories. They put him out of his misery.

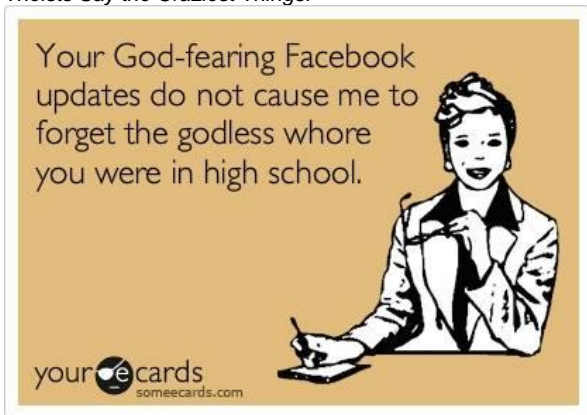
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### The Real Good News

Sometimes it seems as if the Christian Right wins every battle. But we’ve had a couple of victories recently:

The heavily Republican Texas Senate passed a bill to require a framed copy of the Ten Commandments be posted in every classroom. But the Texas House refused to approve it.

*Theists Say the Craziest Things!*

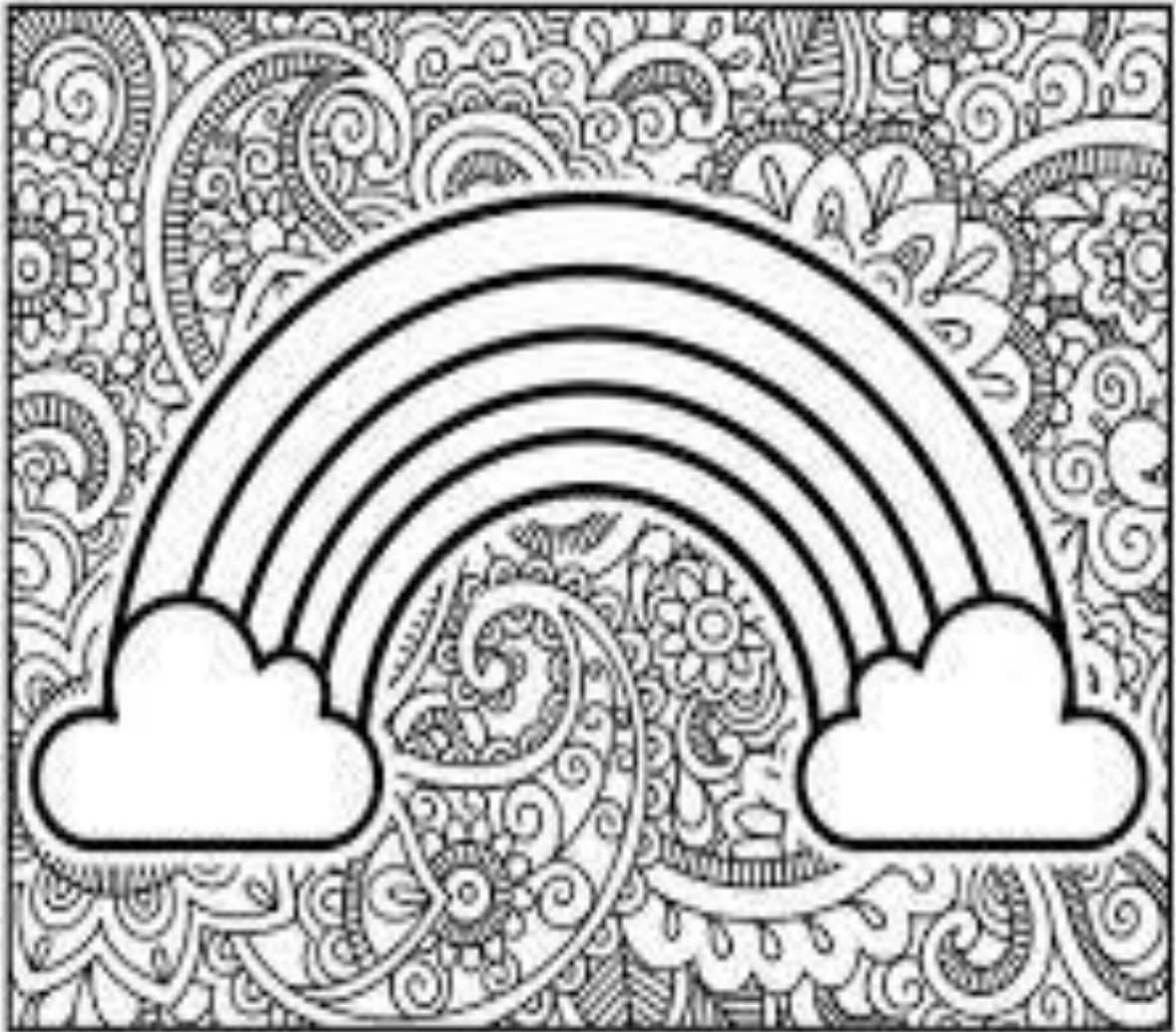


Since 2019, Mississippi license plates have featured the words “In God We Trust.” Not anymore.

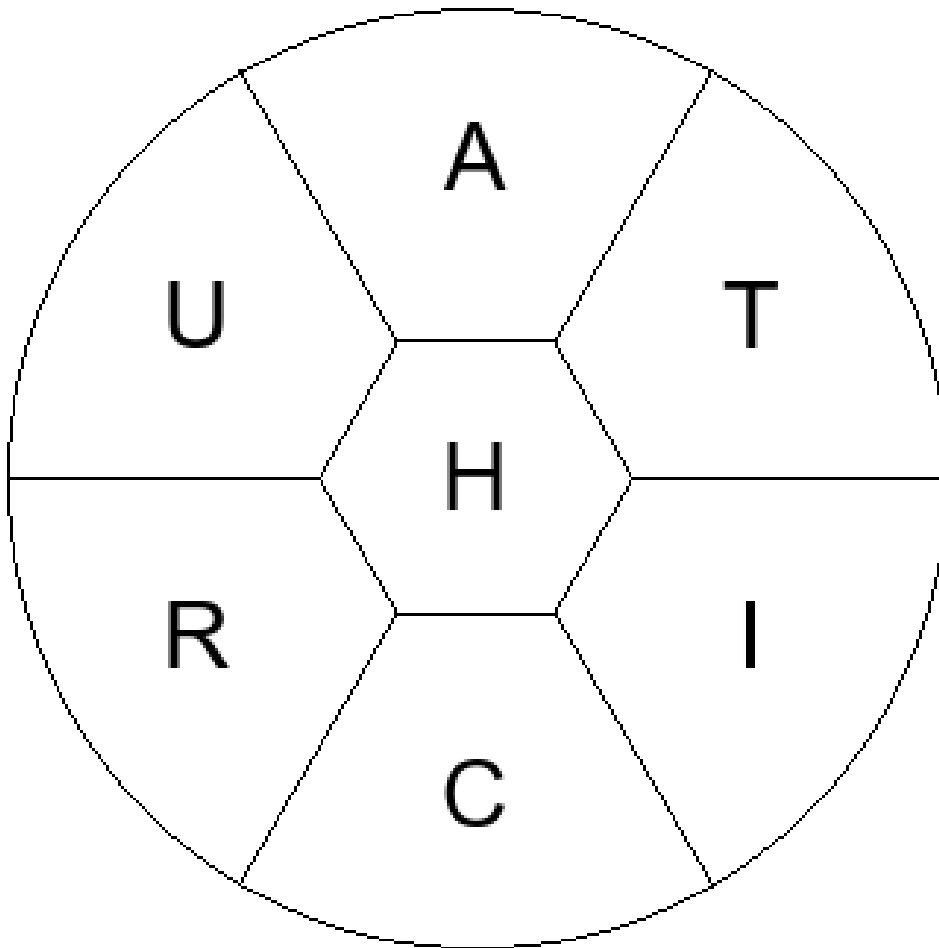
American Atheists and three Mississippi residents sued to have the words removed. A district court originally ruled that the words weren’t a First Amendment violation because residents could use decals to cover up the words. But opponents quickly pointed out that obscuring words on the license plate is illegal, and the court acknowledged that drivers could be pulled over and issued tickets if they covered up the offending phrase.

The state has officially tossed in the towel. It held a contest for a new design, and, according to the Mississippi Free Press, mississippifreepress.org, Mississippi’s license plate will contain a flower and the words, but no reference to God. When asked for a comment about why “In God We Trust” is missing, the governor’s office responded, “This was a statewide contest open to all Mississippians for submissions. We received hundreds of incredible designs that showcased the impressive talent of Mississippians. This design was the winner that was ultimately selected from those submissions.” No mention of why God is no longer trusted.

# FUN!



Find as many words with four or more letters as you can, all containing the center letter, "H". You can use letters more than once. Answers at the end of *PANViews*.



## Member News



PAN remembers Jeannette Wolff, longtime member from Lancaster. She's pictured here with her husband John, who has also long been active in PAN. Jeannette served on the board, and she and John hosted parties for PAN Lancaster for years. She'll be missed.

The Freedom from Religion Foundation asked members to submit six-word stories. Their newsletter, Freethought Today, published these submissions from PAN members:

*Cheryl Huber*

Cancer twice – survived. Why?  
Science rules!

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*Priscilla Oppenheimer*

Weekday church: dark, silent  
--where's God?

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## PAN News & Updates

**Next Festivals:**  
June 10, Olde Annville Days, 9:00 – 2:00 pm  
June 10, York Pride, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, York Fairgrounds, 334 Carlisle Ave.  
This is the first time PAN has had booths at two festivals on the same day. Let us know if you can help!  
June 15, Jubilee Day, Mechanicsburg, 10:00 am – 9:00 pm  
June 17, Lancaster Pride, 12:00 – 7:00 pm  
Lancaster Convention Center  
**Save the Date:** Come picnic with PAN at Gifford Pinchot State Park, Sunday August 27. Details to follow!

*Here we are, at the Dillsburg Pickle Fest!*



**Meetings** – PAN holds in-person and online meetings. Locations, times, and dates below.

Online meeting: Fourth Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm. We hope to split the meeting into an hour of chat and an hour of presentation or more structured discussion. Anyone with a book/movie review, discussion topic, or potential guest speaker should contact Dietrich

Dellinger @ [guyinnagorillasuit@gmail.com](mailto:guyinnagorillasuit@gmail.com)

Chambersburg – Second Thursday of the month, 6:30 pm, Sakura Japanese Restaurant, 1071 Wayne Ave

Cumberland/Mechanicsburg - Third Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm, 398 N. York Street , Mechanicsburg, PA

Harrisburg– First Wednesday of the month, 6:30 pm, Zeroday Brewing Company Taproom, 923 North 3rd Street.

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

Lebanon - Second Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm, Hoss's - 1235 E Main St., Annville

Reading – Third Thursdays at 7:15pm, 3rd & Spruce Drafthaus, 238 S 3rd Ave, Reading, PA 19611

York Meeting – First Sunday at noon, Mexitaly Brick Oven Brewhouse, 2440 East Market St.

### ***How to Contribute to PAN***

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

**Pennies for PAN** - Finally, we are happy to take money the old-fashioned way. You can give your tax-deductible contribution to a Board Member at one of our meetings or events, you can donate via PayPal on our website, [www.panonbelievers.org](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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PANViews Team  
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Spelling bee answers:

Arch	Archaic	Hart	That
Arthritic	Chit	Hatch	Thatch
Attach	Chitchat	Hath	Truth
Catarrh	Church	Hatha	
Catch	Crutch	Hitch	
Cathartic	Hair	Hurrah	
Chai	Chair	Hurt	
Chat	Char	Hutch	
Chia	Chart	Itch	
Chic	Hair	Rich	
Chica	Haircut	Tach	

