

Mid Ohio *A*theists

A Newsletter For Atheists in the Mansfield Ohio Area

Seventh Issue

DECEMBER 2010

Vol. 1 No. 7

Winter Solstice Banquet

For our December meeting, we will be going to the Humanist Community of Central Ohio's Winter Solstice Banquet. The banquet will be held on Saturday, December 18th, beginning at 6pm at the Fawcett Center, 2400 Olentangy River Rd, Columbus.

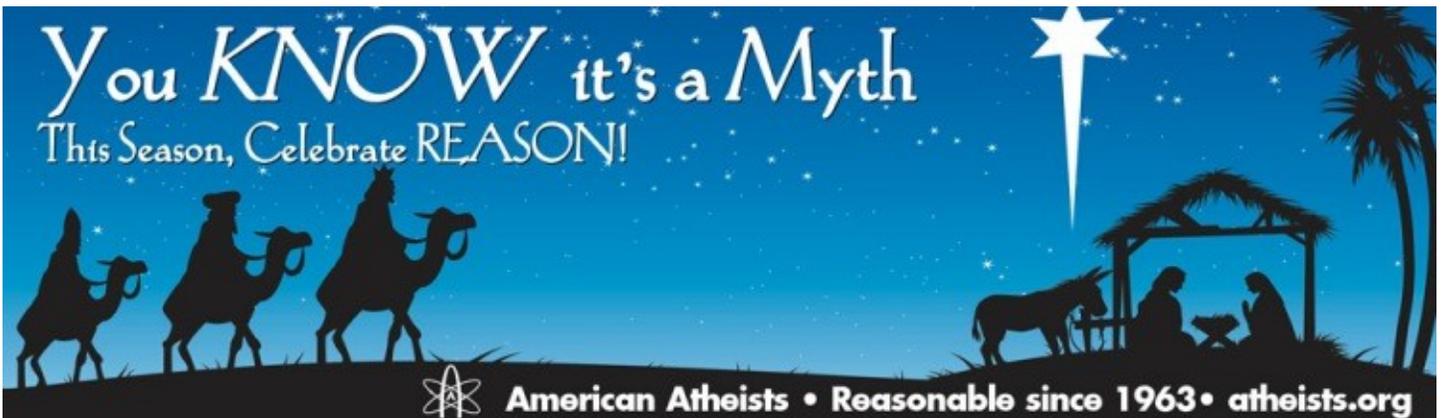
Dan Barker, one of the co-presidents of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, will be the guest speaker. He will be talking about his personal story of going from a fundamentalist evangelical

American Atheists billboard getting attention

American Atheists is getting national attention lately due to putting up a billboard that is drawing much criticism from Christians. The billboard is located outside the Lincoln Tunnel, going into New York City, where millions of people will see it. The billboard was put up the Tuesday before Thanksgiving and will remain there until Christmas, at a cost of \$20,000. The billboard depicts three wise men on camels approaching the baby Jesus in the manger and simply states that "You Know it's a Myth".

atheist billboard has predictably been heated.

The Catholic League put up a billboard on the opposite side of the tunnel to counter the message of the American Atheist billboard. The Catholic League's billboard states "You Know it's Real. This Season, Celebrate Jesus." Just below that in smaller print, "Merry Christmas from the Catholic League." The billboard depicts Mary and Joseph looking down at the baby Jesus laying in straw.



preacher to an atheist activist.

This will be a great opportunity to meet some fellow freethinkers, and to meet Dan Barker, a great force in the Church-State Separation battle. ♦

November Meeting

We met at Barnes and Noble on Sunday the 21st. We had 2 new members sign up.

We discussed getting an account on meetup.com and advertising there so more people in the area can find us.

We also talked about going to the Humanist Community of Central Ohio's Winter Solstice Banquet on December 18th. There will be no meeting at Barnes and Noble in December due to it falling on the day after the banquet. The next meeting will be in January at Barnes and Noble in Ontario again. ♦

The president of American Atheists, David Silverman, said atheists are unfairly targeted in the "war on Christmas". "We get blamed for a war on Christmas every year. This time we're actually going to pay attention to that. We're actually going to earn a little bit of that," Silverman said.

Another objective of the billboard is to reach out to nonbelievers who still attend church. "We're getting a lot of response from closeted atheists saying 'thank you for putting it up.'"

Silverman said that even though the billboard has been up for just a few days, he considers the campaign a success.

Some people who still believe in the biblical story of the birth of Christ are getting upset at the message. The reaction to such a prominent display of an

Bill Donahue, President of the Catholic League, said in a press release "We decided to counterpunch after a donor came forward seeking to challenge the anti-Christmas statement by American Atheists. Our approach is positive, and services the common good."

It's good to see American Atheists boldly putting out their message and trying to reach more atheists. ♦

Atheist Quote

"One must choose between God and Man, and all "radicals" and "progressives", from the mildest liberal to the most extreme anarchist, have in effect chosen Man." - George Orwell

*We are on the web at-
midohioatheists.org*

A Christmas Sermon

By Robert G Ingersoll—1891

The good part of Christmas is not always Christian -- it is generally Pagan; that is to say, human, natural.

Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief. It came with the threat of everlasting torture on its lips. It meant war on earth and perdition hereafter.

It taught some good things -- the beauty of love and kindness in man. But as a torch-bearer, as a bringer of joy, it has been a failure. It has given infinite consequences to the acts of finite beings, crushing the soul with a responsibility too great for mortals to bear. It has filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men. Not satisfied with that, it has deprived God of the pardoning power.

And yet it may have done some good by borrowing from the Pagan world the old festival called Christmas.

Long before Christ was born the Sun-God triumphed over the powers of Darkness. About the time that we call Christmas the days begin perceptibly to lengthen. Our barbarian ancestors were worshippers of the sun, and they celebrated his victory over the hosts of night. Such a festival was natural and beautiful. The most natural of all religions is the worship of the sun. Christianity adopted this festival. It borrowed from the Pagans the best it has.

I believe in Christmas and in every day that has been set apart for joy. We in America have too much work and not enough play. We are too much like the English.

I think it was Heinrich Heine who said that he thought a blaspheming Frenchman was a more pleasing object to God than a praying Englishman. We take our joys too sadly. I am in favor of all the good free days -- the more the better.

Christmas is a good day to forgive and forget -- a good day to throw away prejudices and hatreds -- a good day to fill your heart and your house, and the hearts and houses of others, with sunshine.

Atheist Book Corner

The book [Why I Became an Atheist: A Former Preacher Rejects Christianity](#) by John W. Loftus is a great resource for explaining why Christianity is not true. John is a former preacher who, before leaving the church, had ministries in Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana, and taught at several Christian colleges.

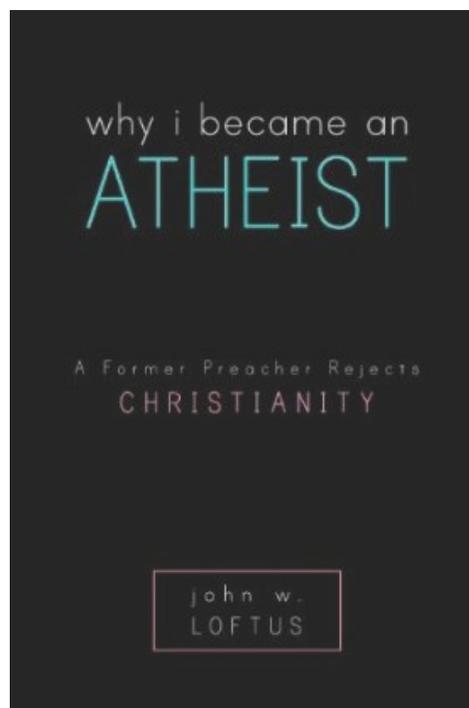
John's life changed dramatically when he had an affair with a woman who was running a homeless shelter he had founded. When the affair became public, the church congregation turned against John, not showing any compassion or forgiveness for the affair. To John, this was the antithesis of the Christian faith and love he had known.

With the emotional devastation from the guilt he had from the affair and the rejection by fellow Christians as well as the gathering weight of the doubts he had long entertained, John began to question his faith.

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is published by members of
the Mid Ohio Atheists group.
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In this book, John explains the reasoning process that led him to reject his religious belief. This book includes his "cumulative case" against Christianity; the philosophical, scientific, and historical reasons that can be raised against Christian belief.

John also includes a chapter on the 'Outsider Test for Faith'. Simply stated, does a religion's claims stand up to scrutiny if look at from someone on the outside. John points out that we all came by our beliefs due to where and when we were born. Since we didn't pick our beliefs, shouldn't we try to step outside them and investigate them to be sure they are right? It is easy for outsiders to see the false claims of religions. If only believers would subject their own beliefs to this test ♦



Atheist Humor

A clergyman was walking down the street when he came upon a group of a few boys about 10 years of age, surrounding a dog. Concerned that the boys were hurting the animal, he went over and asked them what they were doing. One of the boys replied, "This dog is an old neighborhood stray. We take him home with us sometimes, but only one of us can take him home. So we're having a contest: whichever one of us tells the biggest lie can take him home today."

Of course, the Reverend was shocked. "You boys shouldn't be having a contest telling lies!" he exclaimed. He then launched into a 10-minute sermon against lying, beginning, "Don't you boys know it's a sin to lie?" and ending with, "Why, when I was your age, I never told a lie."

There was complete silence for about a minute. As the Reverend smiled with satisfaction that he'd gotten through to them, the smallest boy gave a deep sigh. "All right," he said, "give him the dog." ♦

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midohioatheists](http://www.facebook.com/midohioatheists)**