

Mid Ohio *A*theists

For and About Atheists in the Mansfield Ohio Area

Second Issue

JULY 2010

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Atheists in the Park

Our next meeting will be at our annual picnic at Malabar State Park. It will be on Sunday, July 18th at noon. This will be at the picnic area by the covered bridge.



We had a great time there last year and I'm sure this year will be just as good. Plan to bring your wading shoes and shorts.

This will be a potluck type picnic, so go to our website to see what people have volunteered to bring and what we yet need others to provide. Then email us with what you will be sharing.

If you are not a member but would like to join us for a some good food and good conversation, contact us at info@midohioatheists.org and we'll make sure you are included. We are always looking for new members or people who just want to see what we are about.

But, if you plan to show up to convert us to your religion or to tell us how wrong we are, don't bother. You'll just be wasting your time and ours.

Supreme Court: Vatican Can be Sued

The U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) recently ruled that the Vatican is not immune to civil lawsuits. The case, John V Doe v Holy See, was filed by a plaintiff who claims to have been sex-

We are on the web at-
midohioatheists.org

ually abused in the 1960s by a Roman Catholic priest called Andrew Ronan. The suit was filed in 2002, and thanks to the court's decision last week, it can finally proceed against the Vatican – allegedly liable because it acted as the priest's employer.

The Vatican has argued that it is not liable because it does not employ priests since "it does not pay them any salary, or benefits, and does not exercise a day-to-day control on their activity".

But the main issue in the case has been immunity. The Vatican attempted to use the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (FSIA) of 1976, under which foreign states cannot be sued. The supreme court refused to allow this.

This decision will allow many more plaintiffs to include the Vatican in their sexual abuse lawsuits against priests. Let's hope that the victims can get the justice they so deserve.

Letter in NJ Supports Atheists

A letter to the editor in the Mansfield News Journal on June 24 by Cody Reed of Willard has kept the online contributors of the NJ busy for the last two weeks. The letter was entitled "Humanists and atheists must show majority that we will not be silenced". In the letter Cody stated that atheists and Humanists are being unfairly portrayed by theists and we need to stand up and be counted. Our web address was also given at the end of the letter. Thanks for the shout out Cody.

June Meeting Re-Cap

Our monthly meeting for June was held at Bob Evan's restaurant on the 20th. Several new people come to the meeting. We had quite a wait for a table since we had such a large group.

There was much lively discussion about atheism and some of the experiences we have had as atheists in a Christian dominated society. I think we were all glad we have a local group where we can find support and share our views among like minded people.

See our website for more a more detailed description.

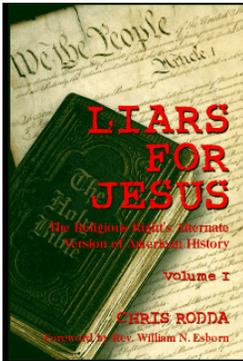
We're also on Facebook
[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/midohioatheists)
[midohioatheists](http://www.facebook.com/midohioatheists)

Atheist Book Corner

An interesting book that is useful for atheists in the continuing battle with theists on the founding of America is Liars for Jesus by Chris Rodda. This book contends that many of the stories and quotes about our founding fathers have been either made up or quoted out of context by the religious right who want to push their agenda of making this a Christian nation.

A famous example is whether or not the Continental Congress ordered 20,000 Bibles printed. Rodda goes back to the original sources instead of relying on newer source material since

much of it has been written by Christians who put their slant on the actual history. Rodda's research on the 20,000 Bibles episode shows that what occurred was a



Rev. Alison requested a loan from Congress in order to print 20,000 Bibles here in America. After being sent to a committee, it was decided that it was too risky to print a Bible with the war going on so the request was changed to import Bibles instead. A vote was taken (which passed) to change the request from printing Bibles to importing Bibles. But no final vote on the updated request was ever taken and no money was ever made available.

Many Christian authors only write that Congress saw that Bibles were in short supply so Congress had 20,000 printed.

Liars for Jesus is a great resource to have when dealing with theists who insist this country was founded on Christianity. The author has several chapters available for downloading at her website - www.liarsforjesus.com

Christian Nation?

Atheists are always hearing assertions to the effect of- "this is a Christian Nation, our Constitution and laws are based on the Ten Commandments". Did you ever wonder how accurate these statements are?

The problem when people say these things is that they've probably never read the Constitution and Bill of Rights and compared them to the Decalogue. Here is an example of how these are fundamentally different:

The 1st Amendment starts- "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; ... "

The 1st Commandment says (KJV Exodus 20:3)- "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of worship, the Bible demands you serve only the god of Moses. How can these two different documents be reconciled? I don't think they can.

Next, the Bible's prohibition against taking the name of the lord in vain directly contradicts the 1st Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech.

Are we a Christian Nation, founded on the 10 Commandments?

Simple Answer: No!

Mid Ohio Atheists Newsletter is published by the members of Mid Ohio Atheists. We can be contacted at info@midohioatheists.org

Rally in Central Park

Some members have said they want to have a meeting in Central Park in downtown Mansfield. If we get enough members interested in taking part, we can organize this at our July 18th meeting.

Christopher Hitchens Announcement



Well known author and outspoken atheist Christopher Hitchens has recently cancelled many public speaking engagements during his book tour promoting his latest book Hitch 22, which is a memoir.

It was a mystery as to why this was happening. But, on June 30th, Christopher released the following statement on Vanity Fair's website that explains the situation:

"I have been advised by my physician that I must undergo a course of chemotherapy on my esophagus. This advice seems persuasive to me. I regret having had to cancel so many engagements at such short notice."

We certainly hope that Christopher gets the best care modern medical science can provide and that he is back on the speaking circuit soon.. His is a much needed voice in the debate between atheists and theists. His recent book God Is Not Great was a NY Times best seller and brought the debate of god's existence to many people for the first time.

Instead of prayers, many atheists are doing something more effective by making donations to cancer research in Christopher's name.