

✧ ✧ **Upcoming AOF Events** ✧ ✧

Thanks to all who joined us for the May 31 online presentation by ex-pastor Dave Warnock, [Dying Out Loud](#). If you missed it, his talk is *now available* for retrospective viewing. Click this link to enjoy:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/N1yDKDrzmJJUpXKuVnbepYbWYC8X6a8gyga-voEz01Wldhxaok5whwg_iHBdVgHI

➤ **Free Movie Nights!**

Fridays, Jun 5 & Jun 19, 2020, 7pm – 10pm

Twice a month, [Reason Center](#) (RC) and AOF entertain you with a **Free Movie** under an excellent [MPLC License](#).

How does this work, in these lockdown days? It requires a Netflix account + the Google Chrome browser. If you don't have these, we apologize. Please be patient until RC can open its doors. Else, here's how to join us:

- Open your Chrome web browser right now and install the Netflix Party Extension. Get it at "www.netflixparty.com". (Really, do it *now*. Don't wait till movie night!)
- Just before show time, fire up the Chrome browser and check the AOF webpage for the movie event. It should display the Netflix Party Link. Click that link.
- The Netflix Movie Party page will open. Log into Netflix (if not logged in already). At the top right of the browser frame, see a small circle with the letters NP in red. It's not easy to see, so look very closely. You must click on the "NP".
- The Netflix movie party should begin. You'll be watching it along with your AOF friends. As it plays we can chat on the side of the screen and make silly, snarky comments.



The MPLC License prohibits telling you the movie title, but we can hint. The June 5 movie is a spooky thriller about three friends making a web series about their town, who discover that their neighbors are being killed and replaced by creatures who are perfect copies of their victims. On June 19, the movie is a 1983 American sports drama starring Tom Cruise, about a dying Pennsylvania steel town, a high school football player desperate for a scholarship, and his headstrong coach.

Incidentally, the Pennsylvania steel town, where this movie was filmed, is Johnstown, the hometown of your humble editor (Fran Evanisko). He confirms that this movie was actually shot there.

Free Movie Night is especially for Reason Center members, but non-members are welcome too. RC *may* beg a small donation to cover costs. How can you be a member? Sign up at <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. Membership, a measly \$5 a month, is tax deductible if you itemize, and the perks (like this one) just go on.

Location: A Netflix Party on your Chrome Browser. Get the extension at "netflixparty.com" (see above).

Contact: Email "programs (at) aofonline.org" or contact Reason Center (<https://reasoncenter.org/>).

Free Movie Nights occur on a Friday evening each month. Maybe two Fridays. Suggest your own fave film for next time!

➤ **The Fantasy Factor - Aron Ra**

Saturday, June 28, 2020, 2pm – 4pm

That pic at right - who is it? No, *not* [Thulsa Doom](#), Conan's nemesis from the 1982 movie. It's [Aron Ra](#), possibly America's most notorious living atheist, freethought activist, podcaster, author, polemist, ex-Mormon and former Texas senate candidate. He will regale us about the polarized climate between those who want to improve understanding of reality and those who desperately need fantasy.



Join the event in the lock-down comfort of your home via Zoom. The exact link will be available later at:
<https://www.aofonline.org/calendar-of-events/icalrepeat.detail/2020/06/28/2396/he-fantasy-factor-aron-ra.html>.

To whet your appetite see his [Wikiquote words](#), or browse his [YouTube channel](#). Wow, it just goes on. This is yet another extraordinary event of the AOF Speaker Series. And free, free, free as your thoughts.

Location: Videoconference via Zoom; watch for the link.

Contact: Email "programs (at) aofonline.org", or see: <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/270945422/>

Attend for free. But you must use Zoom.us, and possibly install the Zoom Videoconference program. Link details later.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Events ✧ ✧

➤ Critical Thinking Workshops

Thursdays, Jun 4, Jun 18 & Jul 2, 2020, 7pm – 9pm

A workshop series sponsored by the Sacramento Area Skeptics to practice and explore the concepts of critical thinking. Each workshop begins with a video to teach a fundamental concept of critical thought; students then apply it to current/relevant topics in a group discussion format. \$1 fee for costs.

Location: Listed as Reason Center (1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sac, map at <https://goo.gl/iVQL8z>) but possibly a videoconference; contact the event organizer for details.

Contact: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/>, or call 831-419-7225 (Angelo).

➤ Blasphemy Breakfast

Sunday, Jun 21, 2020, 9:30am – 11am

Join friends for a “Blasphemy Breakfast” at Mel’s Diner in Rocklin. Like everything else these days, it is tentative. “June might be the month we cautiously begin sharing waffles and omelets at Mel’s again. So far so good, according to science and Gov. Newsom. ... as of today it looks like we’re on again as of our June breakfast! We miss you!” Also, “This is a great group of people to answer any atheist questions you might have, help you learn more about all the freethinking goings-on in the region, or help you any way we can. ... we’ll surely be friends once we’ve met you.” Recommended: the malts, omelets, biscuits ‘n’ gravy, and grilled cheese.

Location: Mel’s Diner, 6708 Lonetree Boulevard, Rocklin. Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/fTFRtMCuqWXejWJSA>.

Details: <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/270747151/>.

Message Judy Saint, the event organizer, with any questions.

➤ Coalition of Reason – Sacramento Area Events

But wait, there’s more! For other freethought events in the Central Valley area, please see the Sacramento Coalition of Reason calendar at <https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/>.

You can help. Here’s how.

Support Reason Center

Since Reason Center opened in July 2014, it has hosted hundreds of events and accrued twelve partner organizations. Its mission: to support a social and intellectual community for freethinkers, contribute to society through education and community service, advance the civic understanding and acceptance of freethinkers, and uphold the separation of religion and government. All good work.

But to continue, “RC” relies on support from members and donors. Especially now. Please stand up for Reason Center, because it stands up for you. To set up a monthly or one-time donation, visit ReasonCenter.org.

Support AOF

You can support AOF *without spending a dime*. How? When you purchase goods at Amazon.com, simply use this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0325762>. Bookmark it now! Prices & service will be the same, but AOF will receive a small kickback for whatever you purchase. Sweet!

Suggest a Meeting

Know a compelling speaker, have a great meeting idea? Tell the AOF Program Committee! Go to <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>, click “Program Committee” in the drop-down line, and enter your thoughtful suggestion. (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

Volunteer?

We suggest it meekly. See <http://www.aofonline.org/learn/committees.html> for opportunities.



(Thanks, Sergio Aragones)

✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➤ Hug an Atheist Day

Monday, June 1, 2020

In 2009, freethinker William Bermudez started [Hug an Atheist Day](#) (June 1st) to poke fun at other groups popping up at the time to encourage hugging. He called for people to run up and hug atheists or any nonbeliever in general, whether agnostic, skeptic, secular humanist, or with other heretical views. In the words of one blogger:

It doesn't matter what your worldview is, practice a little tolerance. Find your nearest Atheist, Absurdist, Agnostic, Anti-Religionist, Antitheist, Apatheist, Deist, Dystheist, Existentialist, Freethinker, Gropaga, Ignostic, Mahayana, Marxist, Misotheist, Naturalistic Pantheist, Nihilist, Nontheist, Pastafarian, Secular Humanist, Skeptic, Spagnostic, Structuralist, Buddhist, Zenbuddhist, or anyone else who doubts the existence of a god, and & give him/her the biggest hug ever!

But use common sense, because not everyone appreciates uninvited hugs.



➤ World Environment Day

Friday, June 5, 2020

The goal of **World Environment Day** is to stimulate worldwide awareness of environmental issues, and to generate action for conservation. The United Nations General Assembly established [World Environment Day](#) in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Each year World Environment Day celebrations occur at a different location around the globe. To find a location for this year, see: [World Environment Day Events](#).



World Environment Day gives environmental issues a human face, one with which we can identify. The philosophy of the Day has changed little over the last three decades; it still strives to associate faces with environmental issues and empower people to be advocates of sustainable and equitable development. By promoting an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing the attitudes towards environmental issues, and advocating partnerships, World Environment Day strives to ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safe, clean, healthy, and more prosperous future.

In the words of the United Nations Environment Programme, "On this World Environment Day, let us not despair, but instead examine the state of our environment. Let us consider carefully the actions which each of us must take, and then address ourselves to our common task of preserving all life on earth in a mood of sober resolution and quiet confidence."

Groups around the world hold activities to acknowledge and celebrate this day. Find an activity near you, and join the fun!

➤ The June Solstice

Saturday, June 20, 2020

Called Summer Solstice in the northern hemisphere, Winter Solstice in the southern, people have marked the **June Solstice** in some way or another for thousands of years. Many religions have seasonal holy days linked to this day. It is the day when the Northern Hemisphere has more daylight than at any other time of the year. In the Southern Hemisphere, the least daylight occurs this day in June.



The precise date of the June Solstice varies from year to year, but usually it is between the 20th and 23rd of June.

"Solstice" comes from two Latin words: "sol" (meaning sun) and "sistere," (to cause to stand still). At noon in either hemisphere the sun will be high in the sky during summer, low during winter. On the day with the greatest number of daylight hours, the sun reaches its maximum elevation; we call this the Summer Solstice. Likewise, the day with the least daylight is the Winter Solstice.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the June Solstice is officially the first day of summer, also called Midsummer because it comes roughly during the midst of the growing season in Europe.

➤ World Humanist Day

Sunday, June 21, 2020

World Humanist Day is a day to spread information and combat misinformation about humanism as a life-philosophy and a means to affect change in the world. This secular holiday dates back to the 1980s, when several state chapters of the [American Humanist Association](#) (AHA) began celebrating World Humanist Day. Different chapters had different ideas as to when that day should be, however. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the AHA and



then the International Humanist Ethical Union passed resolutions declaring the Summer Solstice to be World Humanist Day.

The [American Humanist Association](#), the [International Humanist and Ethical Union](#), the [Council for Secular Humanism](#), the [Campus Freethought Alliance](#) and the [Secular Student Alliance](#) currently celebrate World Humanist Day.

Use this secular holiday to educate the public in your area about humanism, and to gather and celebrate as a humanist community that continues to contribute to the progress and education of the world. A picnic, is a particularly good way to celebrate World Humanist Day. Read your favorite humanist texts aloud; spend time socializing with your fellow humanists in a relaxed, natural environment.

➤ Torture Victims Day

Friday, June 26, 2020

In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution **52/149**, establishing June 26 as the United Nations [International Day in Support of Victims of Torture](#).

The goal is the eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (resolution 39/46, annex, 26 June 1987). This day gives us all an opportunity to stand united against cruelty, and remind the world that torture is a violation of basic human rights.

Clearly the abolition of torture is a key issue to freethinkers and humanists, and too often the worst perpetrators of this atrocity are highly religious societies. But secular societies have been far from innocent of it. This is a cause where we can often join hands with our religious brothers and sisters.

Take a moment to visit the [United Nations webpage](#) for this day, and also to view the [Interactive World Map of torture](#).



"At a time when the legitimate aspirations of people in many regions of the world for greater freedom, dignity and a better life are too often met with violence and repression, I urge States to respect the fundamental rights of all people. Torture and other forms of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment and punishment, wherever they occur and whatever the circumstances, can never be justified."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2011



Radio from the Secular Point of View

[Freethought Radio](#) broadcasts weekly, hosted by Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-presidents of the [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#). The show offers programming for nonreligious listeners, as well as countering the religious-right domination of our public airwaves. Freethought Radio features music and interviews with authors and activists. Check out Freethought Radio's illustrious list of [guests](#), including Richard Dawkins, Julia Sweeney, Janeane Garafalo, Ron Reagan, Betty Rollins, Christopher Hitchens, Steven Pinker, Ursula K. LeGuin and many other fascinating freethinkers, newsmakers and thinkers.



Podcasts (including past shows) are at <https://ffrf.org/news/radio/shows/>. Or listen to [Freethought Radio on iTunes](#), and other online stations such as [tunein.com](#), [stitcher.com](#), and [learnoutloud.com](#).

Recent Programs:

May 28, 2020

President Trump and public officials continue to pander to the Religious Right during the pandemic. FFRF legal fellow **Dante Harootunian** announces a state/church victory removing a Christian cross from a city mural in Illinois. After hearing the freethinking song "Let The Mystery Be" by Iris Dement, we talk with The Nation columnist **Katha Pollitt** about her recent column "Why Did the ERA Die? FX's 'Mrs. America' Has Some Answers."

Listen at https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/ffrf/FTradio_735_052820.mp3.

May 21, 2020

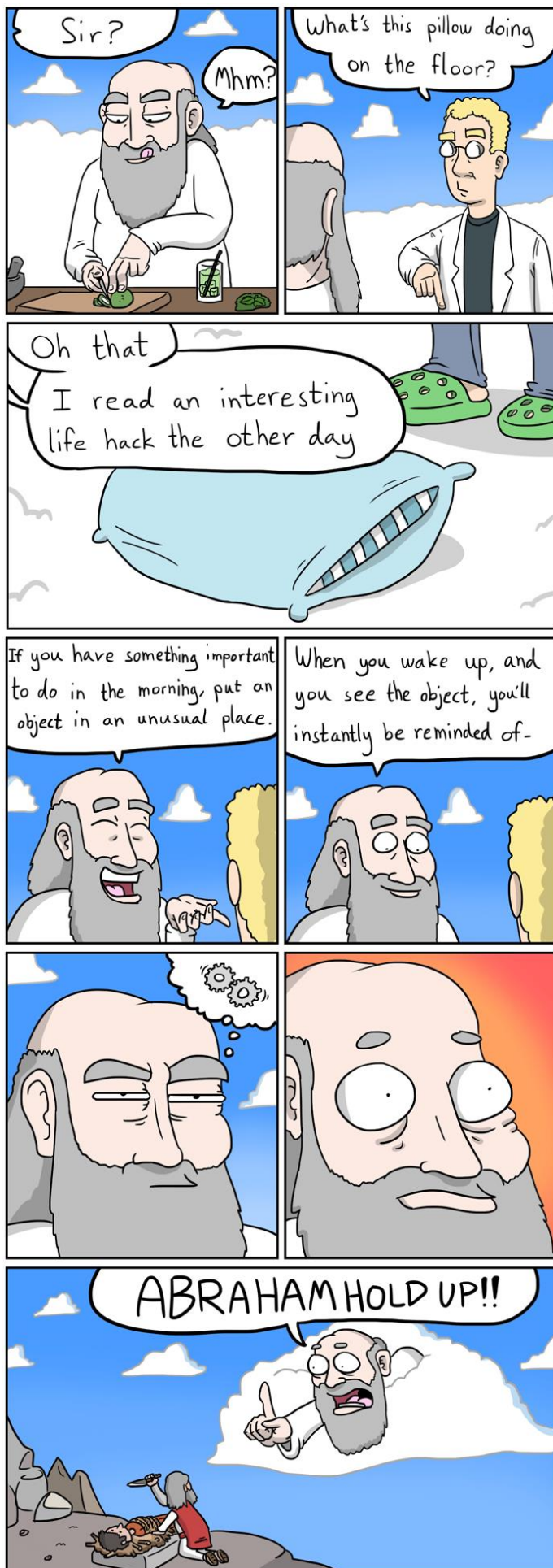
Churches or churchgoers in at least 19 states are hypocritically suing the government for shutting down public worship services. After hearing the Stephen Foster "comfort music" song "Hard Times Come Again No More," performed remotely by Rufus Wainwright and friends, we talk with **Michael Shermer**, editor of Skeptic magazine and author of the new book *Giving the Devil His Due*, about "COVID-19 Conspiracists and Their Discontents."

Listen at https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/ffrf/FTradio_734_052120.mp3.

May 14, 2020

The virus of religion is worsening the pandemic. We talk about religious favoritism at the national and local levels, from the U.S. Supreme Court to states and counties that put ideology over science. Then we speak with Bonya Ahmed and Imtiaz Shams, founders of the new THINK project that is producing quality videos about science, reason and humanism in many languages for countries (including Bangladesh) with little access to such information.

Listen at https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/ffrf/FTradio_733_051420.mp3.



Itstheticie.com



Not yet an AOF member? Please join us!

Atheists and Other Freethinkers is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762, incorporated in 1993. Meetings are free and open to the public. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movies and parties! See what awaits you at www.aofonline.org.

AOF President & Editor: Fantastic Fran Evanisko

Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell

Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos

Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian

Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley

Facebook page: Kaeleigh Pontif

Directors at large:

Roger Zabkie, Pamella Rivers, Ben Tuason,

Linda Ostrofsky (Jetta), Kaeleigh Pontif

How to Contact AOF:

- Call 916-304-3796 (voicemail)
- Or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182
- Or e-message us at <http://www.aofonline.org/contact>

How to Join AOF:

Visit <http://www.aofonline.org/join>, or come to a meeting. We have forms.

AOF's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Atheists-and-Other-Freethinkers/533365556831322>

AOF Mission Statement:

"The purpose of Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF) is to promote the civic understanding of atheism and the acceptance of atheists in our community. Through educational programs, projects, and publications, AOF will extend secular perspectives, including the separation of religion and government and the right to think and speak freely on these perspectives."

What is a Freethinker? One striving to form opinions of life, religion, politics and philosophy on the grounds of reason and experience, rather than tradition, authority or custom. He or she need not be an atheist, though in a religious society most atheists do tend to be freethinkers.

AOF supports a benign separation of Church and State as the best means to protect the liberty and intellectual commerce of citizens. "... to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries" (James Madison, 1803).

Our vision: to be a venue where secular and unchurched citizens can socialize, dialog, develop friendships and enjoy shared company. AOF does not discriminate on such grounds as race, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, physical debility or (*cough*) religion. We welcome the fair-minded of all political persuasions and preferences. Be respectful, and you may join.

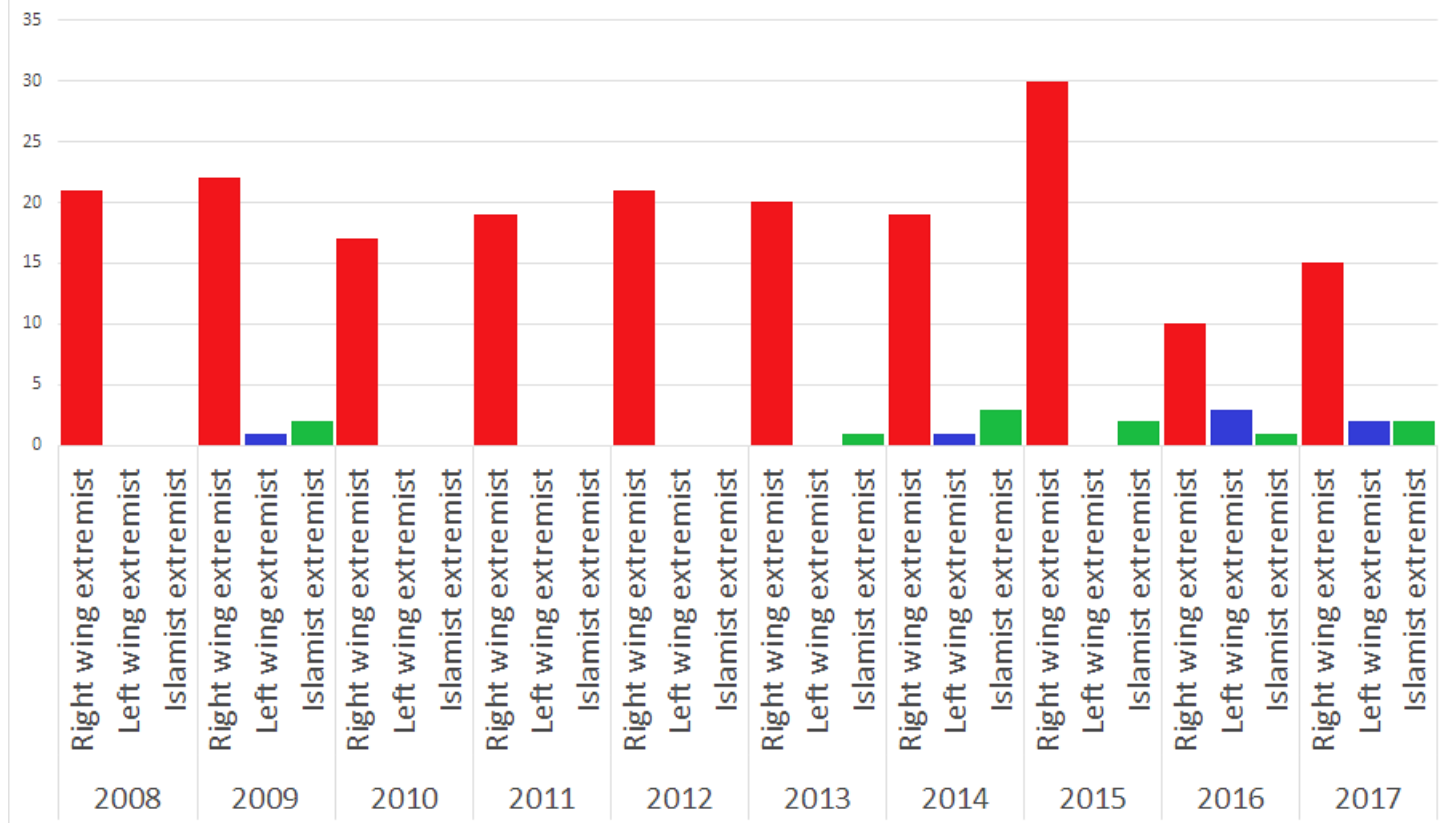
Donations to AOF are tax deductible, and the newsletter is free by email. Please share with sympathetic friends.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See:

<http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>.

Incidents of murder by extremist ideology (2008-2017)

Red - right wing, Blue - left wing, Green - Islamist



Source: ADL H.E.A.T Map data

See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Murders_by_extremist_ideology_US.png

Freethought Profile: Ethan Allen ([source](#))

Ethan Allen, reckless hero of the American Revolution, was just as reckless in attacking Christianity, which he called “superstition” in an unruly book.

A New England resident, Allen actually rebelled before the Revolution. A 1770 dispute over land grants threatened settlers with loss of their farms. They raised a defense regiment called the Green Mountain Boys, with Allen its colonel. The British governor of New York declared him an outlaw and put a price on his head. The settlers held the governor’s forces at bay.

When the Revolution broke out, the Green Mountain Boys joined the action and overwhelmed the British garrison at Fort Ticonderoga. Then Allen made attempted to capture Montreal, but was captured himself and sent to England as a prisoner. Later, he was released.

Allen was a freethinker. At his wedding, the ritual required him to pledge “to live with Fanny Buchanan agreeable to the laws of God.” Allen halted the ceremony. Only after it was specified that his pledge meant the god of nature, as envisioned by Deists, did he proceed.

Before the war, Allen had worked with a fellow skeptic, Dr. Thomas Young, in drafting a book. But Young died, leaving the work unfinished. After the war, Allen revised the manuscript and published it under his name alone as *Reason, the Only Oracle of Man*. It was a scathing assault on Calvinist Christianity. The clergy seethed in anger.

When on his deathbed Allen was told by a minister, “General, I fear the angels are waiting for you,” the old soldier replied: “Waiting, are they? Waiting, are they? Well, goddam ’em, let ’em wait.”

Allen’s comments on religion:

“I have generally been denominated a Deist, the reality of which I have never disputed, being conscious that I am no Christian, except mere infant baptism makes me one; and as to being a Deist, I know not, strictly speaking, whether I am one or not.” – *Reason, the Only Oracle of Man*, 1784, preface

“...The doctrine of the Trinity is destitute of foundation, and tends manifestly to superstition and idolatry.” – *ibid.*, p. 124

“That Jesus Christ was not a god is evident from his own words, where, speaking on the day of judgment, he says, ‘Of that day and hour, knoweth no man, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the son.’ This is giving up all pretension to divinity, acknowledging in the most explicit manner that he did not know all things.” – *ibid.*, p. 125

“There is not any thing, which has contributed so much to delude mankind in religious matters, as mistaken apprehension concerning supernatural inspiration or revelation.” – *ibid.*, p. 200