

AOF News & Views

Monthly

Sacramento, California

June 2012

Sunday, July 8, 2:00 p.m.

Leo Igwe Will Speak!

Leo Igwe, humanist and human rights activist, has been executive director of the **Nigerian Humanist Movement**, director of the **Center for Inquiry Nigeria**, the Western and Southern African representative to the **International Humanist and Ethical Union**, and serves on the **Atheist Alliance International Council**. He has worked tirelessly to end numerous human rights violations and oppression, including homophobia, ritual killings, human sacrifice, hysteria about sorcery and witchcraft, abuse of albinos, caste discrimination, "child witch" pogroms and anti-blasphemy laws. He has often been arrested, his family persecuted, for his atheist and humanist activism.

An eloquent, well-spoken humanist, Leo Igwe is perhaps the most prolific writer in the world on atheism and humanism with respect to these human rights violations, and has been praised as an advocate for justice and the value of human life.

Leo has agreed to tell Sacramento-area freethinkers about his work on his way to Las Vegas for another presentation. To host him is our distinct honor. Don't miss this remarkable event!

Note: This will be a joint meeting with the **Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area**. Other local groups are most welcome to join us. Free admission, bring friends! Location : Sierra II Community Center - Room 10, 2791 24th Street, Sacramento Contact : 916-447-3589. Please bring something light & edible for the snack table if you can: finger foods, fruit juice or soda pop (nothing needing utensils, please).



Tuesday, July 24, 7:00 p.m.

Katherine Stewart: The Good News Club

"Give us a child until he is seven," the Jesuits famously said, "and we will have him for the rest of his life." According to author [Katherine Stewart](#), evangelical Protestants have torn this leaf from the Jesuit book, focusing their missionary efforts on children who are easy to intimidate and who yet lack critical thinking skills. In 2009, she and her husband Matthew had personal experience with this, when a group called "The Good News Club" tried to set up a so-called "nondenominational Bible study" group at their seven-year-old daughter's grade school.



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AOF Line

By President Vincent Wales

I'm sure you've all seen TV advertisements for collections of religious music. "Songs 4 Worship" and the like, filled with the typical smarmy pap you hear on contemporary Christian radio stations.

Most of these commercials show at least one shot of a church congregation, the people all with their eyes closed, heads tilted back, some with arms in the air, and all with expressions of what some might call euphoria on their faces.

But that glazed, oblivious expression reminds me more of the faces of some of the stoners I knew in high school. It's almost like they're high.

And interestingly enough, a friend of mine recently told me about a show he watched on addiction. An opening scene evidently showed a series of shots of the types of things you'd expect: alcohol, drugs, gambling... but it also showed a shot of one of these "euphoric" church congregations!

Though I personally do not imbibe or partake, I consider drug use to be a personal choice. If you want to be a user, go right ahead. Unless you're putting others in danger because of it, I frankly don't care. It's your body, your mind.

This is how I view religion, as well. I don't care what other people believe, so long as they're not harming others due to their beliefs or trying to push their beliefs on others. And if one's religion causes harm to others, it should be treated no differently than when someone is harmed by any other addict. Being drunk, for example, is not an excuse if you hurt someone. You're still responsible for your actions. Likewise, "because the Bible says so" is no excuse, either.

I'd like to see extreme religiosity treated just like any other addiction. They should have their own version of the Betty Ford Clinic... maybe a Dan Barker Clinic!

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AOF Board (2012)

President: Vincent Wales

Vice President: Mynga Futrell

Secretary: Jillian Stanley

Treasurer: Ken Nahigian

2012 AOF Board of Directors: Kristi Craven, David Flanders, Mynga Futrell, Ken Nahigian, Mario Sandri, Jerry Sloan, Vincent Wales

AOF Standing Committees

All AOF members are urged to volunteer in the organization. There are openings in every committee listed here. Please contact the chair or coordinator of any area of interest to you to learn details of getting involved. We would love to have your participation! Phone AOF 916-447-3589 or e-mail aofboard@aofonline.org for direct contact to relevant personnel.

Building / Reason House Committee

Vacant, Chair

Paul Geisert, Mynga Futrell, Mario Sandri

Freethought Day 2012: October 13 and 14

Vacant, Chair. (Save the date! – It's a celebration of reason and church/state separation)

Darwin Day 2012: February 12

Mynga Futrell and Bronda Silva, Co-Chairs

(Save the date! – It's a celebration of science and humanity)

*The purpose of the organization,
AOF, is to promote the civic
understanding and acceptance of
atheists in our community.*

AOF Voluntariat

Affiliation Liaisons

Mynga Futrell, Atheist Alliance of America (AAA),

<http://atheistallianceamerica.org>

Jerry Sloan: American Atheists (AA), <http://atheists.org>; American Humanist Association (AHA), <http://americanhumanist.org>; Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), <http://secularhumanism.org>; and the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (Sac COR), <http://sacramento.unitedcor.org>

AOF News Team

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Many addicts are unaware of, or in denial of, their addictions. Such a clinic would be the perfect place for them to go. They'd have no access to their holy books, to religious television or radio. Certainly, they'd be denied their "Songs 4 Worship" CDs. (Give them one of the freethought CDs that Dan has written and recorded.) Instead, they'd be in an atmosphere of reason, surrounded by former religion addicts who can explain to them how they've been deceived all these years. They'll have books at their disposal, a library of rationalist literature and science texts. There will be a huge museum of natural history that shows quite plainly how Noah's flood couldn't have happened.

These are just a few ideas off the top of my head, but I like where it's going. I'll check with Dan and see what he thinks.

In the meantime, consider doing something to help one of your addict acquaintances. Bring them to an AOF meeting!

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It turned out that the Good News Club was actually a program of the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), founded in 1937 with a very specific and deeply fundamentalist agenda. Its self-declared mission "is to produce conversion experiences in very young children and thus equip them to 'witness' for other children." Good News Clubs are established in public schools across the nation, and few children are spared their attention, not even Christian children who fail to share their particular shade of religious ideology. Sophisticated stealth tactics bamboozle the children (and parents) into thinking the Clubs operate under color of the school's authority -- but in fact, their ultimate goal is to shut down the public school system.

In the aftermath, Katherine wrote [*The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Assault on America's Children*](#), a hair-raising account and exposé of this mostly under-the-radar effort to evangelize children in public schools.

Note, this will be a joint meeting with [Americans United Sacramento](#). Katherine will offer copies of her book for sale at half the cover price. Location : TBA. Contact : 916-447-3589.

Join AOF Today!

aofonline.org/join.html

Atheists and Other Freethinkers



AOF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization. It is one of 50 member societies of the **Atheist Alliance of America** ("a positive voice for atheism"). AOF also maintains affiliations with the Council for Secular Humanism, American Atheists, and the American Humanist Association.

AOF's Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the association, Atheists and Other Freethinkers, 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.

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Reprinting of original material in this newsletter is granted to atheist, freethought, rationalist, skeptical, and secular humanist groups as long as acknowledgment is given. Exchange of newsletters with aforementioned organizations is solicited.



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We're on the Web!
aofonline.org

June/July Calendar of Events

AOF June General Meeting

**CANCELED (AOF will next meet
in July 2012)**

Freethought dinner social: Thai Basil, 25th and J St, Sacramento. More info: <http://j.mp/MKRUUn>

Wed, Jun 13, 6:00 p.m.

AOF Highway Cleanup

More info: <http://j.mp/MKS4uX>

Sat, Jun 23, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Board of Directors Meeting: home of Ken Nahigian. More info: <http://j.mp/MKWYln>

Mon, Jul 23, 7:00-8:30 p.m.