



"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion ..."
The first words of the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution

San Francisco Atheists

May 2010 Newsletter

May meeting program

Please Join us in a rally against the

What can the Atheist movement learn from the gay movement?

Pope's role in perpetuating abuse of children

This month our speaker will be Greta Christina, a well-known blogger on gay and Atheist issues. Here is her summary of her talk:

"What can the Atheist movement learn from the gay movement? The Atheist movement is already modeling itself on the LGBT movement in many ways most obviously with its focus on coming out of the closet. What else can the Atheist movement learn from the LGBT movement both from its successes and its failures? In this talk, Atheist and LGBT blogger Greta Christina discusses coming out; making atheism a safe place to come out into; defusing the ongoing battles between the firebrands and the diplomats in our

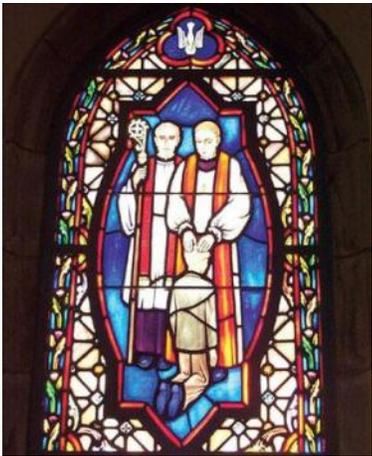
movement; avoiding squabbles about language and self-definition; making our movement more diverse; and other lessons that can be learned from the history of the LGBT movement."

Please join us for this absorbing talk and the discussion afterwards.



Pope Benedict, aka Cardinal Ratzinger, is more than complicit in perpetuating the ongoing abuse of children by priests. This abuse became widely known approximately ten years ago. Since then the scandals have continued to emerge. We read about the sexual abuse of children, usually boys, that is upheld by threats from the abusers that disclosure will send the victim to hell for an eternity. And when that doesn't work, there are always beatings.

The beloved Pope has quite the credentials. For many years he was head of what the Church euphemistically refers to as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the modern day name for the esteemed institution that brought us the Inquisition. As such he was intimately involved in Church policy on abuse.



In Europe and the United States, many Catholics are calling for a transparent investigation into the Church's policies, such as merely transferring an abuser to another parish, that perpetuated this incredibly harmful abuse of children. And they are calling for the Pope to resign.

We feel that Atheists and other Freethinkers should likewise show their support for these noble goals. At the same time, we can point out how the very nature of Christianity promotes blind obedience to established authority and how the sexual repression demanded of priests can result in abusive relationships with those lacking the power to resist.

Please join San Francisco and East Bay Atheists in this rally on May 23 from 9:30 to 11:00 AM. It will be at the St Mary's of the Assumption Catholic Church at 1111 Gough St., San Francisco. Near the corner of Geary and Gough.

Meeting at Schroeder's Restaurant
Saturday May 29 at 6:00pm
Schroeder's Restaurant, rear dining room,
240 Front St San Francisco, CA 94111
Schroeder's Restaurant is two blocks north of Market Street, between California and Sacramento Streets. Use California Street cable car, or BART/MUNI Embarcadero stop. Parking on street or at nearby Embarcadero garage.



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East Bay Atheists

Meeting program

This month we feature a talk, "Leap of Faith: Intelligent Design after Dover," by Joshua Rosenau, Programs and Policy Director of the National Center for Science Education (NCSE). Located in Oakland, the NCSE is prominent in the fight for science education and against creationism. They were very active in the landmark Kitzmiller v. Dover trial in 2005, in which intelligent design was found to be nothing more than religious Creationism.



Many hoped that the Dover trial would put the final nail in intelligent design creationism's coffin, but creationism continues evolving. Since the judge's devastatingly thorough ruling in Dover, PA, new strategies have arrived in laws passed in Louisiana, new science standards passed in Texas, and a new textbook issued as a successor to Of Pandas and People – the textbook supplement central to the Kitzmiller trial. Rosenau will discuss NCSE's work defending science education and explore the ways that scientists and non-scientists alike can block such attacks on science.

Please join us for this talk and the discussion afterwards.

Sunday, May 16, 1:30 - 3:30 PM
Berkeley Main Library, 3rd Floor Meeting Room 2090 Kittredge St., One Block From Downtown Berkeley BART

BART Access: From the downtown Berkeley BART Station, walk 1.5 blocks south on Shattuck Avenue, then turn right on Kittredge. The library is a half block down the street on the left.
Parking: The city parking lot at Allston & Harold Way, a short block from the library, is \$5 for the entire day on Sunday. If you don't mind walking, take University to MLK, turn right and then instead of proceeding left on Allston to the parking lot, turn right. In several blocks you will see parking on the side streets.

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Religious terrorism

Odd, unsubstantiated, myths

Even though we as atheists do not support the christian fairytales most of us have grown up with them. And most of us have become somewhat complacent to these odd, unsubstantiated, myths. Sometimes we forget how similar all religions are to each other whether we are familiar with them or not.

For example it is not always believers in Islam that are terrorists in our modern world. Even though we know the violent history behind all of the different flavors of religious myths the only ones we have to worry about now are Islam; right? Wrong, If you do not believe me read this [article](#).

David Millett

April meeting catch up

Indoctrination from the Bible Belt

The talk was very well received 32 people attended it. Tim shared a poignant and brave account of his life and experiences as a believer in the Christian myths. He talked about his exposure to the church on topics that ranged from greed, hypocrisy, and dishonesty. Tim only recently became a non-believer (about 5 years ago). Authors like: Bill

Bryson and Richard Dawkins helped Tim put the myths of the church behind. The nail in the coffin of Tim's religious life came when he met Laura (now his wife) who is quite the rationalist.



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Atheist News

Obama's criticisms of the Warren and Burger courts

Combined with the recent horrible Supreme Court decision on the Mojave Cross, I think this means that what we feared for so long is happening.

[Read the full story](#)

Larry Hicok

Simply Moving People Around Not Punishment Enough

The irony is astounding:

[Read the full story](#)

Mark Thomas

Eugenie C. Scott to Receive Public Welfare Medal, Academy's Most Prestigious Award

WASHINGTON -- The National Academy of Sciences Council has selected Eugenie C. Scott to receive its most prestigious award, the Public Welfare Medal. Established in 1914, the medal is presented annually to honor extraordinary use of science for the public good. The Council chose Scott for championing the teaching of evolution in the United States and for providing leadership to the National Center for Science Education (NCSE).

[Read the full story](#)

Don't like National Day of Prayer? Try National Day of Reason instead!

Many have pointed out that a president calling for a national day of prayer is about as appropriate as making a national call to blaspheme against God. So as in previous years, this year's National Day of Reason is scheduled to coincide with the Congressionally-mandated and federally-supported National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 6, 2010.

[Read the full story](#) [To try reason click here](#)

Pope Vows To Get Church Pedophilia Down To Acceptable Levels

VATICAN CITY—Calling the behavior shameful, sinful, and much more frequent than the Vatican was comfortable with, Pope Benedict XVI vowed this week to bring the widespread pedophilia within the Roman Catholic Church down to a more manageable level.

Addressing thousands gathered at St. Peter's Square on Easter Sunday, the pontiff offered his "most humble apologies" to abuse victims, and pledged to reduce the total number of molestations by 60 percent over the next five years.

[Read the full story](#)

Don't let Arizona's unconstitutional attack on civil rights stand

[Sign the petition](#)

In Lebanon, a Campaign to Get God Out of Politics

Now THAT is a nice sized crowd!

[Read the full story](#)

Dave Kong

Church's Woes Follow Pope on Trip to Malta

Benedict's visit — commemorating the 1,950th anniversary of the shipwreck of St. Paul on Malta — comes at the most turbulent moment in his five-year-old papacy as he struggles to manage a torrent of allegations that the church hierarchy did not move swiftly to discipline priests who sexually abused minors. [Read the full story](#)

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Quote of the month

H.L. Mencken

Deep within the heart of every evangelist lies the wreck of a car salesman....

What's on

Calendar of events



Join us on June 19 at Pine Lake Park for our annual Summer Solstice potluck picnic. More info on our [website calendar](#).

Joke of the month

