

# Freedom from religion foundation pt. 3

“I’m Secular and I Vote” Campaign

“Freedom from religion” is better understood as switching religion from one brand to another. Secularism and religion sport their own distinctive vocabulary, sacred symbolism, grand metanarrative, exclusive truth exercised by faith, code of ethics/morality, creed, rituals, evangelism, and discipleship. Logically, to discard religion is to separate from all of the above, but secularism instead exhibits them.

Rituals (Superstition, De-baptism, Confirmation, Invocations and Prayer)

“Luck” smacks of superstition. Even so, Freedom from Religion Foundation co-president Annie Laurie Gaylor is named as one of the “lucky” eighteen percent of fellow members who grew up freethinking. As such, she was “spared baptism by water, fire or Sunday school.” Officially renouncing the primitive rite of baptism to which “the luckless” were so cruelly subjected, participants exchange creeds, dogmas, and alleged superstitions of one belief system with those of another. This they do by obtaining genuine De-Baptismal Certificates. (No joke!)

Extracting themselves from any claims of religious affiliation or membership based on baptismal records, secularists join and pay dues (i.e., tithes and offerings) to the fellowship of Freedom from Religion. Congregants aggressively challenge prayer spaces at the University of Iowa, for example; however, following the Supreme Court’s injudicious decision “blessing” sectarian prayer, the Foundation rewards freethinkers who ask for equal time to give secular invocations.[1]

- Celebratory Music Ministry

At the Reason Rally June 2016, celebration of secularism at the Lincoln Memorial will be paired with entertainment and parties that draw hand-clapping, arm raising, closed-eyes enthusiasts eager to sway to the beat of hip-hop artist Baba Brinkman, songwriter-artist Sophia Kameron, and Keith Lowell Jensen of Atheist Christmas fame. This is one Camp Meeting secularists don't want to miss![2]

## Discipleship

In accord with the Bible, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." [3] Even as Christians serve God, secularists are busy about the work of their master, mammon—this, by vigorously contesting what they view as unsavory practices in the public forum and bad legislation.[4]

- Youth Groups

As churches target youth, so do secularists. Last year Thomas Sheedy served as event organizer for the Long Island Atheists (i.e., youth ministry). Furthermore, this high school senior was granted a student activist award of \$5,000 for founding the Secular Student Alliance at Ward Melville High School in East Setauket, New York. Fifty-one students (i.e., converts) expressed interest, a teacher heeded the call to become their adviser (i.e., pastor-teacher), and goals were set (i.e., vision).

Giving Testimony; Evangelism with Promise of "A More Excellent Way" [5]

To the biblical phrase, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," secularists add, "But the wise person says it out loud." [6] Through a television ad, for example, Ron Reagan describes himself as "an unabashed atheist, not afraid of burning in hell." In a newspaper article about his nonbelief, honorary FFRF Board member Daniel C. Dennett wrote,

“I’ve come to realize it’s time to sound the alarm.” Heeding the call, evangelists Richard Dawkins, Mike Newdow, and Steven Pinker promote non-theism as their “critical work.”

What better way to evangelize than by campaigning through FFRF’s “I’m Secular and I Vote” Campaign? In coordination with other major free thought associations, chapters across the nation spread the word via paid digital media, national TV ads, and efforts to mobilize students on college campuses.[7]

### Tax Deductible Financial Giving

FFRF is a member of Atheist Alliance International, the Secular Coalition for America, and the Richard Dawkins Non-Believers Giving Aid. As is the case with churches and their ministries, all dues and donations on behalf of “nonbelief relief” are tax-deductible.

### Persecution Assuaged by Promise of a Sweet By and By

In Sheedy’s view, “Christians will not find a speck of dust on our nation’s soil where they are persecuted as a group.” Many Christians (myself included) disagree.[8] Nonetheless, having abandoned his childhood indoctrination into Roman Catholicism, Sheedy sought legal aid for his struggles. In his view, every state in the country is under threat of scorn from whom he characterizes as “the losing majority.”

- Heaven/Hell

Secularists reference their own versions of heaven and hell. Indeed, FFRF conventions welcome “hell-bound atheists.” In musing about “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” freethinking lyricist Yip Harburg wishes upon a star (i.e., prays). Waking up in some ethereal place where clouds are far behind him, Yip’s troubles melt like lemon drops (i.e., heaven).[9]

### Conclusion

For secularists to declare freedom from religion is folly

because humanism (whether secular or cosmic) fully qualifies as a religion. As the saying goes, “If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck.” In America, folks are free to follow the dictates of conscience. When secularists demand a voice in the public arena, they are exercising their First Amendment right. The same right applies to Jews and Christians.

In the words of Coretta Scott King, “I don’t believe you can stand for freedom for one group of people and deny it to others.”[10] Accordingly, Rosa Parks hoped to be remembered as a person who wanted to be free so others would be free as well.[11] For secularists to deny fellow religionists right to “free exercise” is to undercut and possibly even forfeit their own right. George Washington warned, “If the freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.”[12] A word to the wise: Especially in an election year, even self-serving secularists do well to champion the First Amendment right for all Americans.

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#### Footnotes:

1. Secular group challenges prayer spaces at UI (Accessed 9 April 2016)
2. <http://www.reasonrally.org/> (Accessed 9 April 2016)
3. Matthew 6:24—“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
4. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” Amendment 1 of the Constitution of the United States of America (15 December 1791)

5. 1 Corinthians 12:31—" But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."
6. Psalm 14:1, 53:1—"The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good." (Curiously, the Hebrew words rendered fool in the book of Psalms denote one who is morally deficient.)
7. 'I'm Secular and I Vote' nationwide campaign launched by Freedom From Religion Foundation to engage millions of non-religious voters (Accessed 9 April 2016)
8. Persecution of Christians in America: It's Not Just 'Over There' (Accessed 11 April 2016)
9. Judy Garland Lyrics (Accessed 9 April 2016)
10. Matching Quotes (Accessed 12 April 2016)
11. Matching Quotes (Accessed 12 April 2016)
12. Matching Quotes (Accessed 12 April 2016)