

# New York City Atheists Inc.

Serving the Tri-State area • An affiliate of American Atheists

May 2005  
Vol. II Issue No. 5

WEB: [NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG](http://NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG)

Cooper Station — P.O. Box 93, NY, NY 10276-0093

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## FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

### MAY

|             |                           |   |
|-------------|---------------------------|---|
| May 5*      | Thursday 8 P.M.           | NYC Atheists Movie Nite (See Page 3)      |
| May 5**     | Thursday 8 P.M.           | NYC Atheists Cable Show                   |
| May 7*****  | Saturday 10 A.M. – 6 P.M. | NYC Atheists Street Tabling               |
| May 8***    | Sunday 12:30 P.M.         | NYCAtheists Brunch, Library, Book Club    |
| May 12**    | Thursday 8 P.M.           | NYC Atheists Cable Show                   |
| May 17****  | Tuesday 7 P.M.            | NYC Atheists Meetup                       |
| May 19**    | Thursday 8 P.M.           | NYC Atheists Cable Show                   |
| May 22***** | Sunday 10 A.M. – 6 P.M.   | NYC Atheists Street Tabling               |
| May 26**    | Thursday 8 P.M.           | NYC Atheists Cable Show                   |
| May 29***** | Sunday 12:30 P.M.         | NYC Atheists Monthly Meeting (See Page 3) |

### JUNE

|              |                    |   |
|--------------|--------------------|---|
| June 2*      | Thursday 8 P.M.    | NYC Atheists Movie Nite (See Page 3)    |
| June 2**     | Thursday 8 P.M.    | NYC Atheists Cable Show                 |
| June 12***   | Thursday 8 P.M.    | NYC Atheists Brunch, Library, Book Club |
| June 16**    | Thursday 8 P.M.    | NYC Atheists Cable Show                 |
| June 21****  | Tuesday 7 P.M.     | NYC Atheists Meet-Up                    |
| June 23**    | Thursday 8 P.M.    | NYC Atheists Cable Show                 |
| June 23***** | Thursday 6:30 P.M. | NYC Atheists Monthly Meeting            |

\* Southbridge Towers – 99 Frankfort St. — Community Room (See page 3)

\*\* Manhattan Cable Channel 67/RNN Cable Channel 109

\*\*\* Palace Diner — 122 East 57th St. (Lexington/Park)

Brunch Cost: Order from Menu — Reservations not required.

\*\*\*\* MANHATTAN LOUNGE - 1270 2nd Ave. (89/90th St.)

\*\*\*\*\* 352 7th Avenue/16th Floor (29/30th Street)

\*\*\*\*\* Columbus Circle – In front of Time Warner Bldg. – Broadway (59/60 St.)

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NYC Atheists Inc. is a non-profit, non-partisan educational association. Our meetings and membership is open and all are welcome (both nonbelievers and believers), *i.e.* atheists, agnostics, humanists, free thinkers, skeptics, secularists, separation of-church/state advocates, and individuals who are questioning and searching beliefs.

**SEE PAGE 8 FOR 2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**PRESIDENT'S SERMON**  
**BAD THINGS HAPPEN WHEN GOOD PEOPLE DO NOTHING**



Unabated, today's religious fundamentalists (the New Puritans) will deny one's "soul-liberty" (the complete right to enjoy the freedom of expression and opinion on the subject of other beliefs or non-beliefs that are not Christian fundamentalism). They are working to establish a Christian theocracy in these United States (Taliban West).

For a democracy to work, it requires a society that is educated and a citizenry that is involved.

For example, many individuals find all kinds of excuses to be dismissed from jury duty while claiming dissatisfaction with the judicial system. From non-believers and separation of church / state advocates, I keep hearing: I am too busy, I cannot take a stand for one reason or another. I, I, I... the I's have it. Bad things happen when good people do nothing. Our window of opportunity to stop this religious stampede is quickly closing. No more excuses. We need a significant commitment of your time and money.

Priority one: We need to dramatically increase our membership. We need people to commit an hour or two a week to distribute NYC Atheists' newsletters and literature to the public. (Street Fairs, high street-traffic locations are good venues.). There are millions of non-believers and separation of church / state advocates in America that we need to reach.

Priority two: We need your financial support. As we grow, our operating costs have grown significantly. For example: Our monthly meeting costs are about \$300 (room rental, etc.). Our monthly newsletter costs about \$250 to print and distribute. We need individuals to pick up these expenses -partial, monthly, annual.

Priority three: We need people to help us with our NYC Atheists' Cable Show video editing, lighting, audio, etc. We need someone to be our new newsletter editor. We need someone to help us with public and press relations. We need volunteers to coordinate NYC Atheists events. We need a NYC Atheists Facility.

**ONLY THROUGH A LARGE AND INVOLVED MEMBERSHIP CAN WE CONTINUE OUR PROGRESS AND HAVE AN IMPACT.**

Contact me: Ken Bronstein at [NYCATHEISTS@AOL.COM](mailto:NYCATHEISTS@AOL.COM) or 212-535-7425.

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**PAST APRIL EVENTS**

**Apr. 1 Friday 8:00 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Social Nite Out**

Our members enjoyed an evening of flamenco dancing at the Alegrias Flamenco Theatre. Some members said they plan to return to try the restaurant.

**Apr. 7 Thursday 8:00 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Cable Show**

**Apr. 10 Sunday 12:30 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Brunch / Library / Book Club.**

Thanks to Dennis Horvitz who hosted our April Brunch at the Palace Restaurant. Afterwards, members went to the NYC Atheists' Library and had our monthly book club meeting. Reportedly there was good conversation and exchange of ideas and thoughts.

**Apr. 13 Wednesday 7:00 P.M.**  
**NYCA Madalyn O'Hair Dinner**

Thanks to Jessica Nooney for hosting and preparing a buffet supper for our second annual Madalyn O'Hair Birthday Party.

Eighteen people attended this event in Jessica's apartment, including a visitor from Iceland, who learned about our event from our NYCA Website and, so impressed with our group, became a member of NYC Atheists on the spot.

Jessica began the evening reviewing Madalyn O'Hair's timeline, then gave an abbreviated reenactment of Madalyn O'Hair's famous 1965 interview by Playboy. We concluded the program watching O'Hair's TV interviews on the Johnny Carson and Phil Donahue shows.

The evening ended with Jessica blowing out the candles on O'Hair's birthday cake.

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**Apr. 14 Thursday 8:00 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Cable Show**

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**Apr. 19 Tuesday 7:00 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Meet-Up**  
Thanks to Bob Morgan, who hosted our meetup meeting. Bob led the roundtable conversation.

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**Apr. 21 Thursday 8:00 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Cable Show**

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**Apr. 24 Sunday 12:30 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Monthly Meeting**  
Our NYCA Cable Show host, Dennis Horvitz, interviewed Dennis Himes, American Atheist Connecticut State Director, for a future NYC Atheists' cable show.

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**Apr. 28 Thursday 8:00 P.M.**  
**NYC Atheists Cable Show**

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**JOIN  
NYC ATHEISTS  
SEE PAGE 8  
FOR APPLICATION**

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**FUTURE MEETINGS**

**NYC ATHEISTS MOVIE NITE**

**Date:** Thursday, May 5, 8:00 P.M.  
**Where:** Southbridge Towers Complex, The Community Room in the 99 Frankfort Building.

Beginning in May, NYC Atheists will have NYC Atheist's Movie Nite on the first Thursday of each month. We will initiate NYC Atheists Movie Nite with the outstanding film: *Inherit the Wind*.

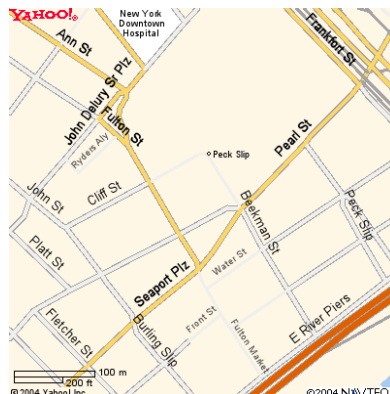
The New York Times "***One of the most brilliant and engrossing displays of acting ever witnessed!***"

The Hollywood Reporter "Two-time Best Actor Oscar winners Spencer Tracy and Fredric March go toe-to-toe in this thrilling re-creation of the most titanic courtroom battle of the century. Garnering four Academy Award nominations including Best Actor (Tracy) and featuring Gene Kelly in a rare, critically acclaimed dramatic role., *Inherit the Wind is powerful, provocative cinema and a heaping measure of entertainment.*"

"The controversial subject of evolution versus creation causes two polar opposites to engage in one explosive battle of beliefs. Attorney Charles Darrow (Spencer Tracy) faces off against fundamentalist leader William Jennings Bryan (Fredrich March) in a small Tennessee town where a teacher has been brought to trial for teaching Darwinism.

Let the trial begin ... and watch the sparks fly!

**Directions:** The complex is located between Pearl / Fulton / Frankfort Streets near the South Street Seaport. See map below. Southbridge is easily reached by Mass Transit: (within easy walking distance) Subway: Fulton Street Station – A, C, J, M, Z, 3, 4, 5; City Hall Sta. 6. Buses: B51, M1, M15, M22, M103



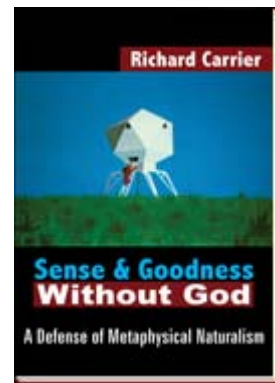
The easiest / best way to enter the complex is to walk east along Fulton / Cliff Street (towards the South Street Seaport), then through the walkway on Fulton Street by the side of the Footlocker store.

As you enter the walkway, notice the large map on the wall that locates the complex's buildings. Walking into the courtyard, on the opposite side will be 99 Frankfort. Located on the first floor is the Community Room.

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**NYC ATHEISTS: BRUNCH / LIBRARY / BOOK CLUB**

**Date:** Sun., May 8, 12:30 P.M.  
**Where:** Palace Restaurant 122 East 57<sup>th</sup> St. (Lexington / Park) After Brunch, we will move to the NYC Atheists' Library and hold our Book Club meeting.

We are fortunate in having Richard Carrier, the author of *Sense & Goodness Without God*, and a past speaker at NYC Atheists meetings as our guest at our book club to discuss his new book



**About the Book**

If god does not exist, then what does? Is there good and evil, and should we care? How do we know what's true anyway? And can we make any sense of this universe, or our own lives? *Sense and Goodness* answers all these questions in lavish detail, without complex

jargon. A complete world view is presented and defended, covering every subject from knowledge to art, from metaphysics to morality, from theology to politics. Topics include free will, the nature of the universe, the meaning of life, and much more, arguing from scientific evidence that there is only a physical, natural world without gods or spirits, but that we can still live a life of love, meaning and joy.

#### About the Author

Richard Carrier is a philosopher and historian studying ancient science at Columbia University in New York, where he received a Masters degree and a Master of Philosophy in ancient history. He is now working on his Ph.D. He previously graduated Phi Beta Kappa at UC Berkeley. Mr. Carrier is also a professional writer, teacher and speaker, and translates four languages. His articles have been published in *Biology & Philosophy*, *The History Teacher*, *German Studies Review*, *The Skeptical Inquirer*, and the *Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*. He is a veteran of the United States Coast Guard and served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Secular Web* for several years, where he has long been one of their most frequently read authors. His popular online essays can be found at

[http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard\\_carrier](http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier).

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**ATHEISM IS A CONCLUSION  
NOT A BELIEF**  
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**JOIN NYC ATHEISTS**

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#### **MAY MONTHLY MEETING**

**Date:** Sun., May 29, 12:30 P.M.

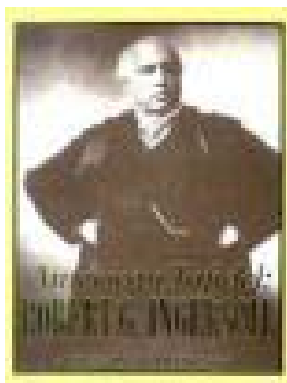
**Where:** 352 Seventh Ave.

(16<sup>th</sup> floor)

**Speaker:** Janice Rael, president of the Delaware Valley Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Janice Rael will discuss her separation of church and state activism.

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#### **I Robert G. Ingersoll**

*If Christians would follow, today, the teachings of the Old Testament, they would be criminals.*

*I would follow strictly the teachings of the New Testament, he I would be insane.*

#### **An Article About a Recently Discovered Pope John Paul II Letter**

##### **Pope to NASA: "Quit it!"**

Vatican City -- Pope John Paul II announced that the Catholic Church's policy of tolerance and engagement toward space exploration and research is over and called on NASA to cease its efforts to discover and understand the cosmos.

"The Church will no longer stand idly by while the heresies of the universe are revealed," said the Pope. "It is clear that objects in space have no respect for God and

are trying to push men off the path of faith. We must protect ourselves from their evil influence."

He cited NASA's Origins Project as a particularly dangerous venture, calling the empirically apparent age of the universe and life an example of the "insolent illusion" falsely displayed by nature in defiance of god's truth, plainly expressed in the Book of Genesis.

Plans are already in effect to excommunicate heavenly bodies that refuse to comply with official Church doctrine.

NASA Administrator Daniel S. Gold in admits that, "NASA is deeply committed to spreading the unique knowledge that flows from its aeronautics and space research. Origins is one of the boldest challenges NASA has taken on, and the results could literally change the way humans think about the universe and their place in it."

The Pope said that the way humans think has already changed quite enough in the years since the Church moderated its reaction to scientific heresy and began creative reinterpretation instead of violent persecution and intellectual perversion.

He fondly recalled how the Church censored Copernicus, burned Bruno, and condemned Galileo. "Ah, the good old days of the Inquisition. We should have kept up the pressure on that heliocentric nonsense. Then we could have prevented the fix we find ourselves in today."

#### **"Original Truth" Is the Only Truth**

The impetus for the ultra-conservative Pope's latest assault on progress is adherence to what he calls "original truth." Since Church doctrine is absolute truth, and absolute truth is by definition static and ageless, Church doctrine

should not, need not and cannot change. Ever.

"It should be obvious to anyone, as it is to me, that contrary evidence cannot be integrated into prior dogma while the truth of the dogma, either before or after integration, is maintained," he explained, adding that the redundancy of the term "original truth" is precisely the point.

"The word [original] implies a chronology of truths of which this version came first. A sequence of divine truths, each modifying its predecessors, is impossible to conceive. The first is truth. The others are heresy. Therefore, I rescind all so-called modernization of doctrine cosmology."

The Pope neglected to explain why the his argument applied only to cosmology when his reasoning, which was surprisingly lucid for a papal edict, seemed to call into question the very existence of the Church itself.

He applauded Republican congressmen in the U.S. House of Representatives for their proposal to slash NASA's budget by 11 percent, calling them "the Church's allies in the battle against scientific knowledge," and urging them to abolish the space agency altogether.

"It's a waste of money," he said. "We already know where the universe came from, when it was created, and how life began."

Vatican sources denied rumors that the Pope, who recently celebrated his 79th birthday, is suffering from senility. The Papal Physician issued a statement: "The Supreme Pontiff's mental health is excellent, even as he watches the Sun orbit the Earth an 80th time."

*"When opinions are free, either in matters of government or religion, truth will finally and powerfully prevail."*

~Thomas Paine

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## NYC ATHEISTS ESSAY CONTESTS

NYC Atheists has established two \$500 essay award contests. One for high school students and the second for college students.

The essay Subject: *"Separation of Church and State."*

**The student does not have to be an Atheist. (Both non-believers and believers are eligible)**

The essay must be the sole, unpublished original work of the entrant, and must not violate or infringe the rights of any third parties.

Only one entry per student.

### High School Student Requirements:

- Full time student enrolled in a New York City high school (public and/or private)
- Not less than 500 words (excluding bibliography), typed (double-spaced).
- A cover sheet that includes the student's name, complete address, telephone number, email address, date of birth, name of the teacher, school name, school address, name of parent or legal guardian.

### College Student Requirements

Not less than 1,000 words (excluding bibliography), typed (double-spaced).

- A cover sheet that includes the student's name, complete address, telephone number, email address, school name and address, numbers of hours completed, and program major.

### Decision

Essays will be judged on style, content and writing that is clear, articulate, and logically organized. The decision of the NYC Atheists inc. Board of Directors is final. The NYC Atheists Board of Directors may choose not to select a winner if they deem no entry meets its criteria.

### Submit:

NYC Atheists Inc./ Awards Committee / Cooper Station PO Box 93 / NY, NY 10276-0093

### Deadline:

Entry must be postmarked no later than May 31, 2005

### Other:

- All entries become the property of NYC Atheists Inc. and will not be returned.
- Acceptance of the prize constitutes permission to use the winner's name and to publish in whole or part the winning essay.
- NYC Atheists Inc. is not responsible for lost, misdirected, illegible, damaged, postage due, or late entries.

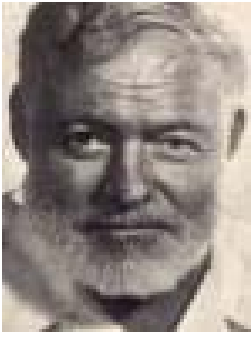
### Notification:

- Winners will be notified by US Mail
- Name will be posted on the NYC-ATHEISTS.ORG web site on June 30, 2005.

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## The Religious Fundamentalists

**Are the New-Puritans**



Ernest Hemingway, American author (1899-1961).

"All thinking men are atheists."

On page 144 of Paul Johnson's book *Intellectuals*, it states that despite being raised in a strict Congregationalist household, Ernest "did not only not believe in God but regarded organized religion as a menace to human happiness," "seems to have been devoid of the religious spirit" and "ceased to practice religion at the earliest possible moment." Others have pointed out that Hemingway used the non-existence of God as a theme in his books.

### The American Atheists Convention

March 25-27—Philadelphia Pa.

The 2005 American Atheist annual Convention took place in Philadelphia this year.

The two most pressing issues considered were:

1. The erosion of the separation of church and state by the Bush administration.
2. Stagnant membership

The unanimous conclusion was that we must quickly and significantly increase American Atheists membership and activism.

It was decided to focus upon increasing the number of American Atheists affiliates and their membership.

Two individuals volunteered to chair a committee whose objective will be to increase the 46 affiliates to at least 100 by year end

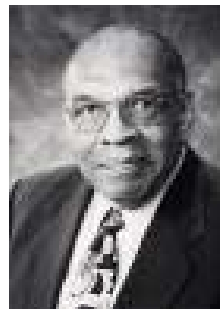
Existing affiliates will also develop recruitment programs to increase their own memberships and activism.

#### Convention Speakers:

Three of the more interesting speakers were:



**Dr. David Eller**, the coordinator of the Atheists and Freethinkers of Denver and former Colorado State Director of American Atheists. Dr. Eller discussed his new book: *Natural Atheism: Our Godless Birth and Why It Is Right* and we also interviewed Dr. Eller for our NYCA cable shows. (May 5 and 12<sup>th</sup>)



**Alton Lemon** was the lead plaintiff in the historic 1971 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *LEMON v.*

*KURTZMAN*, which bolstered the application of the First Amendment and led to the creation of the "Lemon Test", which states that any government practice:

1. Must have a secular legislative purpose;
2. Must have the principal or primary effect of neither advancing nor inhibiting religion;
3. Must not foster "excessive entanglement" between church and state.

Thanks to the efforts of Alton Lemon and others, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the unconstitutional practice of using tax money to subsidize religious schools.



**Dr. Seth Asser** has been professionally involved with issues of child abuse and neglect for over 17 years as a practitioner, consultant and educator. He has served on the Child Fatality Review Committees which seeks to ensure that children receive appropriate and timely medical care for serious and life-threatening illnesses regardless of the religious preferences of their parents. The group seeks to

repeal state laws that exempt parents from the duty to provide medical care should they prefer to seek non-medical, religious rituals for ill children. He has been successful in getting the repeal of religious exemption laws in six states.

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**Joseph Campbell's Quotes**



**Question:**  
**What is the purpose of life ?**

**Answer:**  
**Experience it**

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**The real rapture is being alive.**

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**Heaven and Hell are  
Dream images.**

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**Man created the  
the theory of god.**

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**Eternity Is here and now.**

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**Religion: A mythology metaphor**

**Atheism**

**By. Anon Y Mous**

Atheism is a highly secretive religion devoted to the private worship of the ultimate, all powerful god Athe. Their goal is to improve society by persuading people to join them in their faith through cunning arguments of why it's better than anyone else's.

**The Atheist Doctrine**

Because Athe is regarded as the highest and most advanced being in the universe, communication between Him and His lowly

creations is regarded as a blasphemous concept in Atheism. As such there exist no holy scriptures in Atheism, and prayer, i.e. attempted communication with a superior being, is strictly forbidden. Anyone who dares to indulge in such activity as the perusal of scripture or prayer ceases to be an Atheist.

The lack of scripture or common prayer around which to nucleate a faith leaves Atheism a much less cohesive faith than, say, Christianity, Jainism or Islam. As no Atheistic church actually exists (churches, being lowly human tributes to divine power, are seen as sacreligious affronts to the unreachable glory of Athe) and congregations of Atheists are regarded as unholy (owing to the temptation to group prayer) the typical Atheist has little choice but to attack and challenge the beliefs of other religions, particularly those that partake in the forbidden activities of prayer and congregation. As such, on meeting an Atheist, the last thing you want to do is mention religion; they will likely reel off a list of reasons why your particular deity doesn't exist and why the world would be better if everyone was Atheist (without actually mentioning Athe at all, as this would be blasphemous).

**The Atheist Misconception**

Owing to their reluctance to explicitly mention any form of deity when discussing their faith, it is perceived by many that Atheism is in fact the belief that there is no God. This is not the case - Atheists merely believe that humanity is too weak, pathetic and insignificant to be worthy of the concept of their all-powerful god Athe and mere thoughts of him will lead one to a path of eternal damnation.

Many Atheists adopt the Devil's Advocate approach to dealing with questions about their faith, choosing to play to this misconception to avoid unpleasant discussions about the sad and frail nature of humanity compared to the almighty Athe. Although it leads to glaring errors in the public perception of Atheism, it is regarded as a more pragmatic approach.



Billy Joel, American musician

"I wasn't raised Catholic, but I used to go to Mass with my friends, and I viewed the whole business as a lot of very enthralling hocus-pocus. There's a guy hanging upon the wall in the church, nailed to a cross and dripping blood, and everybody's blaming themselves for that man's torment, but I said to myself, 'Forget it. I had no hand in that evil. I have no original sin. There's no blood of any sacred martyr on my hands. I pass on all of this.'

"I believe that all important matters have to be settled here, not in the clouds somewhere after we kick off."

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**JOIN  
NYC ATHEISTS  
SEE PAGE 8  
FOR MEMBERSHIP  
APPLICATION**

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NYC-ATHEIST ACTIVITIES



March 25-27 — American Atheists Convention

Ellen Johnson — President of American Atheists.



March 25-27 — American Atheists Convention

L. to R. The Palmer family and Dennis Horvitz (NYCA Cable Show Host) being interviewed for a future NYCA Cable Show.



April 13 — O'Hair Birthday Event

Jessica Nooney, our Madalyn O'Hair Event Host.



Street Tabling

NYC Atheists do street tabling throughout NYC. See calendar for future dates and locations.

**NYC ATHEISTS — 2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt No.: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

NYC Atheists Inc. is a non-profit (501c), non-partisan, and educational association with the purposes and goals:

1. To promote the total and absolute separation of church and state
2. To educate and inform the public about Atheism
3. To provide a forum for examination and discussion about Atheism
4. To develop and engage in educational, cultural, charitable, and social activities that are beneficial to the members of NYC Atheists Inc., the Atheist community, and the community at large.

**YOUR 2005 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

- Basic — \$ 25    Supporter — \$ 100    Founder — \$ 250    Patron — \$ 500    Life — \$ 1000  
 Senior (Age 65 or greater) — \$ 20    Full Time Student — \$ 10    Military (Active) — \$ 15

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK PAYABLE TO: NYC ATHEISTS INC. — SEND APPLICATION TO:  
NYC ATHEISTS INC. MEMBERSHIP — COOPER STATION P.O. Box 93 NY, NY 10276-0093**