

PRESIDENT'S “SERMON”

TRUMP CROSSES OVER
GOP: GOD'S OWN PARTY
p2

YES THERE IS A
CONSTITUTIONAL
SEPARATION OF
CHURCH AND STATE
p3

2016 POLITICAL SCORECARD

p4

ELECTION CALENDAR

p5

IN THE NEWS

p6

UPCOMING EVENTS

p7

NYC Atheists inc.

An Affiliate of American Atheists

NOVEMBER 8.2016

VOTE



Edwin Vazquez

**TO PROTECT THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE
VOTE DEMOCRATIC ALL THE WAY**

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PRESIDENT'S "SERMON": TRUMP CROSSES OVER GOP: GOD'S OWN PARTY

By Kenneth Bronstein

In our July / August 2016 NYC Atheists newsletter we explained the critical importance of being a single-ticket voter in November. Only an across-the-board Democratic victory can prevent a Republican-controlled Congress from approving conservative Justices (like Antonin Scalia) to the Supreme Court. Note: there may be as many as four seats in play in the next four years, and conservative decisions that would echo for decades.

As I listened to Donald Trump's acceptance speech, I became distressed about his candidacy for President of these United States. In June, he held a meeting with 1000 Evangelical leaders in New York City, and has finally crossed over into the Evangelical Christian establishment. James Dobson, author of *Focus on the Family* and member of Trump's Evangelical Advisory Board, announced that Trump had recently accepted "a relationship with Christ" and was now a "Baby Christian." Trump guaranteed to support the Board's positions on abortion; to defend the sanctity of human life; preserve religious and conscience-driven liberty; appoint conservative faith-based Supreme Court Justices; and pledged to replace "our beloved Justice Scalia" with a person of similar views, principles and judicial philosophies. That's about as clear an agenda as you can follow. Also: for the first time, Trump used "God Bless America" to end his convention speech.

The Baby Christian has vowed to repeal the Johnson Amendment, a law which prevents tax-exempt organizations (including churches), from endorsing candidates or becoming involved in partisan politics. Trump complained that the law prevented Evangelicals from speaking their mind from their own pulpits. He further declared that the Evangelicals' voice had been taken away and that he would work hard to repeal the amendment and protect free speech for all Americans. And there's more: he claimed that Evangelical Christians have much to contribute to his campaign, and that their support had been a decisive factor in his winning the Republican Party's nomination. Also note that the Republican Party platform also states that God-rights must always be considered.



Photo: Barry Lynn

According to Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, "Trump's new position is outrageous! In 1954, then-U.S. Senator Lyndon Johnson championed a law that stops churches and other houses of worship from acting like miniature political action committees. The idea behind it was to ensure that the benefits of tax exemption should be awarded only to

organizations that operate in the public interest—not partisan entities. Houses of worship are free to speak out on issues or focus on partisan politics, but they may not endorse candidates." Lynn considered Trump's proposals to be "short-sighted, reckless and corrosive to

religious life. The 2016 Republican platform seeks to turn America's houses of worship into miniature political action committees." Clearly, NYC Atheists must oppose this possibility.

American Atheists also condemned Trump's pledge, saying that "the Johnson Amendment applies equally to religious and secular nonprofit organizations. Repealing this critical protection of our nation's secular character would fundamentally undermine the First Amendment's Establishment Clause and upend more than 60 years of law."

Trump reinforced his commitment to the Evangelicals by selecting former Catholic (now Evangelical) Indiana Governor Mike Pence as his running mate; While in office, Pence signed Indiana's controversial Religious Freedom Restoration Act and has opposed abortion rights and same-sex marriage. He also voted against measures strengthening LGBT rights, and supported federal legislation prohibiting same-sex marriage. His basic positions are Religious-Right-friendly.

By contrast, Hillary selected Tim Kaine as her vice-president. Although he is pro-life, Kaine believes the decision to have an abortion should be made entirely between a woman her and her doctor. In 2007 he cut off state funding for abstinence-only sex education, and has earned a perfect score from Planned Parenthood.

I would like to add this message (below) from Michael Moore—a must-read:



Photo: Michael Moore

Nicholas Genni
"I am sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but I gave it to you straight last summer when I told you that Donald Trump would be the Republican nominee for president. And now I have even more awful, depressing news for you: Donald J. Trump is going to win in November. This wretched, ignorant, dangerous part-time clown and full-time sociopath is going to be our next president. President Trump. Go ahead and say the words, 'cause you'll be saying them for the next four years: 'PRESIDENT TRUMP!'"

"Well, folks, this isn't an accident. It is happening. And if you believe Hillary Clinton is going to beat Trump with facts and smarts and logic, then you obviously missed the past year of 56 primaries and caucuses where 16 Republican candidates tried that and every kitchen sink they could throw at Trump and nothing could stop his juggernaut. As of today, as things stand now, I believe this is going to happen – and in order to deal with it, I need you first to acknowledge it, and then maybe, just maybe, we can find a way out of the mess we're in."

"Don't get me wrong. I have great hope for the country I live in. Things are better. The left has won the cultural wars. Gays and lesbians can get married. A majority of Americans now take the liberal

YES THERE IS A CONSTITUTIONAL SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Dale Hansen, Political blogger, Detroit News

position on just about every polling question posed to them: Equal pay for women – check. Abortion should be legal – check. Stronger environmental laws – check. More gun control – check. Legalize marijuana – check. A huge shift has taken place—just ask the socialist who won 22 states this year. And there is no doubt in my mind that if people could vote from their couch at home on their X-box or PlayStation, Hillary would win in a landslide.”

“But that is not how it works in America. People have to leave the house and get in line to vote. And if they live in poor, Black or Hispanic neighborhoods, they not only have a longer line to wait in, everything is being done to literally stop them from casting a ballot. So in most elections it’s hard to get even 50% to turn out to vote. And therein lies the problem for November—who is going to have the most motivated, most inspired voters show up to vote? You know the answer to this question. Who’s the candidate with the most rabid supporters? Whose crazed fans are going to be up at 5 AM on Election Day, kicking ass all day long, all the way until the last polling place has closed, making sure every Tom, Dick and Harry (and Bob and Joe and Billy Bob and Billy Joe and Billy Bob Joe) has cast his ballot? That’s right. That’s the high level of danger we’re in. And don’t fool yourself—no amount of compelling Hillary TV ads, or out-facting him in the debates or Libertarians siphoning votes away.”

“Remember back in the ‘90s when the people of Minnesota elected a professional wrestler as their governor? They didn’t do this because they’re stupid or thought that Jesse Ventura was some sort of statesman or political intellectual. They did so just because they could. Minnesota is one of the smartest states in the country. It is also filled with people who have a dark sense of humor — and voting for Ventura was their version of a good practical joke on a sick political system. This is going to happen again with Trump.”

“Never in my life have I wanted to be proven wrong more than I do right now.”

As president of NYC Atheists, I have concluded that the presidential debates will be the most crucial factor in this upcoming election, and for our next four years. Here’s the schedule:

First Presidential debate: Monday, Sept. 26
Vice-Presidential debate: Tuesday, Oct. 4
Second Presidential debate: Sunday, Oct. 9
Third Presidential debate: Wednesday, Oct. 19

From the responses to an article I wrote examining the concerns of conservative Christians over Tennessee schools’ teaching the five pillars of Islam...by far the most outrage centered on my statements regarding the separation of Church and State. “Where exactly in the U.S. Constitution does it address ‘separation of Church and State?’” and “Simply put, nowhere in the First Amendment does the phrase ‘separation of Church and State’ exist.”

Viewing it in these simplistic terms is meant to dismiss the entire argument; as if every decision based on the separation of Church and State is somehow invalid because the term separation of Church and State doesn’t appear in the Constitution.

First and most basic is the fact that the Supreme Court is the ultimate interpreter of federal constitutional law. This means that while the term “separation of Church and State” may never appear in the Constitution itself, the Court ruling in the case of *Everson v. Board of Education* stated “the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect ‘a wall of separation between Church and State.’”

A quarter century later, the case of *Lemon v. Kurtzman* further defined this separation when it established the Lemon Test to determine if a law violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment. Every ruling since has confirmed that, in the view of the highest court in the land, the Constitution created a separation of Church and State.

Having said that, the separation of Church and State is hardly the first unwritten concept that is protected by the Constitution. In the 1973 case of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court established a woman’s constitutional right to have an abortion despite the word abortion never appearing in the Constitution. The reality is that the Constitution was never meant to be a stagnant document that was rigidly adherent to the words on the page. As Thomas Jefferson said, “The Constitution, on this hypothesis, is a mere thing of wax in the hands of the Judiciary, which they may twist, and shape into any form they please.” Over the past 200 years the Supreme Court has shaped the Constitution to contain a clear separation of Church and State that protects every religion equally.

If only those who argue against this separation could see how they benefit from it instead of inappropriately interpreting it as an attack on Christianity.

ATHEISM IS A CONCLUSION NOT A BELIEF



NYC Atheists 2016



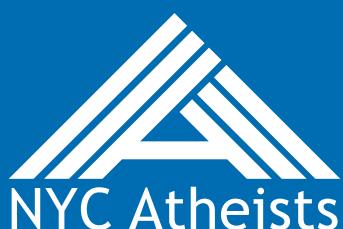
POLITICAL SCORECARD

Would you vote for or support?

Name: _____

Title: _____ Party: _____

	YES	MAYBE	NO
1. Legislation that protects the separation of government and religion:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. That religious non-profits may not endorse political candidates:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3A. Non-believers as a protected class:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3B. LGBTQ are a protected class:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Requiring religious organizations to file IRS 990:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. That all oaths be sworn by affirmation, not the bible:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ending the right to refuse to follow laws based on religion or conscience:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. No government funding (Federal, State, or Local) for religious organizations:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Religious organizations be taxed for the sale of property:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. That salaries of all non-clergy employees of religious institutions be taxed:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. That all hospitals receiving Federal / State / Local monies must offer / provide abortions:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Non-abstinence comprehensive sex education programs:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Reduction or elimination of Faith-based initiatives:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Please send completed scorecard to:

NYCAtheists@gmail.com

Or snail mail to:

NYC Atheists
P.O. Box 6060
New York, NY 10150-6060

TO PROTECT THE SEPARATION
OF CHURCH
AND STATE



2016 Election Calendar

November 8, 2016 - General Election Day
Polls open at 6 am, close at 9 pm

YOU MUST BE REGISTERED IN ORDER TO VOTE!

1

Here's how to do it:

Applications for Voter registration and Absentee Ballots
are available at your County Board of Elections:

New York State County Board Roster

Voter Registration Ends:

Last day to register to vote in person or by mail for the
General Election:

Oct. 14, 2016.

Mailed postmarked by **Oct. 14th** and received by **Oct. 19th**.

2

However, we urge you to vote by Absentee Ballot.

LIFE HAPPENS! It might prevent you from going to
the polls in person.

Here's how to do it:

www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html

Absentee Ballot Request deadline by mail:

Must be postmarked by **Nov. 1, 2016.**

Absentee Ballot Return deadline by mail:

Mail postmarked by **Nov. 7, 2016** and received
by the County Board by **Nov. 15, 2016.**

In person:

Absentee Ballot Request deadline in person:

Nov. 7, 2016 at your County Board of Elections

Absentee Ballot Return deadline in person:

Last day to deliver Absentee Ballot in person to
your County Board (by 9 pm close of polls):

Election Day: Nov. 8, 2016.

3

And there's another option:

You may also download a PDF version of the
New York State Absentee Ballot Application Form and
follow its instructions for delivery.

[Download English Form \(261KB\)](#)

[Download Spanish Form \(145KB\)](#)

“Those who believe absurdities will commit atrocities.”—Voltaire

IN THE NEWS

- Atheists sue over use of tax dollars relating to KC Baptist convention: <http://goo.gl/ppDcxY>
- Behold LUCA, the Last Universal Common Ancestor of Life on Earth: <http://goo.gl/L0QIdc>
- Tim Kaine’s Jesuit spirituality just might appeal to “nones”: <http://goo.gl/dsiZRr>
- DNC platform: Plenty for religious progressives to love: <http://goo.gl/04JAcc>
- N.B.A. to Move All-Star Game From North Carolina: <http://goo.gl/zVoZDv>
- Ted Cruz Calls for Religious Freedom for Atheists in RNC Speech: <http://goo.gl/vOLX3C>
- Last charges dropped in case over Planned Parenthood videos: <http://goo.gl/JcBKdZ>
- NJ township urges Justice Dept. to investigate haredi Orthodox ‘blockbusting’: <http://goo.gl/LU7ba4>
- Which countries still outlaw apostasy and blasphemy?: <http://goo.gl/fRnJvU>
- Satanic Temple wants after-school club in elementary schools: <http://goo.gl/Nm9zjg>
- Fewer and fewer Americans vote with religion in mind: <http://goo.gl/Zj92UM>
- Doctors at Catholic hospitals may be unable to refer women for services: <http://goo.gl/7eJ21Y>
- After Lawsuit, New Jersey Allows Driver to Get ‘8THEIST’ License Plate: <http://goo.gl/4twt5y>

Are You a Serious Writer?

NYC Atheists’ Advanced Writers Group is looking for a few good writers. Founded by NYCA Atheist Jane Everhart more than four years ago, the Writers Group seeks to encourage competent Atheist writers to get published. So far, two of our writers have finished their books and gotten published, one of our writers has had his short story accepted by a literary magazine and one writer has had her book made into a TV film.

If you are a competent aspiring writer or a dedicated experienced writer seeking the camaraderie and encouragement of other serious writers who have an Atheist sensibility, send in your application to the Writers Group as outlined on our Meetup site at:

<http://goo.gl/ttmqOz>

Please note: This group is not designed for learning basic writing skills. Only those with some degree of competence should apply.

“Since it is obviously inconceivable that all religions can be right, the most reasonable conclusion is that they are all wrong.”

—Christopher Hitchens

DON’T PRAY IN MY SCHOOL, AND I WON’T THINK IN YOUR CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2016 UPCOMING EVENTS



Photo: Lisa Smith



Photo: Jeremy Kasdin



Photo: Lee Moore



Photo: Glennys Farrar

SEPTEMBER 9. 2016

Friday 7:00 pm

NYC Atheists Book / Film Club

HOST: Lisa Smith

BOOK / FILM: The Darwin Awards - (Comedy)

LOCATION: OPERA America, 330 Seventh Avenue

(29th/30th st.), 7th floor Board Room

COST: \$10 donation helps cover room rental.

SEPTEMBER 16. 2016

Sunday 12 Noon

NYC Atheists Brunch

SUBJECT: Is there life beyond our own solar system?

SPEAKER: Jeremy Kasdin, Ph.D, Professor, Vice-Dean, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Princeton University

LOCATION: The Press Box Restaurant, 932 Second Ave. (bet. 49th & 50th Sts.) 2nd Floor.

COST: Brunch is \$20, includes buffet entrees, salad, one soft drink, coffee, tax and tip.

SEPTEMBER 20. 2016

Tuesday 7:00 pm

We Want to Hear Your Opinion

NYC Atheists Discussion Meetup

GROUP LEADER: Lee Moore

SUBJECT: "The Election" Who are you voting for and why?

LOCATION: Stone Creek, 140 East 27th St.,

(3rd/Lex) - Rear Room

COST: Free, purchase of drink / food helps compensate Stone Creek for their space.

SEPTEMBER 29. 2016

Thursday 6:30 pm

NYC Atheists Monthly Meeting

SUBJECT: Dark Matter & Dark Energy

SPEAKER: Glennys Farrar, Ph.D, Professor of Physics, NYU

LOCATION: SLC Conference Center,

15 West 39th St. (3rd Floor)

COST: \$10 donation helps cover room rental.

NYC ATHEISTS STREET TABLING

SATURDAY: SEPTEMBER 3, 10, 17, 24, 2016

11AM - 6PM / COLUMBUS CIRCLE

SEPTEMBER 2016

- 09 Friday**
NYCA Book / Film Club 7 pm*
- 16 Sunday**
NYCA Brunch / Speaker 12 noon**
- 20 Tuesday**
NYCA Meet-up discussion group 7 pm***
- 29 Thursday**
NYCA Monthly Meeting 6:30 pm ****

* OPERA America Board Room
330 Seventh Ave. (29/30th St.) - 7th Floor

** Press Box Restaurant & Pub
932 Second Ave. (49/50th St.) - 2nd Floor

*** Stone Creek Bar and Lounge
140 East 27th St. (3rd/Lex.) - Rear Room

**** SLC Conference Center
15 West 39th Street - 3rd Floor

OCTOBER 2016

- 07 Friday**
NYCA Book / Film Club 7 pm*
- 09 Sunday**
NYCA Brunch / Speaker 12 noon**
- 18 Tuesday**
NYCA Meet-up discussion group 7 pm***
- 27 Thursday**
NYCA Monthly Meeting 6:30 pm****



NYCA CABLE SHOWS

Wednesday	MNN	RCN	FIOS
Atheism in History 5:30 pm	1997	84	35
Thursday	MNN	RCN	FIOS
NYC Atheists 5 pm	67	85	36
My Road to Atheism 5:30 pm	67	85	36

NYC Atheists
P.O. Box 6060
New York, NY 10150-6060
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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

IN THIS ISSUE

- President's Sermon p2
- Yes There Is A Constitutional Separation Between Church And State p3
- 2016 Political Scorecard p4
- Election Calendar p5
- In The News p6
- Upcoming Events p7

