

## Atheists believe in nothing other than oppression of our Judeo-Christian roots

By **Bill Thompson** / [More Content Now](#)

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In early May the County Commission in Polk County, Florida, began one of its regular meetings with a prayer -- from an atheist.

Sounds goofy. Then again, it's also so 2019 -- when confusion reigns daily.

The atheist in question, Joseph Richardson, director of the Central Florida Freethought Community, is not unique. This year, atheists have given invocations before sessions of the Pennsylvania Senate; the state House of Representatives in Arizona and Iowa; city councils in Lubbock, Texas, and Berea, Kentucky; and the county board in DuPage County, Illinois.

News coverage of these speeches -- we shouldn't say invocation because that implies prayer -- indicates the atheists generally plead for civility, respect, teamwork and reliance on reason.

All of that is well and good, and not so objectionable.

Still, it's hard to escape the thought that this is so much gaslighting by groups like Richardson's.

For one thing, an invocation, by definition, implies an appeal for divine guidance or aid. Atheists obviously cannot make such an appeal because they don't believe anything exists aside from what our five senses tell us.

For another, we must consider whom atheists actually appeal to. For example, Hemant Mehta, a blogger who calls himself the "Friendly Atheist," offered the opening statement at the DuPage County Board meeting. He told the members, "You are the higher powers you've been looking for. You have made sacrifices to be here and to serve your constituents. You have a willing and capable staff as well as an entire community."

The last thing America needs is encouraging more narcissism among its pols. We instead should seek, at all levels of government, more humility and more devotion to service, as can be brought about by believing in something bigger than ourselves.

A third wrinkle in these instances is the atheists' claim of religion in order to reject religion.

Earlier this year in Arizona, state Rep. Athena Salman, a Democrat and an atheist, offered the opening statement before a House session. Afterward, a Republican lawmaker appeared to mock her -- to which Salman complained that he had "belittled my religious beliefs in ways that are humiliating and uncalled for."

Similarly, earlier this year the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit upheld a lower court's ruling that allowed the U.S. House of Representatives chaplain to deny avowed atheist Daniel Barker the opportunity to deliver the opening prayer. Barker had sued, claiming that atheism was his "religion" and that the rejection infringed on his rights under the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Atheists asserting their belief in nothing amounts to religious beliefs -- again, so 2019.

It's easy to see why atheists believe they can exploit this situation. The lukewarm, milquetoast faith so prevalent throughout much of American Christianity readily claims positions on social or cultural matters that recede from, if not openly quarrel with, scripture. If Christians are unwilling to stand for what they believe, why is it so far-fetched to believe that people who believe in nothing can take their place in offering invocations?

When the D.C. Circuit Court panel unanimously ruled against Barker in April, he complained in a statement that atheists were being treated as "second-class citizens." "Our government is not a theocracy," he added, "and it needs to stop acting like one."

Laughable. The courts operating under this "theocracy" did away with prayer in school almost 60 years ago. They have upheld the right to slaughter babies in the womb for almost 50 years. They have forced communities to remove public

displays of the Ten Commandments, nativity scenes and other religious symbols, or quasi-religious ones, such as a century-old World War I memorial in Maryland shaped like a cross. They have stood ready to enforce government policies that force Christian business owners to violate their faith.

Perhaps someone should offer Barker a plane ticket to Tehran so he can see up close and personal how a theocracy really works.

Atheists forget or dismiss the concept that religious people have rights, too. The Constitution protects freedom of religion, not freedom from religion.

Moreover, Richardson, Barker and their cohorts can go on their merry way practicing their nonbelief -- even to the point that some communities accept atheist "invocations" -- without fear of death, jail, or forced conversion. Ironically, they freely do so because the Judeo-Christian beliefs that founded this nation, and which they despise, value the individual over the government.

They don't have to believe in God, but it would be nice if they showed some appreciation for the government His followers have wrought.

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