

AMERICAN ATHEISTS, INC.

<http://www.atheists.org>

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'TIS THE SEASON, EVEN FOR THE GODLESS ~ MANY ATHEISTS AND OTHER NONBELIEVERS CELEBRATE WINTER SOLSTICE

Just what is an Atheist to do during the "Christmas" time? Nonbelievers -- a segment of the American demographic landscape which comprises up to 13% of the population (that's nearly 30 million people!) -- face this dilemma during the so-called Christmas season. Among their ranks are those who use terms like Atheist, Freethinker, Humanist, Bright, Rationalist or other appellations to describe lack of dogmatic religious faith.

Yet at a time when the majoritarian Christian religion -- and even groups like the Jews who celebrate Hanukkah -- see this time of year as a celebratory period, many Atheists and other nonbelievers look to the Winter Solstice to mark this time of year. Many give (and receive) gifts, host dinners, and in general have a good time partying with friends and family. Why?

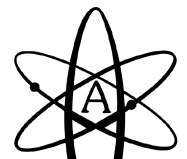
Decades ago, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the famous Atheist who founded our organization and won an important Supreme Court battle to end mandatory prayer and bible verse recitation in the public schools, called for the celebration of four "natural holidays," the Winter and Summer Equinoxes and Solstices. These ancient holidays were acknowledged by almost all of our ancestors. The Winter Solstice, which occurs this year on Saturday, December 22, 2007 at 1:08 AM, marks the time of year when the sun is at its lowest point in its annual journey across our sky. Many Atheist-Freethought and other nonbeliever groups will host parties on that day (See <http://www.atheists.org/wintersolstice.html>).

Ellen Johnson, President of American Atheists, said that the celebration of the Solstice is a growing phenomenon in the United States. "More and more non-religious people are joining in, because there are more of us," said Johnson.

"This is a time of year when everyone, both religious and non-religious, can celebrate life," said Dave Silverman, Communications Director for American Atheists. "What we don't appreciate, though, is government promotion of particular religion, or religion in general in the form of nativity displays and other religious symbols on public property."

If you would like comment and background on the growing celebration of Winter Solstice, please contact us.

AMERICAN ATHEISTS is a nationwide movement that defends civil rights for Atheists; works for the total separation of church and state; and addresses issues of First Amendment public policy.



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