

Jesus Joins in Billboard Battle

Three weeks after Louisville CoR in Kentucky put up its billboard on August 2 (headlined in our last issue), the Louisville Bible College brought Jesus into the fray in the text of its own counter billboard located a half mile away. WAVE News on Channel 3 reported Dr. Tracy Marx of the Louisville Bible College as saying: “We respect the right of atheists. This is America . . . and we are all part of the American society.” Such a counter campaign, together with Louisville CoR’s booth at the Kentucky State Fair, kept media and online discussion of the original CoR billboard alive for a full month. Moreover, the CoR billboard stayed up almost two weeks longer than planned—until September 10—before the space was rented to a new advertiser.



Labor Day Launch in OKC

Oklahoma City CoR, made up of four groups in Oklahoma City and Norman, had its billboard up on Labor Day, September 6, and enjoyed a launch that not only secured significant local publicity but garnered national media attention as well.

At the local level the story was covered on all the major television stations, with videos posted on three out of the four station websites. One in particular: <http://www.kfor.com/news/local/kfor-news-controversial-billboard-god-story,0,1027312.story> stands out. Articles also appeared in all

the major print media: the *Oklahoma Citizen*, *Oklahoma Gazette*, *Oklahoman*, and *Journal Record*. Other cities in the state also carried the story.



But because a local Associated Press reporter wrote about the billboard as well, the story went nationwide. This resulted in a number of inquiries from a variety of cities coming into the national UnitedCoR office, allowing people to be directed to coalitions or coalitions forming in their areas.

As in Louisville, the Oklahoma City billboard was placed near the state fairgrounds and went up just prior to the opening of the state fair—a point that intentionally became part of the publicity.

Meanwhile, Up in Tulsa . . .

The Tulsa Coalition of Reason joined forces with the Freedom From Religion Foundation (headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin) to erect a billboard honoring Thomas Gore, a twentieth



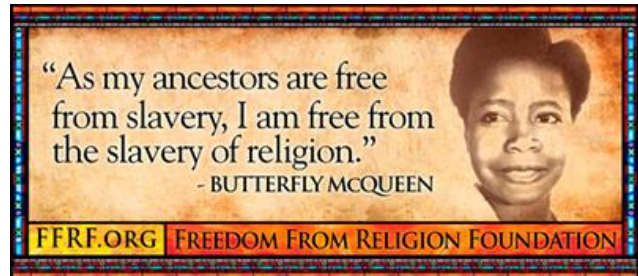
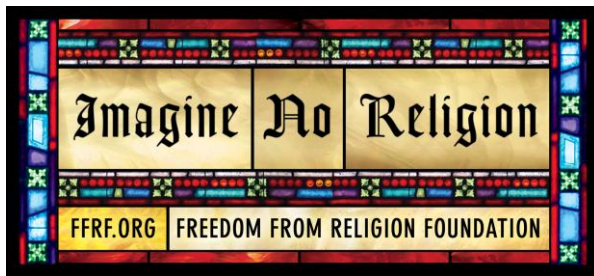
century U.S. senator from Oklahoma who was an atheist, perhaps the first senator to openly be so. The idea was the brainchild of Bill Dusenberry, coordinator of Tulsa CoR and an active member of the FFRF's new Tulsa chapter.

Dusenberry got the idea after reading an [interview](#) with author Gore Vidal that appeared in the *Humanist* magazine. In that interview Vidal talked about his grandfather, Senator Gore, “a dedicated atheist” who never hid his beliefs but whose views nonetheless managed to go unpublicized. Gore was Oklahoma’s debut senator, serving from 1907 to 1921 and again from 1931 to 1937. Before the billboard was designed, Vidal gave an enthusiastic “thumbs up” to the project.

Announced on September 4 in a *Tulsa World* article, the billboard went up September 7 to more publicity. Most of the billboard’s cost was covered by the FFRF. Tulsa CoR had been launched last December with a UnitedCoR billboard saying: “Are you good without God? Millions are.”

And Back in Kentucky . . .

Before the Louisville CoR billboard, and its Christian competitor, came down, the Freedom From Religion Foundation burst onto the scene to blanket the city of Louisville with twenty billboards, announced September 7. These featured a variety of slogans and designs.



At the same time the FFRF also blanketed Atlanta, Georgia, with fifty billboards.

The organization was the first to run nontheistic billboards, starting in 2007, and has now placed them in half the states and about forty-five cities. All FFRF billboards, and likewise those of the American Humanist Association, promote the national organization while all UnitedCoR billboards promote and help launch local coalitions.

San Diego CoR Community Picnic

While there are a few skeptics who don't seem to believe, there is indeed CoR life after the billboard comes down. And the San Diego Coalition of Reason in California is one of those proving the point in a big way. Having now grown to include seventeen groups (inclusive of the Meetup subsidiaries of a few of the major groups), the CoR held a Community Picnic on September 18 at Morley Field in Balboa Park. Members of all the groups were invited to attend and bring their friends for a purely social outdoor activity. The picture below shows a portion of the crowd and the good times enjoyed that afternoon.



Forthcoming CoR Observances

Following National Secular Service Day on Sunday, October 3 (or any day of convenience in October), the next major community of reason observance is the winter holiday season, which can be celebrated as HumanLight on the weekend of December 18-19, the Winter Solstice on December 21, or Festivus on December 23. Now is a good time to begin preparations!

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