



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 6, 2017

## Michael Reagan Denounces Brother Ron's Atheist Commercial

Ron Reagan, the 58-year-old son of the late President Ronald Reagan, has been featured in a televised commercial proudly proclaiming his atheist views. The commercial has appeared on MSNBC's "Rachel Maddow Show," and "Morning Joe," and on CNN's "The Situation Room," "The Lead with Jake Tapper," and "CNN Newsroom." It was rejected by CBC, NBC, ABC, and Discovery Science.



It was also rejected by the late president's older son, Michael Reagan. Michael Reagan, 71, was the adopted son of Ronald Reagan and his first wife, actress Jane Wyman. Ron is the late president's son with his second wife, Nancy, who was also a Hollywood actress.

Now a conservative commentator, Michael used Twitter late last week to call for a boycott of both CNN and MSNBC for running the 30-second spot that Ron ran on behalf of the Freedom from Religion Foundation. He said his father was "crying in Heaven" about Ron's endorsement of the atheistic organization.

In the ad, Ron ends saying, "Ron Reagan, lifelong atheist, not afraid of burning in Hell."

Michael had seen the ad back in 2014, when it ran the first time on Comedy Central. Michael said, "I remember having dinner with my father — with our family, we were having dinner — and he [Ron] was talking about his atheism at dinner one night and my dad leaned over to me and grabbed my hand and said, 'My only prayer is that my son becomes a Christian' ... and that was his prayer."

Ron had first told his parents he would no longer go to church when he was only 12 years old, as he was now an atheist.

In 2004, he told *The New York Times* that he did not have any religion, but that he did have sympathies with Buddhism. He later told Larry King that his rejection of belief in God would preclude him from ever running for public office, because "polls all say that people won't elect an atheist."

But his famous name did get him into a commercial for the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) and onto their Honorary Board of "distinguished achievers." Apparently his achievement is being an atheist son of an American president.

While Ron Reagan was not public about his atheistic views during his father's presidency, he has not been shy to express those views since then. He has also been very public in his liberal political views. He spoke at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in favor of lifting restrictions on embryonic stem-cell research. Those opposed to lifting restrictions "should be ashamed of themselves," adding, "We can choose between the future and the past, between reason and ignorance, between true compassion and mere ideology."

He publicly supported Democratic presidential nominees John Kerry and Barack Obama, and was an early endorser for avowed socialist Bernie Sanders, who sought the Democratic Party nomination last



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year.

Michael, on the other hand, takes the opposite stance both religiously and politically. Writing in his book *Twice Adopted*, Michael Reagan said, “Back in 1988, on a flight from Washington, D.C., to Point Mugu, [my father] told me about his love of God, his love of Christ as his Savior.”

Since then, he has gone into more detail about the time he got to fly on Air Force One with his father. He recalled how President Reagan was counting on his fingers up to nine. Michael asked, “What are you doing, Dad?”

“I’m counting the months until I will be out of office and I’ll be able to attend church again,” the president answered.

“The reason he had stopped going to church while president was because he didn’t want to put other people’s lives in danger,” Michael explained. The president told his son that he did not want to ever again be the cause of people being “severely injured and almost killed,” referencing the result of the 1981 assassination attempt.

Michael persuaded him to make an exception with an unannounced visit on Easter 1988 to a small country church in the Santa Ynez valley near his Rancho del Cielo vacation home outside Santa Barbara, the church he had attended regularly before his presidency.

At his funeral in 2004, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said in her tribute, “Ronnie himself certainly believed that he had been given back his life for a purpose.” She said that he believed that purpose was to “free the slaves of communism.”

Speaking of the ad that his brother Ron made for the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Michael said, “He [his brother Ron] has every right to be an atheist,” but Michael argues that no one would really care what his opinion was if he were not Reagan’s son, noting that the commercial ends with him saying, “I’m Ron Reagan, I’m not afraid to burn in Hell — I think just slaps his father in the face — our father’s face — in a terrible, terrible way. And so all I can say is, do what I do every day ... pray for my brother Ron.”

FFRF, which Ron Reagan supports in his ad, is a very active organization with a multiplicity of projects. For example, they have a “Clergy Project,” a confidential online group that supports ministers leaving their faith.

In October 2000, the FFRF brought suit, as taxpayers in the state of Wisconsin, against “Faith Works,” a Milwaukee-based organization, because FFRF was opposed to a faith-based addiction-treatment program that was being used for a court-ordered treatment program, using taxpayer funds.

In 2001, they sued Rhea County (Tennessee) schools because Bible classes were being held for all students in their elementary schools. As a result of their lawsuit, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a judgment that it was “unconstitutional” for the school district to “teach the Bible as literal truth” to students, including first graders. Ironically, it was in 1925 that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) intervened in the Scopes “Monkey” Trial — arguing against a Tennessee law then that said the theory of evolution could not be taught in the public schools as a literal truth — in Dayton, Tennessee, the county seat of Rhea County.

In November 2012, the FFRF even filed a lawsuit against the IRS for not stopping a Catholic diocese from requiring priests to read a statement urging Catholics to vote. Clearly, FFRF has a very selective interpretation of what religious liberty means. To some, it appears they want to use the heavy hand of



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government to drive the Christian faith out of existence.

The FFRF even gets involved in cases in which no government funds are used. In 1995, the FFRF sued the state of Wisconsin for designating Good Friday as a state legal holiday, and the federal district court agreed that this constituted a First Amendment violation, because it promoted Christianity. In 2012 the FFRF even wrote several letters to Prudhommes Restaurant, in Columbia, Pennsylvania, that their policy of offering a 10 percent discount to Sunday patrons who present a church bulletin was somehow a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

It is quite obvious that the goal of FFRF is not to support the rights of atheists and agnostics to not have religion “forced upon them,” but rather to restrict the rights of Christians to freely practice their religion.

And this is the group supported by the atheist son of the late President Ronald Reagan.

*Image: screenshot from YouTube video of Ron Reagan’s FFRF ad*



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