



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on December 16, 2011

Atheists Demand Texas Town Take Christmas from Square

The town of Athens, Texas, is modest. The Henderson County courthouse (left), as in many small towns in the South, is the center of the community. Normally, during this time of the year, Christmas decorations are on each corner of the square. But this year, that simple display of the holiday season has run into an unexpected bump.



An organization of people who do not live in the town, who do not even live in the state, sent a letter to the Henderson County Commission. This letter was the shock of his life, according to Commissioner Joe Hall. The [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#), a organization of atheists in Madison, Wisconsin, demanded that the town remove the Christmas decorations because according to Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-founder of the organization: “This excludes non-Christians and non-believers who are 17 percent of the U.S. population. So it’s necessary there should be changes.”

In fact, the atheist group is not only asking that the Christian symbols come down but that the following go up instead: “At this season of the Winter Solstice, let reason prevail. There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth & superstition that hardens hearts & enslaves minds.” So far no one who lives in Athens has complained, of course, and this demand seems to have less to do with protecting the sensibilities of the people in Athens than the enforcement of some notional idea of federal atheism.

The town is not budging. Hall put it this way: “We get a letter saying you better do this or we’re going to do that. You come to my house looking for a fight, you’re gonna get one.” The citizens of the town support this attitude. There are one or two women near the nativity seen collecting signatures for petitions supporting the keeping of the nativity scene. A group of pastors has worked to get people for a rally at the square and they expect thousands to attend.

What else might the city of “Athens” do? Well, municipalities can change their names. Texas already has a Bethlehem, a Nazareth, a Galilee, a Calvary, an Easter, a Trinity and a St. Paul—all overtly Christian names—but there is no town in Texas yet named John the Baptist or Gospel City or Holy Redemption. Or the citizens might ask Jews who believe in God to join with them in changing the name of the town to Zion, Jericho, Noah, Solomon, or Jonah, reflecting the Judeo-Christian heritage of our nation.

In the meantime, the Freedom From Religion Foundation might try picketing the embassies or consulates of the many nations that have Islam enshrined as part of the government, or the nations that have Buddhism as the state religion (Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand and Bhutan) or even those nations



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that formally are Christian (although one would never guess it) like England, Scotland, Greece, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, and Norway.)

The enemy of these atheists, of course, is not those people of faith but people of one particular faith: Christianity. They do not spend their energy attacking the superficial establishment of Christian faith, which is why they leave the Norwegian consulate alone, but those who truly believe in the Christian faith. Moreover, they pick on those who can be bullied. So they do not demand that St. Paul, Minnesota, changed its name to Secular City. They find a tiny town in Texas to attack. The people of Athens, Texas, however, seem unflustered and unafraid. They seem to be saying: "Make my day."

Related article: [Texas County Stands up to Atheist Group Over Nativity Scene](#)



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