

ATHEISTS KEEP BUSY

Every year American Atheists hold their annual convention on Easter weekend. They do so because they think they'll garner big media attention at a time when reporters are dying for a story. And every year they go home disappointed. But it least it fills their time. After all, if you believed in nothing and had nothing to do—at a time when most everyone else is a believer and is busy celebrating—wouldn't you want to meet with those who also believe in nothing so that you would have something to do?

In any event, just two newspapers carried stories on the convention this year, the *Orlando Sentinel* and the *Indianapolis Star*. The *Sentinel* sent a reporter because the convention was held at the Airport Marriott in Orlando; the *Star* dispatched a staff writer because one of the geniuses who spoke at the convention was a native of Indiana, Greg McDowell.

Greg is now the director of American Atheists in Florida. He gets our vote as the person who made the most brilliant comment of the convention. "I had come to realize that if Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny did not exist," he opined, "neither did God." It just doesn't get any better than this.

Now let's examine this a little closer. Notice that this is a conditional statement: Greg says if Santa and the Easter Bunny do not exist. But what if they do? What is Greg to do then? Remember, this is a rebuttal assumption and therefore all we need to do is convince the poor guy that when he was a kid someone poisoned his mind about Santa and the Easter Bunny. Then the heavens will open up for him.

If Greg made the most brilliant remark, actor William B. Davis offered the most memorable line. Davis, who played "The Cigarette Smoking Man" in *The X-Files*, told the gathering that

as a second-generation atheist, his career has not suffered for his views. "I think Hollywood is on our side," he said. And we think he's right.