

P.R. MISTAKE: Atheists need lessons

Written by Editorial Staff
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You can call organized atheists many, many things — but don't mistake them for marketing geniuses. When it comes to effective public relations, its all about positive messaging, unless, of course, you are with the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

Thursday, March 6, was the annual National Day of Prayer in America. In a sad commentary about the direction of this country, the National Day of Prayer probably ranks somewhere around Groundhog Day in the consciousness of the American public. It simply doesn't get much recognition.

That in itself makes it really odd that the Freedom From Religion Foundation leadership decided to attack the day with an anti-prayer campaign. The foundation held a rally Thursday in Wisconsin — that's right, Wisconsin — that it described as an "anti-National Day of Prayer rally. Of course, not many people heard about it because most people don't pay a lot of attention to Wisconsin. The event reportedly featured a "moment of bedlam," which it seems to most would only reinforce the untrue stereotype about all atheists promoting hedonism, disorder and chaos.

Of course, the big problem (for the atheists) with the anti-prayer rally held by the foundation is the focus it put on the actual National Day of Prayer. All of the negative publicity simply galvanized the enthusiasm for the country-wide event and brought it even more into the spotlight.

The foundation did get a recent win, with U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb ruled the National Day of Prayer unconstitutional (prayer day continued as the case is appealed). Putting aside the absurdity of the judge's ruling, we don't need government proclamations urging prayer. Prayer is a very personal experience. Celebrating Christianity or Judaism or any other organized religion is just as personal.

Simply put, we don't need permission to pray.

As for the Freedom From Religion Foundation and their P.R. tactics, perhaps someone in the group might want to take a college class or two on marketing. Promoting what you don't believe in is never a very good idea.