

Newport Nonbelievers

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July 1, 2016

Ms Joan Davis, City Administrator, Yachats

Good afternoon, Ms Davis,

Thank you for your prompt response to our June 16, 2016 phone call.

We understand that The City of Yachats views the Genesis 1 Creationism statue as cultural art. At the same time, the statue appears to depict a specific religious creation story by both the images and the label which raises First Amendment, establishment clause concerns.

We believe the statue should be removed from public property. Alternatively, you may wish to accommodate items representing other religions and beliefs, including non-belief.

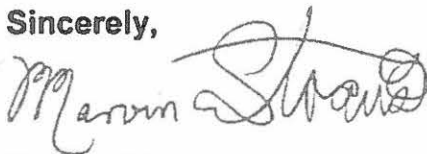
The sectarian symbols in the Little Log Church appear limited to Protestant Christian religions; yet surely, not all of Yachats residents or visitors are Protestant Christian. We acknowledge that the church itself may have historical significance; however we question whether the bible, pictures, and mural do not send the message that you are proselytizing a specific religion and not celebrating history. We suggest either removing those items or providing signage that indicates to visitors that Yachats does not promote religion views.

We question whether it is appropriate that the city goals in your website be concerned about the spirituality of the citizens (and visitors) of Yachats.

Clarifying Yachats' understanding of and allegiance to the First Amendment, would further its goals of diversity and inclusiveness. As things stand--including the Genesis statue--there's at least the suggestion of exclusion.

We are eager to discuss this matter further if you or the city council members would like to meet and develop a contemporary policy that address these and future issues.

Sincerely,



Marvin Straus
Organizer, Newport Nonbelievers