

Atheist Bus Campaign Launches Across UK

Tuesday January 6 2009

The UK's first ever atheist advertising campaign launches this week, with 800 buses featuring the slogan "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life" running in cities across England, Scotland and Wales, along with 1000 adverts on the London underground and two large LCD screens on Oxford Street.

The campaign, which is supported by Professor Richard Dawkins and the British Humanist Association, is a response to a series of evangelical Christian adverts running on buses in June 2008, which featured the URL of a website saying all non-Christians were going to hell. Comedy writer Ariane Sherine suggested the rational, positive slogan to reassure people who may have been scared by the evangelical adverts.

The Atheist Bus Campaign's donation phase launched in October, aiming to raise just £5,500. However, within four days it had raised £100,000 from individual donations from the general public. It has now raised over £135,000, smashing its original target by 2400%.

There will be four new atheist adverts (attached) running on London's tube network from Monday January 12, featuring quotations from famous atheists:

"I'm an atheist, and that's it. I believe that there's nothing we can know except that we should be kind to each other and do what we can for other people" – Katharine Hepburn

"Isn't it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too?" – Douglas Adams

"I do not believe in a personal God and have never denied this but have expressed it clearly" – Albert Einstein

"That it will never come again is what makes life so sweet" – Emily Dickinson

The tube adverts were revealed today at a Central London campaign launch by Professor Dawkins, *Father Ted* TV writer Graham Linehan, columnist and BHA President Polly Toynbee and philosopher AC Grayling.

In addition, two large LCD screens (80 square feet and 40 square feet respectively) on Oxford Street (situated opposite Bond Street tube) will display an animated version of the atheist slogan.

Ariane Sherine, creator of the Atheist Bus Campaign, says: "You wait ages for an atheist bus, then 800 come along at once. I hope they'll brighten people's days and make them smile on their way to work."

Hanne Stinson, Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association, says: "The incredible response to the Atheist Campaign shows just how many atheists out there have been looking for a voice. Now that the buses are rolling out across the country, I feel sure that everyone with non-religious beliefs who spots one of these buses on the streets will be delighted to see what this amazing appeal has achieved."

The buses will be running in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, York, Leeds, Newcastle, Dundee, Sheffield, Coventry, Devon, Liverpool, Wolverhampton, Swansea, Newport, Rhondda, Bristol, Southampton, Newcastle and Aberdeen.

Since its donation phase began in October, the Atheist Bus Campaign has inspired atheist organisations across the world to launch their own bus campaigns. Spain's Union of Atheists and Freethinkers is launching buses across Barcelona today with the UK slogan translated into Spanish, Italy's Union of Atheists, Agnostics and Rationalists is also planning a bus campaign, while the American Humanist Association has brought out atheist bus adverts in Washington DC.

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For all enquiries and interviews, please call:

Hanne Stinson
(020) 7079 3583

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