



FIRST SUNDAY AT THE SHERATON GRAND !!

NTCOF's monthly first-Sunday services will continue at the Sheraton Grand Hotel on the southeast corner of 114 and Esters except for September 4th, 2011 when for that month only we will meet at the Westin DFW Airport across the highway on the northwest corner of 114 and Esters.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY RELIGIOUS LIBERTY !!

Contrary to what some may think, freedom of religion requires freedom from religion. For religious liberty demands that government take no sides when it comes to religious questions and, especially, when it comes to theological doctrines. The United States led the world in insisting on this principle in the late 18th Century when the First Amendment was incorporated into the US Constitution. Nor was this some sort of mistake, or intended only to allow Christians some latitude of opinion. The founders knew exactly what they were doing when they erected what Jefferson called "the wall of separation" between church and state. The founders may not have all been of one mind as to how far the idea should be taken. It was not, for example, initially applied to the states. But as TH Huxley would later observe: "Logical consequences are the scarecrows of fools and the beacons of wise men." Below are some revealing excerpts from American history:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" [First Amendment to the US Constitution, 1791; extended by the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause to all divisions of government in the United States as decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Gitlow vs New York*, 1925]

"I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between church and state." [President Thomas Jefferson, Letter to the Baptists of Danbury, Connecticut, 1802]

"Is uniformity of opinion attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. ... Let us reflect that [the earth] is inhabited by a thousand millions of people. That these profess probably a thousand different systems of religion. That ours is but one of that thousand. That if there be but one right, and ours that one, we should wish to see the 999 wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force. Reason and persuasion are the only practicable instruments. To make way for these, free inquiry must be indulged; and how can we wish others to indulge it while we refuse it ourselves." [Thomas Jefferson, Notes On The State of Virginia, 1781]

"Certainly, no power to prescribe any religious exercise, or to assume authority in religious discipline, has been delegated to the General Government. ... I do not believe it is in the best interests of religion to invite the civil magistrate to direct its exercises, its discipline, or its doctrines; ... Fasting and prayer are religious exercises; the enjoining them an act of discipline. Every religious society has a right to determine for itself the times of these exercises, and the objects proper for them, according to their own particular tenets; and this right can never be safer than in their own hands, where the Constitution has deposited it." [President Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Presbyterian minister Samuel Miller, January 23, 1808]

"The proof of the contrary [that the English common law is rooted in Christianity] is incontrovertible; to wit, that the common law existed while the Anglo-Saxons were yet pagans, at a time when they had never yet heard the name of Christ pronounced, or knew that such a character had ever existed." [Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Major John Cartwright, June 5, 1824]

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"Is the appointment of Chaplains to the two Houses of Congress consistent with the Constitution, and with the pure principle of religious freedom? In strictness the answer on both points must be in the negative. The Constitution of the U. S. forbids everything like an establishment of a national religion. The law appointing Chaplains establishes a religious worship for the national representatives, to be performed by Ministers of religion, elected by a majority of them, and these are to be paid out of the national taxes. Does this not involve the principle of a national establishment, applicable to a provision for a religious worship for the Constituent as well as of the representative Body, approved by the majority, and conducted by Ministers of religion paid by the entire nation? The establishment of the chaplainship to Congress is a palpable violation of equal rights, as well as of Constitutional principles ... Could a [minority religious] clergyman ever hope to be appointed a chaplain! To say that his religious principles are obnoxious or that his sect is small, is to lift the veil at once and exhibit in its naked deformity the doctrine that religious truth is to be tested by numbers, or that the major sects have a right to govern the minor. ... Religious proclamations by the Executive recommending thanksgivings and fasts are shoots from the same root ... they imply a religious agency, making no part of the trust delegated to political rulers." [James Madison, Detached Memorandum, ca 1823]

"As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion – as it has itself no character of enmity against the law, religion or tranquility of Musselmen [Muslims]," [Article 11, Treaty of Peace and Friendship between The United States and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli of Barbary, 1796-1797, written by Joel Barlow, negotiated during Washington's administration, concluded on November 4, 1796, ratified by the Senate without debate in June, 1797, and signed by President John Adams on June 10, 1797]

COMING NEXT MONTH:
"A MORE PERFECT UNION"
What Did The Civil War Accomplish?
And Why Did It (Does It) Matter?
AUGUST 7, 2011 !!
SHERATON GRAND DFW AIRPORT
SE CORNER OF 114 AND ESTERS

**YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS
 TO THE NTCOF ARE NEEDED,
 APPRECIATED,
 AND TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!!**

All NTCOF events can be found through our website calendar (yes, website update is in process thanks to Sarah and Rusty Nejd!), or through our meetup page, from which you can RSVP, at:
 - www.meetup.com/church-of-freethought -
JOIN THE NTCOF MEETUP GROUP !!!

Social Luncheon: Today, immediately after our Service, join us for lunch and discussion at the Golden Corral Buffet and Grill in Grapevine, located just across from the Grapevine Mills Mall, at 2605 E. Grapevine Mills Circle, phone (972) 874-7900. To reach Golden Corral from the Sheraton, cross over the freeway and make a left onto John W. Carpenter Freeway (114) going west. Then take the first exit RIGHT onto International Parkway (121), then Grapevine Mills Parkway exit. Turn LEFT on Stars and Stripes Way, continuing on to E. Grapevine Mills Circle.

Freethought Salon: Get together to discuss today's service topic or other conundrums of interest to Freethinkers. Second Sunday monthly, over breakfast, at the Hilton Vineyard in Grapevine this month; see the meetup site!

Game Night: The regular game night crew meets nearly every Friday night at the IHOP on 2310 Stemmons Trail (I-35), near Northwest Highway (Loop 12). Plan to arrive at about 7:30 PM, and stay late playing Risk, Rummikub, and other fun games!

Secular Singles: Freethinkers have met their life-partners with whom they have begun families through the Secular Singles group. Check the meetup site for the next date, time and location!

**"We should begin by
 setting conscience free."
 - John Adams (1735-1826)**



The North Texas Church of Freethought
 The Fellowship of Unbelievers

Presenter:	Tim Gorski
Music Appreciation (usually) by "Faithless Companions"	David Burgess
Check out faithlesscompanions.com !!!	
Welcome Coordinator	Mark Barnick
Equipment Wrangler:	"Wild" Bill Holloway
Videographer:	John Gauthier
Minister:	Dr. Tim Gorski

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