

The North Texas Church of Freethought BULLETIN

A Fellowship of Unbelievers

Founded 1994

Vol. XIV No. VI

Sunday, June 1st, 2008

TODAY'S SERVICE

War: A Human Failing



Freethought teaches us that evidence and reason can show us how to come to conclusions about how our lives should proceed, how we should relate to other people, and how we can best make use of our finite resources to make a good life for ourselves and for our loved ones. However, what are we to do when other people don't come to the same conclusions as we do? What do we do

when other people won't even use evidence and reason to come to their conclusions, but appeal instead to tradition and superstition? What outcomes are possible when rationality meets irrationality?

The great Freethinker and writer Mark Twain, ever the capable satirist, captured the essence of this struggle in his short story "The War Prayer:"

"O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle--be Thou near them! With them--in spirit--we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it--for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen."

-Mark Twain "The War Prayer"

What is it about us that makes us so dangerous? What leads us not just into temptation but into depravity? Is belief in the supernatural entirely to blame? Or is it something more? And how can we change it? These issues touch on deeply-seated and evolutionarily-ancient emotions which we may not always be aware of, but which can be drawn out by the drumbeats of tribalism. War has been a part of the human experience since the very dawn of our species, and it is unlikely to be banished anytime soon.

FOXHOLE FREETHINKERS

A common misconception is the oft-repeated false-truism, "there are no atheists (or Freethinkers) in foxholes. Nothing could be further from the truth! In every branch of military service today, there are atheists, agnostics, freethinkers, secularists, naturalists, and every kind of secular individual you can think of. In fact, there are so many that there now exists an organization specifically to serve their needs: the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers:

www.maaf.info

One foxhole freethinker who has received quite a bit of attention to date is Army Specialist Jeremy Hall, who is now pursuing legal action against the United States Army because of the persecution he received in Iraw as an atheist who was eager to connect with other freethinkers in uniform.

Our own **Trey Elmore**, who has presented weighty theological critiques here at the NTCOF, is also now become a foxhole freethinker, as a recently-trained Marine.



NTCOF Family Member and newly-minted Marine, Private **Trey Elmore** with two of his drill sergeants at the end of his Marine training.

ANOTHER DEBATE...?

For those of you that enjoyed the debate in April between Executive Director **Zachary Moore** and **John Ferrer**, another debate is now brewing, this time pitting Zach against **Dr. Ray Bohlin** of Probe Ministries in Richardson. Zach and Ray will be debating whether the evidence found in nature favors evolutionary theory or special creation as taught by religious superstitions worldwide. This debate is likely to take place later in June, so stay tuned to your email for more details!

DR. TIM ON LOCAL NEWSCAST

Our own Pastoral Director **Tim Gorski** was interviewed by local Channel 4's **Jason Overstreet** for a story on the decision of several local school districts to teach an elective class on the historical and literary context of the Bible. Dr. Tim pointed out that although this in itself is not a dangerous move, if a teacher were to cross the line from *teaching* to *preaching*, an ugly Constitutional fight could be the result, wasting the time and money of taxpayers who should be taking the responsibility of ensuring their children's religious literacy on their own.



FREETHOUGHT IS NOT FREE!
Your generous TAX-DEDUCTIBLE donation can be placed in the Rainbow-Colored Box!!
OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON YOUR SUPPORT!

The North Texas Church of Freethought

A Fellowship of Unbelievers

Tim Gorski, MD	Pastoral Director
Zachary Moore, PhD	Executive Director

Deborah Boak	Youth Director
Cash Foley	Outreach Director
Georgene Harkness	Treasurer
Howard Harkness	Musical Director
Don Lewellyn	Operations Director
Brad Watson	Social Director

3000 Custer Road, Suite 270-353, Plano, TX 75075
24-hour answering line: (972) 395-5343
Website: www.churchoffreethought.org
Email: info@churchoffreethought.org

JUNE EVENTS

Social Luncheon: Today, immediately after our Service, join us for lunch and friendly discussion at Jason's Deli in Irving, located just south of I-635 on MacArthur, at 7770 N. MacArthur Blvd., phone (972) 432-0555. Easy driving directions: To reach Jason's from the Holiday Inn: turn RIGHT out of the parking lot onto Esters Blvd., RIGHT onto Freepport Parkway, RIGHT to enter I-635 EAST. Exit I-635 at MacArthur Blvd., then RIGHT onto MacArthur, and RIGHT again just ahead into the Jason's parking lot.

Farewell Party: Saturday, June 7th, from 1:00 - 3:30 PM. Come bid farewell to **Mike and Marilyn Sullivan**, who will soon be departing to enjoy their well-deserved retirement in Florida. The party will be held at the Country Villas clubhouse at 2708 Meadowstone Court, Carrollton. Please RSVP to **Jenni Ritter** by Tuesday, June 3rd, at:

jennifer.ritter@verizon.net

Games Night: The NTCOF Games group meets nearly every Friday night at the smoke-free IHOP at 2310 Stemmons Trail in Dallas. The IHOP is adjacent to the Radisson Hotel along North-west Highway, about a ½ mile east of Loop 12. For the latest details, join the NTCOF Games e-list by sending any e-mail message to:

ntcof_games-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Secular Singles Social Luncheon: Sunday, May 25, 1:30 PM. The Freethinking NTCOF Singles meet for lunch and Freethought fellowship on the fourth Sunday each month at Mimi's Café in Grapevine, located in front of the big Target store along Hwy. 114 just west of Wm. D. Tate; phone 817/410-7270. Join the NTCOF Secular Singles e-list for the latest info. To get on the list, just send any e-mail message to:

ntcof_singles-subscrbe@yahoogroups.com

Food Critics (tentative): At **Reata** in Fort Worth, 310 Houston Street. Date and time to be determined. For more

FINANCIAL REPORT

Folks, you hear this over and over, but it's true: Freethought is NOT Free! Our continued growth is only possible through your generous donations and contributions to the church- our success depends on the commitment of ALL our members. We'll be sharing a more detailed financial summary later in the year, but here's a snapshot of our financial activity from last month:

Total Income:	\$928.18
Total Expenses:	\$1442.11
Loss:	-\$513.93