Religious liberty is among what Jefferson referred to as inalienable rights. Unlike even the rights to life, to personal freedom and to property, the right of conscience cannot be legitimately adjudicated away or practically eliminated. The authorities can jail us and confiscate our property. But our minds, our personal convictions – at least for now – cannot be usurped. Only death can effectively do that.

This is what makes struggles for political power between believers of differing dogmas so destructive. The only way to stop them, or to prevent them, is to remove religious doctrines from the sphere of political affairs so that there is nothing to be gained by conflict.

The genius of the founders of the United States, and of those thinkers who inspired them and the trailblazing colonial leaders who set a similar example, was to do exactly this. The “wall of separation” is clearly the intent of the First Amendment, as is the complete lack of reference to religious doctrines in the main Constitution, except for its prohibition on religious tests.

Everyone, no matter their opinion on religious questions, is thereby protected. For religious liberty means being free from the religions of others. This does not mean that we can expect to be free from unwanted exposure to religious doctrines with which we disagree. But it does mean that the government may not take part in such matters by preferring – or derogating – any particular religious expression or practices.

As we know, reality falls short of this, just as it does when it comes to many other important principles. No one can draw a perfect circle either. But that fact does not falsify $x^2 + y^2 = r^2$.

This is the reason for celebrating July 4th. Many other days of the year may be as important historically for advancing state/church separation. (The First Amendment, along with the rest of Bill of Rights, was adopted on December 15th of 1791.) But Independence Day stands for the birth of a nation that began with this ideal as well as related ideals of human freedom and dignity. Yet a nation can only have a continuing commitment to principle if its people are so committed. This means that we must constantly work to consider, discuss and educate ourselves and others about the importance of state/church separation and its vital importance for religious liberty.

As usual, you can count on another fascinating service full of content supplied by your fellow freethinking NTCOF family members. But next month we’re also going to take some time to thoughtfully review the state of the church, and acknowledge those individuals who have gone above and beyond to help serve this organization and the community around us. We’ll also open the floor to questions and comments, as we seek to move the NTCOF in a positive direction forward through the next few years.

Also, for those of you that have been wondering about the upcoming debate between Zach Moore and Dr. Ray Bohlin of Probe Ministries, wheels are in motion to bring this to fruition sometime in August. Stay tuned!

JULY ROAD CLEAN-UP

It’s that time again! We are fortunate to have an opportunity to show how much we care about our community by taking responsibility for the clean-up of Northwest Highway between Preston Road and North Central Expressway. If you can walk two miles, you can participate! We’ll be meeting at 8:30 AM on Saturday, July 26th in the Dillard’s parking lot at North Park Mall. Please contact NTCOF member Keith Geissler to let him know you’ll be pitching in, and watch your email for updates!

keith.geissler@gmail.com
FAREWELL, MIKE AND MARILYN!

It’s truly the end of an era here at the North Texas Church of Freethought—Mike and Marilyn Sullivan, church co-founders and Directors Emeritus, have begun their retirement in Kissimee, Florida. New and old NTCOF members gathered to wish them a very fond farewell at a lovely dessert-themed party organized by Jenni Ritter and Byron King and Brad and Ginger Watson.

FAREWELL, MIKE AND MARILYN!

JULY 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 Freeport 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.

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, July 27th, 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 email list for the latest info. To get on the list, just send any e-mail message to:

ntcof_singles-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Food Critics: June’s dinner was at Reata in Fort Worth, but who knows where we’ll be in July? Will we be exploring Asian, Italian, or Mexican cuisine...or something more adventurous? The only one who knows for sure is Social Director Brad Watson - check your email for an update from him later this month, or check with him personally or by email at:

social@churchoffreethought.org

FINANCIAL REPORT

The North Texas Church of Freethought
A Rational Approach to Religion

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

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