



The North Texas Church of Freethought BULLETIN

A Fellowship of Unbelievers

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SOCIAL ETHICS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Many churches have and promote their version of "Social Justice." The NTCOF does not. But it is well worthwhile considering and making sense of the questions that fall under these headings. That is perhaps the most vital part of deciding what role we feel we can be effective at in moving our world toward a better place.

In particular: Can a society, as opposed to individuals, be said to have ethical obligations? Can there be collective compassion and societal caring? Is this synonymous with the government's being a "Welfare State?" Just how, morally, should we think about the "Welfare State?" Is it just the same as other public works that support advanced societies? Or is it wrong to have "rights" that make positive claims on others, that appear to force others to support us? Or, again, are such "rights" really a kind of bribe or "hush money" paid to those who, for various reasons, are not qualified to participate meaningfully in an advanced economy?

People have very strong feelings about these questions. Feelings that they often see as following inexorably from flawless reasoning. And reasoning that may cause them to see those who disagree with them as stupid, heartless, or worse. People have even stronger feelings about how fairly "the system" treats them.

These are the issues that bring people into the streets, as we have seen most recently in the nations of Greece and Thailand. These are the issues that topple empires and cause revolutions and wars. And, on a smaller, everyday scale, contribute to crimes.

Sensible freethinkers won't undertake to offer final answers to on these subjects, at least not without a large measure of healthy doubt and humility. But we should make an effort to try to understand the issues better and especially where those with whom we disagree (and even if they are wrong!) may have a point worth considering.

BELOW: The Good Samaritan LEFT: Grasshopper & The Ants



The Good Samaritan, by Pieter Paul Rubens, courtesy Church History Museum

COMING JULY 4TH 2010: "The American Exception"

Since the arrival of the first colonists in North America, there has been the idea of Exceptionalism, that this land and its society are set apart and special.

A part of this idea has been theological, but it need not be so. The 19th Century Great Agnostic Robert Green Ingersoll expressed it rationally, and poetically, as was his habit:

"It has been a favorite idea with me that our forefathers were educated by Nature; that they grew grand as the continent upon which they landed; that the great rivers—the wide plains—the splendid lakes—the lonely forests—the sublime mountains—that all these things stole into and became a part of their being, and they grew great as the country in which they lived. They began to hate the narrow, contracted views of Europe. They were educated by their surroundings, and every little colony had to be, to a certain extent, a republic."

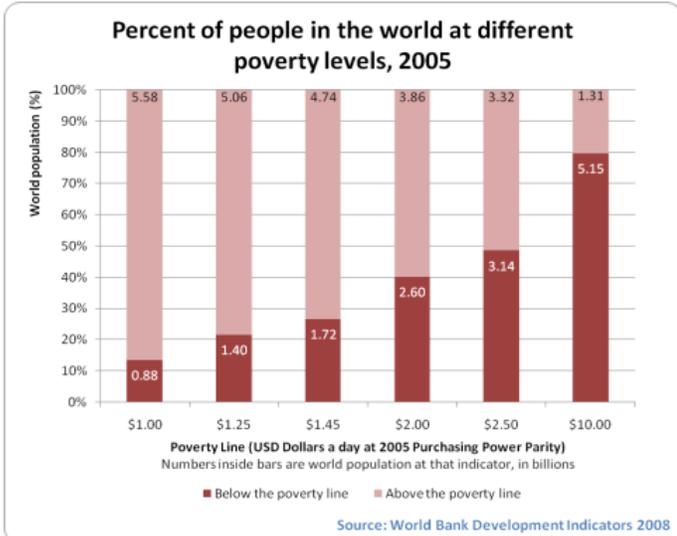
Some object to the idea of American Exceptionalism. They feel that it is embarrassing, that it is arrogant, or that it encourages arrogant attitudes. But this need not be, any more than it is arrogant or breeds arrogance for individuals to believe that they are unique, special, and have something important to offer.

Join us for our next service, July 4th, Independence Day, as we consider how and why the USA with its unique history and character are exceptional and worth celebrating. And bring the kids too!



SOME FACTS ON WORLD ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

About 40% of humanity lives on < \$2 a day (see below)



TEEN GET-TOGETHER AFTER LUNCH TODAY AT THE MALL!

All NTCOF events can be found through our website calendar(if it doesn't work, we're working on it!) , or through our meetup page, from which you can RSVP, at:

- www.meetup.com/church-of-freethought -
JOIN THE NTCOF MEETUP GROUP to get email updates too!

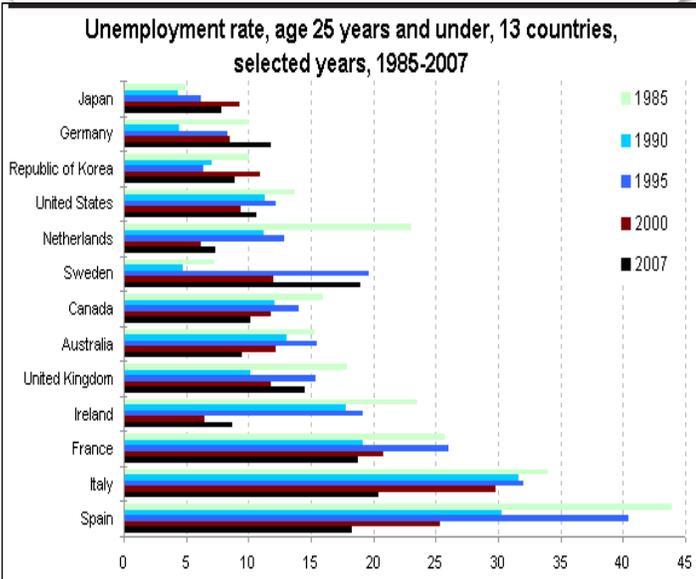
Social Luncheon: Today, immediately after our Service, join us for lunch and discussion at the Golden Corral Buffet and Grill in Grapevine, located just across from the Grapevine Mills Mall, at 2605 E. Grapevine Mills Circle, phone (972) 874-7900. To reach Golden Corral from the Wyndham, take the SOUTH exit from the parking lot (turn your head left as you walk out the main entrance), then drive across Esters Blvd onto John W. Carpenter Freeway (114). 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!

Facilitated Discussion on Moving Beyond Religion - join at <http://www.meetup.com/Freethinking/> - June meeting scheduled 6/24/2010 at 7 pm in Plano



Almost a billion people began the 21st Century unable to read or sign their names

Every child could attend school for the cost of less than 1% of what is spent globally every year on weapons

Bribery is a way of life internationally, it being estimated that at least \$80 billion annually is spent by businesses

In the USA, 25% of high school students drop out, the figure is 40% for blacks and hispanics

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



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Presenters: David Burgess, Cash Foley, Tim Gorski
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Equipment Wranglers: Michael Grob, John Hendricks, Don Lewellyn
Videographer: John Gauthier
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