FIRST SUNDAY AT THE SHERATON GRAND !!

NTOCF’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 the 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]
“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]