



of THE NORTH TEXAS CHURCH OF FREETHOUGHT

The Fellowship Of Unbelievers

25 YEARS OLD !

Beginning Religion Over Again Since 1994

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SCIENCE: IS IT ENOUGH?

Science is clearly enough to get humans to the moon and back and to send robotic devices to distant planets, asteroids and comets. It is enough to discern what distant stars are made of and what the universe was like many billions of years ago. Science is enough to know that HIV is the cause of AIDS together with details of the RNA and other molecules of which HIV is composed despite it's being less than 5 millionths of an inch in size, 60 times smaller than a red blood cell. Science is enough to build electronic circuitry on even smaller scales and such technology has become indispensable and ubiquitous. This barely begins to describe what science is "enough" for. In short, science has been enough to raise humanity's standard of living, even in "poor" nations, to heights our ancestors could not have imagined. Probably no one on Earth is living without or could live without at least some important benefits of the achievements of science.

But is science all that is needed? Can it do and provide all that is necessary for people to be healthy, satisfied and happy in their lives? Is it possible – or, if possible, desirable – to live with nothing but science?

Certainly, science has limitations. The most important of these is that science can only deal with objective facts. And it necessarily can only explain things in terms of objective facts. So, for example, when it comes to emotions, science cannot tell us what it is like to feel love or fear. It can tell us what may be measured physiologically or neurologically when people say they are feeling such things. But that is not the same as the personal, subjective experience of an individual, or what is termed "qualia." This aspect of every person's reality is simply not accessible to scientific study and explanation.

A less important though widely recognized

limitation of science, one that is continually brandished by supernaturalists, is that science cannot explain everything. This is not only perfectly true but it is as it should be. For so long as it can be asked about any fact "why is it that way and not some other way?" and as long as any scientific account of the facts draw questions such as: "But what caused that?" the enterprise of science will continue. How else could there be scientific progress? Such progress is naturally accompanied and driven by questions that no one had previously thought to ask and tools and methods – think electron microscopes, gravitational-wave telescopes and supercomputers! – that no one had previously imagined. Or, as Isaac Newton put it:

"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."

Of course we now "stand on the shoulders" of people such as Newton. Our descendants will one day see further than we in the same way and their descendants will do the same with no end in sight. To attack science claiming it is "not enough" and therefore we must accept dogmatic supernatural "explanations" for what science cannot – yet! – give an account of is to profoundly misunderstand the scientific enterprise.

Much time and energy have been devoted to efforts to find objective evidence of the supernatural, sometimes called "paranormalism" or "parapsychology." ESP and many other "psychic powers," reincarnation, near-death experiences, and prayer have all been extensively studied. Perhaps the earliest attempt at the last was made by 19th Century British scientist Francis Galton. He observed that while the nobility and especially the royalty were continually prayed for, they had no better health or

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longevity than others of similar socioeconomic status. Likewise for clerics. Since then, but for rare claims of something being found that turn out to be due to mistakes, shoddy methods and even outright fraud, nothing has ever supported supernatural claims. Even the US government shut down its efforts to exploit “psychic powers” in intelligence gathering and espionage. In addition, since the early 20th Century, many prizes have been offered by multiple individuals and groups in diverse countries for any reliable evidence of the supernatural. Perhaps the best known is stage magician James Randi's Million Dollar Challenge, which was finally shut down in 2010 with no claimants ever having any success under controlled conditions. Many brilliant minds have considered the problem, including Nobel-Prize winning Welsh physicist Brian Josephson. In his later years Josephson worked to show – without any success – connections between quantum physics and consciousness.

The utter lack of evidence for the supernatural is not the only reason for disbelieving in it. The very term and concept of “supernaturalism” is at odds with the idea of a world of objective reality which can be investigated scientifically. In addition, if there were anything to paranormal claims, the rest of science could not be trusted. A finding that a medication cured an ailment, for example, could just be due to the investigators unknowingly curing their subjects with psychic powers. And what would be the use of flinging spacecraft out to observe distant worlds if someone could get all the same information from “remote viewing?”

Science is clearly enough to do what it can and does do. But it is true that science is not enough to live our everyday lives. It is not enough to decide what we ought to do to live happy and satisfied lives, much less to discover “the meaning of life.” And this is not so much because science is “not enough” to tell us about some additional reality that is beyond objective perception. It is because such things as personal values, meaning and purpose are intrinsically private, internal and subjective elements of the human experience. That is, the only real “supernatural” phenomena that “go beyond” that which science can study is what we experience in our own heads. We can consider this element of life, talk about it with others and learn from what they say of their experiences. But we are limited to our own consciousness, our own qualia. And that has to be enough because it is what it is.

All NTCOF events can be found through our website calendar, or 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 Jason's Deli on MacArthur Blvd just south of I-635, at 7707 N MacArthur Blvd, phone (972) 432-0555.

Freethought Salon: Discuss today's service topic or other conundrums on most non-first Sundays of the month, over breakfast/coffee (or not), in the atrium of the Embassy Suites DFW Airport North – on Bass Pro Drive in Grapevine beginning at 10:00 AM.

Game Night: Most Friday nights 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 Imperial 2030, Dominion, Terraforming Mars, Le Havre, Ticket To Ride, and other fun games!

Have Another Idea? Email or call! Read bulletins & presentations and post on the FORUM at www.churchoffreethought.org LIKE US at www.facebook.com/northtexaschurchoffreethought/ and sign up for our Twitter feed at www.twitter.com/ntcof !

**PLANNED FOR NEXT MONTH:
“Lies, Damned Lies
and STATISTICS”**

**> Sunday, September 1, 2019 <
HERE at the Hawthorn Suites
by Wyndham Hotel
DFW Airport North 10:30 AM**

**THANK YOU !!
FOR YOUR TIME and
FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

**of the NTCOF !!
It is needed, appreciated and
Tax-Deductible !**

**The North Texas Church of Freethought
The Fellowship of Unbelievers**

Pastor (It's a job description, not a title!)..Tim Gorski
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Social Media Czar.....Aaron Kelton
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Videographer.....John Gauthier
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