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Calendar: OrlandoCoR.org

Issue Theme: Free Thinkers

Mar/Apr 2014

Orlando Coalition of Reason - Another new group?

The short answer is “No.” The Coalition is a resource for existing groups and their individual members. Read on to learn more and be sure to visit OrlandoCoR.org for more information.

There are clear evolutionary and societal benefits to forming social groups. Strength in numbers, birds of a feather, the “in” crowd, sports fanaticism, school pride, etc., etc. These are not inventions of marketing gurus or a secret plot by the Illuminati. *Social cohesion* is a real phenomenon that affect us throughout our lives.

Humans have exploited this long before social scientists began studying it. Whether religion has used this for good or for evil is often debated, but there is little debate about whether groups are more effective at influencing public opinion than individuals.

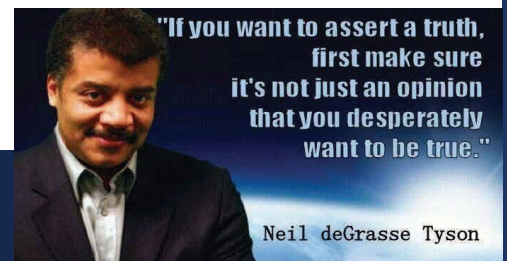
The Orlando “community of reason” has grown to more than a dozen local groups (see page 7) and they are already working together in many ways. So how will Coalition of Reason help?

- Attract more members through public awareness campaigns
- Increase participation with cross-group involvement
- Pool limited resources for goals we share
- Foster communication among local freethought leaders

Want to help out? Here are some ideas for you:

- Email freethought@cfl.rr.com and ask to receive future e-newsletters, then share them on social media and by email
- Volunteer to help your local group so they can stay involved with the OrlandoCoR
- If you are asked about the local community of reason, be sure to direct them to the [OrlandoCoR website](#) where all the local organizations are represented.

In honor of freethinkers this issue includes many of their best quotes





**A MANUAL FOR
CREATING
ATHEISTS**
BY PETER BOGHOSSIAN
FOREWORD BY MICHAEL RYANER

Author, Peter Boghossian at UCF!

Dr. Boghossian will detail tools to help people talk others out of faith and superstition and into reason. There will be an extended Q&A. People of faith are encouraged to attend and ask questions. UCF Student Union. March 15, 4 pm. [Facebook](#)



What's Your Spark? - Tee Rogers

Adventures take many forms. Flin, pictured here, was part of a group coloring and games party at a local domestic violence shelter. Volunteers played with the children, freeing their mothers to take part in an empowering self-defense class. The little girl who named Flin led the whole room into joyous chaos as all tried to say “swim, Flin, swim!” three times fast. (Try it!) This room, in this place filled with children experiencing life-altering trauma, resounded with laughter, hope, love, and a poorly executed tongue-twister. You, too, can be part of inspiring moments like these.

The Flin adventure touched one small group of children, one small group of volunteers – but it represents a greater impact and the meaningful moments service brings to our lives. The opportunities are all around us to be positive role models, to demonstrate kindness and proliferate generosity, and to be part of the greater good.

Our Community Needs Us.

- Our local Heart of Florida United Way hosts a helpline to refer folks in need to services and case management. In 2013, they received 104,009 calls for assistance (Sep. 11, 2013 211 Report).
- Did you know that 41 percent of the U.S. homeless population is comprised of intact families? (National Coalition for the Homeless).
- In our tri-county region (Orange, Osceola, Seminole), there were 12,825 incidents of Domestic Violence in 2012; 108,046 statewide (FDLE).
- 43 percent of U.S. adults have only basic or below literacy skills (National Assessment of Adult Literacy).

Our furry friends need us, too. There is no current aggregate summary of the number of domestic animals euthanized, but did you know that only 15.8 percent of dogs and 2 percent of cats that enter shelters are re-united with their owners, and less than 25 percent are adopted (Humane Society). Our Animal Services in Orange County alone receives more than 23,000 animals each year (OCAS). We have amazing local shelters, refuges, and no-kill adoption organizations working to re-home abandoned animals and provide sanctuary for special life-long residents, but volunteers and resources are scarce.

And don't forget our Earth needs us. During waterside cleanups on one single day in 2012 (International Coastal Cleanup Day), 561,633 volunteers removed more than 5,000 tons of trash



F.A.C.T.S .Monthly Social—All Welcome!

New to the freethinking community? Come to this casual event for a meet people of the community and plenty of time to just hang out and get to know each other. Monthly Social! 1st Sunday every month. 4:30 - 9 pm. Oblivion Tap Room. 5101 E. Colonial Dr., Orlando, [Meetup](#)



What's Your Spark cont.

(Ocean Conservancy).

The Central Florida Volunteers Beyond Belief (CFVBB) initiative needs both leaders and active members to demonstrate the generous spirit of our secular communities. Secularism is an underrepresented demographic in the field of service and philanthropy; CFVBB seeks to make a measurable and visible difference. Not interested in CFVBB? Then get involved just to see the smiles on the faces of children when you show up, or the wagging of tails, or the birds singing in the trees of the park you just cleaned. Get involved because what you do MATTERS.

Get involved for the “volunteer high,” for networking and resume building, leadership experience, friendship, opportunities to learn new skills or teach others, or for a fun, free way to shake off boredom, or to make a positive difference in the world. Get involved because of whatever ignites you.



Tee is the founder and organizer of BE Orlando
BEOrlando@live.com

Central Florida Volunteers Beyond Belief on [Meetup](#)
[Volunteer Resources Page](#)

“How could you ask me to believe in God when there's absolutely no evidence that I can see? I do believe in the beauty and the awe-inspiring mystery of the science that's out there that we haven't discovered yet; that there are scientific explanations for phenomena that we call mystical because we don't know any better”
~ Jodie Foster ~



What can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence.



Christopher Hitchens

“I’m an atheist, and I don’t have any belief in an afterlife. You could say that I’m resigned to the fact that this wonderful life that we get here is it. And having hit 60, it’s a good time to get resigned to these things and not be too nervous or upset, and just enjoy the great times one can have.”

~ David Gilmour of Pink Floyd ~

Popular Regular Events:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Bi-weekly | Mar 9 11 am Recovering from Religion, UCF Chapter Meeting, Facebook |
| Weekly | Mar 10 7:30 pm Trivia in West Volusia, Mondays, The Draft House Meetup |
| Weekly | Mar 11 7 pm Trivia Night Tuesdays, Nona Tap Room Meetup |
| Monthly | Apr 6 4:30 pm F.A.C.T.S. Monthly Social, Oblivion Tap room Meetup |

Black Nonbelievers: A Sign of Change - Richard Peacock



In 2009, as a new transplant to Central Florida, I realized that I had never had an atheist community in which I could get involved, so I went looking for one. I actually wasn't sure where to go or where to look.

Eventually, thanks to the Internet, I would find atheist groups, both online and offline. And I soon discovered that I would often be the lone black person or one of a tiny number of black people who participated in activities these groups sponsored. Even so, being the only racial minority in the room didn't necessarily bother me as much as what I experienced a lot with white atheists: a lack of conversation about black people or a resistance to talking about them.

Black Nonbelievers of Metro Orlando, also known as BNoMO, became my response. I started the group in 2012 through Meetup.com. BNoMO became a way to find other local black (and non-black) atheists who want to engage in activities that would allow us to explore what it means to be a black person who is also an out atheist. BNoMO is now the only group of its kind in the entire of state of Florida. Our group has scores of members and is now affiliated with local, state, and national atheist organizations.



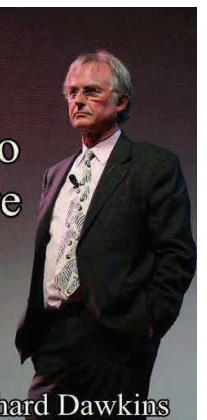
I very proudly consider myself a pioneer because of the work I have done and continue to do with BNoMO. At times, I've been frustrated and disappointed as an organizer of an atheist group, especially when things don't work out as planned. But I have to remind myself occasionally that if I hadn't put myself out there as a risk-taker, BNoMO would have just remained a dream or idea I once had. And you, dear reader, would not have had a chance to read this.

*Richard is the founder of the
Black Nonbelievers of Metro Orlando*

**Learn what the
Black Nonbelievers of
Metro Orlando are doing!**

[Meetup](#) and [Facebook](#)

It is absolutely safe
to say that if you
meet somebody who
claims not to believe
in evolution, that
person is ignorant,
stupid or insane.



Richard Dawkins

- [Local Affiliate Groups](#)
- [Celebrant Directory](#)
- [Newsletter Page](#)
- [Join!](#)



New Secular Projects Being Developed at UCF

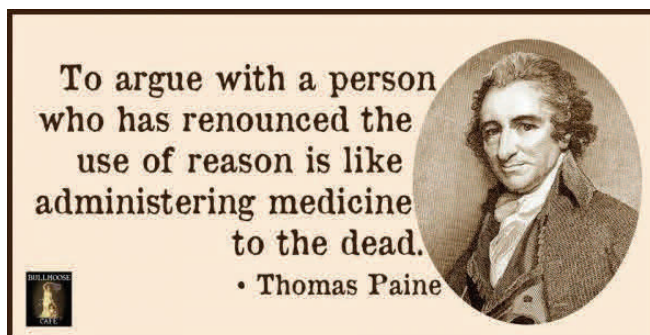
There are two exciting opportunities at the University of Central Florida just getting started. Your help is needed to get them off the ground and underway.



First, we are working to establish a Secular and Religious Minority Alliance for our Faculty and Staff. This will be an organization to promote inclusiveness of individuals who are not part of the mainstream religions. Social events, leadership opportunities, and providing scholarship dollars to students to attend conferences will be part of our goals.

Second, we are working to establish an official diversity training at UCF regarding inclusiveness of individuals not of mainstream religions, focusing primarily on the non-religious community. This training will also serve as certification for the national Secular Safe Zone initiative.

If you are interested in assisting with or learning more about either of these important initiatives, contact Tee Rogers. tee.rogers@ucf.edu



BE Active! Pi Day on March 16th

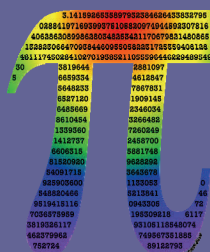
Let's inspire kids and families to get excited about math, science, and, of course, **Pi(e)** at a fantabulous Math, Science, and Pie Festival for families at the Coalition for the Homeless.

There will be math and science related activities and games with prizes so we need your help. Children will receive certificates for participating. Volunteers will receive a Pi Day Adventure Leader Certificate.

Please bring a Pie or creative Pi-related food item to share!

RSVP on Meetup!

Benefiting agency: [Coalition for the Homeless](#)





KEEP
CALM
AND
DONATE
BLOOD

Local Blood Drive Challenge - PintClub.org

[PintClub Blood Drive Weekend-April](#)

[Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)



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 Mar/Apr 2014

OHA Speaker for March: Troy Stoops: Former 'Dominionist'- Speaks Out

On Sunday March 9th Troy Stoops will be talking to the Orlando Humanists association at the [Winter Park University Club](#). He will be discussing such topics as what people like Rick Perry, Michelle Bachmann and Rand Paul really want?

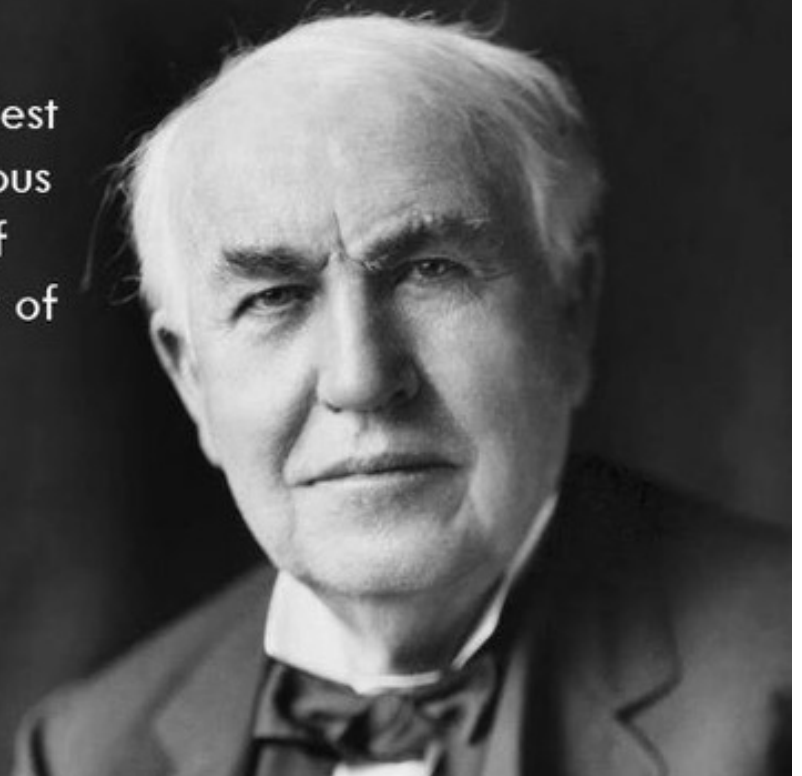


Troy Stoops was born into a rabidly fundamentalist family: First, Oneness Pentecostal and later, Dominionist Assembly of God. During his childhood he witnessed a transformation in American evangelical life -- from the isolated charismatic movement, which was largely silent in American politics, to the kind of full-throated and belligerent political activism that overwhelmed the Republican party in the latter decades of the twentieth century to now.

RSVP to this event on [Meetup](#)





"I have never seen the slightest scientific proof of the religious ideas of heaven and hell, of future life for individuals, or of a personal God."

- Thomas Edison



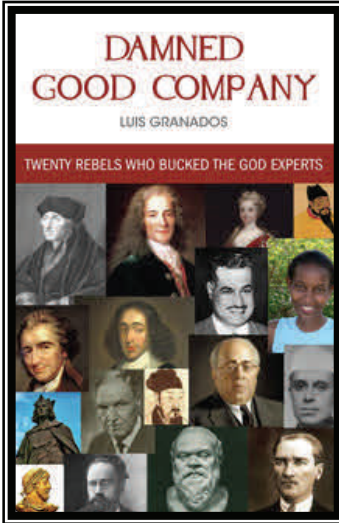


Local Groups You Should Know About

| Name | Emphasis |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|
| | | Click on the icons! | |
| Atheists and Humanists of Florida—Orlando | Combines the social justice aspects of humanism with the activism known for atheism |  |  |
| BE Orlando | A social group that creates opportunities for engagement in positive activities and promotes equality and inclusiveness |  |  |
| BNoMO (Black Non-believers of Metro Orlando) | To create camaraderie, support, and friendship among black non-believers of diverse backgrounds |  |  |
| Central Florida Freethought Community | An organization of freethinkers focused on protecting the separation of state and church |  |  |
| Central Florida Moms Beyond Belief | Offers discussions and support for parents who wish to raise caring and moral children without religion | |  |
| F.A.C.T.S. (Florida Atheists, Critical Thinkers & Skeptics) | A social group working on building a community in Central Florida. |  |  |
| HAFree (Hispanic-American Freethinkers) | A social group for the local Hispanic freethinking community |  | |
| Orlando Humanists Association | A diverse community that encourages not only freethinking but also and foremost 'critical thought' |  | |
| Orlando Skeptics Discussion Group | For sharing and discussing topics focused on Scientific Skepticism | |  |
| Recovering from Religion—UCF Chapter | If you are one of the many people reconsidering the role of religion in your life, or one of the many more negatively affected by religion, | |  |
| Science League for Kids | To provide fun, educational programs to help kids develop their critical thinking skills while enhancing their self-confidence and compassion | |  |
| Skeptical Parenting Community of Central Florida | Provides a platform for like-minded families to interact, support and learn from | |  |
| Secular Student Alliance at UCF | To encourage critical thinking and erode the influence of dogmatism, bigotry, and superstition in our society | |  |
| Secular Student Alliance at Valencia College | An affiliate of the Secular Student Alliance and the Center for Inquiry at Valencia College's West Campus | |  |
| Stetson Association of Secular Students | To promote the ideals of scientific and critical inquiry, democracy, secularism, and human based ethics | |  |
| Wekiva (High School) Atheist and Secular Alliance | A place for freethinking students to connect and share their beliefs openly and to promote rational and scientific thought | |  |



F.A.C.T.S. “Skeptical Readers” Book Club RSVP on [Meetup](#)
Next Meeting: March 11th at Panera Bread in Winter Park
This month's book: *The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children* by Katherine Stewart

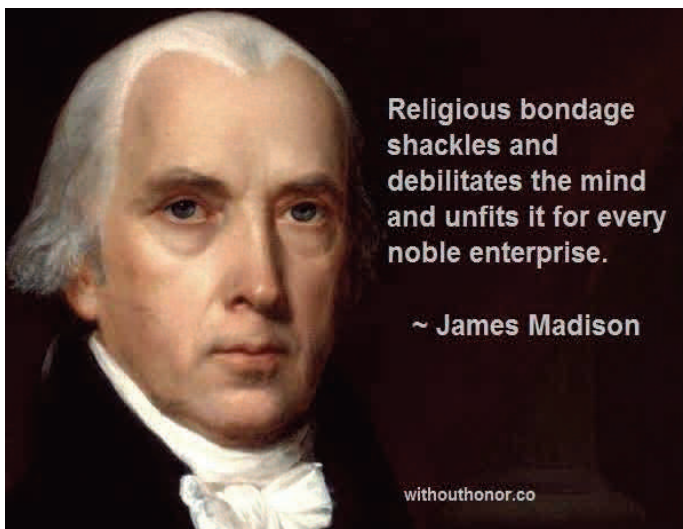


Book of Freethinkers - Buy it in print or e-reader

Purchase at [Humanist Press](#)

Damned Good Company: Twenty Rebels Who Bucked the God Experts Author Luis Granados explores twenty cases, from Socrates to Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Brave challenges against those claiming a special authority from God.

This is a book about people, not about God. People who have preached about God, taken money for sharing what they say they know about God, and ordered others about to enforce what they claim to be God's will—and a small band of heroes who stood up to them. In short, *Damned Good Company* is a Profiles in Courage for Humanists. Available in print or electronic.



“It is told that the great Angelo, in decorating a church, painted some angels wearing sandals. A cardinal looking at the picture said to the artist: ‘Whoever saw angels with sandals?’ Angelo answered with another question: ‘Whoever saw an angel barefooted?’”

Robert Ingersoll

Finally! *The Skeptic's Annotated Bible* is in Print!
[Buy it online](#)

How Do I Find My Representatives?

U.S. Senate: [Click here](#)

U.S. House of Representatives: [Click here](#)

Florida House and Senate: [Click here](#)

Local representatives can be found on your city or county website.



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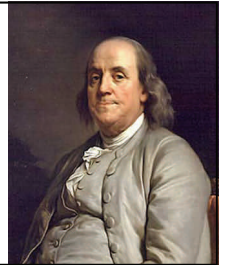

**Be a part of the
 Secular Safe Zone Initiative
 at UCF!**

Email tee.rogers@ucf.edu
 or call
 407.823.3094



“Ignorance of facts
 is not
 evidence for fiction.”
 David Silverman

“We must all hang together,
 or most assuredly
 we shall all hang separately.”
 Benjamin Franklin

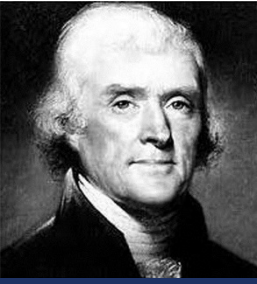
Religion is the cause of
 all the problems in the world.

I DON'T BELIEVE
 IN ORGANISED RELIGION AT ALL.

**It's what
 separates people.**

One religion just represents fragments, it causes war.
 More people have died
 because of **RELIGIOUS CONFLICT**
 than any other reason.

-GWYNETH PALTROW

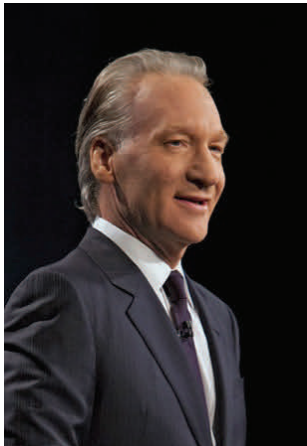


“Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear.” - Thomas Jefferson

Humanist-atheist-agnostic-skeptic-secularist Podcasts

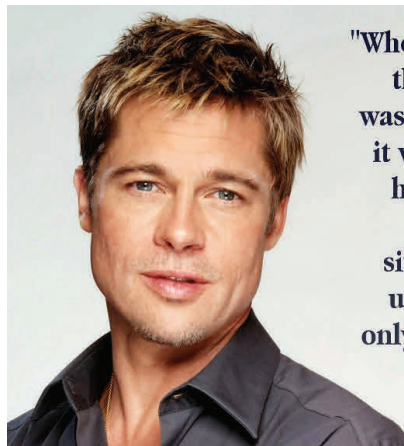
- [The Thinking Atheist](#)
- [Point of Inquiry](#)
- [The Good Atheist](#)
- [Secular Coalition Weekly Call](#)
- [The Atheist Experience](#)
- [The Non Prophets](#)
- [Reasonable Doubts](#)
- [Why You're Wrong](#)

If you want to learn about podcasts check out this [article on about.com](#)



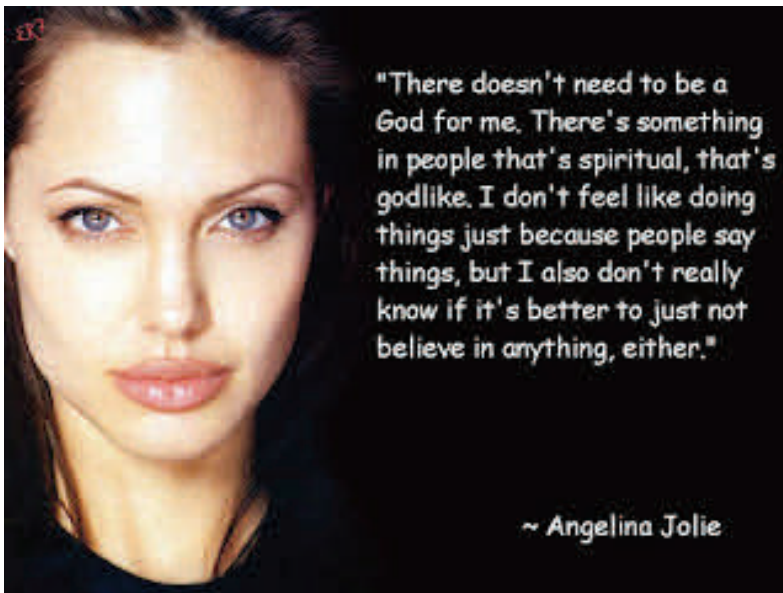
“I have respect for everybody as a human being but intellectual respect, I’m sorry - if you believe in the talking snake, you can’t have my intellectual respect.”

~ Bill Maher ~



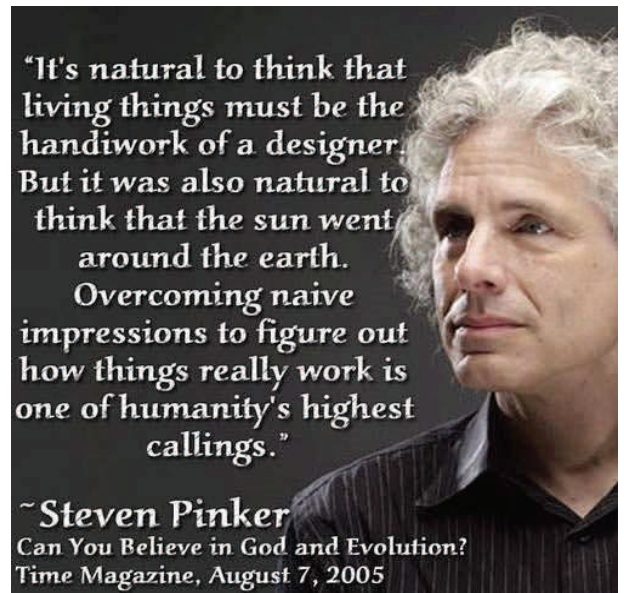
“When I got untethered from the comfort of religion, it wasn't a loss of faith for me, it was a discovery of self. I had faith that I'm capable enough to handle any situation. There's peace in understanding that I have only one life, here and now, and I'm responsible.”

-Brad Pitt



“There doesn't need to be a God for me. There's something in people that's spiritual, that's godlike. I don't feel like doing things just because people say things, but I also don't really know if it's better to just not believe in anything, either.”

~ Angelina Jolie

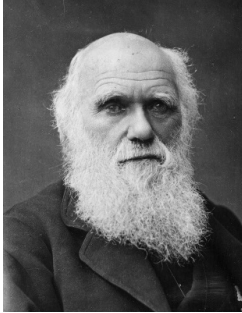


“It's natural to think that living things must be the handiwork of a designer. But it was also natural to think that the sun went around the earth. Overcoming naive impressions to figure out how things really work is one of humanity's highest callings.”

~ Steven Pinker
Can You Believe in God and Evolution?
Time Magazine, August 7, 2005



"I'm an atheist, and Christianity appears to me to be the most absurd imposition of all the religions, and I'm puzzled that so many people can't see through a religion that encourages irresponsibility and bigotry." - Butterfly McQueen



"Ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge."
-Charles Darwin-




"I'm an atheist, and that's it. I believe there's nothing we can know except that we should be kind to each other and do what we can for each other."
~ Katherine Hepburn ~

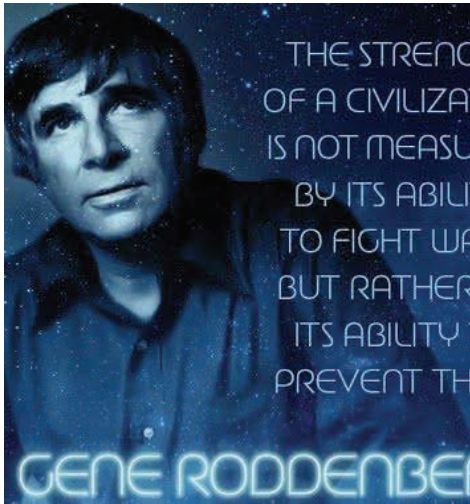
"Morality is doing right, no matter what you are told. Religion is doing what you are told, no matter what is right."
~ H. L. Mencken ~



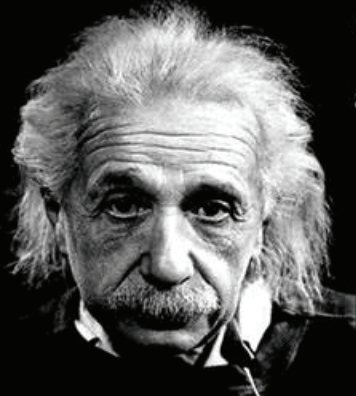
WHEN I DO GOOD, I FEEL GOOD
WHEN I DO BAD, I FEEL BAD
THAT'S MY RELIGION
Abraham Lincoln



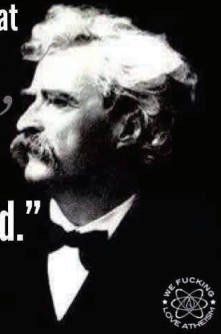
THE STRENGTH OF A CIVILIZATION IS NOT MEASURED BY ITS ABILITY TO FIGHT WARS, BUT RATHER BY ITS ABILITY TO PREVENT THEM.
GENE RODDENBERRY




A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death.
- Albert Einstein



"It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it's the parts that I do understand."
Mark Twain



FB.COM/WFLAtheism



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