

The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Freethought News

Volume 2 No. 5 May 2013 Jim Peterson, Editor

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On the current Population crises

By *John Seager*,
President of
Population Connection
(formerly ZPG)

Like toadstools after a heavy downpour, another crop of handwringers has sprung up lately. In their counterfactual quest to convince people that population challenges are behind us, authors like Jonathan Last and Joel Kotkin have seized on one bit of information and proceeded to build a shaky edifice chock-full of half-truths and conjecture. They breathlessly claim that U.S. family size has plummeted (!) to a level never seen before. Never, that is, unless you remember the 1970s. Since that fact fails to support their argument, it gets omitted much the way Soviets excised disfavored figures from Kremlin photos.

Blissfully free from all constraints imposed by reality, they issue dire warnings about an alleged birth dearth, claiming that "if America wants to continue to lead the world, we need to have more babies." Yet the merest glance at global figures shows that the weakest, most chaotic places on earth are those with the largest families, while the nations with stable, healthy economies almost always have small families.

As the Great Recession wreaked its havoc on the American economy, our family size did drop by about 10 percent. This tends to happen during economic downturns. Many young couples understandably postpone having children when they can't find good jobs or afford family-friendly homes. It happened during the Great Depression. It happened during the economic slump in the mid-1970s. And it's happening now.

While no one can say what will come next, fertility rates have risen in the past as conditions improved. As a baby boomer, I'm a product of one such resurgence.

When we step back and look at the bigger picture, a different view emerges. Globally, we're adding just as many people each year as when Paul Ehrlich

sounded the population alarm in 1968. Since then, world population has doubled.

Africa is mostly a demographic disaster area with unstable nations such as Mali, Niger, and Somalia having total fertility rates of more than six children per woman. The perennial powder keg that is the Middle East has some of the most rapidly growing population centers on earth.

Globally, urban areas are projected to triple in size from 2000 to 2030 as rural communities collapse due to population pressures.

That's like having to build six Bostons each week for 30 years. Except they won't be Boston's.

Instead, we're witnessing an explosion of vast slums as in Africa, where a nearly six-fold increase in urban areas is expected in jam-packed places where raw sewage runs down crude pathways between makeshift shanties.

Back home, half of all pregnancies in the U.S. are still unplanned. And, even with progress on reducing teen pregnancy, we still have, by far, the worst record of any developed nation. With a current population of 315 million, we're heading for 400 million people by mid-century. So, don't count on vanishing traffic congestion and sharp drops in school taxes. Anyone who thinks America is running out of people, be they young, old, or middle-aged, really needs to get out of the house a bit more.

Ω

Mr. Seager is president of Population Connection. He visited largo in late April.

Population Connection is the largest grassroots population organization in the United States. Population Connection, a 501(c)(3) organization, has 140,000 members, supporters, and participating educators.

They educate young people about unsustainable population growth through K-12 lesson plans that reach 3 million students a year. They inform constituents across the country about their congressional representatives' stances on population growth and family planning.

And they work directly with Congress and the White House to inform family planning policy and funding levels.



**HUMANIST
CHARITIES**

Click to connect!

TAMPA BAY COALITION OF REASON – MAY, 2013 CALENDAR

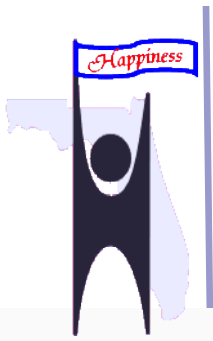
2

This is produced from preliminary information. Check to insure the event is being held, when and where

We are not liable for errors or omissions. Compiled by *Rick O'Keefe*, & *Jim Peterson*.

Check for more events + details on the Coalition of Reason Web site at: <http://tampabay.unitedcor.org/tampabay/>

05-01 Monday, 6:30 PM		Humanists of Sarasota Bay http://sarasota.humanists.net/	See our website for more information on the many activities scheduled throughout the month.	"Drones" w/ Skip Parish at the Roskamp Center 1226 N. Tamiami Trail Sarasota. Lecture series.
05-04, Saturday, 2 PM		CLEARWATER– The Humanist Society of the Suncoast	Countryside Library 2741 S.R 580 Clearwater, FL MAP	Program: See page 3 for details
Monthly		Humanist Families of Tampa	Check for events and developments.	For more information, see our Facebook page
05-02, Thursday, 7 PM		S. PINELLAS– Pinellas County Skeptics	To be determined. See the website .	Monthly skeptical dinner
05-12, Sunday, 7 PM		BRANDON– Joint CFI & Brandon Atheists	See Meetup for the venue.	RSVP to Kathryn before noon of the Friday, preceding the social. http://www.meetup.com/cfi-tampa-bay
05-12, Sunday, 1:00 PM		TAMPA– Atheists of Florida–Tampa Chapter Web: http://atheistsoffloridainc.org	Atheists of Florida Office 5103 South Westshore Blvd Tampa, FL (just four blocks south of Gandy Blvd., west side.)	Details & RSVP at our Meetup site: http://www.meetup.com/Atheists-of-Florida-Tampabay/ Blog: http://aofla.wordpress.com
05-18 , Saturday, 11:00 AM		TAMPA– Tampa Humanist Association	Jimmie B. Keele Library 2902 W. Bearss Ave Tampa, FL MAP	Program: TBA . See page 7 . http://www.meetup.com/Tampa-Humanist-Association/
05- 6:30 PM		New Film Event Tampa Bay Humanist Film freaks	See Meetup for location	See RSVP for details:
05-20, Monday, 6:30 PM		CARROLLWOOD– Tampa Bay Thinkers Discussion Group	Carrollwood Cultural Center 4537 Lowell Rd, Carrollwood, FL 33618 MAP	"Thinking through the Deficit & Debt" RSVP at Web site .
05-16, Thursday, 7 PM		N. PINELLAS– Pinellas County Skeptics	For details & to RSVP, see the website .	Monthly skeptical dinner
Every 2 weeks in North Tampa		Café Philo	Check website for current times & locations	Philosophical discussion group in Tampa
05-19 Sunday 3 PM		BRANDON– CFI Sceptic/Humanist Mixer	See the Meetup for details & the RSVP (required).	Click to RSVP Every third Sunday of each month.
05- Sunday, 12:30 PM		CLEARWATER– UU Humanists	Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Clearwater 2470 Nursery Road Clearwater, FL 33764 MAP	http://www.uuclearwater.org/newindex.htm
05-27 Monday, 7:00 PM,		North Pinellas CFI Skeptics/ Humanists Social	See the Meetup for details & the RSVP (required) before noon of the Sunday preceding the social..	RSVP is required if you are coming. <i>Seating is limited to 12!</i> Click here before noon, xxx (Sunday). Click HERE .
05-25, Saturday 10:30 AM		NW Hillsborough / West Chase CFI Share Readers Book Discussion	Upper Tampa Bay Regional Library 11211 Countryway Blvvd. Tampa, FL 33626 MAP	A group of us like minded book lovers will gather monthly to discuss we've all read. RSV & details: www.meetup.com/cfi-tampa
06 29- Saturday 11 AM		Tampa Bay Skeptics Quarterly meeting	Jan Platt Regional Library on 3910 South Manhattan Ave, Tampa FL	Main Program (tentatively): Videos, videos, videos! Plus "Open Forum" and other fun stuff.



The Humanist Society³ of the Suncoast News

A Socratic society dedicated to the proposition that the fully examined life is well worth living.
Associate organization of the [Humanists of Florida](#), the [AHA](#), [COR](#), and [CSH](#). Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

Volume 21 No. 5 May, 2013

Humanist



Economics

When it comes to the question of how we should live, the science of political economy is our principle source of information and also the source of a great deal of the controversy that rages on around us. From the perspective of a Humanist outlook, these practical issues are weighted with questions about fairness, decency, rights, social and individual responsibility, the historical evolution of society, and an objective assessment of the nature of our species.

We invite you to weigh in with **Ron Frase**, **Glenn Paul**, and others from the roster of our deep thinkers to question, analyze and offer solutions for the enduring puzzle of how to create the fair, equitable, and reasonable society that will assure the optimal outcome for our species, while preserving the environmental and resource basis of our existence. Please think about some of the issues involved, and participate (or just audit, if you must) what should be a lively conversation about our most enduring problem.



Food: the first kindness. Humanists aspire to true friendship with our fellow human beings.

An important measure of this concern is care for the physical well being of others. There is increasing hunger here in our community. Don't forget to bring canned and boxed food or checks for:

Tampa Bay Harvest

Please join us for
this free and open
discussion.

On **Saturday**,
May 4th,
at 2 PM:

**Clearwater
Countryside Library
2741 State Rd. 580
Clearwater, FL 33761**

Following our
meeting, many of us
will dine and argue
together at the
Greek City Cafe,

**Latest books from the Matt Cooper
Humanist Library.** Simply select the
number of the book you wish to borrow, and
send it to Marios Psomas at:

marios_psomas@hotmail.com. Then pick it
up at the next meeting. Be sure to return it!

TITLE

AUTHOR

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. The Expanding Circle | Peter Singer |
| 2. In Gods we Trust | Scott Atran |
| 3. Why Evolution is True | Jerry Coyne |
| 4. The Second World | Panag Khanna |
| 5. Denialism | Michael Specter |
| 6. The Selfish Gene | Richard Dawkins |
| 7. Democracy Incorporated | Sheldon Wolin |
| 8. The Upside Irrationality | Dan Ariely |
| 9. The End of Growth | Richard Heinberg |
| 10. The God Delusion | Richard Dawkins |
| 11. All That We Share | Jay Wallgasper |
| 12. Sex, Time, and Power | Leonard Shlain |
| 13. Sex at Dawn | C. Ryan, & C. Jetha |
| 14. What liberal Media | Eric Alderman |
| 15. The End of Faith | Sam Harris |
| 16. Plan B | Lester Brown |
| 17. The Portable Atheist | Christopher Hitchens |
| 18. Open Society | George Soros |
| 19. Non Believer Nation | David Niiose |
| 20. God on Trial | Peter Irons |
| 21. Natural Experiments of History | Diamond-Robinson |
| 22. The Missionary Position | Christopher Hitchens |
| 23. Life Inc. | Douglas Rushkoff |
| 24. A brief History of Time | Stephen Hawkins |
| 25. Breaking the Spell | Daniel Dennett |
| 26. The Philosophy of Humanism | Corliss Lamont |
| 27. The Quotable Atheist | Jack Huberman |
| 28. 50 Reasons People Give for Believing In a God. | G. Harrison |
| 29. Mathematics and Politics | Alan Taylor |
| 30. Stealing Elections | John Fund |
| 31. The God Virus | Darrel Ray |
| 32. What Every American Should Know About Rest of World. | Rossi |
| 33. Imagine There's no Heaven | Editors of Free Inquiry |
| 34. Hidden Order | David Friedman |
| 35. What the Dog Saw | Malcom Gladwell |
| 36. Sway | Ori, Rom Brafman |
| 37. The Better Angels of our Nature | Steven Pinker |
| 38. Letter to a Young Contrarian | Christopher Hitchens |
| 39. Hot, Flat, and Crowded | Thomas Friedman |
| 40. Gaming the Vote | William Poundstone |
| 41. Subversion Fable | Alexa KcKearing |
| 42. Evolution and the Big Question | David Stamos |
| 43. Why People Believe Weird Things | Michael Shermer |
| 44. The World is Curved | David Snick |
| 45. The Snow Ball | Warren Buffett |
| 46. The Moral Landscape | Sam Harris |
| 47. How We Believe | Michael Shermer |
| 48. Full House | Steven Jay Gould |
| 49. The Origins of Political Order | Francis Fukuyama |

Humanist Society Election Results

On April 6th elections were held for 2013-14 term. Board members, **Steve Brown**, **Jon Green**, **Terri Eckstien**, and **Jim Butler** declined to run. All have given valuable service to us and they will be missed. Members; **Anita Garcia**, **Dave Kovar**, **Beth Maxie**, and **Jordan Williams** were elected to serve with continuing board members, **Lois Fries**, **Marios Psomas**, **Frank Prahl**, and **Jim Peterson**. Thanks!



*Humanists work to build a world
in which happiness is the
enduring criterion of social policy.*

What is the Humanist Way?

1. To extend a human centered approach to the critical problems of life and society.
2. To encourage attitudes of kindness, compassion, tolerance and a loving generosity in human relationships, and in our treatment of all life. These attitudes help us to see ourselves in the lives of others and encourage appreciation for the remarkable diversity of human culture and experience.
3. To develop and popularize the skills of creative and critical thinking that empower people to challenge prejudice, superstition and irrationality in every area of life. Such empowerment enables the individual to reach the highest levels of achievement.
4. To exalt those artistic and imaginative expressions of life which have been the source of the greatest pleasure and enlightenment, and which reflect compelling human truths. Through music, literature, art, dance, and other expressions, we embrace the essence of what it means to be human.
5. To explore the grounds of ethics and morality within the unfolding history of our evolving culture. Such knowledge will enable us to become effective protagonists for the happiness of the individual person. JP

Humanist Society monthly social dinner,

The Moveable Feast for May will be at:

Thai Bay restaurant

on **Sunday May 19th, at 5:00PM**. This restaurant is located at **1300 East Bay Dr.** near Highland in Largo, and features a variety of Asian style dinners in the \$10+ range.

Please contact **Glenn Paul at 727-595-3347** or kpaul29@tampabay.rr.com for reservations by Saturday May 18th. Hope to see you there.

Last month's picnic had a sparse attendance of only 16. Many members did not observe the RSVP protocol as was hoped, making the food quantities issue a little dicey. But we had plenty of beans, slaw, etc. plus desserts left over. Those who did attend enjoyed the camaraderie. We hope things will be better next year.

Laugh Lines A triumph of Reason

During the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution, one morning's executions began with three men: a rabbi, a Catholic priest, and a rationalist skeptic.

The rabbi was marched up onto the platform first. There, facing the guillotine, he was asked if he had any last words. And the rabbi cried out, "I believe in the one and only true God, and He shall save me." The executioner then positioned the rabbi below the blade, set the block above his neck, and pulled the cord to set the terrible instrument in motion. The heavy cleaver plunged downward, searing the air. But then, abruptly, it stopped with a crack just a few inches above the would-be victim's neck. To which the rabbi said, "I told you so." "It's a miracle!" gasped the crowd. And the executioner had to agree, letting the rabbi go.

Next in line was the priest. Asked for his final words, he declared, "I believe in Jesus Christ -- the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- who will rescue me in my hour of need." The executioner then positioned this man beneath the blade. And he pulled the cord. Again the blade flew downward -- thump! creak! -- stopping just short of its mark once more. "Another miracle!" sighed the disappointed crowd. And the executioner for the second time had no choice but to let the condemned go free.

Now it was the skeptic's turn. "What final words have you to say?" he was asked. But the skeptic didn't hear. Staring intently at the ominous engine of death, he seemed lost. Not until the executioner poked him in the ribs and the question was asked again did he reply. "Oh, I see your problem," the skeptic said pointing. "You've got a blockage in the gear assembly, right there!"

Thanks to: Nigel Watson 5/13

HUMANIST SOCIETY OF THE SUNCOAST

A chapter of the American Humanist Assoc.
The Association of Secular Humanist Societies

Board of Directors

Meets Sept., December, April

Lois Fries, Secretary

Anita Garcia

Dave Kovar

Beth Maxie

Jim Peterson, President

Frank Prah

Marios Psomas, treasurer

Jordan Williams

Emeritus members: Terry Eckstien, Steve Brown, Jon Green, Mark Kligman, Jerry Moore, Mark Winterbottom, Sidney Goetz Dec. Bob Collette, Glenn Paul, Don Acenbrach Dec., Jackie Jordan, Brent Yaciw, Mike Hubbard, Matt Cooper, Jim Butler

~*~*~*~*~*~*

Jordan Williams, Publisher.

Jim Peterson, Editor

E-Mail us at:

jim@suncoasthumanist.com



The Kochhar Humanist Education Center hopes to

impact the level of community activism among chapters and affiliates of the American Humanist Association by providing case studies and citizen action guides; they bring to light issues on minority religions and ethnicities that humanist chapter members may not have considered before. It will also expand existing efforts like Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism and utilize other resources in working to eliminate the pernicious effects of ignorance and discrimination.

Tampa Humanist Association

Saturday, **May 18th**, 2013 at
11.00 am Jimmie B. Keele Library,
2902 W. Bearss Avenue, Tampa, FL.
Look for the Tampa Humanist Assoc. sign.

[MAP](#)



Our Essential Life Tasks: Doing Good & Living Well

Humanism is both a working philosophy and a way of life. It is an admixture of the abstract and the practical, which together have the aim of providing a meaningful and happy life for those who are adherents.

This will be a round table discussion of how we can better realize our potential as human beings, and affect the quality of life in the society around us. We will find connections between the philosophical discussion that is forever ongoing, and the way we meet the everyday problems of living using some of these ideas.

Many of us have noted what we see as the lack of humanist social outreach programs, while forgetting the considerable effort many members apply to the betterment of their communities and the world through their efforts.

Our aim is to synthesize a new understanding of the enduring relationship between our inner needs and finding satisfaction in fulfilling what we see as our responsibilities in the continuing re-creation of the world outside ourselves.



The Tampa Humanist Association is the only AHA Humanist group in Hillsborough County. This is a county of more than 1 million people. If statistical averages are correct, than at least 150,000 of those people do not support conventional institutions of religion. Currently, our roles do not number more than 20. I think we can agree that there is room for growth.

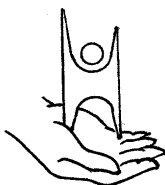
We experienced a major setback with the death of president and cofounder Rob Byrch, but with still enthusiastic members and board, and support from our sister organization, the Humanist Society of the Suncoast, we continue to offer the people of Tampa, a local Humanist option.

Join today, or renew your dues. Only \$25/ year or \$35 with the Happy Humanist pin. \$5 more includes spouse + 2 pins.

A Humanist Helping Hand

Several members have formed a caring response team to help members of our Humanist family who may need supportive practical help. This is an independent group, not affiliated directly with the Humanist Society. But their efforts are wholly consistent with the Humanist outlook. Contact a helper below if you or another member needs help or wishes to participate.

- ◆ Terri Eckstien (813) 891-9399
- ◆ Jerry Moore (727) 455-4973
- ◆ Nan Owens (727) 424-2558
- ◆ Patricia Walters (813) 988-5977



~ Time to Renew ~ ⁵

The Humanist Society
of the Suncoast.

Annual Dues

_ Trial -3 month- free news

_ **Regular - \$25.**

_ Reg. Couple - \$30.

_ **Supporter - \$35/45 (W/ pin)**

_ Life - \$200.

_ Life Couple - \$250.

_ Associate - \$10.

_ Contribution for growth

New!



If new, please fill out the form;
if renewing just indicate your name and any
changes from our previous information. Thanks!

Name: _____

Address -if new : _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

(Privacy respected)

Send to:

Glenn Paul, Asst. Treasurer
Humanist Society of the Suncoast
2507 First St. #E
Indian Rocks Beach
33785-3010

Humanist Quotes

"I believe firmly that in making ethical decisions, man has the prerogative of true freedom of choice."

Corliss Lamont,
1902-1995, philosopher

5/13



Atheists of Florida



Chair, Tracy Thomas
President, Ed Golly
Vice President, Frank Prahl
Treasurer, Nan Owens

AoF outreach programs can be found at our [Meetup](#) site. Current newsletters are available by writing to: Athaifle@aol.com.

JOIN US - AoF meeting information can be found at our Meetup site and more information about the organization can be found on our [website](#) and on our [Facebook page](#). **Our next meeting is scheduled for May 12th at 5103 S Westshore Blvd. Tampa**, and we will be doing our second webcast (you can be a participant or cheer people on from the sidelines. Care will be taken to make sure those that don't want to appear on screen are not seen.)

Our first meeting of every quarter (July is next) is now going to be a potluck, the address information is available only to members of our [Meetup](#) since it is a private home.

Look for exciting new programs and internet webcasts (audio & video) in the offing very soon. Let us know if you wish to participate. We are a resource for those with questions and doubts about the standard religious narrative of life. At the same time, we bring a human centered ethic to bear in serving our fellow human beings as they struggle to overcome the delusional psychology of years of religious conditioning.

We may have only one issue, but it is undoubtedly the most important one for the full emergence of the individual person.

As an institution committed to bring the enormously prolific benefits of the atheist proposition to ever larger numbers of our citizens, we desire to enable an enlightened majority of truly free people to turn their intelligence toward the real problems we all must face.

Find out more about end of life issues. Everyone has to face this final question. But there are choices not provided by conventional institutions. For more information see: <http://hemlockflorida.org/index.htm>



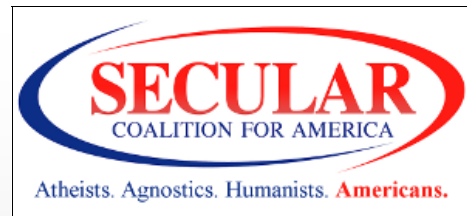
Bank of Wisdom

Electronic publishing to make the world better

6

These Rare Books are Amazing, and only a penny a page. Bank of Wisdom is listing thousands of Rare and Suppressed books in PDF format. These eBooks have a picture of every page so exact reliability is maintained. Yet these eBooks can be Searched and the Cut-and-Paste feature is active, these books can be used for scholarly research, and quoted by page and paragraph, just like the actual book. And for the casual reader there is no end of amazing and interesting facts and ideas that will enlighten, educate, astound, and elevate your view of History and the World. Most important we specialize in books to un-brainwash. The cost of most PDF instant downloads is \$.01 per page. (\$1.00 per hundred page book.) Set up your account here:

<http://bankofwisdom.com>



National Secular Movement Update
Newsletter and Call
Call Every Thursday from 12PM - 12:30PM (ET)
Phone Number: 559-726-1300 Code: 199568

<http://secular.org/>



Freethinkers@USF is a multicultural, interdisciplinary student society which welcomes USF students who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, skeptics, freethinkers, humanists, or religiously open-minded who seek to promote reason, compassion, tolerance, and free inquiry on campus. We hope to contribute opportunity for interdisciplinary dialog to the USF community, and build scientific literacy for all to enable objective and rational interpretations of issues affecting our lives. The student organization is open to anyone of any religious persuasion or personal beliefs. Write [Rodrick Colbert](mailto:Rodrick.Colbert) or freethinkersusf@gmail.com for details.

Clearwater UU Humanists

We are a group of Unitarian Universalists committed to a humanistic and non-theistic worldview. Currently, meetings are scheduled once a month and are usually held on the third Sunday of most months from 12.30 pm to 1:30 pm, after UU services.

The UU Humanists are open to all aspects of humanism, including investigation of religious humanism. However, the focus of the group is on secular aspects of humanism.

Programs have been well received with attendance between 50 and 75. To learn more, please contact: co-facilitators: Bill Norsworthy bnorsworthy@verizon.net
Mark Brandt mwbrandt@mail.usf.edu
Web site: www.uuclearwater.org

UU Humanists will have it's monthly meeting on Sunday, May 25th, 11:00 at the Octagon, at the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater campus, located at 2470 Nursery Road, Clearwater. Evolutionary biology and psychology will be the discussed by Dr. Parragh Pirkh, MD.



Clearwater, Florida

A triumph of Reason in Dunedin

With the leadership of City Commissioner **Ron Barnette**, a retired college philosophy professor, **Mark Brandt** of the UU Humanists of Clearwater received a formal proclamation from the City of Dunedin at its Apr 18th meeting. The proclamation approved Thursday, May, 2nd as a Day of Reason in Dunedin. The proclamation noted the importance of rational thinking and empirical scientific evidence in human progress and meeting the many complex challenges facing society. The Proclamation was positive in tone and did not in any way denigrate anyone's belief system. It simply promoted the idea of rational thought and data driven decisions to help solve society's challenges. Several members of both the UU Humanists and the Suncoast Humanists were present to receive the proclamation. This is a small, but significant step of government acknowledgement of the non-religious basis of government, which the humanist/secularist and freethought movements have proposed since the enlightenment. [View video & proclamation.](#)



Florida Now

<http://www.flnow.org/>

NOW is a multi-issue political organization. NOW's self-defined role has been to initiate change for the benefit of the greatest number of people, to affect the legal and institutional structures of the society in a way that systematically expands the choices and possibilities available to all women. In this way, NOW takes action to bring women, as a class, into the mainstream of society, rather than offering aid to individual women in achieving personal solutions or temporary relief from oppression.

FLORIDA REPORT

Civil liberties news in the Sunshine State



In April, the Florida House of Representatives passed a bill that will make our cruel and unreliable death penalty system even worse, and as of this writing, the Senate is expected to vote on a similar bill tomorrow, Friday, April 26th.

Tell your Senator not to make our death penalty system even worse.

Our capital punishment system is already a shame: broken, cruel, racially biased and unreliable. The Senate bill, SB 1750, will curtail opportunities for people who have been sentenced to death to challenge their sentences.

The bill politicizes the death penalty process, shifting control from the Supreme Court of Florida, into the hands of Tallahassee politicians. It means legislators, not our judicial system, will set rules for post-conviction relief -- and doing it in a way that makes it practically impossible for death row inmates and their lawyers to challenge a sentence of death.

Florida has a long and shameful history of wrongful convictions, with more people wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death in our state than in any other. Without the judicial process to challenge those convictions, those people may have been executed for crimes they did not commit.

Eliminating opportunities for people to challenge a death sentence in a system that has already proven so unreliable **will almost certainly cost lives.**

The House just voted on its bill that would eliminate essential protections for challenging death sentences.
Act now to stop the Senate from doing the same.

Thank you for taking action in defense of people's fundamental rights.



Howard L. Simon

Executive Director FI. ACLU



5/13

Life Ring Secular Recovery group meets every Monday evening at 8-p.m., at Sylvan Abbey United Methodist Church at 2817 Sunset Point Road, Clearwater. The meeting takes place in a modular building at the back of the parking lot. This is a recovery, support group for alcoholics and drug addicts who do not believe in, or feel comfortable with the idea of a higher power as strongly encouraged in Alcoholics Anonymous. If you have any questions, feel free to call 727-772-3360.

Freedom of Thought for Our World, and Our Future



Tampa Bay CoR
TAMPA BAY COALITION OF REASON

Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

Freethought Organizations in the Tampa Bay Area:
Americans United,* Tampa Humanist Association, Humanist Society of the Suncoast, Center for Inquiry, UU Humanists Clearwater, UU Humanists Tampa,* Secular Student Alliance USF,* Atheists of Florida, Plus numerous Meetup organizations that promote what are essentially Freethought ideas and principles.

(*= not currently members of the Coalition)

Member organizations and agencies should contact the following CoR representatives about the matters indicated:

Calendar:
Rick O'Keefe

Newsletter:
Jim Peterson

Web site:
Jim Peterson

Special Projects
Mark Brandt

For several years now, various leaders of the Freethought community in the bay area have been meeting informally to share experiences, and occasionally to coordinate plans. But recently, changing circumstances have brought additional pressure to cooperate in bringing programs and members services to an expanding movement.

At this point leaders continue to meet, and together with the various boards of directors and committees, try to develop policies that will enable every group to enhance its unique role in serving its members.

There appears to be general agreement on developing several community wide programs over the year that will allow significant speakers to be presented in our area. The costs of these programs will be shared among the organizations proportionally.

Thus substantive and exciting new activities will be offered to the Tampa Bay area that were not possible for most organizations before. We are especially grateful to the national office of the United Coalition of Reason and its director, Fred Edwards. You may recall that UCoR was the major impetus to getting a large number of billboards erected across the nation with such messages as "You can be good without God. Millions are!"

TBCoR is an alliance of groups identified with the freethought / Humanist /Atheist movement.

As this momentum continues to grow, we will keep you informed of developments. JP Contact: tbcor@metrodirect.net



TBPCC is an autonomous adjunct to the Humanist Society.

Take Action to End Florida's Nuclear Tax

Tell Florida lawmakers that you shouldn't pay for utilities' risky business decisions!



During this legislative session, leaders in Tallahassee are discussing and debating the flawed nuclear cost recovery law that shifts all the financial risk of building reactors to customers. This hurts Florida's economy, including seniors, families and businesses. Legislation has been offered up in both the House and the Senate.

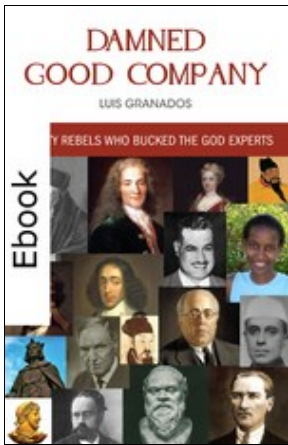
Now is the time to send a clear message to Tallahassee that Floridians can't afford to pay now for expensive reactors that likely will never be built!

Click here and voice your concerns.

Bi-partisan leadership in both the House and Senate has acknowledged that the anti-consumer legislation passed in 2006 has caused serious problems. They are moving in the right direction, but a complete repeal of Florida's nuclear tax is the only way to clearly ensure protections for consumers.

Click www.tampabaypostcarbon.com for more.

The Humanist Press

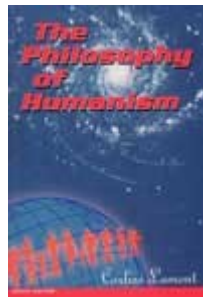


Damned Good Company By Luis Granados

In *Damned Good Company: Twenty Rebels Who Bucked the God Experts*, author Luis Granados explores twenty cases, from Socrates to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, of brave challenges against those claiming a special authority from God. The author was recently the guest of the Tampa Humanists and delivered a memorable lecture. Paperback \$15.00 378 Pages
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The Philosophy of Humanism - Dr. Corliss Lamont

In a work that is a standard text and reference in the ongoing international discussion around secular humanism, Lamont offers an argument for a philosophy that advocates for happiness in this life rather than hope for an undefined afterlife. Paperback, 371 pages. \$16.95

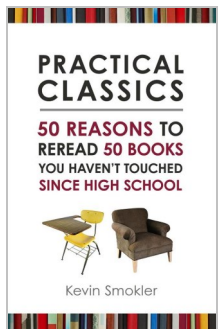


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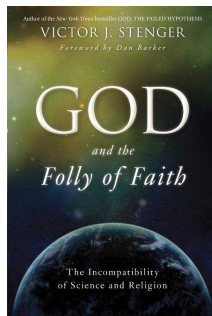
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God and the Folly of Faith: The Incompatibility of Science and Religion

By Victor Stenger, Ph.D.

The story of the fight against superstition has been told before, but never like this. Victor Stenger confronts the battle between religious superstition and science with the eye of a trained physicist and the practicality of a superb teacher.

409 pages Paperback \$20.00 [Order here](#)



Read Humanist Periodicals: The world's leading minds can be read at: [The Humanist](#), [Free Inquiry](#), [Free Mind](#), [Humanist Perspectives](#), [Skeptical Inquirer](#), [Secular Humanist Bulletin](#), [The Florida Humanist Journal](#), [Skeptic](#), [Essays in Humanism](#), and many others. Look 'em up!

I am happy to announce the third season of the International Freethought Film Festival, and excited that I will be able to work face to face with individuals in the Orlando area to make it a success. This year we have added a screenwriting category, and the winning short script will be developed as our very first project to launch our production branch.

Freethought Film Festival Foundation

9



Promoting Reason Through Film

As thrilled as I am to be once again immersed in the planning of the fest, acquiring the motivation to actively move forward on the planning for season three of IFFF took me months of painful reflection on last years event. I wasn't certain that I could break through the paralysis brought on by the disappointment of the poor turnout back in August. All of my efforts are voluntary, and it was truly disheartening for me that so few seemed to care about our mission of promoting reason through film.

The combination of the tragic movie theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado that occurred just eight miles from the film fest venues a week prior to our kickoff; and what I felt was a let down by the secular movement in promoting IFFF 2012; were the primary reasons behind the low attendance. Each event and screening was executed as planned; and those who did attend had a great time and enjoyed the program of films and camaraderie. Freethought got some great press out of it as well!

Unfortunately, ticket sales did not cover all of the venue costs, and we are still in arrears from last season. As disconcerting as this is for me, my efforts go on. I know that the International Freethought Film Festival is worthy of support; and I know that there are freethinkers who care. I am passionate about our mission of promoting reason through film, and feel strongly that it contributes to the necessary dialogue that counters irrational thought and superstitious beliefs, and the evils that can result from them.

I am still alive and kicking, but I can't do this alone. FFFF needs help from individuals who want to ensure that the International Freethought Festival grows. We are a nonprofit that is 100% independent--which means we receive zero funding from other organizations. As such, our programming is not subject to the influence thereof.

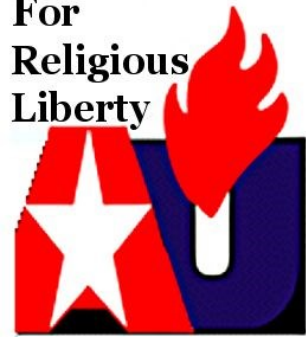
If you can afford to make a even the smallest donation to FFFF, please show your support by stopping by www.freethoughtfilmfest.org and contributing.

Best in Reason...*Andrea Steele*



A Tradition of Advocacy

**For
Religious
Liberty**



**Americans United for Separation of
Church & State**
~ Pinellas County Chapter ~

We regret to note that the chapter has now closed. But there is still a need for an active chapter of this outstanding organization in the Tampa Bay area. If you want to help build one, Email [AU national](mailto:AU.national), or check the web at <http://www.au.org/> Let us know if help needed.



Compassion & Choices
Choice & Care at the End of Life.

**The Military Association of
Atheists and Freethinkers**



Nontheistic service members serve honorably throughout the world—always have; always will. However, nontheists are the last unprotected minority. The nontheistic, whether an atheist, humanist, agnostic, freethinker, or other secular minority, have a strong community.

Jason Torpy, a West Point graduate, serves as president of MAAF. He also holds seats on the boards of the Secular Coalition for America and the American Humanist Assoc.

On the web at: www.maaf.info

Contact: Chris
christbrown@yahoo.com
MSgt, USAF (Retired) Co-Organizer:
MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists
(MASH) MacDill AFB, FL

Humanist Families of Greater Tampa



Jennifer Hancock started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year.

There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in a society that is still hostile to an explicitly Humanist Way of life.

Jennifer is author of several books including; The *Humanist Handbook*, *The Humanist Approach to Happiness*, and her latest book, *The Bully Vaccine* (illustration below). - JP
See much more at: www.Jen-Hancock.com

Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. These are opportunities to do something fun, socialize and enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we go to a park, sometimes a museum, sometimes we go swimming. Our group has grown over the past year to the point we now organize Tampa area outings and Manatee/Sarasota area outings every month.

Throughout the year we host parties like Darwin Day in February, World Humanist Day in June, Freethought Day at Disney in October and Carl Sagan Day in November.

Among our spin off groups, is a Parenting Beyond Belief group which gets together to discuss the challenges of raising children without religion. We are on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/HumanistFamiliesTampa/>

Today's topic is:

The Problem of Existence

My birthday is this month. Yay. Not going to tell you how old I am. Doesn't matter. I'm happy being the age I am. Which is good because it's not like I have a choice about it.

Which brings me to today's topic. The problem of existence. People really struggle with this. In fact, so much of what people are searching for in in life is to find a way to infuse their life with meaning and purpose. They seek out gurus to help them fill the emptiness the feel. The irony is that the only place they need to look is within.

I don't know of many Humanists who struggle with these sorts of existential problems or issues. I think the reason is partly because Humanism provides not only a satisfying answer, but a reasonable one as well. There is no reason why we are here. We just are.

One of the things I like about Humanism as an approach to life is that the critical thinking aspect of it helps me to focus on the right question so I don't waste my time trying to solve problems that don't have answers or solutions. The problem of existence is like that. We can't ever answer the question "Why are we here?" The real question you should be asking yourself isn't why are you here. The question that really matters is what are you going to do with the time you have while you are here. This is a question that not only can be answered, the answers provide us guidance on how to conduct ourselves so that we live life to the fullest.

It seems to me that one of the problems that plaques people is that their expectation for what life is supposed to be like is unrealistic. Life isn't always grand or magnificent. And you aren't failing if your life doesn't live up to some imagined ideal. Voltaire was right. At some point, we just need to tend our gardens and find contentment in that. If you can find contentment in the mundane things, you will find that you are able to enjoy the grand things as well.

Here is an essay I wrote for the Bradenton Herald on this subject - Life Isn't Perfect, don't expect it to be: <http://www.bradenton.com/2013/04/06/4470442/life-isnt-perfect-dont-expect.html>

Jennifer Hancock



WWJD



Norm R. Allen

No Local chapters. See <http://www.instituteforscienceandhumanvalues.net/>

During the 1990s, evangelical Christians started wearing bracelets with the letters “WWJD.”

The letters stand for “What Would Jesus Do?” This is supposed to serve as a reliable ethical guide

for Christians. I started thinking again about this simplistic moral imperative after reading an article in *USA TODAY*.

Titled “Immigration issues touch denominations” (March 22, 2012, P. 3A), the story dealt with the question of how Christian denominations should respond to undocumented workers in the U.S. Some claim that the Bible teaches that we should embrace strangers (Matthew, Chapter 25.) Others say that, according to Romans 13:1, “the powers that be are ordained of God,” and that everyone must obey the laws of the land—including immigration laws.

This dilemma helps to demonstrate that asking what Jesus would do is a poor way to figure out the most ethical course of action. Conservative Christians are likely to conclude that the law is the law, and that even if families are torn apart, those without legal citizenship must be removed from the country. Liberal Christians are likely to try to find ways to assure that those without legal citizenship are permitted to stay. In other words, most Christians will stake out a position and then look for biblical support.

This is not surprising. David Hume wrote that human beings determine right and wrong by sentiment, or feelings, rather than reason.

Moreover, some of the latest findings in neuroscience indicate that we often only believe we are making choices when choices are being made for us. (On March 16, 2012, the Institute for Science and Human Values co-hosted a symposium on “Neuroscience and Ethics: Considering Nature, Nurture, and Norms,” with the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. Later this year, a special issue of *The Human Prospect* will focus on findings and papers from the symposium.)

What Would Jesus Do about slavery? The Bible condones slavery. Luke 12:47-48 condones the beating of slaves? Would Jesus beat slaves? If so, with how many stripes? Or would Jesus condemn slavery? If so, why did he not condemn it in his day?

Would Jesus commit genocide? The Old (First) Testament condones it repeatedly. For example, in Numbers 31:17, God’s Chosen People are commanded to “kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him.” Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Gideon, and Samuel were bloodthirsty maniacs if we are to take the Bible seriously.

European conquerors followed the examples of these biblical role models. They decimated indigenous populations in the name of God, and enslaved the heathen in order to convert them to Christianity.

Would Jesus rape girls or women? The Chosen People of God were commanded to do so. Numbers 31:18 says, “But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.” Clearly, women are regarded as the property—sexual and otherwise—of the men. However, liberal Christians oppose patriarchy and support equality of opportunity between the sexes.

What Would Jesus Do about homophobia? The Bible repeatedly condemns it. Indeed, Leviticus 20:13 says, “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.” However, liberal Christians support the rights of LGBTIQI people, including same-sex marriages. Would Jesus welcome homosexuals, or stone them to death?

What Would Jesus Do about stem cell research? Many researchers maintain that stem cell research could lead to cures for numerous diseases. Liberal Christians support it. However, conservative Christians are worried about the soul that supposedly resides in the tiny stem cell, and oppose such research.

What Would Jesus Do about birth control and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases? Religious liberals advocate the use of condoms to prevent unplanned pregnancies and the spread of STDs. Many religious conservatives, however, oppose all forms of contraception.

What Would Jesus Do about abortion, the death penalty, gun control, euthanasia, etc.? Conservative and liberal Christians disagree on all of these issues, and several others. Asking what Jesus would do does not bring them to agreement.

As Sam Harris pointed out in *Letter to a Christian Nation*, liberal Christians are often on the right side of an issue morally, but on the wrong side biblically. This is not surprising, considering that the Bible was written thousands of years ago.

Thomas Paine pointed out that no generation has property in any other. In other words, past generations had no moral right to insist that future generations embrace all of the moral ideas of the past. Each generation has to figure out how it ought to live. They can use the past as a guide, but they should never follow it slavishly. Rather than asking what Jesus would do, we must try to pursue the best ethical courses of action based on the expected consequences to individuals and society.

What Would Jesus Do? It doesn’t even matter



Click to register for next year

Ages 7-16, Holland, NY

CFI & Community Outreach

By Rick O'Keefe

Join CFI's Humanist book club, a monthly discussion. Contact David Vangsness for details: [CLICK here](#). **National Events: May 17-29, 2013--Women in Secularism** Some of our divisions: " African Americans for Humanism " Tampa Bay Skeptics -- Central Florida's famous Skeptics assoc. See below. " The Committee for Skeptical Inquiry -- world-wide association of Skeptics and scientific investigations. " Cognitive Neuro Sciences, Inc. -- Science-of-the-brain secular humanist oriented counseling/therapy center. Ideal for those wanting to avoid religious-oriented groups like AA. " Council for Secular Humanism -- world-wide assoc. of Secular Humanists To become part of our important work, and to make a difference, become a [member](#):



Rick O'Keefe



CFI-Tampa Bay is pleased to be co-sponsoring May's Humanist Society of the Suncoast discussion on Humanist Economics. Because education is at the core of Humanism and Center for Inquiry, here is a synopsis of what CFI offers, from the basics up through an accredited Masters course, plus Summer Camp for the kids.

The educational programs of CFI are concentrated in the CFI Institute, founded in 1987. The Institute is the oldest continuously operating academic program of its kind in North America, the only one supported by a research organization or "think tank," and the only program staffed with resident fellows (faculty) and a significant number of distinguished visiting fellows. We offer study of humanist thought and practice, with special reference to secular humanism and models and methods of scientific inquiry. Students can interact with and learn from the leading lights in the field of humanism and secularism. See our Institute Catalogue [here](#).

"Interfaith" and Inclusion: Another View

By Tom Flynn, April 19, 2013

There's been much passionate commentary about the recent Boston interfaith service excluding humanist, atheists, and other freethinkers. It's not for lack of effort; Harvard humanist chaplain Greg Epstein and other heavy-hitters in the movement strove mightily for a place on the altar -- pardon me, stage -- and were coldly stonewalled. But what are we asking for when we seek inclusion in such events?

While it may make sense for Epstein, whose work skews religious-humanist, to want a place at an interfaith event, should atheists and more secular humanists be seeking to stand by his side? I don't think so. On my view, those of us in the movement who are not comfortable with the "religious humanist" identifier should not be seeking entry to interfaith events. Instead, we should be boycotting them, then demanding something more inclusive in their place.

Commenting on the controversy, blogger J. T. Eberhard wrote: "Today there will be an interfaith event to mourn the victims of the Boston bombing. The President himself will be in attendance. But when they say interfaith, they really mean interfaith." (Continued on page 13)



What is Tampa Bay Skeptics?

Founded in 1988, Tampa Bay Skeptics is a nonprofit educational and scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of **paranormal** and **fringe-science** claims, and the dissemination of factual information about such claims. In 2004, TBS became a Special Interest Group of the [Center For Inquiry-Tampa Bay](#).

TBS conducts its own investigations, follows the activities of other skeptics groups, monitors the press coverage of the paranormal, and publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Tampa Bay Skeptics Report*, which is also distributed gratis to members of the press and to many other skeptics groups around the world. TBS also makes its representatives available to local and national media to provide a skeptical voice as a counterweight to the irrationalism and superstition that is increasingly prevalent in the television and print media. TBS does not reject claims out of hand, but rather is committed to objective and critical inquiry. In this vein, we share the philosophy of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI) -- publisher of *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine, an international organization that has nurtured the growth of local skeptics groups (such as ours) all over the world.

We encourage those who wish to help further the cause of skepticism to join TBS! Annual membership includes four issues of *Tampa Bay Skeptics Report*, each snail mailed to you in advance of our quarterly meetings (last Saturday of every March, June, September, and December). Members also receive a 30% discount on any [Prometheus Books](#) purchased through TBS. Make your \$15 check payable to "Tampa Bay Skeptics" and mail to:

CFI c/o O'Keefe, 4011 S. Manhattan Ave., Box 139, Tampa, FL 33611-1277
Or click to simply join our [TBS e-mail list\(s\)](#)? Or order [TBS T-shirts](#)?

Lectures, discussions, and hands-on demonstrations of the Humane use of technology. And always, there is the occasional random act of Kindness.

Visit our facility on 1510 Barry Rd. in Clearwater:
Map: <http://tampa-bay.org/map.html>

Doc (Dave Dockery) President, Tampa Bay Computer Society
www.tampa-bay.org "We repair our members' computers for free!"



“Interfaith” and Inclusion: Another View continued from page 12

Really, though, who should find this surprising? Sometimes words mean what they say. Dictionary.com defines interfaith as “relating to, between, or involving different religions.” Why should non-religious people want, much less expect, to be included in an event whose stated scope is only to bring together representatives of different religions? Why should atheists and hard secularists who actively disdain religion want to play any part in something like that?

Full disclosure: I used to take part in interfaith events in the Buffalo, New York area. Ironically, it was after reading Epstein's provocative book *God Without God*, in which he argues for unbelievers to take part in interfaith work, that I fully grasped the contradictions implicit in doing so. I don't appear on interfaith panels anymore. When invited, my stock reply is “Sorry, this is an event for representatives of various religions, and I do not represent a religion. When you plan an event that's not narrowly restricted to persons of faith, be sure to call me.”

To some degree, this reflects my particular situation as executive director of the Council for Secular Humanism. For more than forty years, religious Right ideologues have been accusing humanism generally -- and secular humanism specifically -- of being just another religion, one more rival to Christianity in the game whose other players are Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and so on. The purpose of much of this argumentation was that if it became generally accepted that humanism was a religion, then evangelicals could seek to have ideas associated with humanism (such as the theory of evolution, the idea that Earth is billions of years old, or the notion that moral decision-making ought to be individual and autonomous rather than based on rules handed down by authority figures) excluded from public schools as violations of the separation of church and state. (To this day, about the only way you can catch some religious Right spokespeople admitting that there is such a thing as church-state separation is if you get them going on the “religion of humanism.”) For decades, one of the Council's recurring imperatives has been to make clear at every opportunity that secular humanism is not a religion. For much of this time, we had to do this in a setting in which avowedly religious humanists were quite visible in the Unitarian Universalist Association and elsewhere, and in which the other principal humanist organization, the American Humanist Association, was a religious organization for tax purposes. (Fortunately, that ended in the early 2000s.) So we at the Council had to expend a lot of energy in maintaining that secular humanism, at least, was in no way a religion. When you come out of a background like that, the perils of taking part in interfaith events should be obvious -- so much so that I personally regret not having recognized the need to boycott such events much sooner.

But there's a larger issue here. In my view, it's the real message of inclusiveness that most of us in the movement should be emphasizing -- a message we cannot credibly send while some of us are begging to be included onstage alongside the priests, ministers, rabbis, and imams. There's a popular impression that “interfaith” is the acme of inclusiveness, that when you want to stage an event that's designed to encompass an entire community, an interfaith observance is the way to go. That impression is decades out of date, and more of us ought to be saying so. Because an interfaith event embraces only members of religions, and does so frankly and openly, in a nation where twenty percent of adults don't belong to any religion, “interfaith” is not the last word in inclusivity. Interfaith events, by definition, exclude twenty percent of American adults. They exclude a third of the young.

If, after some traumatic event such as the Boston bombings, officials want to hold an event that includes everyone, from now on they need to do better than interfaith. They need to develop events that do not draw most of their architecture from religious services that no longer speak to the identities and aspirations of one adult American in five. Except in situations where representatives of different churches legitimately do want to just talk to one another -- wrangling out differences in how they interpret the Bible, or some such -- “interfaith” is an idea whose time has passed. Of course, it's difficult to maintain that principled position when you're begging for grudging admission to what amounts to the back seat on the church bus.

To my mind, leaders of atheist and secular humanist and other strong-freethinker groups shouldn't complain that they are being excluded from interfaith events. They shouldn't campaign to get in. No, we should stay out even when asked, and use whatever spotlight that casts our way to press the argument that in a nation that is home to growing numbers of post-religious men and women, real inclusion demands something way better than an interfaith event ... something that is radically more inclusive than a church service with the points of doctrinal disagreement sanded down.

Finally, there's another issue that must be confronted when the interfaith observance in question is a memorial. Seeking to place religionists and nonreligionists on the same stage at a memorial event presumes that there is anything that representatives of these diverse perspectives can validly do together when the focus is on helping attendees to come to terms with the loss of fellow citizens, friends, or loved ones. The problem here should be obvious. For traditional believers, the focus of a memorial event is altogether different than it is for unbelievers. Traditional believers acknowledge the pain of loss, but cover it over with the ointment of beliefs in the afterlife. Unbelievers are confronting a starker reality: the deceased is truly, achingly gone and will never, ever be seen again.

To put it more flippantly than I probably should, when believers and unbelievers sit side by side at a memorial event, they are two discrete groups doing two very different things. The unbelievers are there to say “Good-bye forever”; the believers are there to say “See you later.” I don't know if it will ever make sense to try to achieve two such disparate objectives at a single event. (A tip of the hat to Jason Torpy, with whom I co-developed some of the ideas in this final paragraph in the course of another online debate.)

Tom Flynn, April 19, 2013



<http://tampabay.unitedcor.org/tampabay/>

Practical Freethought

Thousands of your friends and neighbors in the Tampa Bay area feel the same as you. The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason is a group of local organizations joined together to increase the growth, visibility and acceptance of nontheists throughout the area.

All of these groups share common ground, while each has its own particular emphasis and atmosphere. Some are focused on scientific inquiry and education. Others are focused on ethics and community, activism or the arts. Others monitor state/church separation and fight for your civil rights. All alike are committed to promoting the wider acceptance of a more rational and contemporary view of humanity and the universe we live in.

TampaBayCoR.org is where secular people in the Tampa Bay area can discover groups to join, activities in which to participate, events to attend and like-minded people with which to socialize. In short, we want to help those who have grown beyond religious belief to find their philosophical home.

Those nonbelievers who are not ready, or who are unable, to “come out” can take comfort in knowing that they are not the only ones who accept the reality of a 100% natural world.

For the religious community, we want them to realize that, although non-theists reject the supernatural, we share with them compassionate human values that most religious believers embrace. In most ways, we are like them; hard working, taxpaying, moral citizens who care deeply about our families, our communities, our state and our country.

Non-theists are a large minority, larger than many minorities having much more political and cultural influence than we do. Based on the US Census Bureau estimate of Florida’s 2008 population and several polls, we estimate our statewide constituency at about 2,800,000 residents (more than 400,000 in the Tampa

Bay quad-county area). TampaBayCoR has organized to increase our standing in the marketplace of ideas and to take our rightful place at the table of acceptance and equal rights. We invite all nontheists to support us in our efforts by joining and actively participating in one of TBCoR’s constituent groups.

Even if you never join a group or attend a meeting you can help Florida move forward by contributing to local or national participating organizations. And you can always help to further the nontheistic community just by standing up proudly for your reality-based life among your friends and family. It’s OK to not believe in gods. And, yes—not only can you be good without a god or religion, but in most cases, far better off. Millions of us are. *R.O.*

Holidays of Special Interest to Freethinkers

- **2013** International Year of [Water Cooperation](#) (UN)
- **April** is National Humor Month.
- **1st.** [Dyngus Day](#)
- **6th** [Plan Your Epitaph Day](#)
- **20th** [Volunteer Recognition Day](#)
- **22nd** [Earth Day – Create awareness of our future on a changed planet.](#)



TBCoR Leadership Team 2013

Mark Brandt, Jennifer Hancock, Rick O’Keefe, Jim Peterson, Tracy Thomas

Editorial E-Mail: tbcor@metrodirect.net

Be Included!

Group Leaders are invited to send items for this Newsletter. Please send them to: tbcornews@metrodirect.net
 For calendar items, include as much info as possible.