

The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Freethought News



Vol. 8 No. 11, November, 2019
Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Judy Adkins, Editors

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* TBCoR member



Coming on August 6th to the 9th of Next year **in Miami**

This year's theme is **Beyond Borders: Our Global Humanist Culture**. Come examine humanist perspectives on human rights, the importance of supporting apostates and ending blasphemy laws, the humanist role in issues of migration and the climate crisis, approaches to death and loss, the role of young humanists, humanist education, our role in mass media and much more. Celebrate our global humanist culture by attending off-site art events and visiting the humanist art gallery.

After you've [registered for the World Humanist Congress](#), don't forget to book your hotel room at the [Hyatt Regency in Downtown Miami!](#)



Freeflo starts November 1st!

Florida's largest gathering of local and regional freethinkers is set to begin VERY shortly in Orlando. With a varied and exciting list of speakers and performers, it promises to be a stimulus for another renaissance of creative and critical thinking, just when one is needed the most. If you are reading this in time, consider registering for this event. See: <https://www.FREEFLO.org>

Coming in **February 2020...**
TB CoR's Annual Darwin Day observance

Scientist, **Douglas Mann** speaks on: **The Evolution of Morality**

Doug Mann, PhD, is an experimental psychologist and former medical school professor. Research on empathy in the doctor-patient relationship led to his post-retirement interest in moral psychology and the evolution of morality.



Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

Calendar
Judy Adkins
Web site
Jim Peterson

Newsletter

Jim Peterson & Rick O'Keefe
Back & current issues online at:
www.tampabaycor.net

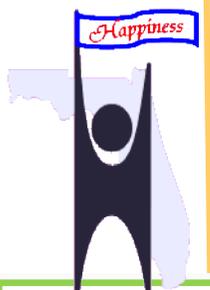
Special Projects
Mark Brandt
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event websites at:
www.tampabaycor.net &
www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason

Anywhere in this newsletter, **CLICK** on an image or blue text for a link.

Listen to local Freethought Views and News on **You Tube®**

Atheist Forum, provides information and opinion from a secular POV. New editions of the program will be available on the **AoF channel of YouTube.com from time to time**. See page [13](#) for more.



The Humanist Society of the Suncoast

An Epicurean society dedicated to the proposition that only the fully examined life is worth living.
Associate organization of the the [AHA](#), [COR](#), & [ASHS](#). Find us at www.suncoasthumanist.com

What is Real?

Can science explain consciousness?
How has consciousness evolved?
Are all creatures conscious?
Is reality all in the mind?

Join us to view a short film and discuss these and other similar questions as indicated in the film.

There is no predetermined answers or outcome to this exercise. It is something of a journey to the inner presuppositions that we unthinkingly rely upon everyday. But do not be surprised if some of the everyday propositions we reference in problem solving are, in fact, correct. But then again, maybe not.

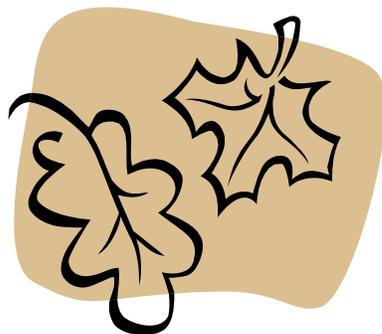
The value of this lies in the fact that we may be able to touch those areas of everyday life that perhaps we have taken for granted, and not previously examined.

A moment of philosophical reflection can often help us gain perspective. Humanism is the outlook of that part of the universe known to think. We have a special obligation to test our selves and our certainties regularly. JP

Tampa Bay Harvest



Bring food: the first kindness & the measure of our Hospitality. Humanists aspire to true friendship with our fellow human beings. Money is more effective than cans and boxes to get the most benefit to the greatest number of people. But we can also use personal care toiletries. Many thanks to **Jordan Williams**. We need **volunteers!** See jim@suncoasthumanist.com Thanx.



Please
Join us in:



The Dunedin Public Library
At 223 Douglas Ave. in Dunedin. ([map](#))

Saturday, November 12th
at 2:00 PM

Many of our members meet afterward for more conversation and refreshment not far from the library.

One of the main goals of the Humanist Society is to help create a community where members can come together and share our thoughts and feelings, ideas and experiences with somewhat like-minded individuals. We are here to learn of the world, and to give and receive in some small measure, the human kindness and compassion we need.



Vol. XXXII No. 11 November, 2019

**Please Join or renew
Now!**

**Humanist Society of the
Suncoast**

Annual Dues

Regular -\$25 
Reg. Couple -\$30.
Supporter -\$35/40 (With pin above)
Life -\$200. (Pin)
Life Couple -\$250.(Pin)
Associate -\$10

Your membership helps keep Humanism alive & growing in the Tampa Bay area A small part of your dues allows us to participate fully as a member organization of the Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason & enables us to support larger & more exciting programs.

If you have questions concerning your dues or status, contact our new treasurer, Scott Wilson scott33761@yahoo.com

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

Name: _____

Address –if new : _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: * _____

E-mail: _____

(Privacy respected)

Send check made out to:
“Jim Peterson”

Memo line: “Humanist Society Dues”
(501c3, tax deductible)

Humanist Society of the Suncoast, AHA
6814 Charlotte Harbor Way
Tampa FL 33625

*= optional



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

What is the Humanist Way?

◆ **To extend** a human centered approach to the critical problems of life & society.

◆ **To encourage** attitudes of kindness, compassion, tolerance & a loving generosity in human relationships, & in our treatment of all life. These attitudes help us to see ourselves in the lives of others, & encourage appreciation for the remarkable diversity of human culture & experience.

◆ **To develop** & popularize the skills of creative & critical thinking that empower people to challenge prejudice, superstition & irrationality in every area of life. Such empowerment enables the individual to reach the highest levels of achievement.

◆ **To exalt** those artistic & imaginative expressions of life which have been the source of the greatest pleasure & enlightenment, & which reflect compelling human truths. Through music, literature, art, dance, & other expressions, we embrace the essence of what it means to be human.

◆ **To explore** the grounds of ethics & 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

The Movable Feast

the Humanist Society's monthly social Dinner

Join us Nov. 20th at Applebee's at 5 O'clock for American style cuisine, and decidedly the best company:

Applebees

For map Menu

5110 E Bay Dr Clearwater, FL
33764

Kindly **RSVP** to: (727) 581-2146
Great Conversation and good food, reasonably priced.

The Humorous Humanist

1. The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
2. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
3. She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.
4. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.
5. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
6. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
7. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France could result in Linoleum Blownapart.
8. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
9. A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
10. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
11. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
12. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'
13. I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
14. A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab centre said: 'Keep off the Grass.'
15. The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
16. The old salt sailor survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
17. A backward poet writes inverse. JR

Humanist Society of the Suncoast

A chapter of the American Humanist Assoc., Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason, & The Association of Secular Humanist Societies

Board of Directors.

Meets Sept., December, April

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~*~*~*~*~*~

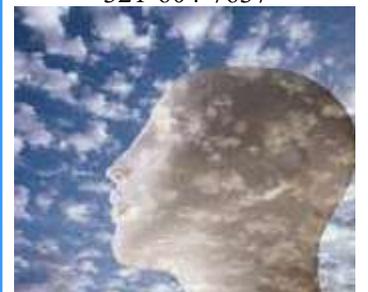
Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

Jim Peterson, Editor
E-Mail us at:
jim@suncoasthumanist.com

**Need Psychological
Counseling?**
For a secular therapist,
click:
Secular Therapy Org.
Cognitive Neurosciences

Or call:
Lynda Gurvitz,
<http://fampsy.org/member/lynda-gurvitz/>
(727) 725-8820

Or, Joel Schmidt
www.floatoncounseling.com
321-604-7637



Hypocrisy in the Federal Government...? *By Roy Speckhardt, AHA*

When HUD secretary, Ben Carson said that church-state separation “doesn’t mean that they cannot work together to promote godly principles,” he revealed just how narrowly he defines the group he feels is worthy of government support. Trump continues to surround himself with officials who blatantly exclude more than a quarter of the American people. This echo chamber of Christian nationalist privilege isn’t limited to saying grace at a Cabinet meeting. The rhetoric of the religious right is directly impacting policy decisions. And yet, despite promises of an “understanding heart and a compassionate heart,” a disregard for basic civil rights remains apparent in the Trump administration.

While Carson espouses care for your neighbors, such underlying compassion is absent from HUD’s recent proposal to severely weaken the disparate impact standard that protects against housing discrimination, jeopardizing the security—and neighborhoods—of millions of Americans. Attacks on the civil rights of communities of color, women, immigrants, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, religious and nonreligious minorities, and families with children have been an underlying theme of many Trump administration policies. This not-so-subtle attack on nontheists is no different.

Humanist Weddings in UK up

They are weddings that are, officially speaking, not even legally recognized. But such a small detail, it seems, is not stopping increasing numbers of couples from opting for [humanist](#) marriage ceremonies across England and Wales.

Such weddings have risen by more than 250 per cent in the last 15 years, according to new figures from the Office for National Statistics. The massive rise makes it the fastest growing type of wedding in the country – and comes as the number of faith-based ceremonies fell in the same period.

While humanist weddings went up 266 per cent between 2004 and 2016, [Church of England](#) weddings fell by 28 per cent, [Catholic](#) by 34 per cent and [Baptist](#) by 42 per cent. The rise – from 287 such ceremonies to 1,051 – comes despite the fact that humanist marriages are classed as atheist or agnostic, and are therefore not officially recognized in England and Wales. Couples who have one must also go through an “official” process at a registry office either before or after.

But the new figures look set to add weight to campaigners who have long-called for humanist marriages to be recognized in England and Wales, as they already are in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

“We knew from the huge popularity of our funerals that there was enormous public appetite for humanist ceremonies but the scale of the demand for weddings, especially in the last 15 years, has blown us away,” Andrew Copson, chief executive of [Humanists UK](#), told [The Guardian](#).

“In a way it is a demonstration of what we know about today’s society – many people are humanist in their approach to life without knowing the word.”

He added: “They’re not religious but they want a ceremony at one of the most important moments in their lives that reflects the positive beliefs and values they hold.”



Member, TBCoR,
Hum Society, &
AHA affiliate.

AoF & THA Meets suspended for now.

Humanist Quotes

“We have to replace beauty, which is a cultural concept, with goodness, which is a humanist concept.”

Philippe Starck

“Three key humanist virtues are courage, cognition, and caring – not dependence, ignorance, or insensitivity to the needs of others.”

Paul Kurtz

“Humanism involves far more than the negation of supernaturalism. It requires an affirmative philosophy...translated into a life devoted to one's own improvement and the service of all mankind.”

Corliss Lamont

“Humanism is a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity, of application of new ideas of scientific progress for the benefit of all.”

Linus Pauling

“Humanism is the commitment to the use of reason in human affairs, applied in the service of compassion.”

Hans JÃ¼rgen Eysenck



An autonomous project of the Humanist Society.
Affiliate of the [Post Carbon Institute](#)

Towards a Humanist Future

While climate breakdown is well under way, and societal collapse is a very real possibility within my lifetime, there is no serious projection to justify a timeframe as short as three to five years for total breakdown. The approach of running for the hills (or the coast) is neither sensible nor helpful. It only makes societal collapse more likely, by curtailing action and dividing the community even further. And, in that scenario, it won't even help you survive.

If we're to survive in the far-less-hospitable world that two centuries of institutionalized greed, selfishness and short-sightedness have bequeathed us, it will only be together. It will only be by using the coming years to cultivate resilient, cohesive, cooperative, equitable communities, embedded in the natural world.

Survivalist retreat shuts off the possibility of action. It assumes that there is no longer any chance of preventing catastrophe, that there is nothing left to be done, that no action to reduce our impact will have any effect. While the scientists whose research I read are increasingly desperate, none condone this view. All argue that, even if we were to pull out all stops now and drive the fastest and largest transition in human history, we will still face severe impacts for generations to come.

We will almost certainly lose all corals, including the Great Barrier Reef, for example. Fires, storms, and droughts will continue to get more intense and frequent. Make no mistake, things will be bad. But, if we act fast, it doesn't have to mean extinction. The worst thing to do right now would be to give in to those who want to keep milking profits out of the destruction of our only home. That only makes it less likely that any of us will survive. Retreat, of course, by definition, is only available to a select few.

Just as survivalism makes extinction more likely by cutting off the option of action, dividing our society even further makes societal collapse even more likely. This would be the worst outcome of all.

At this point in history, now that we have locked in ecological disruption on a scale our species has never known, we must learn the lessons of ecology. And the number one lesson is that resilience is the key. Resilience, not dominance, is the real strength, especially in hard times. And the secret to resilience is connected diversity, cohesion, cooperative coexistence.

We humans have the unique capacity to adjust our ways of living to "fit" into a variety of niches or environments, even some quite hostile. Principal among our resources is the empathy and intelligence needed to establish cooperative relationships. Another, is the imagination needed to work out ways and methods to achieve what we need to.

That means that in many ways our most important task

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc.

(SPAC), has been meeting continuously since 1927. It was incorporated in 1979 as a nonprofit, tax deductible organization.



For almost 50 years SPAC has provided free educational programs for its members & the public. For additional information send your emails to: spacexaminer@gmail.com

Meetings are normally held on the fourth Friday of each month (except November & December when it is on the third Friday) at the St. Petersburg College/Gibbs Campus, 6605 5th Ave N, St. Petersburg, FL 33710, at 8:00 P.M. Meetings are open to the public.
Calendar

M.A.R.S. – Tampa Astronomy Club

Welcome to the [Museum Astronomical Resource Society](#), also known as the M.A.R.S. astronomy club. M.A.R.S. is sponsored by the [Museum of Science & Industry \(MOSI\)](#), in Tampa, Florida. We are also members of both the [Astronomical League & Night Sky Network](#). This site provides club news & astronomical information to our membership & to the public.

Whether you are new to astronomy & curious about how to experience it, or a seasoned veteran looking for an active club to spend observation time with. We invite you to attend a meetings as our honored guest.

Monthly meetings are normally held on the 3rd floor of MOSI in the Science Works Theater, & take place on the 2nd Friday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Meetings are free & open to the public.

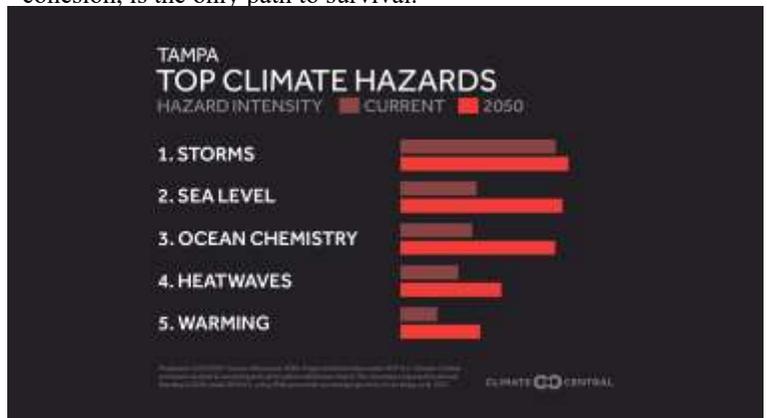
Details & RSVP:

<https://www.meetup.com/MARS-astronomy-club-at-MOSI/>

right now is to build social cohesion while learning to live within natural limits. Luckily, there are ways of making sure that the two go hand in hand. Whether it's urban community agriculture or local sharing and repair groups; whether it's models of participatory democracy like community renewable energy cooperatives; whether it's stripping corporations of the rights of legal personhood unless they properly respect social and environmental norms, supporting worker- and user-owned cooperatives to compete with them, or prioritizing the long-term interests of traditional owners and workers over the profits of fossil fuel corporations; all these point the way towards holding off the worst ecological impacts of climate disruption while building the resilience to avoid the societal collapse it could trigger.

If, at this moment, we turn even more against each other, we have no future. The strongest will survive for a while. Then they, too, will be lost.

In reality, the solution of urban living in harmony with the natural world, brought together with deep democracy and cultivating social cohesion, is the only path to survival.



Atheists of Florida Inc.



For our Atheists helping the Homeless project -

For all meetings: bring, if you can, small bars of unused soap, small bottles of shampoo, heavy duty socks, any kind of personal care items, or money (for bulk purchase of these items).

Ed Golly, Chair - Judy Adkins, Exec. Dir.
See [AoF Meetup](#) for details Website: <http://aof.ngo>

AoF is a comfortable & safe place in which to; find rewarding new friendships, discover hidden potentials, & make a positive contribution to your own humanity as well as that of others. We are pleased to offer legal assistance with church state separation issues as an important focus. For many people, atheism represents the most focused & powerful criticism of the philosophical world-view with which most of us were raised. It is liberating for the same reason it attracts the enmity of those who are committed to the closed & changeless narrative of unexamined traditional beliefs. JP



The broadcast is on hiatus for now. Previous programs are available **on the internet** www.youtube.com/atheistforum. Tune in!
Contact us: info@atheistsoffloridainc.org



St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

Moderated by: Gary Thompson

Contact: easy8@tampabay.rr.com
On the web: <http://atheists.meetup.com/209>

- * Provide intellectual & emotional support to each other & to others in our community who share our philosophy.
- * Foster humanistic moral values & ethical behaviors.
- * Promote a naturalistic worldview wherein beliefs must be verified by a scientific examination of evidence.
- * Defend the separation of church & state *at all levels of government* as guaranteed by the Constitution.
- * "To Smell the Roses Along the Way"

Next meet: Check the meetup site above.

Nov. Events

[Find details by clicking here](#)

meetup

**Nov. TBD.
4PM**

Que Pasa Rest.
10466 Roosevelt Blvd. with
St Pete Atheists

Be sure to check for
changes and RSVP!

**Nov 17th
5PM** (See
Pg. 3) Apple -
bees Largo

Reasons you should join our *new* online realtime meeting....

1. You can learn about current events, history, social scientific news;
2. You can explore ideas and new points of views;
3. You can make new friends, visit with old friends;
4. You can share your knowledge and exercise curiosity;
5. It's interactive, you're not just watching someone talk;
6. It's easy – join using your computer, laptop, tablet, phone;
7. It's convenient, with 2 meetings a month to fit your busy schedule;
8. You can save gas by not having to drive anywhere;
9. You can feel a real sense of community.

10. Best of all it's online and **FREE**...

From AoF; stay tuned for more details.

Register at: <https://www.free2think.org/>

Starts Jan. 8!

David Silverman Returns

David Silverman, the former head of **American Atheists**, will become the next Executive Director of **Atheist Alliance International**, once again giving him a formal position within a movement he departed last year. For more on this, see: <https://friendlyatheist.patheos.com/2019/10/11/despite-misconduct-allegations-david-silverman-is-now-running-an-atheist-group/>

Atheist
COMMUNITY
of Polk County

The Atheist Community of Polk County (ACPC), an affiliate of American Atheists, has launched a campaign supporting homeless and in-transition students in the Polk County Public School (PCPS) District.

"As part of our growing organization's commitment to giving back to our communities, we have been looking at a variety of organizations and charities to support and partner with," said Sarah Ray, co-founder and Director of ACPC. "When we learned that over 3,700 students in our county schools experienced homelessness last school year, our hearts just went out to these kids and we knew the HEARTH Project was something with which we had to be involved. For more, see:

<http://polkatheists.org/> or <https://www.meetup.com/Atheist->

Saturday, October 5th, The Socrates Cafe

An open discussion hosted by **Brent Hardaway**
~ **Forgiveness** ~

Some Psychologists suggest these steps in [forgiving oneself](#):

- Take the time to become ready.
- Talk about what's getting in the way of moving forward.
- Make a commitment to feeling better.
- Realize that one needn't condone or forget what happened, just consider the benefits of freeing oneself and finding peace in life in order to be a better person, to achieve more for oneself and for those one cares about.
- Use stress management techniques when appropriate.

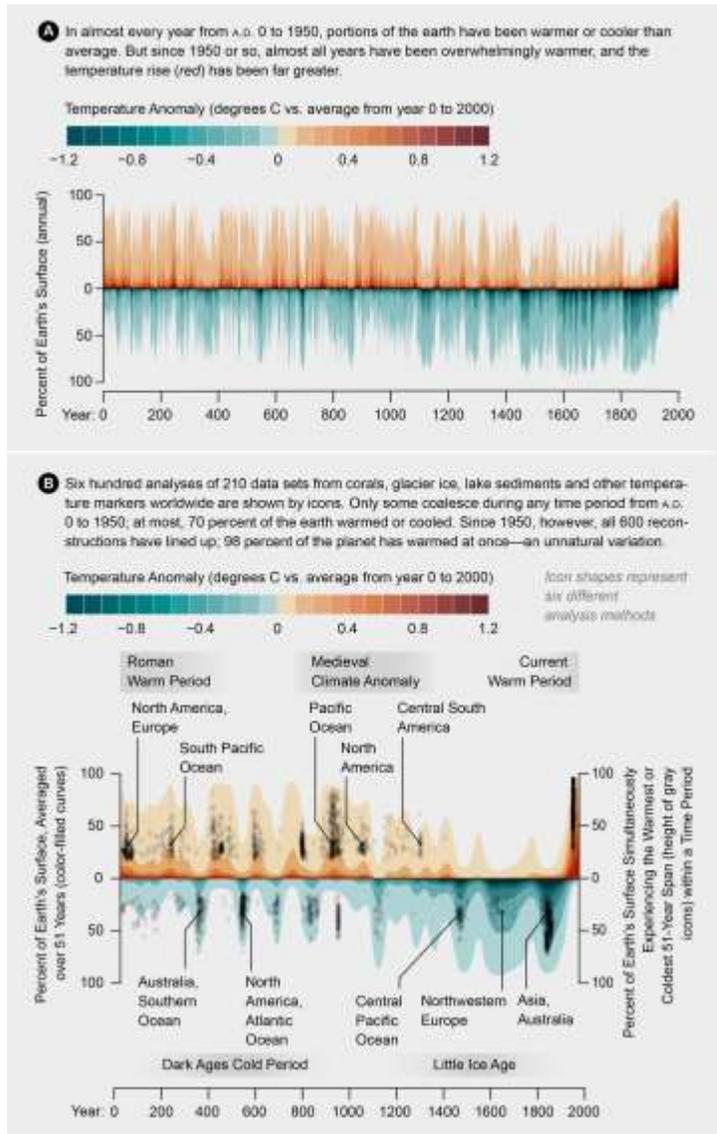
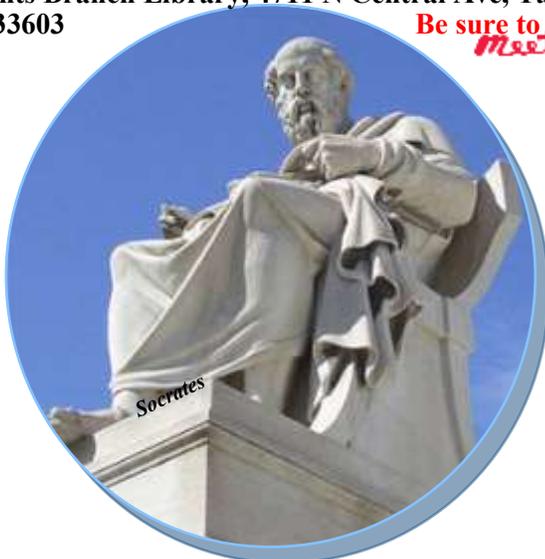
To seek forgiveness from others it is [necessary to empathize](#) with those one has offended and to show it, express sincere remorse by one's words and actions, apologize profoundly and offer to repair what was broken, if possible. Forgiveness is always an option. Some question whether horrible offences should ever be forgiven, e.g. the Holocaust, murder of a child. It's important to remember that forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting or condoning, just releasing bad feelings that are holding one back.

But is forgiveness always the healthier choice? Here again science offers some guidance. [Research with different couples has shown](#) where forgiveness has led to better outcomes and where it has not. In a basically good marriage, forgiveness has been shown to improve relationships, create more satisfaction and more self-respect. But in a more troubled marriage, one where there is physical or verbal abuse, forgiveness given without requiring a change in behavior leads to more abuse, less satisfaction, less self-respect.

Other research conducted with religious believers as subjects have shown similar results. Those engaging in destructive behaviors, such as addiction, were divided into two groups, those who believed god forgives all sinners regardless of their efforts to change their behaviors and those who believed god forgives only those who actively try to change. The latter group was more successful in moving toward equanimity. - JP

Join us for another fascinating discussion, then for dinner/drinks at The Independent (5016 N. Florida Avenue) afterwards! Join us **Oct. 5th at 3 PM in the Seminole Heights Branch Library, 4711 N Central Ave, Tampa, FL, 33603**

Be sure to RSVP!
Meetup



Scientific American clinches the argument for global warming. In the Oct. issue above. For more details, go to: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/global-warming-is-not-part-of-natural-climate-variability/>

Florida faces the nation's highest coastal flooding threat, potentially impacting 3.5 million people. It also has the nation's highest risk of extreme heat by 2050 — only thirty years from now.

This unsettling information was included in a column published earlier this month by Florida's Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried.

As disturbing as these projections may be, they are made worse by the lack of support being provided to the ones who will bear the brunt of what's to come: Florida's youth.

When people think about climate change, their first thought is probably about its effects on the environment, and possibly on physical health. But according to the American Psychological Association, climate change can also take a significant toll on mental health, with the consequences including depression and anxiety.

A July 2019 Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation poll determined that more than seven in 10 teenagers and young adults in the United States say climate change will cause harm to their generation. That includes young people who identify as Democrats and Republicans.



17
years in
Florida

*Rick
O'Keefe,
Branch
Coordinator*



From *ETHICAL OUTLOOK* October 2019

LEADER'S DESK

By DR. RICHARD KORAL

One recent evening, while driving in my car, I was stopped at a red light and I mused about how law abiding I am. There was absolutely no traffic. No cars came along the road where I was stopped, waiting respectfully for the light to turn. Clearly, the traffic regulation does not respect me enough to exercise good judgment. The red light rule is absolute and allows me no discretion. I am required to stop and wait, even if there is no one coming. I've been driving for decades and I can see when the coast is clear and it's safe to go, thank you. More-over, I have to sit and idle my engine, burning gasoline that I purchased with my own money without compensation, all for the public good. That is what is called an "unfunded mandate." So, my rights are clearly curtailed, I am taxed and infantilized by this regulation. But, at the same time, I know that I might not make it across town alive unless I follow the red light rule and can rely on others, generally, to do so, too.

Functioning in a civilized society requires balancing rights. My 45-second inconvenience versus the orderly passage of traffic. Some trade-offs are easier to negotiate than others. But I have been puzzled by the difficulty many people have in balancing rights against safety in the matter of gun control. Many elected officials seem to speak a different language than I do when they explain that gun access needs to be open and unfettered. They and their constituents explain it as a matter of freedom versus oppression. I can't seem to see it that way.

August was a particularly cruel month. There were 53 deaths from "mass shootings" and nearly three times as many people were injured. These include the events in Texas and Dayton, Ohio, the ones in the news. But there were as many as 16 mass shooting events in August as reported by those who keep track. Nevertheless, this is really a distraction. In fact, twice as many people as that have been killed, on average, each and every day by guns. There were almost 40,000 deaths from guns last year and some three times as many were injured. Coincidentally, the numbers of casualties from auto traffic is roughly the same. But cars have other uses. They transport you to work and school and they have radios. Guns, on the other hand, are just designed to put holes in people.

Some 350 years ago, Thomas Hobbes published his book *Leviathan* which explained his contract theory of law. In his telling, people once lived in a violent world of "all against all." It was an awful existence where everyone lived in constant fear of predation by enemies and life was brutish and short. So, to obtain safety and security, people granted a sovereign absolute power in exchange for order. Thus, people compromised freedom of action in exchange for the security in knowing that they would not be victims all the time. We know that Hobbes's

world was a philosophical exercise and that the situation he depicted was an abstract construct. But many people in the gun debate treat it as a reality and say the choices that we face are just that stark. They share stories of shoot-outs and explain the need to be armed and ready for mayhem at every moment.

The challenge in reaching a broader consensus in the gun debate is to get the majority of gun owners, the normal, rational, mentally healthy and civically responsible gun owners, to finally agree that they should give up some of their rights to own certain kinds of firearms so that others who are not so responsible will not have them. Just as I stop at red lights when I don't really need to, but I do so because the broader traffic order needs me to. They must see that society will benefit when they forego the crazy dangerous guns so that others who shouldn't, won't have them, either.

Until regular gun owners see the wisdom of this modest sacrifice and until they wrest the debate away from the loud Leviathans who see mythical predators everywhere, we will not progress. Instead we will descend further and deeper into a society of lock-downs, x-rays, security cameras, ubiquitous guards and active shooter drills - - closer to the world that Hobbes dreamed of.

Why Secular Humanism can do what Atheism can't.

Atheism doesn't offer much beyond non-belief, can Secular Humanism fill the gaps?

By Scotty Hendricks, *Big Think*, 14 August, 2019

Excerpt

Twenty years ago, Robert Putnam argued that Americans were starting to suffer from too much alone time and too little community connection in his book *Bowling Alone*. He wouldn't be shocked by what we see today.

Twenty-two percent of millennials say they have no friends, and the elderly are crippling lonely too. People aren't as involved in community organizations as they used to be. These things are terrible for both our health and communities. While the reasons for this aren't well known, the decline in social capital Putnam described probably has something to do with it.

While the decline of religious belief and attendance at mainstream churches in general isn't the only reason for this decline, the traditional place of religion in American life means that lower church attendance can be a destabilizing factor. Say what you will about churches, they were great generators of social capita.

Read the article here: <http://bit.ly/2JfUsz1>



The “post-truth” era indisputably proves that there is a great need for an organization like the Center for Inquiry, which champions facts, reason, truth, science, and secularism. During a time where ideas are under threat by the changing tides of national and global events, everyone who shares these core values will be needed. CFI needs your help to be part of the solution, to join the good guys. <http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj>

Editorial: **Cosmocrazy, We Hardly Knew Ye**

By Tom Flynn, From: [Volume 39, No. 6, October / November 2019](#)

*For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see
Saw a Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ...
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer
and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.*
—Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Locksley Hall” (1842)

The secular humanist movement has seen broad changes over the decades. Consider, for example, cosmocracy. If the word is unfamiliar, *world federalism* or *one-worldism* may be better recognized: the advocacy (often, the hopeful expectation) that sovereign national governments will eventually subject themselves to a *supranational* order. Cosmocrazy was a popular enthusiasm among secular humanists (and many other social reformers) after World War II. But its roots are far older. Pop quiz, who wrote this?

I believe at some future day, the nations of the earth will agree on some sort of congress which will take cognizance of international questions of difficulty and whose decisions will be as binding as the decisions of the Supreme Court are upon us.

The words, amazingly enough, are those of Ulysses S. Grant in 1873, when he was president of the United States.

At a national freethought conference held in August 1878 at Watkins (now Watkins Glen), New York, Vermont freethinker Lucian Scott gave an address in which he foresaw “an international system of police of sufficient force to keep the peace of the world, and let the nations and the churches fight out their battle with the force of logic in the halls of legislation and the schools of learning.”

At the turn of the twentieth century, H. G. Wells imagined a future “world state” ensuring peace and human welfare. (Okay, it was a world state comprising only the globe’s English-speaking countries, but still.) When the League of Nations rose from the ashes of World War I, idealists hoped it might develop into a world state. But the Great Powers were loath to share the tools of military coercion, so the world body collapsed after its impotence in the face of fascism became manifest.

As World War II ground on, the dream of world government gained renewed momentum. It came to be called “world federalism,” because it envisioned national governments subordinating themselves to a world body rather than American states were subordinate to their federal government. U.S.

presidential aspirant Wendell Willkie published a manifesto titled *One World* in 1943. It sold two million copies, empowering the movement to spread its wings at war’s end in 1945. In that year, Hungarian writer Emery Reves published *The Anatomy of Peace*, which called for replacing the just-founded United Nations with a world government capable of exerting force. By 1949, the American world-federalist movement claimed 47,000 members. Its international counterpart, the World Federalist Movement, claimed 156,000 members in twenty-two nations.

Then came the Korean War and the ascendance of Cold War ideology. Though supranationalist thinking lost much of its luster, some thinkers and activists continued to cherish it.

One of them was Free Inquiry founder Paul Kurtz. The one-world ideal was strong with him in 1973, when he led the drafting of *Humanist Manifesto II*. The successor to the first *Humanist Manifesto* (1933), Manifesto II abandoned its predecessor’s view of humanism as a new religion, replacing it with an entirely secular vision. It also declared that “war is obsolete” and contained passages such as this:

TWELFTH: We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward ... a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government

It might not surprise you to know that Kurtz was a member of the World Federalist Society at the time he founded the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism* and Free Inquiry in 1980. Though I don’t recall his using the word, Kurtz remained a passionate cosmocrat. In 1988, he wrote:

... we have not yet learned to control warfare between ... nation-states, for there does not exist any supranational sovereignty with sufficient moral authority to keep the peace. It is imperative that such a sovereignty be created. As a first step, humankind needs to establish a system of world law and to endow the World Court with enough moral force and teeth so that its jurisdiction is recognized by all the nation-states of the world.**

In a 1992 editorial, he called not only for world government but for a more literal kind of human universalism:

Travel and intercommunication are so widespread that we are becoming, though some may protest, co-citizens of ...

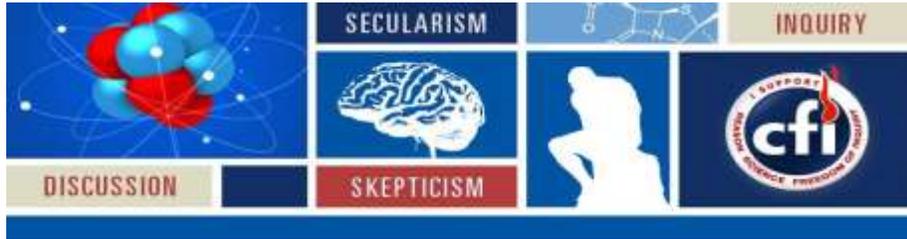
Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2Jht1F3>

*Being all-volunteer means CFI urgently needs volunteers, members,
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we succeed.

The Importance of Organized Secularism in Politics

<http://bit.ly/31U0mwN>

BY [JUHEM NAVARRO-RIVERA](#) • 22 OCTOBER 2019

Despite making up almost a quarter of the US adult population, people with no religion (the “nones”) are underrepresented in politics. According to the Pew Research Center’s “Faith on the Hill” report, few members of Congress are openly nonreligious, and, as highlighted by the Center for Freethought Equality, the numbers are also not particularly high at the state and local levels. (Thanks to CFE’s work, the situation is starting to change.)

The underrepresentation of the nones is not just limited to elected office. Analyses of the relative size of religious groups in the electorate and the general population using exit poll results suggest that the nones are also underrepresented among voters. In 2016, they accounted for 23 percent of the adult population but just 15 percent of voters. All these factors combine to limit the political power of the nones. A recent study suggests that secular organizations can help close the political power gap.

population; all subsets of ‘nones’ are growing

These are among the key findings of a new analysis of trends in the religious composition and churchgoing habits of the American public, based on recent Pew Research Center random-digit-dial (RDD) political polling on the telephone. The data shows that the trend toward religious disaffiliation documented in the Center’s 2007 and 2014 Religious Landscape Studies, and before that in major national studies like the General Social Survey (GSS), has continued apace.



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In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace

An update on America’s changing religious landscape

In U.S., smaller share of adults identify as Christians, while religious ‘nones’ have grown. The religious landscape of the United States continues to change at a rapid clip. In Pew Research Center telephone surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, 65% of American adults describe themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, down 12 percentage points over the past decade. Meanwhile, the religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular,” now stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009.

Both Protestantism and Catholicism are experiencing losses of population share. Currently, 43% of U.S. adults identify with Protestantism, down from 51% in 2009. And one-in-five adults (20%) are Catholic, down from 23% in 2009. Meanwhile, all subsets of the religiously unaffiliated population – a group also known as religious “nones” – have seen their numbers swell. Self-described atheists now account for 4% of U.S. adults, up modestly but significantly from 2% in 2009; agnostics make up 5% of U.S. adults, up from 3% a decade ago; and 17% of Americans now describe their religion as “nothing in particular,” up from 12% in 2009. Members of non-Christian religions also have grown modestly as a share of the adult population.

Protestants and Catholics shrinking as share of U.S.

What’s coming up in November?

Brandon—Thank Goodness for Godless Friday Nights
E. Clearwater—Howard’s Skeptic’s Corner
Brandon—CFI’s Sunday skeptics Brunch
N. Pinellas—CFI Monthly Dinner
E. Clearwater—S.H.A.R.E. Book Club

For info & to **RSVP** (required) <http://bit.ly/2kZTAFI>





The **Center for Inquiry (CFI)** leads the charge on promoting science, reason, critical thinking, and humanist values.

CFI's vision is a world in which evidence, science, and compassion—rather than superstition, pseudoscience, or prejudice—guide **public policy**.

What is a Scientific Theory?

By Glenn R. Anderson on Quora

According to the American Association for the Advancement of Science:

A scientific theory is a well-substantiated explanation of some aspect of the natural world, based on a body of facts that have been repeatedly confirmed through observation and experiment. Such fact-supported theories are not "guesses" but reliable accounts of the real world. The theory of biological evolution is more than "just a theory". It is as factual an explanation of the universe as the atomic theory of matter or the germ theory of disease. Our understanding of gravity is still a work in progress. But the phenomenon of gravity, like evolution, is an accepted fact.

The vast majority of the scientifically illiterate who misunderstand the term "theory" have absolutely no interest in rectifying their ignorance.

Networks of Opposition: A Structural Analysis of U.S. Climate Change Countermovement Coalitions 1989–2015

Robert J. Brulle <https://buff.ly/35YgOP5>
<https://buff.ly/35TA001>

Abstract

The climate change countermovement (CCCM) in the United States has exerted an important influence on delaying efforts to address climate change. Analyses of this countermovement have primarily focused on the role of conservative think tanks. Expanding this research, this article initiates an examination of the structure of key political coalitions that worked to oppose climate action. In conjunction with their allied trade associations, these coalitions have served as a central coordination mechanism in efforts opposed to mandatory limits on carbon emissions. These coalitions pool resources from a large number of corporations and execute sophisticated political and cultural campaigns designed to oppose efforts to address climate change. Through an analysis of twelve prominent CCCM coalitions from 1989 to 2015, I show that over 2,000 organizations were members of these

coalitions and that a core of 179 organizations belonged to multiple coalitions. Organizations from the coal and electrical utility sectors were the most numerous and influential organizations in these coalitions. The article concludes with suggestions for further research to expand understanding of complex social movements and countermovements.

Full article: <http://bit.ly/2N3LFBI>

Here's What the Framers of the Constitution Had to Say About Impeachment

By Thom Hartmann, OpEdNews Op Eds 10/11/2019

There has been much discussion about what the framers of the Constitution thought about impeachment of the president, particularly given the wide range of impeachable things Trump has done, and the debate around whether impeaching him is consistent with the thoughts of the men who wrote the Constitution's impeachment clause. (At the time, they'd not yet settled on the term "president" so they referred to the president at the "executive" or "magistrate.")

Here are the framers' own words, recorded by the hand of James Madison, in Philadelphia on Friday, July 20, 1787, during the Constitutional Convention.

Read the full article here: <http://bit.ly/2MzidTx>

List of Fake News Websites:

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The list:

<http://bit.ly/2vvrXbb>

New & Beautiful ~

- ◆ *Free Inquiry* Magazine and Council for Secular Humanism
<https://secularhumanism.org/>
- ◆ *Skeptical Inquirer* Magazine and Committee for Skeptical Inquiry
<https://skepticalinquirer.org/>
- ◆ *The Humanist* <https://thehumanist.com/>

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) strives to foster a society free of the dogmatic influence of religion and pseudoscience; a society inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment, the wonders of science, and the limitless potential of human intelligence and creativity; a society in which beliefs are not granted the same rights as people, where the freedom of expression is enjoyed by all, and all ideas are open to the scrutiny of reason. Secular government. Free inquiry. Critical thinking. Humanist values. This is the Center for Inquiry. *Join us or donate, we need you* —
<http://bit.ly/2pTDFej>



Founded in 1988 by **Gary P. Posner, M.D.**, **Tampa Bay Skeptics** is a nonprofit educational & scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of paranormal & fringe-science claims, & the dissemination of factual information about such claims. [Read More!](#)



Characteristics of Pseudoscience

By Russell Turpin,
Originally published in SRAM Vol. 6, No. 2

This paper is another in a series of papers we will publish in the Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine examining principles that help to identify pseudoscientific aspects of sectarian medical systems and anomalous methods. —Eds.

Reading discussions over controversial empirical claims, an unsophisticated reader could easily walk away with the view that only tradition and prejudice separate the sparring factions. Such a reader might think that most scientists cast a skeptical eye on paranormal phenomena, the claims for homeopathic dilution, the idea that the earth is relatively young, and so on, merely because these scientists were taught opposing claims. Such critics merely engage in “school of thought bashing.” I think this view is wrong. I think it stems, in part, from an inadequate understanding of how to evaluate evidence. The evidential claims for many of these controversial notions exhibit common flaws. They are the kinds of flaws that scientists recognize from many, many past failures. It is this history of dead ends that seduced previous researchers with flawed evidence that informs the way scientists evaluate the evidential claims accompanying these controversial notions. In this article, I will first list some of these evidential flaws and then discuss errors in relating evidence to theory. Of necessity, this is a short list that omits most such problems. It is largely biased by what I have seen in newsgroup discussions. (A true survey would require a book, of the order that David Fischer wrote for historians.) Finally, I will discuss when mere mistakes (which plague every research direction) turn into quackery.

EVIDENTIAL FLAWS

In the foreground of such controversies are the various studies and experiments published in journals or elsewhere. Various professional posters in the science newsgroups often complain about readers who read all such studies and experiments as if they were the same. The problems listed below are a small sampling of the kinds of issues that the critical eye brings to the reading of these studies and experiments. (I purposely omit particular issues of experimental design and statistical analysis.)

Read the article here: <http://bit.ly/2o5kNZb>

Tricks of the trade

By Phillip Adams, @phillipadams_1
[The Weekend Australian Magazine](#)

His stage name? “The Amazing Randi.” Made him sound like a porn star. But James Randi was and remains one of the world’s most famous magicians, a big influence on the likes of Penn and Teller. Not only because of his technical mastery of the black arts of conjuring and illusion but because of his work in debunking frauds like the spoon-bending Uri Geller.

Whenever scientists found themselves baffled by Uri or his ilk they’d call in Canadian-American Randi, who’d promptly replicate the “psychic phenomenon” that seemed to be occurring in the laboratory. Psychokinesis? Telepathy? Distant viewing? All cons, like the goings-on in séances or the cold readings of a Doris Stokes or “talking to the dead” on the telly.

Randi, now 91, was key to the success of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (now known as the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry), a body with Nobel laureates by the dozen. Alarmed by everything from “psychic surgery” to the fad in ufology, Dick Smith and I wanted to see a similar body here; as the first step in establishing the Australian Skeptics, we brought Randi to Australia. Among our first efforts: the debunking of water divining.

Dick, Richard Carleton and I contributed to a large cash prize for anyone who could “divine” water under test conditions. The crème de la crème of Oz diviners tried... and utterly failed. Over the years our prize money grew, ready to be won by anyone who could demonstrate any psychic power whatever. Many tried – spoon-benders and the rest of the psychic circus. Nobody won. Later, Randi’s US supporters increased the prize to a million dollars. The cheque remains uncashed.

But let me describe Randi’s demo of psychokinesis – moving an object with the power of the mind – the day we met in Dick’s office. He plucked a cigarette I was about to light from my lips (“dirty habit!”) and placed it on Dick’s desk. Then, as a dozen journo and cameramen crowded around Randi, he extended vibrating fingers towards my Marlboro. And it began to move! Up and down the desk! When Randi asked us to guess how he’d done it, everyone had a theory – mostly involving static electricity. “No,” he said. “While your eyes and cameras were on the gap between my fingertips and the cigarette... I was blowing it. Simple as that. And none of you trained observers noticed.”

The classic art of misdirection. Crucial to conjurers. A second or two of distraction is all Randi needs to blow a cigarette – or for David Copperfield to make the Statue of Liberty disappear right before your eyes. I’ve seen him do it. It’s also the basic tool of political performance. Distract, dissemble, avoid the question, change the subject. Like a kid flipping cards on a NYC pavement, politicians are masters of misdirection.

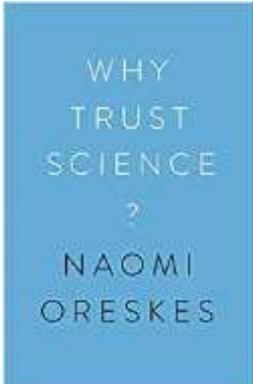
We must always be sceptical of all who would con us – not only conjurers like Geller but also the entrepreneurs, evangelists and influencers who want your money. And even more sceptical of the politicians who want to rule our lives. The World Champion Misdirector? Trump, using outrageous tweets to distract from what he’s really up to. Misdirection made him POTUS.

So the three lessons of my Marlboro? 1. Join the Australian Skeptics. 2. Give up smoking. 3. Watch the lips of politicians – when they’re moving, they’re probably lying. But one thing is absolutely 100 per cent. They’ll be blowing.

“Ben Franklin said it well: “Quacks are the greatest liars in the world, except their patients.” – James Randi, [Flim-Flam! Psychics, ESP,](#)

Recommended Reading

Click on the book's image for more info



Why the social character of scientific knowledge makes it trustworthy

Do doctors really know what they are talking about when they tell us vaccines are safe? Should we take climate experts at their word when they warn us about the perils of global warming? Why should we trust science when our own politicians don't? In this landmark book, Naomi Oreskes offers a bold and compelling defense of science, revealing why the social character of scientific knowledge is its greatest strength—and the greatest reason we can trust it.

Tracing the history and philosophy of science from the late nineteenth century to today, Oreskes explains that, contrary to popular belief, there is no single scientific method. Rather, the trustworthiness of scientific claims derives from the social process by which they are rigorously vetted. This process is not perfect—nothing ever is when humans are involved—but she draws vital lessons from cases where scientists got it wrong. Oreskes shows how consensus is a crucial indicator of when a scientific matter has been settled, and when the knowledge produced is likely to be trustworthy.

Based on the Tanner Lectures on Human Values at Princeton University, this timely and provocative book features critical responses by climate experts Ottmar Edenhofer and Martin Kowarsch, political scientist Jon Krosnick, philosopher of science Marc Lange, and science historian Susan Lindee, as well as a foreword by political theorist Stephen Macedo.

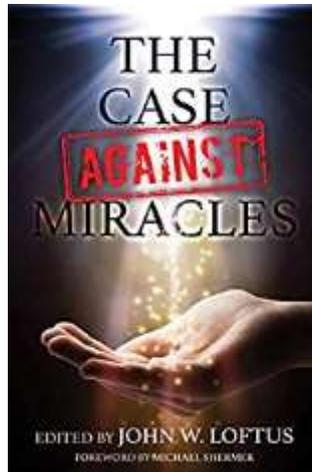
For as long as the idea of “miracles” has been in the public sphere, the conversation about them has been shaped exclusively by religious apologists and Christian leaders. The definitions for what a miracles are have been forged by the same men who fought hard to promote their own beliefs as fitting under that umbrella. It's time for a change.

Enter John W. Loftus, an atheist author who has earned three master's degrees from Lincoln Christian Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Loftus, a former student of noted Christian apologist William Lane Craig, got some of the biggest names in the field to contribute to this book, which represents a critical analysis of the very idea of miracles.

Incorporating his own thoughts along with those of noted academics, philosophers, and theologians, Loftus is able to properly define “miracle” and then show why there's no reason to believe such a thing even exists.

Addressing every single issue that touches on miracles in a thorough and academic manner, this compilation represents the most extensive look at the phenomenon ever displayed through the lens of an ardent non-believer.

If you've ever wondered exactly what a miracle is, or doubted whether they exist, then this book is for you.



The white power movement in America wants a revolution. Returning to a country ripped apart by a war they felt they were not allowed to win, a small group of Vietnam veterans and disgruntled civilians who shared their virulent anti-communism and potent sense of betrayal concluded that waging war on their own country was justified. The command structure of their covert movement gave women a prominent place. They operated with discipline, made tragic headlines in Waco, Ruby Ridge, and Oklahoma City, and are resurgent under President Trump.

Based on a decade of deep immersion in previously classified FBI files and on extensive interviews, Kathleen Belew's *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Harvard) tells the story of American paramilitarism and the birth of the alt-right.



The Matt Cooper

Humanist Lending Library

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TITLE AUTHOR

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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 Niose
20. God on Trial Peter Irons
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56. Demon Haunted World Carl Sagan
57. Being Right Is Not Enough Paul Waldman
58. Loser Takes All Mark Crispin Miller
59. Taking Back Politics Cathy Allen
60. Spiritual Common Sense Mark Lindquist (Gift by author)
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63. 12 Vol Complete Works Robert Ingersoll
64. On Religious Liberty Roger Williams & Davis
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66. Inevitable Illusions M. Piatrelli-Palmarini
67. Ain't Nobody's business If You Do Peter McWilliams
69. Bonk Mary Roach
70. What Money Can't Buy Michael J. Sandel
71. Financial Shenanigans Howard Shilit
72. Sex & God Darrel Ray, ED.D
73. Best American Non required Reading Dave Eagers
74. Reporting at Wit's End St. Clair McKelway
75. Corporations are not People Clements
76. Could I Vote Mormon for president? Cragun – Phillips
77. Culture of Honor Nisbett – Cohen
78. Rot on the Vine Stenes
79. Thoughts of a Freethinker New Kaye * Essential works
80. An Atheist Stranger by Herb Silverman
81. Candidate without a prayer- Herb Silverman



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The mission of the **Secular Coalition for Florida** is to increase the visibility of, and respect for, non-theistic view-points in the State, and to protect



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Bill Norsworthy, is our Florida representative.

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As our government undergoes its seemingly perpetual crises, the secular coalition is needed to remind citizens & officials alike that ours is indeed a secular society. But to preserve its character from the predations of zealots, *requires your involvement.*

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Nov. 6 - Jeffrey Kripal: **Biological Gods: UFOs, Science Fiction, & Emergent Mythologies**

Location: TECO Room; Education Building, USF

Time: 6:00 pm.

More: <https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/institutes/humanities/events/>



The Crafty Freethinker ...

I am a Yorkshire lass born and bred, currently living in the Sunshine State. Maker of fine Secular Jewelry, many pieces of my own design and using the best material.

I am a lifelong freethinker. My work can be seen by clicking on the image above.



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Monday, Nov. 11th 2019

Topic:

For more info, See our Meetup site: www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers

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*, & her latest book, *The Bully Vaccine*.

Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. These are opportunities to do something fun, socialize & 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 & 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 & 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**: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HumanistFamiliesTampa/> See more at: <http://www.Jen-Hancock.com>.

Thanks, *Jennifer Hancock*



USF Freethinkers

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Freethinkers@USF is a cosmopolitan collective of USF students promoting critical thinking & pluralism through dialogue & reasonable inquiry. Join the official group and vote on upcoming discussions:

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TB-CoR Encourages

Ethical Humanism

Ethical Humanism, also called Ethical Culture, is an evolving body of ideas that inspires Ethical Societies. Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity (**Humanist Manifesto III**). For Ethical Humanists, the ultimate religious questions are not about the existence of gods or an afterlife, but rather, "How can we create meaningfulness in this life?" and "How should we treat each other?" The American Ethical Union was founded in 1877 by Felix Adler in New York, and currently has over 30 member societies.

Organizer **Bart Worden** hopes to get a local Meetup group started soon. Watch these pages.



Tampa Bay Technology Center & Thinkers Salon



We repair our member's computers - Free!

Lectures, discussions, & hands-on demonstrations of the humane use of technology. Our new address is 2189 Cleveland Street, Suite 229, Clearwater FL 33765. [Map](#)

Check out *Thinker's Salon* a forum for serious social & scientific ideas & issues.

Find us at:
www.tampa-bay.org

The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers



The **MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH)** community was created for atheist & secular humanist military personnel stationed at MacDill Air Force Base, their families & retired military residing in the Tampa Bay area. MASH provides a valuable & much needed resource in which you will find common ground to socialize, discuss issues, & draw emotional support from like-minded members.

Local Contact: Chris
(christbrown@yahoo.com)
MSgt, USAF (Retired)

Co-Organizer:

MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB

BLACK MUSIC, SKEPTICISM, HUMANISM AND SECULARISM



By **Norm R. Allen Jr.**
Institute for Science and Human Values

June is African American Music Appreciation Month. (It was originally designated as Black Music Month on June 7, 1979 by President Jimmy Carter. President Obama gave it the present designation in 2009. By the way, June is also LGBT Pride Month.)

African Americans have contributed greatly to music. They were among the founders of blues, jazz, rock and roll, disco, rap and other genres. Musicians such as Little Richard heavily influenced the Beatles. Musicians such as Muddy Waters heavily influenced the Rolling Stones. (In fact, Rolling Stone magazine and the Rolling Stones are both named after Waters' 1950 hit "Rollin' Stone.") The blues might be the best place to start a discussion about black music and secularism. Indeed, blues music is secular, and some of it has been downright blasphemous, even questioning the very existence of God. Religious Blacks used to call it devil music.

There have also been some popular songs with secular or skeptical themes in other genres. Stevie Wonder's hit song "Superstition" has been popular among skeptics. Stevie talks about "writings on the wall," the number 13, the idea that breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck, and even mentions the devil, as though there might be reason to be skeptical of the great demon. His most memorable line in the song is: "When you believe in things that you don't understand, then you suffer. Superstition ain't the way."

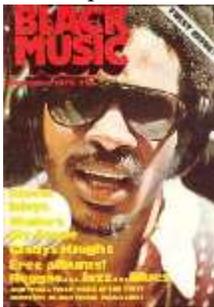
Paul Kurtz couldn't have said it any better. Speaking of Kurtz, the late philosopher and humanist giant used to love the song "We Are the World," written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie. The song was performed by Jackson, Ritchie and other popular American musical superstars making up USA for Africa, in order to combat starvation on that continent.

Kurtz considered the song to be a humanist anthem because it is completely secular and human-centered. Human beings are told that it is up to them to make a choice to save the lives of their fellow human beings. This is consistent with the humanist saying that no God will save us, we must save ourselves. Or as Robert Ingersoll said, "Hands that help are better far than lips that pray."

Another favorite song of skeptics is the rap group Public Enemy's "Don't Believe the Hype." Though the song does not deal with religion or skepticism of paranormal claims, it advises listeners to be skeptical of mainstream media and to question what they are told by the powers that be.

There have been great Black secular musicians. In 1900, James Weldon Johnson penned what has become known as the Negro National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Though the song is religious, Johnson was a humanist. However, like the humanist poet Langston Hughes and other nonreligious Black artists, Johnson was strongly attracted to the drama of Black religion.

The great jazz saxophonist Charlie Parker was also nonreligious. Parker, who used to practice on his horn for up to 14 hours per day,



was one of the creators of bebop. He and master trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie combined to form one of the greatest horn duos of all time.

There have been many outspoken atheist rappers throughout the U.S. They include Greydon Square, the Freethought MC, Charlie Check'm and many others. In the 1990s, there was an atheist rap group in northern California that used to attend organized atheist gatherings. The Lifesavas is a humanist rap group from Portland, Oregon that has been around at least since 2003.

Among the big-name rappers, KRS-One has called himself a humanist. However, Black humanist scholar Anthony Pinn does not agree with this position. In his book *Noise and Spirit: The Religious and Spiritual Sensibilities of Rap Music*, Pinn relates:

What KRS-One offers... is a human-centered theistic orientation. Such an approach involves tension between divinity and humanity whereby the accountability shouldered by humans for the furtherance of human fulfillment is highlighted – but within the context of a divine presence in the world. (p. 89)

Pinn goes on to say that the rapper actually embraces a "radical humanitarianism, based on a fundamental appreciation for humankind, as opposed to humanism." (p. 90)

In his book *Writing God's Obituary: How a Good Methodist Became a Better Atheist*, Pinn discusses the blues:

Blues figures and church figures both encountered injustice and adverse circumstances, but while church figures seek assistance from God or find a way to make their predicament a source of inspiration and even joy, blues figures "keep on keeping on." The blues sees nothing special, no cosmic plan expressed in human misery. It's just the shit we encounter and that we have to move through.

Conservative religionists are always at the forefront of attacks against music – even gospel music that they do not consider to be sacred enough. However, musicians will continue to unapologetically make great music for the masses. There's no turning back now.

Norm R. Allen Jr. is the editor of two ground-breaking books,

- **AFRICAN-AMERICAN HUMANISM: AN ANTHOLOGY**
- **THE BLACK HUMANIST EXPERIENCE: AN ALTERNATIVE TO RELIGION.**
- He is currently writing a third book, **SECULAR, SUCCESSFUL and BLACK: 25 PROFILES.**

For 21 years, Allen had been the first and only full-time African American secular humanist to travel the world promoting secular humanism. He has spoken on numerous radio and television shows including National Public Radio, and strengthened 72 humanist groups in 30 African nations. His writings have appeared in numerous books and encyclopedias, including *VOICES FOR EVOLUTION*, published by the National Center for Science Education.



Ruth Brown (1928-2006) was known as the Queen of R&B, crusaded for musicians rights. "Teardrops from my Eyes" became a hit in 1950. She used her platform to draw attention to human rights.

Politics Anyone? Share your Opinions

Hello Secular Friends,

In the last few months, I've been working on launching a new project: The Secular Voices Panel. This will be a survey of nonreligious folk (atheists, agnostics, nones, or religious nontheists) about politics and the 2020 Elections. We're recruiting participants now and the plan is that from January to December they will get one short survey each month (no need to collect demographics since they will be pre-collected) about a specific theme, and also some horseshoe questions that will be repeated and adapted as the Presidential field gets clearer.

The link to join the [panel is here](#).

Thanks for your time.

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Thanks to Dr. Ryan Cragun



“Under God” wasn’t part of the original Pledge of Allegiance. Those two words were added to the Pledge in 1954, when the country was in the grip of McCarthyism and communist witch-hunt hysteria.

Before 1954, the Pledge affirmed that we were “one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Indivisible means we can rise above our differences, religious or otherwise. Liberty means the right to act and speak freely no matter what one’s faith or philosophy may be. And Justice, of course, means equal rights for all, regardless of whether or not we believe in a deity. The Knights of Columbus – a Catholic men’s group – led the lobbying effort to add “under God.” Now the Pledge is twisted, with divisive religious language that implies true patriots must be believers.

With “under God” added, the Pledge is not a statement of patriotism. Instead, extremist preachers and politicians point to the language to validate their view that those who don’t believe in God don’t belong. Religious or not, don’t say this altered Pledge. Until the Pledge is restored to its inclusive version, we can take it upon ourselves to refuse to

Foundation beyond Belief



Weathering the storms: Nearly 70,000 residents of the Bahamas were rendered homeless by Hurricane Dorian in September. So far, 600 remain missing and 56 are counted dead. The country reports 1.5 billion pounds of debris needs to be cleaned in one community alone.

The good news is that humanists responded in a big way, donating over \$22,000 in less than a month to our Humanist Disaster Recovery appeal for Dorian!

[Our appeal remains open](#), as we continue to monitor other storms, which so far have not posed a significant threat to communities.



Next Lecture: Monday, November 4, 2019

Speaker: Alan Grindal, MD

Topic: The Aging Brain: Realities and Opportunities.

For more news and activities, see:
<https://www.husbay.org/index.htm>

participate in what’s become a discriminatory exercise. (Note: A Supreme Court case – West Virginia vs. Barnette – gives public school students the absolute right to sit out the Pledge, for any reason. Public schools might not tell you about this right, but if anyone questions you about sitting out the Pledge, contact the AHA’s Legal Center.)

Whether you are religious or not, you can make a statement for true inclusiveness. Support liberty and justice for all, and support indivisibility. Stand up for America by sitting down during the Pledge of Allegiance boycott until the inclusive version is restored.

[Learn more at boycottthepledge.com](http://boycottthepledge.com)

Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

Join the Freethought Organizations of the Tampa Bay Area: groups that promote serious secular discussion & activity about important issues in our area & beyond.

Substantive & exciting new activities are now offered to the Tampa Bay area that were not possible for most organizations before.

Every year we sponsor events as Darwin Day in February, Solstice day in December, and other activities all year long.

We are especially grateful to the national office of the United Coalition of Reason & its director, Sarah Levin.

You may recall that UCoR was the major impetus to getting a large number of billboards erected in Tampa Bay & across the nation with such messages as “You can be good without God. Millions are!”

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

As this momentum continues to grow, we will keep you informed of developments .
JP

Contact:

council@tampabaycor.net

Or see, <http://tampabaycor.net/>

Northern Ireland legalizes Abortion

Northern Ireland Humanists and Humanists UK, which have campaigned for decades on legal [same-sex marriages and abortion in Northern Ireland](#), said it is an ‘extraordinary’ moment for LGBT and women’s rights. Northern Ireland Humanists looks forward to providing legal same-sex marriages as soon as the new law comes into force.

Earlier this year, the UK Parliament [passed an Act](#) that pushes through the reforms at midnight tonight. The same-sex marriage law is expected to come into force in February and abortion by April.

Same-sex marriages: Northern Ireland Humanists welcomed the move to legalise same-sex marriages. It has long campaigned for equality for same-sex couples and already conducts non-legal humanist ceremonies which have been growing in popularity amongst same-sex couples in Northern Ireland.

Abortion: The UK Government’s new [guidance on abortion](#) in Northern Ireland states that no criminal charges can be brought against those who have had an abortion, or against doctors and other healthcare professionals who provide and assist in an abortion.

Northern Ireland Humanists supports legal and safe access to abortions for people in Northern Ireland and believes no-one should face criminal sanctions for procuring an abortion. It also supports buffer zones around clinics to protect vulnerable women and staff from harassment. Recently, it intervened in the case of [Sarah Ewart](#), a Belfast woman who was denied an abortion in spite of having a fatal foetal abnormality.

Northern Ireland Humanists coordinator Boyd Sleator commented:

‘Tonight will mark an extraordinary moment for LGBT people and women after decades of fighting for these important rights. For the first time, women in Northern Ireland will be able to make their own choices about their bodies without fear of being prosecuted for doing so.

‘LGBT people will be allowed to legally marry the person they love after years of being treated terribly by politicians and religious organisations who have conspired together to deny them their human rights. This is a huge day for them, and we celebrate in unity with all LGBT people. We look forward to providing legal same-sex marriages as soon as the new provisions come into force.

‘However, work has not finished: over the coming months we need to closely watch the legislation to ensure that these rights promised to women and LGBT people are delivered in full.’
For more see: <https://humanism.org.uk/news/>



TBCoR Leadership Team 2019

Judy Adkins
AoF

Bill Norsworthy,
UUCH

Mark Brandt,
UUCH

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MAF

Jenn Hancock,
GTBHF

Rick O'Keefe,
CFI, TBS

Jim Peterson - Facilitator
HSS, TBPC

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Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – November, 2019 Calendar

This is produced from preliminary information. Check the individual Web sites to insure the event is being held, when & where We are not liable for changes, errors, or omissions.
 Compiled by Rick O'Keefe & Jim Peterson. Your RSVP is requested, & often is required for admittance.
 See our Meetup site for more: www.meetup.com/Tampa-Bay-Coalition-of-Reason



Various Sundays, 2 PM; & Friday nights	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Freethought Social & Godless Friday Nights	Skeptical interests with critical thinkers. Click to RSVP : http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	            
TBA – various activities	TRI-COUNTY – Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup	
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc..	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
2nd Saturday, 2 PM see Pg. 2 3rd Sunday -Dinner see Pg. 3.	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists Now on the 2nd Saturday at 2 PM !	
3rd Sunday, 12:30 PM	E. CLEARWATER– UU Clearwater Humanists	Details: http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists	
TBA – various astronomy activities at MOSI	E. TAMPA– Museum Astronomical Resource Society (MARS) at MOSI	Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi Other events: http://bit.ly/MARS-home	
TBA - numerous events—this semester	E. TAMPA– Humanities Institute at USF	See Web site for full listing of many events & calendar. http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities Locations vary! Page 12.	
4th Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	RSVP is required. Seating is limited to 25! <i>For CFI & TBS paid members.</i> http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
3rd Saturday, 11 AM	N TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & RSVP : No program this month! http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists	
Various Saturdays	NE CLEARWATER – CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to <i>10 paid-up CFI members.</i> RSVP is required. Must have read the book under discussion to attend. http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
3rd Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. RSVP here: http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers	
4 th Friday, 8 PM general meeting. Many more events monthly.	ST. PETERSBURG– Astronomy Club	For several dates, locations, & details: http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar	
Various Saturdays/Sundays plus various other times/venues	TAMPA BAY REGION– Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay	Details & RSVP http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I	
TBA – various activities	TAMPA BAY REGION– Humanist Families	RSVP here: Family outings & other activities. Details & RSVP : http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN	

Read more on the web at: www.tampabaycor.net

Does Religion Restrain Violence

Whenever tragedy strikes in America, some conservative politician or pundit will inevitably blame it on secularism. In the aftermath of the shooting at Umpqua Community College, for example, Fox host Bill O'Reilly cited weakening religion as the culprit. "As the world becomes more secular," he declared, "civilized restraints to bad behavior drop." Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee offered similar sentiments after the 2012 school shooting in Newtown, Conn., blaming such wanton violence on the fact that "we have systematically removed God from our schools."

If it were true that when belief in God weakens, societal well-being diminishes, then we should see abundant evidence for this. But we don't. In fact, we find just the opposite: Those societies today that are the most religious — where faith in God is strong and religious participation is high — tend to have the highest violent crime rates, while those societies in which faith and church attendance are the weakest — the most secular societies — tend to have the lowest.

We can start at the international level. The most secular societies today include Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Czech Republic, Estonia, Japan, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, South Korea, New Zealand, Australia, Vietnam, Hungary, China and Belgium. The most religious societies include Nigeria, Uganda, the Philippines, Pakistan, Morocco, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Colombia, Senegal, Malawi, Indonesia, Brazil, Peru, Jordan, Algeria, Ghana, Venezuela, Mexico and Sierra Leone.

It is the highly secularized countries that tend to fare the best in terms of crime rates, prosperity, equality, freedom, democracy, women's rights, human rights, educational attainment and life expectancy. (Although there are exceptions, such as Vietnam and China, which have famously poor human rights records.) And those nations with the highest rates of religiosity tend to be the most problem-ridden in terms of high violent crime rates, high infant mortality rates, high poverty rates and high rates of corruption.

Take homicide. According to the United Nations' 2011 Global Study on Homicide, of the 10 nations with the highest homicide rates, all are very religious, and many — such as Colombia, Mexico, El Salvador and Brazil — are among the most theistic nations in the world. Of the nations with the lowest homicide rates, nearly all are very secular, with seven ranking among the least theistic nations, such as Sweden, Japan, Norway and the Netherlands.

Now consider the flip side: peacefulness. According to the nonprofit organization Vision of Humanity, which publishes an annual Global Peace Index, each of the 10 safest and most peaceful nations in the world is also among the most secular, least God-believing in the world. Most of the least safe and peaceful nations, conversely, are extremely religious.

As professor Stephen Law of the University of London observed: "If a decline in religiosity were the primary cause [of social ills], then we would expect those countries that have seen the greatest decline to have the most serious problems. But that is not the case."

What about within the United States? According to the latest study from the Pew Research Center, the 10 states that report the highest levels of belief in God are Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee and Oklahoma (tied with Utah). The 10 states with the lowest levels of belief in God are Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Alaska, Oregon and California. And as is the case in the rest of the world, when it comes to nearly all standard measures of societal health, including homicide rates, the least theistic states generally fare much better than the most theistic. Consider child-abuse fatality rates: Highly religious Mississippi's is twice that of highly secular New Hampshire's, and highly religious Kentucky's is four times higher than highly secular Oregon's.

It is, of course, impossible to conclude from any of this data that secularism, in and of itself, causes societal well-being, or that religiosity causes social ills. Peacefulness, prosperity and overall societal goodness are undoubtedly caused by multiple, complex factors — economic, geographic, cultural, political, historical and so forth. That said, it is clear that a strong or increased presence of secularism isn't the damaging threat to society so many continually claim it to be. If only the likes of O'Reilly and Huckabee would take heed.

Phil Zuckerman is a professor of sociology and secular studies at Pitzer College in Claremont and the author of "Living the Secular Life." He gave a TB-CoR Darwin lecture in 2018.



Freeflo 2019, Florida's largest and most successful freethought conference starts on November 1st in Orlando. Many fabulous guest speakers will present profound to profoundly funny programs. The main events are on Saturday and Sunday, and if you are reading this in time, it's not too late.

Speakers include Seth Andrews, Dr. Sikavu Hutchinson, Matt Dillahunty, Dr. Ryan Cragun, Bertha Vazquez, Aron Ra, Debbie Goddard, Gina Duncan, Dr. Daniel Batchelder, Dr. Anjan Chakravartty, Monica Miller, Amy Monsky, Brandon Haught, Sarah Gillooly

Learn more and register at <https://www.FREEFLO.org>

