

# HUMANISTS

# of FORT WORTH

Volume 14, Number 5

Happy



Humanist

May, 2013

This newsletter is presented by the Humanists of Fort Worth (HoFW), Texas for its members.

The "Happy Humanist" symbol is presented by IHEU (International Humanist and Ethical Union).

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Getting older is no problem; you just have to live long enough!

Anon

## Meeting

May 8, 2013 7:00 PM

**SPEAKER: Open Forum Discussion**

**TOPIC: How/Why I Became a Non-Believer**

**More on page 4.**

## ! Thanks !

Many 'thank-yous' to the members and friends who are assisting with the cleanup and rearrangement duties after our meetings. It is much appreciated.

If you are interested in lending a hand please see one of the Board Members.

## ! Thanks !

**The Humanists of Fort Worth (HoFW) meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Westside Unitarian Universalist Building, 901 Page Ave.**

## The Meaning of Humanism

### 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

Humanism as a philosophy has ever competed with other philosophic viewpoints for the allegiance of men. But however far-reaching its disagreements with rival philosophies of the past and present, Humanism at least agrees with them on the importance of as such. That importance stems from the perennial need of human beings to find significance in their lives, to integrate their personalities around some clear, consistent and compelling view of existence, and to seek definite and reliable methods in the solution of their problems. Philosophy brings clarity and meaning into the careers of individuals, nations, and civilizations.

### 2. HUMANISM DEFINED

**First:** Humanism believes in a naturalistic metaphysics or attitude toward the universe that considers all forms of the supernatural as myth; and that regards Nature as the totality of being and as a constantly changing system of matter and energy which exists independently of any mind or consciousness.

**Second:** Humanism, drawing especially upon the laws and facts of science, believes that we human beings are an evolutionary product of the Nature of which we are a part; that the mind is indivisibly conjoined with the functioning of the brain; and that as an inseparable unity of body and personality we can have no conscious survival after death.

**Third:** Humanism, having its ultimate faith in humankind, believes that human beings possess the power or potentiality of solving their own problems, through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision.

**Fourth:** Humanism, in opposition to all theories of universal determinism, fatalism, or predestination, believes that human beings, while conditioned by the past, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action, and are, within certain objective limits, the shapers of their own destiny.

**Fifth:** Humanism believes in an ethics or morality that grounds all human values in this-earthly experiences and relationships and that holds as its highest goal the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress— economic, cultural, and ethical— of all mankind, irrespective of nation, race, or religion.

**Sixth:** Humanism believes that the individual attains the good life by harmoniously combining personal satisfactions and continuous self-development with significant work and other activities that contribute to the welfare of the community.

**Seventh:** Humanism believes in the widest possible development of art and the awareness of beauty, including the appreciation of Nature's loveliness and splendor, so that the aesthetic experience may become a pervasive reality in the life of all people.

**Eighth:** Humanism believes in a far-reaching social program that stands for the establishment throughout the world of democracy, peace, and a high standard of living on the foundations of a flourishing economic order, both national and international.

**Ninth:** Humanism believes in the complete social implementation of reason and scientific method; and thereby in democratic procedures and parliamentary government, with full freedom of expression and civil liberties, throughout all areas of economic, political and cultural life.

**Tenth:** Humanism, in accordance with scientific method, believes in the unending questioning of basic assumptions and convictions including its own. Humanism is not a new dogma, but is a developing philosophy ever open to experimental testing, newly discovered facts, and more rigorous reasoning.

The preceding was taken from *The Philosophy of Humanism*, by Corliss Lamont, Eighth Edition, Revised.

May 2013

## **Officers and Board Members**

**Chair: Sam Baker**

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### **MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:**

Single Member	\$25.00/yr.
Couple	\$40.00/yr
Patron	\$50.00/yr.
Student	\$10.00/yr.

Choose the category that best fits your needs.

See the Treasurer, Dolores Ruhs,  
or a member of the Board for an application.

Pay in cash or mail the application, with your check, to:

Dolores Ruhs, Treasurer-HoFW

1036 Hill Top Pass

Benbrook, TX 76126-3848

# PRESENTATION FOR MAY MEETING

Open Forum Discussion

## “How I Became A Non-Believer”

How/why did you decide to leave the religious beliefs of  
your past?

What effect did it have on your relationships with your  
friends, family, co-workers?

Hope to see you there.

*Sam Baker*

From the . . .



. . . Sam Baker

**Our Undemocratic Constitution: Granting Inordinate Power to a Small Minority of the Population through the Senate**

*"So much of it does need a page-one rewrite, including that bullshit about the Senate and the Second Amendment. Both of them should go." Bill Maher*

Circumstances change. When the Constitution went into effect, guns shot one bullet at a time and took at least ten times longer to reload than it now takes to change out a thirty round clip on a semi-automatic assault rifle. In 1789 there was no way to slaughter a classroom of 30 children in seconds even with the most advanced firearm of the day. In addition, when the provision giving each state two senators was written, the discrepancies in population between the states were not as great as they are now.

Imagine a chart with a rank ordering of states by population in the first column starting with the least populated state (Wyoming) with cumulative number of senators in the second column, cumulative population in the third column, and cumulative percentage of the U.S. population in the fourth. When the cumulative number of senators reaches 50, those states represent only 16% of the U.S. population (yes, only 16%!). At 70 seats, only 34% of the U.S. population is represented. Eight or nine states account for half the U.S. population, yet they are represented by only 16 to 18 senators. Some political scientists speculate that the U.S. Senate is the least democratic legislative chamber in any developed nation.

In other words, the fate of the nation is in the hands of a senate overwhelmingly dominated by senators from sparsely populated and mostly rural states. Rural states with less than 20% of the population control the U.S. Senate. This might be okay if you don't care about democracy and if these rural states had the brightest, most educated citizens and elected the brightest, most educated senators who had only the best interests of the U.S. public in mind. Unfortunately, the evidence is to the contrary. These small state senators, whether Republican or Democrat, consistently undermine proposals that the vast majority of the American people are in favor of: Medicare for All, higher taxes on the wealthiest of Americans to bring down the deficit, less defense spending, protection of safety net programs like Social Security, environmental protection and campaign finance reform.

Small population states have a long history of holding up progress in America. According to Yale political scientist Robert Dahl, slavery survived longer than it would have because of the disproportionate influence of small-population Southern states. The House passed eight antislavery measures between 1800 and 1860 but all of them died in the Senate. Furthermore, the civil rights movement of the sixties was slowed by senators representing small-population rural states.

With the decline in family farms and the rise of corporate agri-business, the politics of these sparsely populated states now tend to be dominated by big business and corporate interests. If you wanted to control the Senate, where would you get the most bang for your campaign buck, in numerous small state senate campaigns or in a few senate campaigns in big states? The consequence is that the nation doesn't get the health care it wants, but we do get the continuation of agri-business and other corporate welfare programs like farm subsidies. We don't get climate change legislation, but we do get defense spending on weapon systems the Pentagon doesn't even want.

The bottom line: the interests of the average American are overwhelmed by the power of senators representing a small, more uninformed, more uneducated fraction of the population. According to Sanford Levinson, a law professor at the University of Texas, "The Senate constitutes a threat to the vitality of the American political system in the 21st century and it warrants a constitutional convention to rectify it."

Taken together with the gerrymandering of winner-take-all congressional districts, is it any surprise how few Americans bother to vote? They may not know exactly why, but they do know that it's a waste of time. They know their views won't be represented in either the House or the Senate whether they vote or not.

*Editorial . . .* **Know Your Bible? 9**

*Don Ruhs*

All Bible quotes are taken from the King James Version (KJV).

From: Various sources, including the Holy Bible.

**CONTRADICTIONS, REPETITIONS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT**

In the Bible there are *two* accounts of the Creation (Gen 1:1-31 and Gen 2:4-25).

In the first of these two accounts of the Creation, God created man *last*; in the second, however, God created him *first*, that is to say, before all other creatures.

In one case God created mankind from the beginning as “male and female”; then, however, only the man came into being from “the dust of the ground”, while woman was formed subsequently from a rib of the man.

The second account of the Creation contains details not mentioned in the first.

The two accounts of the Creation also differ from one another in their literary form. The first is hymnal, of the nature of a litany, whilst the second is a simple narrative.

So far reference has been made only to repetitions. The name of Moses’ father-in-law has been transmitted in *three* different forms, once as Jethro (Ex. 3:1; 4:18; 18: 1-12), once as Reuel (Ex. 2:18), and finally as Hobab (Judges 4:11). Other passages in the Bible also make us wonder what their meaning is, for example:

What sort of darkness “in all the land of Egypt” was it from which the Egyptians suffered whilst the Israelites in bondage did not (Ex. 10:22)?

How could Moses describe his own death (Deut. 34)? Or to put the question in another way: can the first five books of the Bible really have been written by Moses when they tell us of his death?

These are only a few examples of inconsistencies in the Bible. There and similar incongruities have raised questions, however, which have led scholars to examine the Bible time and time again and to offer fresh interpretations. For generations the Bible has been the object of critical investigation and it can claim to be not only one of the most widely distributed and best selling books, but also the work of world literature which has been subjected to the most objective and thorough scholarly research.

**“The Bible as History” Werner Keller,  
2nd Revised Ed., 1980.**

THE FATHER OF JOSEPH,  
MARY’S HUSBAND, WAS JACOB.

And *Jacob begat Joseph*, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. (Matt. 1:16)

THE FATHER OF MARY’S  
HUSBAND WAS HELI.

. . .being the son of Joseph which was the son of Heli. (Luke 3:23).

CHRIST PREACHED HIS FIRST SERMON  
ON THE MOUNT.

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a *mountain*; and when he was set his *disciples came unto him*: and he *opened his mouth* and *taught* them saying . . . (Matt. 5:1,2)

CHRIST PREACHED HIS FIRST SERMON  
IN THE PLAIN.

And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people . . . came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases . . . And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said, Blessed be ye poor . . . (Luke 6: 17,20)

CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED  
AT THE THIRD HOUR.

And it was the *third hour* and they crucified him. (Mark 15:25)

CHRIST WAS NOT CRUCIFIED  
UNTIL THE SIXTH HOUR.

And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the *sixth hour*: and he (Pilate) saith unto the Jews Behold your King! . . . *Shall I crucify* your King?

**“Self-Contradictions of the Bible” Wm. Henry Burr,  
1987 (Originally published 1860)**

May 2013

## **Humanists of Fort Worth**

Minutes

April 10, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Sam Baker. There were twenty three members and three visitors present.

Our speaker was Alexis Lohse, a student at Texas Christian University, traditionally one of the most conservative campuses in the nation, on her experiences in founding TCU's first-ever atheist/agnostic/secular student group, *The Free Thinking Frogs*.

Refreshments were served following the presentation.

The meeting ended at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*John Fisher*

John Fisher, Secretary

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NOTE: Alexis is also an active member of the Humanists of Fort Worth.

Don Ruhs, Editor

*Humanists of Fort Worth*

May 2013

**Humanists of Ft. Worth (HoFW)**

Treasurer's Report

Report Date: 10-April-2013

Beginning Balance 13-Mar-2013 **\$1,140.55**

CREDITS	Date	Amount
DUES	4/13/2013	
James W. Lee	"	25.00
Reed Bilz	"	25.00
D.Trice/J.Counts	"	40.00
B.T. Browder	"	25.00
David Pursley	"	25.00
DONATIONS		
James W. Lee		25.00
Snacks	"	14.00

TOTAL CREDITS \$179.00

DEBITS	Activity	Ck. #	Date	Amount
Bobbie Lotven	Cookies	423	4/10/2013	5.00

TOTAL DEBITS \$5.00

TOTAL CREDITS LESS DEBITS \$174.00

Ending Balance 10-Apr-13 \$1,314.55

Attest:

Signature: *Dolores M. Ruhs* Date: 13-Mar-2013

Dolores M. Ruhs Treasurer

Don Ruhs Clerk

Copies:

Sam Baker Chair  
Gene Gwin Co-Chair  
John Fisher Rec. Secy.  
Dolores Ruhs Treasurer  
Don Ruhs Board Member  
Dick Trice Board Member

c:My Documents/HoFW Treasurer's Reports MSXL 13-Mar-13





Church

&

STATE



*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.*

The 1st Amendment to the Constitution of the United States—"The Establishment Clause."

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From: *Americans United for the Separation of Church & State* April 2013, page 22

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AROUND THE  WORLD

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## Irish Moving Away From Church Control of Schools

One of Europe's most Catholic countries may dramatically reduce control of its public schools.

*The Washington Post* reported recently that Ireland's education minister, Ruari Quinn, wants to implement a gradual shift away from Catholic Church dominance over public schools. Quinn indicated that religion does best in places like the United States where the church doesn't have government power.

"The country in which religion has strived most strongly is where church and state are separated, Quinn said. "The countries where religion is languishing either through neglect or indifference are those European countries which previously were dominated or controlled by the Catholic Church such as Portugal, Italy, Spain, not to mention Ireland."

The move away from church control of Ireland's public schools has been in the works for some time. In 2011, Quinn set up a study group to figure out how most of the country's schools could be transferred away from church patronage and said that his goal was to switch half of Ireland's schools from church control to other arrangements, the news website *Irish Central* reported.

The site noted that in 2011, the Catholic hierarchy controlled about 90 percent of Ireland's 3,200 primary schools.



the BOOK NOOK

This space is intended to focus attention on books, authors, subjects and articles that may be of interest to humanists, agnostics, atheists, and freethinkers.

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## Atheist Manifesto

*The Case Against Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*

Michel Onfray

Copyright © 2005, 2011 by Éditions Grasset & Fasquelle  
English language translation copyright © 2007, 2008, 2011 by Arcade Publishing, Inc.

Ebook 210 pgs.

Onfray pulls no punches here in showing the similarities between the three monotheistic religions that are ever attempting to maintain control over the minds of people in today's societies. He takes us into the teachings of the Judeo-Christian Bible, including the *Torah* of the Old Testament, and the *Gospels* of the New Testament, and, also, the *Surahs* of The Holy Koran.

He not only describes the disparities between the three major religions, but, also, the disparities and contradictions within the "holy books" themselves.

As one continues to read, it becomes more and more clear the reasoning behind the devastation these fundamentalist teachings are creating and the havoc we are witnessing at home and around the globe.

Fundamentalist beliefs, of whatever radical religion, are a danger to the freedoms we all hold dear for ourselves and for our future generations.

Don Ruhs, Editor

## **Reminder**

**HoFW Membership Renewal  
For fiscal year 2013-2014  
Is due the first of March**

**Dolores Ruhs, Treasurer**

*See membership categories on page 3.*

## **Reminder**

### **Secular Humanism: A definition**

**Secular humanism is a philosophy and world view which centers upon human concerns and employs rational and scientific methods to address the wide range of issues important to us all. While secular humanism is at odds with faith-based religious systems on many issues, it is dedicated to the fulfillment of the individual and humankind in general. To accomplish this end, secular humanism encourages a commitment to a set of principles which promote the development of tolerance and compassion and an understanding of the methods of science, critical analysis, and philosophical reflection.**