



WORK ETHIC(S)

Work consumes a large part of most people's lives. Or, as William Faulkner put it:

"The only thing a man can do for eight hours a day is work. He can't eat for eight hours; he can't drink for eight hours; he can't make love for eight hours. The only thing a man can do for eight hours is work."

One can, of course, sleep for eight hours, but during sleep, arguably, we're really not living our lives as such.

So why don't today's mainstream churches have more to say about – or are heard to say more about – the subject of work? Instead it's Creationism, the definition of marriage, abortion, pornography, and endless theological irrelevancies used to justify banning scientific research and other forms of progress.

There is, hovering in the background, the matter of "The Protestant Work Ethic." This seems to be understood as a sense of duty and devotion towards work and to give an honest day's work for an honest day's wage, etc. Yet in the Bible stories the Jesus character extols the boss who pays the workers the same whether they work all day or only an hour, and admonishes his listeners to take a lesson from the lilies of the field that "neither toil nor spin."

Clearly, ethical principles applied to economic activity, and especially to transactions where the commodity is labor or a service of some kind, is not a simple thing. If it was, there wouldn't be so many laws attached to it, from minimum wage to unemployment to whole divisions of the government, including the federal Department of Labor. But knowing what is right and doing what is right is something within us, and if our commitment to those things is not kept up within us, or we even come to believe that it comes from somewhere else, such as from laws, then no law or government can do much to sustain them. But how and from where will this commitment come?

We must all take part in the maintenance of this strand of our culture. In part this consists of supporting communities and leadership that exhibit a commitment to ethical behavior in the workplace and between those who cooperate together in the economic activity that sustains our way of life. And it consists in doing so in a "Spirit of Liberty," as Judge Learned hand put it, "the spirit which is not too sure that it is right," which is the spirit of mental and spiritual liberty, the spirit of Freethought. We do this by firmly standing for what we believe is right while being open to other ways of looking at things and even to consider how our beliefs may be wrong or, at least, might be improved.

Thus, we may believe that the minimum wage is a vital part of civilized society. At the same time, we may see that

We Can Do It!



it may not serve some whose skills are not sufficient to make their efforts "worth" such a wage. Likewise, unemployment subsidies undoubtedly keep laid-off workers from begging in the streets. But they may also be a disincentive to energetically seek another job. During economic slowdowns companies immediately reduce their workforces. But this may make it more difficult for the companies who do this most aggressively to succeed when things pick up again, especially if they have lost their most experienced and capable (and expensive) employees. Even tax policies factor in to the problem of there being work available for everyone who wants it. For while those with the most means should surely be expected to contribute the most, those same people are often the ones most capable of putting other people to the best and most productive use.

As psychologist (and atheist/humanist) Albert Ellis used to say, we must not shrink from the F-word: FLEXIBILITY. The goal should be human well-being and individual and collective behavior, as well as public policies, that are rationally directed towards achieving it. This may require a willingness to let go of or at least weaken ideological commitments. Maybe this is why most churches don't offer much when it comes to the problem of work ethics in the 21st Century.

"Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." -Theodore Roosevelt

COMING IN OCTOBER: JOHNNY TAN SPEAKS on “UNCONDITIONAL LOVE”

Motivational Speaker and Author Johnny Tan will speak at the October 3rd 2010 service of the NTCOF. His topic will be: “The Power of Unconditional Love: A Key To Potent Leadership at Home and at Work.”

Mr. Tan’s mission in life is to bring “motherly love” to “the global center stage by leading the world in recognizing the significant role mothers play in making a positive difference in our daily lives.” It is not so much that love coming from one’s mother makes it “motherly” either. Mr. Tan attributes his understanding of unconditional love to his “9 moms,” nine people, who happen to be women, who helped him to learn the valuable lessons that he now teaches others.

Mr. Tan also worked in the restaurant industry for 18 years and sees the lessons of unconditional love as being linked to the hearth and home and, specifically, the kitchen, where so many of us found not just physical nutrition but also emotional and spiritual sustenance.

Mr. Tan’s website is:

www.frommymamaskitchen.com

Mr. Tan’s blog, including recent musings about Warren Buffett’s remarks on the subject of unconditional love, is:

<http://www.johnnytan.com/blog>

And you can also find Mr. Tan at:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/fmmk-talk-radio>

Mr. Tan’s book is “From My Mama’s Kitchen: Food for the Soul, Recipes for Living” which will be available for purchase and signing by the author at our October 3rd service.

Don’t miss this one! Bring your friends! And, as always, bring your children for a good time with their Freethinking friends!

“[Work] is about a search ... for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. Perhaps immortality, too, is part of the quest.”
- Studs Terkel in *Working*, 1972

**YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS
TO THE NTCOF ARE NEEDED,
APPRECIATED,
AND TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!!**

TEEN GET-TOGETHER AFTER LUNCH TODAY AT THE MALL!

All NTCOF events can be found through our website calendar (if it doesn’t work, we’re working on it!) , or through our meetup page, from which you can RSVP, at:
- www.meetup.com/church-of-freethought -

JOIN THE NTCOF MEETUP GROUP to get email updates too!

Social Luncheon: Today, immediately after our Service, join us for lunch and discussion at the Golden Corral Buffet and Grill in Grapevine, located just across from the Grapevine Mills Mall, at 2605 E. Grapevine Mills Circle, phone (972) 874-7900. To reach Golden Corral from the Wyndham, take the SOUTH exit from the parking lot (turn your head left as you walk out the main entrance), then drive across Esters Blvd onto John W. Carpenter Freeway (114). Then take the first exit RIGHT onto International Parkway (121), then Grapevine Mills Parkway exit. Turn LEFT on Stars and Stripes Way, continuing on to E. Grapevine Mills Circle.

Freethought Salon: Get together to discuss today’s service topic or other conundrums of interest to Freethinkers. Second Sunday monthly, over breakfast, at the Hilton Vineyard in Grapevine this month; see the meetup site!

Game Night: The regular game night crew meets nearly every Friday night at the IHOP on 2310 Stemmons Trail (I-35), near Northwest Highway (Loop 12). Plan to arrive at about 7:30 PM, and stay late playing Risk, Rummikub, and other fun games!

Secular Singles: Freethinkers have met their life-partners with whom they have begun families through the Secular Singles group. Check the meetup site for the next date, time and location!

You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life.” - Albert Camus



DFWCOR

Dallas-Fort Worth Coalition of Reason

The North Texas Church of Freethought
A Fellowship of Unbelievers

Music by “Faithless Companions”

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