



## **Triangle Freethought Society**

**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**

**December 18, 2009**

### **First Nonreligious Winter Solstice Display Unveiled in Raleigh NC**

*The Triangle Freethought Society (TFS) will unveil, for the first time, a Winter Solstice display on Moore Square, in Raleigh NC, Sunday, December 20, 2009. The Winter Solstice display will serve as a counterbalance to a nativity display that a local religious advocacy group has been erecting annually in Moore Square for the last four years.*

Raleigh, NC, December 18, 2009 – To mark the passing of the Winter Solstice, the Triangle Freethought Society (TFS) will erect a modest display in Moore Square on Sunday, December 20th. The purpose of the display is twofold in that it will also serve as a counterbalance to a religious nativity scene that has been annually erected in Moore Square by a local religious advocacy group.

"We don't think religion, or religious activity, belongs on city or state property," noted Mark Zumbach, President of TFS

"While we support the freedom of religion and the right to free speech, we feel strongly that if the city of Raleigh is going to allow an overtly Christian display to be erected in our public square, other points of view should be represented as well," Continued Zumbach. "Not doing so gives the appearance that our city government is endorsing Christianity."

It is estimated that 15 percent of the U.S. population is not religious. <sup>1</sup>

The Winter Solstice, which is the shortest and darkest day of the year, takes place on December 21st. This natural holiday signals the return of the sun and the New Year, and has been celebrated for millennia in the Northern Hemisphere with festivals of light, evergreens, feasts and gift exchanges.

"Nonbelievers don't mind sharing the season with Christians," Zumbach said, "but we want the public to be made aware of the fact that the holiday originated from sun-god myths and pagans rituals, long before it was co-opted as a Christian holiday.

TFS will erect their display at Noon on December 20th, and will have an unveiling ceremony from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. The ceremony will include readings about the season, and a non-alcoholic champagne toast marking this historic occasion. The ceremony is open to TFS members, their family and friends, as well as members of the press and general public.

TFS requests that those attending the ceremony bring non-perishable canned goods or a monetary donation for the Food Bank of Central Carolina.

"We feel that it is important to take this opportunity to do something charitable for the less fortunate in our community" said Amy Glenn, TFS Secretary.

"Atheists do not believe in any gods or an afterlife, but we do believe that we should spend our one life making the world a better place for those here and for the generations to come."

(more)



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### **About the Triangle Freethought Society (TFS)**

TFS was founded and incorporated in North Carolina in the autumn of 2009. It was officially voted in as a chapter of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, Inc. during their annual meeting in November, 2009. TFS is a group of atheists, post-theists, non-theists agnostics, freethinkers and skeptics in the Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill areas of

North Carolina. The purpose of TFS is to protect the separation of church and state as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the constitution of the United States and to educate the public on matters relating to non-theism. TFS is working for the rights of atheists and agnostics to ensure that they enjoy the same rights as religious citizens, and is working to correct the distorted image of atheists and agnostics that has been perpetrated in mainstream culture. TFS defends science education from pseudo-science, and promotes reason and compassion as an alternative to unquestioning faith in supernatural deities.

### **About the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc.**

The Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc. is an educational group working for the separation of state and church. Its purposes, as stated in its bylaws, are to promote the constitutional principle of separation of state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.

Incorporated in 1978 in Wisconsin, the Foundation is a national membership association of freethinkers: atheists, agnostics and skeptics of any pedigree. The Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3). All dues and contributions are deductible for income tax purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2008 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), Mar. 09 2009.

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