



**Bund für Geistesfreiheit – bfg Bayern**  
Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts  
Hemauerstr. 15 – 93047 Regensburg

Tel.: 0941 64660048 – [vorsitzender@bfg-bayern.de](mailto:vorsitzender@bfg-bayern.de)  
Internet: <http://www.bfg-bayern.de>  
Bankverbindung: Sparkasse Nürnberg  
Kto. – Nr. 1 051 247 / BLZ: 760 501 01

# Freigeistige Betrachtungen

eine Sendung des

## Bundes für Geistesfreiheit (bfg) Bayern

Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts  
im Bayerischen Rundfunk, Programm Bayern II, UKW  
am Sonntag, den 2015 09 13 um 6.45 Uhr

**Texte: Wanda Foster, Erwin Schmid**

**SprecherInnen: Wanda Foster, Waltraud Gebert, Erwin Schmid, vorsitze  
(chairman of BFG Bayern)**

**Erwin Schmid**

Guten Morgen, liebe Hörerinnen und Hörer!

Herzlich willkommen zur Sendung des Bundes für Geistesfreiheit Bayern, kurz bfg. Wenn Sie mehr über den bfg, seine Grundsätze und Aktivitäten wissen wollen, sehen Sie bitte im Internet unter [www.bfg-bayern.de](http://www.bfg-bayern.de)

Mein Name ist Erwin Schmid, Landesvorsitzender vom Bund für Geistesfreiheit und heute begrüße ich sehr herzlich Wanda Foster aus Fort Worth, Dallas, Texas.

Wanda Foster ist Herausgeberin des Forth Worth Humanist Quarterly und stellvertretende Vorsitzende der Humanists of Fort Worth, Dallas Texas, die Mitglied in der American Humanist Association sind und dadurch auch Mitglied in der IHEU der Internationalen Humanistischen und Ethischen Union weltweit, ebenso wie der Bund für Geistesfreiheit Bayern über den Dachverband der freien Weltanschauungen Mitglied in der IHEU ist.

Dear Wanda, cordially welcome in Germany, herzlich Willkommen in Deutschland.

Bitte erzähl uns etwas über die Geschichte der Humanists of Fort Worth, Texas

Please tell us about the history of the Humanists of Fort Worth, Texas.

**Wanda Foster:**

You do me a great honor to allow me to join your very large listening group.

I only wish to connect with Germany and any in the world interested in rethinking and thinking about the place of religion in the world and whether or not it has a constructive place. The world should be, in my opinion, about constructive things, things that help people and the globe survive ourselves, including both the good and bad results of our own making.

### 1. History of Humanism and Humanists of Fort Worth

Humanism is quite old, some say as old as the Greeks. It has enjoyed some popularity since the 1800s among intellectuals, including statesmen like Thomas More and Nelson Mandela; poets like Aldous Huxley, philosophers, such as Desiderius Erasmus; many authors, such as Richard Dawkins, Arthur C. Clark, Sam Harris, and Mark Twain; physicians such as Sigmund Freud; and many scientists such as Albert Einstein and Nikola Tesla; and performers, such as Kathryn Hepburn and Frank Zappa.

Historically humanism came in both religious and nonreligious forms, but today most humanism in America takes the nonreligious form. Humanism is the rejection of magic, gods, religion, and religious hierarchies and fervor in favor of education, science, rational thinking, and promoting the betterment of mankind.

Humanists, secularists, and atheists first became a force in Texas and the U.S. in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time, television had begun to show the world as it really was on the nightly news, which galvanized people toward various opinions. Much of this change occurred as a direct result of the problems the people were able to view for the first time. Seeing something first hand has a powerful effect. For the first time, we knew that the world was not entirely as it seemed. It was a bigger place than some expected and more corrupt than many had hoped it would be.

Hope was destroyed in many young Americans in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. We died in foreign wars that were not symmetrical as wars had been before that. The methodologies of war were recreated from the ground up, and we did not like what we saw. People like peace and security, not war. In addition, science began moving into the light and out of the laboratories. We saw it on television, and we saw it change lives for the better.

Exposure to new thoughts and ideas often brings change and upheaval for societies that prefer structure, and most people do. Despite the transition, these same generations were products of the American dream and chose to be survivors of this new knowledge. They reacted to meeting reality in different ways. People who came back from various wars were better educated than before because the GI bill funded college educations for the first time, and for the first time they had traveled and seen other worlds. They began to trust science, mathematics, and engineering rather than things they could not see. Public schools and television provided some new ideas about how the world worked. Many people rethought their lives and why they lived their lives as they did. At the same time, as it has been since the U.S. was formed, America remained religious, but tempered religion with more science than they had in the past. Many decisions continued to be rationalized based on religion, but large contingents of other people reacted in ways different than they previously had.

Some people chose love, others magic and occultism, others military, others Eastern and Western religions, which humanists also view as magic and occultism by other words. While they were frightening times, a few brave people chose reality. They became atheists, agnostics, free thinkers, nonbelievers of one sort or another. During that time frame, the Unitarian Universalist churches entered their heyday because they were not of one mind, nor did they need to be. They just wanted to know the truth as it was and to tolerate those different than themselves.

The first atheist organization in Fort Worth, Metroplex Atheists, started in 1985. Our organization did not form until 1995, when the founder of the Humanists of Fort Worth, Russel Elleven, supported by a band of similar thinkers, chartered the organization, which is affiliated with the American Humanist Association. Elleven was an atheist himself, but found his voice as minister of Fort Worth's Westside Unitarian Universalist Church.

Texas is very conservative and religious. Over the last four decades of my life the U.S. has become a much more conservative place, and it is not necessarily friendly to those who believe in no god and in separation of church and state. But a newer, previously silent body of atheists seems to be growing and stating its mind.

In my view, the great division the U.S. is experiencing over government and law have to do with religious fervor and the belief that god reigns over all and, therefore, should govern government. Yet no one has found any single religion that breeds unity with another. It is tearing our country apart with anger and frustration internally. The religious are rejecting the knowledge of science and have set up their own quasi-science in universities that teach things like creationism which tries to show scientifically that there is a god. That leaves science with the burden of proof of showing evidence for

something that does not exist, which is a complete corruption of the scientific method, which is based on experience, evidence, and proof of what is.

## **2. How is the State of Texas connected to religion or what is its religious composition (makeup)?**

The State of Texas is highly religious in terms of tradition and affiliation. More than 55 percent of the people are affiliated with a religion compared to only some 48 percent of other people across the U.S. This is based on statistics from Sperling's Best Places to Live, but no one would argue with it I think. These statistics do not mean that only 55 percent follow religious traditions. It just means that this percentage of the people choose to openly affiliate. Others follow their traditions without specifically attending church. Most people I meet in Texas believe in a god, usually the Christian one of their own denomination.

The largest concentration of Fort Worth's affiliated people belong to some sort of evangelical protestant church, including more than 20 percent Baptist of some form, including either the fundamentalist Baptists with their emphasis on an errorless god and strict biblical interpretations, or the Southern Baptists, who tend to be better educated and, thereby, somewhat less conservative about biblical interpretations, but also having rather strict religious and social ideas. Most of these people today are conservative Republicans. This political element is different than things were in the past. Historically, in the 1960s and 1970s religion these same churches would avoid combining religion with politics, but currently many of them preach about politics and political choices from their pulpits.

Fort Worth also has a high concentration of Catholics, which make up about 11.25 percent of the affiliated population. While a percentage of Catholics are Democrats, the majority today also are conservative Republicans in Texas. Democrats generally believe in equality and a woman's right to choose to have a child or not, while Republicans do not. Their policies amount to required births. This choice to juxtapose religion with Catholic birth ethics has created a government wedge along religious lines.

Other smaller numbers of our protestants belong to Bible Churches, United Methodists, Methodists, Church of Christ, United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ (which created Texas Christian University in Fort Worth), Episcopal, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, and other Christian, evangelical, independent, and nondenominational churches.

Often the racial makeup of these churches varies depending on the racial side of town the members live on. While racial integration was required of the schools in the 1970s, we still find much division along racial lines in the city. People cross from one side of the city to the other, but few live in socially integrated areas. Churches reflect these communities, and in some areas they prefer it this way. I once was a member of a church that required my friends and me to stop seeking members outside of the white community.

Texas, in my opinion, is not really racially integrated. Socially, people have selected their own parts of town and neither side, the black nor the white, understands or embraces each other equally. Churches have been part of the division. While you can go to any church regardless of race, you might not really feel welcome outside of your area, so things stand apart, except for the occasional crossover visitor or member. Our integration has been a great experiment for those in Europe facing integration for the first time now, as a result of immigration and refugees from everywhere.

A small percentage of Fort Worth, 2.2 percent, is Islamic, and less than 1 percent of the general population is Jewish. Eastern religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, constitute less than 1 percent also. Unitarians and unaffiliated go unmentioned, although I have seen another source that says we are only about 4 percent of the population. Overall, the Pew Research Center's latest data nationwide matches our trends of atheist, agnostic growth. Some 30 percent of those under 30 are reported to be nonbelievers. Also Pew reports that 20 percent of the U.S. population overall does not believe. I question whether many of those who are affiliated actually believe, however. Many sit in their pews out of fear and obligation, not belief.

Since 1985 at least 20 agnostic, secular, unaffiliated, atheist groups have sprung up across Fort Worth. The Humanists of Fort Worth is 99.5 percent atheist. Online, we have some 390 members. We meet

inside the Westside Unitarian-Universalist Church, which itself is 60 percent atheist and 100-percent focused on tolerance, sharing, human issues, and rational thought.

Other organizations similar to ours include the Metroplex Atheists, the Dallas-Fort Worth Coalition (which is a community of nonbelievers across Dallas and Fort Worth), the Freethinkers, the Secular Sisters, the North Texas Church of Freethought, and numerous others. Atheists and agnostics also operate a broadcast station known as the Dogma Debate, which airs online regularly to promote rationalism, science, and point out the magic and dissonance of religious thought.

We see more and more young people coming on board all of the time. They seem to see--more readily than the older people--that religion is not real, that it is a lie, and that it misleads and injures the people.

### **3. How do humanists in Fort Worth organize their lives from birth to death?**

We find that organization is a positive human trait and that humans organize themselves when given the opportunity to think and work things through collectively. So much of human organization has been laid out for us from birth to death by religious ideas. Unfortunately, many of our current, core members, including me, started life with religious training. It will be excellent to see future generations and how they think independently outside the shackles of religion. If they are allowed to think and act rationally, I predict huge improvements in organization in the future.

Churches teach top-down organization, which is useful for armies and military seeking to force people to their death as if their deaths were voluntary, which they often become under this system. This same system often is applied to business with limited results. The person who owns a business or gets paid the most to operate a business from the top often is treated like a god in work society, whether or not this “leader” has any understanding of the product or service or any association with common work that would enable them to understand how best to do it. So rather than having the best people do the right work in the right way, many corporations in Texas and worldwide have a central, authoritarian management scheme in which work is done according to corporate demands coming down from the top. I think religion traditionally has supported this type of top-down hierarchy. Still, someone literally on the bottom of the pile may understand the best way to do something because they understand the work and have done it before. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of any sizable corporation is a salesman, who in many cases has not done the work and has no idea how to do it.

Many middle managers are useless peons, who simply do what they are told from the top and support whatever stupidity is sent down. For this service and dealing with employees, they get paid more than others. Many also come from an educationally privileged class, those who were able to find the funding they needed to obtain the correct master’s degree to suit the leanings and preferences of upper management.

They are empowered to lead even when they lack common sense, have never done the work they manage, and often lack understanding of the connection between the quality of the product or service provided and its meaning to the company as a whole—outside of the money the product provides. Humanists increasingly discuss new work models in which power is more distributed among the employees to help ensure provision of the best product or service to the market. Many of us feel, for example, that food markets have been greatly degraded to the detriment of the people. Quality ensures returning customers and health, but no one in business seems particularly interested in the health aspects of the population outside of the money they receive for providing degraded food products.

Of course, if there is no market for a product or service or if the market has changed, the product or service should be revised. From a humanist perspective, change is always on the agenda in response to changes in evidence, scientific findings, and rational thinking for the betterment of the people.

Humanists emphasize the importance of rationally based, scientific thinking and education without religious dogma or training. We view the realities of the world in person and value critical thinking. We believe humans, like other animals, are moral beings and that we are equal in all forms of life. That is, we value life.

At birth, we value the life that is born. Before birth, we believe that critical thinking and family planning are essential to the well-being of children. Religions work to prevent this critical thinking, encourage excessive births that cannot be supported, and encourage overcontrol of sexual urges and female bodies. Sexuality is a part of every human, and when it is suppressed through shame, guilt, abstinence training, and other forms of religious teaching, it tends to cause children to feel abnormal because they are sexual, yet even the sexuality of children is normal and preferred for the existence of a human animal that is healthy. Children need to learn precisely how to deal with their sexuality, not to deny that it exists. In fact, sexuality requires some training for every age from birth to death, but that training needs to allow for and promote positive sexual expression that is age appropriate.

The Westside Unitarian-Universalist Church does just that, by providing a lifelong program, the Our Whole Life (OWL) program with different levels for all ages.

Educating atheist and agnostic children can be difficult in Texas. Wealthy children go to very high-cost, church-related schools owned by Catholics, Episcopalians, and Protestants, who teach religion at school. While these institutions are touted as educational, parts of their agenda are not educational at any price.

The only atheist I know who was born to an atheist family went to one of those schools as a child and endured chapel even though his parents also did not believe. He needed an education, so that is how he went to school. He is educated. I do not know if that is because he so much denied religion in his early days, which he did, or because religion when presented to a nonreligious child with some open education means nothing. Regardless I think his parents are to be credited for not requiring him to accept someone else's beliefs until he has formed his own.

Public schools in the U.S. are different than public schools in Texas in that, by law, religion is not supposed to be taught in public schools. Many people try to fight against that without realizing that public schools are simply not the correct realm for this. If you want a stranger of any religion at all teaching your children about religion, then that might be fine, but I suggest that none of these people really want that. They just want one god, their own god, taught to everyone's children.

Public schools in Texas mostly are for the poor and provide inadequate services. At least this is true in poor neighborhoods. A few public schools in middle- to upper-class neighborhoods offer reasonable services and opportunity. So students with no requirement for public help with education get better schools than those who do. Somehow the decision to provide better services to better-off neighborhoods is based on tax dollars, leaving the poor to the land of little to no opportunity and creating a cycle of poverty in some areas.

A humanist submits that monetary gain is not the right way to consider value to society. People with no money are rich, and people with much money are poor. When we can provide opportunity for all, we should. If everyone has opportunity, society as a whole will improve over time.

Humanists meet regularly in different venues. So far this year humanist meetings have emphasized climate change, ecology, electric cars, the broad realm of human sexuality, the right to live and die peacefully, and science. Humanists also have dinners at various local restaurants, just to socialize and discuss events with like-minded people. Humanists often also participate in Unitarian Forum, a regular weekly meeting on Sundays involving discussions of humanist ideas and current events.

Our Chair, Sam Baker, organizes the key humanist educational meeting, which deals with subjects important to humans in reality. As vice chair of for the last couple of years, I work with the Humanists of Fort Worth Board; prepare the Fort Worth Humanist Quarterly with the assistance of the chair, the treasurer, and the secretary; and organize social outings.

In fact, we love going to our meetings. Meeting is fun, not the chore that church agony seems to create for many church people. We actually believe in what we are doing. We feel vital and required for ourselves and the world. Some of our members are older than 80. They still show up and even help with setting up the meeting rooms and providing refreshments. This sort of social enjoyment adds an element of youth and vitality for the elderly, while providing guidance for younger members.

Acceptance is universal. Because we actually believe in what we are doing, we feel vital and required for ourselves and the world.

Humanists go to school and work like everyone else, but we try to get together with those who accept our feelings and thoughts.

Humanists conduct our marriages and funerals. In addition, some atheists conduct invocations for open, public meetings at City Councils, where governments will allow them. In the U.S., most of these meetings open with a Christian prayer. While some cities are progressive enough to permit humanists to give an occasional humanist invocation instead of the Christian one, most of our cities have never had one.

Humanist invocations are very moving to an atheist or agnostic, because they involve opening our eyes to reality and looking at the people around us, while stating our hopes, desires, and thoughts for humans building a better world. Only humans can build a better world for humans, so the invocation is given to those in the room, not to some nonexistent spirit from storybooks.

Death is there for all of us in any realm. That is a truth or wisdom of the ages. But death can be either a fact or a choice. Many people in general survive and suffer until their deaths. While still alive, they may take massive amounts of drugs to help them deal with the pains they have when they know they are dying. It is illegal to help them die, but many humanists believe these people have the right to choose a more humane death than medicine and law allow. A previous chairman committed suicide because he suffered from Alzheimer's. He feared going into a nursing home and finding he had no control over his own life.

Burials often are cremations or natural to the extent allowed by law. Burials outside of funeral homes allow for composting or light wood caskets rather than vaults. This enables the person to reintegrate with the soil more easily. In science, no energy leaves the world, it simply changes form.

#### **4. What are the differences in sexuality among Christians, Muslims, and humanists in the USA, Texas, and Fort Worth?**

Oddly, regardless of what religions say, humans have a variety of sexual needs regardless of their religions, and none of these are unusual, evil, or shameful as we are born with them.

Generally we are born with sexual urges, although occasionally someone may be born with lack of such desires. We can say that the types of sexual expression are very broad, as they are throughout the animal kingdom. We consider that the nature and presence of these urges are part of the imperative of life. In most contexts, sex makes life enjoyable and worthwhile. The beauty of sex comes from its ability to provide pleasure and release for the human body and mind in addition to promoting high levels of bonding among couples. Bonding helps enable couples to stay together throughout the life of a child, so that offspring have the presence of those needed to bring them up to adulthood and nurture them. Also, if we wish to maintain monogamy, sex is vital to a healthy, enduring relationship.

Not all sex is about child rearing. It also is about mental and physical health of the person. Without sex, people who have sexual urges become unhealthy. It is true that some people are asexual, meaning they have little if any sexual need or desire. Even people with healthy sexuality may go through periods of asexuality when desire simply is lacking and sex is not required for whatever reason. These reasons may involve physical makeup, mental composition, or an illness or infirmity.

For most people, however, sex is required for happiness and normality. Christians in Fort Worth churches largely believe in abstinence outside of marriage. These Christians are taught odd things, such as the belief that having sex is a sin against themselves and god. Yet in truth, sex is a help to them. Constant denial of any form of sex causes a person to focus on it more than they would ordinarily. Constant denial of sexual urges causes urges to increase. Denying sex is the same as denying water. Denial of water makes a person thirstier not less thirsty.

Boys and girls, even Christian boys and girls, masturbate and think about others of the same or opposite sex, whether or not they are old enough to support a family. Increased abstinence from all forms of sex leads them to think about it even more.

Parents would do better to explain to their boys and girls that they will think about sex, and that is normal. They should also explain masturbation to a child before a child has masturbated so when the child starts touching himself or herself he or she will feel like a human, not like someone doing something bad, as they may have learned from church or school.

Family planning and age appropriate sex education also are important. I favor delaying partner sex in favor of masturbation for the young, but the day will inevitably come—usually not the day of a parent's choosing—when sex occurs with the opposite sex. Before that unplanned day, children should know that day will come and should have training about sexual protections from sexually transmitted diseases and avoiding pregnancy before they are ready.

Adults having sex too often have unprotected sex, largely because many men prefer it and demand it that way. Women should know that they have a right to protected sex and contraception. Yet it is unmarried, pregnant women who often suffer the greatest because society increasingly pressures them to give birth to children they are unable to provide for, largely because of societal and religious pressures to avoid contraception and abortions and give birth to children.

Men may or may not comply with child support laws. The burden is on the female to fund the cost of paternity testing.

As for sexuality, some people say 20 percent of all males and 5 to 10 percent of all females prefer sex with someone of their own gender and that they have done so naturally, since they were old enough to have sexual thoughts. I believe that if we studied sexuality closely, we would see that many people who are truly homosexual also have different physical traits than totally straight people. That implies a genetic, birth difference. Let's assume a god of the universe created them. How did he not know that they would be gay? If it is wrong for them to be gay, then he did wrong by creating them. These ideas seem logical and irrational, but sadly cut against the grain of the Christian church, which thinks god is without error. Rationally, however, it becomes clear that people do not choose homosexuality. They are born that way and are naturally gay.

Every farmer of any ilk knows that a certain number of bulls will impregnate a cow, while a certain number, for whatever reason, choose not to. Animals can be homosexual just as much as people.

Sexuality covers a broad spectrum. A percentage of people is bisexual, and normally so. Most people have been attracted to someone of the same sex for a brief period of time. Sometimes children in middle school are very close to children of the same sex, even though they turn out to be totally straight later on. Many times these feelings are not expressed as sexuality, but sometimes they are.

A woman knows an attractive woman and an attractive man. That is not sex, but it comes from a sexual understanding of gender, which is not a simple subject. Every person is different.

The only inappropriate sex in my view is the sex that hurts another by coercion, manipulation, or age and power differentials that take away another's right or ability to choose or consent.

We all well know that the predatory behavior of priests has been very harmful against children in far too many cases. I believe priestly suppression of sexuality in religions calling for celibacy causes too much sexual illness in the minds of priests and leads them to seek to hide their sexuality by taking it out on children and then trying to hide their abuse of power against the children. These situations amount to coercion and manipulation and cannot be tolerated.

Sex belongs to the person whose sexuality it is, not to anyone else who takes it as a result of a power differential. A priest or an older person has such a power differential over a child. The largest problem with any sexual act occurs when someone takes sex from someone else without desire or consent or when someone manipulates or otherwise coerces someone into sexual performance of any kind.

The big problem I see with the Muslim religion and its corollaries in the Christian religion is the great fear both have of women. To control women, women are shamed and denied their sexuality. If they are really so afraid of women that they must cover women from head to toe and even circumcise them to prevent their sexual joy, then these men need to rethink the level of cowardice in male society.

While female circumcision and total coverage of female bodies do not occur in the Christian religion, we have a large body of religious Republicans in the U.S. Congress who want to control female bodies by requiring forced birth. That is, they do not want to allow women contraception, yet they also do not want to allow abortion. This is a Catch 22 for women. If you want people to care for their own children, allow them the means to make choices about the number of children they have through contraception and family planning. If you want women to be well-educated and have the option to go through college without a child whether they are married or not, then give them the means to prevent pregnancy healthily. Abstinence teaching contributes to unplanned pregnancies because people who deny themselves sex for too long will think about only that.

If men were forced to carry babies to full term inside their bodies and then to care for, feed, and educate those children to adulthood, Congress would pass very different laws.

### **5. What is the ratio of refugees in the USA to religion?**

Our total U.S. population in 2014 was 318.9 million. As for immigration as a whole, 2013 statistics estimate the U.S. had a total immigrant population of some 41.3 million. I can tell you that the number has only risen since that time, although immigration has remained somewhat stable for the past 10 years. So our total immigrant population is approximately 13 percent at any given time.

We separate the word refugee from the word immigrant, and the previous count includes both refugees and immigrants. Refugees are people born abroad who were forced to leave their home countries as a result of political or warlike conditions that threaten their lives.

The U.S. accepts about one-half of all actually resettled asylum seekers, which is more than all of the others resettled in other countries combined. In the past 35 years, we have taken in 3 million refugees through legal processing. Of course, we have many people in our country who are not refugees, but who come in to work either legally, with work visas, or illegally by crossing borders or staying over after a visit.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reports that today there are some 15.4 million true refugees worldwide. Of that number, only 1 percent is accepted into another country and resettled.

### **6. What do humanists do?**

Humanists promote education, science, rational thinking, and work that improves our world. We promote tolerance, sharing, understanding, and equal rights for humanity. We are an affiliate of the American Humanist Association, a nonprofit organization that emphasizes progressive agendas, such as lesbian, gay, transgender equal rights; women's rights; racial equality; equal treatment under the law; separation of church and state; public healthcare; climate change science and ecology; advocacy for the incarcerated, particularly those who are imprisoned for a long time for minor crimes and those who are facing the militaristic nature of policing in the U.S. today. We also work to prevent human trafficking, which statistics say occurs more frequently now than at any other time in history.

### **7. Was sind die Perspektiven der humanisten in America, and how can we work together worldwide?**

Humanism is growing in America. Pew Research Center data every year shows an increase in admitted nonbelievers and unaffiliated populations. Since the 1990s this increase has been great, rising from 4 to 6 percent in the 1980s to about 15 or 20 percent today.

People increasingly are educated to some level, and with education comes an increase in critical thinking across populations. This is combined and increased by the existence of global connections and an international education that can be gleaned from the Internet. The Internet has become a great place to share knowledge and increase understanding exponentially. As nonbelievers find others like themselves, they talk to their friends, who talk to their friends. No doubt this conversation causes some dissent among those who fear open-mindedness and change.

Nonetheless things are changing. I believe many more people are agnostic or atheists than will ever declare it. We have one visitor to our book club who drops off family members at mass and rushes away to visit with us for a little bit.

After all, atheists and agnostics sit in pews every day waiting for the god of their dreams to arrive, and he (usually a male) never does. When they pray, they may be able to think something through in their heads and feel something within themselves, but few really believe the magic. If they saw Jesus walk on water, they likely would run or have a delusional out-of-body experience.

So many wars are fought for gods who oddly look only like the people who think them up and only think their thoughts. We are very slightly removed from the Greeks and the Romans of old with their stones to worship.

People see the most awful problems and do nothing. Instead of doing something, they dismiss the world's true problems by folding their hands and hearts into themselves as they pray. The bible says faith without works is dead. Why is that? Why does an all-powerful god require people to get his work done? Why does he need us to close our eyes and dismiss the state of our own world? Some Christians I know are angry at god for not doing more. I think they should give up their anger for the truth that their gods are nonexistent ghosts of our wishes. Giving up these gods will enable them to release their anger and get busy on those things that matter.

Together, in Deutschland and in America we can start a German-American conversation and open our minds to a new way in which we cooperate over things that need to be done to improve things—not prayer, not war, but a way to live peacefully among ourselves and spend our war chests on diplomacy and improving the lives of people, animals, and our planet as a whole.

**Speaker Erwin Schmid:**

Yes, Humanist all over this planet should work together.

[German translation]

Ja, Humanisten überall auf diesem Planeten sollten zusammen arbeiten.

Dear listeners, as members of the Bund für Geistesfreiheit, you also are members of the worldwide International Humanist and Ethical Union.

[German] Werden auch Sie, liebe Hörerinnen und Hörer Mitglied im Bund für Geistesfreiheit und damit Mitglied in der weltweiten internationalen Humanistischen und Ethischen Union.

This program can also be found on the Internet, and can be found at our Web site: [www.bfg-bayern.de](http://www.bfg-bayern.de). Our next program you will hear on Sunday, October 18, 2015 - again at the same time 6:45 on Bayern 2

Please also send your concerns to with email [vorsitzender@bfg-bayern.de](mailto:vorsitzender@bfg-bayern.de)

[German] Diese Sendung können Sie auch im Internet finden und noch mal hören unter [www.bfg-bayern.de](http://www.bfg-bayern.de). Unsere nächste Sendung hören Sie am Sonntag 18. Oktober 2015 – wieder um die gleiche Uhrzeit 6:45 auf Bayern 2. Bitte senden auch Sie Ihr Anliegen mit email an [vorsitzender@bfg-bayern.de](mailto:vorsitzender@bfg-bayern.de)

Wir wünschen Ihnen einen schönen Sonntag!