



For Immediate Release

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Great grandson of former president explains why Ethical Culture is more than religion

ST. PETERS – Hugh Taft-Morales, an Ethical Culture leader and great grandson of William Howard Taft, will visit Ethical Society Mid Rivers on Sunday, August 24, to talk about why both secularists and those who subscribe to religion can find common ground in the framework of ethical humanism. The public is invited to the platform, a potluck lunch and a 2-hour afternoon workshop.

Taft-Morales, who graduated from Yale University in 1979, has an M.A. in Philosophy from the University of Kent at Canterbury, England, and is certified as an Ethical Culture leader at the Baltimore Ethical Society.

A confirmed secularist for most of his life, Taft-Morales now calls Ethical Culture his religion. He does so, however, while simultaneously advocating that Ethical Culture is more than a religion. According to Taft-Morales, the genius of Felix Adler, founder of the movement, was in placing ethical commitment to the worth of all people above any religious or philosophical characteristics. While Ethical Culture has a humanist religious hearth that offers warm inspiration to many, those not “religiously minded” need not gather round the fire. In ethical relationships and deed – independent of any religious claim - is where Ethical Culture lives.

Prior to becoming an Ethical Leader, Taft-Morales taught philosophy and history for twenty-five years in Washington, D.C. independent schools. In the mid-1990’s he became involved in Ethical Culture, serving the Washington Ethical Society as board member and Director of the Coming of Age Program, a program designed to build positive parent-child relationships and nurture maturation of young teens.

Ethical Society Mid Rivers will hold a potluck lunch following the platform at 10:30 a.m. Pizza will also be provided.

A 2-hour workshop entitled “Freethinkers, Faithists, and Atheists: Mapping Non-Believers,” will be offered to the public at 1pm on August 24. According to a 2012 Pew survey about religious affiliation, the fastest growing group in the U. S. is the one claiming no religion at all. As a result, a wide spectrum of organizations – from humanist to skeptic to atheist - are scrambling to attract some of these 33 million people. How do we make sense of the diversity of alternatives to traditional religion? What does Ethical Humanism offer that is unique and important? How can we help give direction to the many people now swimming in humanist seas? These questions will be discussed.

Ethical Society Mid Rivers is a humanist educational, cultural and social justice congregation. Their mission statement says: “We commit ourselves to the unique worth

of every person. We build relationships that bring out the best in others and in ourselves. Our faith is in the human capacity to create a better world.”

The congregation meets every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. with fellowship for adults and lessons for children. Members host “Living Ethics” discussions during the week in their homes. The location for Sunday platforms is The University of Missouri Extension Center, located at 260 Brown Rd., St. Peter’s, MO, 63376. For more information, go to <http://www.ethicalsocietymr.org>.



Hugh Taft-Morales, great grandson of President William Howard Taft.

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