

The May AFS Meeting

Dennis Martin on “Secular Humanism and Valuing Human Life”

Our program for May 10th will be by **Dennis Martin** on the topic of “Secular Humanism and Valuing Human Life.”

Why do secular humanists and theists disagree on so many social issues? What is at the heart of these differences? In addition to using different value systems, in this talk Dr Dennis Martin will show that secular humanists and theists conceive of life and of human life differently. What consequences do these differences make in traditional social issues, and what future social issues will secular humanists need to take the lead on? In his usual informal style, Dennis will engage the audience and seek their insights on these topics.

Dr Dennis Martin is a 12-year member of AFS. He is a retired philosophy professor, now living in the Outer Banks in North Carolina. Dennis has a mathematics degree from Georgia Tech and a PhD in philosophy from Emory. Dennis has spoken at AFS on seven previous occasions, in addition to teaching a 6-week course on secular humanism at AFS in 2010. Dennis notes, “I always try to bring some original thinking to AFS in my talks, and I admire the clear-thinking, important comments that AFS members bring.”



Dennis Martin



Calendar

5/10 AFS Board Meeting 11:00 a.m.

5/10 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.

5/29-31 Sunday Assembly World Conf.

@ DHPC & Plaza Theatre Atlanta

All events are at AF Hall unless noted and are subject to change.

Be sure to like AFS's Facebook page for updates: www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought

[AtlantaFreethought](http://www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought)

Building & Grounds

We have numerous opportunities for our members to help maintain and improve our building and grounds.

The following are some things you may be able to help with.

- Lawn and grounds maintenance. We need several volunteers to help keep the AFS facility looking good. It takes about 1 hour to mow the grass, wack the weeds and blow off the walkways.
- Our old lawn mower & weed wacker have died. If you have anything to replace these items that you want to donate please do.
- AFS has received a donation of bushes, but we need to dig them up and transplant them to our location this fall. In the meantime, we need to dig some holes to prepare for autumn plantings.
- We need to install an irrigation system for our new bushes. If you have any materials to donate and/or can install such things, let's talk.
- We need to insulate our water pipes under the building. If you have any pipe insulating material and/or would like to do this, let's talk. Old carpet padding works well for this. Got any?

If you can help, please contact:

markbanks51@gmail.com

Programs and Speakers

All programs are on the second Sunday of each month at AF Hall, 4775 N. Church Lane SE, Atlanta, GA, unless otherwise noted. Programs start at 1:00 PM, but feel free to arrive at 12:00 for socializing. Visitors are always welcome.

The views and opinions expressed by speakers at AFS do not necessarily reflect those of AFS members or its policy.



May 10: Dennis Martin - "Valuing Human Life"

Jun 14: TBA

Jul 12: TBA

Aug 9: TBA

AFS Email List

The AFS Announcements email list provides subscribers with reminders and updates on AFS activities. Send an email to AFS-Announce-subscribe@yahoo.com to subscribe. The AFS Forum email list is a place for discussions of freethought, atheism, agnosticism, church-state separation and religion. To subscribe to this list, send an email to AFSForum-subscribe@yahoo.com. The AFS Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought. For information on other AFS email groups, visit the AFS website at www.atlantafreethought.org.

The Atlanta Freethought Society is a member-run organization dedicated to advancing freethought and protecting the rights and reputation of freethinkers, agnostics, atheists and humanists.

We welcome anyone who is interested in learning about living a good life free from religion through attending AFS speeches, debates, and discussions. We employ protests, letters to the editor, broadcast appearances, and any other reasonable and civil means available to achieve our mission.

We define freethought as "the forming of opinions about life in general and religion in particular on the basis of reason and the evidence of our senses, independently of tradition, authority, or established belief."

We actively support a strict separation of church and state as the best means to guarantee liberty for all, regardless of religious belief or lack of belief.

We seek to educate ourselves on many topics but especially on religion and non-religion. We do this through a series of thought-provoking speakers and programs, and by maintaining a web forum and an extensive library of freethought, religious, and related books, pamphlets, videotapes, and audiotapes.

We provide an organization where freethinkers and non-theists can develop friendships, talk freely, socialize and enjoy each other's company. We do not discriminate against anyone on such irrelevant grounds as race, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, or physical disability. We welcome members and leaders of all political parties and preferences.

Because we are designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) educational organization, contributions to AFS are tax deductible.

Any who are like-minded are welcome to join us.

Atlanta Freethought News An AFS Publication

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Atlanta Freethought News

Vol. 21, Number 5, May 2015

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Membership in AFS is \$50/year per person,
\$20 for low income.

Membership includes AFNews by email or mail.
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Sustaining Membership is \$100.

Life Membership is \$1000.

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Sunday Assembly's Annual Conference in Atlanta May 29-31

<http://www.aconferencecalledwonder.com/>

CELEBRATE LIFE. BUILD COMMUNITY. HAVE FUN.

Join the Sunday Assembly's annual conference from May 29th-May 31st 2015 which is entirely dedicated to celebrating life, building secular communities and having a lot of fun. A get together for Sunday Assembly organisers, Sunday Assembly participants, community builders and anyone who wants to make a difference in this one life we know we have.

Get tickets at www.aconferencecalledwonder.com/tickets/

HEMANT MEHTA - THE NEED FOR SECULAR COMMUNITY

CASPER KELLY - CREATIVITY

MAYA HUTCHINSON - DIGITAL COMMUNITY BUILDING

SANDERSON JONES - MC

MIKE AUS - FRUIT FROM THE OASIS

MANDISA THOMAS - DIVERSITY NOW! BUT HOW?

PIPPA EVANS - IMPROV CLASS

AMY BOYLE - CREATING LEADERS

BOB FAW - USER FRIENDLY BRAIN TOOLS

BRETT WHEELER - POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

BART CAMPOLO - LOVE NOT LABELS

DALE MCGOWAN - PARENTING, KIDS AND COMMUNITY

Venues:

DRUID HILLS PRESBYTERIAN

On Friday and Saturday we'll be hosting the conference and General Assembly in this building.

PLAZA THEATRE

On Sunday the Plaza will host a Sunday Assembly Of All The Talents.

HOTELS

Highland Inn Hotel



*It's not any
huge secret
that I'm an
atheist.*

*~ Director Joss
Whedon*

New Word Needed

Michael Bucki - 4/10/15

We need an antonym for the greatly overused "miracle."

Webster defines miracle as "an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs."

Consider these examples: a skier buried in an avalanche is rescued; with or without medical treatment, a child's cancerous brain tumor suddenly disappears; an alcoholic/addict swears that God removed his obsession to abuse X-substance. All too frequently events like these are described as miracles.

Set aside the cell phone video that aided rescuers find the skier; the faulty CAT-scan that gave false hope to the child's parents or the several years of jail time confronting the addict; these events are still readily accepted by many as "miracles." But what if each of our examples was followed by "an ordinary event negating the effects of an alleged miracle?" A day or two after the rescue the skier is run over by a snowplow; the child's brain tumor returns; the alcoholic/addict relapses.

What to call such an event? How about "cynacle?" Or maybe "skepticon?" "Cynicon?" "Skeptacle?" Cast your vote and let me know.

Christian Flag Should Not Fly At Georgia City Hall and County Courthouse, Americans United Says

Bible-Reading Marathon Cannot Be Promoted With Religious Symbols At Government Buildings, Church-State Watchdog Asserts

<https://au.org/media/press-releases/christian-flag-should-not-fly-at-georgia-city-hall-and-county-courthouse>



Georgia officials must refrain from displaying the Christian flag at city and county buildings, Americans United for Separation of Church and State says.

In letters sent May 1 to officials in both the city of Cochran and Bleckley County, Americans United explains that flying the Christian flag on public property violates the First Amendment.

“When government buildings fly a Christian flag, especially with the intention of promoting Bible reading, it sends a crystal clear message that one religion is favored above all others,” said The Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Executive Director of Americans United. “This is among the most blatant violations

of the Constitution that I have seen.”

Against the advice of its attorney, the city of Cochran voted recently to display the flag, which includes a Latin cross, at city hall in order to promote a local Bible-reading marathon sponsored by the International Bible Reading Association. Bleckley County, meanwhile, has flown the Christian flag at its courthouse in previous years in conjunction with the Bible-reading event.

In its letter, Americans United says these activities are unconstitutional, as evidenced by the recent AU case of *Hewett v. City of King*, in which the North Carolina city agreed in a settlement to stop displaying the Christian flag at a government-sponsored veterans memorial.

“The constitutional violation is arguably even clearer here than in the cases described above, because the City is flying the Christian flag in order to promote a religious event: a local Bible Reading Marathon sponsored by the International Bible Reading Association,” Americans United asserts in one of its letters.

Said Americans United Senior Litigation Counsel Gregory M. Lipper: “Flying the Christian flag at government buildings sends the message that non-Christians are second-class citizens. Government officials are supposed to represent all citizens, not just Christian citizens.”

The letters were written by Americans United Legal Director Ayesha N. Khan, Lipper and Staff Attorney Ian Smith. They ask for a response within 14 days.

<https://www.au.org/files/Cochran%20GA%20Christian%20flag%20at%20city%20hall.pdf>

<https://www.au.org/files/Cochran%20GA%20Christian%20flag%20at%20county%20courthouse.pdf>

Foundation Beyond Belief’s Humanist Disaster Recovery is now raising funds to help with recovery effort in the wake of the Nepal Earthquake

NOW SUPPORTING: The Women’s Foundation Nepal

A 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal on Saturday, April 25, 2015. The area surrounding Kathmandu was hardest hit, while an avalanche was triggered on Mount Everest and deaths have been reported in surrounding countries. The government of Nepal has confirmed more than 5,000 deaths and is accepting international aid.

Our first beneficiary for this drive is **The Women’s Foundation Nepal** <http://www.womenepal.org/>. Despite damages to some of their facilities, their main office in Kathmandu was left unharmed. They have been able to use their facilities, including their offices and schools, to shelter those in need. Their staff members have been participating in the rescue operations and they have been providing food and resources to anyone in need. Currently, Women’s Foundation is focused on meeting the emergency needs of survivors, but in the coming weeks they will move into recovery mode as they help their community pick up the pieces.

This organization was chosen as a beneficiary for two primary reasons.

First, locally run organizations are always best suited to handle recovery, especially in the long term. Second, the impacts of disasters on women have been widely researched in countries around the world. This research has found that women face more and unique challenges throughout response and recovery, including needs related to health, safety, and economic stability. After disasters, access to women’s health resources are especially difficult to find, gender-based violence increases, and women are often unable to access recovery-related employment opportunities and aid. For these reasons, the work Women’s Foundation does is especially important as they enter into recovery.

Go here to donate via Paypal: <https://foundationbeyondbelief.org/hdrdrive?link=24212>

National Day of Reason resolution introduced for the first time in U.S. House of Representatives

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2015-04-national-day-of-reason-resolution-introduced-for-the>

On April 28th, United States Representative **Mike Honda** (CA-17) introduced **U.S. House Resolution 228** http://americanhumanist.org/system/storage/2/28/1/5579/HONDA_036_xml.pdf, which would celebrate May 7, 2015, as the National Day of Reason. This is the first time that a National Day of Reason resolution has been introduced in Congress.

“Each day, scientists and engineers in my Silicon Valley district are developing innovative new technologies through the use of the scientific method and the application of reason,” said Rep. Honda upon introduction of the resolution. “I am introducing a resolution declaring a National Day of Reason because the application of reason, more than any other means, has proven to offer hope for human survival on Earth, improved the conditions in which we live, and cultivated intelligent, moral, and ethical behaviors and interactions among people.”

“Millions of nontheist Americans reject prayer as a method for solving individual and societal problems, and so they’re understandably alienated when elected officials endorse a National Day of Prayer,” said Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association, “Let’s seek a more universal option.”

The American Humanist Association worked closely with Rep. Honda and his staff to introduce this resolution, which is co-sponsored by Delegate **Eleanor Holmes Norton** (DC). In previous years, Rep. Honda and Del. Norton have also supported the National Day of Reason by entering

statements into the congressional record in favor of its observance.

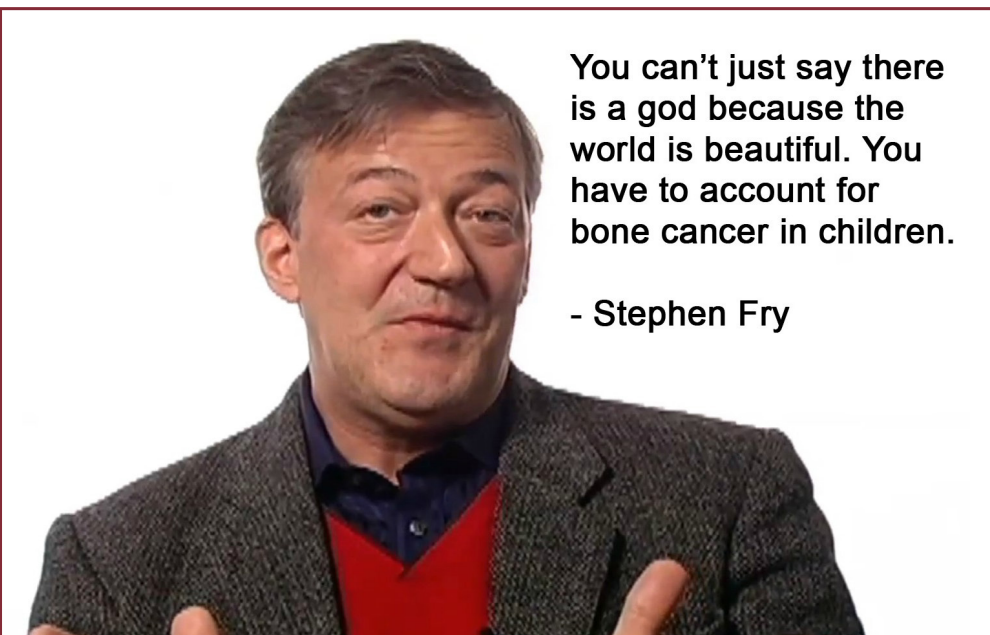
The American Humanist Association commemorates the National Day of Reason on the first Thursday in May in response to a resolution of the U.S. Congress in 1952, instituting a National Day



of Prayer. This inclusive and secular alternative honors reason, which religious and nonreligious Americans can support together. The resolution asserts that “those who wrote the Constitution of the United States...based it upon principles delineated within the philosophies distinguishing the historical Age of Reason.” The day also raises awareness about the dangers of blurring the lines that separate church and state.

This year’s National Day of Reason is also supported by Nebraska Governor **Pete Ricketts**; Omaha, Nebraska, Mayor **Jean Stothert**; Bellevue, Nebraska, Mayor **Rita Sanders**; and Delaware Governor **Jack A. Markell**, who have all issued proclamations declaring May 7 as a Day of Reason. Efforts are ongoing to introduce other proclamations and resolutions at the state and local levels.

Humanists across the country will celebrate the National Day of Reason by hosting public rallies, lectures and other events. More information about these festivities and about the National Day of Reason can be found at NationalDayofReason.org.



You can’t just say there is a god because the world is beautiful. You have to account for bone cancer in children.

- Stephen Fry

Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

The SOS (Secular Organizations for Sobriety) meets on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. in Roswell. For more information, send an email to donnaigore@yahoo.com.

We Agnostics Atlanta meets on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Galano Club, 585 Dutch Valley Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30324. Clubhouse phone number: (404) 881-9188.

The Fayette Freethought Society hosts lunches, dinners, book discussions, civic activities and more. (www.meetup.com/Fayette-Freethought-Society/)

The Peachtree City Humanists meet often for discussions at Starbucks, lunch, dinner at She's Bistro, and more. Several upcoming events each month. (www.meetup.com/Peachtree-City-Humanists-PTCH/)

Fellowship of Reason meets on the first Sunday of every month at 10:30 AM at AF Hall. There are meetings for book discussion, philosophy, a classic film course, and other events. (www.fellowshipofreason.com)

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter meets on Sat. May 9 at 1 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Booksellers Southlake, 1939 Mount Zion Road, Morrow, GA.

There is no proselytizing of any kind allowed at these meetings. For more information and resources, please visit www.recoveringfromreligion.org. (www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter/)

Atlanta Skeptics will have its meetup on Sat. May 9 at 6:00 p.m. Come help **Derek** and **Swoopy** celebrate 10 years of critical thinking and science at a live recording of the **Skepticity** podcast.

Yes, it truly has been 10 years since Derek and Swoopy helped kick off the entire skeptical podcasting scene (they even beat that 'other' podcast to the punch). So come to Manuel's and see the creative process in action as they do a very special live recording. Be sure to check with the Meetup page. (www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/)

Atlanta Astronomy Club is back to meeting at Fernbank Science Center, 156 Heaton Dr, Atlanta for their May 9th meeting at 3-5 pm. For more information, check out the website (www.atlantaastronomy.org)

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta atheists** on Sunday, May 10, at 6:00 p.m. at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/)

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths) has their monthly meeting for a change on Tuesday, May 12 6:00 p.m. at Summits Wayside Tavern Snellville, 3334 Stone Mtn Pkwy. The back room will be reserved (www.meetup.com/brights-295/)

There will be a **Third Sunday meetup for Atlanta Atheists** on Sunday, May 17, at 2:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewery, 3655 Old Milton Pkwy, Alpharetta. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/)

Freedom From Religion Foundation will meet on Sunday, May 24th at 2:00 at Atlanta Freethought Hall. **Steve Yothment** will speak on "The Historicity of Jesus". (www.meetup.com/Freedom-From-Religion-Foundation-of-Georgia/)

Black Nonbelievers are back to regularly scheduled meetings! On Sunday, May 17 3-5 p.m. at Atlanta Public Library Main Downtown Branch, 1 Margaret Mitchell Square, the topic will be: **Why Are We Here?**

There are many reasons why people get involved and participate with groups. For this meeting, we will explore some of the interactions within BN and the secular community, and gain some introspection as to our motives, and what we hope to accomplish for the organization and ourselves.

As always refreshments will be provided, and there will be merchandise for sale. (www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/)

Another **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** is scheduled for Sun., May 24 at 4:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewing, 5600 Roswell Rd, Sandy Springs. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/)

The Atlanta Science Tavern is having a meeting at Manuel's Tavern, 602 N. Highland Ave NE, Atlanta, GA from 7-10 p.m. Sat. May 23 but at press time, the topic has not

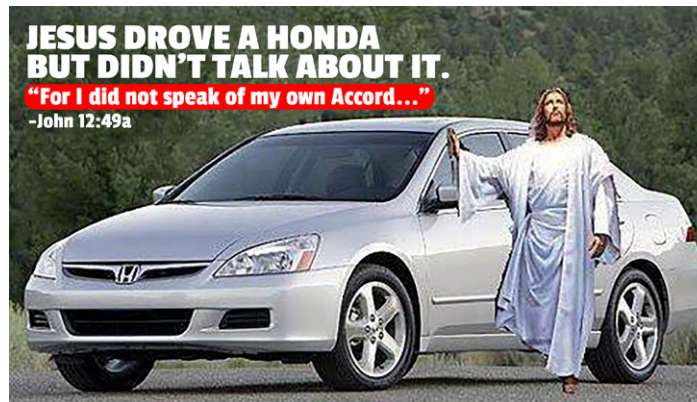
yet been announced. The cost is \$3.00 per non-student. See the meetup page for more info. Note that Science Tavern also has quite a few other listed events. (www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern)

Atlanta Atheists has first Sunday meetups each month: the place varies. Check Meetup for info on the June get-together. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/)

Sunday Assembly Atlanta will meet at First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, 470 Candler Park, Atlanta, GA 6:00 p.m. Sun, June 21. The topic has not been posted yet. They are not having their regular May meeting due to the world conference in Atlanta (see page 3 for more information!)

Please ask one of their volunteer helpers if you need assistance in any way. Their venue is wheelchair accessible and there is always a potluck supper afterwards.

Besides their Sunday meeting, this month, SA also has a range of other events, such as *Mindfulness Meditation*, *Transhumanist Discussion*, *What Technology Wants*, *First Sunday Small Group & Potluck*, *Artist's Meetup*, *hikes and camping*, *book clubs*, and *Help Often projects*. For more about the global movement, check out: sundayassembly.com/about/ (www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly/)



Become a Member!

(Or renew your membership with this form or online at www.AtlantaFreethought.org!)

If you've enjoyed what you've read, we enthusiastically invite you to join the Atlanta Freethought Society. Every month you will get our acclaimed monthly newsletter, the *Atlanta Freethought News*, voting rights in the organization—and enjoyment of the superb speakers we have coming up, as well as the social and activist events that we sponsor!

Individual memberships: One person can become a member for \$50 per year.

Sustaining memberships: One person can become a sustaining member for \$100 per year.

Life memberships: Avoid the hassle of renewing every year. A life membership lasts a lifetime.

Paper newsletter: We encourage members to receive the newsletter by email. This avoids the printing and mailing expenses. But if you really want the paper version of the newsletter, just let us know and we will send it to you at no additional charge. (You can also pick up a paper newsletter at any AFS meeting.)

Thank you for your support! We look forward to your being with us in the coming months!

Annual dues are:

Membership Dues# of mems Total

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Sustaining Member	\$100	\$		_____
Life Member	\$1000	\$	Phone: H	_____ W _____
Subscription only	\$30	\$	Email:	_____
Books		\$	Any other things you'd like to tell us?	_____

Shipping and handling for Books	\$	_____
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"Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect."

—James Madison, 1774

We still have these great books for sale:

Why I Am Not A Christian—\$8

Lucid, comprehensive, engaging answer to Christian apologists by Keith Parsons. Respectful but devastating to all Christian claims. A wonderful follow-up to Bertrand Russell's great essay with the same title.

An Uppity Old Atheist Woman's Dictionary—\$8

By the late, great Carol Faulkenberry (illustrated by Amanda Faulkenberry); like Ambrose Bierce's *Devil's Dictionary*—but better: more biting, funnier. Guaranteed to make you laugh out loud and to challenge at least one idea you hold.

Quotations That Support the Separation of State and Church (2nd edition)—\$11

Compiled by Edward M. Buckner and Michael E. Buckner; ammunition against Christian-nation mythologists. Quotes from America's revolutionaries, constitution framers, Presidents, court decisions. Sources carefully documented; extensive index. Comb-bound—lies flat for easy copying.

Please add:

\$4 TOTAL S&H Charge for up to 2 books. \$1.50 EACH S&H Charge for 3 to 9 books. No S&H Charge for 10 Books or more. (All Merchandise will be shipped USPS Priority Mail)

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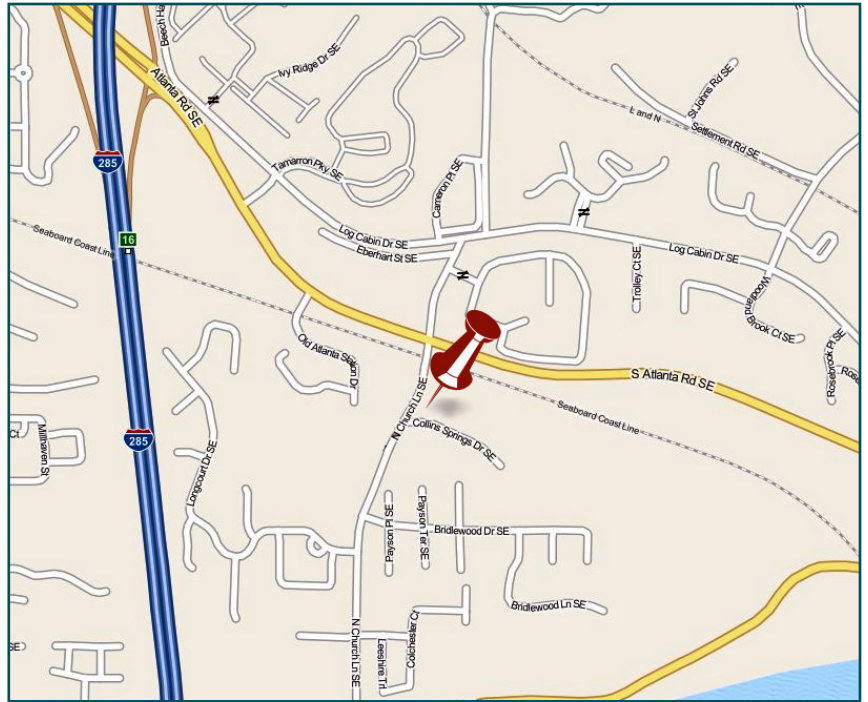
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Dare To Think
For Yourself!



**The May 10th
Meeting:
1:00 at AF Hall,
4775 N. Church Lane SE
Atlanta, GA**

**This Month's Speaker:
Dennis Martin**



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