

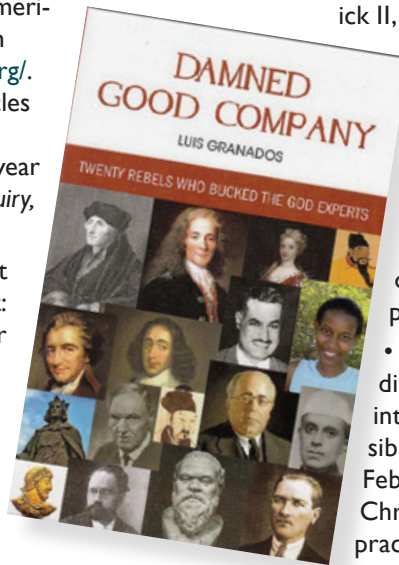


Luis Granados

Our speaker for September 8 is **Luis Granados**, speaking on his new e-book *Damned Good Company: Twenty Rebels Who Bucked the God Experts*. Mr. Granados is a 58-year-old Washington attorney and a student of the history of organized religion. He publishes a weekly

article on <http://www.luisgranados.com/blog> relating a current headline to an episode from religious history, demonstrating how little things change from religion to religion, from century to century. These articles are now carried also by *Secular News Daily* <http://www.secularnewsdaily.com/> and *Rant & Reason*, the blog of the American Humanist Association <http://blog.thehumanist.org/>. His longer magazine articles on religious history have appeared within the last year in *Secular Nation*, *Free Inquiry*, and *The Humanist*.

He is not an atheist, but more of an agnostic/deist: a suspecter, not a believer who resents being told what to do by people no better than he is who claim to speak for God. He feels that large portion of what is wrong with the world has been caused by giving these frauds more credit than they deserve. He wants to embolden people



Calendar

- 9/8 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.
 - 9/14 Paint exterior of AFS Hall (Rain date 9/21). AFS will provide paint, brushes, etc. You provide labor.
 - 10/12-13 AFS booth at Atlanta Gay Pride - Piedmont Park
 - 10/13 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m. ELECTIONS!!!
 - 10/19 AFS march in Little Five Points Parade
- All events are at AF Hall unless noted and are subject to change. Be sure to like AFS's Facebook page for updates: <https://www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought>

The September AFS Meeting

AF Hall Spruce-up!

We will be painting and doing some yard work on Sat., Sept. 14th (21st if weather conditions are not favorable) starting around 8 am. AFS will supply paint and brushes. We have some landscaping tools, but you are encouraged to bring what you can to help.

to follow in the footsteps of the heroes of *Damned Good Company*, that the world may be run more on principles of "What makes sense?" than on principles of "What did God say about that?"

Articles by Luis Granados:

- "Medieval Free Thinker"—The story of Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor who fought the Catholic Church and almost brought us the Enlightenment 500 years before its time. It was published in the Fourth Quarter 2008 *Secular Nation*.
- "Apartheid's Anniversary"—The story of how the Calvinism of South Africa's Dutch Reformed Church led the creation of the apartheid system in 1948. It appeared in *Free Inquiry* Feb-March 2009.
- "Who Killed Neal Beagley?"—Children die when their parents brainwash them into believing that God, not man, is responsible for curing disease. This article, in the Feb-March issue of *The Humanist*, traces Christianity's hostility to medical research and practice through the ages.
- "Body Count"—The latest ploy of defenders of religion like Dinesh D'Souza is to claim that atheism has killed more people than religion ever has. It just isn't so. This article from the 2008 3rd Quarter *Secular Nation* lays out grim statistics.
- "Counterfeiting Tradition"—The Turkish government is funding a group of Muslim theologians to produce a kinder, gentler version of the "sunna," or the "way" of Muhammad, to produce a more moderate version of Islam. "Counterfeiting Tradition," in the July-August 2009 *The Humanist*, explores the history of the traditions they are modifying, explaining why the effort is doomed to failure.
- "Buddhism and the Bomb"—Secularists are soft on Buddhism. They shouldn't be. This article which appeared in the Summer 2009 *Secular Nation*, explores the role of Japanese Buddhism in the deaths of millions of Asians during WWII.

Programs and Speakers

All programs are on the second Sunday of each month at AF Hall, 4775 N. Church Lane SE, Smyrna, 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.



Sept 8: Luis Granados, author of *Damned Good Company* by Humanist Press, will speak on his book.

Oct 13: AFS Board Member **Paul Broman** will speak on his encounter with the Church of Scientology.

Nov 10: Dale McGowan, Executive Director of Foundation Beyond Belief, will speak on his new book *Atheism for Dummies*.

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. For information on other AFS email groups, visit the AFS website at <http://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

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THREE FFRF CHALLENGES PROCEED IN DISTRICT COURT

Freedom From Religion Foundation wins standing to sue IRS over Form 990

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18643-ffrf-wins-standing-to-sue-irs-over-form-990#sthash.kvrK1bT3.dpuf>

August 26, 2013

The Freedom From Religion Foundation, which has three historic lawsuits in federal district court over preferential treatment of churches and ministers by the Internal Revenue Service, says it now has “three bases loaded.”

For the second time within three days, a federal judge has ruled in favor of allowing FFRF to pursue IRS inequities favoring churches over FFRF.

On Aug. 19, U.S. District Judge Lynn Adelman ruled that FFRF’s case against church electioneering may proceed. (<http://ffrf.org/images/A1716508.PDF>)

U.S. District Barbara Crabb, in the Western District of Wisconsin, ruled Aug. 22 that the national state/church watchdog, based in Madison, Wis., has standing to pursue its lawsuit against the IRS for exempting churches from annual accountability requirements. (<http://ffrf.org/images/A1718475.PDF>)

FFRF was previously given standing and is awaiting a decision over its challenge of the 1954 federal “parish exemption” law — uniquely gifting “ministers of the gospel” with the right to deduct church “housing allowances” from taxable income. This case is also before Judge Crabb.

In her Form 990 ruling, Crabb wrote that the plaintiffs — FFRF and Triangle FFRF, its chapter in Raleigh, N.C. — have been injured because “the government is relieving an ongoing burden from some taxpayers on the basis of religious affiliation.”

She added, “it is not plaintiffs’ ‘belief’ that gives them standing. Rather, it is their status as organizations that are burdened with requirements not imposed on churches.”

In exchange for the significant advantage of retaining tax exemption, all 501(c)(3) organizations except churches must file an annual, onerous Form 990 with the IRS. These forms are available to the public, and reputable charities now place 990 forms on their websites for easy access.

Tax-exempts report to the public on what they do with donations, financial oversight policies, salaries of top employees, how much of the income is used for fundraising versus mission or management, etc. Most active nonprofits, such as FFRF, hire a certified public accountant to prepare the form, incurring significant accounting.

“Don’t get us wrong. We think the cost and transparency is worth it,” says FFRF co-founder Annie Laurie Gaylor. “We’re grateful for the privilege of

the government designating donations to FFRF as deductible for income-tax purposes. But since we began filing these forms in 1978, we’ve been acutely aware that churches don’t play by the same rules, yet get equal or better privileges.”

Dan Barker, FFRF co-president, asks, “What do churches have to hide? Why don’t they want to be accountable to the public?”

“Look at Jonestown, Guyana, to see can happen when tax-exempt churches are not accountable to the government, or necessarily to anyone,” Gaylor added. “Had Rev. Jim Jones had to account to the government for the wealth, armory and even the foster children he and his church amassed, I believe that heinous slaughter in 1978 would have been averted.”



FFRF’s parish exemption challenge has received national exposure in the last week due to a bizarre legal twist. Read one of the many news stories HERE: (http://www.tennessean.com/article/20130820/NEWS06/308200069/Feds-grant-religion-tax-break-atheists?nclick_check=1)

The federal government, seeking to get FFRF’s challenge dismissed, claims FFRF’s co-presidents should qualify for a clergy tax break for leading an atheist organization. They are saying, “No thanks.”

“We are having to tell the government the obvious — we’re not ministers and FFRF

isn’t a church!” Gaylor said.

FFRF’s Form 990 lawsuit also challenges the expensive filing fees which all groups seeking 501(c)(3) tax exemption must file — except churches. Crabb ruled that FFRF and its chapter have already paid the fees, and likely won’t incur more. Crabb asked FFRF to “show just cause why that claim should not be dismissed.”

The Freedom From Religion Foundation, based in Madison, Wis., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational charity, is the nation’s largest association of freethinkers (atheists, agnostics), and has been working since 1978 to keep religion and government separate.

Holding the line in Texas textbooks

<http://ncse.com/news/2013/08/holding-line-texas-textbooks-0014959>

“Science scholars in Texas are giving thumbs up to coverage of evolution in proposed new high school biology textbooks,” according to a press release from the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund dated August 13, 2013.

As NCSE previously reported, when the Texas state board of education last revised the state science standards in 2009, the result was a flawed set of standards. Although creationists were unsuccessful in inserting the controversial “strengths and weaknesses” language from the old set of standards, they eventually prevailed with a requirement that students examine “all sides of scientific evidence.” Additionally, the board voted to add or amend various standards in a way that encourages the presentation of creationist claims about the complexity of the cell, the completeness of the fossil record, and the origin of life.

The state board of education is presently in the process of evaluating science textbooks and other instructional materials, with a final vote expected in November 2013. The worry, for those concerned with the scientific integrity of Texas’s textbooks, is that publishers would be pressured to compromise their treatment of evolution in order to comply with the flawed standards. The worry was compounded, as the TFN Education Fund’s press release explains, by the fact that “[s]ome of the country’s most prominent evolution deniers got influential positions on official state review panels examining the next textbooks and online materials.”

The TFN Education Fund commissioned a detailed review of the treatment of evolution in the textbooks and instructional materials submitted by publishers. The reviewers discovered (PDF, p. 3) that “creationists on the State Board of Education have failed to pressure publishers into including ‘junk science’ that questions evolutionary theory in the new high school biology materials. Indeed, all of the publishers have submitted biology instructional materials that honestly address and support the science of evolution and that do not include pseudoscience intended to water down or ‘disprove’ evolution.”

Kathy Miller, the president of the TFN Education Fund, commented, “It appears that publishers have done a good job resisting political pressure to weaken instruction on evolution with junk science in their new textbooks ... That should be reassuring



ing for parents who want their kids to get a science education that prepares them for college and a 21st[-]century economy.” “But,” she added, “we’re already seeing signs that the pressure on publishers will increase in the coming months.” The board is expected to hold at least one and perhaps two public hearings on the proposed instructional materials.

The board is expected to receive the official reports on the proposed instructional materials before its September 18-20, 2013, meeting, during which the first public hearing will be held; Appendix B to the TFN Education Fund’s report explains the process.



7 STATES WHICH BAN ATHEISTS FROM HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

ARKANSAS, ARTICLE 19, SECTION 1
MARYLAND, ARTICLE 37
MISSISSIPPI, ARTICLE 14, SECTION 265
PENNSYLVANIA, ARTICLE 1, SECTION 4

SOUTH CAROLINA, ARTICLE 17, SECTION 4
TENNESSE, ARTICLE 9, SECTION 2
TEXAS, ARTICLE 1, SECTION 4

The Depths Of Delusion: FRC Insists DOMA Ruling Is No Big Deal

Aug 30, 2013 by Simon Brown in Wall of Separation

<https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/the-depths-of-delusion-frc-insists-doma-ruling-is-no-big-deal>

As the great philosopher Yogi Berra once said, "It ain't over 'til it's over." (<http://www.yogiberra.com/yogi-isms.html>) And as far as Family Research Council (FRC) President Tony Perkins is concerned, the fight to stop the legalization of same-sex marriage is far from over.

In a recent fundraising email on behalf of FRC's lobbying arm, Perkins ranted that the Supreme Court's June ruling striking down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) didn't really do much.

"The media would have you believe, and the radical homosexual activists would have you believe, and the liberals in Washington would have you believe that the case is closed because the Supreme Court ruling on DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) was the last word," he said.

"But they're wrong," he continued. "The high court's DOMA ruling, wrong-headed as it was, only struck down Section 3 of the law: this means people in same-sex 'marriages' who live in states that allow it, can receive federal marriage benefits—technically, once you get beyond the bluster of Justice Kennedy, the ruling accomplishes nothing more."

Hate to break it to you, Tony, but you and the FRC are going down on this one, big time. It's true that some states still oppose marriage-equality either through legislation or in their constitutions, but the Supreme Court said DOMA violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fifth Amendment. That's a huge step toward marriage equality (<https://au.org/media/press-releases/supreme-court-marriage-decisions-advance-equality-while-preserving-religious>), and it is already leading to swift changes.

Just yesterday, the IRS announced it would extend federal tax benefits to same-sex couples (including joint filing) (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/08/29/irs-gay-marriage-taxes/2728927/>). Some local officials in New Mexico and Pennsylvania are issuing marriage licenses (<http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/county-nm-issues-sex-marriage-licenses-20031933>) to same-sex couples. This is surely just the beginning, since support for marriage equality is at an all-time high. (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/07/01/poll-supreme-court-gay-marriage-affirmative-action-voting-rights/2479541/>)

But let's entertain Perkins, for a moment. Tell us, Tony, just what will happen if same-sex marriage is legal in every state?

"On an economic level: disaster," Perkins warned. "The Government Accounting Office has determined there are some 1,138 mentions of marriage in federal law. This means nationwide legalization of same-sex 'marriage' will make an enormous negative impact on the government's budget and thus the country financially."

Huh? So allowing more people to get married somehow trashes the economy? That's funny, coming from a group that claims to be "pro-marriage." (Also, Tony, I think you meant to say "Government Accountability Office," since there is no "Accounting" office.)

Perkins also warned of a loss of "religious liberty."

"Forcing the redefinition of marriage on all states will mean a loss of religious

liberty," he wrote. "It already means parents are no longer in control of what their children are taught about sexual morality in public schools. It already means bakers and florists and photographers are being forced to participate in same-sex 'weddings' or face fines and lawsuits. Christian business owners are suffering the consequences as provisions of this law are imposed upon them."

What Perkins doesn't seem to get is that "religious liberty" doesn't give anyone a right to discriminate. Anyone can believe whatever they want about marriage, but those beliefs should not guarantee someone the right to treat someone else like a lesser human being.

Perkins even tried to justify his position against marriage equality as the mere expression of his religious beliefs rather than homophobia.

"There is nothing hateful about standing for marriage and doing our best in public policy to ensure that a child has a mother and a father," he said. "But once this position becomes 'hate,' and hate becomes a crime, Christians will be in more trouble than ever."

"This is no longer simply about marriage," he added. "This is about the federal government maneuvering a step closer to being able to silence Bible-believing churches and their values..."

That tiresome argument just won't work. No churches are being forced to perform same-sex weddings because the Constitution already guarantees that they don't have to do so. Nor is anybody in government out to silence churches or trash the Bible.

And you can pretend all you want that you care about how children are raised, but we know this is really about forcing your own idea about marriage onto other people.

Sorry, Tony, but you're on the losing end of this battle. Take a look at some polls. Note the large numbers of young people (<http://www.npr.org/2013/03/24/175201923/millennials-and-same-sex-marriage-a-waning-divide>) who say they support same-sex marriage. The future does not bode well for you.

Tony, you and supporters of the FRC can continue to wail all you like, but it might be better to simply face facts: Your cause is a lost one.

P.S. The Wall of Separation will be on hiatus until Tuesday September 3.



Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

Atlanta Astronomy Club meetings are usually held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at AF Hall. The September program, on the International Space Station, will be on the 21st at 8:00 pm. <http://www.atlantaastronomy.org>

The Fellowship of Reason meets on the first Sunday of every month at 10:30 AM at AF Hall. They also have meetings for book discussion, philosophy, a classic film course, and other events. <http://www.fellowshipofreason.com>.

The Fayette Freethought Society hosts lunches, dinners, book discussions, civic activities and more. <http://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 in June. <http://www.meetup.com/Peachtree-City-Humanists-PTCH/>.

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths) meet often for discussions, etc. <http://gust.domek.org/>.

The Atlanta Skeptics, at press time, did not indicate they would be having a meeting in September, due to having run a track at Dragon Con, but check the Meetup page to be sure: <http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics>).

The Atlanta Science Tavern was very busy running the

Decatur Book Festival over Labor Day Weekend—at press time they had not listed their normal Science Tavern activities at Manuel's Tavern, but instead are offering SpaceUp Atlanta 2013 from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm at the GTRI Conference Center, 250 14th St. NW, Atlanta GA. Tickets are \$20 in advance before Sept. 25, \$30 at the door and \$10 for those 15 and under and can be purchased at <https://spaceupatl.eventbrite.com/>. Tickets include breakfast, lunch, teeshirt, stickers, and other memorabilia. Parking will be available at the GTRI Conference Center parking deck. Park on 4th floor or higher. Sign-in begins at 8:30 a.m. and the program starts at 9:00. You can contact the SpaceUp organizers at SpaceUpATL@gmail.com. (<http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern>)

The Black Nonbelievers of Atlanta will have their monthly meeting on Sunday, September 15th, 2:30 pm at Atlanta Public Library - Main Downtown Branch, 1 Margaret Mitchell Square, Atlanta, GA. The General Meetings are back on the 3rd Sunday schedule!

Topic of Discussion: **Secular Struggles in Work and Business**

- Are you surrounded by religious coworkers?
- If self employed, are you compelled to hide your nonbelief?
- What do you think are some consequences to being openly secular in your place of business?

BN's Vice President, Felicia Smith, will be presiding. As always, there will be light refreshments and merchandise for sale. If you would like to contribute to the meeting by displaying a creative talent, please contact one of the organizers. <http://www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/>

The SOS (Secular Organizations for Sobriety) meets on Tuesdays at 7:30PM in Roswell. For more information, send

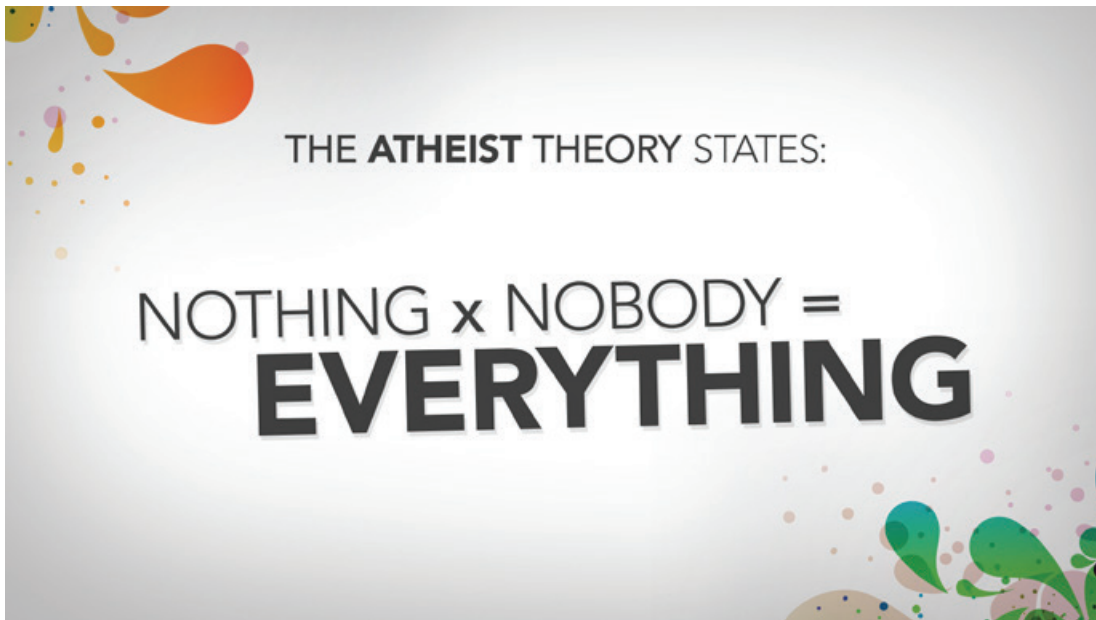
an email to donnajgore@yahoo.com.

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta atheists** on Sunday, September 8, at 6:00 p.m. at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (<http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/>)

Another **meetup for Atlanta**

atheists is scheduled for Sun., September 22 at 4:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewery, 5600 Roswell Rd, in Sandy Springs. (<http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists>)

IIG Atlanta will maybe have a general meeting Saturday, September 21 at 4:30 p.m. at Manuel's Tavern (602 N Highland Avenue Northeast, Atlanta, GA 30307). We're a new, ambitious group affiliated with IIG-West and exist to promote critical thinking about the paranormal, supernatural and unexplained. We now offer **\$100,000** for anyone who can demonstrate evidence of the occult or paranormal under properly controlled conditions. Tell your friends! We look forward to meeting you! Questions? Visit IIGAtlanta.com or contact Shaune Beattie by gmail: shaune.beattie@gmail.com. (<http://www.meetup.com/IIG-Atlanta/>).



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!

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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 Faulken-berry); 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.

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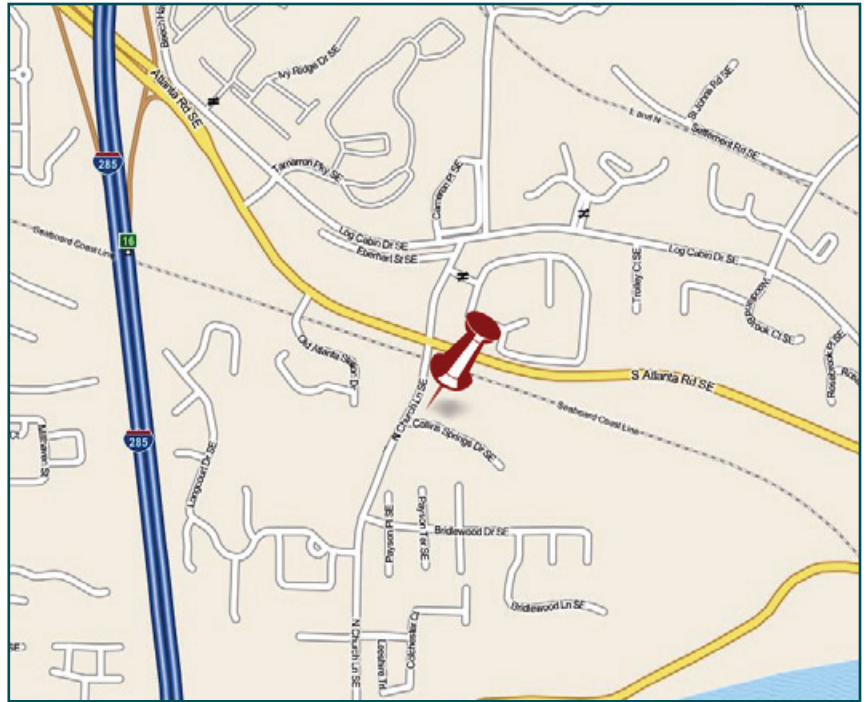
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Dare To Think
For Yourself!



**The September 8
Meeting:
1:00 at AF Hall,
4775 N. Church Lane SE
Atlanta, GA**

**This Month's Speaker:
Luis Granados**



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