

The March AFS Meeting

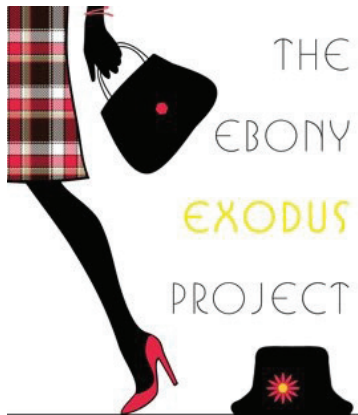
Candace Gorham will speak on the Ebony Exodus Project and why many black women are leaving religion behind

The speaker for our March AFS meeting is **Candace Gorham, LPC**, Founder of The Ebony Exodus Project, and author of the book *The Ebony Exodus Project: Why Some Black Women Are Walking Out on Religion—and Others Should Too* (<http://www.amazon.com/The-Ebony-Exodus-Project-Religion/dp/1939578027>).



Candace Gorham

Candace Gorham, LPC, is a researcher, teacher, and credentialed counselor who has worked with children, adolescents, and families for more than ten years. A former evangelical minister, she



Why Some Black Women Are Walking Out on Religion—and Others Should Too

CANDACE R. M. GORHAM, LPC

THE
EBONY
EXODUS
PROJECT

holds a Bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education from North Carolina Central University and a Master's degree in mental health counseling from Wake Forest University. She taught high school in the United States and middle school in Bermuda. She

has served as a regional manager and a training director for a mental health agency. She is a certified Cognitive Behavioral Therapy trainer. She has spoken at national, regional, and local education and mental health conferences. She also provides individual therapy for people who find her through

Grounds Committee

As the weather gets warmer, AFS is looking for people who can help out with mowing and such at AF Hall. See a Board Member for more information.



Calendar

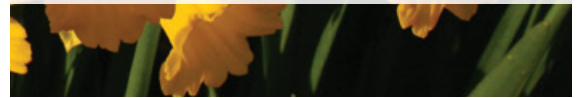
3/9 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.

4/13 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.
Silent Auction!

4/26-27 Inman Park Festival

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 Secular Therapist Project (<http://www.secular-therapy.org>). She lives in Durham, North Carolina with her husband and daughter.

Candace is a member of The Clergy Project, The Secular Therapist Project, and The Speakers Bureau for the Secular Student Alliance.

The Ebony Exodus Project (<http://ebonyexodus.com/>) explores the reasons why record numbers of black women are leaving the church. It also seeks to examine the negative effects the Black Church has on black communities, and specifically black women. Black women are the single most religious demographic in the United States, yet are at the bottom of the totem pole of just about every measure of quality of life, from physical health to mental health to financial stability. Ebony Exodus attempts to highlight the discrepancy between what the Black Church promises women (health, wealth, love, happiness, etc.) and the realities of the plight of black women.

Silent Auction



A silent auction will be held at the April 13 meeting. If you like, you can bring your items to donate at the March meeting.

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.



Mar 9: Candace Gorham, leader of The Ebony Exodus Project, will speak on her book, *The Ebony Exodus Project: Why Some Black Women Are Walking Out on Religion—and Others Should Too*. <http://EbonyExodus.com>

Apr 13: TBA

May 11: 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. 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

Vol. 20, Number 3, March 2014
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Membership in AFS is \$50/year per person,
\$20 for low income.
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Life Membership is \$1000.
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AFS Webmaster: Paul Broman
AFS Facebook Site: Laura Ross & Rick Pace

Sad news of the passing of our friend Roberto Moraes



What sad news for all who value human rights, progressive causes, freethought/atheism, international cooperation, civil liberties, and who understand that physical disabilities can matter so little when a man is determined, bright, and patient. Sadder news still for those of us who knew and loved **Roberto Moraes** personally. His wheelchair and handicapped van could easily mislead you, but if you had just one conversation with Roberto you quickly learned that he traveled with relative ease back and forth between Brazil and the US, that he thought for himself and practiced

independence more than most of us, that he could be counted on to come to a rally against the death penalty or for women's rights or for many other progressive causes, and—more valuably—that he was a key effective organizer of such rallies and politics. He was not personally loud, but he made sure thousands of others could be heard.

Democrats in Cobb, members of the Atlanta Freethought Society, and, we know, people all over at least two continents, have lost a friend and ally and there can be no one to take his place.

At press time, memorial plans were still in the works.

**Regards to all,
Ed B.
ED BUCKNER**

Author (with Michael E. Buckner) of *In Freedom We Trust: An Atheist Guide to Religious Liberty* (Prometheus Books, 2012)

Treasurer and Former President, American Atheists - www.atheists.org
ebuckner@atheists.org

The message below was posted on Facebook by Roberto Moraes's family and gives a little more detail about his death.

Our father, Roberto Moraes, passed away Monday Feb 24th after suffering a sudden stroke on the 13th while here in Brazil. Initially it was a minor stroke and he was expected to recover well, but by the fourth day of his recovery his condition had worsened, with swelling and more bleeding in his brain. He had emergency surgery to try to relieve the pressure on his brain and he was put into an induced coma and life support to allow the brain a better chance at recovery. However, the bleeding in his brain continued and despite another surgery, the damage was irreversible and he did not wake up from the coma.

He received excellent care at a public hospital here in Sao Paulo. He would have wanted everyone to know that a public health system really can work!

He was cremated today following his wishes and we are planning to plant a tree with his ashes in his memory at our farm in Brazil.

We want to thank everyone for their messages and are overwhelmed by the

number of lives he has touched, both here in Brazil and in the US.

Chris Moraes, Vicki Moraes & Lia Moraes

The message below was posted on Facebook by Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

Friends, It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the passing of our dear friend, Roberto Moraes. As many of you know, Roberto was a deeply committed activist on a full range of social justice issues. He was a dedicated member of Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty for well over a decade. Any time GFADP hosted an event, Roberto was not always present. Roberto worked tirelessly to collect signatures for clemency for many people on death row. He was deeply committed to the campaign to save Troy Davis, and traveled numerous times to Savannah to canvas neighborhoods and collect signatures.

We send our love and condolences to Roberto's children and family at this difficult time. His absence in our movement will be tangibly felt. His presence and dedication lives on in all of us as we struggle to end the death penalty.

**With love and solidarity,
GFADP**



'Ark Park' Back Afloat?: Creationist Groups Says Ground Will Be Broken On Biblical Theme Park In May

Feb 28, 2014 by Simon Brown in Wall of Separation

<https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/ark-park-back-afloat-creationist-groups-says-ground-will-be-broken-on>

It seems reports of the demise of Kentucky's infamous "Ark Park" have been greatly exaggerated—or at least that's what the project's head would like us to believe.

Americans United has followed the saga of Ark Encounter, which is the brainchild of the creationist ministry Answers in Geneses (AiG), for several years. We took an interest because AiG has sought financial help from both the state of Kentucky and the town where the park is supposed to be built—even though it is a fundamentalist outfit that seeks to promote creationism and debunk evolution.

Ark Encounter, which is supposed to feature a 510-foot replica of Noah's Ark, has been an unmitigated disaster from the start. Yet misguided Kentucky lawmakers keep making efforts to plug the leaky project's holes.

Now, after years of delays, AiG President Ken Ham said ground will be broken on the park in May. And this time, he says he really means it.

"We're going to begin construction, and this is going to be great for the area," Ham said in an online announcement. "Let's build the ark."

Ham even gave a rough idea of when the park would open: summer 2016.

It's certainly possible that Ham is being honest for once, but it's pretty tough to trust anything he says when it comes to his pet project. To recap Ham's ever back-peddling timetable: he said in January 2011 that work would begin that spring; then in May of that year, AiG said groundbreaking would be over the summer; in June, AiG said construction would begin in August; and by early August 2011, AiG still had not broken ground but promised that it would happen "in the next few months."

Then in late August 2011, AiG bumped the timetable way back, saying groundbreaking would begin in the spring of 2012.

So what makes Ham think the "Ark Park" construction can begin in May? We're not sure, because the math surrounding the project remains fuzzy at best. Back in November, the city of Williamstown, which already gave the overtly religious park a 75 percent property tax break, decided it would sell \$62 million in municipal bonds starting in December for AiG affiliates.

That hasn't quite worked out. *The Louisville Courier-Journal* reported in January that while \$26.5 million in bonds had been sold, the city needed to sell an additional \$29 million by Feb. 6 or else those who already bought bonds would be able to collect on their investment immediately.

What happened with that? The city won't say, the *Courier-Journal* reported this week. We do know, however, that the project is estimated to cost \$120 million and the state said it would generate about \$119 million in revenue over 10 years, including sales and income taxes. Even if those numbers are accurate (and they're assuming the park will get hundreds of thousands of visitors every year, which is dubious at best), that means it would take 11 years for the "Ark Park" to turn a profit. Talk about a slow return on an investment.

Now you can see why we're not holding our breath for a May ground breaking. We're also not confident that the "Ark Park" makes any sense financially for the state given AiG's track record.

AiG already owns Kentucky's embarrassing Creation Museum, where kids are taught that the earth is only 6,000 years old and can "learn" what it was like in the olden days when humans rode around on dinosaurs (which, outside of "The Flintstones," never happened).

AiG claims as many as two million people will visit the park in its first year. That seems unlikely. We know that the Creation Museum, which is only seven years old, has already experienced attendance problems. The number of people who visit each year has declined since it opened, peaking at 404,000 in 2007 and falling to 254,074 for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2012.

In August, Ham said the museum would add some secular attractions, such as zip lines, in order to attract a wider audience. That's fine and well for the museum, but what does that say about the ability of a religious attraction to draw visitors and make money?

The "Ark Park's" problems are real, from both a fiscal standpoint and a church-state perspective. The negative press Ham has gotten isn't just some witch hunt, but that's not how he sees it. Ham, who claims that "God has burdened AiG to rebuild a full-size Noah's Ark," once again went out of his way to bash the press. In his announcement that construction would begin on the park in May, he denounced reporters and "atheist bloggers" for supposed "distortions" about the project.

Just to be clear: Ham is within his rights to build a fundamentalist theme park. What concerns us is that Kentucky seems determined to prop up the project at every turn despite its obvious sectarian overtones and growing evidence that it will never pan out. And even if the "Ark Park" one day gets afloat, what kind of jobs will it bring? Seems like mostly seasonal work that pays low wages and offers no benefits. That is hardly worth massive tax breaks.

Kentucky lawmakers are wasting their time on this project. They'd best pull the plug immediately, or they're going down with Ham's ship.



CPAC Boots Atheist Booth

David Silverman: 'This Is Exactly the Problem'

<http://news.atheists.org/2014/02/25/press-release-cpac-boots-atheist-booth/>

On Tuesday February 25, American Atheists President David Silverman received a phone call from American Conservative Union Executive Director Dan Schneider informing him that the ACU board is breaking its agreement to permit American Atheists to host an information booth at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), March 6-8.

According to Silverman, Schneider cited "the tone" in the quote "The Christian right should be threatened by us," which was in a Tuesday CNN article, as the reason for the revocation. This reversal came just hours after a press release from American Atheists announcing the booth, one week before the conference.

Silverman repudiated Schneider's assertion: "This is exactly the problem. The ACU, which has invited CPAC speakers such as Rush Limbaugh, Ann Coulter, and Sarah Palin, is afraid of my tone? My 'tone' was clearly an excuse to back out after our press release angered religious conservatives."

"Continuing to conflate religion and conservatism is not a viable strategy; this was apparently too scary for CPAC attendees

to hear," Silverman said. "America's religious conservatives can deny it all they want, but soon they're going to realize that ignoring the growing number of atheist constituents is a losing proposition."

In the weeks after American Atheists registered for CPAC, a member of the American Atheists board met with CPAC organizers to discuss CPAC 2015. "Our input was well-received and the atmosphere was positive. We suggested several atheist speakers for 2015 and welcomed the opportunity to engage about conservative issues," Silverman said. American Atheists also planned a special promotion allowing anyone attending CPAC to sign up for a free one-year membership and a discount to the American Atheists National Convention, April 17-20 in Salt Lake City.

Silverman left the door open to reconciliation. "We still want to attend CPAC. If the ACU will invite us to exhibit as previously agreed, we will be there to talk about the importance of religious equality," he said.

The CPAC conference comes just six weeks ahead of American Atheists' own 40th National Convention, which will take place the weekend of April 17-20, 2014, Easter Weekend in Salt Lake City.



AMERICAN ATHEISTS
2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

The 2014 American Atheists National Convention will be held April 17-20 at the Hilton Salt Lake Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

For our 40th Annual National Convention, we are thrilled to welcome our keynote

speaker: professional football player Chris Kluwe.

Chris is the author of the new book *Beautifully Unique Sparkleponies: On Myths, Morons, Free Speech, Football, and Assorted Absurdities*. Chris is an outspoken advocate for LGBT equality, free speech, and other social issues who also happens to be one of the best punters in the NFL. Chris made news when he wrote about the bigotry he experienced as a result of his support for marriage equality and has made appearances on programs such as CNN's Anderson Cooper 360, The Colbert Report, The Ellen Degeneres Show, and many others.

In addition, American Atheists is pleased to welcome special guests Denise Stapley, winner of *Survivor: Philippines*, and Mark White, bass guitarist for the rock band Spin Doctors. Denise lives and works in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and is the state's only certified sex therapist. When Mark isn't playing with the Spin Doctors, he teaches and gigs with other bands.

Registration for the 2014 National Convention is now open! Register today!

TheHumanist.com launched by American Humanist Association

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-02-new-godless-media-hub-thehumanistcom-launched-by-ame>

February 12th's launch of TheHumanist.com by the American Humanist Association is giving humanists and other nontheists a fresh place to get daily original reporting and commentary on issues important to a growing godless worldview. The new media hub will also be seen as a vital resource for others who recognize the increasing cultural need for discourse free from the constraints of theology.

"TheHumanist.com will provide fresh news and lively commentary from a humanist perspective on a wide range of political and cultural issues," said Jennifer Bardi, editor of the *Humanist* magazine and senior editor for TheHumanist.com. "It's a new opportunity for humanists to reach the general public with original reporting and high-quality articles."

TheHumanist.com will have new material posted from a wide range of well-respected names in the secular community, including Janet Asimov, Greta

Christina, Rob Boston, and Marty Klein. The site will also be the new home for the American Humanist Association's *Humanist* magazine, The Humanist Hour podcast, and is absorbing the Humanist Network News e-zine. The site is also mobile-friendly, with plans to expand its offerings through videos and other multimedia.

"Millions of humanists and atheists are absorbing information about the secular movement through the Internet, and TheHumanist.com will serve as an online hub for this growing community," added Maggie Ardiente, senior editor for TheHumanist.com and communications director for the American Humanist Association.

Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

Atlanta Astronomy Club will have its March 15 general meeting from 3-5 at Fernbank Science Center, 156 Heaton Park Drive, Atlanta, GA 30307. (<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>.)

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta atheists** on Sunday, Mar. 9, 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., Mar. 23 at 4:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewery, 5600 Roswell Rd, in Sandy Springs. (<http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists>)

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 March. (<http://www.meetup.com/Peachtree-City-Humanists-PTCH/>.)

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths) meets on the 2nd Monday of every month at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett, 12 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville, GA. Their next meeting is at 7:00, Mon. Mar. 10th. (<http://www.meetup.com/brights-295/>.)

IIG Atlanta meets in the Crow's Nest at Manuel's Tavern on Sunday, Mar 15, 4:30 p.m. Independent Investigations Group Atlanta is affiliated with IIG-West and Center for Inquiry, and promotes critical thinking about the paranormal, supernatural and unexplained. *It offers \$100,000 for anyone who can demonstrate evidence of the occult or paranormal under properly controlled conditions.* Questions? Visit IIGAtlanta.com or contact Shaune Beattie by email: shaune.beattie@gmail.com. (<http://www.meetup.com/IIG-Atlanta/>.)

The Atlanta Skeptics will meet at Manuel's Tavern Mar. 15 at 6:00 p.m. **Blake Smith** of MonsterTalk will do "Ancient Aliens, Evolution, and the Invention Fallacy." Be sure to check Meetup for more information and to RSVP. (<http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/>.)

Sunday Assembly Atlanta will meet on Sun. Mar. 16 at 11:00 a.m. at a different location: Clarkston Community Center, 3701 College Avenue, Clarkston, GA. The speakers are a group of musicians from South America who will be playing music indigenous to their countries, as well as telling about their unique instruments, how music helps them preserve their heritage and how they personally relate to music. For more about the global movement, check out:

<http://sundayassembly.com/about/> (<http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly/>)

The Black Nonbelievers of Atlanta is having the March general meeting at Roswell Public Library, 115 Norcross St, Roswell, GA on Sun. Mar. 16 from 2:00-4:00 pm.

There has been much discussion about what the freethought community isn't doing to meet the needs of nonbelievers. At BN, we provide an atmosphere where fellow nonbelievers can meet, fellowship and exchange ideas. We would like to take this a step further and see which projects you can suggest we participate with, and that you can

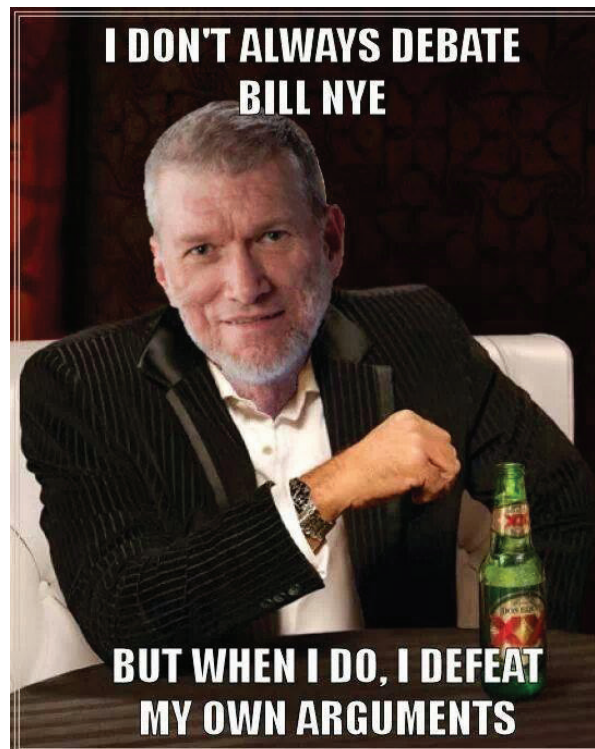
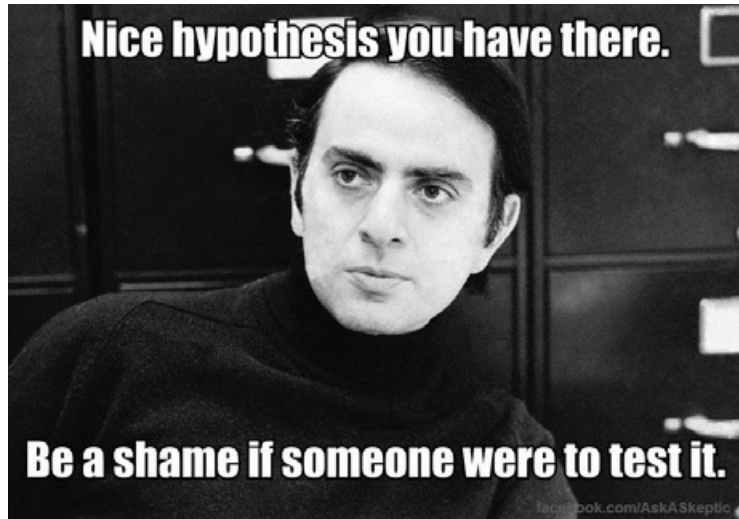
help us bring to fruition. This is something we encourage on a regular basis, but the floor will be yours. Let's see if we can make more things happen - we'll need your help. :-)

As always, there are refreshments provided and merchandise for sale. (<http://www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/>)

The Atlanta Science Tavern is meeting at Manuel's Tavern, Sat., Mar. 15, 7:00 pm, \$3.00 for non-students. **Mark Mandica** of Atlanta Botanical Garden will speak about "The Metro Atlanta Amphibian Monitoring Program - Frogs need our help." Be sure to check Meetup for more information and to RSVP. (<http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern>)

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

Check out Atlanta Secular Directory (<http://AtlantaSecularDirectory.com>) for more Science/Skeptical/Secular events in the metro Atlanta area, or contact **Laura Ross** (laura@laurarossdesign.com) to suggest events or groups to add to the calendar—volunteers desperately needed to help with this project.



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:

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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.

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.

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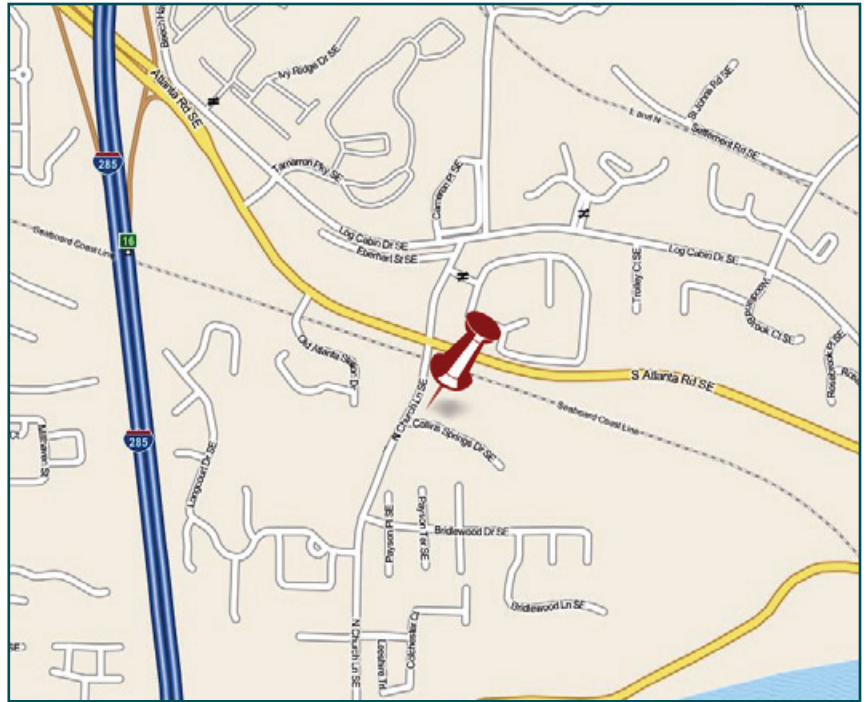
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*Dare To Think
For Yourself!*



**The March 9th
Meeting:
1:00 at AF Hall,
4775 N. Church Lane SE
Atlanta, GA**

**This Month's Speaker:
Candace Gorham**



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