

The June AFS Meeting

Dwight Lyman “Christian Science: An Inside Perspective”



Dwight Lyman

The June 8 AFS meeting will feature a presentation by former AFS board member **Dwight Lyman** on “Christian Science: An Inside Perspective.” Dwight Lyman was raised in the Christian Science church and was, in fact, a third-generation member. Dwight will

share with us the history of Christian Science and will clear up some misunderstandings as well as offer criticisms of the institution as someone who was originally an insider, having had a grandmother who was actually a Christian Science Practitioner.

Dwight became an atheist almost 40 years ago and blogs at Atheology (<http://atheology.com/>) and The Naked Atheist (<http://thenakedatheist.com/>). He has been happily married to AFS Secretary and Atlanta Freethought News editor Laura Ross for 31 years. They have two daughters, Halley and Maia.

The meeting will start at 1:00 p.m. at Atlanta Freethought Hall. Please feel free to come as early as 12:00 for snacks and conversation with other freethinkers!



Calendar

- 6/8 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.
- 7/13 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.
- 8/10 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.

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>



Grounds Committee

We need help keeping the lawn mowed. With all the rain, the grass is growing very quickly.

Thanks so much!

Lake Hypatia “Advance” (not Retreat) Glorious Fourth 2014 Thurs, July 3 – Sat, July 5, 2014 • Rural Munford, Alabama

Sponsored by the Alabama Freethought Association & FFRF

If you’re looking for camaraderie with freethinkers and informative speakers in a relaxing, lakeside setting, register now for the annual July 4th celebration at FFRF’s southern, air-conditioned Freethought Hall at Lake Hypatia, near Talladega, Alabama. Sponsored by the Alabama Freethought Association, the oldest FFRF chapter, and its co-director **Patricia Cleveland**, the event takes place Thursday, July 3, through Saturday, July 5. FFRF will co-sponsor, with Co-President **Dan Barker** entertaining at the piano and Co-President **Annie Laurie Gaylor** providing video updates on FFRF legal and other activities. Download our brochure, today! (<http://ffrf.org/images/lakehypatiaforprint.pdf>)

Registration begins now for Alabama Freethought Association’s annual event on July 3rd through 5th!

\$20 members / \$25 non-FFRF members
\$15 adult meals / \$10 kids’ meals

Some of the fun we have scheduled:

- Stimulating Speakers
- Freethought Jeopardy, with **Martin & Cheryl Lewison** as emcees
- The annual “atheists vs. agnostics” volleyball match
- Craft events for children
- A complimentary July 3 hotdog lunch (vegetarian options offered.) Other group meals in the breezy Lakeside Pavilion
- “Debaptisms” in Lake Hypatia, presided over by **Patricia Cleveland**

Go here for more information (<http://ffrf.org/outreach/lake-hypatia>) and go here (<https://ffrf.org/outreach/lake-hypatia/registration>) to register.

See inside this newsletter for fantastic photos taken by our own **Jack McKinney** of the Lake Hypatia event in July of 2008!

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.



Jun 8: Dwight Lyman, former AFS board member, will speak on "Christian Science."

Jul 13: Rob Boston, Director of Communications for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, will speak on current church/state issues.

Aug 10: 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 <http://www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought>. 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.

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Atlanta Freethought News

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

Membership includes AFNews by email or mail.
(Tell us which one you want.)

Sustaining Membership is \$100.

Life Membership is \$1000.

Subscriptions only are \$30 for 12 issues.

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Send E-mail to
afs@atlantafreethought.org.

AFS Webmaster: Paul Broman
AFS Facebook Site: Laura Ross & Rick Pace

Jack McKinney's 2008 Lake Hypatia Photos



FFRF contests Georgia high school prayers

Church 'sponsors' pregame high school meal

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20759-ffrf-contests-georgia-high-school-prayers>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has filed a complaint with the Douglas County School System about a Baptist church's entanglement with the football program at Alexander High School in Douglasville, Ga.

A district resident concerned about the situation contacted FFRF, a national state-church watchdog with more than 20,000 members and about 375 in Georgia.

In a May 27 letter to Superintendent Gordon Pritz (<http://ffrf.org/images/Douglas%20County%20School%20System%20GA.pdf>), Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel said FFRF understands that Friday pregame meals are "sponsored" by a local church, Pray's Mill Baptist, and that Ric Blazi, the church's pastor of student ministry, according to its website, gives what the complainant describes as a "pseudo-sermon" at the end of the meal before asking everyone to bow their heads and pray.

"Our complainant reports that there are nonbeliever athletes who are uncomfortable with this practice, but cannot decline to participate or leave because they risk banishment from the team," Seidel said. "We also understand that Mr. Blazi is present at most practices and games."

It's illegal for a public school to invite a pastor to lead a team in prayer. The Supreme Court has continually struck down formal, school-led prayer in public schools, FFRF noted, and cited specific cases going back as far as 1962.

Seidel reminded Pritz of a 1989 decision by the 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in *Jager v. Douglas County Sch. Dist.* (<http://openjurist.org/862/f2d/824/jager-v-douglas-county-school-district-jager>) that barred the district from inviting ministers, and later, randomly selected students, parents and school staff, to deliver invocations over the loudspeaker before football games.

"Federal courts are very protective of upholding their orders, and defying that order, as the district does in this instance, could easily constitute contempt of court," Seidel warned.

FFRF named the Jager family its Freethinkers of the Year in 1989 for challenging the prayers (<http://ffrf.org/outreach/awards/freethinker-of-the-year-award/item/11922-the-jager-family>).

Doug Jager, as a member of the marching band, was harassed in 1984 for not participating in the prayers. The case went public during the 1986-87 school year. His



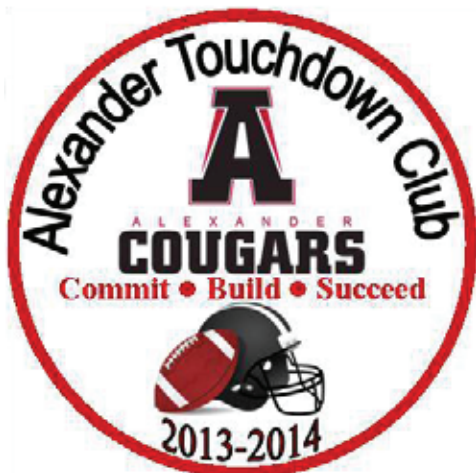
parents, Bill and Sue, were extremely supportive, and are still FFRF members.

The district unsuccessfully argued in *Jager* that the invocations were constitutional because they took place at events where attendance was voluntary. The court dismissed the argument, saying, "This argument lacks merit because whether the complaining individual's presence was voluntary is not relevant to the Establishment Clause analysis.... The Establishment Clause focuses on the constitutionality of the state action, not on the choices made by the complaining individual."

Seidel continued, "It is inappropriate and unconstitutional for Alexander High School to offer a Christian minister unique access to befriend and proselytize student athletes. Public high school athletic teams cannot seek out a spiritual leader for the team and allow that person to sermonize and pray with students, because public schools may not advance or promote religion. Mr. Blazi's religious messages are clearly offered as part of regularly scheduled school-sponsored functions."

FFRF asked the district to stop the prayers and the serious constitutional violation and comply with the Establishment Clause and the 11th Circuit's decision.

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.



Humanist group launches secular invocations program in response to Supreme Court ruling

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-05-humanist-group-launches-secular-invocations-program>

In response to the May 5th U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, which determined that legislative prayer does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, the American Humanist Association announced a new program that will provide resources for atheists and humanists to deliver secular invocations during legislative meetings.

The Supreme Court's ruling, authored by Justice Kennedy, makes clear that local governments must make "reasonable efforts to identify all of the congregations located within its borders" and welcome an invocation by anyone who wishes to give one, regardless of their faith. The majority decision also states that the policy must be one of nondiscrimination. The opinion adds that the invocations must not "denigrate nonbelievers or religious minorities, threaten damnation, or preach conversion."

The Humanist Society, an adjunct of the American Humanist Association, just launched as a

platform for humanists to be identified within local government borders so that they can offer secular invocations pursuant to a legislative prayer practice. The website (<http://humanist-society.org/invocations/>) provides sample secular invocations and an interactive map to find a humanist who can deliver an invocation in one's local area. Though this is a new program, there are already 50 individuals approved to give secular invocations, and the program is actively seeking to bolster this number (<http://humanist-society.org/invocations/apply/>).

"Non-religious people are often asked to contribute to a ceremonial event, but some struggle to find an alternative to religious wording," said Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association. "We want to make it easier for anyone who wants to give a secular invocation so that legislative meetings can be nondiscriminatory."

Monica Miller, attorney for the American Humanist Association's Appignani Humanist Legal Center, said, "While we would have preferred the Supreme Court to rule against any kind of prayer during government meetings by overruling the 1983 *Marsh v. Chambers* decision, the Supreme Court's ruling emphasizes that local governments must be inclusive in their prayer policies, meaning that humanists must be allowed to deliver secular invocations whenever a government allows citizens of other faiths to deliver prayers at its meetings."

Shine The Light of Reason!

Atlanta Coalition of Reason's Summer Solstice Launch Weekend

Summer Solstice Celebration/Launch Party

Doo Gallery
205 Holtzclaw St SE
Atlanta, GA 30316
Saturday, June 21, 2014, 8:00 p.m.

Concert

Atlanta Freethought Hall
4775 N. Church Lane
Atlanta, GA
Sunday, June 22, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

In the city sometimes known as "Hotlanta," get ready for the weekend that is sure to live up to the description! Taking a different approach from the standard method of introductions, the official launch of the Atlanta Coalition of Reason (ATL CoR) will be a Summer Solstice celebration, complete with a launch party on June 21st, followed by a concert on June 22nd. Speakers and performers will include **Greydon Square, Jeremiah Camara, Sam Singleton** and **Steve Hill**.

ATL CoR coordinator **Mandisa Thomas** says, "This is an initiative that is well overdue. Atlanta has one of the largest populations of nonbelievers, and there are so many strides to be made by the area groups working together. I am proud to be part of facilitating this important and festive occasion, as well as all future projects."

"There are a number of fine organizations in the Atlanta area to serve the diverse needs and styles we have and to further the cause of those of us without religion," says veteran activist and ATL CoR advisor **Ed Buckner**. "But we have very much long needed better ways of pulling together for the sake of the things we have in common. With Mandisa at the helm, the Atlanta Coalition of Reason is destined to serve our movement, our local groups, and our members extraordinarily well. This is great to see and I'm eager to be a part of it."

Tickets are \$25 for party and concert (\$15 for party and

\$20 for concert separately). If you are traveling from out of town, please contact the coordinator for assistance with finding reasonably priced accommodations.

Mark W. Gura

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Mandisa Thomas

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Thank you Steve Yothment!

Thanks to our Vice President Steve Yothment, who noticed that our projector was no longer working well when he gave his presentation last month. He has purchased a new projector from Ebay and if it turns out to be as good as he thinks it is, the new projector should be up and running in time for the June meeting!

Steve is very kind to help us out with this very necessary equipment.



Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

Atlanta Astronomy Club will have its Jun 21 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. There are 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, Jun 7, 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., Jun 22 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 June. (<http://www.meetup.com/Peachtree-City-Humanists-PTCH/>)

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths) normally 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. Jun. 9th. (<http://www.meetup.com/brights-295/>) The topic is "What's in a name?" A discussion of the labels (atheist, agnostic, humanist, freethinker, etc.) we use for ourselves, how we define them, why we prefer them, and which ones we don't like and why. This topic may lead to disagreement on definitions, but we can disagree without being disagreeable.

IIG Atlanta will have its regular meeting Jun 21 at 4:30 at Manuel's Tavern, in the Crow's Nest. 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 June 21. Join us for a night of Skeptical Trivia. Challenge your fellow skeptics to see who will reign supreme, and perhaps win some prizes along the way.

The questions will have a skeptical theme and will range across all sorts of topics, not just science. The format will be teams by table so think carefully before you sit down!

We will be in the North Avenue room (come in the front door, turn right and head all the way back). Social and dinner starts at 6 pm. (<http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/>.)

Sunday Assembly Atlanta will meet on Sun. Jun 22, 6:00 p.m. (Note new time!) at SAA Venue, 3580 Pierce Dr., Suite 160, Chamblee. After the Assembly, there will be a potluck. And as always, childcare will be provided during the service, and the venue is wheelchair accessible. Everyone is welcome! For more about the global

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

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter is having the June meeting at Barnes & Noble Booksellers Southlake, 1939 Mount Zion Road, on Sat. June 14 at 1:00 pm.

If you are one of the many people who have determined that religion no longer has a place in their life, but are dealing with the after-effects in some way or another, Recovering From Religion (RR) may be just the right spot for you. We welcome everyone, from doubting theist to ardent atheist, and our goal is to assist you in dealing with the negative impact of religion in your life. We are honored to be a part of your journey to be free from faith!

The RR Morrow Chapter is affiliated with the National organization, and is dedicated to helping former believers live happier and healthier lives. For more information and resources, please visit www.recoveringfromreligion.org. (<http://www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter/>)

The Atlanta Science Tavern is meeting at Manuel's Tavern, Sat., Jun 28, 7:00 pm, \$3.00 for non-students. **Robert Wirtz**, the Chief of the Entomology Branch at the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention will speak about "The World's Most Dangerous Animals - A Look at CDC Entomology Branch Activities." The discussion will be about the importance of insect-transmitted diseases, with a focus on malaria, lymphatic filariasis, Chagas disease and arboviruses, such as dengue, Chikungunya and current efforts to reduce transmission. (<http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern>)

Black Nonbelievers will have their June general meeting at Atlanta Public Library, Main Downtown Branch, 1 Margaret Mitchell Square on Jun 15 at 2:00 p.m. The topic is: "The Importance of Coalition Building"

"Coalition building is when separate groups join forces to focus on one main issue. When many different groups unite, anything is possible!" ~from www.gsanetwork.org

There are a few freethought groups in the Atlanta area, as there are in other cities. We are coming together to form the Atlanta area Coalition of Reason (ATL CoR), which will serve as a united entity and help bring a stronger voice to the secular community in our city. Join us for an interactive discussion with a panel of organizers from some of the other groups about this exciting new venture, and how we can become more involved with various projects, as well as create some of our own.

Refreshments will be provided, and there will be merchandise for sale, as well as tickets for the upcoming ATL CoR Launch Weekend. See you then! (<http://www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/>)

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.

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 important project.



I saved over 10% by switching to atheism!

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.

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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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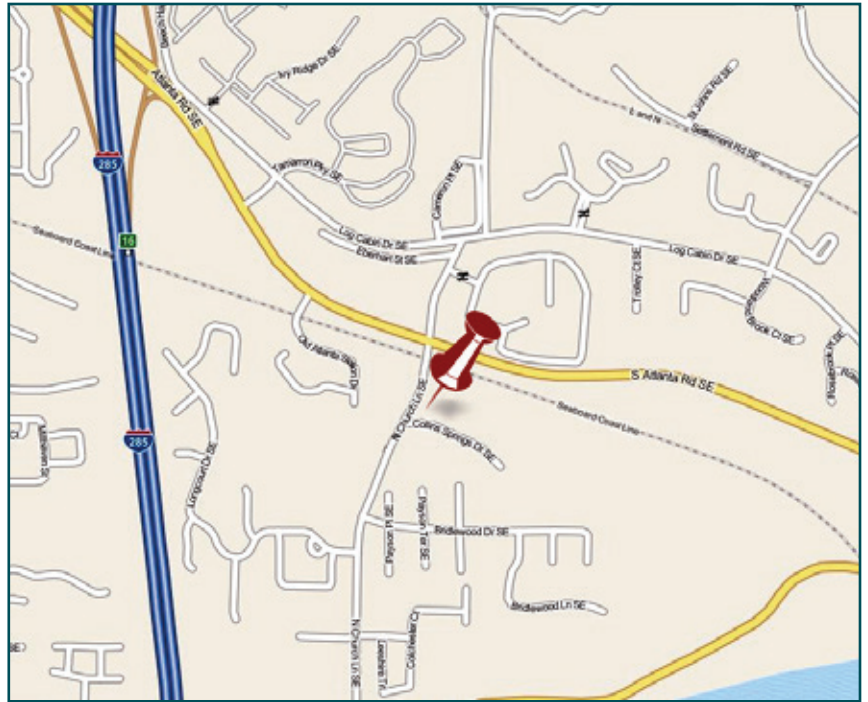
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*Dare To Think
For Yourself!*



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

**This Month's Speaker:
Dwight Lyman**



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