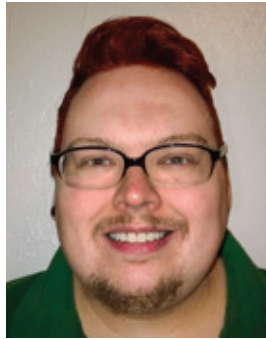


The August AFS Meeting

Dave Churvis, President, GA State Secular Panthers



Dave Churvis

Our speaker for the August 10 AFS meeting will be **Dave Churvis**, President of the Secular Panthers, the Secular Student Alliance affiliate at Georgia State University. His topic: "Secular student groups as a 'youth wing' of the secular movement, and the need for greater engagement from the community."

Dave Churvis is the founder and President of Secular Panthers, the Secular Student Alliance affiliate at Georgia State University. He is an engineer and an activist, with a passion for social justice, music, education, fashion, economics, art, queer theory, and gaming. Dave is: queer, atheist, feminist, polyamorous, geeky, absurdist, skeptical, and political. He lives in Atlanta with his husband Matthew. He can be reached at davechurvis@gmail.com.

The meeting will start at 1:00 p.m. at Atlanta Freethought Hall with a potluck lunch at noon.

Come early for food and a chance to meet and greet your fellow freethinkers and enjoy the nice summer weather.

Grounds Committee

We need help keeping the lawn mowed and weeded. Any help you can offer will be much appreciated.

Let Mark Banks know if you can. Thanks to those who've helped!

The August Potluck

Before the regular August 10th meeting, we will have a Potluck Lunch, starting at noon. Join AFS members and guests for some good food and great socializing. Please bring food according to the first letter of your last name:

- A-G: Bring side dish**
- H-P: Bring a main dish**
- Q-Z: Bring a dessert**

AFS will provide drinks, plates and silverware.

Calendar

8/10 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.

9/14 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>

You will do me the justice to remember that I have always supported the right of every man to his opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who denies to another this right makes a slave of himself to present opinion because he precludes himself the right of changing it. The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall.

Thomas Paine,
The Age of Reason

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.



Aug 10: Dave Churvis, President of the Secular Panthers, the Secular Student Alliance affiliate at Georgia State University: “Secular student groups as a ‘youth wing’ of the secular movement, and the need for greater engagement from the community.”

Sep 14: Leah Mickens “We’ve Come This Far—In Spite of Faith.”

Oct 12: 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.

Atlanta Freethought News An AFS Publication

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Atlanta Freethought News

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Life Membership is \$1000.
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The Real X-Files: Scientific Paranormal Investigations Workshop

A training workshop to be taught by Ben Radford on August 27 in Atlanta

Ever wondered how a person goes about investigating a haunted house, a Bigfoot sighting, or a crop circle? In movies and on television, it looks easy, but how do real-life paranormal investigators discover what really happened, separating truth from myth? Come find out in a unique, intensive workshop taught by investigator **Benjamin Radford**. Radford is deputy editor of *Skeptical Inquirer* science magazine, columnist for Discovery News and LiveScience.com, and author of seven books and over a thousand articles on science literacy, investigation, and the paranormal. Radford has appeared on CNN, Good Morning America, ABC News, BBC, CBS News, the History Channel, The Discovery Channel, National Geographic television, and many more.

He will share his experience and insights gained over a decade of experience investigating dozens of mysterious and paranormal phenomena. Radford is one of only a few paranormal investigators in the world who approach the topics from a skeptical, scientific perspective. The purpose is to understand and explain the mysteries using science and evidence, not to prove or disprove

the existence of these phenomena. Drawing from dozens of case studies involving ghosts, monsters, miracles, psychics, and more, Radford will explain the step-by-step process in investigations, including critical thinking, evaluating unusual claims, interviewing eyewitnesses, and conducting field experiments.

The workshop will take place on Wednesday, August 27, 2014, 7:00 p.m. at **Tier3MD**, 3580 Pierce Dr Suite 160, Chamblee, GA, (which is the Sunday Assembly meeting place). Cost is \$40 and includes a workbook and a copy of his book *Scientific Paranormal Investigation: How to Solve Unexplained Mysteries*. The class size is limited, and you must register to guarantee a space at Atlanta Skeptics Meetup page: <http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/events/197442482/>

Due to tight schedule the start time will be promptly at 7:00 p.m.; we will open the doors at 6:00 p.m., during which time food will be available.



Ben Radford

The Atlanta Star Party!

Stargazing, Food and Fun for a Great Cause - August 28, 2014

<http://atlantastarparty.com/>

Since 2009, participants in the Dragon Con Science, Space, and Skeptic Tracks have hosted this annual charity event to celebrate science and space and bring people together for a great cause. We hold the annual Star Party the night before Dragon Con begins, in honor of **Jeff Medkeff** (<http://atlantastarparty.com/jeff>). All proceeds from the Star Party go to wonderful charities, such as the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, American Cancer Society, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and CosmoQuest.

This year, we're proud to welcome astronomers **Pamela Gay**, **Nicole Gugliucci** and **Derek Demeter**, who will be speaking at the event. We're very excited to have the **Emory Math and Physics Department** host us again at The Emory Math & Science Center, 400 Dowman Dr., Atlanta, GA 30322.

The Star Party is an annual charity cocktail party. Our goal is to have a wonderful party, meet new people and learn about our universe. The party includes general mingling, food and drinks, followed by some time with more formal speakers with information, demonstrations and cool news from our astronomers.

We then will get to go up to the Observatory and check out the view from the telescope itself as well as to learn about what they do at the Emory Observatory.

Tickets are \$60 per person and this includes food, soft drinks and entertainment. Beer and wine tickets are available as additional purchases.

This year's party will be held on August 28, 2014. Proceeds will go to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (<http://alzfdn.org/>) and CosmoQuest (<http://cosmoquest.org/>). Buy your tickets (<http://atlantastarparty.com/tickets>) now!



atlanta
STAR PARTY

Bible distribution disallowed in elementary school

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/21009-bible-distribution-disallowed-in-elementary-school-july-21-2014>

A South Carolina school district has agreed to stop allowing the distribution of bibles on school property following a July 3 letter from Freedom From Religion Foundation Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott to Anderson School District One Superintendent David Havird. FFRF's complainant reported that a man told students they could take a bible as a staffer stood by outside an elementary school library, with bibles on the table.

Elliott's letter addressed illegal events that occurred in April, when the bibles were distributed to students at Powdersville Elementary School in Greenville, S.C.

"It is unfortunate that some adults view public schools as ripe territory for religious recruitment," wrote Elliot. "Parents carefully instruct their children not to accept gifts from strangers. Parents also understandably become nervous when adults take an over-keen interest in providing materials to their young children without parental knowledge. As the courts have held, religious instruction is for parents to determine, not for public school educators." Elliott noted that the distribution was not only in violation of school policy but court precedent.

Counsel for the District responded on July 21 that,

"[T]he District will ensure that bibles are not made available to elementary school aged students during the school day on school premises."



The Center For Inquiry (CFI) is Suspending Support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act: Here's Why

http://www.centerforinquiry.net/news/were_suspending_support_for_the_employment_non-discrimination_act_heres_why/

Last year, we helped rally support for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a bill in the U.S. Senate that would prohibit discrimination against LGBT Americans in employment, and that bill passed. (http://action.centerforinquiry.net/site/MessageViewer?em_id=45321.0) Early in July, we have suspended our support of ENDA, and we think it's important to explain why. It might not surprise you to know that it has a lot to do with the recent Hobby Lobby decision by the Supreme Court, and special privileges for religion.

You see, in order to get this non-discrimination bill passed, it contained language that exempted "religious employers" who might consider such a law a violation of their free exercise rights. **We absolutely opposed this exemption**, but reluctantly swallowed it as a political necessity for passage, as the exemptions would be limited to "genuinely" religious employers such as churches, ministries, religiously affiliated universities, hospitals, and other religious non-profit organizations. But what we expected to be a narrow provision of an overall good bill is in danger of being interpreted extremely broadly.

In the case of *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*, the Supreme Court ruled that this limit was

insufficient, and in the case of the contraceptive mandate of the Affordable Care Act, they declared that for-profit corporations (which employ over half of all Americans) have, under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), a right to refuse on religious grounds to provide contraceptive coverage in employee health care plans. In other words, even though Hobby Lobby is a regular business, they get to opt out of following the law because they claimed a religious privilege.

This sets the stage for all manner of religious exemptions to generally applicable laws, to be claimed by businesses of any kind, and it absolutely puts ENDA in danger of being rendered almost wholly moot. If it were to become law, with its current language about religious exemptions for discrimination, the Hobby Lobby decision ensures that any for-profit corporation could declare a religious objection to hiring and equal treatment of LGBT Americans, and never face a penalty for discrimination.

So what was once a narrow political necessity for a greater good has become an unacceptable flaw. **The Center for Inquiry believes passionately in the full equality of all individuals, regardless of who they are, where they come from, what they believe, or who they love.** The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, as currently written, no longer serves that cause, but rather gives the government's seal of approval to employers' use of religion as an excuse for trampling on the rights of LGBT Americans in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

We cannot accept that, and we won't support it. **CFI will settle for nothing less than a strong federal law that protects from employment discrimination all LGBT individuals, full stop.** When that bill surfaces, it will have the full weight of our enthusiastic support.

9/11 Cross Case Ruling Is An Example of Christian Privilege

<http://news.atheists.org/2014/07/28/911-cross-case-ruling-is-an-example-of-christian-privilege/>

American Atheists is disappointed in the Second Circuit's ruling to affirm the dismissal of its case against the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey regarding the equal representation of atheists in the 9/11 National Museum.

"The Court relied on the words of religious persons, ignoring statements to the contrary from atheists, that a Christian cross is comforting to the non-religious population. The opposite is true," said American Atheists President David Silverman.

"Atheists died on 9/11, members of our organization suffered in lower Manhattan on that day, and our members helped with the rescue and recovery

efforts—yet we are denied equal representation in the National Museum. There are no better examples of Christian privilege and prejudice in this country than this decision and the refusal of the museum commission to work with us to honor atheists who died and suffered on 9/11," said Silverman.

American Atheists filed the lawsuit in New York Supreme Court on July 27, 2011. The organization has not yet decided whether to appeal the ruling.

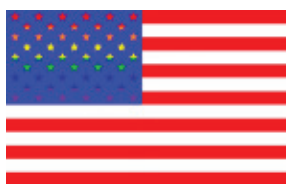
American Atheists Lauds Lack of Religious Exemptions in LGBT Anti- Discrimination Executive Order

Group Criticizes Continued Religious Discrimination by Charities

<http://news.atheists.org/2014/07/21/press-release-american-atheists-lauds-lack-of-religious-exemptions-in-lgbt-anti-discrimination-executive-order/>

American Atheists voiced its approval for the lack of religious exemptions in President Obama's executive order prohibiting companies with federal contracts from sexual orientation and gender identity employment discrimination.

"The bottom line for American Atheists is and will always be equality," said American Atheists President Dave Silverman. "Today's Executive Order is a historic move forward for all Americans.



We're thrilled that this executive order doesn't include any religious exemptions, and that's exactly how it should be. Claiming a religious belief is not and should never be a get-out-of-the-law free card."

Silverman, however, expressed his frustration with President Obama's refusal to rescind a G.W. Bush Executive Order that allows religious charities and houses of worship that receive government funds to discriminate in hiring policies based on religion. "The American people should never have to fund discrimination with their tax dollars," Silverman said. "If these groups want to discriminate, they don't deserve our respect, and they don't deserve our government's support."

August 2014

When I got untethered from the comfort of religion, it wasn't a loss of faith for me; it was a discovery of self. I had a faith that I'm capable enough to handle any situation. There's peace in understanding that I have only one life, here and now, and I'm responsible.

—Brad Pitt



American Atheists announce the first atheist channel

<http://www.atheists.org/AtheistTV>



American Atheists is excited to announce what is believed to be the first atheism-dedicated television channel, Atheist TV.

In partnership with internet-streaming service Roku, which offers devices similar to cable boxes to bring hundreds of channels of content to your TV, American Atheists will bring together dozens of atheist content creators, including The Richard Dawkins Foundation, to present the first on-demand television station that presents exclusively atheist, humanist, and freethought programming.

In addition, American Atheists is making available its recently-digitized historic video archives spanning more than 50 years of activism.

Want to watch but don't have a Roku? You can watch it live here: <http://atheists.org/atheistTV/live>

Page 5

Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

Atlanta Astronomy Club will have its August 16 beginners astronomy meeting from 2-2:30 and the 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>.)

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter is having the August meeting at Barnes & Noble Booksellers Southlake, 1939 Mount Zion Road, on Sat. August 9 at 1:00 pm.

It's the monthly meetup for the Morrow chapter of Recovering from Religion! We will meet to discuss issues directly related to religious indoctrination, struggles faced, and how to better overcome them.

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

Black Nonbelievers will have their August general meeting at Atlanta Freethought on August 10 to support Dave Churvis! Looking forward to seeing y'all! (<http://www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/>)

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta atheists** on Sunday, August 10, at 6:00 p.m. at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (<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 August. (<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. August 11th. (<http://www.meetup.com/brights-295/>)

Sunday Assembly Atlanta will meet on Sun. August 17, 6:00 p.m. at SAA Venue, 3580 Pierce Dr., Suite 160, Chamblee.

Resiliency is springing back, getting back on your feet and soldiering on—but how can we make it useful to us? How can we keep going when all the signs say to stop? This month, our topic is “Resilience.” In our survivor’s toolkit for this Assembly, we will:

- Learn why resilience is important for happiness
- Find ways to be more resilient in everyday life
- Discover how “hardiness” can be one of your most useful tools in the game of life
- Develop ideas about what resilience means to you
- Sing songs to keep us moving forward
- And a few surprises!

Our lineup:

- MC forthcoming
- Laura Hopkins will share “I’m doing my best”

- Marti Keller—wilderness poet, artist in residence and UU minister—will share about “hardhood” and the art and science of resilience
- The Joes will be leading the music

After the Assembly, we will be having our usual potluck! Resilience is key when you want to pile dessert on top of a full stomach! Our venue is wheelchair accessible.

*Make sure to RSVP only once on EITHER Facebook or Meetup so we can get an accurate count and make our service welcoming for all. For more about the global movement, check out: <http://sundayassembly.com/about/> (<http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly/>)

The Atlanta Science Tavern is meeting at Manuel’s Tavern, Sat., August 23, 7:00 pm, \$3.00 for non-students. The topic is **“Invite a Monarch to Lunch - the Biology and Ecology of the Monarch Butterfly”** by **Trecia E. Neal**, Biologist and Monarch Conservation Specialist at Fernbank Science Center.



Pollinators have been in the news lately because of the dramatic drop in the numbers scientists and citizens have observed and reported data on for the last few years from some very interesting Citizen Science projects. Monarchs are an iconic and well-loved species, the state insect of seven different states. The monarch is the only butterfly to make a two-way migration such as birds do. Currently, the migration is listed as “an endangered natural phenomena”.

Our speaker Trecia Neal, Biologist and Monarch Conservation Specialist at Fernbank Science Center, will discuss the biology and ecology of the monarch, why the migration is endangered, as well as current conservation efforts and how you can help. She will have handouts for you to take home and live monarchs and milkweed available to observe. (<http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern>)

Freedom From Religion Foundation will have its next meeting on Sunday Aug. 24th 2:00-4:00 p.m. at 1532 Dunwoody Village Parkway, Suite 205, Atlanta 30338. We will be discussing legal issues regarding separation of

church & state. This is a brand new group and it does not yet have a website.

Another **meetup for Atlanta atheists** is scheduled for Sun., August 24 at 4:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewery, 5600 Roswell Rd, in Sandy Springs. (<http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists>)

IIG Atlanta will have its meeting this month in conjunction with **The Atlanta Skeptics** at Tier3MD, 3580 Pierce Dr., Chamblee, GA, 7:00 pm (come at 6:00 for food) on Wednesday, August 27 (the place where Sunday Assembly meets). The cost is \$40.00 per person and you must RSVP here: <http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/events/197442482/>.

The meeting is actually a training workshop with **Ben Radford** on **“The Real X-Files: Scientific Paranormal Investigations Workshop”** and is required for any IIG members who wish to take part on a future investigation. The workshop will last three hours with two short breaks. This includes a workbook and a copy of Radford’s book **Scientific Paranormal Investigation: How to Solve Unexplained Mysteries**.

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.

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.

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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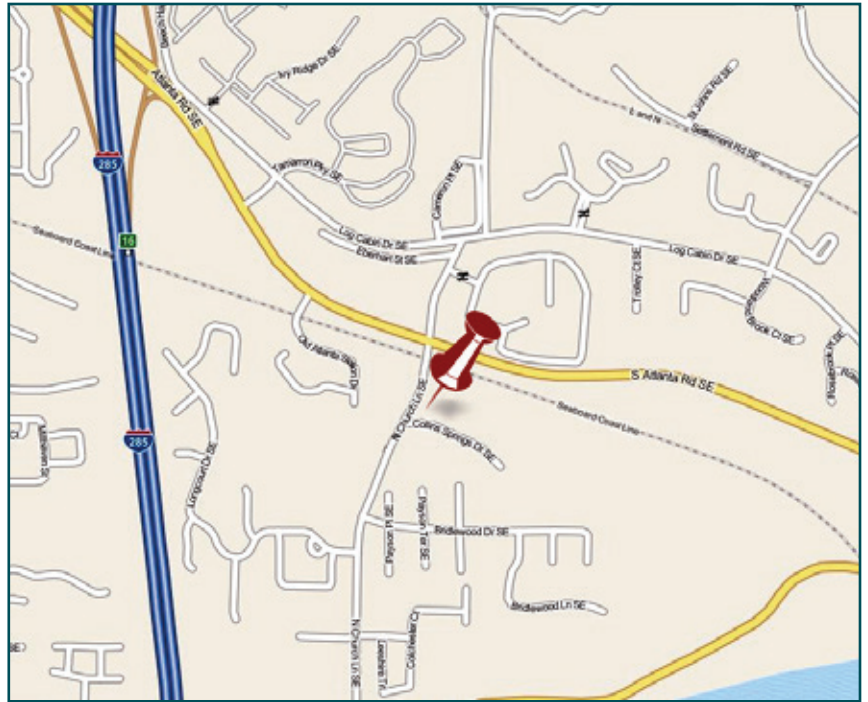
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*Dare To Think
For Yourself!*



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

**This Month's Speaker:
Dave Churvis**



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