

The August AFS Meeting

Todd Daniel - "Population Control and Family Planning"

Our speaker for the August 9th AFS meeting is **Todd Daniel**.

Global climate change, water shortages, urban sprawl, and other environmental problems abound.



Todd Daniel

While these issues get plenty of media coverage, what you rarely hear about is one of the root causes of nearly all our environmental ills — an exploding world population.

Todd Daniel will give an engaging presentation about global population, an

issue that is riddled with myths and misinformation. During his talk, Todd will explain the population issue, show how it is impacting our global environment, and provide positive solutions. Special emphasis will be placed on global warming.

Todd has been a volunteer for the Sierra Club Global Population & Environment Program since 1998. He served on the Club's national population committee from 2001-2002 and currently serves as a program mentor. In addition, he serves as population issue leader for the Georgia Chapter and holds several other positions on the state and local level.

The Sierra Club has had an active population policy and program since the 1960s. The program goal is to protect the global environment by advancing global reproductive health and sustainable development. The Club only promotes voluntary programs.

Founded in 1892, the Club is the nation's premiere grassroots environmental organization with over 1.3 million members and supporters.

Before the lecture, be sure to join us at noon in our newly repainted and repaired pavillion for our wonderful potluck lunch!



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Calendar

8/9 Potluck lunch 12:00 noon

8/9 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m. (short board meeting afterwards)

9/13 AFS Board Meeting 11:00 a.m.

9/13 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: www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought

Board meetings and Nominations

Your AFS Board has been hard at work this year and we are seeing a lot of results.

It's time to start thinking about who will be on next year's board of directors. In March, the board voted to amend the AFS Bylaws, making September the board nomination month instead of October, taking nominations for three board members (who serve a two-year term) and all of the executive board members (serving a one-year term). This will need to be approved by members at large.

Right after the August meeting, the Atlanta Freethought board members will be conducting a short meeting about rules and bylaws and before the September 13th meeting the board will get together to finalize plans for nominations as well as the October 10-11 Atlanta Pride Festival.

The August Potluck

Before the August 9th 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 a dessert
H-P: Bring a side dish
Q-Z: Bring a main dish

AFS will provide drinks, plates and silverware.

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 9: Todd Daniel, Sierra Club “Population Control and Family Planning”

Sep 13: Dr. Jill Dermyer, Clinical Psychologist and Certified Secular Therapist in Georgia
(Also AFS Board Nominations)

Oct 11: Atlanta Pride, No meeting - Go to Atlanta Pride instead!

Oct 18: Jennifer Taylor, board member of The Freethought Society, “Increasing Diversity in the Secular Movement.”

Nov 8: Bob Truett, former zoologist, “What is This Thing Called Love?”

Dec 13: Sarah Green, Tennessee Regional Director for American Atheists

AFS Email List

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Atlanta Freethought News

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Membership in AFS is \$50/year per person,
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Cleaning up and painting the Lew Southern Memorial Pavillion!

On July 25, a group of five hearty men painted the Pavillion, starting at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 2:00 p.m. The volunteers were Mark Banks, Mike Bucki, John Sinclair, Ross Llewallyn, and Tony Nickel.

Mark Banks also did some repairs on some broken and rotten wood. And Steve Yothment cut the grass on July 24th and will do so again on August 8th. Everything is looking good! Thanks guys!

Photos are by Ross Llewallyn.



Not pictured: Ross Llewallyn

Can Tennessee recognize reason along with faith?

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/23396-can-tennessee-recognize-reason-along-with-faith>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is asking Tennessee Gov. **Bill Haslam** to put reason on an equal footing with religious faith, if only for a day, due to a new state law that requires the governor to designate the first weekend in August of each calendar year as “Tennessee’s Weekend of Prayer Over Students.”

Co-Presidents **Annie Laurie Gaylor** and **Dan Barker** of FFRF, a national state-church watchdog with about 22,500 members nationwide and nearly 300 in Tennessee, sent a letter July 28 to Haslam, who signed the bill in April. FFRF promotes the constitutional principle of separation of state and church and educates the public on matters relating to nontheism.

The letter notes that not all Tennesseans believe in the power of prayer, and many object to mingling church and state in public schools.

“As a result, we are requesting on behalf of FFRF’s members in Tennessee that you also issue a proclamation proclaiming a ‘Day Of Reason’ along the lines of the proposed proclamation included with this letter. Prescribing a dedicated Day of Reason is very timely in light of the 90th anniversary of the verdict on the infamous Scopes trial. We recognize, however, that you might also choose to declare a ‘Week Of Reason,’ or an alternative date near the beginning of the new school year. We look forward to working with you to finalize the details for an appropriate proclamation and dedication as requested.”

FFRF’s proposed proclamation:

WHEREAS, Tennessee students face many influences pulling them toward divisiveness, intolerance, and ignorance; and

WHEREAS, reason and free inquiry are the most effective agents against error; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee students should be intellectually challenged and enhanced by public schools that educate without dogma, coercion, or suspension of critical judgment; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee students should learn in their public schools to base opinions on reason and informed knowledge; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee students should be taught that they are responsible for their own actions and that they should judge human conduct by its intent and consequences; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee public schools should advance and impart knowledge, compassion, and rational understanding; and

WHEREAS, this summer marks the 90th anniversary of the verdict in the infamous Scopes trial, reminding us again to remain ever vigilant about the instruction of our youth:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Haslam, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim and dedicate August 15, 2015, as the first annual “DAY OF REASON,” to honor and encourage Tennessee’s public schools as inviolate institutions of reason and human understanding, during the 2015-2016 school year and always.

I encourage all citizens to join me in honoring the worthy and critical undertakings of our public schools.

The weekend of prayer bill passed the state Senate 33-0 and the state House approved it 95-2. **G.A. Hardaway** and **Johnnie Turner**, both Memphis Democrats, were the only two to vote against it.

Behind the bill was a theocratic group called First Priority, which boasts a mission of “Uniting the Local Body of Christ With a Plan of Action to Influence the School with the Gospel.” It trumpets “Christ-Church-Campus” and “The Hope of Christ in Every Student.”

Trey Reynolds, Wilson County director of First Priority of Greater Nashville, told the Lebanon Democrat: “We are asking local churches all across Middle Tennessee to adopt a school to serve as the point person for prayer on that school campus. This will be a multi-church, multi-denominational time of prayer at each of the more than 200-plus schools. We would like to know which schools your church would be willing to adopt and serve as the liaison in your community.”



According to a story in the *Kingsport Times-News*, a Christian group called Expecting God’s Help is teaming with First Priority in Hawkins County. “The countywide event will be held Sunday, Aug. 2, from 2-4 p.m. on the campus of every public school in Hawkins County, including the independent Rogersville City School.”

Haley Wherry, director of First Priority Blue Ridge, said, “Without prayer, these students will not be able to stand against the insurmountable odds they will face from childhood until they leave this world.”

Four Hawkins County schools have a First Priority group in the school: Rogersville Middle School, Cherokee High School, Surgoinville Middle School and Volunteer High School. Wherry is available “to assist local churches to empower their students as missionaries in the other middle and high schools of Hawkins County.”

The “Prayer Walk Guide” includes a dozen items, including “10. Plead – the Blood of Jesus over the Schools, Homes and Students; 11. Bind – the powers of darkness in the Name of Jesus; 12. Loosen – the Power of God in our schools, our communities, our nation.”

“It is a shocking misuse of governmental authority to pass a law, at a behest of a group intent on missionizing public school students, to designate a weekend to ‘pray over students.’ Public schools exist to educate, not proselytize. We will await the governor’s response to our reasonable request with great interest,” said FFRF’s Gaylor.

Fla. school district paid \$86,000 to contest FFRF lawsuit

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/23407-fla-school-district-paid-86-000-to-contest-ffrf-lawsuit>

Orange County Public Schools, Fla., spent \$86,164.68 paying its attorney to defend a lawsuit filed by the Freedom From Religion Foundation—only to eventually do what FFRF requested it do months before filing suit.

That money could have bought 861,645 No. 2 pencils, 47,869 elementary school student meals, or nearly 400 Chromebooks for students, but instead went to spending two years insisting on allowing a religious group distribute bibles to students.

In 2013, FFRF sent a letter asking the Orange County Public Schools to close a “forum” that was created at the behest of a Christian missionary group that wanted to continue to distribute bibles to public school students.

When the district kept the forum open, FFRF asked to distribute its own materials to students. The school district then censored many of the materials FFRF sought to distribute, and FFRF sued over the censorship. To end that lawsuit, in February 2015, the school district closed the forum for religious distributions—which is what FFRF suggested in its first letter.

“Had the district listened to FFRF as a concerned ally rather than treated

us as an adversary, it could have saved a lot of time and money,” said FFRF Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel. “We urge other public schools to stick to the business of educating students, not providing outside groups with a platform to preach to other people’s children.”

Allowing religious literature distributions turns the public schools into religious battlegrounds, fraught with solicitation and propaganda. But schools are not required to open these forums. FFRF’s position is that the best course is to disallow all third-party literature distribution, and FFRF finds it unfortunate that Orange County Public Schools had to pay its lawyers tens of thousands of dollars to come to the same conclusion.

Atheists Laud Ruling Against ‘Religious Burden’ For Contraceptive Coverage Opt-Out

<http://news.atheists.org/2015/07/14/atheists-laud-ruling-against-religious-burden-for-contraceptive-coverage-opt-out/>

On July 14, American Atheists applauded the decision by the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals requiring religious employers to either provide contraception coverage to employees or formally request to opt-out, allowing a third-party insurer to provide coverage. The court ruled against the Denver-based Little Sisters of the Poor claim that filing for the opt-out made the organization complicit in the contraceptives use and held that the existing accommodation for the so-called “contraceptive mandate” for religious organizations in the Affordable Care Act is not a substantial burden under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).

“In the post-Hobby Lobby judicial landscape, this decision is about the best we can hope for,” said **Amanda Knief**, American Atheists National Legal & Public Policy Director. “The Little Sisters of the Poor are not required to provide contraceptives under the mandate. They simply have to fill out a form

indicating that they’re opting out. Their claim that a two-page form was a ‘substantial burden’ on their beliefs is ridiculous.”

“No employee should be forced to adhere to their employers’ religious dogma,” added **Nick Fish**, National Program Director. “The Little Sisters were asking the Court to make it easier for them to deny health care op-

tions to their employees. The hoops women have to jump through to get access to contraceptives are ridiculous enough. I’m relieved that the court came down on the side of employees’ rights.”

In his opinion in the Hobby Lobby case, Justice **Samuel Alito** specifically said that the existing accommodation, the one challenged by the Little Sisters, “does not impinge on plaintiffs’ religious beliefs” and even suggested extending the accommodation to for-profit organizations.

“While American Atheists opposes any special treatment or exemptions from generally applicable law on the basis of religion, we applaud the court for finding middle ground that protects the right of employees to not have their healthcare choices dictated to them by their bosses,” said Fish.



Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

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

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

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

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

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter meets on Sat. Aug. 8 at 1 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Booksellers Southlake, 1939 Mount Zion Road, Morrow, GA. There is no proselytizing of any kind allowed at these meetings. For more information and resources, please visit www.recoveringfromreligion.org. (www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter/)

Atlanta Astronomy Club will meet at Fernbank Science Center, 156 Heaton Dr, Atlanta for their Aug. 8th meeting at 3-5 pm. For more information, check out the website (www.atlantaastronomy.org)

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta atheists** on Sunday, Aug. 9, at 6:00 p.m. at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/)

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths) has their monthly meeting on Monday, Aug 10, 6:00 p.m. at UUCG, 12 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville. The topic is "Where do our ethics come from?" If God doesn't tell us how to act, then how do we figure how to behave? Once we have rejected religion, what's left to guide us? Come discuss. (www.meetup.com/brights-295/)

Atlanta Skeptics - host Shaune Beattie is stepping down, so check the Meetup page. (www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/)

There will be a **Third Sunday meetup for Atlanta Atheists** on Sunday, Aug 16, at 2:00 p.m. at Diesel Pizza & Pub, 994 Alpharetta Street, Roswell, GA. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/)

Black Nonbelievers will meet on Sunday, Aug. 16, 3-5 p.m. at Atlanta Public Library Main Downtown Branch, 1 Margaret Mitchell Square. The topic of discussion is "Parents Beyond Belief." Many of the members were once believers, and raised their children under religion. Black Nonbelievers will learn from them what the process was like to detach from believing, and the impact that had on the parent/child relationship. As always, there will be refreshments and BN merchandise for sale. (www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/)

Sunday Assembly Atlanta will meet at First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, 470 Candler Park, Atlanta, GA 6:00 p.m. Sun, Aug. 16. At presstime, the topic had not yet been announced, but it will be great. Don't forget our fabulous potluck following the assembly! Please bring a dish to share and a healthy appetite. Please ask one of their volunteer helpers if you need assistance in any way. Their venue is wheelchair accessible and there is always a potluck supper afterwards.

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

Another **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** is scheduled for Sun., Aug. 23 at 4:00 p.m. at Five Seasons Brewing, 5600 Roswell Rd, Sandy Springs. (www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists)

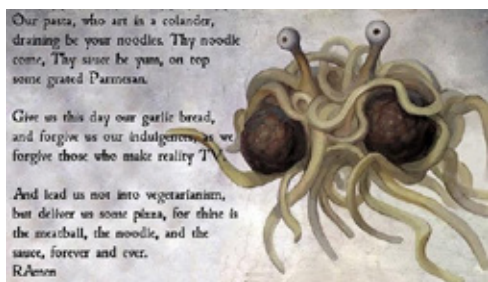
The Atlanta Science Tavern is having a meeting at Manuel's Tavern, 602 N. Highland Ave NE, Atlanta, GA from 7-10 p.m. Sat. August 22. The topic is "Using novel therapeutic interventions to keep children healthy in body and mind" given by **Shannon Gourley**, Assistant Professor, Departments of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, Emory University School of Medicine.

The talk will be about brain and behavior change throughout development in childhood, including adolescence. Adolescence, in particular, is a period considerable brain development. It is also a period of vulnerability to the emergence of multiple psychiatric illnesses. As another example, chronic feeding aversion develops in some children and can result in problem behavior at mealtime and in extreme instances, the placement of feeding tubes. Behavioral treatments are highly effective but require several weeks of intervention.

In this talk, Gourley will discuss her research into novel therapeutic interventions tailored to adolescents – and adolescent brain development – that may be effective in the treatment of psychopathology. She will also discuss work that she and her colleagues at the Feeding Clinic at the Marcus Autism Center are doing towards developing novel interventions to accelerate therapies that address feeding aversion in children. Participants will learn more about the way that old therapies can be repurposed for new applications and how current work in pharmacology and molecular biology may aid in keeping children healthy, body and mind.

The cost is \$3.00 per non-student. Note that Science Tavern also has quite a few other listed events. (www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern)

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



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.

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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

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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.

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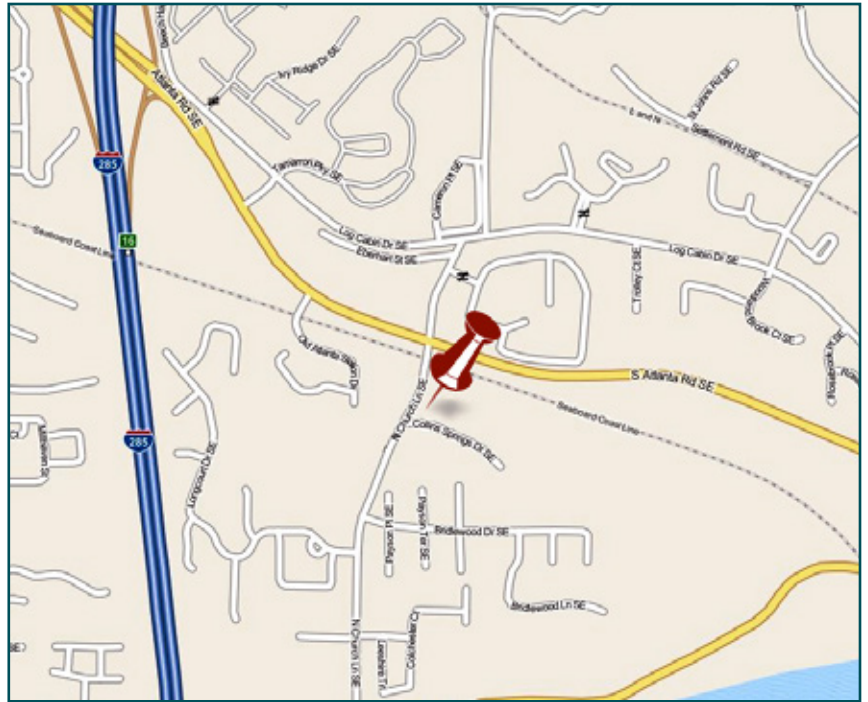
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Dare To Think
For Yourself!



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

**This Month's Speaker:
Todd Daniel**



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