

The December AFS Meeting

Chuck Miller on the documentary "Exodus"

On Sunday, December II, Atlanta Freethought Society is fortunate to welcome Executive Produc-



er Charles R. "Chuck" Miller, a consultant and secular activist who will talk about the upcoming documentary "Exodus." Chuck has played a key role in casting and consulting on the development of the film.

"Exodus" is a feature-

length documentary about the growing number of African-Americans leaving religion. Awardwinning journalist David Person takes a look at this trend by examining the lives of Black atheists and illuminating interviews with pastors and theologians commenting on the implications for the church and community. The subjects tell their stories of coming out atheist, including the prejudice and social problems they face as part of the most religious demographic in America.

"Exodus" will be a powerful film that needs to be seen by a mass audience to create better understanding of non-religious African-Americans. Making a broadcast quality documentary for a mass audience is a large undertaking. We know this subject is important and deserves an in-depth journalistic treatment.

"Exodus" is being produced to reach the mass audience of television viewers, many of whom have never had a conversation with an African-American atheist. Wide distribution of "Exodus" on broadcast and cable television will make that possible. The interviews and cinéma vérité "slice of life" segments in "Exodus" present an authentic view of African-American atheists, illuminated by commentary from fellow non-believers and clergy. A mass audience needs to see this documentary in order to understand a little discussed and often misunderstood social trend. In addition, "Exodus" will give Black atheists an authentic voice that must be heard. Interviews with clergy will provide the counterpoint for journalistic integrity.

Calendar

12/11 AFS Board meeting 11:00 am 12/11 AFS General meeting 1:00 pm 12/30 Games at AF Hall! 7:00-ish pm 1/8 Potluck Lunch 12:00 noon 1/8 AFS General meeting 1:00 pm 1/8 Games at AF Hall! 2:30 pm 1/27 Games at AF Hall! 7:00-ish pm

All events are at AF Hall unless noted and are subject to change.

Be sure to like AFS's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought

Notes from the Editor:

Since the art show currently on the walls does not currently have a replacement (hint hint), we will be leaving the art on the walls another month. If you'd like to make a purchase for the holidays and support our AFS artists as well as AFS, let us know! Everything is for sale—talk to the artists or to members of the board if you are interested.

Also, if you would like to hang your own work, let us know about that as well. The application is on page 7 next to the membership form.



If you are a paid member, you will have received a ballot for board elections. If you haven't mailed them in already, bring them to the meeting on Sunday. Volunteers who are not currently running for office are needed to help count ballots.

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It is December and 2017 membership fees are due this month to give us an idea about next year's budget. You can find an application on page 7 of this newsletter. Your support helps pay for the building, supplies, printing, etc. as well as honorariums for our wonderful speakers.

For the latest in upcoming AFS events, join our Meetup group! meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society

Programs and Speakers

All programs are on the second Sunday of each month at AF Hall, 4775 N. Church Lane SE, Atlanta, GA, 30339 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.

Dec II: Chuck Miller: "Exodus" - a documentary about African-Americans who leave the church

Jan 8: Bill Osinski: On his book and screenplay about Dwight "Malichi" York, a religious leader who got into legal trouble

Feb 12: TBD

AFS Email List

The AFS Announcements email list provides subscribers with reminders and updates on AFS activities. Send an email to <u>AFS-Announce-subscribe@yahoogroups.com</u> 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 <u>AFSForum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com</u>. The AFS Facebook page is at <u>facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought</u>. For calender information on AFS activities, please join the <u>Meetup group</u>. The AFS website is <u>www.atlantafreethought.org</u>.

To keep up to date on the Atlanta Freethought Society calendar of upcoming events, please join our Meetup group: <u>meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society</u>.

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.

Views, opinions, positions or strategies expressed by authors are theirs alone and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, positions or strategies of the Atlanta Freethought Society or any member thereof. The editors of *Atlanta Freethought News* reserve the right to edit or alter in any manner it sees fit any articles deemed to be obscene, offensive, defamatory, threatening, in violation of trademark, copyright or other laws, or is otherwise unacceptable; and also to correct grammar and to conserve space.

Atlanta Freethought News An AFS Publication

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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.

Please make checks and money orders payable to Atlanta Freethought Society

(or Paypal to afs@atlantafreethought.org)

Visit our Meetup page at meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society/

See AFS events and member views at: facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought.

Send E-mail to afs@atlantafreethought.org.

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Atlanta Freethought News



Significant logical errors about Satan and Good News Clubs

Dear Editor:

Marietta Daily Journal columnist Kevin Foley wrote a recent wise column on all the brouhaha about the Good News and Satan Clubs (MDJ, 28 October). The commentary since, by letters-to-the-editor writers, school board members, and others has included some basic logical and constitutional mistakes.

No one—not Christians or atheists or Satanists or believers in heaven and a merciful God or agnostics—no one has the final say on these matters, which cannot be resolved to everyone's satisfaction by evidence and logic. Some are convinced that heaven is real, some not; some that there is a true religion, others that there is none or that their own is truer than yours.

When government agents—including public school officials—take sides, they cannot resolve matters and the real power of government means they can make things worse.

Four American ideas support separation of government and religion, four that every American should accept fully:

- I. Americans do not all agree on religion.
- 2. Human judgement is imperfect.
- 3. Religious truth cannot be determined by force or by majority vote.
- 4. Religious liberty is worth defending.

Accept all four and you should understand why public schools should not host Good News Clubs or Satan Clubs.

> Regards, Ed Buckner Smyrna, Georgia

Atheists Billboards Say 'Skip Church' for a Merrier Christmas

news.atheists.org

In what has become an annual holiday tradition, American Atheists launched two billboards nationwide urging viewers to celebrate an "atheist Christmas" by skipping church. Several of the locations are in southern states to start promoting the solar eclipse convention the atheists will be hosting in Charleston, SC, in August 2017.

The first billboard shows a text message exchange between two young women. One tells the other about her plans to skip church this holiday season and that her parents will "get over it." This billboard will be up the entire month of December in Colorado Springs, Colorado; Lynchburg, Virginia; Augusta, Georgia; Shreveport, Louisiana; and Georgetown, South Carolina, a short drive from the site of the upcoming convention in Charleston.



"It is important for people to know religion has nothing to do with being a good person, and that being open and honest about what you believe—and don't believe—is the best gift you can give this holiday season," said **David Silverman**, president of American Atheists. "More and more Americans are leaving religion, but we still have work to do when it comes to fighting the stigma many atheists face."

The second billboard is a parody of President-elect **Donald Trump's** campaign slogan. The message calls on atheists to "Make Christmas Great Again!" by skipping church. During the campaign, Trump repeatedly pledged that stores would say "Merry Christmas" rather than "Happy Holidays" if he were to win the presidency. That billboard will be up the entire month of December in Lynchburg, Virginia, and Shreveport, Louisiana.



A recent survey from the Public Religion Research Institute shows that a quarter of Americans and almost 40% of young people are atheist or non-religious. This billboard campaign is specifically aimed at that growing population, especially those who no longer believe but still occasionally attend religious services or call themselves religious despite their lack of belief.

"The only way to remove the stigma is to show our friends and family that we are the same kind, loving and compassionate people they've always known us to be," said **Nick Fish**, national program director for American Atheists. "This billboard campaign will be a starting point for that conversation in com-

"This billboard campaign will be a starting point for that conversation in communities where atheists don't always have a voice."

Artwork provided courtesy of American Atheists.

Trump's Health and Human Services Nominee a Disaster for Religious Freedom, LGBT People, Women

news.atheists.org

On November 29, 2016 President-elect Donald Trump announced U.S. Representative Tom Price, of Georgia, as his nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services. In response to this nomination, Amanda Knief, national public policy director of American Atheists, released the following statement.

"American Atheists again must sound the alarm on behalf of Americans concerned about the separation of religion from government as the incoming Trump Administration takes shape. By nominating Rep. Price to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services, the President-elect is signaling that his administration will embrace the divisive rhetoric



and disastrous policies of the religious right.

"Rep. Price is a co-sponsor of the socalled 'First Amendment Defense Act' (FADA), a bill that would give individuals, public businesses, healthcare providers, and even government employees the ability to essentially break any laws that conflict with their religious views on marriage

or sex outside of

Rep. Tom Price R-GA

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marriage. This law would elevate religious dogma above civil rights laws and gut existing protections for LGBT people and women.

"Rep. Price's extreme record on women's healthcare is dangerous and rooted entirely in religious beliefs rather than science. He has sponsored legislation granting personhood rights to fetuses, attempted to ban abortions after 20 weeks, has backed allowing employers to fire workers who use birth control or have abortions, and has said that the provision of the Affordable Care Act that guarantees coverage for birth control 'is a tramping of religious freedom and religious liberty in this country.'

"The continued re-definition of 'religious liberty' pushed by people such as Rep. Price has eroded the rights of LGBT people and women, and indeed all Americans, and American Atheists will continue to fight against any attempt to use religion as a weapon in public policy."

Trump Wanted Jerry Falwell Jr. To Run The U.S. Department of Education

by Rob Boston in Wall of Separation

www.au.org

If there's anyone out there who still thinks the **Donald Trump** presidency won't be so bad for separation of church and state, chew on this: Trump offered the job of Education Secretary to **Jerry Falwell Jr.**

That's right: Trump was prepared to turn the U.S. Department of Education over to a biblical literalist who would have been absolutely unqualified for the job.

Did I mention he's a creationist? And that he rails against the LGBTQ community? That he once told students at Liberty University to arm themselves against "those Muslims?"

Falwell does run Liberty University, a large conservative Christian college in Lynchburg, Va. He inherited it from his father. But this hardly means the younger Falwell is prepared to oversee the American public school system, which serves more than 50 million children.

Imagine a man whose university runs a Center for Creation Studies that aims to "research, promote, and communicate a robust young-Earth creationist view of Earth history" overseeing public education in America.

Under Falwell Jr., this might have been a science text for public schools.

Imagine how Falwell would have handled the rights of LGBTQ students in public schools. Imagine him promoting "Christian nation" fake history penned by his pal **David Barton**.

And make no mistake, Falwell would have had the leverage to interfere in all of these issues. Public education in the United States is largely funded at the local level, usually through property taxes. But the federal government contributes some aid as well. It's hard to pin down the precise figure because the feds spread it out over a number of programs, but one estimate by *The New York Times* put federal education spending at more than \$107 billion annually.

Falwell told the Associated Press that Trump offered him the top job at the Education Department when the two met in New York City after the elec-

tion. Reportedly, Trump wanted Falwell to commit to at least four years, which Falwell wasn't willing to do.

But Falwell continues to imply that he'll have some role to play in the Education Department, and the education secretary Trump did name, **Betsy DeVos**, is known primarily for promoting private school vouchers. The country may



have dodged Falwell, but the appointee we got isn't much better.

Public education in the United States faces significant challenges. Adequate funding is essential, as is building community support for the schools.

A strong leader could call on Americans to rally around their public schools, since they are the only educational institutions that by law welcome children of all religions, races and socio-economic backgrounds.

By offering important positions to people like Falwell and DeVos, who not only don't prioritize public education but seem to disagree with its core mission, Trump has exposed his true colors: We can expect at least four years of an Education Department that focuses on private institutions while the public schools that serve 90 percent of our children are an afterthought.

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Religious Registries Have A Disturbing History

by Irissa Cisternino in Wall of Separation

www.au.org

The election of **Donald Trump** to the presidency has renewed talk about creating some sort of national registry of Muslims entering the United States.

In some versions, this is similar to the disastrous **Bush** database enacted after 9/11.

Though not unexpected given Trump's campaign rhetoric over the past year and a half, the proposal is still frankly horrifying—not only because it's a blatantly unconstitutional form of religious discrimination and persecution, but because we've seen this before.

After the story broke on Trump's

proposed database, a Trump surrogate cited a precedent for this type of discrimination: Japanese internment camps—one of America's least proud moments.

But as I watched this man scramble to defend actions that were indefensible, I thought to myself, there's a much more accurate and much uglier analogy for this: Nazi Germany.

I don't make this comparison lightly, but the parallels are worth examining. In 1939 and 1940, the Third Reich instituted compulsory registration for Jewish citizens in countries Germany had invaded as part of a massive program of anti-Semitic legislation. This was among a series of anti-Jewish laws that eventually culminated in the mass extermination of six million people.

In light of this history, is it any wonder people get nervous when any politician starts talking about keeping lists of people by religion?

Singling out members of certain religions for a registry is unconstitutional—



and fundamentally un-American. Throughout his almost two-year campaign, President-elect Trump had some awful things to say about Muslim Americans. He

called for a complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States (before walking

it back and then calling for it again), at one point insinuated that Muslims should be compelled to report suspicions of terrorism and stated that he saw Muslims in New Jersey cheering on 9/11 (which is completely false).

He has also implied on more than one occasion that all Muslims should have to register with the government, including, apparently, those who are citizens. In November of 2015, he was specifically asked about this by an NBC News reporter who wanted to know how his plan differed from Nazi Germany's policies. Trump's reply was a flip, "You tell me."

Such inflammatory rhetoric invokes another disturbing comparison to World War II: official



anti-Semitism in pre-war Germany. In the years before the war, the German government and German citizens began distributing anti-Jewish propaganda all over the country, creating a hatred of Jews that was unprecedented.

The current campaign to scapegoat Muslims is disturbingly familiar.

Now that Trump is soon to take office, his casual talk of targeting Muslims is rebounding around the nation. We've seen numerous incidents of anti-Muslim bias and even assaults on Muslims.

There is a political echo, too. Recently, a Georgia lawmaker proposed a bill that would make it illegal for Muslim women to wear a hijab or other type of Islamic veil in public before abruptly rescinding it after an (understandable) backlash. This was especially ironic considering the bill would have altered an anti-masking law that was

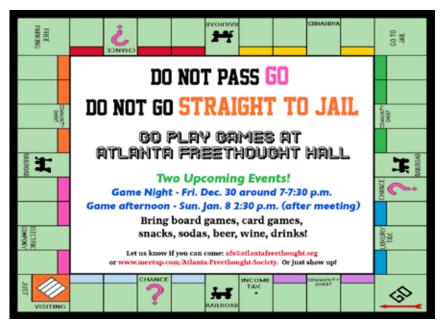
originally aimed at curbing the Ku Klux Klan.



My family has some Jewish roots. My greatgrandmother fled Russia during the pogroms and came to America. Jewish people are, unfortunately, no strangers to policies of discrimination and hate that ema-

nate from both official and private sources. That's why so many of them are speaking out now.

The fact that anything even remotely like this seems to be a matter for serious discussion should rattle all Americans to their very core.



December 2016

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 donnajgore@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 like an Alcoholics Anonymous group.

Marietta Skeptic/Humanist Meetup has various gettogethers and discussion groups. Several upcoming events. (www.meetup.com/Marietta-Atheists-Meetup)

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)

The Southern Crescent Freethinkers sponsor Navigators, Owl & Ibis: A Confluence of Minds, and meet for dinner,

etc. Several upcoming events each month. (www.meetup. com/Southern-Crescent-Freethinkers)

N. Georgia Freethinkers Secularists & Humanists Non-religious

manists Non-religious freethinking adults who, at times, feel somewhat isolated in this little corner of Georgia to forge friendships, meet for drinks, have dinner parties, chat over coffee, practice debating skills, laugh, hold game nights, etc. (www.meetup. com/North-Gwinnett-Freethinkers-Atheist-Agnostic-Meetup)

The Atlanta Science

Tavern does not currently

have any meetings scheduled but that is likely to change. Please check meetup page for more information. (www.meetup.com/ AtlantaScienceTavern)

Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter meets on Sat, Dec. 10 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)

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

Atlanta Astronomy Club is having their holiday potluck on Sat, Dec. 17 at Atlanta Freethought Hall starting at 6, with dinner at 7. They will supply ham, turkey, soft drinks & coffee and ask you to bring the sides & desserts for 6-10 people. Family favorites and ethnic dishes are especially welcome. (www.atlantaastronomy.org)

GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths)

meets on the Mon Dec 12 at 7:00 pm at UUCG, 12 Bethesda Church Road, Lawrenceville, unless otherwise indicated. Check Facebook/Meetup pages for more information. (www. meetup.com/brights-295)

Black Nonbelievers is going to have their last meeting of 2016 on Sun Dec 18 from 3-5. The location will be announced later—RSVP for announcement. (www.meetup.com/ Black-Nonbelievers)

There will be a **third Sunday meetup for Atlanta Atheists** Sun Dec 18 at 2pm at Ship and Anchor Pub, 5975 Roswell Rd Ne Ste E361, Sandy Springs (www.meetup.com/ Atlanta-Atheists)

Sunday Assembly Atlanta will have a general meeting on

Sun Dec 18 at 6 p.m. at First Existentialist Congregation, 470 Candler Park Dr NE, Atlanta. This event won't be a normal assembly, but instead a Yule Rock with a music focus.

Assemblies, and the potlucks afterward, are open to the public and free to attend! They are an extremely active community with a large number of upcoming events including rock chorus, secular support, mindfulness meditation, wonder club, urban wonder, book club, makers night out, volunteering, queer beyond belief group, public speaking series, trivia nights, etc. (www.meetup.com/

EHOLIDAY WHEN MANY AMERICANS RESS THEIR CHILDREN AS PEOPLE HEY WOULD RACIALLY PROFILE ON NY OTHER DAY, AND NEVER THINK TWICE ABOUT THE IRONY.

Sunday-Assembly)

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

Atlanta Skeptics has "Drinking Skeptically" on the first Friday of each month. 5 Seasons Brewing, 5600 Roswell Rd, Sandy Springs. (www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics)

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

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)

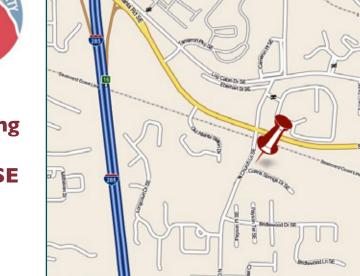
Freedom From Religion Foundation of Georgia

meets on the first Sunday of every month at 2:00 at AF Hall, with a lively meet and greet starting at 1:30 pm. (www.meetup. com/Freedom-From-Religion-Foundation-of-Georgia)

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	Receive newsletter by email (No charge for members) Receive paper newsletter by mail (No charge for members)	Shipping and handling for Books \$_ Extra donation (Thank you!) \$_ Total: \$_		on only	Individual \$50 \$ Low Income \$20 \$ Sustaining \$100 \$	Annual dues are: Membership Dues# of mems	Sustaining memberships: Or Life memberships: Avoid the H Paper newsletter: We encourd and mailing expenses. But if you red send it to you at no additional charg Thank you for your support! We	Become a Membe (or renew your membership with this form If you've enjoyed what you've read, we enthusiast Society. Every month you will get our acclaimed in voting rights in the organization—and enjoyment as the social and activist events that we sponsor!
Save time and postage by making a payment via Paypal to: <u>afs@atlantafreethought.org</u>			Any other things you'd like to tell us?	Phone: HW	Address:	Total	 Sustaining 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! 	Become a Members (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!
or loss while artwork is in our posession. Owner agrees to terms: Signature/date AFS Art Committee approval: Signature/date	Freethought Society art committee for approval (afs@atlantaf- reethought.org). Installation & removal will be done by artist/ owner overseen by AFS art committee. Damage to building will be repaired by artist/owner. The owner assumes all risk for	Is artwork for sale? Yes / No \$ Upon sale owner agrees to pay AFS a 33.3% fee. Terms: All artwork disblays will be submitted to Atlanta	Phone(s):	Address:	Display dates: from to Owner if other than above:		Phone(s): Email: Description of artwork (subject, color, dimensions, weight, frame, price, materials, other info — list on separate page if necessary):	AFS Art Display Program 4775 N. Church Lane SE Atlanta, GA 30339 www.atlantafreethought.org afs@atlantafreethought.org Person or entity displaying art: Address:





Dare To Think

For Yourself!



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