

## The September AFS Meeting Jeffrey Selman, Americans United

On Sunday, Americans United for Separation of Church and State outgoing Atlanta Regional Chapter President **Jeffrey Selman** will talk about the State of Georgia requirement that kindergarteners in Georgia be taught about Christmas, including the religious meaning of the



Jeffrey Selman

holiday and the people and events which are celebrated. (No other religious holidays are included in the state mandate.)

Jeffrey Selman was the Lead plaintiff in *Selman v. Cobb County School District* and was a co-plaintiff in the Cobb

County Commission sectarian invocation suit *Pelphrey v. Cobb County, GA*.

Hoping to inspire other citizens to stand up for the separation of church & state and valid science education and against theocracy, in 2015 he published an autobiographical account of his journey, *God Sent Me: a Textbook case on Evolution vs. Creation*.

Jeffrey was born in the Bronx, NY. He Earned a BA in History with a minor in Psychology from **Lehman College**. After graduation he worked for the US government in the "War on Poverty" with the Navajo as a **Volunteer In Service To America (VISTA, now AmeriCorps)**. He taught elementary school in New York City for eight years both in mainstream and special education environments, as well as two years of history in NYC High Schools.

Jeffrey's career has also consisted of IT consulting, recruiting & management. In 1996, in response to threats to the separation of church and state in the Georgia Public School System, Jeffrey

### Calendar

- 9/10 Potluck 12:00 p.m.
  - 9/10 AFS General Meeting 1:00 p.m.
  - 9/10 AFS Board meeting (for bylaws) 2:30 p.m.
  - 9/16 East Cobber Parade and Festival, Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, parade 10:00 a.m., festival 11:00 a.m-3:00 p.m.
  - 10/8 AFS Board of Directors meet 11:00 a.m.
  - 10/8 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:  
[www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought](http://www.facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought)

### The September Potluck

Before the September 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 a dessert**
- H-P: Bring a side dish**
- Q-Z: Bring a main dish**

AFS will provide drinks, plates and silverware.

### EAST COBBER Parade & Festival Saturday, September 16, 2017



served as a member of the **Georgia State Public School Curriculum Committee**.

Jeffrey also is one of the original founders of the **Rainforest Alliance** out of NYC, a former President of the **Vegetarian Society of Georgia**, and a former Advisory Board member of **Georgia Citizens for Integrity in Science Education (GCISE)**. TV & Radio interviews with Jeffrey can be found at [www.jeffreyselman.com](http://www.jeffreyselman.com).

**For the latest in upcoming AFS events, join our Meetup group!**  
[meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society](http://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.



**Sept 10: Jeffrey Selman, Americans United for Separation of Church and State**

**Oct 8: TBD**

**Nov 12: TBD**

### AFS Email List

The AFS Announcements email list provides subscribers with reminders and updates on AFS activities. Send an email to [AFS-Announce-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AFS-Announce-subscribe@yahoogroups.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@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AFSForum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). The AFS Facebook page is at [facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought](https://facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought). For calendar information on AFS activities, please join the **Meetup group**. The AFS website is [www.atlantafreethought.org](http://www.atlantafreethought.org). To keep up to date on the Atlanta Freethought Society calendar of upcoming events, please join our Meetup group: [meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society](http://meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society).

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

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

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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,  
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Sustaining Membership is \$100.

Life Membership is \$1000.

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# Americans United Atlanta Regional Chapter Elections

by Jeffrey Selman

It has been quite a while since the Atlanta Regional Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State has held elections for its officers. Hectic times and multiple issues have distracted the chapter from the attention that is usually paid to the officer election process. That being said, AU Atlanta is looking for candidates that are passionately interested in participating in the organization's protection of the separation of church and state.

With the political environment being what it is, the possibilities of a USA Presidential switch coming could be eminent. With that comes the open door to a possible theocratic leaning Presidential succession. Whether the present AU officers are reelected or new blood moves in to take over the leadership, the future looks challenging. From issues like promoting one faith over others in

public schools (which is encountered all too often), to supporting candidates for public office from the pulpit, to having our nation repress the equalizing

freedoms of all people by those who demand a one and only one belief fits all, AU's work is cut out for it. Also, the local AU chapters will be relied up heavily this coming year as the **Barry Lynn**, the National Executive Director, is retiring and a replacement is still being sought.

AU will hold a **Meetup** at Atlanta Freethought Hall on at noon on Sunday, September 17, 2017 concerning the election. All interested (regardless of experience or age), please reach out to **Jeffrey Selman** in order to offer your energy to the cause. He can initially be reached at [selmanjml@aol.com](mailto:selmanjml@aol.com).

The positions that are open for this election are **President**, **Vice President** (this position is filled by the second placed candidate), **Treasurer** and **Organization Secretary**. If you are willing to run for one of the offices, or know of someone who would be, please come to this meetup which will be kicking off our election process and season. The election will be held in December 2017 and the new officers will begin January 1, 2018.



# Atheists Condemn White-Supremacist Demonstration in Charlottesville

[www.atheist.org](http://www.atheist.org)

In response to the demonstrations of white supremacists and neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Virginia, American Atheists president **David Silverman** and International Humanist and Ethical Union president **Andrew Copson** released the following joint statement:

“That these people feel emboldened to march and protest in 2017 in the United States sickens us. Their views are reprehensible,



their actions are abhorrent, and they have no place in our civil society. We stand in solidarity with the targets of the hatred espoused by these white supremacists and neo-Nazis.

“As many have said, bigotry in America in

2017 isn't just people in white hoods and robes. It's people who are our neighbors, coworkers, and even government officials engaged in subtle acts of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and religious hatred.

It is our obligation as humanists and as citizens of this nation—and indeed the world—to fight this bigotry at every turn.

“Silence is not an option. Anyone who does not forcefully and unequivocally



condemn the bigotry of these people is complicit in their actions.

“Our thoughts and support are with those who have been injured in Charlottesville and the families of the people who lost their

lives. We must remember that this violence didn't start and won't end in Charlottesville. We must be prepared to confront it across the nation wherever we find it.”



# Americans United Affirms Commitment To Defend Women's Access to Birth Control

[www.au.org](http://www.au.org)

August 26th was **Women's Equality Day**, when Americans mark the anniversary of the 19th Amendment that granted women the right to vote. It's a welcome opportunity to reflect on how far our nation has advanced in the fight for equal rights. And it's a stark reminder of just how far we have left to go.

The Trump administration is poised to take action that will stand in the way of many women's equal participation in our society. A **regulation** coming soon would allow bosses and universities to use religion as an excuse to deny their staff and students health insurance coverage for birth control.

Women – not politicians, employers or universities – should have the sole right to make decisions about their own health care. Stripping insurance coverage for birth control is discrimination, plain and simple.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) **ensures** that women have access to affordable and effective contraception, a huge advance for women's health and equality. As former Supreme Court Justice **Sandra Day O'Connor explained**, "The ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the Nation has been facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives."

Here's what women have told us about **why access to birth control is important to them**:

"I use contraception to protect myself from unwanted pregnancy, in order to reach my own full potential as a productive member of society."

"Contraception enables me to focus on my degree and puts me in control of my own reproductive health."

"I believe that my education is just as important as those of my male peers, and therefore I use birth control."

The anticipated Trump regulation would let any for-profit corporation, university or nonprofit institution cite religion to deny their employees and students insurance coverage for contraception. **Sign up** to receive emails from Americans

United for updates about the proposed regulation and how you can help to fight back!

The imminent Trump rule is just the latest attack on the ACA's policy to require access to birth control. For-profit corporations (like Hobby Lobby) and nonprofit institutions (including prominent universities) **went to court** to argue that the policy should not apply to them because they have religious objections to providing the coverage to their employees and students.

Religion, however, is not an excuse to allow these organizations to deny women access to health care.

Americans United has been fighting these challenges, and we'll continue to fight if Trump's proposed regulations go into effect. Women's equality is at stake. We will fight on behalf of Jane Doe and

Ann Doe, students who would be harmed by losing their coverage and whom we represent in one of the cases, **University of Notre Dame v. Price**. We will fight to ensure that the voices of students, faculty and staff at religiously affiliated universities who signed our friend-of-the-court **brief** in a case that went to the Supreme Court, **Zubik v. Price**, continue to be heard.

Religious freedom is a fundamental American value. So is the right to make decisions for yourself about your own health care. Trump's proposed rule betrays both. Discrimination disguised as "religious freedom" is still discrimination.

As we celebrate Women's Equality Day, we commit to continue our fight for women's equality and ask you to **join us**.





# ‘Prosperity Gospel’ TV Preacher Paula White Says God Approves Of President Trump

by Rob Boston

[www.au.org](http://www.au.org)

It makes sense that President Donald Trump’s spiritual adviser is Paula White, whose garish TV ministry promotes the controversial “prosperity Gospel,” the idea that Jesus, who in much of the Gospels sounds like a socialist, really wants you to become filthy rich (and the best way to do that is to donate – surprise! – to someone like Paula White).

White and Trump share a faith that emphasizes cash over Christ, but that’s not all they have in common. For example, both often say things that don’t stand up to scrutiny. Consider this gem unleashed recently by White during an interview with fellow TV preacher Jim Bakker. (Yes, that Jim Bakker. He got out of prison back in 1994 and pretended to be contrite for a few years but then went right back to fleecing people;



these days, Bakker spends most his time **hawking buckets of “survival food”** to help his followers ride out the apocalypse, Armageddon, riots,

societal breakdown, zombie attacks, a really heavy snowstorm, etc.)

“They say about our president, ‘Well, he is not presidential.’ Thank goodness. Thank goodness. Thank goodness,” White told Bakker. “And I mean that with all due respect. Because in other words, he is not a polished politician. In other words, he is authentically – whether people like it or not – has been raised up by God. Because God says that he raises up and places all people in places of authority. It is God who raises up a king. It is God that sets one down. When you fight against the plan of God, you are fighting against the hand of God.”

OK, let’s unpack this a bit. You don’t have to be a theologian to see some flaws in White’s reasoning. First of all, does God really raise up all rulers? God raised up Caligula, Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin, Pol Pot and Kim II Sung? And anyone who fought those guys was fighting against God? Many believers would argue the opposite: opposing evil, genocidal dictators is doing God’s work.

Furthermore, far-right fundamentalist Christians tend to make this argument only when someone they like is in power. Prior to Trump, they spent eight years assailing President

Barack Obama every day, with some of them even questioning his legitimacy. But Obama must have been raised up by God too, right? And by attacking him, under White’s own theory, were they not fighting against God?

Here’s what’s really going on: Religious Right leaders have hitched their wagons to a guy whose moral compass hasn’t worked for decades (if it ever did), a **pathological liar** and reckless tweeter who, **as I noted on August 21st**, couldn’t even be bothered to immediately condemn neo-Nazis in the wake of the Charlottesville tragedy.

Religious Right leaders made this Faustian bargain because they want to achieve certain political goals – mainly elevating their oppressive dogma into law and forcing everyone to follow it – and they believe a real estate baron and coarse reality TV figure who never had one good word to say about evangelical Christianity until he decided he wanted to be president is the man to satiate their lust for power.

Religious and non-religious people who support the separation of church and state may look upon the situation with dismay, but thankfully they don’t stop there. Many have been **inspired to join, support and get involved** with Americans United and fight to preserve our constitutional rights.

All fans of separation of church and state, religious or non-religious, should oppose White’s scriptural cherry-picking by keeping in mind a simple truth, one that our country’s founders knew well: Resisting dangerous zealots who yearn to take away our rights isn’t just admirable and noble, it’s also essential to maintaining our democracy.



# Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

**The Atlanta Science Tavern** has several meetings planned. Please check meetup page for more information. ([www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern](http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern))

**Atlanta Astronomy Club** is not having meetings during the summer months. Check website for more info. ([www.atlanta-astronomy.org](http://www.atlanta-astronomy.org))

**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](mailto: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 similar to Alcoholics Anonymous group.

**Gainesville Atheists** are now having weekly meetups on Sundays at 3 pm, Lake Lanier Club Business Center, 2350 Avonlea Way, Gainesville to discuss the historicity of Jesus. They are also doing outreach to University of North Georgia - Gainesville. ([www.meetup.com/Secular-Atheist-Study-the-Scriptures-SASS-Gainesville](http://www.meetup.com/Secular-Atheist-Study-the-Scriptures-SASS-Gainesville))

**Marietta Skeptic/Humanist Meetup** has various get-togethers and discussion groups. Several upcoming events. ([www.meetup.com/Marietta-Atheists-Meetup](http://www.meetup.com/Marietta-Atheists-Meetup))

**The Peachtree City Humanists** participate in social and educational activities such as dinners, lunches, coffees, outdoor recreation, discussion groups, and book clubs with topics that include science, psychology, philosophy. Former AFS President Steve Yothment is now President of PCH! ([www.meetup.com/Peachtree-City-Humanists-PTCH](http://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](http://www.meetup.com/Southern-Crescent-Freethinkers))

**Freedom From Religion Foundation of Georgia** does not have a meetup scheduled at presstime; check Meetup and Facebook. ([www.meetup.com/Freedom-From-Religion-Foundation-of-Georgia](http://www.meetup.com/Freedom-From-Religion-Foundation-of-Georgia))

**Recovery from Religion - Morrow Chapter** meets on Sat, Sep 9 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](http://www.recoveringfromreligion.org). ([www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter](http://www.meetup.com/Recovering-From-Religion-Morrow-Chapter))

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** Sun., Sep. 10 6 pm, Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. ([www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists](http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists))

**GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths)** will meet Mon., Sep 11, 7 pm at UUCCG, 12 Bethesda Church Rd, Lawrenceville. To find out about future meetings, go to the Meetup page. ([www.meetup.com/brights-295](http://www.meetup.com/brights-295))

**Americans United for Separation of Church and State** will meet Sun, Sep. 17, 12 pm, Atlanta Freethought Hall, 4775 N. Church Lane, Atlanta. This will be an important meeting to discuss the future of the local chapter and to nominate new officers. ([www.meetup.com/americansunited-georgia](http://www.meetup.com/americansunited-georgia))

**First Church of New Atheism** will meet to discuss "Atheism at Work: Out or Not" Sun, Sep. 17, 7 pm, Thinking Man Tavern, 537 West Howard Ave, Decatur. ([www.meetup.com/The-First-Church-of-New-Atheism](http://www.meetup.com/The-First-Church-of-New-Atheism))

**Black Nonbelievers** will have their General Meeting at Little Five Points Community Center, 1083 Austin Ave NE, Atlanta on Sun, Sep 17, 3 pm. It will be a live *No Religion Required* Podcast with hosts Ashley and Bobby Cary and special guest Dr. JT Snipes. ([www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/](http://www.meetup.com/Black-Nonbelievers/))

**Sunday Assembly Atlanta** will have a general assembly (Topic TBA) Sun Sep 17, 5:30 pm at First Existentialist Congregation, 470 Candler Park Dr NE, Atlanta. This is also a potluck supper. All are welcome. SAA is 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/Sunday-Assembly](http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly))

**Ethical Humanists of Atlanta** is meeting Sun, Sep 24 12:30 pm at Manuel's Tavern, 1603 N Highland Ave NE, Atlanta to have a conversation on ethical living. They meet every 4th Sunday. ([www.meetup.com/Ethical-Humanists-of-Atlanta](http://www.meetup.com/Ethical-Humanists-of-Atlanta))

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta Atheists** Sun., Sep. 24 4 pm, 5 Seasons Brewing, 5600 Roswell Rd, Prado Shopping Center, Sandy Springs. ([www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists](http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists))

**Atlanta Skeptics** has "Drinking Sceptically" on the first Friday of each month. 5 Seasons Brewing, Prado Shopping Center, 5600 Roswell Rd, Sandy Springs. ([www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics](http://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](http://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](http://www.fellowshipofreason.com))



# Become a Member!

**(Or renew your membership with this form or online at [www.AtlantaFreethought.org](http://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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## AFS Art Display Program

4775 N. Church Lane SE Atlanta, GA 30339

[www.atlantafreethought.org](http://www.atlantafreethought.org) [afs@atlantafreethought.org](mailto:afs@atlantafreethought.org)

Person or entity displaying art: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of artwork (subject, color, dimensions, weight, frame, price, materials, other info — list on separate page if necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

Display dates: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Owner if other than above: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Is artwork for sale? Yes / No \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Upon sale owner agrees to pay AFS a 33.3% fee.

Terms: All artwork displays will be submitted to Atlanta Freethought Society art committee for approval ([afs@atlantafreethought.org](mailto:afs@atlantafreethought.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 artwork at all times. AFS will not be responsible for any damage or loss while artwork is in our possession.

Owner agrees to terms: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature/date \_\_\_\_\_

AFS Art Committee approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature/date \_\_\_\_\_

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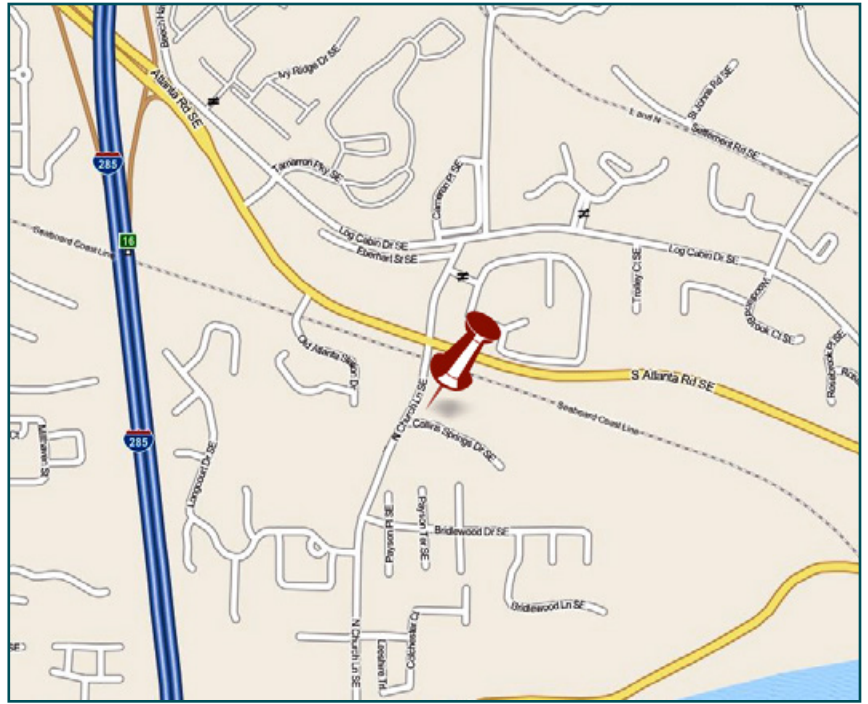


*Dare To Think  
For Yourself!*



**September 10th meeting  
1:00 at AF Hall  
(Potluck at 12:00),  
4775 N. Church Lane SE  
Atlanta, GA 30339**

**Jeffrey Selman**



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