

Dr. Richard Dien Winfield for June Meeting (via Zoom)



Richard Dien Winfield

We are delighted that **Richard Dien Winfield** will be the speaker for the June 14 online meeting! Dr. Winfield is Distinguished Research Professor of Philosophy at the University of Georgia, where he has been teaching since 1982. Winfield is the author on 21 books of philosophy and has just published a book on

political policy entitled *Democracy Unchained: How We Should Fulfill Our Social Rights and Save Self-Government.*

Since 1983 he has been married to **Sujata Gupta Winfield**, who practices immigration law. They have three children, all of whom attended the public schools in Athens.

In 2018 Winfield ran unsuccessfully for the US House of Representatives in the Democratic Primary for Georgia's 10th Congressional District. *The Nation* magazine identified him as the first candidate to support a Federal Job Guarantee. Winfield is now campaigning for the US Senate in Georgia's special "jungle" election, taking place this November 3rd. This is the seat now held by **Kelly Loeffler**, appointed by **Governor Brian Kemp**.

AFS is a 501(c)(3) organization and as such cannot endorse or support candidates.

Steve Yothment again has set up a free Zoom session for Sunday, June 14 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. He will open it up at 12:30 if people want to log in early. To the right is the meeting invitation as generated by Zoom. Steve reserved this link for the next seven months in case we need it. Log in with a computer, tablet, or smart phone.

Atlanta Freethought Society has hit hard times.

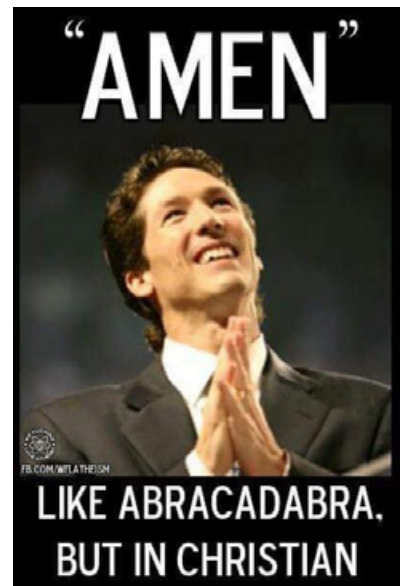
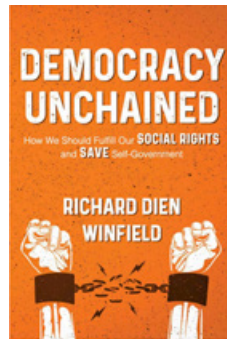
Donations have dropped off and we are tapping our already limited reserves to pay the bills. If you can help, send checks by mail to **775 N. Church Lane SE, Atlanta, GA 30339** or via Paypal at afs@atlantafreethought.org.

AFS June Meeting June 14, 2020 1:00-3:00 PM (EST)

To join Zoom meeting go to link below:
us02web.zoom.us/j/86843137944

Meeting ID: 868 4313 7944

(This same link will be used for the next seven months until Dec 13, 2020 in case we need it!)



Calendar

June 14 General Meeting on Zoom 1 pm
July 12 Stay Tuned!

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

 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.



June 14: Richard Dien Winfield via Zoom

July 12: TBA

August 9: TBA

September 13: TBA

October 11: 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@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. The AFS Facebook page is at facebook.com/AtlantaFreethought. For calendar information on AFS activities, please join the [Meetup group](#). The AFS website is 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.

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.

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

Editor: Laura Ross
Assistant Editor: Steve Yothment

How to Contact the Editor

Send correspondence to AFS at:
4775 N. Church Lane SE,
Atlanta, GA 30339,
phone Laura at 404-634-1005, or send
e-mail to Laura@LauraRossDesign.com
or luara.mom@gmail.com

2020 Board of Directors

Mark Banks – 770-354-1546
Diane Buckner, Treasurer – 404-257-6008
Michael Buckner – 404-633-2486
Dwight Lyman, Secretary – 404-825-0260
Laura Ross, President – 404-825-0258
Judy Thompson – 404-296-2020
Steve Yothment – 678-364-8703

Atlanta Freethought News

Vol. 26, Number 6, June 2020 CE
Copyright © 2020 by the Atlanta Freethought
Society, Inc. Signed articles are all copyright
© 2020 by their respective authors.

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

Membership includes voting privileges and
AFNews by email/USPS (indicate preferences).

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.

AFS Wordpress specialist: Dwight Lyman
AFS Facebook page: Laura Ross, Ed Buckner,
Steve Yothment

Statement from American Atheists President on Nationwide Protests

atheists.org

In response to the murder of **George Floyd**, the protests that have followed, and the increasingly aggressive response by police forces across the nation, American Atheists president **Nick Fish** released the following statement:

*“My heart breaks for the family and loved ones of **George Floyd, Breonna Taylor**, and so many more Americans whose lives have been stolen from them. I’m disgusted by the continued violence and brutality that Black members of our communities endure at the hands of law enforcement. Officers are supposed to be protecting us all, but too often they resort to dangerously aggressive responses that disproportionately target Black, Latino, and other communities of color.*

This weekend’s protests in response to those murders—and to decades of injustice—have been met with countless examples of police officers using excessive force, targeting journalists and peaceful demonstrators, and escalating confrontation as a pretext to arrest protesters demanding reform.

Elected officials and civil leaders must do more to recognize and address the racism and systemic biases that pervade our criminal justice system, end the militarization of our nation’s police forces, and ensure accountability for members of law enforcement who erode trust with their repeated and extreme uses of force. This weekend’s demonstrations are the result of years of failed promises to address long-standing biases that have cost countless lives.

I stand with the members of our community who have peacefully protested against this racism and violence. I call on politicians and leaders in law enforcement to ensure that the constitutional right of all Americans to peaceably assemble is protected, to de-escalate confrontations, and listen to the voices of those demanding reform.”

American Atheists, as a member of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, has joined with more than 400 other national civil rights groups in calling for sweeping changes to our nation’s policing by passing federal legislation on a range of issues, including use of force, police accountability, racial profiling, militarization, and training. [You can read the full letter here.](#)

Freedom From Religion Foundation has Gideons barred from a Georgia school district

ffrf.org

A Georgia school district has stopped the Gideons from distributing bibles in a number of schools after the Freedom From Religion Foundation raised several objections.

Many parents reported to the national state/church watchdog that Ebenezer Elementary School and Marlow Elementary School in the Effingham County Schools system allowed Gideons to enter classrooms, preach to students about the significance of the bible, and distribute bibles to young students, including our complainants’ children. Every child was reportedly given a bible (although they were told that they could return it to the teacher if they didn’t want it).

A little background: Gideons International is an association of Christian business and professional men who are members of Protestant/evangelical churches “dedicated to telling people about Jesus ... by providing Bibles and New Testaments.” Their website openly refers to “students in the fifth grade and above” as prime targets.

It is unconstitutional for public school districts to permit the Gideon Society to distribute bibles as part of the public school day, FFRF emphasized to Effingham County Schools officials.

“Courts have uniformly held that the distribution of bibles to students at public schools during instructional time is prohibited,” FFRF Attorney **Chris Line** wrote to Effingham County Schools Superintendent **Randy Shearouse** in December. “In striking down a school district’s policy permitting Gideons to distribute bibles in classrooms, the 7th Circuit stated, ‘The Gideon Bible is unabashedly Christian. In permitting distribution of “The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” along with limited excerpts from the Old Testament, the schools affront not only nonreligious people but all those whose faiths, or lack of faith, does not encompass the New Testament.”’

FFRF also pointed out that since parents carefully instruct children not to accept gifts from strangers, the Gideon practice is a usurpation of parental authority and can pose safety risks when children have to run a gauntlet of aggressive adults hawking religious literature on school property.

In a follow-up letter last month, FFRF emphasized: “The right of free exercise does not require a school district to grant individuals access to a captive audience of public school students to attempt to convert the students to their particular religion.”

FFRF’s admonitions had their effect.

“The Board of Education has authorized me to assure that outside adults, including the Gideons, will not be allowed into the classrooms of any of the schools in the school district to proselytize or distribute religious materials,” the school system’s legal counsel recently responded.

FFRF is gratified that Effingham officials finally heeded its advice.

“We’ve been warning school systems about the Gideons for many years,” says FFRF Co-President **Annie Laurie Gaylor**. “It’s past time for districts around the nation to impose an unequivocal ban.”

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is a national nonprofit organization with more than 32,000 members and several chapters across the country, including hundreds of members and a chapter in Georgia. Its purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.

Trump Administration Taps Anti-LGBTQ Extremist To Lead Anti-Racism Discussion

By Rob Boston / Wall of Separation Blog

au.org

A week has passed since President Donald Trump's tasteless stunt of **walking to a church** near the White House for a Bible-waving photo-op, an action that resulted in protesters in the area being dispersed with an aggressive show of force rarely unleashed on peaceful gatherings.

Since then, the administration has been doing what it does best: lying about what happened. They've insisted that the protesters, who were speaking out against the police murder of **George Floyd** in Minneapolis, weren't hit with tear gas. (**They were.**) Attorney General William Barr denies that he gave the order for police to assault the protesters. (**He did.**)

On Friday, Vice President Mike Pence attempted to smooth things over by **visiting with some black religious and business leaders in the D.C. area.** But Pence's choice to lead the meeting is telling, and it's an indication that the administration isn't taking the issue of racial healing seriously.

Pence turned to **Bishop Harry Jackson Jr.**, who pastors a large church in Prince George's County, Md., to facilitate the meeting. While Jackson is black, he's hardly representative of that community or its current concerns. For the past several years, Jackson has been best known as a shill for the right wing. He often appears at Religious Right gatherings, where his presence sends a comforting, although incorrect, message to crowds of older, white, conservative evangelicals that the black community agrees with them. (Jackson is also a member of Trump's **Evangelical Advisory Board.**)

The issue Jackson is most closely identified with isn't racial reconciliation or police violence – it's gay bashing. During the battle over marriage equality a few years ago, Jackson was all over the media spewing far-right bromides about how two people of the same gender shouldn't be able to get married

because of what he thinks the Bible says.

When Congress debated hate crimes legislation that would impose enhanced criminal penalties on those who physically attacked LGBTQ people, Jackson insisted, incorrectly, that it would penalize speech as well.

"And so what we are dealing with," he said **during a meeting of Christian nationalists**, "is an insidious intrusion of the Devil to try to cut off the voice of the church, and I for one am not going to let that happen."

In 2009, when municipal officials in D.C. passed legislation granting same-sex couples the right to marry, Jackson (whose church is not in that city) attacked the move. The day after the legislation was approved, a bad snowstorm hit the city and paralyzed it for a day. He **wrote a column** explaining how helpless he felt over the storm and the new law, but he had a truck to get through the snow so all was well. (I know – it doesn't make any sense to me either.) Jackson attempted to overturn the law by forming a group called Stand for Marriage DC. There was one problem: It was **bankrolled by Religious Right groups**, not city residents.

(Continued pg. 5)

Become a Member!

(Or renew your membership with this form or online at www.AtlantaFreethought.org!)

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 \$1000 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!

Membership Dues # of mems Total

Individual	\$50	_____	\$_____
Low Income	\$20	_____	\$_____
Sustaining Member	\$100	_____	\$_____
Life Member	\$1000	_____	\$_____
Subscription only	\$30	_____	\$_____
Extra donation (Thank you!)			\$_____
		Total:	\$_____

Receive PDF of newsletter by email

Receive paper newsletter by post

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: H _____ W _____
 Email: _____

Save time, postage, and keep your hands clean by making a payment via **Paypal** to:

afs@atlantafreethought.org

No One Is Free Until Everyone Is Free

By Rachel Laser / Wall of Separation Blog

au.org

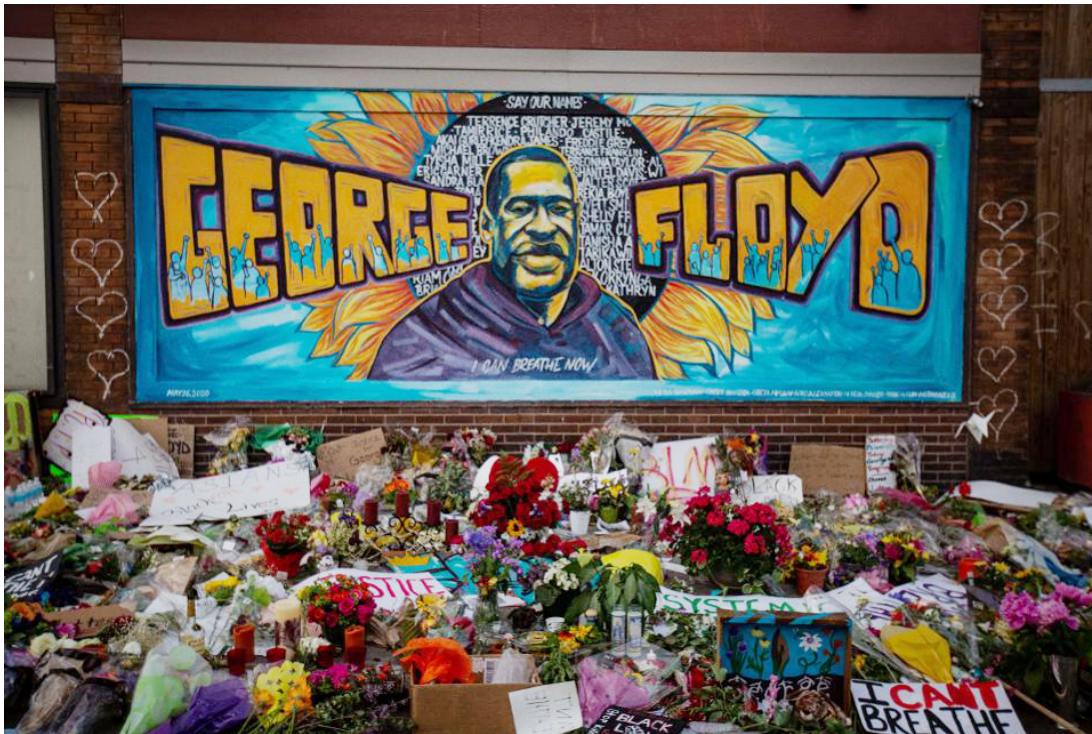
At Americans United, we venerate the Constitution, which became the foundation of a nation determined to preserve freedom of religion, along with freedom of speech, assembly and the press.

But we also acknowledge that the Founders who gave us these principles gravely compromised their legacy by condoning the enslavement of millions of black people. A Civil War was fought partially to free them, and yet, almost 250 years after our founding, we are still struggling with that legacy of oppression and systemic racism. Religious ideals were also distorted. While

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and thousands of other clergy fought for abolition and civil rights, others cited the Bible as permission for slave-holding and white supremacy, an “article of faith” in Christian Nationalist quarters even today.

Many of us are supporting the peaceful protests across the nation against racism and police brutality. It is all of a piece with our values, which could be summed up by Maya Angelou’s words that *no one of us can be free until everybody is free*. The issue of racial equality is also intertwined with our work: for example, when we fight against private school vouchers used to fund religious education, we are also fighting taxpayer support for hundreds of schools that at best exclude and at worst were founded as segregationist academies, specifically designed to keep white and black children apart.

We continue to file legal briefs supporting governors and others who are lawfully restricting both religious and secular gatherings to protect public health. With the Trump administration issuing new regulations allowing discrimination in the name of religion and taking every opportunity to pander to religious extremists, our to-do list is constantly growing.



But we realize that for AU to succeed, we must do our part in building an inclusive movement that can change this country for the better. So we are asking you to also reach out to the civil rights organization of your choice, whether it’s national, or local to your own city or state, or a coalition like the Leadership Council on Civil and Human

Rights, to which AU belongs. Learn from them how you can help build our movement.

Right now, as hundreds of thousands of people are in the street to call for justice, we can do nothing more important than support them and the ideals of a country in which everyone is free.

Trump Administration Taps Anti-LGBTQ Extremist - Continued

After the U.S. Supreme Court extended marriage equality nationwide in 2015, Jackson was among those claiming that houses of worship would be compelled to perform such unions. **He told PBS**, “Right now, we wonder, who is going to conduct weddings and these kinds of things and how free will we be?”

Five years have passed since the high court’s ruling in that case. If you’re wondering how many houses of worship nationwide have been forced to

perform weddings for same-sex couples, I have the answer: zero.

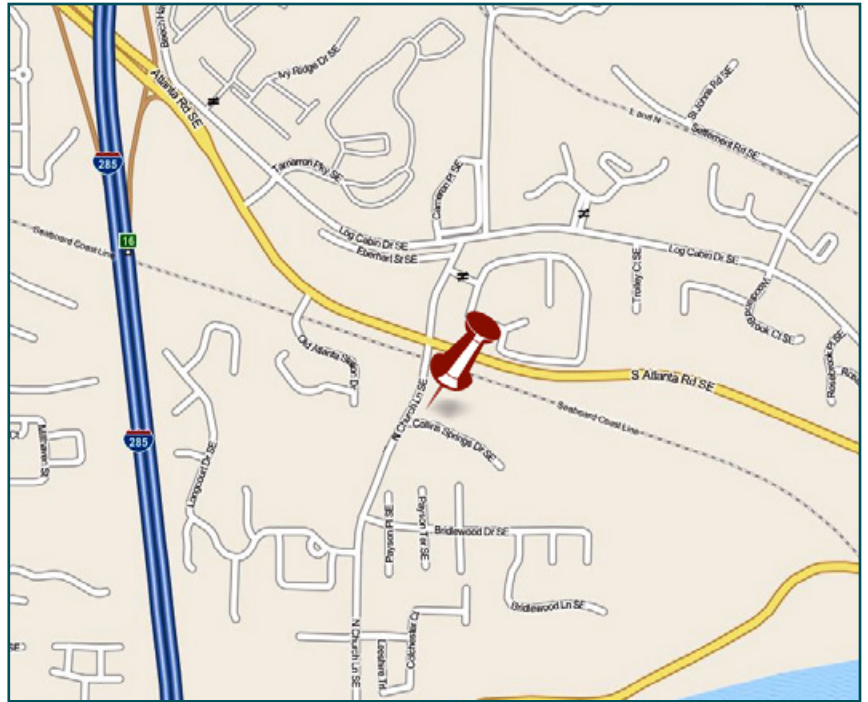
Over the weekend, millions of Americans marched or attended vigils, demanding a serious look at the issue of systemic racism. These events were truly intersectional and included many LGBTQ people who spoke out against racism and police brutality. (In D.C., a **band of evangelicals** marched.) Americans want action, and if ever there was the time for leadership from the White House, it is now. Administration officials clearly aren’t interested. If they were, they wouldn’t have turned the discussion over to Jackson, an anti-LGBTQ extremist who tears bridges down instead of building them.

*Dare To Think
For Yourself!*



**AF Hall
4775 N. Church Lane SE
Atlanta, GA 30339**

**Dr. Richard Dien
Winfield
(via Zoom)**



Atlanta Freethought News is produced by the Atlanta Freethought Society, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit, member-run, educational organization created to advance freethought and protect freethinkers. Any freethought, atheist, secular humanist, agnostic, or rationalist group is granted permission to reproduce anything from our newsletter not expressly labeled otherwise (acknowledgement of AFS and author appreciated). Articles published represent the official opinion of AFS only when that is clearly stated; all other opinion is that of the individual author.

Atlanta Freethought News
Atlanta Freethought Society
4775 N Church Lane SE
Atlanta GA 30339

