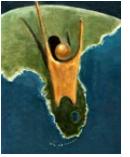


# The Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

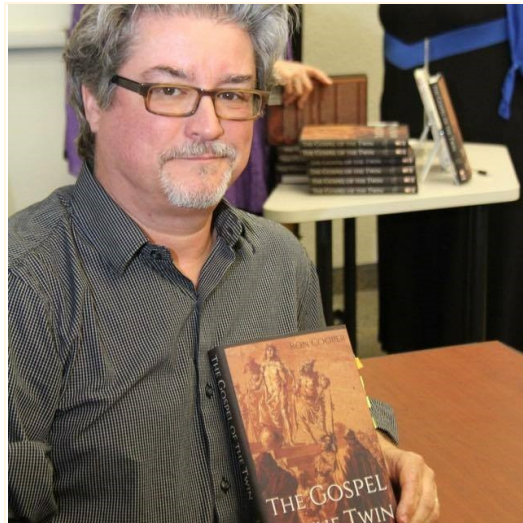


# Freethought News

Vol. 7 No. 6, June, 2018  
Jim Peterson, Rick O'Keefe, Editors

## What's Inside?

- Suncoast Humanist Soc 2\*
- Tampa Humanists 4\*
- Post Carbon Council 5\*
- Astronomy clubs 5
- CFI Tampa Bay 6\*
- Tampa Bay Skeptics 10\*
- ACLU 11
- Books/Cooper Library 12
- UU Humanists 13\*
- ACLU Tampa Bay 14
- Florida Atheists 14\*
- Tampa Bay Thinkers 15
- TB Technology Ctr 15
- Humanist Families 15\*
- Military Atheists 15\*
- Humanistic Judaism 15
- USF Freethinkers 15
- Inst For Sci & Hum 16\*
- Secular Coalition 16
- Coalition of Reason 17
- Unified Calendar 18
- Addenda, if any 19
- \* TBCoR member



### The Historical Jesus, and the reality of peasant life: is it the "gospel truth"

Presented by the Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay lecture series- with the gracious collaboration of UU Clearwater Humanists. Join us on:

**June 24th at 12:30 at the UU Octagon**

-- **Ron Cooper, Ph.D.**, will discuss the historical Jesus, what little we actually know, what the best research says, how first-century Mediterranean peasant life under Roman occupation was much different than what the New Testament says, how the Gospels give wildly different stories about Jesus, etc. Ron might read a passage or two from "The Gospel of the Twin" and then a bit about his latest novel, his first set in Florida. More on [Page 17](#)

-- **Ron Cooper** was born and raised in the South Carolina Low country. Following a BA from the College of Charleston and an MA from the University of South Carolina, Cooper was awarded a Ph.D. in philosophy from Rutgers University. After publishing philosophical works, such as *A Phenomenological Examination into the Intelligibility of Experience* (Ohio University Press, 1993), he turned to fiction, and his first novel, "Hume's Fork", appeared in 2007.

BOOKS WILL BE SOLD, so bring cash! A **DONATION of \$5+** will be solicited to defray costs of this lecture, so please bring more cash. UU & CFI paid members are admitted free when presenting a current membership card (Planetary Level and above). <http://bit.ly/2pTDFej>

## AHA supports the Do No Harm Act



When the "the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) became law in 1993, no one expected that it would be used to allow religiously motivated discrimination against other Americans. Sadly, the religious right twisted this law to allow all sorts of religiously motivated bad behavior, which is why we were glad to see the Do No Harm Act introduced in the Senate this week. In fact, the AHA is so supportive of this new legislation that we are listed as an [official supporting organization](#) by the Senators who introduced the bill.

The Do No Harm Act would change RFRA by clarifying that it cannot counteract civil rights laws, employment law, protections against child abuse or access to health care. That means that RFRA would finally do what it was intended to do: protect the religious rights of all Americans while also protecting our civil rights and liberties.

**Can you take a moment right now to ask your Senators to co-sponsor this important bill?**

In order for this bill to become law we need to overcome opposition by the religious right in Congress, which means we need all humanists to take action on this important issue and contact your Senators. **Urge your Senators to co-sponsor the Do No Harm Act today!**



Thank you for standing up against religiously-motivated discrimination.  
**Roy Speckhardt**  
AHA Executive Director

## Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason

**Calendar**  
Rick O'Keefe

**Web site**  
Jim Peterson

**Newsletter**  
Jim Peterson

**Special Projects**  
Mark Brandt  
& Bill Norsworthy

See our event website at:  
[www.tampabaycor.net](http://www.tampabaycor.net)

See the full roster of the  
Leadership Board  
on Page 17.

This publication online at:  
[www.tampabaycor.net](http://www.tampabaycor.net)

## Freethought Radio to be off the air soon, but Still on the Web.

Atheists of Florida produces the *Atheist Forum*, every **Sunday, from 7 to 8 pm.**

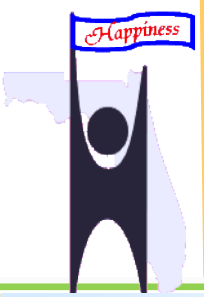
You will find a variety of subjects discussed, from atheism (of course) to science, politics, ethics, art and social culture.

The broadcast is available on WTAN-1340 and **on the internet at [TanTalk1340.com](http://TanTalk1340.com)**

Be sure to **call 727-441-3000**, with your questions and comments. See page [14](#) for more.

Check out twenty years worth of past programs of the Atheist Forum on our website [www.aof.ngo](http://www.aof.ngo) And check into our channel at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) for additional material.





# The Humanist Society of the Suncoast News

An Epicurean society dedicated to the proposition that the fully examined life is worth living well.  
Associate organization of the [Humanists of Florida](#), the [AHA](#), [COR](#), & [ASHS](#). Find us at [www.suncoasthumanist.com](http://www.suncoasthumanist.com)

Volume 31 No. 6 June, 2018

## Empathy

A consideration of an essential social resource that not only binds us together in common enterprise against the depredations of an indifferent universe, but allows civilization to exist.

We will have a special guest, *Liz Kicak* from the Humanities department of USF to lead us in this discussion. We will focus on The intersection of ethics and empathy (hallmarks of a liberal arts education) in science, policy making, climate change science, etc.

JP



### Please Join us in:



### Join or renew Humanist Society of the Suncoast

#### Annual Dues



- Regular -\$25
- Reg. Couple -\$30.
- Supporter -\$35/40 (With pin above)
- Life -\$200. (Pin)
- Life Couple -\$250.(Pin)
- Associate -\$10

Your membership helps keep Humanism alive & growing in the Tampa Bay area A small part of your dues allows us to participate fully as a member organization of the Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason & enables us to support larger & more exciting programs.

If you have questions concerning your dues or status, contact our treasurer, [marios\\_psomas@hotmail.com](mailto:marios_psomas@hotmail.com)

If new, please fill out the form; if renewing just indicate your name & any changes from our previous information Thanks!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address –if new : \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \* \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Privacy respected)

Send check made out to:  
**“Marios Psomas”**

Memo line: “Humanist Society Dues”  
(501c3, tax deductible)

Humanist Society of the Suncoast, AHA  
1013 Connecticut Rd  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689  
\* = optional



## Tampa Bay Harvest

**Food: the first kindness & the measure of our Hospitality.**  
**Humanists aspire to true friendship with our fellow human beings.**  
Money is more effective than cans and boxes to get the most benefit to the greatest number of people. But we can also use personal toiletries.  
Thanks to *Jordan Williams*. **We need volunteers!** Write to [jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto:jim@suncoasthumanist.com) Thanx.

**The Dunedin Public Library** at  
223 Douglas Ave. in  
Dunedin. ([map](#))

**Saturday, June 2  
at 2:00 PM**

Many of our members meet afterward for more conversation and refreshment not far from the library.

### List of Fake News Websites:

Before you get too excited about an item you want to share or comment about, make sure the social media item is legit.

**The list:**

<http://bit.ly/2vvrXbb>



*Humanists work to build a world in which happiness is the enduring criterion of all policy.*

## What is the Humanist Way?

- ◆ **To extend** a human centered approach to the critical problems of life & society.
- ◆ **To encourage** attitudes of kindness, compassion, tolerance & a loving generosity in human relationships, & in our treatment of all life. These attitudes help us to see ourselves in the lives of others, & encourage appreciation for the remarkable diversity of human culture & experience.
- ◆ **To develop** & popularize the skills of creative & critical thinking that empower people to challenge prejudice, superstition & irrationality in every area of life. Such empowerment enables the individual to reach the highest levels of achievement.
- ◆ **To exalt** those artistic & imaginative expressions of life which have been the source of the greatest pleasure & enlightenment, & which reflect compelling human truths. Through music, literature, art, dance, & other expressions, we embrace the essence of what it means to be human.
- ◆ **To explore** the grounds of ethics & morality within the unfolding history of our evolving culture. Such knowledge will enable us to become effective protagonists for the happiness of the individual person. JP

## The Movable Feast

the Humanist Society's monthly social Dinner

Join us on Sunday, June 17th.  
at 5 O'clock for good local pub style  
cooking, and the best company too, at:

# Applebees

For [map](#) [Menu](#)

5110 East Bay Drive Clearwater, FL 33764  
(727) 539-6388

Kindly RSVP to: **(727) 581-2146**  
Great Conversation and good food, reasonably priced.

## Laugh Lines Writing Tips 6-18

Like the virgin prairie for the explorer, metaphors are pregnant with possibility, but don't mix them.

It behooves the writer to avoid archaic expressions.

One should not shift from the third person to the second person when you write.

I once read that splitting modifiers was wrong in the library.

It is generally recommended that the use of the passive be minimized.

Write assertively, if you think no one will be offended.

A sentence containing a parenthetical phrase (must be a complete sentence) without that phrase.

Avoid the use of vulgarisms that might piss off the reader.

Avoid rephrasing, which is, in other words, paraphrasing or rewording of a statement, sort of like repeating it.

We've told you a million times not to exaggerate.

Ambiguity is perhaps more or less sometimes undesirable.

Hyperbole should not be unrealistically magnified.

You will die horribly if you are overdramatic!

87,327,344 English teachers agree that all statistics should be verified.

When choosing among two, make the best choice. Between three or more, pick the better one.

Avoid overuse of rhetorical questions. Know what I mean?

I could care less about expressions that mean the opposite of what they say.

Vary sentence length. Uniformity is boring.

Be sure to use the correct word accept in certain cases.

Do not use no double negatives.

Don't verbify nouns.

Avoid clichés like the plague.

Each pronoun should match their subject.

Never use a preposition to end a sentence with.

Try to not split infinitives.

Don't be repetitively redundant or repetitious.

## Humanist Society of the Suncoast

A chapter of the American Humanist Assoc., Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason, & The Association of Secular Humanist Societies

### Board of Directors.

Meets Sept., December, April

**Jay Alexander,**  
**Steve Brown,**  
**Lois Fries,** Secretary  
**Dave Kovar,**  
**Brad Perryman** Vice Pres.  
**Jim Peterson,** President  
**Frank Prahl,**  
**Marios Psomas,** Treasurer  
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~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

Jordan Williams, mail Publisher

**Jim Peterson, Editor**  
E-Mail us at:  
[jim@suncoasthumanist.com](mailto:jim@suncoasthumanist.com)

**Need Psychological  
Counseling?**  
For a secular therapist,  
**click:**  
**Secular Therapy Org.**  
**Cognitive Neurosciences**

**Or call:**  
Lynda Gurvitz,  
<http://fampsy.org/member/lynda-gurvitz/>  
(727) 725-8820

Joel Schmidt  
[www.floatoncounseling.com](http://www.floatoncounseling.com)  
321-604-7637



## Tampa Humanist Association

Meets every third Saturday at, 11:00 AM

### North Tampa Public Library

8916 North Blvd. Tampa, FL 33604 [Map](#)

March 17th, 11 AM

Leaders: *Lucas Hopegood & Jim Peterson*

Member, TBCoR,  
Hum Society, & AHA  
affiliate.



This month's Issue:

### *How to be Moral in a Secular World*

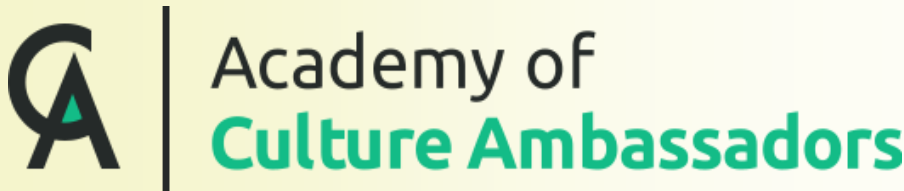
*As Humanists it is our task to discover the secret world above and within the level of conscious recognition. Using the instruments of reason, & critical thinking, we strive to be at one in understanding both the world that made us, and the one we are inventing.*

*Each month a new investigation thoughtfully & critically dissects a new intersection of mind and matter. Be part of it.*

*At present, we are a small, intimate group meeting in a neighborhood library. But we are ambitious, and hope to grow. Ideally, such small discussion groups should appear in every neighborhood. The need is as great as the potential. What is required is a few longtime humanists willing to take on the relatively small effort to secure a library meeting room once a month, post a few notices here and there (including this newsletter), and show up to lead a discussion, share a little knowledge; give something to the future. JP*

Learn more about the association at: <http://tampahumanist.com/>

Special from Jennifer Hancock...



The Academy is a community of socially minded workplace culture ambassadors that have an exemplary reputation for sharing innovative practices for superior workplace joy, productivity, and innovation. They host an annual "Wisdom Retreat" for leaders who have a passion for humanistic workplace cultures. The retreat focuses on practical Wisdom. Practical wisdom is what Aristotle called "phronesis". It is a type of wisdom relevant to practical things and about making judgments based on common sense and deep notions of what is good for the community. We need practical wisdom, above all other virtues because it's what allows other virtues — honesty, kindness, courage and so on — to be displayed at the right time and in the right way. The next retreat is August 7-8 2018 in Sante Fe New Mexico - details and registration information here: <http://cultureambassadorsretreat.com/>

Please join the International Humanistic Management Association for a live online lunch and learn with *Dr. Gerald Wagner* - Academy of Culture Ambassadors.

## That Sinking Feeling...

Last month, the AHA joined over 110 other organizations in urging Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar to reject calls to issue a "domestic gag rule," which would force doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals to knowingly withhold counseling on, and referrals for, safe and legal abortion.

To see the letter to the Secretary, go to the AHA site: <https://americanhumanist.org/featured/aha-joins-110-orgs-urging-hhs-not-reinstate-domestic-gag-rule/>

### Humanist Quotes

6/18

"Humanism involves far more than the negation of supernaturalism. It requires an affirmative philosophy . . . translated into a life devoted to one's own improvement and the service of all mankind."

Corliss Lamont

"The beginning of wisdom is the awareness that there is insufficient evidence that a god or gods have created us and the recognition that we are responsible in part for our own destiny. Human beings can achieve this good life, but it is by the cultivation of the virtues of intelligence and courage, not faith and obedience, that we will most likely be able to do so."

Paul Kurtz

"A good world needs knowledge, kindness, and courage; it does not need a regretful hankering after the past or a fettering of the free intelligence by the words uttered long ago by ignorant men."

Bertrand Russell



An autonomous project of the Humanist Society.  
Affiliate of the [Post Carbon Institute](#)

## Scalise, Bishop aim for deal to open Florida's Gulf Coast waters for drilling

House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) and Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) are aiming to strike a deal to allow offshore drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico if the U.S. military and federal government sign off, but it remains uncertain if their effort can convince Florida lawmakers to drop their sharp opposition to oil exploration off the state's coasts.

On Wednesday, senior Interior and Defense officials briefed a working group of lawmakers from five Gulf Coast states who are seeking to expand energy exploration, according to Scalise's office and Bishop. And the Utah Republican says he plans to draft legislative language on offshore oil and gas drilling that he hopes to incorporate in either the National Defense Authorization Act H.R. 5515 (115) or a broad energy package H.R. 4239 (115).

"There are some areas where if there's sufficient agreement between Interior and Defense so it doesn't impact the military mission, they can work that out," Bishop told POLITICO. "You can put a moratorium [on drilling] but you give some flexibility, so depending on what the military actually needs there could be some development in some areas, which happen to be where the oil deposits actually are that [energy companies] want."

A spokesperson for Scalise confirmed he was part of the effort seeking a "constructive path forward" for offshore drilling in the eastern Gulf.

"In the briefing, both [Interior and Defense] agreed that with appropriate restrictions and proper coordination by the two departments, there are some areas in the federal waters of the eastern Gulf that could support both military and energy activities," the spokesperson said. "Whip Scalise looks forward to working with the Chairman and the other members of the working group on a path forward to ensure our military training exercises in the region are not compromised while also supporting the President's Energy Dominance strategy."

Several Republican sources said the issue has reached the secretarial level within the agencies — as well as the Oval Office. But one source familiar with negotiations said while they're moving in the right direction, they may not find agreement this year on how to handle the current moratorium that expires in 2022.

"The Florida guys are going to have to make a decision about what exactly they want," the source said. Some members of

the Florida delegation have voiced openness toward allowing some drilling in the region provided the agencies sign off on it, according to the source. And the interest in the eastern Gulf is likely to be mainly in deepwater areas rather than shallower waters close to shore.

"I don't think there's a chance there's going to be near-shore leasing," the source said.

Oil and gas leasing is prohibited within 125 miles of the Florida coast under a moratorium that runs to 2022. The state's congressional delegation and Republican Gov. Rick Scott have vocally opposed expanding drilling over concerns about impacts to the state's huge tourism industry as well as military operations there.

"Imagine resting on one of our white sand beaches, or swimming in our crystal-clear waters in sight of a farm of obtrusive white tanks full of oil, or having to watch large steel offshore supply vessels navigate and anchor nearby, crowding out our recreational and fishing boats," ten Florida House Republicans wrote February in the Tampa Bay Times. "The barges, workboats, tank farms, pipelines, mooring balls and other equipment that accompany offshore drilling and production are wholly incompatible with our tourism and residential economy."

Three Florida Republicans — Reps. Matt Gaetz, Francis Rooney and Gus Bilirakis — attended the Wednesday meeting with Deputy Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Kate MacGregor and several Defense Department officials.

### The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc.

(SPAC), has been meeting continuously since 1927. It was incorporated in 1979 as a nonprofit, tax deductible organization.



For almost 50 years SPAC has provided free educational programs for its members & the public. For additional information send your emails to: [spaceaminer@gmail.com](mailto:spaceaminer@gmail.com)

Meetings are normally held on the fourth Friday of each month (except November & December when it is on the third Friday) at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL, at 8:00 P.M. Meetings are open to the public. [Calendar](#)

### M.A.R.S. – Tampa Astronomy Club

Welcome to the [Museum Astronomical Resource Society](#), also known as the M.A.R.S. astronomy club. M.A.R.S. is sponsored by the [Museum of Science & Industry \(MOSI\)](#), in Tampa, Florida. We are also members of both the [Astronomical League & Night Sky Network](#). This site provides club news & astronomical information to our membership & to the public.

Whether you are new to astronomy & curious about how to experience it, or a seasoned veteran looking for an active club to spend observation time with. We invite you to attend a meetings as our honored guest.

Monthly meetings are normally held on the 3rd floor of MOSI in the Science Works Theater, & take place on the 2nd Friday of each month from 7:00PM to 9:00PM. Meetings are free & open to the public.

**Details & RSVP:**

<https://www.meetup.com/MARS-astronomy-club-at-MOSI/>



The mission of the Center for Inquiry is to foster a secular society based on science, reason, freedom of inquiry, & humanist values. Since 2002, our all-volunteer chapter has served West Central Florida. Won't you support us? [Join our community today.](#)



*Rick O'Keefe,  
Coordinator*

### Some of June's activities are:

- ◇◇ Howard's Skeptics Corner
- ◇◇ Thank Goodness 4 Godless Friday Nights
- ◇◇ CFI Sunday Skeptics Brunch
- ◇◇ Tampa Bay Tech Center Monthly Meeting
- ◇◇ The Moveable Feast w. Humanist Society
- ◇ Ron Cooper, "Jesus' Twin"
- ◇◇ CFI SHARE Book Club
- ◇◇ 2+ astronomy clubs' meetings
- ◇◇ Sunday Night call-in "Atheist TV on the Internet"

And more at <http://bit.ly/2jaYhv6>

June 21 is World Humanist Day

**Subscribe** to our CFI Tampa Bay newsletter here: <http://bit.ly/2lJte9I>, Then scroll down the page until you see the red section with "Receive E-Mails".

### **You might like these blogs:**

*Freethought from the Heartland* with Reba Boyd Wooden, Indianapolis, IN

*Hollywood Reality Check* with Jim Underdown, Hollywood, CA

*A Skeptic Reads the Newspaper* with Benjamin Radford, Albuquerque, New Mexico

*Investigative Briefs* with Joe Nickell, Amherst, NY

*Advocatus Diaboli* with Tom Flynn, Buffalo, NY

*The Morning Heresy* with Paul the Morning Heretic

*Access Points* with Timothy Binga, CFI Amherst

We enjoyed meeting those of you who stopped at our CFI table at EcoFest on Earth Day at Zoo Tampa. It's a pleasure talking with humanists interested in restoring the environment.

## **What is Secular Rescue?**

The **Campaign for Free Expression** is an initiative of the Center for Inquiry (CFI) to focus the public's attention and efforts on one of the most basic and foundational human rights: the freedom to express yourself. We hope you join us.

Around the world, militant extremists have harassed, attacked, and murdered secularists and dissidents for daring to promote and defend secular government and fundamental human rights. In some countries, including most recently Bangladesh, this problem is particularly severe, and new threats emerge across the globe every day.

**Secular Rescue** is a program of the **Center for Inquiry** designed to provide emergency assistance to writers, bloggers, publishers, and activists who face threats due to their beliefs or expressions regarding religion.

Generous public support has allowed the Center for Inquiry to assist more than two dozen individuals and their families in escaping to safety, either temporarily or permanently.

Learn more including how you can help:

<http://bit.ly/2HHgxXA>

The following **official statement** by CFI was made public via social media on Monday morning, March 5th:

"The Center for Inquiry is committed to a policy <http://ow.ly/eaKH30iL3uS> of zero-tolerance for sexual harassment. Serious allegations have been raised regarding Lawrence Krauss, and we suspend our association with him pending further information."

Further questions from members, supporters, and volunteers should be directed to Nick Little, Legal [nlittle@centerforinquiry.net](mailto:nlittle@centerforinquiry.net) or Robyn Blumner, CEO [rblumner@centerforinquiry.net](mailto:rblumner@centerforinquiry.net).



*Did your CFI membership lapse? Find out—please send me an email so I can check for you. Include your current phone & address with ZIP, please. I'll look it up & let you know.*

Cordially, Rick  
[tampa@CenterforInquiry.net](mailto:tampa@CenterforInquiry.net)



16  
years in  
Florida



New & Improved website: <https://CFITampaBay.org>. Please visit, then comment: what would you like to see?



Take note: In this newsletter most graphics & blue text are links for your use. So **click** away!

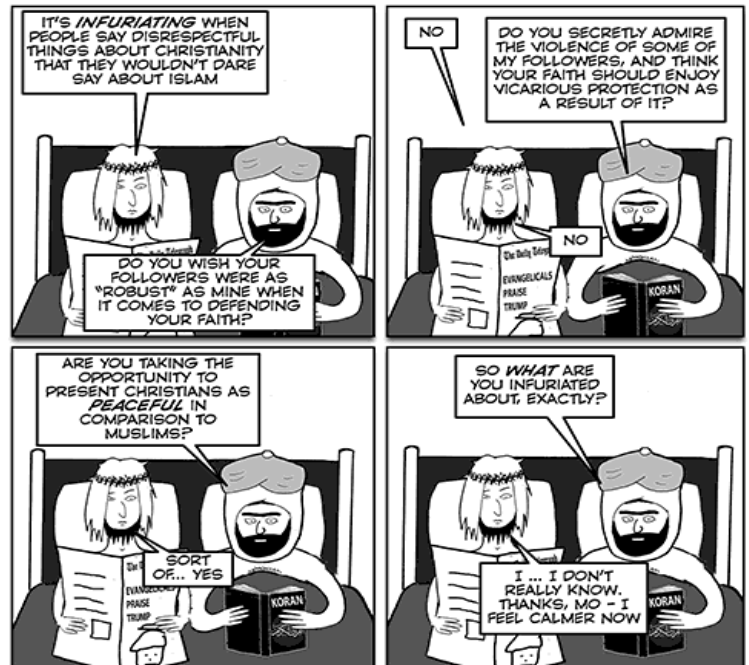
## POINT OF INQUIRY

### CFI's all new "Point of Inquiry"

The flagship podcast of the Center for Inquiry is beginning a brand new chapter!

You can subscribe to **Point of Inquiry** in your podcast app of choice, and if you're already a subscriber, well, *don't go anywhere!*

Sign up here: [www.pointofinquiry.org/](http://www.pointofinquiry.org/)

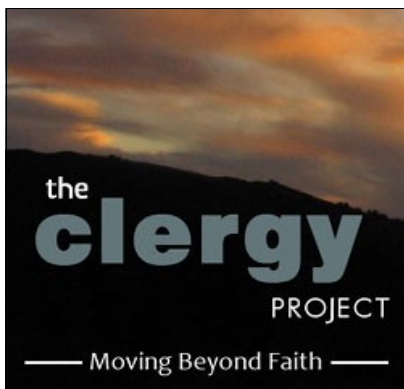


© Jesusandmo.net

### University of South Florida Humanities Institute

\*\*\* *See you in the Fall 2018 semester!*

For engaging speakers & socials, check the calendar at <http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities>  
Many previous lectures are available on YouTube.



The purpose of **The Clergy Project** is to provide a safe haven for active and former professional clergy/religious leaders who do not hold supernatural beliefs. It originated from a growing awareness of the presence of these professional clergy and a concern about their dilemma as they moved beyond faith.

Recovering from  
Religion  
The Hotline

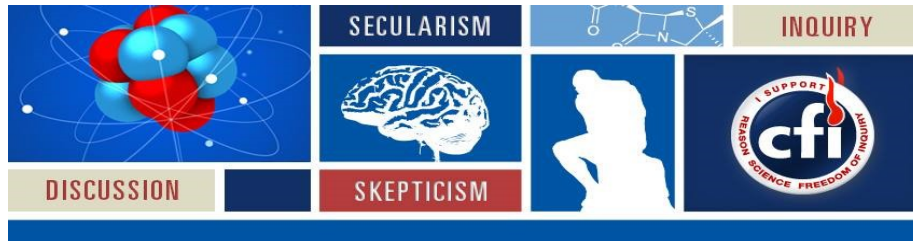


"My grandfather once told me that there were two kinds of people: those who do the work and those who take the credit. He told me to try to be in the first group; there was much less competition." ~ Indira Gandhi

*Non-participation is a negative personal choice.  
Have you chosen to be positive?*

Click below

**JOIN NOW**



Continuing recommended reading about modern America, these two award winning books:

Carol Anderson says of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, “that book breaks my heart.” Matthew Desmond’s Pulitzer Prize-winning book profiles poor families in Milwaukee as they struggle to keep their housing. In *Evicted*, Desmond emphasizes the importance of the home to American life and offers actionable solutions to break the eviction cycle that disproportionately punishes impoverished mothers.

Buy *Evicted* here: [Amazon](#) | [Barnes & Noble](#)

Tressie McMillan Cottom’s *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy* includes a blurb from Anderson calling it a “powerful, chilling tale.” On the podcast, Anderson describes it as a look at “how [for-profit colleges] prey on the aspirations of those who are seeking a college education in order to have a better life.” Through interviews with former students and employees, McMillan Cottom links the for-profit college industry to larger trends in race, class, and gender inequality.

Buy *Lower Ed* here: [Amazon](#) | [Barnes & Noble](#)

From **CFI SHARE Book Club**: for our May 26 meeting Marios Psomas chose *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* by Jonathan Haidt.

For our June 30 meeting Mike has chosen *The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics* by Daniel James Brown

“You talk to God, you're religious. God talks to you, you're psychotic.”

~ Doris Egan

## CHURCH AND STATE

Why aren’t religious views classed as delusions?

Religious beliefs are typically incompatible with scientific evidence and observable reality, but aren’t considered to be delusions. Why not?

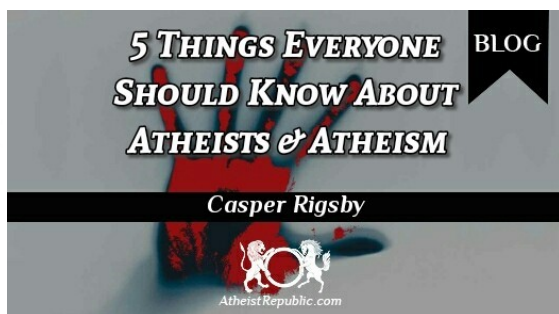
If someone told you, in all seriousness, that they talk to invisible beings

who control the universe, you’d probably back away slowly, nodding and smiling, while desperately looking for the nearest exit or escape route. If this person then said they wanted to be in charge of your life, you’d probably do the same, but more urgently, and with a view to finding the nearest police officer. Yet, this happens all the time.

... Read the rest here: <http://bit.ly/2HX8gzB>

**READ THIS:** TB-cor’s [Meetup](#) makes it easy to view & **RSVP** to our activities & some affiliated events. The value to us of your joining our Meetup is that we need to know how many folks expect to attend an activity. Some programs are limited in seating; some require ordering books, etc.; some are open only to paid-up CFI members; & some require prepayment.





Casper Rigsby writes, “There are five fairly simple ideas concerning atheists and atheism that I think everyone should understand. These ideas cover what an atheist is by definition, some generalizations that theists often indulge about atheists and atheism, and finally the most important thing one can know about an atheist. Understanding these ideas will give a clearer picture of what atheism really is and also what it really isn’t. While there are many other things one could know about atheists and atheism, I feel these five things are the most important.”

And here’s the article: <http://bit.ly/2HXKFz2>

Thanks to [Atheist Republic](#) for the lead.

*Thanks to Dr. Charles W. Faulkner for the following.*

### **"Humanism? What's that?"**

The above quotation is nearly the precise response that one would get were he or she to ask anyone to consider becoming a humanist. People can benefit greatly from adopting a humanist position on every issue that involves them.

#### **What humanism entails.**

First, let's clarify our terms. Humanitarians and humanists are not necessarily one and the same. The terms are somewhat different. While humanitarians contribute to worthy causes, humanists are dedicated to the cause of humanity. That is, humanists want humans to become all that they can be, especially in a psychological sense.

Perhaps the greatest infringement upon your freedom is the society, or individual, that tries to tell you what to think and how to behave, and punishes you if you refuse to think and behave the way it (HE or SHE) wants you to.

Humanists want to know why they should think or behave a certain way. If they are given logical reasons they might buy the idea. If the reasons are not good ones they will likely choose to reject the ideas.

Take racism, for instance. After years of intense, in-depth research by scientists, biologists, anthropologists, geneticists and human behaviorists, it has been determined that, although people differ racially with respect to features

and pigmentation, there is no racial distinction in intelligence or behavior. The evidence in support of this position is easy to obtain.

#### **Humanism fosters skepticism.**

Of course, similar questions could be applied to the belief in the existence of a supreme being, astrology, reincarnation, ESP, homeopathy, mind-reading, or any belief. These ideas may or may not be true. A logical person, humanist or other, would wish to be certain that there is solid proof to support these, or any, ideas before making a major change in his or her life, in support of one of these concepts.

But, what about things that we already believe to be true, and for which we have never seen evidence? If you examined everything that you now believe to be true, how many of those ideas actually have proof to support them? The fact is that many of our beliefs have no valid support but we accept them simply because our par-ents, friends or, even our pastor told us that they were true. We have never been shown the proof. We have never asked for the proof. Someone whom we trust told us that they were true, and that was good enough for us. But should it have been?

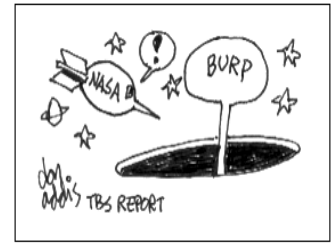
Suppose that what we believe to be true is actually false. What difference would it make in our lives? The difference is that we would virtually be under the con-trol of another individual or group of individuals. We would be reduced to the position of sub-human, or robot, or slave, or child. We would, in effect, be ignorant because we would allow someone else to do our think-ing for us. The case could easily exist that we could allow a person to control our lives who is not as good as we, who hates us and who would like to destroy us. If a person whom we trusted told us that monsters were going to invade our house tomorrow, would we possibly vacate it immediately or even give it away — to the person who told us about the monsters? If some-one told us that we would have bad luck if a black cat crossed our path, or that we would get rich if we played

*(Continued on page 10)*

I think skepticism is an antidote for nonsense –and there's always nonsense in life– and also it's the method for discovering what's true or false. And yes, we should use it throughout life. ~ Paul Kurtz, “Father of Modern Secular Humanism”



Founded in 1988 by **Gary P. Posner, M.D.**, Tampa Bay Skeptics is a nonprofit educational & scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of paranormal & fringe-science claims, & the dissemination of factual information about such claims. **Read More!**



(Continued from page 9)

a certain number on the lottery, we might spend the rest of our lives avoiding black cats, or spending a small fortune playing the lottery.

Yet, the reasoning implicit in a well-grounded plan can free one from continued oppression. It can free one from fearing those things that shouldn't be feared and from being intimidated by those things that shouldn't be intimidating. It can motivate one to fearlessly take the strong and necessary steps to create his or her own destiny, instead of waiting for a mysterious, hopefully benevolent, force to do it for them.

#### What humanism can accomplish.

Humanism is little more than reason and common sense. It is the desire that a person has to believe only those things that have been proven true with empirical proof (the five senses) and logical thinking, and to fight for the right to live in a society that allows everyone to believe what he or she wants to believe as long as it doesn't infringe upon the rights of someone else who wants to do the same thing.

*The very oppression of [Freethinkers and especially] African-Americans* cries out for them to throw off the cloak of the supernatural which appears in the form of astrology, ESP, palmistry, theism and ghosts — and to throw off the fear and intimidation that accompany them. Freedom requires sound, logical thinking that removes the crutches of phenomena whose existence has never been proven. Humanism and its fearless logic can open the door to freethinking and freedom for all people, especially African-Americans.

Are you a member of Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay? If not, please note that joining us makes you a member of CFI worldwide with all the applicable benefits. Website: <http://bit.ly/2ljTe9I> and “Join us”. Please choose your level of support <http://bit.ly/2pTDfEj>. Is there value to you in supporting your freethinker’s beliefs with a membership or donation? If not, consider an application to **become a volunteer**. Thanks in advance for your support.



**The Crafty Freethinker** ... Yorkshire lass born and bred, currently living in the Sunshine State. Maker of fine Secular Jewelry, and lifelong freethinker, my work can be seen by clicking on the image at left.

“If there are any lessons to be learned from history, it is that we should be skeptical of all points of view, including those of the skeptics. No one is infallible, and no one can claim a monopoly on truth or virtue. It would be contradictory for skepticism to seek to translate itself into a new faith. One must view with caution the promises of any new secular priest who might emerge promising a brave new world—if only his path to clarity and truth is followed. Perhaps the best we can hope for is to temper the intemperate and to tame the perverse temptation that lurks within.” ~ Paul Kurtz (2014), *Multi-Secularism: A New Agenda*, p. 338



The **Committee for Skeptical Inquiry** promotes science and scientific inquiry, critical thinking, science education, and the use of reason in examining important issues. It encourages the critical investigation of controversial or extraordinary claims from a responsible, scientific point of view and disseminates factual information about the results of such inquiries to the scientific community, the media, and the public.





# Ahead of the Curve: Regulating Artificial Intelligence

By **Luis Granados**



I ran across a new report recently that made me do a double-take. "[When Software Rules: rule of Law in the Age of Artificial Intelligence](#)" was prepared by the Environmental Law Institute, and as the title implies it discusses the regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Environmental law and AI are two interesting fields, but what have they got to do with one another? Have the environmental lawyers run out of other ideas to work on, so they have to invade computer geeks' turf?

It turns out that AI has quite a bit to do with environmental concerns, for good and for ill. That's because AI has quite a bit to do with *everything*, and the environment is a subset of that. Or, turning it around, you could say the environment has to do with everything, and AI is a subset of that.

The report at its outset cites two specific examples of overlap. Cloud storage systems are wonderful, but they consume gobs of energy nearly two percent of all US electricity. So Google, which maintains some of the largest data centers, turned its "Deep Mind" AI system onto the problem of reducing its data center's energy use. The result was a 15 percent energy use reduction at what was already an efficient center.

Then there's the dark side. Everyone knows that Volkswagen figured out how to cheat on its emissions testing. What's less widely known is that they used AI to do it. By one estimate, Volkswagen's little AI trick may cause some [1,200 premature deaths](#) in Europe.

It would be helpful if the report recited a handy list of laws to pass in order to maximize the good that AI can do for humanity while minimizing the harm. Unfortunately, that isn't possible. AI itself is changing every day, and the "social contract" that society must informally adopt before hard rules are promulgated is nowhere near crystallizing.

One useful suggestion the report does raise is to port the concept of an "Environmental Impact Statement" (EIS) over to the world of AI. An EIS is required by law for major projects and takes an interdisciplinary approach to predict unintended consequences. A careful attempt to make such a prediction, expanded beyond purely physical concerns, could help decision makers cope with AI.

Example: an EIS for self-driving cars. On the one hand, there's reason to believe they can be more energy efficient, e.g. by reducing idling times and taking the most efficient route to a destination. They may someday become safer drivers than humans as well. All good—but what happens when people are freed from the annoyance of driving and are able to work productively during drive time instead? How many will be tempted to move even further away from their jobs, thus negating whatever positive effects there might be? An EIS isn't a magic talisman that can answer these questions definitively, but it's better to try to think them through in advance than just to lurch forward blindly.

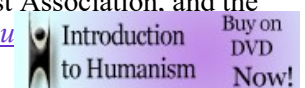
I also separately ran across exactly the kind of danger we need to watch out for as we think through the challenges AI presents. One of the key recommendations in the Environmental Law Institute report favored "transparency," which in this context means requiring AI to be able to explain how it achieves a particular result. Not all AIs do this; as I described [last fall](#), the [AlphaGo](#) AI that beat the human champion at the game of "Go" makes decisions in a way that is impossible for humans to trace or understand.

The ELI report, and [many others](#) who have considered the issue, strongly recommend that all AI must be capable of explaining itself. "Black box" AI that produces an untraceable result should be verboten, if not by law then at least by social and industry standards of acceptability. Nevertheless, a recent *New York Times* [opinion piece](#) argued that "black box" AI is just fine, so long as it works, and the demand for explainability creates unnecessary friction and added cost. I thought the article was mildly persuasive—until I spotted the "About the Author" segment at the bottom, which noted that the author was a general partner in a venture capital firm.

I worked with venture capital pros during my legal career. They are incredibly smart, incredibly hard-working, incredibly selfish, and incredibly single-minded in their pursuit of rate of return. They have to be this way to survive, I suppose, and that's fine. They fill an important role in the economy. But they are the *last* people you want to listen to about the best way for humanity to deal with AI. I don't agree with the ELI folks on everything, but I can trust that they're trying to do their best for humanity as we deal with AI that is rapidly outstripping us. Venture capitalists? Not so much.

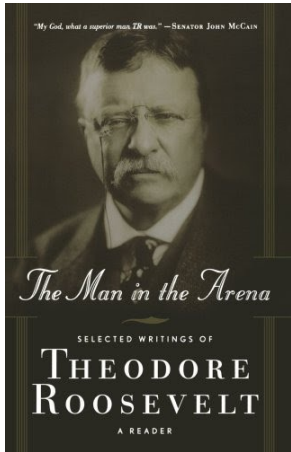
The single most important recommendation in the ELI list was also the fuzziest, calling on the public to "Raise awareness and foster critical thinking about potential applications and impacts of AI." AI is too big to leave to the experts, be they venture capitalists, think-tank lawyers, or tech geeks. The burden of critical thinking falls especially on humanists, because [relying on scripture](#) for guidance, as some theists do, cannot yield useful results.

**Luis Granados** is the director of [Humanist Press](#), the publishing house of the American Humanist Association, and the author of *Damned Good Company: Twenty Rebels Who Bucked the God Experts*. He writes the [Ru Schmucks](#) and [Ahead of the Curve](#) columns for TheHumanist.com.



## Recommended Reading

Click on the book's **image** for more info



“There is nothing quite so tragic as a young cynic,” Maya Angelou wrote in contemplating **courage in the face of evil**, “because it means the person has gone from knowing nothing to believing nothing.”

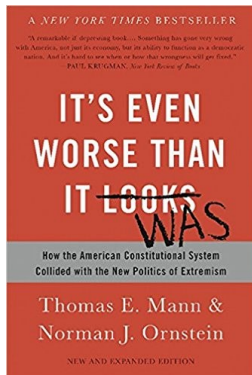
How to prevent that cultural tragedy, which poisons the heart of a just and democratic society, is what **Theodore Roosevelt** examined when he took the podium at the Sorbonne in Paris on April 23 of 1910 to deliver one of the most powerful, rousing, and timeless insightful speeches ever given.

A century before Caitlin Moran cautioned that “**cynicism scours through a culture like bleach, wiping out millions of small, seedling ideas**,” Roosevelt admonishes against “that queer and cheap temptation” to be cynical.

Carol Anderson’s book *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of our Racial Divide* was published a few months before Election Day but remains vitally relevant more than a year into the Trump presidency. In it, Anderson discusses how anger in black communities is hyper-visible, while “white rage manages to be almost invisible [...which] distorts our understanding of the reality of race relations in this country.”



In this book, the authors, Mann and Ornstein, track the rise of extremism in American politics that seems to be getting worse every day. Anderson says *It's Even Worse Than It Looks* “gave [her] an insight into where we are right now with the Republican Party, understanding how [it] moved from a governing party to a party of opposition ... which then didn’t provide any kind of space for moderate Republicans.”



## The Matt Cooper

### Humanist Lending Library

Humanist Society members (only) can select the number of the book you wish to borrow, and send it to Marios Psomas at: [marios\\_psomas@hotmail.com](mailto:marios_psomas@hotmail.com) Then pick it up at the next meeting.

**Be sure to return it!**  
**Donations appreciated.**

#### # TITLE AUTHOR

80. **An Atheist Stranger** Herb Silverman
81. **Candidate without a prayer** Herb Silverman New
1. The Expanding Circle Peter Singer
2. In Gods we Trust Scott Atran
3. Why Evolution is True Jerry Coyne
4. The Second World Panag Khanna
5. Denialism Michael Specter
6. The Selfish Gene Richard Dawkins
7. Democracy Incorporated Sheldon Wolin
8. The Upside Irrationality Dan Ariely
9. The End of Growth Richard Heinberg
10. **The God Delusion** Richard Dawkins
11. All That We Share Jay Walljasper
12. Sex, Time, and Power Leonard Shlain
13. Sex at Dawn C. Ryan, & C. Jetha
14. What liberal Media Eric Alderman
15. The End of Faith Sam Harris
16. **Plan B** Lester Brown
17. The Portable Atheist Christopher Hitchens
18. Open Society George Soros
19. Non Believer Nation David Niose
20. God on Trial Peter Irons
21. Natural Experiments of History Diamond-Robinson
22. The Missionary Position Christopher Hitchens
23. Life Inc Douglas Rushkoff
24. **A brief History of Time** Stephen Hawking
25. Breaking the Spell Daniel Dennett
26. **The Philosophy of Humanism** Corliss Lamont
27. The Quotable Atheist Jack Huberman
28. 50 Reasons People Believe In G.G. Harrison
29. Mathematics and Politics Alan Taylor
30. Stealing Elections John Fund
31. The God Virus Darrel Ray
32. What Every American Should Know About World Rossi
33. Imagine There's no Heaven Editors of Free Inquiry
34. Hidden Order David Friedman
35. What the Dog Saw Malcom Gladwell
36. Sway Ori, Rom Brafman
37. The Better Angels of our Nature Steven Pinker
38. Letter to a Young Contrarian Christopher Hitchens
39. Hot, Flat, and Crowded Thomas Friedman
40. Gaming the Vote William Poundstone
41. Subversion Fable Alexa KcKearing
43. Evolution and the Big Question David Stamos
44. **Why People Believe Weird Things** Michael Shermer
45. The World is Curved David Snick
46. The Snow Ball Warren Buffett
47. **The Moral Landscape** Sam Harris
48. **How We Believe** Michael Shermer
49. Full House Steven Jay Gould
50. The Origins of Political Order Francis Fukuyama
51. **Asimov's Guide to the Bible** Isaac Asimov
52. Autobiography of Mark Twain Harriet Smith, Editor
53. Science Friction Michael Shermer
54. Genius James Gleick
55. Inevitable Illusions Piatrelli & Palmarini
56. Demon Haunted World Carl Sagan
57. Being Right Is Not Enough Paul Waldman
58. Loser Takes All Mark Crispin Miller
59. Taking Back Politics Cathy Allen
60. Spiritual Common Sense Mark Lindquist (Gift by author)
61. Autobiography of Mark Twain Ed. Harriet Elinor Smith
62. The Skeptics Annotated Bible Various
63. **12 Vol Complete Works** Robert Ingersoll
64. On Religious Liberty Roger Williams & Davis
65. The God Makers Baker & Hunt
66. Inevitable Illusions M. Piattelli-Palmarini
67. Ain't Nobody's business If You Do Peter McWilliams
69. Bonk Mary Roach
70. What Money Can't Buy Michael J. Sandel
71. Financial Shenanigans Howard Shilit
72. Sex & God Darrel Ray, ED.D
73. Best American Non required Reading Dave Eggers
74. Reporting at Wit's End St. Clair McKelway
75. Corporations are not People Clements
76. Could I Vote Mormon for president? Cragun – Phillips
77. Culture of Honor Nisbett – Cohen
78. Rot on the Vine Stenesh
79. **Thoughts of a Freethinker** New Kaye \* **Essential works**

**Evolve Fish is a good source for freethought goodies:**

<http://evolvefish.com/>

To access more Freethought history & perspectives,  
**Frank Prahl's Freethought Library.**

[fprahl@verizon.net](mailto:fprahl@verizon.net)

# The Ten Commitments

Schools are responsible for developing literate and skilled human beings, but they also must be committed to helping their students develop good personal, social, and citizenship values. This ethical mission is an essential part of all education, public and private, elementary through high school and university. In a democratic and pluralist society, we believe that the values presented should be the moral foundation of education <http://cohe.humanistinstitute.org>

## **Altruism**

Altruism is the unselfish concern for the welfare of others without expectation of reward, recognition, or return. Opportunities for acts of altruism are everywhere in the family, the classroom, the school, and the wider community. Think of examples of altruistic acts in your experience. What person-to-person and group projects, classroom and school-wide activities, and community service projects might you and your students undertake?

## **Caring for the World Around Us**

Everyone can and ought to play a role in caring for the Earth and its inhabitants. We can directly experience the living things in our homes and neighborhoods like trees, flowers, birds, insects, and pets. Gradually we expand our neighborhood. We learn about deserts and oceans, rivers and forests, the wildlife around us and the wildlife elsewhere. We learn that we are dependent on each other, on the natural world, and all that lives in it for food and shelter, space and beauty.

## **Critical Thinking**

We gain reliable knowledge because we are able to observe, report, experiment, and analyze what goes on around us. We also learn to raise questions that are clear and precise, to gather information, and to reason about the information we receive in a way that tests it for truthfulness, accuracy, and utility. From our earliest years we learn how to think and to share and challenge our ideas and the ideas of others, and consider their consequences. Practice asking "what next?" and "why?" and "how do I/you/we know that?"

## **Empathy**

We human beings are capable of empathy, the ability to understand and enter imaginatively into another living being's feelings, the sad ones and the happy ones as well. Many of the personal relationships we have (in the family, among friends, between diverse individuals, and amid other living things) are made positive through empathy. With discussion and role-playing, we can learn how other people feel when they are sad or hurt or ignored, as well as when they experience great joys. We can use stories, anecdotes, and classroom events to help us nurture sensitivity to how our actions impact others.

## **Ethical Development**

Questions of fairness, cooperation, and sharing are among the first moral issues we encounter in our ethical development as human beings. Ethical education is ongoing implicitly and explicitly in what is called the "hidden curriculum" that we experience through the media, the family, and the community. Ethics can be taught through discussion, role-playing, story telling, and other activities that improve analysis and decision-making regarding what's good and bad, right and wrong.

## **Global Awareness**

We live in a world that is rich in cultural, social, and individual diversity, a world where interdependence is increasing rapidly so that events anywhere are more likely to have consequences everywhere. Much can be done to prepare the next generation for accepting the responsibility of global citizenship. Understanding can be gained regarding the many communities in which we live through history, anthropology, and biology. A linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity are present in the classroom and provide lessons of diversity and commonality. We help others reach understanding about the interconnectedness of the welfare of all humanity.

## **Humility**

We must always remember that there's a lot we don't know about the universe. There's still so very much to learn. Science will help us. But sometimes scientists discover surprising things that tell us how some of our old beliefs are false. So we need to be willing to change when our knowledge changes. A good humanist doesn't try to be sure of things that science can't show are true.

## **Peace and Social Justice**

A curriculum that values and fosters peace education would promote the human rights of all people and understanding among all nations, cultural and religious groups. Students should have opportunities to learn about the United Nations' role in preventing conflict as well as efforts to achieve social justice in the United States. They should learn about problems of injustice including what can be done to prevent and respond to these problems with meaningful actions that promote peace and social justice and that protect the inherent human rights of everyone both at home and abroad.

## **Responsibility**

Our behavior is morally responsible when we tell the truth, help someone in trouble, and live up to promises we've made. Our behavior is legally responsible when we obey a just law and meet the requirements of membership or citizenship. But we also have a larger responsibility to be a caring member of our family, our community, and our world. Stories and role-playing can help students understand responsibility and its absence or failure. We learn from answering such questions as: What happens when we live in accordance with fair and just rules? What happens when we don't? What happens when the rules are unjust?

## **Service and Participation**

Life's fulfillment can emerge from an individual's participation in the service of humane ideals. School-based service-learning combines community service objectives and learning objectives with the intent that the activities change both the recipient and the provider. It provides students with the ability to identify important issues in real-life situations. Through these efforts we learn that each of us can help meet the needs of others and of ourselves. Through our lifetime, we learn over and over again of our mutual dependence.



AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

CENTER FOR EDUCATION

## **UU Humanists of Clearwater**

*Usually every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday at 12:30 to 1:30 pm, after UU services,*

at 2470 Nursery Rd. in Clearwater.



## **A Humanist Discussion group in East Tampa !**



## **UU Humanists of Tampa**

Public Discussion, 2nd Wednesday eve from 7-9 PM, & on the 4th Sunday Morning 9:45-10:45.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa

# Atheists of Florida, Inc.



Ed Golly, Chair - Judy Adkins, Exec. Dir.  
Al Hann, Vice chair,

See [AoF Meetup](#) for details Website: <http://aof.ngo>

AoF is a comfortable & safe place in which to find rewarding new friendships, to discover hidden potentials, & make a positive contribution to your own humanity as well as that of others. We are pleased to offer legal assistance with church state separation issues as an important focus. For many people, atheism represents the most focused & powerful criticism of the philosophical world-view with which most of us were raised. It is liberating for the same reason it attracts the enmity of those who are committed to the closed & changeless narrative of unexamined traditional beliefs. JP



# The Atheist Forum



Sunday 7 to 8 pm.

The broadcast is available **on the internet at [TanTalk1340.com](http://TanTalk1340.com)**, live streaming on smart phones using the “**TuneIn**” application, and on the following frequencies in the Tampa Bay area – **WTAN AM 1340, WZHR AM 1400, WDCF AM 1350, WTAN FM 106.1, and WZHR FM 104.3.**

Listeners can call **727-441-3000**, where four lines await your call in of questions and comments. All programs are being archived on the AoF web site, [www.talk.aof.ngo](http://www.talk.aof.ngo).

- ? ? Have something to say?
- ? ? Have a topic you'd like to hear about...
- ? ? Know someone you'd like to suggest to be a guest on our show?

Contact us: [info@atheistsoffloridainc.org](mailto:info@atheistsoffloridainc.org)



We must protect the First Amendment of the Constitution from those that want to weaken or destroy the establishment clause. The religious right currently has a particularly strong influence in the house, senate, and the white house. We must carefully examine the credentials of those running for office to ensure that influence is weakened and the encroachment of religion into our government is halted and hopefully reversed.

This year there are 13 (as of this writing) initiatives on the ballot to modify the Florida Constitution. These are somewhat complicated as some of them have multiple issues in the same measure, so it will take effort on our part to ensure we understand what we are voting for or against. You can view the atheist forum where we discussed these issues with Gary Gibbons. <http://bit.ly/FI-CRC> .

### Why vote by mail?

By getting your ballot early you have time to review each initiative and decide how you want to vote. It ensures you don't miss an election since you will receive a ballot to all elections in which you are eligible to vote. You must refile a vote by mail request every two years. You can also track your ballot online, so you know that it was received. ...**J. M. Adkins**  
**Pinellas County (727) 464- 8683, Hillsborough (813) 612-4180**  
Sarasota & other counties - contact your supervisors of elections.



## Planks off the old Board

Atheists of Florida is an ardent supporter of our public school system. In response to the misguided legislation from the state that requires the posting of the state motto in every building in every public school in Florida, we have composed two posters that can satisfy the requirement which we are offering to provide at our expense. This is because the state provided no funding for the mandate. We have already pitched the posters to the Pinellas and Sarasota County school boards. While our offer has been always well received, it has so far, not been accepted.

The board of directors has decided to convert the *Atheist Forum* from a live radio broadcast to a YouTube video production. This will reduce our production costs for the *Forum* to the cost of Internet service to broadcast the show. We will be constructing our studio during June and July so we can resume production through this summer. The *Atheist Forum* will be a live call-in talk show probably on Wednesday evenings, specific time and connection link to be announced.

The board also voted to set the annual dues to \$30.00.

\*\*\*\*\*

### All-in-One Printers For Sale:

Canon 3020 - Print, Copy, Scan.  
Wireless, WIFI, 7 pounds.  
Includes ink, power cable and optional USB cable. MSRP \$99 with cables. My price: **\$49**Tx inc.  
Meet the PIXMA MG3020



Wireless Inkjet All-In-One, an affordable wireless printer for all your home printing, scanning and copying needs. Great features such as the Canon PRINT app, makes it easy to print up to 4800dpi Hi-Res. photos and documents wirelessly from your smartphone or tablet. It can even support optional XL ink cartridges. New, inc. factory Warranty.

Contact Joe Reinhardt at (727) 544-0414, or Email: [wjr22@hotmail.com](mailto:wjr22@hotmail.com)  
Proceeds help support AoF! (you can too!)

## Tampa Bay Thinkers



Discussing serious matters since 2008. **Carrollwood Cultural Center**, Tampa, every 2nd Monday, monthly at 7 PM.

**Monday, June, 2018**

**Topic: Why is there an opioid crisis? What can be done to stop it?**

See our Meetup site:

[www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers/](http://www.meetup.com/tampa-bay-thinkers/) for more info.

## The Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers



The **MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH)** community was created for atheist & secular humanist military personnel stationed at MacDill Air Force Base, their families & retired military residing in the Tampa Bay area. MASH provides a valuable & much needed resource in which you will find common ground to socialize, discuss issues, & draw emotional support from like-minded members.

**Local Contact:** Chris  
([christbrown@yahoo.com](mailto:christbrown@yahoo.com))  
MSgt, USAF (Retired)

Co-Organizer:

**MacDill Atheists & Secular Humanists (MASH) MacDill AFB**

## Humanist Families of Greater Tampa

**Jennifer Hancock** started this organization several years ago. It uniquely serves Humanist families with a variety of wonderful programs throughout the year.

There is a strong emphasis on creative childrearing. Here, you can make connection with other families dealing with the problems of living in a society that is still hostile to an explicitly Humanist Way of life. Jennifer is author of several books including: *The Humanist Handbook*, *The Humanist Approach to Happiness*, & her latest book, *The Bully Vaccine*.

Humanist Families organizes social outings every month. These are opportunities to do something fun, socialize & enjoy each other's company. Sometimes we go to a park, sometimes a museum, sometimes we go swimming. Our group has grown over the past year to the point we now organize Tampa area outings & Manatee/Sarasota area outings every month.

Throughout the year we host parties like Darwin Day in February, World Humanist Day in June, Freethought Day at Disney in October & Carl Sagan Day in November. Among our spin off groups, is a Parenting Beyond Belief group which gets together to discuss the challenges of raising children without religion. We are on **Facebook**.

See more at: <http://www.Jen-Hancock.com>.



## USF Freethinkers

Join [Freethinkers@USF](mailto:Freethinkers@USF) for genuine, conversational discourse & a communal atmosphere.

[Freethinkers@USF](mailto:Freethinkers@USF) is a cosmopolitan collective of USF students promoting critical thinking & pluralism through dialogue & reasonable inquiry. Join the official group and vote on upcoming discussions:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FreethinkersUSF/> for more information.



## Tampa Bay Technology Center & Thinkers Salon



*We repair our member's computers - Free!*

Lectures, discussions, & hands-on demonstrations of the humane use of technology. Our new address is 2189 Cleveland Street, Suite 229, Clearwater FL 33765. [Map](#)

Check out *Thinker's Salon* a forum for serious social & scientific ideas & issues.

Find us at:  
[www.tampa-bay.org](http://www.tampa-bay.org)



## Humanistic Judaism of Tampa Bay

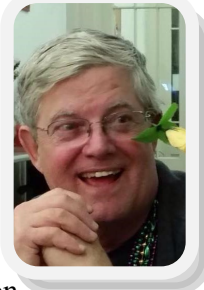
Visit the **Meetup**, or email [Jeff Lipkes](mailto:Jeff Lipkes)

Get the Bank of Wisdom—*FREE*. Contact [Marios Psomas](mailto:Marios Psomas), Librarian



The mission of the [Secular Coalition for Florida](#) is to increase the visibility of & respect for non-theistic view-points in the State, & to protect & strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all.

**Bill Norsworthy**, is our Florida representative. Please sign up [here](#). Volunteer activists are wanted, needed, & appreciated!



See page 17 for more information on our Secular Coalition connection to the National day of Reason. SC wants *you* to represent the voice of thousands of the people of reason in the halls of power.

As our government undergoes its seemingly perpetual crises, the secular coalition is needed to remind citizens & officials alike that ours is indeed a secular society. But to preserve its character from the predations of zealots requires your involvement.



## [ACLU of Greater Tampa Bay](#)

You know that we're in the fight of our lives to defend our democracy. You've marched in the streets, attended town halls, and called your representatives – but the attacks on our communities aren't slowing.

That's why it's so important that we take time now to regroup, inspire, and mobilize.

This is exactly what we'll be doing in Washington D.C. on June 10-12 at the ACLU Membership Conference. You play a critical role in the future of our democracy – and the future of Florida – we hope you can make it.

We'll sharpen our organizing skills, engage in dialogue about key issues, and have a chance to speak directly to our representatives so that we can take charge this legislative session. And we're excited to have leaders like **Cecile Richards, Representative John Lewis, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Kerry Washington, and Questlove** join us while we do it.

Let's make sure the Florida activists like you have the tools we need to make an even bigger impact in 2018. [Register for the 2018 ACLU Membership Conference today!](#)



## Trouble with Southern Baptists By Norm R. Allen Jr.

The problem with the religious insanity of Southern Baptists is that it is dangerous! They are actually looking forward to World War III and they will do whatever they can to accelerate it. And in Trump they have the perfect dupe to do their bidding. Who cares how many porn stars he sleeps with as long as he can help usher in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

Pastor Rick Wiles is especially off-the-wall. He is constantly featured on Right Wing Watch. He has stated that Muslims must be “stomped out like cockroaches.” He believes Obama is truly a demon from the pits of Hell. (However, the pastor has reportedly fallen out with Trump, and in 2017, he said that Ivanka Trump is an evil woman that practices Kabbala.) Recently, Wiles said that antichrist refers to behavior and beliefs.

He said that anyone who disbelieves that Jesus was God in human form “is antichrist.” He included Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and others. Israelis might also be interested to know that Wiles condemns homosexuality and Zionism and says that “They’re driven by the same spirit.” He believes that homosexuality and Zionism will rule the world simultaneously through Artificial Intelligence and high-tech surveillance of the people. This paranoid conspiracy theorist further believes that the evil figure of the Antichrist will be a homosexual Jew. (Homosexuals and Jews are, not coincidentally, despised by many Southern Baptists.) Many Southern Baptists believe that the Antichrist will be a Jew. There is no telling how geopolitics will play out. But how could such a belief possibly bode well for Jews, especially Israelis?

## St Pete Atheists // Freethought Group

Moderated by: Gary Thompson

Contact: [easy8@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:easy8@tampabay.rr.com)

On the web: <http://atheists.meetup.com/209>

- \* Provide intellectual & emotional support to each other & to others in our community who share our philosophy.
- \* Foster humanistic moral values & ethical behaviors.
- \* Promote a naturalistic worldview wherein beliefs must be verified by a scientific examination of evidence.
- \* Defend the separation of church & state at all levels of government as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America.
- \* “To Smell the Roses Along the Way”



## Promoting Action & Unity in the Tampa Bay Area

Join the Freethought Organizations of the Tampa Bay Area: groups that promote serious secular discussion & activity about important issues in our area & beyond.

Substantive & exciting new activities are now offered to the Tampa Bay area that were not possible for most organizations before.

Every year we sponsor events as Darwin Day in February, Solstice day in December, and other activities all year long.

We are especially grateful to the national office of the United Coalition of Reason & its director, Sarah Levin.

You may recall that UCoR was the major impetus to getting a large number of billboards erected in Tampa Bay & across the nation with such messages as "You can be good without God. Millions are!"

*TBCoR is an alliance of groups identified with the secular / freethought / Humanist / Atheist movement.*

As this momentum continues to grow, we will keep you informed of developments . JP

**Contact:** [tbcor@metrodirect.net](mailto:tbcor@metrodirect.net)  
**Or see,** <http://tampabaycor.org/>  
**Or,** <https://unitedcor.org/coalition-of-reason/tampa-bay/>

## Historical Jesus... Continued from page 1

-- An ancient legend claimed that Jesus had a twin brother Thomas. An extra-Biblical text that dates from perhaps as early as the late first century CE (which would make it the same age as the Biblical Gospels) claimed to be the secret teachings of Jesus as recorded by "Judas Didymos Thomas." The Greek word "Didymos" and the Aramaic word "Thomas" both mean "twin."

While only several Greek fragments of this manuscript, dating to the early second century CE, actually exist, a manuscript written in Coptic from the fourth century was discovered in 1945. This "Gospel of Thomas" contains 114 purported sayings of Jesus, many of which resemble passages in the New Testament. Drawing upon years of extensive research in early Jewish and Christian history and recent work on the historical Jesus, acclaimed novelist Ron Cooper focuses on Thomas of Nazareth, old and bitter after years of self-imposed exile from his homeland, who returns to Jerusalem to write a book about his identical twin brother Jesus.

Disgusted by how others have perverted his brother's message, Thomas wants to set the record straight. But in doing so, he must try to unravel the enigma that was Jesus. Provocative, inventive, and sure to be controversial, "The Gospel of the Twin" draws upon scriptural and ancient, non-Biblical sources to present an imaginative version of the founding of Christianity through scenes of violence, tenderness, and mistaken identity that will change the way the world thinks about Jesus.

*Keeping up with Jennifer...*

## Thinking Freely

## Speaking Out



To not get lost in the weeds of the day to day work of trying to make my goals a reality – I re-evaluate every 6 months.

Is what I am doing helping me to my primary goals or secondary goals or tertiary goals? Do I need to rethink one of my tertiary goals? Do I need to re-allocate my time and priorities?

The answer is ALWAYS yes. Yes I do need to re-prioritize based on what is working and what isn't and whether I am enjoying the work or not.

Thanks and take care.  
*Jennifer Hancock*



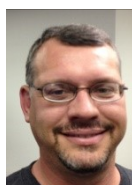
Al Hann  
AoF



Bill Norsworthy,  
UUCH



Mark Brandt,  
UUCH



Chris Brown,  
MAF



Jenn Hancock,  
GTBHF



Rick O'Keefe,  
CFI, TBS



Jim Peterson  
HSS, TBPC

### TBCoR Leadership Team 2018

Editorial E-Mail: [tbcor@metrodirect.net](mailto:tbcor@metrodirect.net) CoR Facilitator



## Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason – June 2018 Calendar

This is produced from preliminary information. Check the individual Web sites to insure the event is being held, when & where .... We are not liable for changes, errors, or omissions. Compiled by Rick O'Keefe & Jim Peterson. Your RSVP is requested, & often is required for admittance. Meeting planners need this information.



2nd Sunday, 2 PM	BRANDON–CFI Sunday Freethought Social	Skeptical interests with critical thinkers. Click to <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke">http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke</a>	            
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Atheists of Florida, Inc.	Details & <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup">http://bit.ly/AOF-Meetup</a>	
TBA – various activities	S TAMPA– Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc..	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke">http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke</a>	
1st Saturday, 2 PM see Pg. 2 3rd Sunday -Dinner see Pg. 3.	DUNEDIN– Humanist Soc. of the Suncoast	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists">http://bit.ly/Suncoast-Humanists</a>	
3rd Sunday, 12:30 PM	E. CLEARWATER– UU Clearwater Humanists	Details: <a href="http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists">http://bit.ly/UUC-Humanists</a>	
TBA – various activities at MOSI	E. TAMPA– Museum Astronomical Resource Society (MARS) at MOSI	Details & <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi">http://bit.ly/1Psc2Pi</a> Other events: <a href="http://bit.ly/MARS-home">http://bit.ly/MARS-home</a>	
TBA - numerous events— this semester	E. TAMPA– Humanities Institute at USF	See <a href="#">Web site</a> for full listing of many events & calendar. <a href="http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities">http://bit.ly/USF-Humanities</a> Locations vary! <b>Page 11.</b>	
4th Monday, 6 PM	N. PINELLAS AREA– CFI Freethought Supper	<b>RSVP is required.</b> Seating is limited to 25! <i>For CFI &amp; TBS paid members.</i> <a href="http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke">http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke</a>	
3rd Saturday, 11 AM	NE TAMPA – Tampa Humanist Assoc.	Details & <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists">http://bit.ly/TPA-Humanists</a>	
4th Saturday, 10:30 AM;	CLEARWATER – CFI Readers Book Discussion	Limited to <i>10 paid-up CFI members.</i> <b>RSVP is required. Must have read the book under discussion to attend.</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke">http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke</a>	
3rd Monday, 7 PM	NW HILLSBOROUGH– Tampa Bay Thinkers	Lively discussions. <b>RSVP</b> here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers">http://bit.ly/TPA-Bay_Thinkers</a>	
4 <sup>th</sup> Friday, 8 PM general meeting. Many more events monthly.	ST. PETERSBURG– Astronomy Club	For several dates, locations, & details: <a href="http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home">http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Home</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar">http://bit.ly/StPete-Astronomy-Calendar</a>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday plus various other times/venues	TAMPA BAY REGION– Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay	Details & <b>RSVP</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke">http://bit.ly/2Ktcfke</a>	
TBA – various activities	TAMPA BAY REGION– Humanist Families	<b>RSVP</b> here: Family outings & other activities. Details & <b>RSVP:</b> <a href="http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN">http://bit.ly/1Ps9MaN</a>	

## 2019 Freethought Cruise

Nassau-Cuba itinerary. For more details: [freethoughtcruise.com](http://freethoughtcruise.com). Departs Florida March, 2019



## Art Bell: R.I.P. L-I-A-R

by *Gary P. Posner*

Legendary broadcaster Art Bell, creator and original host of the nightly four-hour “Coast to Coast A.M.” paranormal/conspiracy/superstition radio show, died fittingly on a Friday the 13th of this year. But it was on the night of May 25-26, 2001, that I had my 15 minutes of fame with his national audience of millions.

Bell’s guest for that portion of the program was Richard C. Hoagland, a semi-regular best known for his promotion of the imaginary manmade “Face on Mars.” My cover story in the November/December 2000 issue of *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine had left little to the imagination about Hoagland’s credibility, but it did warrant a follow-up column to address a few loose ends.

In discussing the content of that column, Bell declared, “As a matter of fact, one of Richard’s harshest critics, as well as mine and many others in this kind of business, would be my good friends at the *Skeptical Inquirer*. Well, Gary Posner of the *Skeptical Inquirer*, incredibly, in his May/June 2001 [follow-up column] said, quote, ‘Some have remarked that this version — a [1998] light-reversed Face on Mars photo — does indeed look a bit more like a head, though that of a lion rather than a humanoid. The idea, therefore, that Richard C. Hoagland should be ridiculed for stating that the new Face on Mars photo shows an eastern-side lion head, is ridiculous.’”

A bit later, Bell to Hoagland: “The *Skeptical Inquirer* never — almost never — retracts anything it ever says. And they noted, in their May/June edition, that indeed you should not be ridiculed for stating the new Face on Mars photo shows an eastern-side lion head. Uh, they actually went out of their way to say, in essence, that they would agree — they might agree. Well, they didn’t say that, but they said you shouldn’t be ridiculed . . .”

And while winding down, Hoagland summarized, “And the most amazing thing is Gary Posner’s reaction. I mean, the *Skeptical Inquirer* can never be considered a prejudiced source in favor of our model, right? For him to say that I shouldn’t be ridiculed for proposing this, I believe, and the reason they did the retraction, is they had an inside track . . . that there *is* a ‘Face’ on Mars, it *does* have dual [humanoid-lion] imagery, and we’re going to go there physically and find out what it means with a manned mission.”

Bell and Hoagland could not have conveyed more clearly to their listeners that my follow-up column contained a “retraction” of my cover story’s criticisms of Hoagland’s “Face on Mars” claims, that I was now of the opinion that to ridicule him for promulgating them would be “ridiculous,” and that my sudden about-face about the “Face” was likely due to newly acquired “inside” information confirming its reality.

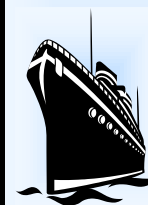
A fuller recounting, including audio clips from the show, can be found at [gposner.com/Hoagland\\_follow-up.html](http://gposner.com/Hoagland_follow-up.html). But the title of this piece contains a clue as to the veracity vs. mendacity of that night’s Bell/Hoagland colloquy about me.

## Critical Thinkers Evaluation Tools

Websites to help you verify identities, places, images, and other factors.

Thanks to Middle Tennessee State University, James E. Walker Library <http://bit.ly/2GxrhqZ>

- ◆ Learning how to evaluate what you read, view, and hear is an essential skill set for your academic and personal life. — [CRAAP Test](#)
- ◆ Use it to evaluate all kinds of information & to determine if a source is appropriate and credible. — [BEAM Method](#)
- ◆ How to use different types of sources in your writing. —
- ◆ [Ten Questions for Fake News Detection -- from The News Literacy Project](#)
- ◆ Answering these questions can help you evaluate the credibility of all types of sources. —
- ◆ [Evaluating a News Article: an Eight Point Checklist -- from EasyBib](#)
- ◆ Simple checklist to help you identify "fake" news. The same principles can also be used to evaluate websites & social media — ["Fact or Fiction?" Checklist -- from CQ Researcher](#)
- ◆ [News Quality Graphic with Bias Notes](#)
- ◆ Categorized news sources by degrees of conservative & liberal bias. — [Website Evaluator](#)



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## The "Grotesque Caricature" of the White Evangelical is Real

By [Egberto Willies](#), Friday April 20, 2018

Most are apoplectic about the [White Evangelical](#) durable and cultlike support for Donald Trump. Some see their current morality as a self-serving new thing to get the judges they want. The evil emanating from their movement is neither new nor should it be surprising. See [page 16](#) for an example

Hollis Phelps, Professor of Interdisciplinary studies at Mercer University in Macon, GA, wrote an [article](#) titled *Maybe It's Time to Admit that the 'Grotesque Caricature' of White Evangelicals is the Reality* where he examines the pathology. It is likely the best analysis of the reality of the evil that has always been a part of the sect. He wrote the following.

*There's no doubt that evangelicalism seems to have an image problem, especially since its overwhelming alliance with Trump. In the minds of many outside the fold, evangelicalism no longer represents a specific religious position centered on sin and the need for individual salvation but rather a self-serving, power-hungry political movement that will side with the devil himself for the sake of political pragmatism.*

*"When people say what does it mean to be an evangelical, people don't say evangelism or the gospel," Birdsall told the Washington Post. But this image problem isn't new. Although polling shows that overall feelings toward evangelicals as a religious group have remained relatively stable since 2014, the perception of evangelicals as "agents of intolerance," to quote John McCain back in 2008, well predates the Trump era. And besides, we shouldn't chalk it all up to image. The fact remains that over 80% of self-identified white evangelical voters cast their lot with Trump. Moreover, despite a host of missteps and scandals, overall evangelical support for Trump as president hasn't declined but grown.*

Phelps posits the pretext that the White Evangelical uses to support Donald Trump and turns it on its head.

*Given the consistency with which white evangelicals as a whole have lent their support to Trump—and right-wing candidates and policies more generally—it's far past time to own up to the fact that the image is, in many respects, the reality.*

*Well-intentioned evangelical leaders may not like to hear that, but it remains the case that an overwhelming majority of evangelicals continue to support Trump and his policies. Sure, they may have issues with his moral*

*center, or lack thereof, but they're willing to overlook all this for the sake of political expediency, for promises of "religious freedom," and the hope of a judiciary stacked with conservative judges. This is because, at the end of the day, evangelicalism isn't really about personal values but, rather, social and political conversion and control.*

Phelps reveals an inconvenient truth about the White Evangelical. Trump did not create the pathology. He is just their medium that is a reflection of them.

*The Trump era, then, does not create a new problem for evangelicals and their image; it's simply casting a very bright light on what has always been there, at least for the past forty years or so. ... it's questionable the extent to which evangelicals ever held much moral authority in the first place. ... appealing to some "pure" form of the faith beyond its supposed political corruption—beyond the racism, xenophobia, nationalism, and the like that even critics of paper over—isn't the way to go.*

*Not only do such appeals represent little more than nostalgia-laden theological desires that have little to do with what goes on on the ground, but they also ignore the fact that the line between religion and politics is flimsy at best, if not entirely non-existent. Evangelicalism, in its current manifestation, isn't a religion that has been corrupted by its entry into politics but is, rather, a social movement that works through a specific type of politics. The substance of that politics has been clearly on display for some time now. Trump and his evangelical allies didn't invent it; they only exacerbated it.*

It is important that your Evangelical relatives and friends read this. It just may give them pause as they examine their morality. Maybe they will begin to see what the rest of the world sees. Maybe they will realize the irreparable damage they are doing to Christianity.

Check out our other stories on [Evangelicals in the Trump Era](#).