



# THE MINNESOTA ATHEIST

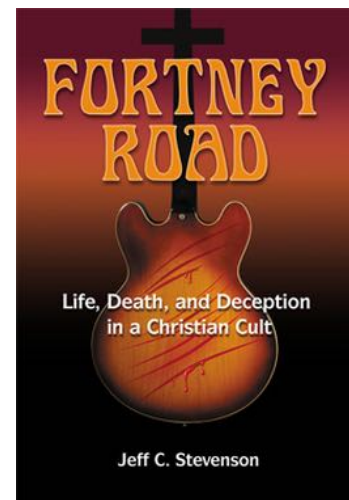
## Public Meeting Sunday January 17, 2016 Author Jeff Stevenson

*Fortney Road* is a disturbing account of calculated mental, physical, and sexual abuse in an evangelical Christian cult. Drawing on seven years of research including interviews with seventeen survivors, author Jeff Stevenson tells the story of the Church of the Risen Christ. He details the rise of its sadistic leader, Larry Hill, and its outreach tool, The All Saved Freak Band. The band being one of the earliest religious rock groups borne out of the Jesus Movement.

Join us on Sunday, January 17 at the Roseville Library as Jeff talks about this strange, violent and fascinating cult. He'll read excerpts from his recent book, take questions, and give updates about former cult members.

Unfolding against the backdrop of the 1960s and early '70s, *Fortney Road* is also the story of one brilliant musician who managed to avoid the fates of Hendrix and Joplin only to fall victim to a charismatic, cruel zealot. While other cult leaders such as David Koresh and Jim Jones have become infamous, Larry Hill and his followers on Fortney Road have flown largely under the radar—until now. *Fortney Road* is illustrated with over 50 photographs and images.

*Fortney Road* was released in June 2015. It's available at [FreethoughtHouse.com](http://FreethoughtHouse.com) and [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)



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Sunday, January 17, 2016

Roseville Public Library

2180 Hamline Ave. N

Roseville, MN 55113

1:15 Doors open

1:30 Special meeting for board nominations

1:45 Break/Social time

2:00 Featured speaker

4:00 post meeting dinner at

Panda Garden Buffet

1706 Lexington Ave. N., Roseville

# President's Column

By Eric Jayne

For the fifth consecutive year members and supporters of Minnesota Atheists armed themselves with tape, scissors, ribbon, bags, and toys in preparation for the annual “War on Christmas”.

A couple dozen heathens gathered at the Green Mill in St. Paul. They brought toys and games for patients at Children’s Hospital of Minnesota. After feasting on food and drinks from the restaurant’s menu these jolly nonbelievers decorated bags and wrapped their donated gifts with a healthy dose of yuletide cheer.

The gift donation tables, which were set up ahead of time by the restaurant’s staff, overflowed with toy cars, dolls, board games, Lego sets, crayons, markers, stuffed animals, and all sorts of other goodies. After we wrapped everything and settled with our most-excellent waitress, we loaded the gifts in Minnesota Atheists board member Art Kallenbach’s truck.

A small group of us immediately delivered the gifts to the hospital and were met at the door by two cheerful receptionists who helped bring the gifts inside. They also kindly took our picture with the donations in their lobby.

Look for this tradition to continue during the War on Christmas in 2016!



# News and Notes

By George Francis Kane

In early December, two Muslims killed 14 people and wounded 21 in a mass shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California. The perpetrators were a married couple who hours later were killed in a shootout with the police. The husband, Syed Rizwan Farook, was a Chicago-born U.S. citizen. His wife, Tashfeen Malik, was a Pakistani national who married Farook in Saudi Arabia in 2014. She came to the United States on a fiancée visa, and was granted a provisional green card this summer. On the morning of the attack, she posted her allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, on her Facebook page.

Following the massacre, Republican presidential nomination candidate Donald Trump called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." Fear of jihadi soldiers exploiting U.S. laws to come to the United States to commit acts of terrorism had been roiling since the since the Islamic State claimed credit for the November massacres in Paris, because hundreds of thousands of refugees are fleeing the war in Syria. Terrorists have for years been a staple of the debate over immigration reform.

When questioned, Trump announced that he would not only bar entry by refugees and immigrants, but also Muslim tourists and U.S. citizens traveling abroad. Trump's comments drew a storm of condemnation from the other Republican candidates. Jeb Bush tweeted that Trump was "unhinged." Chris Christie said that Trump's proposal was "the kind of thing that people say when they have no experience and don't know what they're talking about."

It is easy to poke holes in Trump's plan. How do you know if a person is a Muslim? A person's religion is not on his passport. By his name? All people with Arab names are not Muslim, any more than all people with Italian names are Catholic. The refusal to admit citizens back into the country could only be accomplished with a constitutional amendment.

Minnesota Atheists opposes the exclusion of any group of people on the basis of religion, and has since the first release in 2010 of our policy on dealing with Islam. The relevant portion of that policy reads:

*Minnesota Atheists supports a strict application of the First Amendment to religion, not only the Establishment Clause but also the Free Exercise Clause. We should not abandon this principled stand by enacting special laws directed against Muslims, such as an immigration exclusion. However, religion shall not be used as a privileged basis for excluding legal investigation into terrorist activity.*

*In the United States, although there are immigrant Muslims communities, terrorist cells have had few successes. Cultural conflict has been at a low level. Here in the Twin Cities, for example, we have had a few cases that have been spotlighted by the local press. Some Muslim Imams were ejected after boarding a flight because their Arabic prayers were considered suspicious; Somali cab drivers wanted to reject passengers at the airport who were carrying alcohol; clerks in grocery stores refused to handle pork products, and Muslim students requested special foot-washing facilities and prayer rooms at public colleges. Incidents like these must be handled on their individual merits, and Muslims should be treated with sensitivity, but exactly like everyone else – no better and no worse.*

*The most important objective has to be winning the battle of ideas and values. We must be sure that the opportunities and civil rights of liberal society are within the reach and expectation of Muslim immigrants. Our most potent weapon is the quality of life in secular society*

The principle at issue is that separation of church and state requires government neutrality; government may not favor one religion over another. Violating this principle demonstrates that government favors one group, and that other groups are disfavored and do not really belong in this country. That is the message that underlies every civil war. It is the greatest recruiting tool that terrorist groups could have.

## Cryptogram By George Francis Kane

Gfxl Aljsj, ivrw yu heljl yhelpj mlpl nlgflqlo hy nl hel jyrj yu Kyo,  
ifpvzsgysjgw zyrzlfqlo, help nfphej vrrysrzlo nw kyoj yp vrklgj.

Op. Pynlph Tpfzl fr "Olzyrjhpszhfrk Aljsj," plulppfrk hy hel elpylj  
yu hel vrzflrh Elgglrfjhfhz mypgo, nyhe iwhefzvg vro efjhypfz.

# Accepting Nominees to the 2016 Board of Directors

By Heather Hegi

Minnesota Atheists holds elections for the Board of Directors every year. The board of directors consists of: president, associate president, chair, associate chair, secretary, treasurer, and three directors-at large. All positions are up for election, but we are particularly in need of a nominee for secretary. If you are interested or would like to know more about the secretary position or any other position, please contact Heather Hegi at [sec@mnatheists.org](mailto:sec@mnatheists.org) or any other board member.

months prior instead of one year. If you're interested in being on the board but do not meet these qualifications, consider getting your dues in now so you may qualify next year!

The elections will take place on February 21<sup>st</sup> during a special session before the February Public Meeting. This will also be held at the Roseville Public Library, 2180 Hamline Ave N, Roseville MN 55113 at 1:30pm. The new board will take office on March 1, 2016.

Nominations will open and close on January 17<sup>th</sup> during a special session before the January Public Meeting. This will be held at the Roseville Public Library, 2180 Hamline Ave N, Roseville MN 55113. The nomination session will start at 1:30pm and end at 1:45pm.

Candidates must be nominated by another dues paying member while nominations are open. The nominee does not need to be present to be nominated. To be eligible for office, the nominee must have been a dues paying member for at least one year prior to the date of assuming office; director-at-large nominees must have been a member for 6



## Minnesota Atheist Published in Star Tribune

*The following letter from a long-time member of Minnesota Atheists appeared in the Minneapolis Star Tribune on November 14, 2015.*

The irony is thick: A reader, objecting to the removal of a Nativity scene from public property in Wadena, Minn., laments, "that if communities like Wadena don't stand up, band together as a community and declare that enough is enough — anyone can bully and threaten lawsuits in order to strip away our rights, rights that are granted to us by the Constitution."

In fact, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) does not infringe on any individual's right of free exercise of religion, as guaranteed by the First Amendment. The First Amendment also prohibits the establishment of religion, that is, no government entity or representative may favor one religion over another, or favor religion over nonbelief, regardless of the views of the majority of the citizens. Rights are enumerated in the Constitution precisely for the protection of the minority; if rights such as freedom of religion were determined by popular opinion, they would, after all, no longer be rights.

The reader should be grateful for the work the FFRF does in guarding our First Amendment rights; the time may come when he will not be in the majority, and then he will truly appreciate how our Constitution protects the minority from the tyranny of the majority.

-Joyce Denn, Woodbury

# Cable Report By Steve Petersen



James Zimmerman interviewed Mahad Muhammad, founder of Black Freethinkers of Minnesota. They reviewed the history of Black Freethinkers, challenges and prospects for future growth, and issues of importance to Black Freethinkers. There are two organizing tools they are using today, Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/BlackFreethinkersofMinnesota>) and Meet Up (<http://www.meetup.com/Black-Freethinkers-of-Minnesota/>).

We are actively looking for people to host and produce programming. If you have interest in hosting or ideas on programming, please get involved. Contact Steve Petersen at [address@mnatheists.org](mailto:address@mnatheists.org).

**Cable Crew:** George Kane, Brett Stembridge, Shirley Moll, Steve Petersen, Les Stordalen, Grant Hermanson and Art Anderson.

**Podcasts:** Programs are available on the MinnesotaAtheists.org website. Access via iTunes and YouTube has been made possible by Grant Hermanson. To date, our channel has had over 200,000 downloads.

**Have a program idea? Would like to be an interviewer or interviewee? Would like to get some experience of being on the crew behind the scenes? We have opportunities for you! Also, if you would like to see Atheists Talk on your local station, we can work to make that happen. Please contact Steve Petersen at [address@mnatheists.org](mailto:address@mnatheists.org).**

## Cable Schedule

**Bloomington:** Ch. 16. Sunday 11:00 p.m. Sponsors: David and Joanne Beardsley.

**Minneapolis:** Ch. 75. Monday 7:00 p.m. Sponsor: Steve Petersen.

**Northwest Community Television (NWCT) Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, New Hope, Osseo, Plymouth and Robbinsdale,** Ch. 20 check web page for date and times: <http://nwct.org/programming.aspx>  
Sponsor: Grant Hermanson

**Rochester:** Ch. 10. Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 7:30 p.m. Sponsor: Jim Salutz.

**Roseville, Shoreview, Arden Hills, North Oaks, Little Canada, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Moundsview/New Brighton:** Ch. 14. Wednesday 10:30 p.m. Sponsor: Shirley Moll.

**St. Cloud:** Ch. 12 Thursday 8:30 to 9:00 p.m. Sponsor: Tom Stavros.

**St. Paul:** Ch. 15 Wednesdays 5:00 p.m. Sponsor: Jim Wright.

**Stillwater:** Ch., 16. Tuesday 7:00 p.m.; Wednesday 9:00 a.m. Sponsor: Lee Salisbury.

**White Bear Lake, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Mahtomedi, Maplewood, North St. Paul, Oakdale, Vadnais Heights:** Ch. 15. Saturday 8:00 p.m. Sponsor: Michael Seliga.

# Year in review The Food Group

By Steve Petersen



Eric Jayne started our group for volunteering at The Food Group in the fall of 2013. That year we worked a shift in the late afternoon for about three months. Our volunteers packed enough food to help feed 5,146 people in need. Starting in January of 2014, Shirley Moll and I started a mid-afternoon shift from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month and that has continued to this day.

In 2014 our volunteers handled enough food to help feed another 14,634 people in need and this past year, 2015, our volunteers packed food for 15,850 people. In the photo is our December group of volunteers, a little larger group than most months. We kept up a good pace, repackaging 717 bags of meals that had a freezer bag of green beans and a number of different meats and poultry selections. It was enough to help feed 2,868 people.

The Food Group is a food bank and is a collector of donated food products from groups with food drives and corporations. It purchases bulk foods and distributes those commodities of foods to local food shelves. Our time is mostly spent repackaging from large containers of products down to the individual size for daily needs. The Food Group strives to provide meals that are healthy; they provide meals for vegans and vegetarians as well as meats and poultry.

If you are interested in helping, either go to the Minnesota Atheists Meet-Up and sign up, or contact Steve Petersen at [address@mnatheists.org](mailto:address@mnatheists.org), or just show up at The Food Group on the second Thursday of the month at 1:00 pm. The address is 8501 54th Ave North, New Hope, MN 55428. Closed-toe shoes are required (no sandals or flip flops.)

## Cryptogram Answer

Like Jesus, many of these others were believed to be the sons of God, miraculously conceived, their births announced by gods or angels.

-Dr. Robert Price in "Deconstructing Jesus," referring to the heroes of the ancient Hellenistic world, both mythical and historic.

## Treasury Report By Chris Matthews

### Building Fund

AE Software Inc	\$300
Erik Englebretson	\$50
Ted Nagel	\$50
<b>Total Building Fund</b>	<b>\$400</b>

### Radio Fund

George Kane	\$100
Mike Haubrich	\$70
Erik Englebretson	\$50
Ted Nagel	\$50
Nancy Ruhland	\$50
Craig Stilen	\$50
Jim Barri	\$30
Mark Paquette	\$30
Steve Petersen	\$25
Brent Duelm	\$15
Art Scearcy	\$15
Cash, 5th Sunday Fundraiser	\$160
<b>Total Radio Fund</b>	<b>\$645</b>

### General/Visibility Fund

Alyssa Ehni	\$300
Stephanie Arbesfeld	\$100
Michelle Tjernagel	\$70
Ted Nagel	\$55
William Donnay	\$50
Ed Lubinski	\$40
Justine Hartz	\$27
Shelley Eichenlaub	\$20
<b>Total General/Visibility Fund</b>	<b>\$662</b>

**Total Income: \$1,707**

**Current Building Fund Total \$135,021**

### Top Expenses

Conference	\$2,378
Newsletter Printing	\$1,318
Radio Show	\$1,025

## Secretary Report

By Heather Hegi

- Work has been done to rename, redefine, and create new committees to carry out the work of Minnesota Atheists more effectively. Learn more about our committee's at: [mnatheists.org/information/committees](http://mnatheists.org/information/committees)
- The Blasphemer's Ball raised about \$50 after all expenses and a fun time was had by all.
- The 2016 Budget was set.
- In budget planning, the Radio Program, the Newsletter, and the Aints Game were identified as our biggest expenses. Further discussion on the Radio Program and Newsletter were tabled for the next meeting. Discussion on the Aints Game concluded that it has been self-sustaining and worthwhile given the publicity, positive image, and community building it brings.
- A motion was made and approved to sign the contract for a 2016 Aints Game on July 16<sup>th</sup>.

Complete meeting minutes are available to dues paying members by contacting Heather at [sec@mnatheists.org](mailto:sec@mnatheists.org)

## Call for February Articles

We welcome contributions from all readers of The Minnesota Atheist. While we cannot guarantee that your submission will be accepted for publication, we will carefully consider anything that is related to atheism. We would especially like to receive contributions which provide profiles of individual atheists and which report atheist-related events in the wider community.

Because we are a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, we cannot print articles that support or oppose a specific candidate, but we can print articles that support or oppose specific causes. Article length should ideally be 500-1000 words and no more than 2000 words.

Please send submissions to the editor, Jenny Nolan at [editor@mnatheists.org](mailto:editor@mnatheists.org) by 11:59pm on January 22. All submissions may be edited for style and length.

We look forward to receiving your submissions. Without readers like you The Minnesota Atheist would be needlessly constrained in its breadth and depth.



# “Why Agnosticism?” (1935)

By Chapman Cohen (Excerpted by August Berkshire)

A discussion of Agnosticism follows naturally the subject of Religion, although one difficulty is its elusive character. It is quite as indefinite as “religion,” and its use is just about as enlightening. It ranges in significance from Atheism on the one side to mystical religion on the other. But it has a great vogue, and, thanks to certain circumstances, occupies a fairly “respectable” position. It owes much of this “respectability” to the fact that Atheism is in the field, and to some minds Agnosticism appears as a compromise between two opposing positions, which it is hoped will be recognized as an indication of impartiality. In short, Agnosticism may be classed as a kind of Methodism minus a confession of faith, or an Atheism that lacks the courage of forthright expression.

One may summarize the objections to Agnosticism as a substitute for Atheism, as follows: –

(1) “Agnosticism,” which has a legitimate place in philosophy, has no relevance whatever to religion, and no meaning when applied to “God.”

(2) Every attempt to state Agnosticism results in (a) stating Atheism, or (b) restating an attitude which has been common to religious and Christian writers for many centuries, and in any case shows a gross confusion of two distinct questions; (c) the word was coined, in connexion with the religious controversy, with an almost openly expressed desire to avoid the use of “Atheism,” and (d) its use in controversy has been to induce indefiniteness of speech, haziness of thought, and has tended to strengthen the conviction of the Theist in the fundamental soundness of his belief.

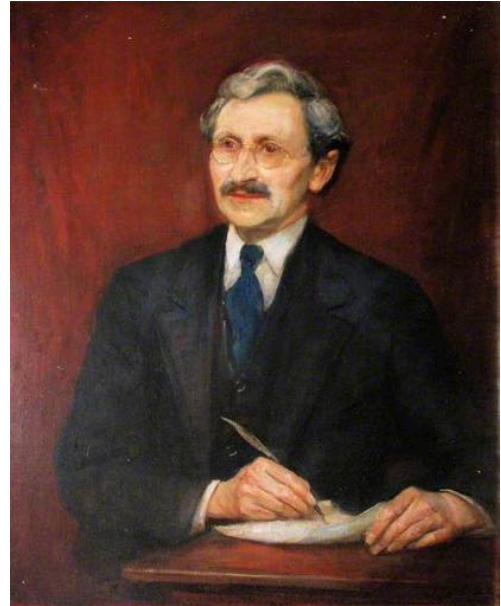
Yet for more than two generations the word has been used by thousands as though it carried a definite and well-understood meaning with regard to the belief in God, and it has been, quite erroneously, assumed that it indicated a genuinely scientific attitude with regard to fundamental religious ideas. Timidity has taken shelter beneath the cloak of intellectual rectitude, and fear of offending the religious world has been disguised as concerns for not breaking the canons of scientific righteousness.

...

Atheism, as such, is concerned solely with the validity of belief in God. The question of God belongs to theology, that of “existence” belongs to philosophy. The two questions are today jumbled together for two purposes, first, it suits the theologian to claim whatever credit he may from mixing up the religious with the philosophic question. Second, it suits a certain types of mind to evade the unpleasantness of being thought to be opposed to the belief in God by allowing the confusion, and even to emphasize it by mis-stating Atheism.

...

The Agnostic could purchase peace and retain status only so far and so long as the Atheist was there to bear the brunt of religious animosity. Whether he knows it or not, and whether he likes it or not, the Agnostic is always sheltering



behind the Atheist. The Atheist receives the kicks which the Agnostic would get if the Atheist were no longer there. The more logical thinker pays for the comfort enjoyed by the less logical one. It is not a pleasing analysis, and I do not wonder at an Agnostic not liking it, but it is true. I do not think that the Rev. E. Garvie was unfair when he said [Thomas] Huxley invented Agnosticism as “a refuge from the dread of materialism.”

...

If the Theist could no longer suppress the Atheist, it was distinctly a gain to have a disbeliever in God [Thomas Huxley] who merely said that he could not make up his mind about it. That is never a very impressive attitude; and it did not take defenders of the faith long to use Huxley as a buttress for the shaky religious structure.

...

Agnosticism is preferred to Atheism, because it adds to the courtesies of controversy. Whether it adds to the clarity and profit of controversy is not considered. But we may note that the discourtesies of controversy did not come from the Atheist, but the Theist. It was he who denied the right of the Atheist to voice his disagreement with Theism, and who wielded all the historic religious weapons of slander, vituperation and falsehood when the Atheist insisted on speech. ... So the Agnostic calls on the Atheist to improve the “courtesies of controversy” by dropping a term which is a plain statement of his position, and adopting another one which serves to disguise his real position. So might the relations between the burglar and the householder be improved if the latter would leave his door unbolted at night. ... I agree that one may live more comfortably with the Christian if one conceals one’s real opinions. Only I would very humbly suggest that in controversy (continued on page 9)



# “Why Agnosticism?”

By Chapman Cohen (Excerpted by August Berkshire)

(continued from page 8)

the first concern should be, not for comfort, or even for what those we are attacking may determine to be courtesy; the first thing for which we should seek is accuracy.

...

The Atheist and the Agnostic do deny the existence of the particular Gods as they pass before them. But the Agnostic persists that he will not deny the existence of “God,” which by itself, unspecified, undefined, unparticularized, means exactly nothing at all.

...

But if the story of anthropological science be true, there is no room for Agnosticism with regard to the belief in Gods. The Gods are all of a piece with witches and fairies, angels and devils; they have the same origin, and none has a better title to existence than the others.

...

The Christian knows that Agnosticism means, finally, Atheism. But it suits his game to pit the Agnostic against the Atheist, and to ignore the evident truth that the Agnostic is, as G.W. Foote once put it, merely an Atheist with a top-hat.

Chapman Cohen, “Why Agnosticism?”, *Primitive Survivals In Modern Thought*, Pioneer Press for the Secular Society, London, 1935, pp. 46-63.

Chapman Cohen (1868-1954) was president of the National Secular Society in Great Britain (1915-1949) and the editor of its magazine, *The Freethinker* (1915-1951).

## Featured Blogpost

### Consider The Possibilities, Atheists!

By P. Z. Myers, reprinted with permission from [freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2015/11/20/consider-the-possibilities-atheists](http://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2015/11/20/consider-the-possibilities-atheists)

Let’s look on the bright side of this infuriating story.

“Khalil 29 and Ayyad, 28, moved to Philadelphia from Palestine 15 years ago. Khalil now owns the Feltonville pizza shop — Pizza Point — that gave him his first job. The friends were in Chicago visiting each other’s families and met back at the airport Wednesday night to take the same flight home. The gate agent told them apologetically they wouldn’t be allowed to board because a passenger was afraid to fly with them after overhearing the men speaking Arabic.”

So they called the police, and argued, and finally, after a delay, were allowed to board the plane. It’s totally unjust that someone can just whine about a fellow passenger’s religion or language and get them kicked off.

But...you know, last time I was on a flight, there was a



Catholic priest in all the somber regalia boarding the plane with me.

You can see where this is going.

Can I go to the gate agent and claim that I am afraid to fly with a member of a child-raping cult that worships death? Because that is just as reasonable as claiming I’m afraid that a couple of pizza guys were a danger because they didn’t speak English to each other. But hey, if airlines are going to bend over so much to avoid defying the bigotry of their passengers, we could start acting as stupid as those fools and be really annoying.

Except, unfortunately, that I have no interest in competing in the idiocy race with bigots, and generally when I’m boarding a plane I just want to get the process over with and get to my destination.

Also, I doubt that they would care what an atheist fears, anyway.

# Jesus' Sacrifice, Genuine Or Fake?

By Lee Salisbury

All you bible skeptics, I know this isn't easy, but for just a few moments put your bible contradictions and inconsistencies aside. Forget all the questions challenging the historicity of Jesus. Instead, just simply accept the Jesus sacrifice story as described in the bible. Then decide: was Jesus' sacrifice genuine or a fake?

Let me use a parody to illuminate the question. Suppose Eric Jayne were bankrupt, penniless, even homeless. Then August Berkshire hearing of Eric's plight decided to make a sacrifice and sell all he owned and give the proceeds to Eric.

Wow! What a sacrifice! August's sacrifice should bring tears to our eyes.

But wait, there's a 'behind the scenes' arrangement that we should know about August's sacrifice.

Before August sold all his assets, August bought a lottery ticket. August's friend George Kane runs the Lottery. George agreed to rig the lottery to make August's ticket the winner. Sure enough, three days after August's sacrifice, August won the Lottery collecting \$500 million.

Now dear reader, what do you think of August's sacrifice? Should August be venerated and admired for his sacrifice? Do you really think August would have sacrificed all his wealth without the foreknowledge that guaranteed his lottery winnings? Was August's act really a sacrifice or was it just a clever plot to win the lottery prize while gaining our admiration and praise?

Have you ever heard any other sacrifice story that parallels August's phony sacrifice?

Yes, you have!

We've all heard the supposed sacrifice story about Jesus of Nazareth. The story tells us Jesus walked throughout Judaea doing good, healing the sick and casting out demons. The resentful scribes and Pharisees connived a scheme against Jesus. Jesus was brought before the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate. There was a phony trial based on trumped up charges. Jesus was spat upon, whipped, and beaten. A crown of thorns was impaled upon His head causing profuse bleeding. The ungrateful Jews yelled "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." Jesus was brutally nailed to a cross. A sword was thrust into his ribs. He was mocked while in excruciating pain. He finally died.

Wow! What a sacrifice. But, was this really a genuine sacrifice or was there some 'behind the scenes' arrangement by which Jesus not only had foreknowledge of his crucifixion and death, but was also guaranteed his resurrection? Jesus must have thought so because he along with numerous scriptures foretell these events well in advance.

Mark says Jesus "began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). Jesus said this on several occasions!

"For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10). This Messianic prophesy meant Jesus would not "see corruption"

i.e., not die with the same consequence as a human.

The book of Revelation speaks of Jesus as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). According to the infallible inerrant Word of God, Jesus' death was planned by the Godhead's Executive Trinity Committee some 4,000 years before Calvary.

Oi, Oi, Oi, such a deal! Who wouldn't accept a couple hours of pain and suffering for the promised resurrection to rule and reign for eternity at God's right hand? Jesus' reward makes August's \$500 million lottery winnings look like chump change.

If Jesus' sacrifice as the Lamb of God had been a genuine sacrifice, he would have experienced permanent death like the sacrificial lambs that foreshadowed him. If Jesus' sacrifice had been a genuine sacrifice, his death would have resulted in a permanent, unending death. If Jesus were truly the sinner's substitute, he would have died and gone to Hell exactly like the sinners for whom he was a sacrifice.

Simply accepting the Jesus story as portrayed in the bible exposes a Jesus who did not sacrifice his life. Instead Jesus selfishly kept his life, side-stepping corruption and death. At most, Jesus' death was momentary, maybe a couple hours. The morning after the crucifixion the bible says the grave was empty. He was resurrected and after some exchanges with his disciples ascended to heaven. As in our parody, Jesus' alleged sacrifice won him the lottery exactly as planned and guaranteed 4,000 years earlier.

Jesus' substitutionary sacrifice makes a powerful impression, provided one assumes there was genuine sacrifice by crucifixion. But, the unavoidable fact remains, Jesus did not sacrifice anything. A literal reading of the gospel account makes Jesus' alleged sacrifice simply a self-serving stepping stone to glory. But, that glory is only in the eyes of those so desperate for the hope of life after death that they cannot reason sufficiently to ask the most basic question: Was Jesus' sacrifice genuine or fake?

The value of any product or service is only as high as the integrity behind it. Jesus' promise of eternal life is based on a faked, fraudulent sacrifice. The Christian believer's reward is a savior and promise devoid of integrity. As in every religion, Christianity's savior-god and promise of life after death is without substance, founded on human fear and gullibility.

# Upcoming Events

**Third Annual White Elephant Gift Exchange** Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m., Green Mill Restaurant, 57 South Hamline, St Paul

**Secular Family Night** Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-9:00 p.m., Dakota Unitarian Universalist Church, 13001 County Road 5, Burnsville. Movies, Games and Free Childcare. Please RSVP on Meetup.com.

**Adult Night at The MN Zoo** Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 4:30 p.m., Minnesota Zoo, 13000 Zoo Blvd, Apple Valley. Cost \$10, pre-registration required at mnzoo.org/adult-nights-out/

**Atheists Talk Community Brunch** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every month at 10:30 a.m., Q. Cumbers, 7465 France Ave S, Edina

**Godless Gamers** Every Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and Thursday at 6:00 p.m., Fantasy Flight Games Center, 1975 County Rd B2, Roseville

**Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous** Every Sunday from 6-7 p.m. and Wednesday from 7-8 p.m., Health Recovery Center building, lower floor, 3249 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis. Based on A.A, minus beliefs in any form of a God.

**Freethought Toastmasters Meeting** 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m., Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1280 Larpenteur Ave W, St Paul. freethought.toastmastersclubs.org

**Freethinking Females** 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m., Claddagh Irish Pub, 7890 Main St N, Maple Grove, and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m., Chatterbox Pub, 800 Cleveland Ave S, St. Paul (note two different locations). Shattering the myth that Atheist groups are male dominated with a female's only event.

**Volunteer Food Packing** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m., The Food Group, 8501 54th Ave N, New Hope

**Blasphemer's Brunch** 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of every month at 10:30 a.m., Pizza Lucé, 800 W 66th St, Richfield

**Minnesota Atheists Board Meeting** 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m., Amherst H Wilder Foundation, 451 Lexington Pkwy N, St Paul. All Minnesota Atheists members are welcome.

**Bowling for Deities** Last Saturday of every month at Noon, Memory Lanes, 2520 26th Ave South, Minneapolis

For more events, visit [www.meetup.com/minnesota-atheists](http://www.meetup.com/minnesota-atheists)



## Minnesota Atheists Membership and Donations

- One-year student membership \$10
- One-year individual membership \$35
- Three-year individual membership \$90
- One-year household membership \$45
- Three-year household membership \$115
- One-year sustaining membership \$75
- Three-year sustaining membership \$200
- Life membership \$600

Donations are tax deductible. Membership fees are deductible for the amount beyond their fair market value.

Student memberships include a subscription to the PDF version of *The Minnesota Atheist* delivered by email. All other memberships include a subscription to the printed version delivered by postal mail. If you would prefer the PDF version delivered by email, please check the box and provide your email address.

**Minnesota Atheists**  
**PO Box 120304**  
**New Brighton, MN 55112**

**Please make checks payable to Minnesota Atheists.**  
**Students, please enclose a copy of your fee statement or school identification.**

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# Minnesota Atheists

## Positive Atheism in action since 1991

Minnesota Atheists is dedicated to building a positive atheist community that actively promotes secular values through educational programs, social activities, and participation in public affairs.

### Minnesota Atheist Board of Directors

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**Minnesota Atheists Goals**  
Minnesota Atheists practices positive, inclusive, active, friendly, neighborhood atheism in order to provide a community for atheists, educated the public about atheism, and promote separation of state and church.

### Minnesota Atheists Affiliates

Minnesota Atheists is affiliated with the Atheist Alliance of America, Atheist Alliance International, American Atheists, The American Humanist Association, the Council for Secular Humanism, The International Humanist and Ethical Union, and the Secular Coalition for America.

### Minnesota Atheists Membership

Regular members: 206  
Life members: 42  
Meetup members: 2017

### Minnesota Atheists Honorary Members

Hector Avalos, PhD  
Dan Barker  
Gerald Erickson, PhD  
Annie Laurie Gaylor  
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