

# Manitoba Humanist



## Dealing with Religion in the Workplace

**CanadInns Polo Park  
1405 St Matthews Ave  
Saturday May 10, 2014**

*In November, several of our members shared very moving personal stories about their journeys into non-belief. There was something we all could relate to amongst their experiences, and that meeting, entitled You Are Not Alone, was one of our most talked-about ever!*

*When choosing a meeting topic for May, our executive again lapsed into discussing personal stories, this time mostly workplace related. We realized that in the larger world, there are all sorts of issues faced by non-believers. The office can be a microcosm of beliefs and cultures, and is subject to numerous rules and legislation involving religion.*

*We didn't need to go further afield than a few of our own members to discover some very interesting experiences and dilemmas. Come and listen to their stories and participate in the discussion that will follow.*

*Meet and greet starts at 5:30 pm (check the notice board in the lobby to find our room).*

*Announcements and brief meeting at 6:00, followed by dinner at Aalto's (optional).*

*Presentation at 7:00*

Published by and  
for the Humanists,  
Atheists, and  
Agnostics of  
Manitoba



# H<sup>A</sup>M

[www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca](http://www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca)

Find us on Facebook and  
YouTube! Details page 5.



Have you ever read the whole  
Bible? Now's the time!  
See page 4.

Over 90% of those who  
identify themselves as  
"Christian" admit they  
have never read the  
entire bible...



which  
ironically is the  
way you become  
an atheist.

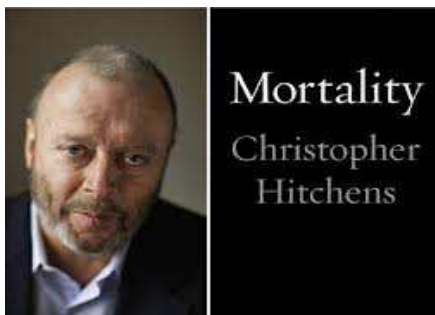
## COMING SOON!

All events are subject to change. Some details are TBA. Watch future newsletters, HAAM's website or Facebook page, or join us on Meetup for more information as it becomes available.

**Note that some events are for members only. Memberships are always available at the door at all our events.** Membership fees are affordable and are used for community outreach as well as toward our own events and activities. Join us! Get involved! Make new friends!

### May

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>. Book Club**, Cornish Library, 20 West Gate, 6:15 PM.



Our book will be *Mortality* by Christopher Hitchens (the posthumous memoir of his dying days). This is a short book, so it's not too late to start reading! Note that the Cornish Library is NOT wheelchair accessible. Members only.

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>. Flash Mob Community Cleanup!** Agape Table, located at All Saint's Church, 175 Colony Street (corner of Osborne and Broadway), 9 am - noon.



Meet outside the main entrance, facing Colony St. Dress for the weather – rain or shine. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes, and bring garbage bags, gloves, and hand sanitizer (optional). More info on page 5.

### June

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>: Annual Pride Parade**, 12 noon at the Legislature.

Thousands of people are expected to join in the annual Pride Parade through downtown Winnipeg to show off their Pride! Watch as floats and groups show off our city's rainbow colors! The parade is the finale of the week-long Winnipeg Pride Festival – check their website for more details <http://www.pridewinnipeg.com/>.



HAAM has made it a tradition to march as a walking group to show solidarity and support for our LGBTQ community. Everyone is welcome to join us – just wear rainbow colours and show up. Meet at 11:30 near the front steps of the Legislature. You'll find us with our banner (shown in photo).

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>. Garage Sale**, 522 Kildare Avenue West (between Brewster and Hoka Streets), 8-5.



Come out and find some great bargains!

Spring cleaning? Renovating? **HAAM needs your gently used treasures for the garage sale.** Small items can be brought to meetings. HAAM can arrange to pick up larger items on request. Contact [dgoods@mts.net](mailto:dgoods@mts.net) or phone 204-284-4319 for pick-up. Please label your

items with name and contact information, since you may be eligible for a tax receipt for the value of the donation.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>. Solstice Party and BBQ,**  
Assiniboine Park, picnic site #3 (on Assiniboine Park Drive, just west of the zoo near the river; easiest to access via Roblin Blvd), 5:00 pm.



Bring a food item, chair, blanket, Frisbee, kids, pets... or just bring yourself! Join us to celebrate the end of another wonderful year at HAAM. Non-members and guests welcome; come and go as you please. HAAM will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, buns, and expert BBQ cooks!

## RECENT HAPPENINGS



On April 10th many of us enjoyed a lecture by noted experimental psychologist **Steven Pinker** at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Part of the museum's Fragile Freedoms series, Pinker's presentation comprised a summary of evidence and arguments from his book "The Better Angels of our Nature" entitled "A history of violence and humanity." In it he presented many statistics about rates of murder and violent crime from many countries spanning the approximately 800 years that such figures have

been available. Combined with stats about social change, Pinker made a strong argument that humans have become decreasingly violent over time. He rejected the idea that human nature has changed in that time, proposing instead that various cultural and historical innovations have combined to make violence less acceptable and desirable; innovations like democracy, literature and media, international trade and cooperation.

The controversy created by this thesis was represented well in the questions posed in the Q&A session, with most queries expressing opposition to Pinker's conclusion. He answered by stating his working definition of violence and why it mattered, reminding us how this trend is general and subject to local and temporal lapses, and how our brain processes can fool us into thinking that the past was less violent.

At the following reception, Pinker signed books, posed for pictures, and answered questions from fans and critics alike. It was a privilege to meet and learn from one of the world's leading intellectuals.

- Chad Froese

Ed note: if you missed this, all of the lectures in the Fragile Freedoms series will be available on the CBC Ideas page <http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/>.

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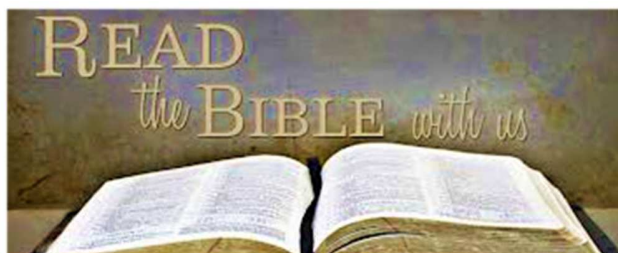
Those of us at our April meeting had a rare chance to see the personal side of a public persona. Our guest speaker, **Dr. Pete Boghossian**, joined us via Skype from his home in Portland. We caught him after a nap which made him late to the meeting (thanks to Chad Froese for filling in the gap with a report of Steven Pinker's speech!) When Pete joined us we enjoyed an informal and informative discussion, interrupted by his children and dogs running around the house. Such a great way to get to know the real humanist behind the academic!

A few highlights and take-home points for those who missed this: Pete's proposed TV

show sounds exciting – watch for the promotional trailer soon on his Facebook page [‘The Reason Whisperer’](#). There is no one way to reach people; everyone responds to different triggers. Don’t speak of ‘losing your faith’ - losing something implies wanting it back; instead speak of abandoning it. Pete is trying to concentrate his efforts more on reaching religious audiences rather than speaking at atheist conferences, since his intent is to promote reason to the wider community and there are only limited gains to be made by speaking to already secular groups. He acknowledged that there is still more to be done in the area of recovering from religion once people have abandoned faith and accepted reason. He closed with this advice: try to leave the world less superstitious, more kind, and more rational.

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## OPERATION ‘READ THE BIBLE’



Have you ever read the Christian Bible? The whole book, not just sanitized versions of familiar stories like Noah’s ark and the birth of Jesus. Have you thought about reading it and didn’t make good on your resolution? It’s a daunting task. There are 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 chapters in the New Testament, for a total of 1,189 chapters (on average, 18 per book). Yet it’s considered a literary masterpiece. Christian apologists base many or most of their arguments on it. And one of the responses most often heard from non-believers when asked what turned them away from faith was ‘I read the bible’. We should all be at least familiar with it.

In 2011 I attempted to read the whole bible in one year under the guidance of blogger who posted daily readings. He started off gung-ho in January, but got behind in spring and summer. He got sidetracked by apologists arguing on his blog. It took us almost a year to finish the Old Testament. In Jan 2012 we began the New

Testament, but he gave up shortly afterward. I plodded along and finished on my own in late spring. I learned a lot from that experience.

Committing to reading every day is more than most of us can manage, and I hadn’t realized how tedious and irrelevant much of the Bible is.

I read the Skeptics’ Annotated Bible – the King James Version with notes by Steve Wells. All the contradictions and inaccuracies are pointed out, as well as violence, sexism, intolerance, etc. It can be read free online at

<http://skepticsannotatedbible.com/>, and is also available in print. I bought a copy for my reference shelf, and now that it’s sitting there, I feel I should re-read it. I will understand a bit more this time, now that I have a basic idea of what’s in there.

But why go it alone? It will be more fun with a group. I will post a reading guide each month in the newsletter, less intense than the 1 year version. Completing the whole book in a year means keeping up with the readings every single day; if you miss even one or two days, it’s easy to fall behind and become inclined to give up. So I will stretch the 1 year reading guide out to around 16 months by only reading 5 days a week. This will make it easier to keep up, and we should still finish sometime in the fall of 2015. Now you have no excuses!

Any version of the bible will do, print or online. Comparing translations and interpretations is part of the fun. A good website if you want to compare versions is Bible Gateway <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/> which has dozens of options and is searchable. For example, Numbers 23:22 in the King James Version mentions unicorns; in more recent translations the beast has become a wild ox. Hmmmmmm.

Those of us on Facebook can discuss our readings on the Manitoba Humanists ‘Closed Group’ page. I will start the ball rolling when I begin, but I am NOT a biblical scholar – this will be a group project. Amazed at what you’re reading? Don’t understand it? Hopefully we can answer each other’s questions and all learn something.

We will start June 1<sup>st</sup>, since it’s usually easier to find time to read in summer. This also gives everyone some time to think about it, find a printed or web version of the Bible that you like, and psych yourself up. Who’s in?

- Dorothy Stephens

## ON THE WEB



Did you know that HAAM has 2 different Facebook pages? Guidelines for each page and the Code of Conduct have recently been updated and are posted on their respective page.

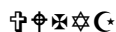


Our official page is called '[Humanists, Atheists, and Agnostics of Manitoba](#)'. The executive uses this page to share news and information that we believe will be of interest to our members and readers. Everyone is welcome to read, comment on, and share our posts. Upcoming events are also listed here (under the 'Events' tab). Please find us and 'like' our page.



We also have a 'Closed Group' page called '[Manitoba Humanists](#)'. This page is for sharing, discussion and building an online community of non-believers. To read the posts and participate in the discussion you must first ask to join the group. Find us and click 'join'. Anyone can join; you do not need to be a member of HAAM.

Online communities are a great way to connect with like-minded people, and can be a real life-saver for those in isolated areas, but to develop friendships it is preferable to meet each other in person whenever possible. If you are within the Winnipeg area, please come to our meetings or events. If you have been reading and/or posting on our Facebook pages, we would love to meet you in person. You are not alone! See you soon!



HAAM now has a [YouTube](#) page! (If link doesn't work, copy and paste <http://tinyurl.com/k9n36v6> into your browser.



We are pleased to announce that our very first videos posted are from the Multi-Faith Open Forum in January. If you missed hearing HAAM's Diana Goods comparing her hopes for the future with those of Christian and Muslim apologists, you can catch up now.

## CHARITY OF THE MONTH



For our May charity project, we have chosen to donate time and effort rather than money. It's often easier to toss a few dollars in a collection box than give up our valuable free time. But we are hoping that our members will enjoy the feeling of accomplishment that comes with contributing to the well-being of our community in a tangible way.

After a very long winter we are planning an outdoor community cleanup. Get some fresh air and exercise, and get to know some of your fellow Humanists as we disperse in groups into the West Broadway area. Come alone or bring family and friends – many hands make light work! (Details on page 2)

**Executive:**

**Donna Harris, President**  
**Heather McDonell, Vice President**  
**Helen Friesen, Treasurer**  
**Cheri Frazer, Secretary**

**Members at Large:**

**Scott Burton**  
**Todd De Ryck**  
**Chad Froese**  
**Gloria Froese**  
**Diana Goods – Librarian**  
**Pat Morrow – Outreach**  
**Bob Russell**  
**Dorothy Stephens – Newsletter**



Contact us at:

[mbhumanistsatheists@gmail.com](mailto:mbhumanistsatheists@gmail.com)

or Phone 204-612-0601



Humanists, Atheists, and  
Agnostics of Manitoba



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Agnostics of Manitoba



@MBHumanists



Yes, I would like to **BECOME A MEMBER** of  
Humanists, Atheists & Agnostics of Manitoba

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*\*Household Memberships: Please give the  
names of all additional Humanists in your  
household 18 years or over:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

New Member       Renewal

Membership Category:

Individual Membership      \$30.00  
 Individual Limited Income      \$10.00  
 Household Membership\*      \$50.00  
 Household Limited Income      \$15.00

*\* After July 1<sup>st</sup>, pay just ½ the yearly fee for the  
rest of the year. After October 31<sup>st</sup>, pay full fee  
and get the entire next year.*

**DONATION** (Tax receipts issued for all  
donations of \$10 or more)

I would like to make a donation to HA<sup>2</sup>M of:

\$10     \$20     \$30     \$50     \$100  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please **DO NOT** send cash in the mail. Make  
cheque payable to: **Humanist Association of  
Manitoba** and mail to: Humanist Association  
of Manitoba, 7 Pinehurst Lane, Mitchell, MB,  
R5G 2J3.

Memberships are also available by credit card  
on our website, or by cash or cheque at any  
HA<sup>2</sup>M meeting or HA<sup>2</sup>M event.

March 2014