

Manitoba Humanist

In June, HAAM was bursting with PRIDE!*



and we have photos to prove it!

L to R: Claudia, Helen, Sausha, Karen, Jay, Tracy, Amy, Matt, Alana, Dale.

More photos on page 5!

In This Issue!

- We're gearing up for our annual Summer Outreach at the Morden Corn and Apple Festival
- It's not too late to read Nailed! in time for the Summer Book Club
- The Bible Study group begins reading the New Testament – Join Us!
- Was Hitler an atheist?
- HAAM supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report
- Lots more photos of our members at the Solstice Party and Pride Parade
- Got ideas for the fall? Let us know!

*And speaking of Pride, Congratulations to all our American friends!

Love Wins!

At right, the White House was lit up like a rainbow flag after the US Supreme Court approved nation-wide marriage equality.



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



HAAM

www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca

River City REASONFEST

September 19th and 20th,
(Saturday and Sunday)
Canad Inn Polo Park

Hear fascinating and inspiring speakers, including:

- Hector Avalos
- Scott Carnegie
- Greta Christina
- Tracie Harris
- PZ Myers
- Lloyd "Hawkeye" Robertson
- Arthur Schafer
- Stephanie Zvan

Early Bird registration rates expire August 1st!

Join your fellow Humanists!
Register NOW!

<http://rivercityreasonfest.org/>

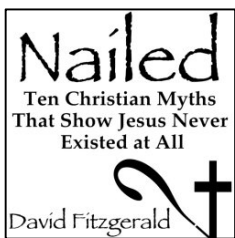
COMING UP!

If you're new to HAAM, welcome! Our regular monthly meetings are always open to the public, but *our other events are intended for paid members only*. If you would like to check us out, you are welcome to attend one or two events before becoming a member. After that, if you wish to continue to participate, we ask that you support the group by joining. Annual fees are affordable and assist with community outreach as well as our own activities. Memberships are available at the door.

Contact and membership info is on page 6. All events are subject to change, and some details may be TBA. Past newsletters are archived on the HAAM website. Watch future newsletters, our website, Facebook page, or join us on Meetup for more information.

July

Wednesday, July 22nd, Summer Book Club Meeting,
7 PM, 77 Edmonton St. The book is **Nailed! Ten Christian Myths That Show Jesus Never Existed at All**,



by David Fitzgerald. (Details on our website.) There are 2 copies in the Winnipeg Public Library. It can also be ordered from McNally Robinson or in Kindle form from Amazon. Former pastor **Jeff Olsson** will be our host.

August

Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd, 10 AM to 10 PM; Sunday 23rd, noon to 6 PM, Morden Corn and Apple Festival.

HAAM members are gearing up for our Annual Outreach table at one of Manitoba's most popular summer festivals, where we ask people what they believe and why they believe it, and let non-believers know that we have a community of people that they can join. Every year we get pulled towards that age-old assertion by many of our visitors: Morality comes from God. (Whether we like it or not). So this year we'll be asking festival goers **"Do you need a god to be good?"**



Pat Morrow and Donna Harris at our booth in Morden.

We intend to demonstrate through evidence and discussion that not only can we be good without gods, we can be better.

We are looking for more volunteers! We will accommodate your schedule – come for an hour or two, or all day. Don't be shy! If you're new, we'll put you with experienced outreach people, or you can just observe for a while. It's a lot of fun and a great learning experience. Even if you haven't done anything like this before, drop by our table for a visit and see what it's all about. The Morden Corn and Apple Festival runs August 21–23 2015 (Friday and Saturday 10-10 and Sunday noon-6). Hope to see you there.

Save the Dates! Upcoming meetings and events:

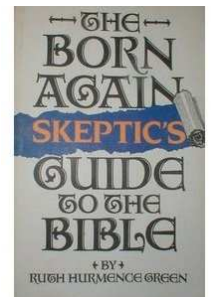
September 19th (Saturday) and 20th (Sunday), River City ReasonFest, Canad Inn Polo Park, 1405 St. Matthews Ave. Visit <http://rivercityreasonfest.org/> for more information and to register.

Note: There will NOT be a regular monthly meeting in September because of the conference. See you all at ReasonFest!

Saturday October 17th, monthly meeting, topic TBA
Saturday November 14th, monthly meeting, topic TBA
Saturday December 19th, Solstice party

ON THE BOOKSHELF

More people own the Bible than any other book, but very few people have actually READ it... Fewer still have read it with an unbiased eye. If you've glanced at the monthly reading guide for the Atheist Bible Study and felt curious, but haven't the time or inclination to complete all the



readings, then our treasurer, **Helen Friesen**, highly recommends the **Born Again Skeptic's Guide to the Bible**, by **Ruth Hurmence Green**. This is a "Coles' Notes" version of the bible. At just over 400 pages, you can read the highlights of all the atrocities, contradictions, and absurdities, in just a couple of weeks. This book has 5-star reviews from non-believers, who cite Green's "humor and sarcasm on almost every page". And predictably, it has 1-star reviews from apologists who condemn it as a 'diatribe against Christianity'. Decide for yourself! If you would like to borrow it from the HAAM library to read over the summer, contact us to arrange pick-up or drop-off.

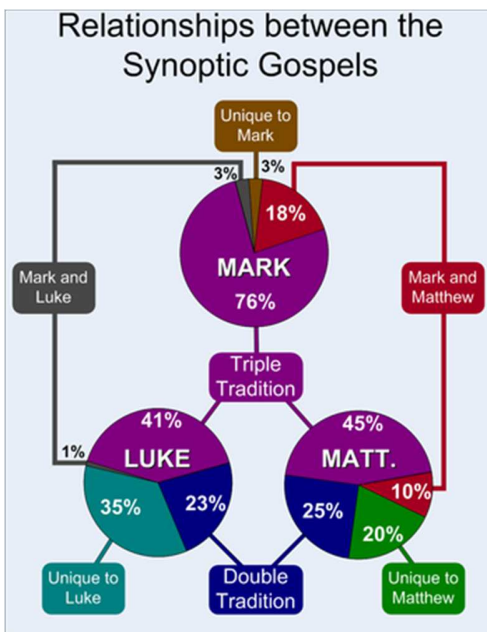
Note that borrowing privileges are now restricted to paid HAAM members only.

THE NEW TESTAMENT



Jews and Christians living at the time the gospels were written believed that the end of history was at hand, that God would very soon come

to punish their enemies and establish his own rule, and that they were at the centre of his plans. The gospels were written to confirm the identity of Jesus as the deliverer who would appear at the end of the age to usher in a new kingdom - hence the use of terms such as Messiah, Son of Man, and Son of God to refer to Jesus. In the Old Testament the term messiah, meaning "anointed one", described prophets, priests and kings, but by the time of Jesus, it had come to mean an eschatological king. (Eschatology means the study of the end-times.) The term "Son of Man" has its roots in Ezekiel and Daniel, where the Son of Man is assigned royal roles of dominion, kingship and glory. Early Christians expected Jesus to return as Messiah in their own lifetime; when he did not, they had to adjust their expectations.



The three synoptic gospels – Mark, Matthew, and Luke – tell the story (synopsis) of the life of Jesus. Mark is second in the bible because it was originally thought to be an

abridgement, or 'highlights' of Matthew. However, this is now believed not to be the case; it was actually written first. We will read the 4 gospels in the order they were written because it's easier to see the relationships between them this way. For example, only 3% of Mark is unique and much of its content is common to all 3 gospels (see diagram). Obviously, Matthew and Luke used Mark's writing and then added to and embellished it. (Matthew dates to around 80-90 CE and Luke to 80-100 CE, although all dates are estimates.) In addition to noting the common material,

the other trend to watch for throughout the 4 gospels is the increasing sophistication and divinity of Jesus – similar to the way a trophy fish gets bigger each time the fisherman retells the story of his catch.

Mark is pretty basic. Its unknown author wrote in Greek, for a Gentile audience, likely around 66-70 CE during Nero's persecution of the Christians in Rome or the Jewish revolt. It's the shortest of the 4 gospels and does not include any genealogy or birth narrative for Jesus, nor, in the original ending at chapter 16, any post-resurrection appearances. About a third of it consists of accounts of miracles and healings; however, unlike the other gospels, the miracles in Mark are described more like magic tricks than evidence for God. Its earliest complete manuscripts date from the 4th century, and end, at 16:8, with the discovery of the empty tomb. But almost all bibles now have the "longer ending" (16:9–20), with accounts of the resurrection and ascension, possibly written in the early 2nd century.

The author of Matthew was probably a Jew familiar with the legal aspects of scripture. He wrote in polished Greek, drawing on 3 sources – Mark, the unknown source referred to by scholars as "Q", and some source unique to his own community. It's Matthew who connects Jesus' divinity to OT prophecy and places added emphasis on Jesus' teachings.

In order to appreciate the similarities and differences between the stories of Jesus as told in each gospel, I propose a little homework exercise. Set up a chart/spreadsheet (on a computer if you can; otherwise, get a big poster paper and a jumbo pad of Post-It notes). Make 5 columns, one for each gospel and one for the Book of Acts. Then, as you read, note significant events on the chart. Mark will be easy, because he's first. But as you progress, you will have to move events around to try to fit everything in. This way, you can compare accounts side-by-side. By the end, you will either be ready for the looney bin, or you will have a handy chart the basic NT events. Can they be reconciled, or are there too many contradictions? Spoiler: Dan Barker issued a \$1000 challenge several years ago for someone who could do this successfully – not even for the entire gospels, just the Easter Story – and no one has collected the prize money yet.

Readings for the week of:

July 5: Mark 4-5; 6-7; 8-9; 10-11; Mark 12-13

July 12: Mark 14; 15-16; Matthew 1-4; 5-6; 7-8

July 19: Matt 9-10; 11-12; 13-14; 15-17; 18-19

July 26: Matt 20-21; 22-23; 24-25; 26; 27-28

Please share your comments or questions on our Atheist Bible Study Facebook group page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/234461256751696/>



HAAM members come from every imaginable background - from a variety of religions, to varying degrees of religiosity, to no religion at all. In order to keep our group active and interesting, we need YOUR input.

Our Exec is now planning for the upcoming season. Is there a topic you'd like to hear learn about or a speaker you'd like to hear at an upcoming meeting? An issue you'd like to discuss at a Round Table? Speaker? Book for the Book Club? Film or video for next year's Film Fest? Event you think our members might be interested in? Opportunity for outreach? A fun activity that would benefit the community?

Do you know of a charity that we should support? During our meeting season, we promote a different one each month, as a way to put the "H" on Humanism. We try to choose smaller, grassroots-type groups; usually, but not necessarily, local. This gives them exposure as well as support.

We welcome our members' ideas and involvement. Contact info is on page 6.

Reader Submission: HITLER WAS AN ATHEIST?

It happened again recently. Someone emphatically stated to me that Adolph Hitler was an atheist. If I had a dollar for every time someone said this to me over the years, I would be able to take my wife out for a nice steak dinner with a fancy bottle of wine and dessert thrown in. As I usually did, I looked at this person and asked why they should think that Hitler was an atheist and invariably the reply was that nobody who believed in god could commit such atrocities.

We are very lucky in Canada, we have the freedom to learn to read and with much thanks to Andrew Carnegie we have libraries full of books that we may borrow for free. There are no barriers preventing us from reading the books that we need to seek out the truth. Yet, very few people actually read these books. What a shame. The person who will not read is no better off than the person who cannot read.

Is it possible for me to convince this person to look and see what's going on in this world, to go to the library and read a few books and to start thinking? I am just amazed at how people parrot popular opinion without ever questioning it.

Right now, today, we have three groups fighting in the Arabian Peninsula. They have been fighting for thousands of years and each group is fighting a Holy War. These three groups all have the same god and the same prophets, yet the Christians have been calling the Muslims heathens, the Muslims have been calling the

Christians infidels and the Jews are telling them both that the land belongs to them because god promised it to them. Each group states that god is on their side. Whose side is god really on? Each group looks into their Holy books and states that god not only tells them to kill, torture, and enslave their enemies, but god orders them to do so.

Take a look at the Queen of England. She appears to be a benign and caring person. Would we compare her to Hitler? Officially the Queen is the head of the Anglican Church and she sits on her throne "by the grace of god"; but if it was not for the Queen's forefathers attacking and conquering "heathen tribes" and enslaving, torturing and abusing conquered people, the Queen would not be sitting on her throne today. Why did England enforce apartheid in all of the countries that she conquered but declare it to be despicable after she vacated or was forced out of these lands? The best defence is a good offence. History has absolved the Queen and her family. History always absolves the winner and condemns the loser.

Let's look at the Holy Roman Empire and the Spanish Inquisition which makes the German Nazis look like a bunch of pussycats. This Inquisition was responsible for the torture, rape, enslavement and murder of millions of people yet the Pope sits peacefully on his throne. History has absolved him and his empire. They are the winners.

Now, let's look at Adolph Hitler. He was a loser and like all losers, history condemns him. Who has read *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, a best seller in the twentieth century, or Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*? Who has read



that Hitler, as a young boy, attended a small Catholic church and each Sunday he would gaze upon a Swastika above the altar and later use this sign as his symbol? If you read these books, you will realise that Hitler, along with Joseph Goebbels and some of his other henchmen, all considered themselves to be good Catholics and that they were doing "God's Work". When condemned by his enemies Hitler calmly asked if he was doing any differently than they had done. Read, think, and answer Hitler's question and in the end try to tell me, with a straight face, that Hitler must have been an atheist because nobody who believes in god could be responsible for such atrocities. Hitler was no atheist.

- **Wayne Douglas Weedon** is a HAAM member

Try to imagine your child or grandchild being taken away at the age of five, to a school hundreds of miles away, for ten months of the year. No one there to comfort them after a nightmare, or to ensure they get enough to eat and wear warm clothes. No outings or trips, no close sibling relationships, and certainly no birthday parties – just unrelenting work. And worst of all – being indoctrinated into a foreign religion that declares them to be an unworthy sinner.

On June 2nd, the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** delivered its summary of 94 recommendations to the federal government. The committee spent six years interviewing Indian residential school survivors, collecting their statements, and documenting recommendations. In my personal opinion, this is a landmark in our history. The recommendations in this report deserve to be seriously considered, and implemented where possible. It would be a true failure of duty if it were just placed on a shelf, and no changes made.

HAAM supports the committee's recommendations to help survivors and their families. Let's all do what we can to make sure that the Truth and Reconciliation report is not forgotten.

- Donna Harris



L to R:
Janine,
Laura,
Dorothy,
Gloria,
Chad,
Lawrence,
Rollin

Above: Our Harmonizing Humanists sang at the BBQ

Right, L to R: Luc,
Tammy, Roland,
Lawrence, Amy



Below: David and
Chad talking shop
(airplanes)



R: Amy's
Pride
poster
made the
front page
of the
Metro!



R: Jim with
his first
S'more ever!



L: Calista
decked out
for the Pride
Parade



Below: A special celebration at the picnic! Congratulations Fatema - we're so glad you're staying here with us!



Above: Helen and Jay



L: Donna
wearing her
colander at
the parade



R: Karen and
Calista in
their 'truck'
at the BBQ



Time to roast
marshmallows!
L to R: Jim,
Chad & Calista,
Anna, Mandy,
Laura

HAAM's Executive:

President Donna Harris
Vice President Pat Morrow
Treasurer Helen Friesen
Secretary Cheri Frazer

Members at Large:

Todd De Ryck
Norm Goertzen
Tony Governo
Dorothy Stephens – Newsletter



Contact us at:

mbhumanistsatheists@gmail.com

or Phone 204-612-0601



Humanists, Atheists, and Agnostics of Manitoba



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@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. _____

Registered Charity # 85080 5326 RR0001

New Member Renewal

Membership Category:

- Individual Membership \$30.00
- Individual Limited Income \$10.00
- Household Membership* \$50.00
- Household Limited Income \$15.00
- Lifetime Membership \$1000.00 or more

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

DONATION (Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10 or more)

I would like to make a donation to HA²M 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, 112 - 230 Barkman Avenue, Steinbach, MB R5G 0Y5.

Memberships are also available by credit card on our website, or by cash or cheque at any HA²M meeting or HA²M event.