

Manitoba Humanist

To embrace Humanism is to embrace the concept that caring for our fellow human beings is our highest calling.



- Sean Faircloth

**HAAM presents:
Humanism - A Superior World View**

Saturday November 14th

Canad Inns Polo Park, 1405 St Matthews Ave, 5:30 PM

Yes, the topic of our November meeting does sound a little pompous, but if we're honest with ourselves, if we didn't think it was a superior world view, we Humanists would move on to something better. Right?

Please join us as we discuss Humanism - its history, its principles, and its relationship to atheism. How does it measure up, compared to other world views? Discover why, as we go forward as a species, it is the best world view humanity has come up with so far. We will also be discussing those difficult conversations we often have with religious family and friends.

For some long-time Humanists, this may be a meeting to re-evaluate what they believe and why they believe it. For others it will be an introduction to a

world view they may have held all their lives, but simply didn't know it. Bring your questions! There will be plenty of time for Q & A after the presentation.

Our social time is from 5:30 to 6:30. Come for dinner, drinks, or just to visit.

The meeting is at 6:30
Presentation is from 7:00 to 8:00
Buffet (optional) is open till 8:30 for those who arrive late.



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



HAAM

www.mbhumanistsatheists.ca

Our November charity is



Details page 2.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- Hospital chaplains
- Secular parenting
- Outreach report
- New library books
- Bible study wrap-up
- Can you serve on our exec?
- Reaction to the Oct meeting
- Website updates
- T-shirts for sale

... just keep reading!

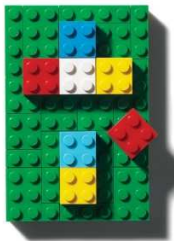
COMING UP!

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.



Thursday November 19th, Secular Parenting Group,
River Heights Library, 1520 Corydon Ave, 6 – 8 PM.



Our parents' group will meet again to share stories and tips on raising kids who are good without god. New members are always welcome! Your hosts will be **Luc and Tammy Blanchette**. If you have kids, please come out and support each other!

The meeting room is in the basement, so kids are welcome to tag along and play in the room, or use the library, while parents chat.

This event is intended for HAAM members, but if you're not a member, and want to check us out, you are welcome to attend one or two events before joining. Memberships are available at any event as well as on our website.

Saturday December 12th, Winter Solstice party, Belgian Club, 407 Provencher Blvd, 6:00 PM (*Note date and time*) \$10 per person plus potluck item. Kids under 12 free. Details to follow.

CHARITY OF THE MONTH

We recently added a new category to our charity project - **International Outreach**. Up until now, our sponsorship has all been local. This month we're heading to **Africa!** HAAM has decided to extend our aid a little further afield, and once or twice a year, support an overseas project. The same guidelines will apply - the organization must be secular (or non-proselytizing), and preference is given to small, local, and often struggling groups that can benefit from the exposure.

For the past several years, our VP and Outreach Coordinator, **Pat Morrow**, has been supporting **Kasese Humanist Primary School** in Uganda. Many of us have been watching the progress of this school since its inception. An unlikely beacon of rational humanism in the heart of "kill the gays" country, Kasese Humanist Primary School gives us all hope that Uganda can recover from the poisonous influence of deadly American religious intolerance.



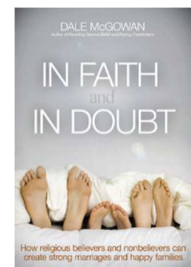
This unique school, for boys and girls ages 3-14, was founded in 2011 by the Kasese United Humanist Association. Its

curriculum is science-based, but sports, music, and arts programs are also offered. Our donations will support a variety of needs - textbooks, teachers' salaries, student field trips, science lab equipment, food for boarding students, and tuition assistance for needy families. Help us support this worthwhile cause.

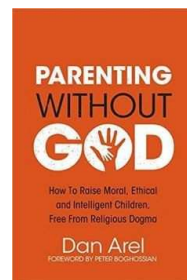
<http://kasesehumanistschool.webs.com/aboutus.htm>

ON THE BOOKSHELF

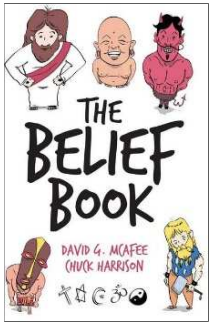
We are acquiring 4 new books this month. All of them deal with families and relationships, since those seem to be the most common issues and questions our members wrestle with. First is **Dale McGowan's** recent book on mixed-faith marriages, **In Faith and Doubt: How Religious Believers and Nonbelievers Can Create Strong and Loving Families**. This book offers suggestions for negotiation in relationships; strategies for dealing with pressure from extended family; profiles of families who have successfully blended different world views; insights for helping kids make their own choices about religious identity; and advice for handling holidays, churchgoing, baptism, circumcision, religious literacy, and more.



Secondly, there are two new books to help with secular parenting - a hot topic if there ever was one. We have **Dan Arel's Parenting Without God - How to Raise Moral, Ethical and Intelligent Children, Free from Religious Dogma**. The



title pretty much describes the book; it's intended for parents who are seeking guidance on raising freethinkers in a Christian-dominated culture. Next, a book for the kids - **The Belief Book** by **David G. McAfee**. It's aimed at helping elementary and middle-school children learn about different religions, gods, and beliefs in general. It introduces the Scientific Method and encourages the development of critical thinking skills.



Lastly, we have **Greta Christina's** brand new book, **Comforting Thoughts About Death That Have Nothing to Do with God**. This was the topic of Greta's presentation at Reasonfest. Her thoughts about grieving without god have been described as "cheeky, smart, unflinchingly honest, and deeply personal". A must-read book for all of us who deal with grief without resorting to false hope or superstition.



Contact HAAM if you would like to borrow a library book. *Note that borrowing privileges are now restricted to paid HAAM members only.*

SPIRITUAL CARE ≠ PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING

Most every health care facility in North America has a staff of 'chaplains' (or in more trendy terminology, 'Spiritual Care' or 'Pastoral Care' staff), many of whom are available 24/7 through on-call rotations. Not every facility – in fact, very few – have adequate staff available for professional counselling (clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, addictions counsellors, and the like). Of those that do, few have such staff on-call after standard working hours.



Patients are frequently admitted to hospital with physical ailments that are the direct or indirect result of personal, social, or family problems which cannot be alleviated by medical treatment alone. These may include depression, addictions, domestic violence, unhealthy lifestyle choices, etc. Treating people for the

acute illness or injury and discharging them back into the community without addressing the underlying issues and causes that led to their hospitalization only contributes to a vicious cycle of hospital re-admissions (revolving door syndrome). Initial assessment and counselling in hospital with referral for outpatient treatment after discharge would go a long way towards breaking the cycle. Yet when patients ask to 'speak to someone', often the only person available is a chaplain.

A recent job posting for a chaplain in a Canadian hospital included the following qualifications:

- Competencies as delineated by the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC): Spiritual Assessment and Care, Self-Awareness, Spiritual and Personal Development, among others.
- Knowledge of and ability to work with varied spiritual expressions, religious backgrounds, cultures and their associated traditions.
- Master of Divinity, or equivalent.
- Current membership in the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care.
- Must be ordained, commissioned or endorsed for spiritual care provision by one's own religious group.

Where does this job posting list any training or qualifications for counselling? Nowhere. Yet that's often the role that chaplains are expected to fill, because *there's no one else*. There's no question these people are well-intentioned, but they are not qualified professional counsellors, and let's face it – they're biased towards invoking the supernatural as part of the discussion.

Changes to Manitoba's privacy legislation several years ago (*as the result of a patient complaint*) means that hospital chaplains are now excluded from seeing patients without their consent. Patients are asked on admission if they would like to be visited by a chaplain, and *if yes*, to specify their religion. That's an improvement on the previous practice, in which all patients were asked to state their religion at admission. But it leaves non-believers out in the cold if they would like to 'speak to someone'.

Why does this situation continue to exist? Why are we as taxpayers funding a partisan system? For the same reason most outdated traditions persist – unless someone actively complains, nothing changes. And unfortunately, people who are already vulnerable – sick, hospitalized, suffering, and dealing with personal crises – are in a poor position to muster the resources to complain effectively.

If you or a loved one should encounter a need like this while in hospital, consider questioning the status quo. It's the only way that progress will ever be made.



It's that time of year again - time for HAAM's executive to think about planning for another year of events, activities, and projects. *And that means recruiting new members to serve on the executive committee.*

Being on the exec generally involves attending a meeting once a month, usually on a weeknight (exact days and dates are flexible and mutually agreed upon by members). But in between, most of our communication and planning is done online, so proximity and the ability to attend physical meetings is not critical. The more important requirements are enthusiasm, creativity, and the desire to participate in planning meetings and events, and setting the goals and direction for our organization.

Please consider stepping forward, or accepting the offer to join if you are approached. Many hands make light work, enable HAAM to offer more events and programs, and make a bigger difference to our members and community.

Elections will be held at our AGM in January, 2016 – so you have some time to think about it or ask questions of our current executive members (see page 6).

ON THE WEB



The brochures that we distribute to the public at our Outreach events have now been added to our website (under the 'Resources' menu). There are 4 about Humanism, Atheism, and HAAM, and 3 dealing with evolution. Why the focus on evolution? Because it's the single biggest topic of conversation and source of questions from visitors when we host an Outreach or info booth.

REACTION TO 'EVENING WITH NIIGAN SINCLAIR'

After attending the October meeting featuring Niigaan Sinclair addressing Aboriginal Issues, I've come away with a perspective I hadn't foreseen. Firstly, I feel ashamed. I grew up going to school in the 70's and 80's without having known most of the history of the native

experience that Niigaan presented. Most Canadians know something of the residential schools tragedy, but I had no idea that under the Indian Act, which sounds to me much like Canada's version of Apartheid, there was an ethnic group which didn't have the same rights and freedoms as I enjoy.



I find myself wondering how many in the mainstream are aware that there was a time in this country when First Nations people required passes to travel off the reservation, for example. I had no idea that First Nations persons didn't have the same rights and freedoms as I have. I feel stupid for not knowing so important a piece of the history of this country that no Canadian should be ignorant of.

Why? The media, and let's be honest, our culture at times, sell us a picture of First Nations people as a group of discontented, white hating, malingering malcontents prone to complaining at the drop of a hat. I've come away from Niigaan's words with the suspicion that mainstream Canada is woefully ignorant of what it is to be Aboriginal, and just as importantly, without a working knowledge of the journey that's key to understanding the First Nations perspective. I'm sorry to say I'm one of the ignorant, but I'll be looking at our country and our Aboriginal community with new eyes, an open heart, and an understanding that there is much more concerning our First Nations I have yet to learn.

- Rob Daly

COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT

On Oct 1st, **Pat Morrow** and **Donna Harris** drove out to Grunthal, Manitoba to address students at **Green Valley School**. Here is their report:

Part of the Social Studies course is a class on *Modern Life Issues*, which in some ways is a defense of the Christian world view and moral ethos. The students were polite, but their questions came fast and furious after Pat's brief presentation. The Q & A could have continued on a variety of moral topics for hours, as the students raised issues including abortion, creationism,



and even sex before marriage. As mentioned in the official course outline, the Modern Life Issues class is subtitled "Christian Ethics".

As humanists we forget that in this class we are often speaking to students who have very limited life experience outside the Christian worldview of their church and parents. This is evident in the collective jaw-dropping of some students when we introduce concepts such as the nonexistence of god(s), or suggest that we have developed better moral systems than what is found in the Bible.

We were struck by the ingrained sense of agency (i.e. causation or planning by a creator) that the students have. Many see agency in everything. For example, we explained that all the elements in our bodies come from stars that have exploded. We were then asked: *but how do all the chemicals know to come together to form a person?*

Maybe it's youth, maybe a failure of our schools in teaching science, or maybe a deep seated need to believe, that causes students to think this way. Regardless, these conversations are important if only to expose young people to new concepts and alternate ways of thinking. As always, we had a great time and are looking forward to next term.



The **Book of Revelation** occupies a central position in Christian eschatology (the study of the destiny of humankind as described

in the Bible). The major issues and events in Christian eschatology are death and the afterlife, Heaven and Hell, the Second Coming of Jesus, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Rapture, the Tribulation, Millennialism, the end of the world, the Last Judgment, and the New Heaven and New Earth of the world to come.

According to tradition, Revelation was written by John (who also supposedly wrote the Gospel and 3 Epistles bearing that name). However, most scholars now believe the gospel and epistles share authorship, while another unknown author wrote Revelation. Revelation is an apocalyptic prophecy, composed in the context of a conflict within the Christian community of Asia Minor over whether to engage with, or withdraw from, the far

larger non-Christian community. The book is permeated with allusions and echoes to the OT in almost every verse, with over half of the references being to Daniel, Ezekiel, Psalms, and Isaiah.



Because this book is so confusing and bizarre, a brief outline may be helpful. Chapter 1 - the revelation of Jesus Christ; 2 & 3 - epistles to the 7 churches in Asia; 4 &

5 - the throne of God; 6 - 8:6 - Seven seals are opened; 8:7 - 11 - Seven trumpets are sounded; 12 - 15 - Seven spiritual figures; 16 - Seven bowls are poured onto earth; 17 & 18 - the aftermath of the Whore of Babylon; 19:1-10 - the marriage supper of the lamb; 19:11 - 20 - Judgement of the Beast, Devil, and Dead; 21 & 22 - the new heaven and earth, and New Jerusalem, and reassurance that the second coming of Christ is imminent.

Readings for the week of:

Nov 1: Revelation 1-3; 4-5; 6-7; 8-9; 10-11

Nov 8: Revelation 12-14; 15-16; 17-18; 19-20; 21-22
This concludes the entire standard Protestant bible.



If you've completed the whole project, then give yourself a pat on the back and have a stiff drink! There will be a few more Facebook posts after the readings are complete, with some fun facts, trivia, and quizzes. Final exam, anyone?

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



For Sale: We still have a limited number of HAAM T-shirts for sale at \$25 each, in large and extra-large



sizes. Printing on the back reads: "Live and Let Think".

If you would like one, please contact HAAM. T-shirts can be brought to the next meeting or event, or picked up/delivered by mutual arrangement.

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:

<http://mbhumanistsatheists.ca/contact-us/>

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

Special Offer for New Members!

If you are a NEW member joining for the FIRST TIME, and you join after September 1st, your membership fee will include membership for the 2016 calendar 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.