

AUGUST 2020



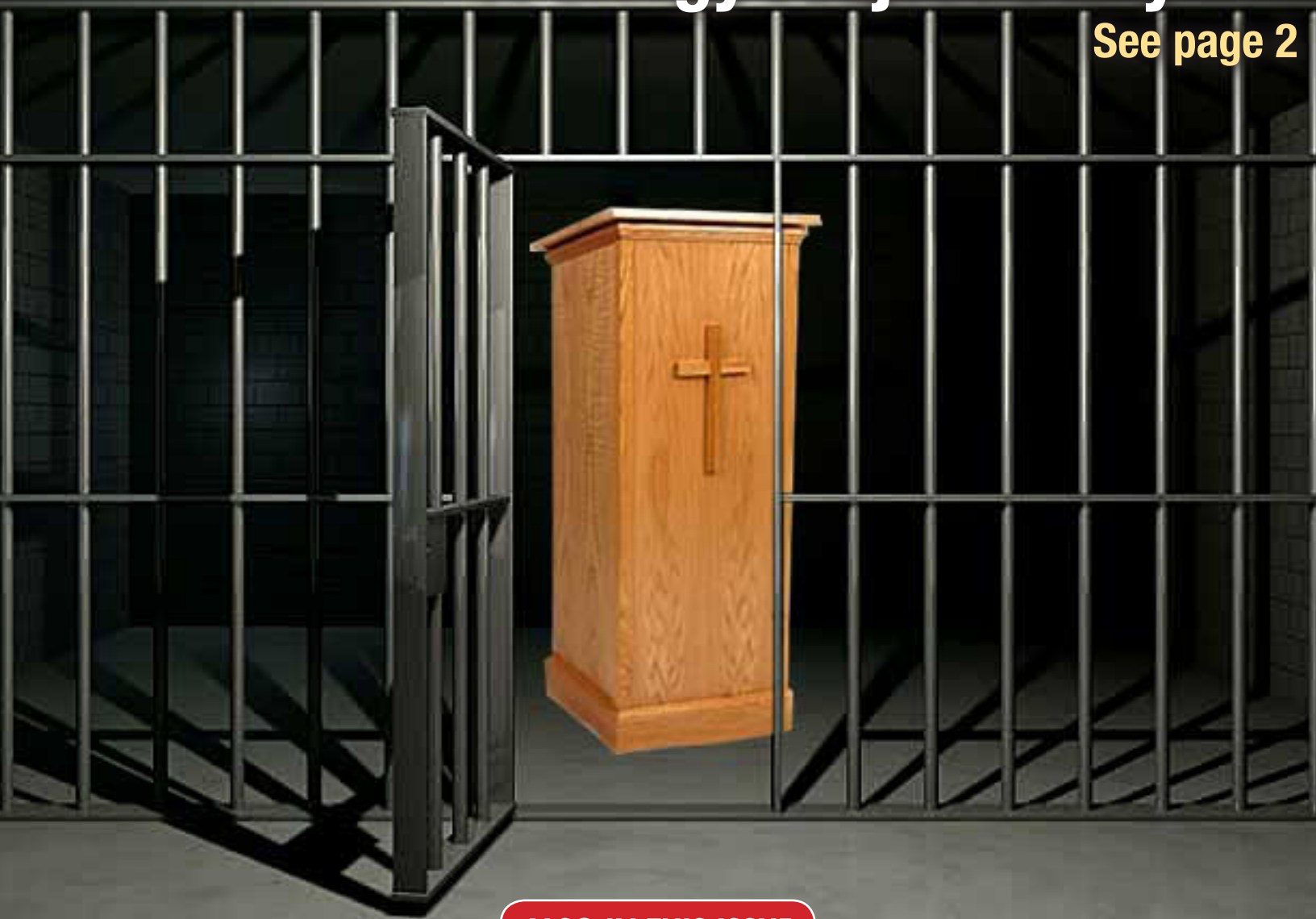
# DULUTHINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR FREETHINKERS

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LAKE SUPERIOR  
FREETHINKERS

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FREETHINKERS**

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# Uncaught-Escaping the Pulpit A Clergy Project Story

**Join us Sunday August 2nd at 10am via Zoom, to hear speaker Ed Raby**

**A** Presentation of The Clergy Project – an organization dedicated to helping clergy members who have lost their faith and have become agnostics or atheists escape the pulpit and find new lives. At present the Clergy Project has over 1000 members of various denominations some out and some still in the pulpit. The Clergy Project offers emotional, mental, professional, and psychological support for ministers leaving the pulpit because they have become atheists or agnostics. Many of our members are still in the pulpit and secretly non-believers because of the possible repercussions to their personal and professional lives.

Ed Raby is one story of The Clergy Project. He was a minister for 20 years and a Christian for 40 years. A pastor of three different churches (2 Assembly of God churches and 1 Non-Denominational church), Ed left his faith three years before he left the pulpit. Since leaving the ministry, The Clergy Project has been instrumental in Ed Raby's transition to 'normal' life. He is one story of many of The Clergy Project.



Born in Michigan, Ed Raby grew up in the small town of Reed City. He was a member of the local Assembly of God with his parents for his upbringing and 'felt' the call to the ministry at age 17. He attended Trinity Bible College in Ellendale, ND graduating in 1993 and went on to attend Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY graduating in 1996. He became an ordained Assembly of God Minister in 2001. He went on to pastor Assembly of God churches in Greenville, Michigan and Perry, Michigan. He left the Assemblies of God in 2007 and was pastor of a Non-Denominational Church in Hersey, Michigan from 2008 to 2018.

Ed Raby lost his faith in 2014 after wrestling with a quote by Dan Barker. Upon Losing his faith, Ed entered School where he worked on a degree in Political Science and Ferris State University which he received in 2018. Ed and his wife Jody have been married 31 years and have three children and five grandchildren. Ed has recently started a YouTube Channel called The Rabyd Atheist where he discusses atheism, the Bible, theology and deconversion.



**OMC**  
**SMOKEHOUSE**

**OINK, MOO, CLUCK**

**Join us August 19th on the OMC Smokehouse patio at 5:30pm for LSF's August Social Dinner**

**1909 West Superior Street**

**Support LSF by using **

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**Easy as “One, Two, Three”**

- 1** Go to [LSFreethinkers.org](https://LSFreethinkers.org)
- 2** Click the orange “Support Lake Superior Freethinkers” box
- 3** Click the “Start Shopping” button on the Amazon Smile page

Shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and they will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to LSF at no cost to you!



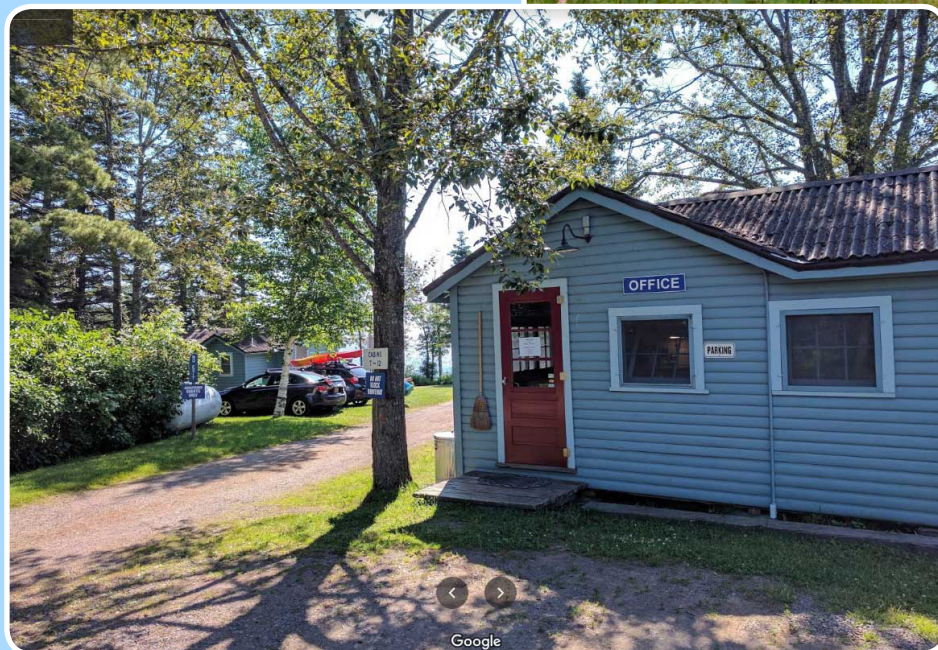
# Join us for Happy Hour live

from 4:00-6:00 pm Thursday, August 6th

At the Home of Bill Guse, (Bob's Cabins) 664 Old N. Shore Road

- Take hwy 61, expressway, east from Duluth, to mile marker 20.
- Turn right, down hill towards Lake, (Only about 125ft)
- Continue east on the older hwy, Scenic 61
- See Moca Moose Coffee shop, blue building, turn right, cross RR tracks.
- When crossing RR tracks see sign for **Bob's Cabins**.

Park anywhere near the garages, walk to gray house.





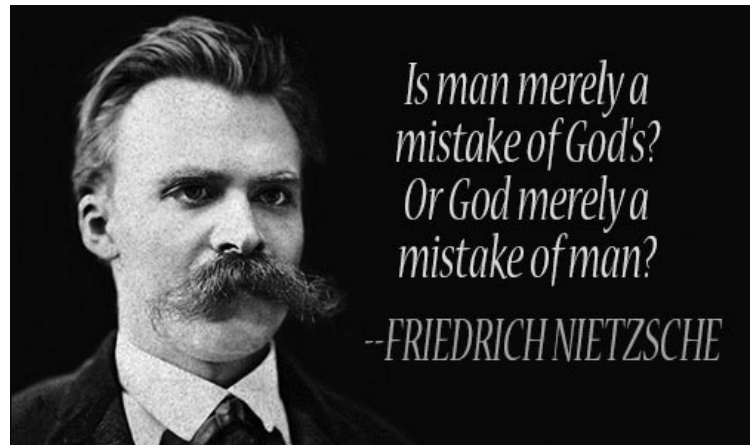
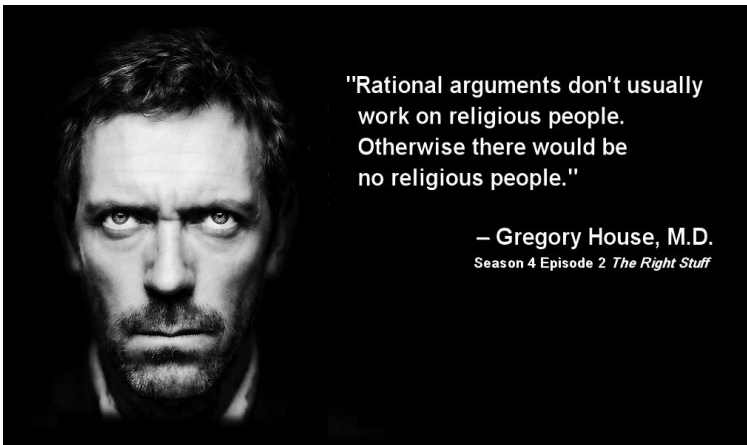
# Next Pavilion Party August 22nd

**P**avilion Parties will continue outdoors this summer on **the fourth Saturday of each month** at the home of our Flounder, Dr. Bill Van Druten. **Plan to arrive at 1pm.** Bring a food item you have made, or maybe an interesting libation to share with other attendees. We'll talk and laugh at Dr. Van Druten's home: 2931 Greysolon Road in Duluth. Park anywhere on Greysolon Road but not on 30th Avenue!



## Upcoming LSF Presentations

DATE	PRESENTER	TOPIC	REFLECTION
August 2nd	Ed Raby	The Clergy Project	Bryan Bongey
Sept. 6th	Jeremiah Camara	Religious Roots of Slavery	Charles Gessert
October 4th	Rod Forseth		



# FFRF condemns South Carolina's giveaway to religious schools

**S**outh Carolina's recent decision to hand out tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to private schools is unprecedented and shocking, the Freedom From Religion Foundation asserts in a letter to the governor.

The S.C. governor's office recently announced that of the \$48 million of taxpayer funds that Congress entrusted to its discretion for COVID-related education relief as part of the CARES Act, it will be allocating \$32 million to private (mostly religious) schools through a program called Safe Access to Flexible Education. FFRF, a national state/church watchdog, noted that its South Carolina members are "indignant and outraged" over precious tax dollars in COVID relief going to private, mainly unaccountable religious schools.

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster announced the funding can go to private schools this fall even if they are not open full-time, although he has said that public schools must be available for both in-person instruction and virtual learning this fall. FFRF denounced this double standard that enriches religious schools at the expense of overburdened public schools.

FFRF is objecting to the "religious boondoggle" on several grounds. First, taxpayers shouldn't be forced to fund religious education, FFRF Co-Presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor write to McMaster. The vast majority of private schools are religiously affiliated, and vouchers and tuition tax credits almost entirely benefit religious schools with overtly religious, mostly Christian missions, which integrate religion into every subject. For instance, in Wisconsin, Indiana, and North Carolina, between 90–100 percent of schools participating in each state's voucher or neovoucher program are religious.

"The right to be free from being taxed to support religions in which you disbelieve is a foundational American principle that protects religious liberty in a fundamental way," states FFRF. Funding private religious education disenfranchises nonreligious Americans in particular, who are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population by religious identification.

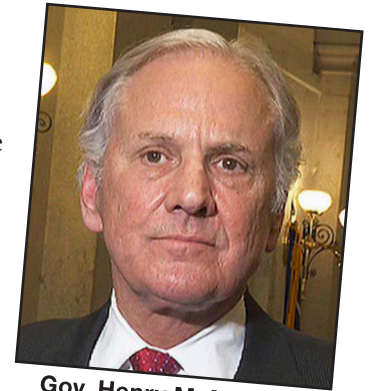
Second, such funding programs lack accountability, FFRF contends. When taxpayers pay a \$32 million bill, they are entitled to transparent accountability in how

those funds are used. Private religious schools qualify for funding under the program without providing any such accountability. The lack of oversight of private schools eligible for public funding encourages widespread fraud and mismanagement. The voucher program in Milwaukee, which is the longest running in the country, stands as a prime example. More than \$139 million in tax money over a 10-year period has gone to Milwaukee voucher schools that were eventually removed from the program for failure to meet basic requirements.

Third, the funding of private schools hurts public schools, particularly disenfranchising rural students, FFRF points out. For millions of parents who live in rural communities, there are no nearby private schools for them to send their children. The S.C. funding program diverts \$32 million of education funding from underfunded public schools — now forced to undergo enormous expenses relating to social distancing and online education — to private schools predominantly in urban areas.

And fourth, such a funding program allows taxpayer-funded discrimination, FFRF avers. It is a foundational principle of this country that the government must remain secular and must not endorse any one religion — or religion in general. Public schools are places where all families are welcome. The S.C. funding program allows private, mostly religiously segregated schools to participate so long as they do not discriminate on the basis of "race, color, or national origin." But that still allows schools receiving taxpayer funds to openly discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion. Public funds should never be used to support such discrimination.

The funding program is a taxpayer boondoggle and injustice, and on behalf of concerned S.C. citizens, FFRF is urging McMaster to withdraw this misguided proposal. (A S.C. circuit court judge has issued a temporary restraining order against the program until a hearing can be conducted.)



Gov. Henry McMaster