

lished religion. Atheists of Florida member Victor St. John recognized the foolishness of this posture and responded with this letter printed in the January 20 loading:

Darrell Fasching asks the question, "How do we tell the difference between God and the Devil?" The answer is YOU CANNOT, simply because there is no God, no Angels, no Devil, no Heaven — and no Hell! All this is just plain silly, and living in the Dark Ages. People believe in religion because of their fear of the unknown. What feeds this fear is stupidity, ignorance and superstition. So they respond to the theory that somehow they will end up on the right hand and in the good graces of a 'God' or a Supreme Being who has never made an appearance to justify his/her/its existence!

A walk through a state mental hospital or a children's hospital will provide ample evidence AGAINST the existence of a being that is both all-powerful and all-loving, and condones war where millions of young men are needlessly slaughtered while doing nothing to stop it!

Victor St. John
Clearwater

Fasching's response immediately followed St. John's letter. In it, he accused St. John of being an atheistic fundamentalist intolerant of differing opinions. He argued that "the problem of belief in a world of unjust suffering is as old as the book of Job and older. It has troubled both intelligent believers and unbelievers throughout the ages." True enough, but it troubles us in different ways — the believer is confused about why it occurs; the non-believer understands that it occurs because it is simply the reality of nature and its solution is at the end of our arms.

No views is good views

In the December 24th St. Petersburg Times an editorial cartoon depicted Michael Jackson

approaching a Catholic church with two priests and several altar boys standing on the entry steps. One priest was saving to the other, "Mr. Jackson, it seems, would like to join the priesthood." The resultant outcry was so great that the Times chose to run an apology the next day. Yaciv responded to the apology:

Here we have a perfect example of why the Constitution needed the First Amendment. Suppose the Catholics were not prevented from direct involvement in the lawmaking process. Despite the fact that the majority of people in the United States support a woman's right to choose, the church would impose its will upon us all. As it is, they are attempting to keep their congregations as ignorant as possible by encouraging them to close their minds against opposing views.

There is also a matter of denial going on here. There are hundreds of documented cases of child abuse and other forms of sexual abuse in the clergy, yet the church continues to play "damage-control" games in the media. Many reputable psychologists admit that the very nature of the church stimulates such aberrant behaviors through its attitudes toward sex. If anyone should be offended by the Christmas Eve cartoon, it should be Michael Jackson; at least he has not yet been found guilty! Yet the church places the blame on the messenger instead of admitting culpability and seeking solutions.

Perhaps the Catholics in Spring Hill will choose blind obedience and ignorance over rational discourse. For the sake of the future, let's hope that the congregation will wisely reject this attempt at increasing closed-mindedness and continue to subscribe to Florida's most objective newspaper.

Brent Yaciv
Seminole

Or, as we were asked the other day,

Q: "How do you get a nun pregnant?"

A: Dress her up as an altar boy.



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Atheists of Florida

Dedicated to the absolute separation of State and church

Volume III Number 2

February, 1994



RICO Applies to anti-abortinoids Supreme Court puts 'em in their place

PROBABLY THE BIGGEST NEWS of the past month came from the Court, which, in a unanimous decision ruled that abortion clinics now have the RICO anti racketeering laws in their arsenal of protection from radical anti-abortion groups.

Argued by the National Organization for Women joined by the Clinton administration's Justice Department, the decision is aimed primarily at Randall Terry's Operation Rescue and Joseph Scheidler's Pro-Life Action Network. NOW had noted that since the formation of these groups in the mid-1980s a growing amount of violence had become part of the anti-abortion protest movement. The real fear of Terry and Scheidler is that RICO allows that anti-abortion groups may be sued as conspirators, even if they are not present when the violence occurs.

The principal argument of the defense was that the RICO act applies only to crimes (continued page 9)

Alliance Members:

- Atheists United
- Los Angeles
- Atheist Coalition
- San Diego
- Atheist Network
- Houston
- Minnesota
- Atheists
- Atheists of Florida
- Atheists of San Francisco Region
- Atheists and Agnostics of Wisconsin
- Atheist Centre
- Vijayawada, India



Spotted during the week of the Los Angeles earthquake...no elaboration necessary.

Ballots ready

Nominations for additional Atheists of Florida board members are in and the ballots will be mailed to all members this month. The new board members will be announced in March and will serve for three years.

Next month...

It seems that even with a change of political parties in the White House we simply can't get away from the ill-defined term "Family Values". In our March Insight column, A of F member Sid Goetz drives home just how irrelevant this issue really is. Also, *Inside the Koresch Cult* will be reviewed by Patrick Bens. And just what is this Atheist Centre in Vijayawada, India? A letter from LAVANAM will shed some light.

"Men never do evil so completely — and cheerfully — as when they do it from religious conviction."

— Blaise Pascal



those of us in the atheist community have long recognized the detestable twisting of words by those with a religious agenda, especially those on the far right of the spectrum. Unfortunately, it seems that such double-speak is increasing in *efficit vennis*: I offer no less of an example than that of William Raspberry.

Granted, Raspberry has never been considered an atheist or even close, and there are many who would hardly term him a liberal. Yet there have been times when his words seemed grounded in logic rather than faith, in (un)common sense rather than repetitive sloganeering. Such was not the case in his column printed on January 25, 1994 under the heading, "Have courts gone too far separating church and state?"

Anyone with an objective grasp of history recognizes that to start with, despite the best intentions of the Founding Fathers, church and state have never been truly separate and are still not approaching this as a reality. Even on the surface, religious mottoes appear in our Pledge and

on our currency and official seals, religious symbolism is hidden in supposedly secular holidays, and religious icons are still included in official displays and buildings as "traditional." Far more surreptitious influences hide in government favoritism toward religious organizations or in so-called "morality" laws based on the idea that sex is evil and drugs are unfair competition for churches. In short, we have never reached the separation of church and state envisioned by Thomas Jefferson or the other more rational Founders of our nation.

But let us suppose that somehow the true miracle of such separation was achieved (all true miracles are human accomplishments). Would the assertions made in Raspberry's article approach reality? I'll take them one at a time. Raspberry quotes liberally

from a lawyer named Kevin J. Hasson who intends to found a "public-interest law firm devoted to the defense of religious liberty" called the Beckett Fund. (Remember that name folks, and remember his idea of what religious liberty means when they come looking for donations). Since Raspberry specifically supports these definitions and ideas in his column, I'm treating them as if they were his words even when he quotes Hasson.

The Founding Fathers "wouldn't have dreamed they were banning Christmas trees, or the ability of people to pray in legislatures or to offer simple invocations at high schools." Has any of this happened, or is it likely to? Simply put, no.

A short drive around town in December will easily convince you that banning Xmas trees from public property would not result in a shortage of displays. Plenty of Christians, whether they can afford to or not, have their yards and trees lit up like used car lots, selling Xmas and Christiansanity to all those gullible enough to buy in. All the Seven-Eleven type stores combined can't beat the number of outlets for this display of superstition. So what could be possibly be talking about?

Cash. Our cash, in the form of tax dollars. What Hasson, Raspberry, et al are concerned about is that they might have to foot their own bills for a change. I can see the fear of the churches here all too clearly: "If the government stops spending money on religious displays, the next step might be making us pay our share of property and income taxes." Gee, we couldn't have that now could we? (Please!)

I want the specifics of a case where a legislature or anyone else in attendance has been prevented from praying. I'll bet Raspberry and Co. can't find one. Not leading a prayer, which implies involving others in a public spectacle which violates not only the Constitution but their own Bible (See Matthew 6, first

NEWS FILTERS

Rico from page 1

involving an economic motive and not issues of political protest, which would violate the First Amendment. This was commensurate with the ruling which had been handed down by the seventh circuit court. Chief Justice Rehnquist disagreed, however, stating simply, "We do not think this is so. Nowhere in [RICO] is there any indication that an economic motive is required." He wrote

that the decision does not mean that the court believes Pro-Life Action League is a racketeering organization. It merely allows the clinics to try to prove that it is.

The court recognized that activities of the anti-abortion movement are a far cry from simple protest through speech. NOW claims that Pro-Life Action League has been responsible for over 311 blockades of abortion clinics, 73 clinic invasions, 23 acts of arson or attempted arson, 33 fire bombings or attempts, 11 acts of destruction of clinic property, eight assaults on clinic staff, 25 burglaries and thefts, 383 acts of trespass, and seven acts of extortion.

RICO delivers steep punishment: up to 20 years in jail for each criminal offense and triple damages in civil judgements.

No god could goof this badly

WASHINGTON — The extra-strange bedfellow of Jesse Helms has struck again, this time by conning the Senate to agree to deny federal funds to state or local agencies that bar constitutionally protected prayer in public schools.

It all came about as the Senate debated the Goals 2000 education bill which would write into law the national education goals agreed to in 1989 by then-President Bush and the nation's governors.

Helms, in his finite wisdom, has concluded that virtually all the nation's ills have resulted from the very singular issue of removal of forced religious recitation in the captive environment of the nation's public schools.

Essentially, the measure uses the carrot of the federal buck to ensure that student or religious

groups which are allowed to conduct prayer meetings in public schools before or after school hours will continue to be able to do so if the school also allows nonreligious groups to meet.

Some senators argued that the amendment went too far in mandating how school districts should act.

Both Florida senators voted in favor of the amendment. Their addresses are:

Sen. Bob Graham or Sen. Connie Mack
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Praise the Lord and pass the lawyer

MIAMI—A story in the *Miami Herald* revealed that the Wayside Baptist Church was hit with a \$4.2-million judgment for negligence in hiring a youth minister who sexually molested nearly a dozen boys. And with an additional \$2.5-million in punitive damages against the youth minister, the total jury award comes to about \$6.7-million. Not exactly pocket change.

That's not news; after all, it's the same old story. Just another little slip-up come to light.

What this may do is cast a new light on the anticipated collapse of religion in America. Consider this: a steadily increasing number of such cases coupled with a steadily declining revenue base, which may accelerate in view of where the money ends up, could alter predictions that the church has about fifty years left in America. Could that even be somewhat generous?

Can't we ever get this right?

Don't laugh. A committee of U.S. bishops is proposing a document on marriage. That's like asking Dan Quayle to judge a spelling bee.

Drawing from their failed effort to develop a pastoral letter on women and from the men's movement, the bishops encourage Catholics to strive for equality of the sexes. They advise couples to move beyond the very sexual stereotypes that have been preached to them for the past 1500 years.

Atheist fundamentalist?

Creative Loafing ran an article in its January 6 issue titled "Necessary Ethics" by Darrell Faschist, or Fasching. The premise of the article was that ethics should not be derived from cultural conditioning, rather from estab-

(continued next page)

GYMNASIUM IN BRENT VALLEY



Religious Rhetoric and DoubleSpeak: A Match made in Heaven?



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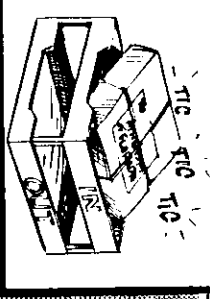
Membership dues should be sent to the chapter of interest. Direct general correspondence to:
Miami Chapter / P.O. Box 530102 / Miami, FL 33153-0102.
Contact phone is (305) 996-0210.

Newsletters should be sent to:
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The A. of F. newsletter, published ten times per year, is provided free of charge to our members as a medium of exchange. Letters from members are published on a space-available basis. Articles may be edited for clarity or length.

Atheists of Florida, Inc. is affiliated with the national Atheist Alliance for purposes of information exchange.

Letters



conclusion of Review

although Darwin's theory was published in November of 1859 it was not until the early Twentieth century that American scientists abandoned entirely all the apologetics and openly embraced what was incontrovertible evidence of evolution. Then, in 1925 came the ill-advised Scopes trial. By 1936, alas, mysticism

began an emergence. Now, looking back, we know that in 1954 a vote-sensitive Congress changed the national motto to "In God We Trust" and today religious smoke and mirrors infest even public buildings and public airwaves.

With Education almost in shambles in our country, atheists across the nation are lamenting, "It is easier to believe than it is to know." **A**

The Religious Reich

Norman B. Leclair
Navarre, Florida

BECAUSE THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE of Christianity has been one long continuous search for "enemies" it came as no great revelation to anyone when the violent prone religious reich once again resorted to a systematic campaign of rage and ruin to achieve their objectives and realize their goals. The escalation of violence from frenzied demonstrations to the destruction of private property, the burning and bombing of medical facilities and the eventual premeditated murder of those on the "unwanted" posters and "hit" lists was all too sadly predictable.

These latest examples of God-sponsored savagery, coupled with all the other mindless acts of criminal behavior perpetrated by religious zealots in recent years, only confirms the fact that faith and force are corollaries. For since its very inception as a cult of twelve, the warp and woof of Christianity has always been destruction and death, just as the true trinity of the faith has always been intolerance, violence and bloodshed.

For one has only to peruse the gruesome and gory stories of scripture to appreciate why the fanatical pseudo social zealots of the Lord have such an affinity for resolving all their disputes with a paroxysm of wild-eyed barbarism. Consistent with its teachings they are but emulating the behavior of that great sociopath in the sky and carrying out his demented dictates, i.e. "bring mine enemies

and follow Christian terrorists.

They're here in force

Quotes from the Religious Reich:

"The National Association of Christian Educators is a group of professional educators in our public schools. There are over 500,000 born-again Christians working from the inside

hither and slaughter them before me." Luke 19:27.

Those heinous instruments of torture, terror, fire and death (the iron maiden, iron crown, penitents girdle and being burned alive at the stake) used for the promulgation of Christianity during that other age of darkness have now been replaced by more modern methods of persuasion: bombs, bullets, terror, fire and death. Well...on second thought, maybe the believer hasn't really changed all that much over the years.

The times, they aren't a-changing

These times, unfortunately, are analogous to those days not so many moons ago when violence was rife in another God-fearing civilized country — where the government and the courts were likewise unwilling or unable to curtail the unrest. The metal belt buckle worn by those true believing fanatics back then were emblazoned with the motto, "Gott mit uns" (God with us).

Which again surprises no one conversant with the bloody two thousand year history of the faith. For the Christian God, the greatest supernatural terrorist in all the annals of literature has always stood cheek by jowl with his toadies and fellow Christian terrorists.

of the system to change it and return the Christian ethic of morality and excellence to education. Our goal is to bring public education back under the control of the Christian community."

— Robert L. Simonds
Citizens for an Excellent Education

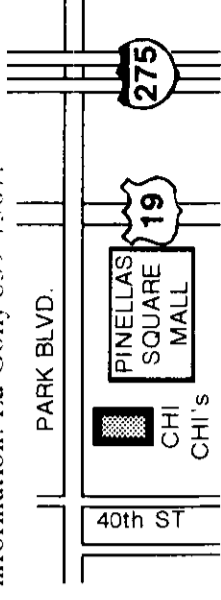
Atheists of Florida CHAPTER MEETINGS:

MIAMI

The Miami Chapter will hold a joint Lecture-Meeting with the Humanists on Sunday, February 20 at the Ft. Lauderdale Main Library, Room A & B at 2:00 pm. Lecturer: Dr. Philip Appleman, distinguished professor emeritus of English, Indiana University. Dr. Appleman is the editor of the North Critical Edition, Darwin, and the author of three novels, six books of poetry, including "Darwin's Ark" and "Let There Be Light", several nonfiction books on Darwin, Malthus, and overpopulation, and hundreds of articles and poems in national publications. He is the recipient of the American Humanist Association's Arts Award for 1994. Atheist Hotline (305) 936-0210.

TAMPA

The Tampa Bay Chapter will have an informal social/business dinner meeting **Saturday, February 26** at the **Chi Chi's restaurant**, 4020 Park Blvd. in Pinellas Park from **4:00 pm to 6:30**. The hostess will direct you to our private dining room. This will be the ideal opportunity for new prospects to meet and get to know our current members. For more information: Ed Golly 839-7567.



section)! Do they think if they aren't praying out loud that their omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent god can't hear them? Of course, we atheists realize that they never have had any intention of praying to a god, that the entire exhibition is for the benefit and pandering to of fellow humans.

Now here's another interesting twist to the words: "offering a simple invocation." Sounds quite innocuous put that way, doesn't it? The problem with this euphemistic usage is that there is no such thing as a simple invocation, unless by simple you are classifying it as appealing only to those of extremely simple mind. There may be truth to that, but assuming that the entire audience at a graduation ceremony qualifies is insulting to say the least. The underlying base of assumptions is several layers deep: First, we must assume that there is some sort of supreme force or being to appeal to. Right away, that excludes a good percentage of the populace. Second, we must assume that this supreme whatever would pay attention to our petty groveling. Hardly likely, if it even existed. Third, we must assume that this whatever shows favoritism to those who grovel to it, hardly an admirable trait. Underlying the previous assumptions are even more pernicious assumptions concerning education: that logic and reason are to be thrown out except in mathematics and science courses, that whatever historical knowledge has been gained should be ignored in favor of a promotional view of religion's influence, that majority domination is more important than individual rights. In other words, forget everything you've learned and let superstition be

your guide. Ouch!

I must agree with one contention: "The Judeo-Christian heritage has been the underpinning of the western culture." Quite true, which perhaps explains why there are so many things wrong with Western culture. Rasberry demonstrates his ignorance of racial history by forgetting that this same heritage condoned slavery for centuries, encouraged environmental pillaging, and has drained our tax base by fighting attempts to control overpopulation (via sex education, birth control, and abortion) while encouraging irresponsible reproduction (via "giveaway" programs supported by tax exemptions). In short, William Rasberry has ignored reality for the sake of promoting religious bigotry. He should be ashamed.

What we really need is the true separation of church and state that our country has never quite achieved. There is no need to worry about whether teachers or other public officials will handle the treatment of minority religious viewpoints "with simple good manners and respect," something the history of Christianity has shown atheists is highly unlikely, if religious practices aren't brought into government activities to start with. Let the children make their construction-paper memorahs or whatever, the adults do their mental-mirage gymnastics or put up icons, at home or on private property where such things belong. Leave schools to teach the lessons needed for the real world, and governments to deal with problems of the here and now. **A** Perhaps both could then do a better job.

Insight



The State of "Our Union"

Christos Tzanetakos



Message from the

President

NO, THIS IS NOT A state of the union address. The headlines of the daily news, CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC and other media all provide a clear view of the depressing state in which our country and the whole world is enmeshed.

The Union I am referring to is the exciting developments for the unification of all the atheistic groups in our country under the umbrella of one democratically governed organization.

Two years ago, Atheists of Florida, Inc., by a unanimous vote of its directors, became a member of Atheist Alliance, Inc. The Alliance is incorporated as a non-profit California organization, and its board of directors are the representatives of the member societies.

As has been already announced, Atheists of Florida was honored by the election of both of its representatives to officer positions of the Alliance at the Annual board meeting last December. I was elected Co-president along with Marie Castle of Minnesota Atheists, and our Vice-president, Ed Golly was elected Secretary of the Alliance. Jack Masson of San Francisco Atheists became the new Treasurer and Howard Kreisner of the San Diego Atheist Coalition is the new Vice-president and editor of the *Atheist Digest*, a quarterly publication of the Alliance which is scheduling its first issue for this spring.

The current member societies of the Alliance are:

ATHEISTS UNITED, Los Angeles
 ATHEIST COALITION, San Diego
 ATHEIST NETWORK, Houston
 ATHEISTS OF SAN FRANCISCO
 MINNESOTA ATHEISTS
 ATHEISTS OF FLORIDA
 ATHEISTS & AGNOSTICS of Wisconsin
 and ATHEIST CENTER, Vijayawada, India.

Marie Castle and I have taken the task of expanding the Alliance and by the end of our term this year, we hope to increase the member societies of the Alliance to include all existing autonomous Atheistic organizations and assist in the formation of new ones.

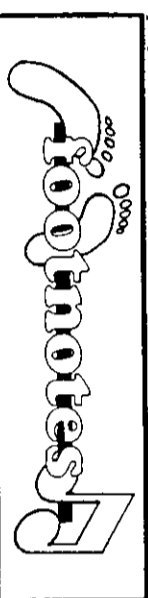
Dr. Albert Einstein devoted his life to complete his Unified Field Theory, and although he never succeeded, his efforts led to the new fields of physics and the better understanding of our universe.

On December 4th, 1993, the date of the second annual board meeting of the Atheist Alliance, a historic decision was taken for another Unified Field. The Board voted unanimously to accept and become a member of a broader "Coalition for Secular Humanism, Atheism and Free Thought" (CSHAFT), whose aims and purposes are to unify all the philosophically like-minded groups for a coordinated field of action.

It is my personal pleasure and privilege to announce that CSHAFT, with members including societies from the United States, Mexico and Canada, is holding its first North American conference July 8-10 in Toronto, Canada. Marie Castle and I will represent our Alliance, and we strongly urge all the members of all our Atheist societies to participate in this historic event.

Here in our state, the process of cooperation was manifested by the joint lecture-meeting with the Secular Humanists of South Florida, when members of both groups enjoyed the presentation on January 23rd by Dr. Simon V. Glyn on Jean Paul Sartre's "Existentialism". Therefore, for the Feb. 20th lecture-meeting I wholeheartedly suggest not only that you participate but also bring along a friend.

Since this is my first report for 1994, I would like to wish a belated HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our members and fellow atheists. Secular Humanists, Free Thinkers and whatever other name is basically used for the same philosophy.



In our July/August, '93 newsletter, the President's message column asked our readers to respond to the *Science Magazine's* quest to rename the Big Bang. The magazine decided that none of the entries qualified as a suitable substitution, but did name these submissions as close favorites:

- Superspeed
- God's log-on
- Big Birtha



cases in England: Two eminent vicars, who were also geologists (a common phenomenon in 19th century England) the Rev. Adam Sedgwick and the Rev. William Buckland renounced their long and distinguished careers and declared themselves unbelievers. The author includes a rather long quote of the Rev. Buckland's declaration of disbelief which will be of interest if the reader enjoys the careful but inflated prose of that period.

tyranny most often springs from a fanatical faith in the absoluteness of one's beliefs

"Scientific Creationism" — Marketing Deception as "Truth" is an interesting read and well worth the time if one has a keen sense of irony. I can't call it "a laugh a minute" but one is deeply amused. Dr. Garrett Hardin happily points out that Creationists have, to thinking people, lost every debate on the issue until Sputnik, after which there was a great national outcry on the part of American citizens for more teaching of (true) science in the classroom. Thus the Creationists had to develop a strategy to "market" Creationism. Hardin never gets to the point (never fear, Gould has already clarified it in a previous essay) but Hardin is good reading.

His final paragraph is worth quoting: "Our social world is a chaotic one. It is understandable that many sincere people should seek emotional refuge in a waterproof hypothesis like that of instantaneous creation. Broadening the support for Darwin's view depends not so much on accumulating more scientific evidence as it does on getting more people to understand the nature of science itself."

Montagu and Asimov have distinct styles, but both are exceedingly interesting writers and thinkers. In "The 'Threat' of Creationism" (the title itself a wry comment) Asimov puts Creationism to shame (if religionists are capable of feeling such an emotion) pointing out that there truly is a threat to our very civilization. In 1982, he points out, the ACLU filed suit on

behalf of clergymen, teachers and parents to stop a law requiring that Creationism be given "equal time" (a favorite phrase of the Bible thumpers) with evolution in the classroom. The ACLU succeeded. That — and two other similar laws in the Bible Belt — were declared unconstitutional. Asimov points to the differences between the Creationists and "mainstream" religions, delineating the opposition of the latter toward the fanatics. He writes that the Creationists are in the majority in the Bible Belt, calling them "an apathetic and falsely secure majority." (In a later essay, that "security" is held in question.)

The writer gives and develops seven arguments of Creationists for their case: (1) The argument from analogy, i.e., if a watch must have a creator then it stands to reason that Life must also have had a creator. (2) The argument from general consent or the "fact" that all humans have believed in a divine creator. (3) The argument by belittlement — belittling evolution as "only a theory" and lacking the "truth" of the Bible. (4) The argument from imperfection, that evolution is not perfect and not entirely agreed upon. Evolution, they contend, lacks the neat explanations of scripture. (5) The argument from distorted science; the assertion (by them) that the second law of thermodynamics renders the evolution theory impossible. Here, Asimov clearly dismisses the argument as "Kindergarten terms."

(6) The argument from irrelevance, in which Creationists put all scientific arguments aside — arrogant and itself irrelevant argument. (7) The argument from authority in which they point to the Bible as the word of God and, naturally, the final authority.

Asimov, like Montagu, shows why scientists are so reluctant to try to have an open debate with Creationists. He points to the real dangers of giving them their beloved "equal time" and suggests some of the reasons that ordinary and rational people may actually embrace the warm emotional world of myth as against the cold logic of the scientific approach.

Ultimately Asimov points to three tragic cases (Spain, Germany, and France) in which nationally mandated orthodoxy led to destruction. Then his penultimate paragraph: "We will inevitably recede into the backwater of civilization [if we should fall victims to a national orthodoxy in this country] and those nations that retain open scientific thought will take over the leadership of the world and the cutting edge of human advancement."

Ergo: the threat of which he writes. There are many other delightful and informative essays in this important anthology. Not the least of which is Dr. Sidney Ratner's 1936 essay, "Evolution and the Scientific Spirit in America." The author points out that(continued)

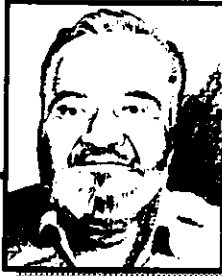
Anthony J. Schleitstein
 Financial Consultant



Private Client Group
 One Turnberry Place
 Suite 700
 Biscayne Boulevard
 Aventura, Florida 33180
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The Case Against the Penis

Reflections on the Bobbitt case



John Quirindongo

Queing up

If one story has captured the interest of the world but been completely ignored by the "religions" of the world it is the story of Lorena Bobbitt. Why have the Televangelists as yet not made comments and taken sides quickly as they do in other behaviors?

band on grounds of temporary insanity because his male ego was damaged. In the Moslem countries the rights of women are minimal. In china and Japan, women are second class citizens and treated as property in marriage. In the United States, murders against women are frequently done by their husbands. Battering and maiming go unreported and laws for stalking against women often by convicted rapists and murderers are slowly being enacted with much difficulty. Husbands are the first suspect when a wife is murdered.

Oral sex and more specifically fellatio is a familiar theme in pornography. In the Latin countries, women take great pride including it in their foreplay. Lorena Bobbitt was from Ecuador and was happy being in this country having had no problem in finding a job and a handsome husband. He, on the other hand, was unemployed. There must have been much love when the young military man and the young Ecua-

dorian woman first met. Undoubtedly she was afraid and not well versed on what legal recourses were open to her. Her first statement included, "He satisfied his sexual urge" but left her unsatisfied. Not only was she bettered previously and had pictures and a police record to show the abuse but her sex life was sorely lacking. The husband refused to make statements or give lawyer interviews and alcohol seemed to be involved. Perhaps she was waiting for the compulsory two years of marriage required for a permanent resident alien "green card" or afraid she would be deported. In any case, what terrible mental state or diabolical circumstances would drive a young woman to cut off her husband's penis? By now we know that the verdict has rendered this a classic case of temporary insanity and the victim goes unpunished.



In Kafka's *The Trial*, the hero never knew the offense of which he was accused but he was nevertheless deemed guilty by reason of accusation. This reasoning is common under the Catholic-Napoleonic Code which includes all Latin countries as well as our southern states. Our British-Christian based jurisprudence gives lip service to the "innocent until proved guilty" aspect giving the tacit collusion of the Judge, Police and Prosecution unfair advantage preparing their case resulting in many innocent people being jailed. The Free Press tries the high profile case continually resulting in a guilty verdict long before the Court verdict is sue. Sacco & Vanzetti, the Rosenbergs and Alger Hiss were deemed innocent by the American Bar Association long after their guilty verdict. Most fortunately, it hasn't happened again.

A

The Bible says that a woman's hand is to be cut off if she touches her husband's penis.

In Hindu India, the wife is killed in pandemic numbers without legal recourse for very petty reasons including their dowries and not producing a male baby. In Catholic Brazil, the wife

may be killed and sometimes maimed and the courts consistently without exception pardon the hus-

Atheist of Florida charter member John Quirindongo lives in Miami, Florida

MARK ANDREW TROP
Attorney at Law

Shoreview Bldg., Ste. 201
9999 N.E. 2nd Ave.
(305) 759-5727 Miami Shores, FL 33138

Science and Creationism

Ashley Montagu, Ed.
Oxford University Press, New York,
1984
415 pps

book &
film

Review

A Must-read For Atheists



Max Weatherly

FUMMAGING AROUND IN MY public library trying to find something (anything, I'm afraid) on Atheism, I chanced across an exceedingly interesting anthology of essays edited by the venerable and much honored Ashley Montagu, a celebrated anthropologist and one of those few scientists who write well. (Freud was one of that hallowed crew, as you may know.) Many years ago Montagu wrote a book he called *The Natural superiority of Women* long predating the current rise of feminism long denied women, thanks mostly to Biblical strictures. But that giant step forward in the name of civilization and the freedom of womankind was only a part of the clear and rational thinking and well written contributions of that celebrated man. Look him up in any good library and enjoy yourself.

In this 1984 book there are nineteen essays following Montagu's own brilliant introduction in which he writes, "A scientist is characterized neither by a willingness to believe or a willingness to disbelieve, nor the a desire to prove or disprove anything, but by the desire to discover what is, and to do so by observation, experience, verification, and falsification."

Thus he defines and sets the standard for the essays that are to follow. He writes, "Let us not forget that tyranny most often springs from a fanatical faith in the absoluteness

of one's beliefs."

This entire anthology is characterized not by pontification, but by ponderous scientific language, not by snarling and growling but, happily, by the gold brocade of knowledge threaded throughout by the silver of humor: A delightful read.

Two Goulds

The eminent American anthropologist, Stephen Jay Gould, is represented by two essays, "Evolution as Fact and Theory," and "Creationism: Genesis Versus Geology." To begin the latter work, Gould quotes a verse by G. K. Chesterton:

And Noah he often said to his wife
when he sat down to dine
"I don't care where the water goes if
it doesn't get into the wine."

Gould points out that two famous Creationists have to invoke a miracle to explain the Flood -- which would have been impossible (if you read Genesis 1:6-7) otherwise. Naughty, naughty boys, not by any stretch of the imagination are miracles scientific.

The infamous "Monkey Trial" was held in Tennessee in 1925 with William Jennings Bryan representing the religious right (as we now know them) and the great atheist, Clarence Darrow, representing the defense. (John Scopes, a biology teacher, had dared to espouse Darwin's Theory of Evolution in his classroom.) Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100. There followed laws prohibiting such nefarious teachings; which laws were not overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court until, ready?...1968! Such is the power of the religious fanatics who think their beliefs to be absolutes and from such power springs the threat of which Isaac Asimov writes in a later essay.

In this essay, Gould points out three strategies devised by the religious to support their claim of "science." In the first, they invoke miracles when backed into a corner by the application of logic. Next they develop the outrageous and arrogant claim of "Creation Science." That was followed by textbook publishers lying down and including creationists' (hilarious) claims as "fact." All publishers had to do to sell millions of books was to include Creation Science in the books of California and Texas (the biggest purchasers) and there wasn't much other states could or would do. Finally Creationists went into legislation, cowing vote-hungry politicians and slipping laws through state legislatures: first Arkansas, then Louisiana. (All of which laws have been declared unconstitutional, which won't come as a surprise to atheists who care about such things as the First Amendment.)

Finally Gould points to two late 19th century

Atheists of Florida charter member Max Weatherly is a writer living in Delray Beach