

How could anyone be cruel enough to promote bringing a child into a world for abuse or starvation? Doesn't she realize that banning abortion is more likely to produce children in this country who resemble the Somalians we've all seen tragically depicted in recent weeks?

Of course, she couldn't be that cruel. She has merely deluded herself with the sloganeering "adoption, not abortion" agenda of the movement, has brought into the patriarchal ideal that you must have six kids to be a "real woman" and has blinded herself with those tears she cries in hopes that her opinion will be forced on millions of women nationwide.

Brent Yaciw
Seminole

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State: _____ Zip: _____
 Please indicate tape desired or date of meeting: _____

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Atheists of Florida, Inc.
P.O. Box 530102
Miami, FL 33153-0102

March 1993

Atheists of Florida

Brent's Video Service

Some of you may have noticed the ad for videotapes in the last newsletter, along with a reference to a nonexistent coupon. No, we haven't joined the religionists in referencing nonexistent items, there was simply a mixup due to the change of format. Actually, in hopes of somewhat justifying the expense of my video unit, while promoting exchange of ideas and information for educational purposes, I'm taping more than just our meetings; but I'm only going to tape speakers, not meeting proceedings which are reported in the newsletter. Currently, I have videotapes of the Atheists of Florida, Tampa Bay meetings (beginning Jan. 93) and of the Humanists of the Suncoast meeting featuring Edd Doerr. I also have a talk on religious freedom/church-state separation given by Jeanne Pugh, who was the Religion section editor of the St. Petersburg Times for 14 years. I intend to visit and tape as many atheist/freethought/humanist-related speakers as possible, allowing our members to see and hear speakers on times and dates they cannot attend or as a permanent record for reference. They are available for only \$10.00 each including shipping (both AOF talks - Jan/Feb - will fit on one tape). You may also request a "catalog" list by sending me a stamped, self-addressed envelope. To order a tape, fill out this mailing label form and give it to me at the meeting, or send with your check or money order to: Brent Yaciw, 6642 - 122nd St. N., Seminole, FL. 34642.



ATHEISTS of FLORIDA

Member of ATHEIST ALLIANCE, the Democratic Alliance of Autonomous Atheist Societies Chapters in Miami and Tampa Bay March, 1993 Volume II Number 03

Atheists of Florida coming to Cable TV

MIAMI — Production is scheduled to begin March 19 on the first four 30-minute Cable TV programs to be shown on Cable T.A.P. Channel 35. The "Atheists of Florida Forum" will be hosted by Dr. Albert E. Lyngzeidson Ph.D, chair / Philosophy professor: Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University. Dr. Lyngzeidson is the Chairman of Atheists of Florida. Each week, Dr. Lyngzeidson and his guests will discuss topics of interest pertaining to state/church separation and other pertinent subjects. The program will be seen at the following times:

- Mondays, 10:00 a.m.
- Wednesdays, 9:30 p.m.
- Thursdays, noon.

The programs will be produced at the WLRN Cable-TAP studios which is the Dade County Cable Television Access Project. If you receive the WLRN SIGNAL, watch for an article introducing the program. The first four topics will be:

- #1 Atheism defined: Not A Religion
- #2 Separation of Church and State, featuring two lawyers from the Miami/Dade area.
- #3 Women, Religion & Power; topic and discussion featuring Florence Morgenroth
- #4 Tax-exempt religious properties and businesses

Atheists of Florida will be happy to entertain your ideas for topics and guests for future

Final Notice

This will be the final issue of the Atheists of Florida newsletter sent to those who have not sent in their 1993 membership renewals. We have enclosed an application form in the newsletters of those who have not yet renewed (it may be a left-over 1992 form). Don't be left out of future issues —renew today!

programs. Also, try to view the programs to offer constructive criticisms of the show.

Efforts are under way to have the programs shown on Jones Cable in the Tampa Bay area. Their new schedule will begin in April and we are working on getting a time slot. That position should be known and published by next month's newsletter.

We look forward to producing an informative, constructive, educational series.

cult\kəlt\ n 1: formal religious veneration : WORSHIP 2: a religious system; also: its adherents

— Webster

From the President...

"To those of our members who sent letters of approval to my dissertation on the effects of religion in our January issue, I would like to express my personal thanks.

At this time, I would like also to inform all our members that beginning March, '93, our organization has been approved and will start

taping a 1 1/2-hour TV forum to be aired in April on the Dade County cable access channel (see front page).

Your ideas on topics of interest and suggestions would be much appreciated.

Again, Thank you for your approval and kind remarks."

Most sincerely,

Christos Tzanetakos, President

**Oh, don't worry!
After all...**

Religion Doesn't hurt anybody

Atheists Of Florida, Inc., is a non-profit, educational organization designed to heighten public awareness about atheism and atheism, and to provide intellectually stimulating contacts for the membership.

Membership dues should be sent to the chapter of interest. General correspondence should be directed to the Miami Chapter, P.O. Box 530102, Miami, FL 33153-0102. Contact Phone is (305) 936-0210. Annual dues are: \$50.00 - Sustaining; \$30.00 - Couple; \$25.00 - Individual; \$5.00 - Student (under 25 yrs.). Dues are pro-rated quarterly, with annual renewals due by January 1.

Newsletter correspondence and chapter inquiries should be sent to the Tampa Bay Chapter, P.O. Box 130753, Tampa, FL 33681-0753. Deadline for newsletter items is the 15th of each month. The A.O.F. newsletter is provided free of charge to our members as a medium of exchange. Letters are published from members on a space-available basis, in general accord with guidelines set out in Vol. 1, No. 6, national Atheist Alliance for purposes of information exchange.

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

Chairman	Albert E. Lyngzeidson
President	Christos Tzanetakos
Vice President	Ed Golly
Secretary	Celia Ghantz
Treasurer	Charles A. Ross
State Board of Directors	Kyoko Bragdon John J. Diamond Steven Miller Louis Miller Florence Morgenson Daniel Strick Brent Yachiv
Newsletter Editor	Ed Golly
Assistant/Letters Editor	Brent Yachiv

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Again, Thank you for your approval and kind remarks."

Most sincerely,

Christos Tzanetakos, President

—As of presstime, the Waco whacko, David Koresh (a.k.a. the Messiah) and his brainwashed followers remain at a standoff with federal agents at their 77-acre tax-exempt compound, costing taxpayers millions of dollars a day. Up to 20 people died in an earlier gunfight. The Branch Davidians, as this survivalist cult calls itself, has stockpiled hundreds of powerful weapons and is poised for instructions from God as to whether or not to wage a full-blown war. If history is a guide, based on the violent overtones of the Bible, a peaceful solution doesn't look likely. Maybe U.S. taxpayers will get lucky: Someone in the compound will light a match and accidentally blow the whole place to Kingdom Come. Then we can avoid the inevitable legal fees, court costs and prison tab that will result from this.

—Mohammed Salameh of Jersey City, the Muslim fundamentalist arrested as a suspect in the World Trade Center bombing, has been linked by federal investigators to El Sayyid Nosair, the man tried for the assassination of Rabbi Meir Kahane. They claim Salameh visited Nosair at least one time in Attica state prison, including once within a month before the bombing. Meanwhile, Muslim spokesmen keep maintaining through the media that theirs is not a fanatic religion and they should not be lumped together by the actions of a "crazed few." Mmmmm. In our humble opinion, we've seen plenty of nasty violence, retribution and sheer lunacy committed "in the name of God" by more than a few members of this sect. Whether or not Salameh is found guilty, Muslim fundamentalism has a frightening history of terrorism to its name.

construction on her halo by asking me, "don't you agree, Lou?"

I immediately said, "I think I am a person who has common sense, and is reasonable and fair, so in the interest of fair results, I suggested to God a while back that He start paying to me instead."

And the satisfaction of seeing her fall back a few steps, and the greater satisfaction of seeing and smelling her halo collapse in a flutulent shower!

Louis Miller
Miami Beach

Ever dependable Victor St. John generated some free publicity for Atheists of Florida on February 4 in Beach Views

To the Editor:

Regarding the 'Political Ramblings' by Demo 1, *Publican* of January 14, in which he accuses me of writing about nothing "which is what I believe in," what an arrogant assumption, and how does he/she know what I believe in!

I have never had the dubious distinction of having met the man/woman, and I take umbrage at his/her remarks!

For the record, I believe in a lot of things (certainly not 'ple-in-the-sky bye-and-bye'). I believe in a good time in Las Vegas, good food, excursions on the Pinellas Trail, and a myriad of activities, which includes being a member of A.O.F. (Atheists of Florida), along with its conventions and meetings and camaraderie.

Unlike the religious, we believe, and discuss facts, not fiction or fantasy! And our heads are not stuck in the clouds, as in the land of 'make believe.'

All this hardly comes under the heading of 'believing in nothing!'

Regarding Mr. Estes' 'Gleanings' of January 14, in which he says that God has no arms, feet or eyes, he refers to God as a 'He' which makes him a 'male figure.' (Incidentally, nobody has ever seen this 'God!')

So now, that narrows the field and leaves us with a disembodied, armless, footless, blind male. What a ghastly apparition!

He goes on to say that 'God saw what the problem was and dealt with it at the cross.' Well, this God must be very inept and 'falling down on the job,' because mankind is still

plagued with pain, suffering, wars, cancer, etc. Why make an imperfect world in the first place?

Whatever happened to the 'Awesome Powers?' - can do anything?

God is in the 'Soul Saving' business. Saving it for what? From what?

What do we really know about the Soul? Not a damned thing!

The only way that I know of to save the 'Soul' is to walk on your heels!

Victor St. John
Clearwater

And we just couldn't resist this response to Victor from another letter-writer appearing on the same day

To Victor St. John

I am reminded of what E. Stanley Jones said: "An atheist is a man who has no invisible means of support."

Seldom at a loss for words, Brent is heard from again in the Largo Seminole Times February 13, '93

Anti-abortion column was tragically off base

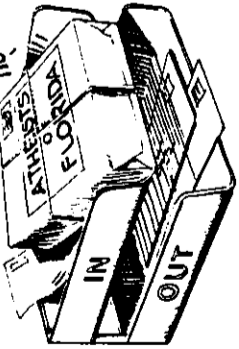
Editor: Re: Jana Carpenter's Jan. 29 guest column, "A long and moving march filled with smiles and sincerity."

As I read this column, I was filled with sadness and disgust. Sadness that someone would be so self-deceptive and supportive of cruelty, and disgust that Ms. Carpenter actually seems proud of her intolerance.

Ms. Carpenter obviously has watched too many of those obnoxious anti-abortion ads where every child grows up cute, clean cuddly and happy in a *Leave It To Beaver* world.

She also has ignored the news about overpopulation, how it is the greatest problem facing our world today.

She ignores reports of children in our own country starved and abused because their mothers were not ready to have children. They were not able to properly take care of themselves, much less a child; using birth control was too much trouble, and besides, babies are all cute and cuddly and never cause any trouble, right? (continued)



Tax the Churches

The big topic of discussion today, as well as the past few years, is the deficit. Everyone wants to solve the problem; no one seems to have any concrete answer as to how this should be accomplished. There is one answer overlooked by almost every pundit and self-proclaimed economic expert, which would not only solve our deficit problems but correct a longstanding constitutional violation. Tax the churches.

I know the "traditional view" is that this would violate the First Amendment. However, the opposite is true. By allowing a special exemption for businesses that sell religion, the IRS violated the establishment clause by providing a subsidy to religion. Whether you call their product god, hope, or afterlife insurance, churches are businesses selling a product like any other.

Granted, some churches will claim that they are performing charitable works such as feeding the poor, etc. Fine. As long as this is the sole activity of the organization, and there is a minimum percentage (at least fifty percent) of incoming funds used for this as opposed to providing administrative salaries, let them retain their status. Once the first Bible or Koran is passed out, or the first sermon is given to a group that came for food, start the tax meter.

Churches also own billions of dollars in property that is currently untaxed. Our funding shortage in the schools would disappear if the churches paid their fair share.

Conservatives are fond of pointing out that we are one of the most religious countries in the world, while at the same time blaming a lack of religiosity on our decadent state of affairs. It's time to recognize that religion itself has no demonstrable positive effects on society, and should be taxed as a business like any other industry that conducts seminars for profit.

Brent Yaciv
Seminole

I dreamt last night I was young again and it was a frightening thing. I walked the streets of the NYC of my youth and met people who had since become famous and others who had not...familiar faces and others not familiar... people who had died and others still alive. The world was a place where everything was new to me and every day an adventure. I remembered my first awareness that girls were sexually attractive and the first job I had. It was then that I believed in God. The world was a frightening thing.

My dreams are not of yesterday but of years ago when I knew little but expected much and now I expect little but know much. Yet I have the problem of forgetting what I ate yesterday but remember the first time I ate shrimp at the age of 17...and the first time I had a sexual experience. Although it was an adventure it was a frightening thing.

It was then that I realized that primeval man was also frightened and that perhaps was how religion began. How the primitive mind may have thought their souls travelled and left the body in dreams and the thought of Gods frightened them...and in its name many have died.

I dreamt last night I was young again and it was a frightening thing.

John H. Quirindongo
Ft. Lauderdale

Turning the tables

Besides being able to possess an unfettered, untrammelled, and independent mind there are very few other advantages that accrue to us Atheists in a religion dominated country. However, this week, I was able to garner a small verbal triumph, as an Atheist, that I would like to share with the readers.

This lady, nameless of course, was exhorting the small group that was standing around her. "I never go to sleep without communicating with the good Lord, thanking Him for everything that He has done." She was working herself up further and further and I started to see the gleam of the solid gold halo that she was fashioning around her head. Then she tried to draft me into additional

MIAMI

The Miami Chapter will meet Sunday, March 21 in the Board Room of the Ft. Lauderdale Main Library, 100 South Andrews, beginning at 2:00. For more information, call the Atheist Hotline:(305)936-0210.

TAMPA

The Tampa Bay Chapter will meet Saturday, March 13 at 2:00 in the Countryside Library, corner of State Road 580 and Countryside Boulevard. This will be a joint meeting with the Humanists of the Suncoast sponsored by the People For the American Way featuring a short video about the Religious Right in Florida, followed by a discussion of this and other topics.

Atheists on Page 1

TAMPA -The headline read: 'Atheists believe churches should be paying taxes'. It filled the bottom quarter of the front page of the *Tampa Tribune* for Saturday, March 6.

Written by *Tribune* staff writer Karen Haymon Long, the premise of the article was that Clinton is calling for financial sacrifice from every person and institution in the country -- except religion. She then proceeded to interview several persons who supposedly could offer an expert opinion on the topic, many of which we found to be somewhat lacking.

Susan MacManus, chairwoman of the University of South Florida's Department of Government and International Affairs, actually claimed that religious institutions have been among the first to sacrifice in the present economy by providing humanitarian aid. Sure.

Michael Gibbons, a University of South Florida expert on American politics, claimed there is no reason to believe any presidential candidate over the last 200 years ever thought it was a reasonable idea. Reason would have little to do with the concern of re-election. And perhaps Gibbons is unfamiliar with some of the thoughts and deeds of the founding fathers regarding the subject of religion and taxes.

A religion teacher from the University of Florida, David Hackett, claimed that according to Gallup polls, 98% of Americans believe in

God. Apparently Mr. Hackett is completely unaware that Gallup is extremely biased with regard to religion and will structure questions to generate distorted results. We know that at least 8% and more probably 12 to 20% of Americans have no religious beliefs or affiliation. Another 50% probably only express such a belief because they have been conditioned to do so without ever applying the mandates of their religion or constructively participating in it.

Tampa Bay Chapter Director Ed Golly was quoted in the story by quoting Thomas Jefferson: "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical."

The current discrepancies resort back to a 1970 U.S. Supreme Court decision written by Chief Justice Warren Burger who said taxing churches would cause more government intervention in religion than not taxing. Nowhere in his decision did Burger say lifting the exemption would be unconstitutional.

He actually opined that religious groups foster "moral or mental improvement" and are a beneficial and stabilizing influence in American communities, rendering a tax exemption "useful, desirable, and in the public interest." *(For examples of this concept, see page 2 of this newsletter).

Last year Mayor Freedman announced a

budget deficit of \$3 million for the City of Tampa. Where do you suppose we could get all that money? For the answer, see chart.

Religious property exemptions

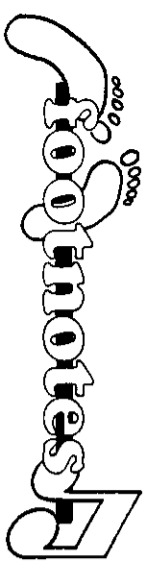
Dollar amounts in millions					
Number of parcels	Market value	Total exempt value	Potential taxes	County taxes	County property taxes
Hillsb'gh	2,503	\$473.7	\$461.0	\$11.6	\$616.3
Pinellas	1,141	461.3	460.1	9.0	650.0
Sarasota	402	185.3	185.3	3.1	259.0

"Bucking" the IRS

During the final days of the presidential campaign last year, an evangelical church in Binghamton, NY ran full-page newspaper advertisements in *USA Today* and the *Washington Times* claiming that Bill Clinton was a sinner and therefore a vote for him was a sin. The ads maintained that Clinton supported abortion on demand, rights for homosexuals and the distribution of condoms in public schools.

One of the first groups to object to the ads was Americans United for Separation of Church and State, who wrote to the IRS complaining that the ads constituted a clear political endorsement in violation of the IRS tax-exempt codes. In short order the IRS sent a list of items they wanted from the church which replied with what answers they "considered appropriate."

Atheists of Florida feels this incident closely parallels the "post card" issue at the Catholic masses in the west-central Florida region on the weekend of January 23/24, whereby parishioners were asked to voice opposition to the Freedom of Choice Act on abortion (February, 1993 newsletter). Therefore we will be watching closely for any results from the complaint.



Scholarship Fund

With a generous contribution of \$150.00 from our Treasurer, Mr. Charles Ross, the balance of the account now stands at \$1,150.00.

HRS Money funding religion

story from the St. Petersburg Times of January 24, '93

Columnist Mary Jo Malone revealed that the Gulf Coast Division of the Children's Home Society of Florida operates a shelter for abused children in Hillsborough County known as Joshua House. Built mostly by subscription of private money, it is operated on \$400,000 in state money distributed by HRS.

The story surfaced when the executive director of the Home Society, Abe Wasserberger, who is Jewish, objected to the reading of Bible passages at committee meetings. Told that his religion was his problem, he then pointed out that Joshua House might violate state/church separation. But nobody acted. Because of his complaints, he was fired in December of last year.

HRS has conducted its own check and found that Joshua House was taking children to church even when they or their parents did not want it. One 9-year-old girl was even baptized against her will. So to protect its state-funded income, Joshua House simply claims these things won't happen again.

The thrust of Malone's article is that Wasserberger was fired because of religious discrimination, mainly because he is Jewish. While we certainly feel for Wasserberger's situation, we feel the real issue here is that HRS should entirely cut off any funding of Joshua House in view of its obvious Christian motive. We hope to be able to report further to you on this situation in a future newsletter.



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Spokesmen for Christ

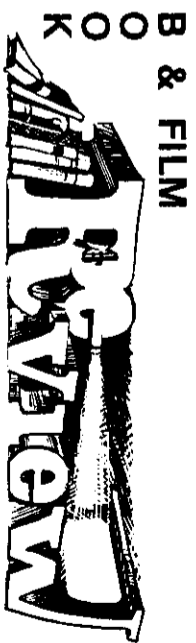
The Jesus Seminar

Review by Mike Perdomo
The "Jesus Seminar", a group of some 200 biblical scholars, ended six years of debate a few months ago with the conclusions that Jesus never said 80% of the sayings attributed to him in the four gospels and that he never claimed to be the son of God.

This would make obsolete the works of Albert Schweitzer, G. A. Wells and Ernest Renan, among others on the search for the historical Jesus. So far as I know, no book has been published about the

findings of that group of scholars. But I am currently reading *A History of Christianity* by Paul Johnson (Atheneum, Macmillan Publishing Company, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022), wherein on pages 31 and 37 the same foundation had been

than two centuries. Jesus was very knowledgeable on them. In fact, he was a rabbi (i.e. Matthew 26:49 and John 1:38) who even thought that he had come to preach only to the house of Israel (i.e. Matthew 10:5, 6 and 15:24, 26). Being born and versed in the Jewish tradition, it is very unlikely that he thought himself as divine, for in the Jewish tradition that is a no-no. His last words, practically censuring God for having forsaken him, point also in this direction: if he was a god, thereby knowing what was



laid prior to 1976. When Jesus was born, all the Jewish scriptures that today form the Old Testament had been in circulation for more

who walked with a sure gait of the self reliant person. His only vice was to be very loving to his children (if that can be a vice).



Commentary

My Father-in-Law

by John H. Quirindongo

I think often of my father-in-law lately. Not because he was an atheist like me but because when he died 25 years ago his non-practicing religious children saw fit to bring him to a requiem mass. Although his children were relieved to bring their father to a peace with the universal "creator", my father-in-law had been a proud man

I don't think he would have been happy to hear of this religious perfidy. I believe in keeping with the atheist tradition that we die and go to that nothingness from which we came. So the answer to whether it is good or bad to keep one's children happy with a meaningless gesture is moot.

After much anguish I have decided to let things happen as they may. My father-in-law was a wise man and he was right. Funerals, requiems and religious rites are for the living to fool themselves that there is a life after death and to be mentally alleviating. Who am I to make demands after my death? God?

Atheists of Florida member John Quirindongo lives in Ft. Lauderdale

But I wonder about myself. I have made no plans for my death and never had life, or rather death, insurance. I have recently reached an age when I

must prepare for death and I don't want any religious rites at my bier after death. What do I do? Or should I care?