

Amendment

To achieve this objective will take many years. It will require long-range planning and work. For starters, we can solicit the support of other Atheist groups and like-minded liberal groups such as the humanists, ethical culturalists, common cause, the ACLU, NOW, the Anti-Defamation League and the

NAAACP. Liberal leaders such as Ted Turner, Jane Fonda, Rosalind and Jimmy Carter, Ralph Nadar, Gloria Steinem. Scientists such as Carl Sagan. Lawyers, mathematicians, writers, university professors. The list is endless. All these people and groups have access to our politicians and have influence on them. You would also be

surprised how many churches would favor such as amendment.

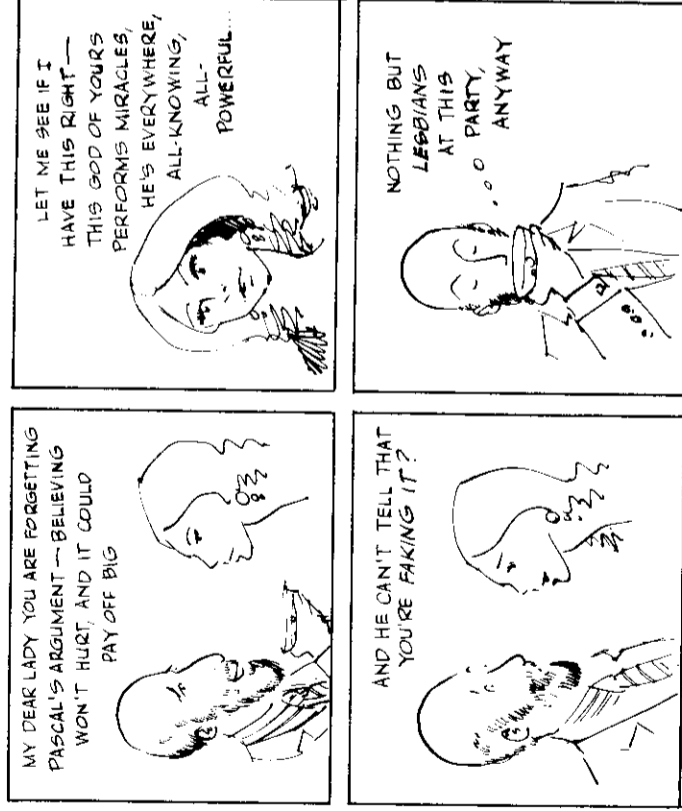
We can expect abuse and a lot of anger, but for the first time, we will be calling the shots on our own turf and on our own terms. We will be acting in a positive mode, on behalf of a more humane, enlightened society.

The Melting Pot has Boiled Over...

Reprinted From the Atheist Network Journal, Houston Texas

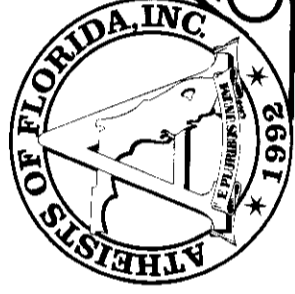
LA Riots Produce Flood Of Prayers

After the unbelievable verdict of the Rodney King beating trial was announced and the subsequent rioting began, our country responded to the crisis with an enormous outpouring of prayers. Such use of mysticism to resolve a natural problem underscores the root cause of this crisis. For the last 12 years, Reagan and Bush have neglected important social issues like civil rights, while urging Americans to take solace in prayer, "the opiate of the masses." By exploiting and deceiving Americans with the political expedient of religion, both presidents have succeeded in using their office to promote religion at the expense of social issues they care little about. Consequently, Los Angeles is now another Beirut. Is it any wonder that racism and class barriers have increased when the last three presidents have recommended prayer instead of rational political solutions?



In Escondido, California, atheist Steve Thorne has decided to run for Congress from the new 51st District. He is Pro-Choice, running against two Republicans who are anti-choice. One doesn't even live in California. To help him out with contributions, write to:

Steve Thorne Campaign Headquarters
613 Fern Street
Escondido, CA 92027



ATHEISTS OF FLORIDA

"To be able to fill leisure intelligently is the last product of civilization."
— Bertrand Russell

Newsletter of Atheists of Florida, Inc.
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Chapters in Miami and Tampa Bay
June, 1992

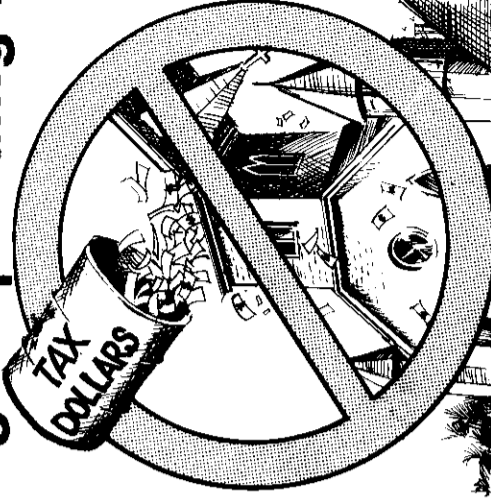
Atheists of Florida to fight spending for church restorations

MIAMI — "If it were simply a matter of preserving the history of the superstitions of the primitive mind of the twentieth century, then there would be no objection," said Christos Tzanetakos in an interview with the *Miami Herald*. "Otherwise, the expenditures of funds by the State to preserve the building is totally a violation of separation of state and church."

Tzanetakos, acting director of *Atheists of Florida, Inc.*, discovered that the State of Florida intends to spend \$250,000 to aid in the restoration of the St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Key West.

Tzanetakos has written our objections to the state, but they contend that the state attorney's office finds no conflict of interest regarding state/church separation.

As it turns out, four historic churches in Key West are at present undergoing restor-



ation utilizing partial funding from the state. And this is not the beginning of the practice. The state has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money in similar restoration projects.

Their argument maintains that a church is just like any other historic building. Of course, *Atheists of Florida* realizes that just isn't true. The Constitution doesn't require separation of state and, say, railroads or state and movie theaters, universities, or public-works projects. (See Restore, page 2)

Directors Elected

MIAMI — June 2, 1992
The ballots were opened to determine the twelve directors of *Atheists of Florida, Inc.* The Board of Directors will serve for a three year term and will assume the following responsibilities:

1. Set policy for the

organization's affairs, and
2. To elect officers of the organization and of the Board.

The officers will be elected by ballot following the nominations of individuals for the positions of Chairperson and Secretary.

The Chairperson's term of office shall start as soon as elected and shall run until the next election, (See pg 4)

INSIDE...

Meeting Schedules page 2
News & Commentary page 3
Constitution -- Time for an amendment? page 4

Atheists of Florida CHAPTER MEETINGS:

MIAMI

Meeting announcements will be found in these boxes at the top of page two in every newsletter. The Miami chapter usually meets the second Sunday of each month at the Main Library of Ft. Lauderdale, 100 S. Andrews Avenue on the eighth floor. Meetings begin at 2:00 with a 30-minute registration and social time, followed by a topic at 2:30.

Since we are now into the summer, the Miami chapter will not meet during the months of June and July. Expect the next meeting in August, which will be announced in an upcoming newsletter.

TAMPA BAY

The group in Tampa Bay has been meeting as a social group for the past few months and now has generated sufficient membership (ten or more) to form a chapter. We meet on the last Thursday of the month (this month it's June 25th) at Chi-Chi's restaurant, 4020 Park Boulevard in Pinellas Park at 7:00 pm. We are in a private room and most people have dinner followed by any discussion.

For more information, call Ed Golly in Tampa at 839-7567 or Brent Yaciw, Seminole, 393-6321, or George Starke, St. Petersburg, 578-1326.

Restore

It does mandate separation of state and church.

The parallel argument is that no state government, whether federal, state, county or city, should spend tax monies to restore say, a grand hotel for a private enterprise to go in and run

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upon completion. It's not the responsibility of the taxpayers to provide a building for a private enterprise to operate. A public building restored for public use is quite another matter. Therefore, if the hotel or the churches were restored as museums or libraries or day-care centers, *Atheists of Florida* would be quite unconcerned.

Aren't the churches open to the public? Of course not. Churches are maintained for the operation of the business of religion, a business which caters only to those who are superstitious enough to par-

ticipate. And to do this, they already pass their property tax bills on to the rest of us, along with their income taxes, tangible and intangible taxes, excess water usage surcharges, and any of the myriad of other taxes we citizens pay. Religion in America has become, like government, a bloated leach which sucks off all of us whether we utilize it or not. And any government subsidy of religion is as unconstitutional as censorship.

As Tzanetakos expounded, "Civilization will thrive when the last stone from the last church falls on the last priest."

Amendment

all Christian denominations. Ergo, the Christian religion is our official state religion. Christians would not deny this.

Every day our courts, our laws and our lawmakers contravene the First Amendment's intent that there shall be no state religion and churches shall not be supported by taxpayers monies.

Our tax laws exempt churches from paying taxes. Church holdings consist of real estate, stocks, bonds, etc. that run into billions of dollars. Churches receive gifts and bequests, run bingo games and raffles, bake sales and garage sales that net them even more money. They are allowed to engage in many profit-making ventures that every business would have to pay taxes on. Our taxes would be significantly lighter if they churches paid their share.

In short, we, the people, believe we live in a secular democracy, yet we support churches of all denominations in the biggest tax scam of all.

The authors of the Bill of Rights recognized the dangerous influence of religion and the church in civil matters. They considered the separation of state and church so important that they addressed it in the very first clause of the very first amendment.

The danger still exists and grows year by year. For example, in order to qualify for tax-exempt status, churches are specifically forbidden from intervening directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to any political candidate. They may not attempt to influence legislation by contacting or urging the public to contact legislators in order to support, propose or oppose legislation or advocate the adoption or rejecting of legislation.

Yet, they spend millions of dollars promoting their own candidates and their ideological beliefs in the political sphere. They lobby for public funds for religious

schools and promote the teaching of creationism in the public schools. They foster homophobia, decry scientific findings, bring cases to court to try to take away women's rights to their own bodies and retain the domination of men over women. On the international scene they make foreign policy by lobbying against giving foreign aid to any nation that supports family planning and birth control.

As the secular society the framers of the Bill of Rights intended, and enlightened people demand, we can no longer tolerate this unbelievable abuse of political system.

The only way to combat the enormous and ever growing power of religion in our nation is through a Constitutional Amendment. We must state:

- 1) We are a secular nation.
- 2) We acknowledge all religions but favor no one religion over another.
- 3) Each individual has the right to exercise his religious belief, or lack of it, without prejudice.
- 4) No public areas or public funds will be used for religious purposes, including the sale of public airways to any church or religion.
- 5) All churches must pay taxes.
- 6) All churches and religious orders are enjoined from political activities in which there is direct or indirect intervention in any political campaign on behalf of, or opposition to, any political candidate. Also, they should be enjoined from attempting to influence legislation by contacting or urging the public to contact legislators in order to support, propose or oppose legislation, or advocate the adoption or rejection of legislation.



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Commentary

The real problem... The real solution

Courts have failed to establish full state/church separation as intended by the Constitution. Florence Morgenroth suggests a "final solution"

THE FOUNDING of a new organization, such as Atheists of Florida, Inc., is an exciting time in which goals are defined and ways of achieving them are set forth.

In our application to the Internal Revenue Service for tax-exempt status, we listed among our activities our intention to sue the government for granting tax-exempt status to churches for the following reasons: violation of the First Amendment, government as an accessory to fraud, manslaughter and unfair competition.

I believe we do need litigation, but litigation is very expensive, takes a long time and must be done on a case by case basis.

While each case wends its way through the courts, I propose a second front, which will also take a long time, but if successful, would do away with many future lawsuits.

We need to change the religion clause in the First Amendment, preferably by a Constitutional amendment.

The framers of the Bill of Rights believed they were founding a secular society.

"Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion" abolished all established state religions which existed in certain colonies prior to the revolution. The abolition of state religions meant that citizens were no longer taxed to pay for the support of that religion. The framers left it up to the individual to choose which religion, if any, he chose to follow.

While people are free, more or less, to worship as they please, the authors of the First Amendment were not successful in abolishing a state religion or taxpayers support thereof.

Each time we pledge allegiance to the flag, we are

told that his is a nation under God. Our acknowledgment of God is written on our currency. In taking his oath to uphold our Constitution, every newly elected President swears on a bible, the literal word of God. And each session of Congress and the Supreme Court is begun with a prayer enlisting the guidance and support of God.

We all know that the God that is addressed is the Christian God. So, although there is no one official state church, supposedly eliminated by the First Amendment, there is an official state God! This official state God acts as an umbrella for
(continued next page)

Directors

Continued from page 1

at the Annual Board Meeting the following year. The Chairperson may be re-elected. The Chairperson presides at Board Meetings and rules on procedure.

The Secretary's term is identical to the Chairperson's, and may be re-elected. The Secretary of the Board and the Secretary of the Organization shall be the same person.

Results

The following members have been elected to the Board of Directors:

Kyoko Brogdon	John J. Diamond	Celia Glantz
Charles Alan Ross	Daniel Streit	Louis Miller
Christos Tzanetakos	Albert Lyngzeitson	
<i>all of the above from Miami,</i>		
<i>Steven Miles of Gainesville</i>		
Florence Morgenroth	Brent Yaciv	Ed Golly
<i>from the Tampa Bay area.</i>		

News & Comment

Isn't it so sadly typical?

Religion is always the problem—never the solution.

Earth Summit '92, recently held in Rio De Janeiro, recognized that the biggest dilemma facing the world's environment is overpopulation of the human species. But whom do you suppose would come out as the biggest opponent of family planning or even the mention of contraception? Naturally, it's the Vatican.

The world's population grows by over a quarter of a million people every day. This in spite of the fact that over 40,000 people starve to death each day, half of whom are under the age of five years. Even if conservation of resources was

achieved, the added growth in population would consume whatever is saved. Continued population growth will cancel any other successes of new environmental policies.

Some argue that the world is not nearly overpopulated yet. But given the starvation, poverty and inequitable distribution of resources which continues year after year, there can be no logical dispute of that fact. But unfortunately, the Christian religion teaches that we were "put" on this Earth to procreate and that, regardless of any depletion of natural resources, a god will provide everything we need to exist.

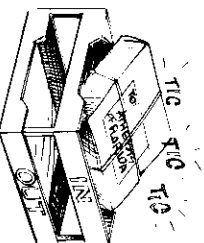
The proponents of this superstitious nonsense are the enemies of the future. The propagation of this lunacy may become an insurmountable barrier to any serious progress in

turning the tide of population growth and the subsequent decline in quality of life for all of us.

All the prayer in the world can't generate a normal rainfall in drought-stricken Mozambique, so the nation is turning into a desert while its people starve.

Unless enough young minds are weaned off the superstition of religious fantasy, the future lifestyle of all inhabitants of Earth will be one of high prices, shortage of space, insoluble ecological problems and an overall consistent lowering of the quality and significance of life. If we continue to let ourselves be dominated by this bastion of bunk known as religion, we have only ourselves to blame for our own demise.

Or in the words of Pogo, "We have met the enemy, and he is us."



LETTERS

Mr. Mike Perdomo has written to explain that due to his poor health it is practically impossible for him to attend the meetings. He would like very much to communicate in writing with other members. If you would like to send a note to Mr. Perdomo, his address is: 2463 Coral Way, #23 Miami, FL 33145

We welcome comments or articles from members to include in the newsletter. Express yourself. Capitalize on your guaranteed freedom of speech. Send us a line. We'll make room.

Late Renewals

Mrs. Ophelia Hoops of Ft. Lauderdale
Mrs. Sheri Hilton of Miami
Mr. Martin Shidlowsky of Miami

New Members

Mr. Antony Schleifstein of Boca Raton
Mr. Ed McDougall, Sr. of Sarasota
Mr. Miguel Melgar of Miami

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<p style="text-align: center;">June 14, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed an order adding the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance.</p>																			