

## CHAPTER EVENTS

**TAMPA BAY:** Last Saturday of each month through August, Noon – 1:30, Clearwater East Public Library, 2251 Drew Street, Meeting Room A. Beginning September, First Wednesday of each month, Pinellas Park Library, 7 – 9 pm. Third Wednesday of each month, 7 – 8:30 pm, Platt Library, 3910 S. Manhattan Ave., Tampa, Community Room. Dinner at 5:30 preceding Wednesday meeting at Piccadilly Restaurant on Dale Mabry just north of Henderson, front room. FMI: Ed Golly, 813-839-7567, AthALFLE@aol.com.

**PALM BEACH:** Meetings are held the third Sunday of each month at 2:30pm in Jupiter. Members notified by postcard. For driving directions or more information, call Charles Schisler 561/627-6340 or 561/624-9359.

*Have you ever noticed exactly how our state constitution is worded regarding religion and public funding of same? Here are some direct excerpts (bold type is our emphasis):*

### So you'll know...

**W**e, the people of the State of Florida, **being grateful to Almighty God for our constitutional liberty**, on order to secure its benefits, perfect our government, insure domestic tranquility, maintain public order, and guarantee equal civil and political rights to all, do ordain and establish this constitution.

#### Article I

**SECTION 3. Religious freedom – There shall be no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting or penalizing the free exercise thereof.** Religious freedom shall not justify practices inconsistent with public morals, peace or safety. **No revenue of the state or any political subdivision or agency thereof shall ever be taken from the public treasury directly or**

**DADE&BROWARD:** Third Sunday of each month, 2:00 alternating between Broward County Main Library, 100 S. Andrews Ave. Ft. Lauderdale, or Biscayne Cafeteria, 147 Miracle Mile, Coral Gables. Meeting notifications and activities available in **NEWSNOTES**, a monthly publication mailed to all active Dade&Broward chapter members. FMI: Patrick Bens, 305/940-0442 or 954/929-0441. atheist1@bellsouth.net

**ORLANDO:** Meetings scheduled for the first Sunday of each month at the Orange County Public Library, 101 East Central Blvd, 3rd Floor, Downtown Orlando, 1:00pm. FMI: Nan Owens (813) 662-6612. nanowens@ix.netcom.com.

*indirectly in aid of any church, sect, or religious denomination or in aid of any sectarian institution.*

#### Article II

**SECTION 5. Public officers – (a) No person holding any office of emolument under any foreign government, or civil office of emolument under the United States or any other state, shall hold any office of honor or of emolument under the government of this state. No person shall hold at the same time more than one office under the government of the state and the counties and municipalities therein, except that a notary public or military officer may hold another office, and any officer may be a member of a constitution revision commission, taxation and budget reform commission, constitutional conventions, or statutory body having only advisory powers. (b) Each state and county officer, before entering upon the duties of the office, shall give bond as required bylaw, and shall swear or affirm:**

**"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida; that I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the state; and that I will well and faithfully perform the duties of (title of office) on which I am now about to enter. So help me God,"** and thereafter shall devote personal attention to the duties of the office, and continue in office until a successor qualifies. **A**

8 June 2001

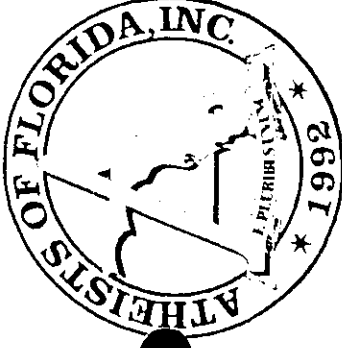
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Volume X No. 2  
June, 2001

# Atheists of Florida

*Dedicated to the absolute separation of state and church*

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www.atheistalliance.org/florida  
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## Atheists of Florida Forum to resume production

**TAMPA – UNDER THE GUIDANCE** of producer Brent Yaciw, the Atheists of Florida Forum will again go into production this summer.

Studio space has become available for our production from Tampa atheist Joe Redner who has his own cable access live program shown on Time-Warner in Hillsborough County. An outspoken atheist, even when he was a political candidate for Tampa City Council two years ago, Redner is a strong advocate of atheist activism and state/church separation. He once appeared with his legal counsel, Luke Lirot, on one of our Forum programs and has had then A of F president Ed Golly appear on his show.

Redner produces his programs at the Cable TV facilities. To do that, we would need to have several members go through the training process to become certified. This would require several months. Then we would need to schedule studio space as available. Redner's facility has two producers already available in house. We have several members of the chapter who have volunteered to operate cameras and they will need no other training. Therefore, we can get into actual taping months earlier than if we opted for the Cable company's facility.

The studio is being prepared and cameras assembled at this time. The control room equipment is already in place. The current studio will be somewhat makeshift, but Redner plans to eventually construct a permanent studio in warehouse space directly adjoining the control room.

Hosting of the series will be divided between Yaciw and Ed Golly. Half the programs will cover topics of immediate newsworthiness while the other half will involve non time-sensitive subjects so they may be included in the Atheist Alliance TV Outreach pool and broadcast around the country.

Time-Warner public access in Hillsborough County continues to run our programs which were produced between 1993-1997 in Miami. We will use the new shows to update our available slot.

**REDNER ALSO AGREED** to finance the production of our book covers. We had initially designed the covers to fit an 18" sheet, but since regular covers are

larger, he decided we should prepare our covers to match the regular size. When printed, they will be distributed at all our public functions such as Miami Book Fair and Circus McGerksis, Elm Street Flea Market, etc., offered free on the A of F Forum and Website, and we may even distribute them in front of public schools. The covers contain the Bill of Rights on the front while the Ten Commandments appear on the back. The intriguing element is the inclusion of the proscribed punishment for violating the Commandments, Biblically referenced, which appear alongside. Hopefully, the contrast between commandments and rights will be lost on few recipients of the covers.

**WEEKLY PLANET REPORTER** David Jasper showed up at the April meeting of the Tampa Bay chapter. We opened the Summer Guide issue of the *Planet* (May 17-23, 2001) to find a rather nice article about the group on page 36. Most impressive to Jasper were the free cookies and coffee provided by Jerry Moore. Otherwise, he gave a very positive outlook on the meeting, encouraging readers to attend either of the two meetings the chapter holds each month.

The *Planet* is a weekly publication (we advertise the Tampa Bay chapter in the classified section), so by the time you receive this the issue will no longer be on the stands. If you'd like a copy of the article, contact Golly and he'll send it to you.

**PRESIDENT NAN OWENS** has completed the A of F Chapter Operations and Guidelines manual. This 20-page document is a guidebook for all chapters, existing or forming, to use so they may become completely familiar with the guidelines of the organization as established by the Board of Directors and defined in the Bylaws. Owens has done a remarkable job on the book and we thank her for all her effort. We expect that other Member Societies of the Atheist Alliance International will use it as a model for their own chapter guidelines if they desire. **A**

*"Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church, and the private schools, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and the state forever separated."*

—Ulysses S. Grant



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WHENEVER A BIOLOGICAL process takes place and energy is stored or released, or chemicals are changed in form, some waste material is a by-product. Therefore, when the energy stored in sugar is released or a secretion is produced, a waste product is produced which must be removed (excreted).

Because this is a waste it can be dangerous.

THE SOLUTION IS EVOLUTION

No. 9—Excretions

—Jim Strayer



a vacuole inside the cell until the cell dies, usually in less than a year.

If the waste is produced by a one-celled organism living in water, it simply protects itself by discharging it and moving away from the waste.

If the waste is produced by a cell in a multicellular organism like yourself, the waste must be carried away. When any cell in your body functions it will produce some waste. That waste will be picked up by the blood stream and carried to the kidneys. The kidneys are made up of special cells which filter the waste and transport it to the bladder in the form of urine. It can be stored safely there until urination.

This process is very important because if the kidneys stopped working you would be very ill in a few hours and dead in a few days.

This series will continue in the next newsletter. Jim Strayer is a retired biology teacher. He lives with his wife, Bobbe, in Ormond-By-The-Sea.

Mini-review:

The Talbot Odyssey

by Nelson DeMille; Warner Books, 1984

OKAY, IT'S NOT EXACTLY a new book, but the final passage that made it worth noting in this newsletter: "I knew, I knew all along it was him. We all knew, but none of us can bring ourselves to believe that Daddy is a liar, or that God is a fake, or that the minister is an atheist."

This rarely happens and usually enough nephrons function to keep us healthy or at least alive when we have kidney infections until some other biological mechanism (the immune system) saves us.

As you might imagine, the evolution of these specialized cells was very important in the evolution of all forms of animal life. So much so that the nephrons found in frogs, fish, and you are almost identical.

They are also very much like the nephridia, which perform the same function in worms and insects. It was the evolution of this specialized cell that enabled multi-cellular animals to develop. Without nephrons and nephridia, no animal life could exist.

Of course, different cells produce different wastes. Yeasts produce alcohol, and bacteria produces a variety of acids. Because evolution is a never ending process, some organisms have evolved to use the waste of others. So the alcohol excreted by yeasts in making beer, wine, and other alcoholic beverages is consumed to keep bacteria alive and they in turn excrete different acids. A good example is sweet cider, containing sugar, which the yeast use to live off of and to give off alcohol, so the bacteria can live off of the alcohol and excrete acid. Sugar to alcohol to acid. Or another way of saying it is, sweet cider to hard cider to vinegar. The hard cider or wine is "yeast pee" and the acid in vinegar is "bacteria pee."

The reason that milk is pasteurized is to kill the bacteria which would produce acid and make the milk curdle (sour). On the other hand, we can introduce certain bacteria to cause the milk to curd and form cheese. Wine and beer can also be pasteurized to stop bacterial growth. By understanding evolution we can understand, and even control, some of the natural world.

That was his strength. He did not have to deceive us, we deceived ourselves."

This lesson alone makes the book worth reading, but there's more to it than that. If you're interested in knowing who "he" was, along with reading about an intricate duel of nerve, wits, and intrigue between a master spy and a former police officer turned spy hunter, read the book!

—Brent Yaciv

An article by Michael Hayes in Miami Today the first week of May profiled Patrick Heffernan, President, Floridians for School Choice. Heffernan, who has mastered all the school voucher buzz words, is a professional advocate for school vouchers. Here is a digest of the interview.

Floridians for School Choice

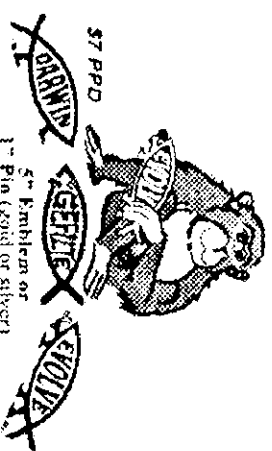
FLORIDIANS FOR SCHOOL CHOICE, at 1000 Brickell Ave. / Suite 900, Miami, is a non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-profit organization. Patrick J. Heffernan, 53, a striking double for Pat Robertson, advocates that all parents, not just those who can afford it, should have the "liberty" to "choose" which school they want their children to attend.

To circumvent the state constitutional restriction on direct aid to any sectarian institution, Heffernan subscribes to the usual sham of appropriating the tax money directly to the child to then be spent at the (Christian) school.

Rearred a Catholic, one of eight kids, he attended St. Rose of Lima in Miami Shores. Following a teaching stint in Washington, D.C. Heffernan earned a master's degree in philosophy from the University of London and became a lecturer in philosophy of education at Cambridge University for six years. Back in the states, he eventually ended up working with the Catholic schools in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties "to help them understand and begin to build endowment funds to preserve their own futures."

That led to his present position. In England, in 1979, Heffernan witnessed a parliamentary election where

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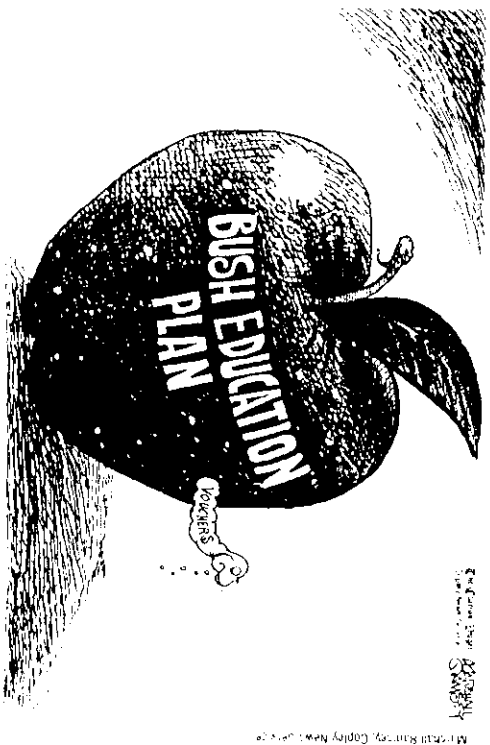
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the Labour Party maintained in its manifesto that they would abolish private schools in England. Puzzled that a democracy would be moving in the direction of having all its schools operated by the government, Heffernan was motivated to study how different countries established their educational systems. His conclusion was that "the idea of having all or most of your schools operated by the government is an idea associated more with socialism and totalitarianism than with democracy."

Heffernan cites the fact that we are the only country in the 32-member Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development that doesn't routinely make money available to private schools in order to pitch in and be in partnership with public schools "for the sake of education."

He acknowledges that our Constitution "has difficulty" with such direct funding of private schools, but argues that when the direct payment to recipients play is engaged in the form of scholarships or vouchers it will subvert the constitution.

To Heffernan, the word "voucher" is routinely avoided, citing public ignorance of the word's meaning. Somehow he construes that a duck is not a duck. This keeps his approach centered on disguising vouchers as "opportunity scholarships" or "warrants."



When questioned about the state/church separation conflict of taxpayer aid to parochial schools, Heffernan cites several state Supreme Court decisions demonstrating that our Constitution has no more problem with public dollars going to religiously affiliated schools than it does with public dollars going to religiously affiliated colleges, hospitals or nursing homes. Those dollars are going to the individuals, not to the institutions, according to Heffernan. He expects we could have a US Supreme Court ruling on that idea at the K-12 level within a year.

"The Court is probably going to hear the case from Ohio," predicts Heffernan. Patrick Heffernan—making a living working to subvert our constitutional protections of state/church separation and putting your tax dollars into the religious coffers.

## Maybe he should try a rain dance

*"It is best to read the weather forecast before we pray for rain."* —Mark Twain

TALLAHASSEE —As we reported in the previous issue, Gov. Bush is grappling with the staggering drought we have in Florida. He has employed his power as governor to resolve the water shortage dilemma by —praying!

While heading to an update on the drought, Bush said, "I literally pray for rain when I do my prayers in the morning. I don't think that's inappropriate and I hope other people do the same."

We spotted a couple of excellent letters in the *St. Pete Times* regarding the issue. One wrote, "We may as well pray for a governor who can actually do something policywise, other than to suggest that we all invoke some incantation in order to solve our drought. What's next, Jeb? Are you going to call a 900 psychic hot line to tell us when it's likely to rain?"

The writer chastised the gov for relying on group prayer as a solution instead of adopting controls on further development. Another writer was amazed at the naivete of the gov.

What next? Will he be praying that our aquifers overflow with water so we need not address the chronic water shortages we have?

As of this writing, it still hasn't rained.

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## No help for overpopulation

WASHINGTON —The House voted May 16 to uphold President-select Bush's order prohibiting U.S. money from aiding overseas groups that provide abortion services. Apparently, no mention was made regarding



how to care for all the potential unwanted children. Bush made this his first official act as president in an obvious move to placate the Religious Reich. His very next act was to establish the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Thank goodness we have a Constitution which strictly prohibits the establishment of religion.

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## Bible Belt unhitching

OKLAHOMA CITY —A *New York Times* article reported an effort is underway in Oklahoma to stem the rising tide of divorce in that "Bible Belt" state. The governor, Baptist leadership and the antiodivorce movement are struggling to avert clashes between notions of wedded bliss and the reality of marriage.

They're scratching their heads over the fact that the divorce rate in much of the area where evangelical Christianity is particularly strong is roughly 50% above the national average.

In Arkansas, Republican Gov. Mike Huckabee signed a covenant marriage law in April that allows couples to choose a marital contract that, in most cases, would require a two-year waiting period before a divorce is final.

Republican Gov. Frank Keating of Oklahoma asserts divorce is a principal cause of poverty in his state. But the Democratically-controlled legislature has killed his proposals along with the removal of mutual incompatibility as grounds for divorce. Better, Keating reasons, to keep people miserable as long as God is satisfied.

The census revealed that in the 1990s, the number of unmarried couples living together jumped by 97% in Oklahoma, 125% in Arkansas and 123% in Tennessee. These increases in the heart of the Bible Belt are well above the 72% increase in unmarried couples nationwide.



## Commandments dumped

WASHINGTON, D.C. —The U.S. Supreme Court announced on May 29th that it would not hear an appeal of an Indiana case dealing with a government-sponsored Ten Commandments monument displayed on public property.

The high court's rejection of *Books vs City of Elkhart* allows a lower court ruling prohibiting government endorsement of the Commandments to stand.

Justices Scalia, Thomas and Chief Justice Rehnquist took the unusual step of issuing a dissent announcing they wanted to hear the case. Rehnquist, writing for the three, said the Commandments' role in the development of our legal system. "The votes of four justices are needed to hear a case."

In response, Justice John Paul Stevens issued a statement of his own. He wrote that Scalia, Thomas and Rehnquist failed to note that the Elkhart monument begins with the lines, "THE TEN COMMANDMENTS—I AM the LORD thy God," which appears in a larger type size than the rest of the Commandments.

"The graphic emphasis placed on those first lines,"

Stevens said, "is rather hard to square with the proposition that the monument expresses no particular religious preference...."

At issue was a Ten Commandments monument erected in front of the city municipal building in Elkhart, Ind., in 1958. Local residents William Books and Michael Suetkamp filed suit against the city in 1998 over the granite tablet, which is 6 feet tall and stands alone in front of the city building.

Last December, the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the display violates the separation of church and state.

TV preacher Pat Robertson's legal group, the American Center for Law and Justice, was representing Elkhart and encouraged the high court to consider an appeal. The Supreme Court's decision to not to hear the case represents yet another hindrance for the Religious Right.

Even President DUBYA weighed in on the issue during the 2000 campaign, indicating that he would support changing the law to allow the display of the "standard version" of the Commandments in public schools and other buildings. In fact, there is no standard version — different faith traditions use different interpretations.

IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO: you are a worshipper at a mosque or a church or a synagogue and a sermon is hurled from a loudspeaker. On your return home, in the privacy of your own room, that same sermon is reentering your head not as a memory, but, by means of microwave technology, as a fresh new message beamed at you — and at you alone — from a van parked

## Remote control mind control

—Patrick Benz

outside. Along with the religious indoctrination that weighs on you and bends your knees onto your prayer mat, you, by name, receive instructions from the same voice to go and execute a murderous plot. No one in your house hears the mysterious voice but you. As a believer, you obey the order as perceived from a god. Another suicide bombing is about to occur.

This is not a topic typical of Art Bell's All Night Talk Show. This is the latest in invisible warfare being played out by technology savvy governments, according to the eloquent Mr. David Dowd, who spoke with great clarity for two hours non-stop to our intensely attentive Miami/Fort Lauderdale meeting on Sunday, March 18, 2001 at the Broward County Main Library.

Mr. Dowd warned us of the existence and wide use of specific devices capable of altering the mind of innocent people. These gadgets, developed in the 1950s with experiments on cats and perfected into the 1970s for eventual use on whales, employ microwave technology able to control someone's behavior. He insists that it is assumed that this technology, which is relatively inexpensive to produce, is regularly used in cults and in theocratic nations with religious terrorism on their agenda. From eyewitness reports in Massachusetts, it is known, that these devices can be programmed to modify a person's conduct. Original attempts made the

victim become nauseous, vomit and get severe headaches.

Progressively, however, the need for sophistication improved the efficiency of the intelligence apparatus to the point that now it can beam messages into that part of the brain which processes

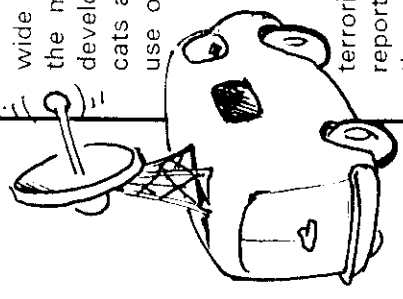
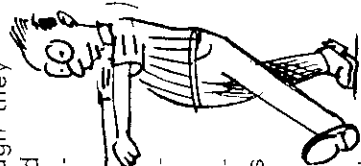
commands. The victim reacts quite casually as if it remembers an order to execute a certain task, most often of evil nature.

David Dowd, a graduate of M.I.T., alluded to programs through which soldiers are sent into battle on suicide missions; of pilots changing course without reason and of numerous ordinary pranks by his buddies at MIT on unknown fellow students. Although we witnessed no demonstrations, Mr. Dowd's speech was well documented with all the published acknowledgements available from University libraries, the USAF, and personal investigations. He was advised to stop his research or face "grave consequences."

The first encounter of this technology leaves the victim in shock, he explained. Reactions are of unconditioned suicidal tendencies. Amnesty International, he maintains, considers these remote control mind control devices torture weapons. AI suspects that these techniques are not uncommon in the preparation of Middle East suicide bombers, even if they were developed and manufactured in the West. Although they are banned in Western civilizations and their existence denied by our government agencies, the product is believed to be widely in use here in military, sectarian and corporate circles and in organized crime.

Called the "weapon of invisible warfare," this illicit, futuristic instrument is readily available through explicit ads in consumer electronics magazines of which recent examples were shown. An underground economy has found customers in every layer of society. As our interest in the matter was concentrated solely on the phenomena of religious exploitation, it became clear to each and everyone in attendance that these devices would be a welcome stimulant in the creation and maintenance of the fanaticism of blind faith. No one in the highly skeptical audience was left unaware that Mr. Dowd knew what he was warning us about when he said that no one is safe from this perverse piece of technology. Whether you want your accountant to cheat on your taxes or you want someone to be killed on command, this programmed remotely operated microwave device will make your wish come true.

"It sounds unbelievable, doesn't it?" asked Mr. Dowd in conclusion. He reminded us that therein lies the danger. We refuse to accept that something like this is allowed to exist, let alone be used on innocent people. To be aware of its potential is a caution we all must adopt.



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Edwin Kagin is a lawyer and a member of the Secular Student Alliance national Advisory Board. He is an Eagle Scout, a former college English instructor, a U.S. Air Force veteran, an N.R.A. Certified Handgun Instructor, and an Honorary Black Belt in Kenpo Karate. He is Vice President of the Free Inquiry Group (FIG) of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky and a published writer of poetry and prose that appears regularly in FIG Leaves, and elsewhere. Collections of his writings can be found on his web site ([www.edwinkagin.com](http://www.edwinkagin.com)) and he has a book coming out hopefully later this year. He is Director of Camp Quest, the nation's first secular humanist residential summer camp ([www.Camp-Quest.com](http://www.Camp-Quest.com)). Edwin has run unsuccessfully as "the candidate without a prayer" for the Kentucky Supreme Court and for the Kentucky State Senate. He is listed in Who's Who in Hell. Kagin lives in Kentucky with his wife, Helen.

## KAGIN'S COLUMN

# On displaying the Ten Commandments in public places

—Edwin Kagin



As everyone knows, the United States of America was perfect until the 1950's. Things started falling apart in the 1960's, just after "In God We Trust" was struck on our money, and "under God" was added to our Pledge of Allegiance.

We had gone through a Revolutionary War, a Civil War, two World Wars, the Great Depression, and various other dramatic, but easily solved, national problems, like slavery and women wanting to vote, without any need for a statement of reliance on a deity being placed on the cash or an unnamed god being added to our secular expression of loyalty to flag and country.

And Satan rejoiced. He saw the insecurity and the fear. He knew that people's need for public religiosity and for revealed rules meant private personal ethics had been replaced by public show and by dictated declarations of forced faith of the sort condemned in the Sermon on the Mount. The U.S. of A. had fallen into Satan's hands, and he has been pretty much in control ever since. The worse things have gotten, the more his maniacal merciless minions, wrapped in reeking robes of hypocritical righteousness, have caused the unsuspecting faithful to fall into the waiting clutches of that fallen angel.

Satan has successfully inspired support for forbidden-by-god public prayer in public places. This

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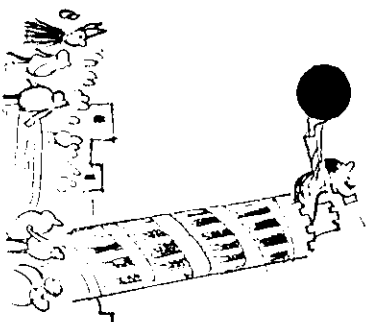
age and diminish personal freedoms so that democracy can be more easily eliminated. Misguided demonically influenced school officials and elected law makers have actually wanted people to risk their immortal souls by engaging in public praying—when the son of god has specifically forbidden such activity (Matthew 6: 6), and said that those who disobeyed would be as imperiled as fools who build their houses upon sand. What are the children to think or do when they read in their school-required bible readings that their school-required public prayers are in direct violation of the word of god? Fortunately, this peculiar slippery slide to perdition has not been implemented in all that many places. In those venues where public prayer is actually regularly and heretically practiced, like in the Congress of the United States, the deleterious consequences are so obvious that reasonable persons can not dispute the dire truth of the Savior's warnings.

Then there is the Satanist plot called "creation science." This movement oxymoronically tries to replace scientific fact and proof with the pre-scientific biblical mythology of origins. If he can get us to accept this stuff and repudiate evidence, Satan will have made much progress in destroying what our society has achieved with science and democracy.

But that ancient terror is even more clever than previously understood. We note with horror that there is emerging a far greater Satanic threat—an attempted direct fatal blow aimed at the very heart of democracy. He wants the gullible faithful, those who should know better but don't, to make laws requiring that the so called *Ten Commandments* be posted in public places—places like public schools, courtrooms, and government buildings. Imagine! Satan has gotten public servants to actually give official endorsement to a set of primitive rules written in Hebrew for a bronze age community of nomadic Jews. He knows that the fighting and the bloodletting certain to result over the meaning, the enforcement, and even the correct translation, of these Hebrew rules will put democracy on the ropes for sure.

He has laid it upon certain of our elected elect the fanciful fear that without these dictated declarations of forced fealty, the faint of faith must needs wallow in sin. He has persuaded some uncertain souls that we all need certainty and a fixed moral law that should be interpreted for us by those in power over us, and since the rules are unclear and impossible, like not coveting (there goes capitalism, the stock market, achievement awards, financial rewards, aspirations to succeed and acquire—in short, the American Dream that we had until god got put on the mammon), citizens are expected to constantly reaffirm their belief in the deity and his rules. Like quoting the Nicene Creed for example. This is not required if

something is clearly so. We do not chant together, "I believe in gravity; I believe if I drop a thing it will fall down; it will not fall up as the unbelievers say." A ritual for facts is so unnecessary it seems foolish. Religious ritual is so foolish it seems necessary. Try believing in the Holy Trinity without faith. If a thing can be shown to be so, one does not need a religion in order to believe in that thing, and believing in a thing does not make it so.



Now it would indeed be nice if there existed on our earth ten rules, precepts, laws, or anything for that matter, that everyone agreed were absolute rules of law and life that were so clear and so correct in their expression, application, and understanding that all people at all times would unambiguously agree those rules would be followed as presented. Then we could post them in public places. And not a person would object, because everyone would agree with them and follow them as a matter of course. Sort of like the rule requiring breathing. Everyone follows it, and no one objects to the requirement that they breathe. Of course, in such circumstances, posting the ten commandments would be quite superfluous. We don't really need publicly posted signs commanding unto breathing people, "Thou shalt breathe" (some religious types command "Thou shalt breed," but that's a different type of thing, and is another generally unnecessary directive).

Most people who think there is nothing wrong with displaying the Big 10 in public forums really don't know just what they are. So here are the ten commandments—in unnumbered Edwinian paraphrase:

***I am the same god who brought you out of bondage in Egypt. There are many other gods, but you are not to prefer any of them over me, for I am a jealous god. You are not to make images of anything, worship any images, nor take my name in vain or I will punish your descendants into the fourth generation. Because I created everything in six days, and rested on the seventh day, you are not to work on Saturday, nor is anyone in your house to work on Saturday, not even your slaves. If you want to live long in the land I have given you, you must honor your father and mother, you are not to steal, kill, commit adultery, lie about your neighbor, nor covet anything your neighbor owns, like his wife, his livestock, or his slaves.***

That's them. The rules the pro posters say underpin our civilization and laws. Note there is nothing in them about democracy, due process of law, compassion, or being kind to your children so they just might honor you without a direct order from god.

God seems kinda insecure, too. Why need a god command worship if he is so clearly the better god? Why should he care?

Despite current claims that they have nothing to do with religion, the first four commandments are religious rules (the secular basis for our culture indeed!), and the remaining six prohibit behavior that most societies address in laws that are usually much clearer about informing

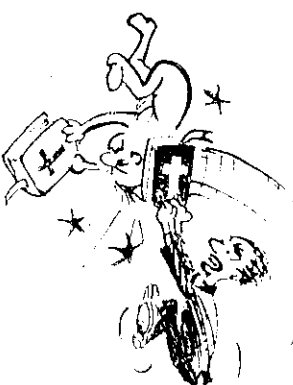
citizens of just what is in fact prohibited. Those who say the commandments they want to publicly post are not religious should note that the first four have over twice as many words as the six that follow.

The commandments are subject to all kinds of interpretations and exceptions that can lead, and have led, to unpleasantness and even bloodshed. This is why Satan wants us to do away with the notion of keeping church and state separate. Forcing religion into public life is the very best way to destroy democracy. What priesthood shall prevail? Who is to say what the law of god means? For example, "Thou shalt not kill" sounds reasonably clear. One might naively think this law of god prohibits killing. Not so. It is okay to kill animals, and okay to kill humans in war, in self defense, and in capital punishment. God endorses these (depending on whom you ask), and other killings, but one learns this in Sunday School, not from the simple statement of the commandment itself.

The forth commandment says to worship on the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as the Jews, Seventh Day Adventists and others do. It doesn't say to worship on the first day of the week, Sunday—as most Christians do, with no biblical authority whatsoever for so doing.

There is not a single commandment that is not subject to wildly different interpretations. And therein lies the problem. In matters of faith—whose understanding should control? How do we know they are right? Shall we, as in the past, have religious wars to decide?

But these matters are minor. Satan's true evil genius in selecting this issue to destroy democracy is seen when those who are both Theists and Satanists cannot even agree on which translation of the Bible to use, much less on the meaning of the disputed text. Catholics use a different bible than do those Protestants they denounce as heretics. Jews read it in Hebrew, and they read it backwards.



IF WE REALLY want to destroy American democracy by declaring that the ten commandments are really secular, and that the rules contained therein regarding which god to believe in, and how to worship this god, and when to go to church, and so on, are not religious, then we should take care that we use the right translation of the Bible when posting these non religious principles to use for controlling the lives of others, for those who want them posted in public tend not to read Hebrew, and those who do read Hebrew tend to understand all too well how religious doctrines can be called something else when employed to harm others.

How can this possibly be resolved to satisfy everyone? Maybe we should just keep state and church separate and keep our democracy. Maybe we should make public display of our American Bill of Rights. There are ten of them after all, and they were written in English. Unless, of course, we don't really believe in them.