

READING AN EDITORIAL recently I saw another atheist group mentioned naturally, in a condescending tone. I imagined that I had never heard of an atheist organization before and wondered what my perception of it would be. I thought I might question just why atheists would bother to join an organization. What ever would be the point?

A recent inquiry to Atheists of Florida had been

Message from the President

What do atheists do—sit around and not pray?

—Ed Golly

sent the usual introduction letter and a membership application. It came back to us without a check. On the back was a note he had scribbled explaining why he had decided not to join.

The writer's comments gave me pause to realize we may not be successfully conveying our message to other atheists about the underlying reasons they should consider membership. Our introduction letter tells the "who" and "what," but apparently not the "why."

"I am satisfied," wrote the inquirer. "that I am comfortable being an Atheist. However... I do not try to crusade for Atheism."

Neither do we. In fact, most atheists realize that efforts to proselytize to religionists are utterly futile. Reason and blind faith mix like bunker C crude and water.

He continued, "There has been a chapel at Boston's Logan Airport ever since I worked there in 1949. It hasn't hurt anybody—"

I once heard a cousin of mine express the same response to the prayer in school issue. "Why not?" she said. "It doesn't hurt 'em."

Nah. Religion, with all its messages of personal inadequacy, sin, guilt, and divisiveness can't possibly hurt anybody, can it?

Does the idea of government sponsoring religion at the expense of all citizens, even us atheists, concern you? How will you feel when the next president starts handing out billions of your tax dollars to "faith-based" organizations? Both major candidates have announced their intention to do precisely that. And, since religion is still projected only in a positive light and always assumed to be good for

everyone, who will oversee how that money is spent? No religion will tolerate government looking at its books—they're the first to remind us about separation of state and church whenever any investigation is suggested into their affairs. So if they claim to

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spend, say, \$3.50 to provide a meal for a homeless person and in fact spend, say, 60 cents for that meal, who will know what becomes of the difference? And if the pastor is using it for a Terre Verde mansion or jewelry for his girlfriend, who's gonna know?

Have you noticed what's transpired just this past year? It has really been a monumental year for religious intrusion. Your tax dollars, via vouchers, are now paying for superstitious "education" in Florida's religious schools and more of your tax dollars will be spent in court to fight to retain them. Evolution has been dumped from Kansas public schools. Politicians are determined to plaster the ten commandments everywhere. The Catholic church is taking over the hospitals of our nation and converting health care into religious doctrine.

While being asked why he should join our organization, I mentioned the hospital issue to a passerby at the Miami Book Fair. He shrugged and just allowed that he could always go to a different hospital. He had walked away before I could ask him what if his HMO only allows certain hospitals in the plan and they are all controlled by the church? Just sit back and do nothing, and one day it may happen to you. Or do you think this momentum will just fizzle out because the religious right will decide to honor the constitution before their god?

As the year came to an end, President Clinton called for increasing intrusion by religion into the public schools of this nation.

Florida's population now stands at about 18-million. Based on people I meet at the public outings and the polls we read, it's not at all inconceivable that we atheists are 20 to 25% of the nation's population. Even using the lower numbers, there are some three and a half million of us in Florida. Just one percent of that number is 35,000. If we could just get one percent of the atheists of Florida to become members of our group, think of the voice we would have! We could have a paid lobbyist in Tallahassee like the ACLU and a paid staff. A newspaper instead of a newsletter.

But unfortunately, there are too many atheists who think the religious right can't possibly turn this nation into a theocracy.

Do you recall ever hearing of a conversation that went something like this? "The Nazis are necessary to control the Communists." "Who will control the Nazis?" "Don't worry, they're too small to amount to anything."

Atheists are not the tiny minority of fringe radical wackos that many would have us believe. But as long as we remain silent and separate, we can continually be portrayed in this manner. A few voices are meaningless... a large collective of loud voices can be heard.

It's up to you.

A

YOU PROBABLY LEAD a reasonable, satisfying life—you make the decisions that affect your life using logic, experience and scientific knowledge.

I'd like to tell you how joining Atheists of Florida can add value to your quality of life.

Most likely, you, your family, and many of your friends, developed your guiding concepts and objectives through your learning, experiences and judgment. From this, you understand that ideas and life styles vary from person to person—you can respect these differences and accept that people live their lives in many fulfilling ways.

But did you know that just a small cadre of well-organized, determined zealots can frustrate your well-reasoned decisions by enacting legal barriers or closing access to services?

Incredibly, as we march into a new century with scientific and technological progress bursting around us, we are also seeing a religious minority force their backward dictates onto all of us.

How do some of these regressions affect you and your family? For example, just this past year harmful educational legislation was passed that affects Florida families—when the state legislature authorized school vouchers, which use tax monies to subsidize elementary/secondary education at parochial and private schools.

1. Your tax monies are used to promote religious doctrines and policies that are offensive to many people.
2. Plus, funding to public education is cut... draining public school resources and slashing services needed by students.
3. Although public schools must meet state-mandated standards, it's not required of parochial schools, which can teach their own brand of religious dogma and science (or pseudo-science). This helps foster a populace steeped in superstition rather than focus on informed citizens equipped to face the challenges of the new technological century. Is this the neighborhood you want for your family?

On both federal and state levels, we are seeing the separation of state and church violated at an alarming rate. Our tax money is being paid out to fill the coffers and advance the agenda of religious organizations... particularly the more extremist and aggressive sects. Until recently, this cost was largely indirect—tax exemptions for religious income and properties meant that ordinary citizens paid more to replace those revenues. But, now "charitable choice" legislation gives our tax monies directly to religious organizations (as noted, the more authoritarian, fervent groups are most likely to commandeer these funds). Most of these legislative proposals do not impose constraints on the group receiving these funds—they are free to proselytize, and to practice discrimination in employment and in their clientele (those who receive the government-paid services) on the basis of their religion and/or its tenets (homosexuality, gender, racial or religious biases, etc.). *Is this how you want your tax monies spent?*

In addition to public monies for religion, legislators are inserting religion into the public arena... schools, the courts, and other official services. Whereas most citizens are content to live and let live—you follow your conscience and I'll live up to my principles—a small minority of religious enthusiasts have a mission: "I'll obey my religious duties... and I want to force them on you, too." And they are succeeding!

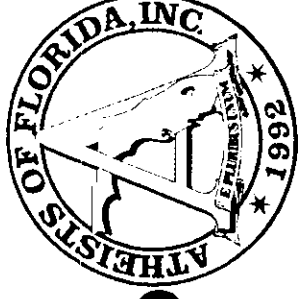
Through legislation, and also by practical or economic coercion, they seek to limit your access to many areas of life: medical services,¹ freedom of speech (calls for unchecked censorship), marital directives, educational prohibitions,² etc.

It's a bit staggering, isn't it? But Atheists of Florida gives you a voice to oppose these disturbing downtrends. As the articles in this sample newsletter illustrate, Atheists of Florida takes direct action on some issues. In addition, atheists of Florida allies with other organizations (civil rights coalitions, special interest organizations, even concerned religious groups) to wield more forceful power to resist these tyrannies.

But probably the most satisfying value that Atheists of Florida can add to your life is to provide a free-thought community for you and your family... curious, caring people who seek to grow and improve their quality of life with you!

¹Birth control and abortion, fertility and sterilization services, diseases involving reproductive organs, end of life issues, etc.

²Suppressing views in sex education, family structure, literature, history, science-evolution, etc.



Sample Newsletter
January, 2000

Atheists of Florida

Dedicated to the absolute separation of State and church

A Member Society of the ATHEIST ALLIANCE, the Democratic Alliance of Autonomous Atheist Societies



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THERE ARE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS and ample politicians that want the Ten Commandments displayed in schools, public buildings and courthouses. If that is done, isn't it equally important to display the penalty for breaking a commandment? The New Testament teaches that the Old Testament should be obeyed. This includes

Follow the Commandments — or else

—Jim Strayer

both the Commandments and the results of not following the Commandments

Jesus said in John 10:35, "Scripture cannot be broken." This statement was made after he had said in John 5:46-47, "For had ye believed Moses, he would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

1st Commandment, Exodus 20:3

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The punishment — Deuteronomy 17:3-5

"And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heavens, which I have not commanded. Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die."

More punishment — Exodus 22:20

"He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed."

3rd Commandment, Exodus 20:7

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain."

The punishment — Leviticus 24:16

"And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death."

4th Commandment, Exodus 20:8

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

The punishment — Exodus 31:15

"Whosoever shall work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death."

5th Commandment, Exodus 20:12

"Honor thy father and thy mother."

The punishment — Exodus 21:17

"And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death."

7th Commandment, Exodus 20:14

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The punishment — Leviticus 20:10

"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife...the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death."

6th Commandment, Exodus 20:13

"Thou shalt not kill."

The punishment — Leviticus 24:17

"And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death."

8th Commandment, Exodus 20:15

"Thou shalt not steal."

The punishment — Exodus 22:4

"If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall restore double."

Some exceptions:

Exodus 22:19

"Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death."

Leviticus 20:13

"If a man lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death."

The list of curses and punishments for not believing in God is long. Following the Ten Commandments, which are also listed in Deuteronomy 5:7-21, there are a number of curses which "shall come upon thee, and overtake thee." These curses are given in Deuteronomy 28:16-68. Space does not permit all of them to be quoted, but a few are that the Lord will "smite thee" with consumption, fever, hemorrhoids, scab, madness, blindness, boils, and many more even worse.

Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services

A Catholic hospital is first a church, then a hospital. These hospitals must maintain a code of behavior that underpins everything they do.

The Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, drafted in 1994 by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, cover moral issues from conception to death.

Though the directives, in their entirety, apply only to Catholic hospitals, partner hospitals often are persuaded to abide by some of them.

Here are some highlights of the directives.

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES: Advance directives contrary to Catholic teaching will not be honored. Decisions by a health care surrogate "should be faithful to Catholic moral principles and to the person's intentions and values."

EUTHANASIA: Not permitted, even in states where it is legal.

PERSISTENT VEGETATIVE STATES: The conference of bishops is still trying to determine whether it is moral to withdraw food and water.

MORNING-AFTER PILLS: A rape victim should be able to prevent pregnancy if "there is no evidence that conception

merger two years ago.

Employees at Bayfront must sign an agreement to work under the Catholic Directives. By November, 1999, Cigna health plan (for school district employees and many others) will only cover hospital care at Bayfront/St. Anthony's, down from a previous choice of 12 hospitals and 12 pages of listed doctors, now only 4 1/2 pages.

Keep in mind this is a nonprofit community hospital that leases property from the city of St. Petersburg for \$10 a year. The lease, according to the The St. Petersburg Times, requires Bayfront to provide services regardless of "sex, race, color or creed." City attorneys are trying to determine if the abortion restrictions violate the lease.

But that has been difficult. Bayfront executives failed to disclose the religious intrusion into Bayfront when they appeared before the council two years ago to seek an amendment to its lease agreement with the city to allow Bayfront to join the alliance. When the abortion controversy first erupted, they stone-walled and denied requests for public records, further eroding the community's trust.

Local groups such as NOW, the ACLU, Americans United, Planned Parenthood, and Atheists of Florida, angered by the intrusion of religion into public health care, are making their voices heard.

Led by Sandy Oestreich, president of the Pinellas chapter of NOW, members of A of F, NOW and other groups protested a black-tie fundraiser for the hospital at the Coliseum in St. Pete on Sept. 24.

Chanting "Not the church, not the state, women will decide their fate!" and "Keep the pope out of my hospital bed," protesters held signs, waved at passersby and challenged those attending the fund-raiser to think before they give money to an organization that violates the Constitution. One woman, dressed in a blue gown, tried to convince protesters that the hospital was serving the community. The protesters ignored her. Oestreich also has formed the Coalition for Religious Freedom in Our

has occurred already." She may be treated with medications that prevent "ovulation, sperm capacitation or fertilization." Doctors can't "initiate or recommend" treatments "that have as their purpose or direct effect the removal, destruction or interference with the implantation of a fertilized ovum."

FERTILITY TREATMENTS: Procedures that involve destruction of human embryos are prohibited. Sperm and egg donors are prohibited, as are surrogate mothers and fertilization in lab dishes. Adoption services and counseling should be provided.

ABORTION: Never permitted when directly intentional. Are permitted when the primary intent is to cure a serious pathological condition in the mother and the procedure or medication cannot be safely postponed.

STERILIZATION: Not permitted unless it is the unintentional side effect of curing a serious pathological condition and no simpler treatment is available.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER HOSPITALS: Are opportunities for Catholic hospitals "to witness to their religious and ethical commitments and so influence the healing profession"—for example, in making sure the poor are treated. On the other hand, partnerships may create "risk of scandal" by generating confusion about Catholic moral teaching.

Secular Hospitals. More meetings and protests are planned.

Activist Lois Utley helped create MergerWatch, a branch of Family Planning Advocates in Albany, NY. They have recently helped block proposed mergers in Miami, Baltimore, Wilmington and Enid, OK. "When communities are awakened to the potential to have religious gatekeepers dictate what services they may or may not obtain," she said, "they get outraged."

"People are already upset over HMO gatekeepers determining what services they may receive," she continued. "To add the local bishop is something that many people simply find unacceptable."

Feminists know that women will never be free unless they can control their own bodies, a belief that became law in 1973. But Congress doesn't have to ban abortions if the American Medical Association treats the procedure as beyond the bounds of medical training.

The Catholic Church doesn't have to bother swaying the opinion of the majority of Americans who believe in a woman's right to choose if it owns the hospital they go to. Grass-roots activism remains a powerful weapon. This is why Atheists of Florida has joined the coalition. Help us how you can, by signing petitions, picketing, or finding out about mergers in your town.

As more hospitals merge and more health care networks join the Catholic Church, it's likely that religious intrusion into our hospital beds will spread like a cancer. Let's hope we can remove it before it kills us.

When Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals merge, women's health care services often get excommunicated. Increasingly, services which can't be legislated out of existence are merged into oblivion.

The Hospitals that Stay Together Pray Together

IT'S THREE IN THE MORNING. Your hands are shaking and your stomach feels as if it has a rock in it. A few hours ago, a masked intruder broke into your home. He raped you.

Now a kind policewoman is waiting with you in an examining room of Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg.

The ER physician says you're okay, just a few bruises and bumps. They will heal. But aside from the other fears you have you're thinking about pregnancy. You want to make sure you prevent it. So you ask for a post-rape pill. The doctor tells you he'll be right back. You think he's gone to the hospital pharmacy to get one, but instead he's consulting with someone else about whether to give you the pill.

Thing is, he's not consulting with another doctor. He's asking a nun.

At Bayfront and other hospitals throughout the state and nation, decisions on reproductive rights, euthanasia, life support and other serious medical conditions more and more are being made not by qualified physicians but by the Catholic Church. And that has feminist and state-church separation groups outraged.

First some background. Catholic hospitals are the largest nonprofit health care providers in the nation. The Catholic Church owns five of the 10 largest hospital corporations in the country, according to an article by Jennifer Baumgardner in *The Nation*. That amounts to 800 hospitals and healthcare systems and more than 70 million patients.

In these lean financial times, the nonprofit Catholic hospitals are merging with nonprofit secular hospitals, as in the case with Bayfront in St. Pete. When that happens, the Catholic value system of medical care—called the Ethical and Religious Directives, (see box)—often dictates health care decisions. Baumgardner says.

According to Catholics for a Free Choice, the Bayfront/St. Anthony's is one of 105 mergers that have occurred between Catholic and public or

non-sectarian private hospitals nationwide. In at least half those cases, reproductive health services were either dropped entirely or severely limited. CFC reports that there are now 91 counties in the nation where a Catholic hospital is the sole provider of health care, and 95% of those counties have a population where Catholics are in the minority. Eighty percent of the diocese served by BayCare is non-Catholic.

When Catholic hospitals contemplate mergers with secular hospitals, church officials insist that the new partners accept the directives. In a nutshell, the directives forbid hospitals from offering any services that contradict Catholic teaching. They specifically prohibit Catholic hospitals from offering abortion for any reason, vasectomies, tubal ligations and in vitro fertilization, or distributing any contraceptive device (even "emergency contraception" for women who have been raped or condoms for HIV-positive patients). The directives also state that the church is not bound to honor any "living will" or end-of-life instruction that a terminally ill patient may have signed.

Catholic hospitals draw government support through Medicaid and Medicare and accumulate huge amounts of money that is exempt from taxation. According to the California Women's Law Center, a group that has expressed alarm over the spate of mergers, the Daughters of Charity, the Catholic order of nuns that is the largest owner of Catholic hospitals in the country, had cash and investments totalling \$2 billion as of March of 1998.

Brackenridge Hospital in Austin, Texas, is a prime example of how a foreign theocracy can dictate your medical care here in America, regardless of your constitutional rights.

Last summer, a band of ultra-conservative Catholics assailed the city-owned hospital which was managed by the Catholic Seton Healthcare Network, and demanded that it stop offering sterilizations and birth control—even though the lease agreement between the church and the city stipulated that these services be offered. Austin Bishop John McCarthy had approved the arrangement, but the far-right Catholics attempted to go over his head, firing off a series of complaints directly to the Vatican. In response, Vatican officials instructed McCarthy to stop sterilizations and contraceptive distribution at the hospital.

McCarthy responded that the 30-year lease requires the facility to offer reproductive health care services (with non-hospital staff) and assured the Vatican that a "wall of separation" had been built between Seton and medical practices the church considers sinful. The dispute is ongoing.

At Bayfront, part of the BayCare health network, elective abortions are no longer performed, even in such cases as Down's Syndrome. (The procedure is still performed when the life of a mother is in danger.) And some employees have reported no morning-after or post-rape emergency pills in the pharmacy since the

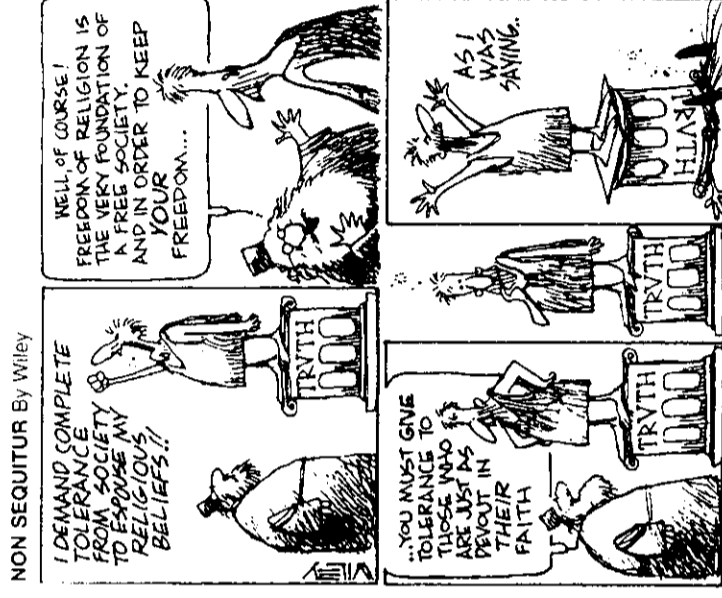
EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN that there are many psychological factors at work which influence those who join, and those who basically endorse, but are reluctant to join, the atheist movement. Let me mention at the outset that there seem to be two intellectual, pro-freedom movements which should be

Atheists, Liberals and Libertarians in the United States

—Charles Schisler

strong, mutually-supportive allies. Both have so much in common that true advocates of one position should necessarily be strongly supportive of the other. These two individualistic ideas are atheism and libertarianism. When I gave taped lectures on Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism back in the early 1960's, this was brought forcefully to my attention. Many discussions with her supporters and detractors even then alerted me to the basic point of this paper.

So much national energy has gone into trying to make the United States into a religious, if not exclusively, Christian nation—that it may be expected that religious propaganda on all sides has deadened one's ability to think through the specific issues involved. To be an enlightened atheist one must first be aware of arguments promoting atheism—a task not easily found in our culture. But once found or independently discovered, for very good reason not everyone who is pro-freedom would publicly endorse atheism. My personal experience proves that known atheism can seriously affect oneself in the workplace, not just in social situations. Yet there are positive benefits to know the philosophical values of associates, and for those of



NON SEQUITUR By Wiley

Charles Schisler is director of the Palm Beach chapter. He holds a B.S. from the University of Nebraska and retired as a major from the U.S. Air Force

significance to know yours.

Because so much courage is necessary to profess atheism in the U.S. it seems odd that so many do it for reasons almost unrelated to the complete rejection of religion, as such. There are some who are first and foremost enthusiastic promoters of the Democratic party and use atheism primarily to subdue the right-wing Republican party. They use atheism as a tool for political ends—not necessarily because atheism itself has inherently noble intellectual merit.

There are surely those who see monopolistic Christianity as a great threat not just to an enlightened society, but to the great disadvantage of other religious traditions such as liberal Judaism. There are some professed atheists who understand that, like all religions, Judaism may have been founded on mythology, but delude themselves into thinking that Judaism can, or should exist independent of mythology. Other New Age quasi-religious movements with pseudo-scientific quackery, of which Scientology is but one example, are free to propagandize when the dominant religion is put down by atheists.

UNLIKE EUROPEANS WHO more nearly equate liberal as libertarian, in the U.S. we're unsure where libertarians fit within the artificial liberal-conservative spectrum. This illustrates the inadequacies of our political categories and thinking. Having long allied myself with such innovations in thought, I am convinced that liberals, generally speaking, are not as freedom oriented as their label suggests, but psychologically attuned to compulsion in human affairs. Liberals are not as interested in getting rid of god as in displacing god. They want to *play god* for everyone's good, yet not realizing that one's good is more often than not the distinct province of the individual. I quite often know very well what is in my own best interest and preference—but miserably uninformed what strong preferences you may harbor, or how best you may achieve them in all the various avenues and complex choices at your command. In that regard I am an inept liberal. Yet freedom is my (dare I say it) holy ideal. I am, in the true sense of the word, interested in liberty (libertas) and therefore libertarian.

Atheists, just as libertarians, are interested in personal autonomy, in a community of other individuals of principled, ethical persuasion—intolerant of god-domination or the manipulation of others. Those desiring to replace god with some human counterpart are not ideal champions of atheism. Granted, one *can* be an atheist—lamenting that god does not exist—and constantly search for a way to supersede god. However, we who understand that an ultimate creator is an obvious, contradictory lie, and remain determined that no master rules our every move and manipulates our natural, humanistic desire for getting along in this brief life—we are the natural, most worthy representatives of atheism!



Family Values

— Sidney M. Goetz

Has there ever really been any substance to this term?

Insight

ALL THIS TALK about family values is getting to me.

The term 'family values' is frequently qualified by the adjectives "traditional" and "American". That should alert us to be on guard that the basic beautiful concept is being distorted by some to advance their particular agenda or ideology.

Former Vice President Dan Quayle attempted to co-opt the expression for the Republican Party. He was early on the principal spokesman for this new "political" position. But President Bush was not far behind. And the Republican Party platform enshrined the principle of family values as a party ideology, identifying it further as "traditional".

The Democrats stood toe to toe in the debate, advocating the same values by name, though the content differed. Tipper Gore led the Democrats in this battle, ready to take on anyone who tried to challenge her bona fide family values. Her credentials included the leadership of Parent's Music Resource Center, which she co-founded with Susan Baker, wife of Secretary of State James A. Baker III. PMRC had been fighting lewd and violent rock music lyrics since 1985. Her persistence paid off when the Recording Industry Association of America announced the imposition of a uniform record warning label system.

But it took the Republican Party national convention in 1992 to produce, finally, a rash of definitions.

Let's take "traditional" family values first. How far back are we supposed to go to be traditional? Do we go back to the Old and New Testaments? That would really be traditional!

But if we go to the bible, we are going to find uncritical accounts of polygamy, adultery, rape, sodomy, and the most unspeakable violence. We see institutionalized prostitution.

Sid Goetz is a retired attorney, National Board Member of the American Humanist Association, and Florida State Board Member of The American Civil Liberties Union.

We see mass murders. We see sibling hatred and deceit. We see cruelty and physical abuse of children. ('Spare the rod and spoil the child.') And we see men able to divorce their wives by the flick of the wrist. ("You no longer please me. Get thee out of my house.")

Are these the family values that Dan and Marilyn and Barbara are advocating? Of course not!

So let's come down to a more recent past and examine some traditional American family values. What do we find? In our colonial past, Puritan family values included burning witches at the stake. In the Southern states, slavery of the black race, with cruelties such as separation of families and sexual exploitation — not to speak of rape by white masters, were accepted practices.

Are we still going back too far? Are these examples of family values *too* traditional and too painful?

Let's get into the 20th century. In the first few decades, the subjugation of wives and children in the USA, often accompanied by brutal beatings and abuse, was accepted as perfectly normal family values. Women and children were without rights. They were simply chattels of the husband in fact and in law. Of course I'm sure that those who call for the return of the family values of the good old days would publicly deny their goal to be a return to such an era. But I challenge them to look into the theological teachings of Far Right Fundamentalist and Pentecostal churches which preach the inerrancy of the bible and the supreme dominance of the husband and father over wife and children, and their right to administer corporal punishment for refusal to obey. These *still are*, I submit, the sinister objectives of the behind-the-scenes manipulators of the Republican Party. They were actually responsible for a platform which demanded a *constitutional amendment* banning abortion under *any* circumstances, including rape and incest.

Marilyn made it clear at the Republican convention that what she and Dan meant by traditional family values was to turn back the clock to the "good old days" before the great cultural upheavals of the '60s. Speaking about "our generation's social revolution", she said "our goal must be to go back to the future." She was talking about the days when pre-marital sex was very

common, but *not openly acknowledged*... when an unwed young woman who became pregnant was shipped off to some far off place to have her baby and spare the family the public embarrassment. The days when her baby was labelled a "bastard", and the law left him/her in an orphan home bereft of any right to inherit from his father.

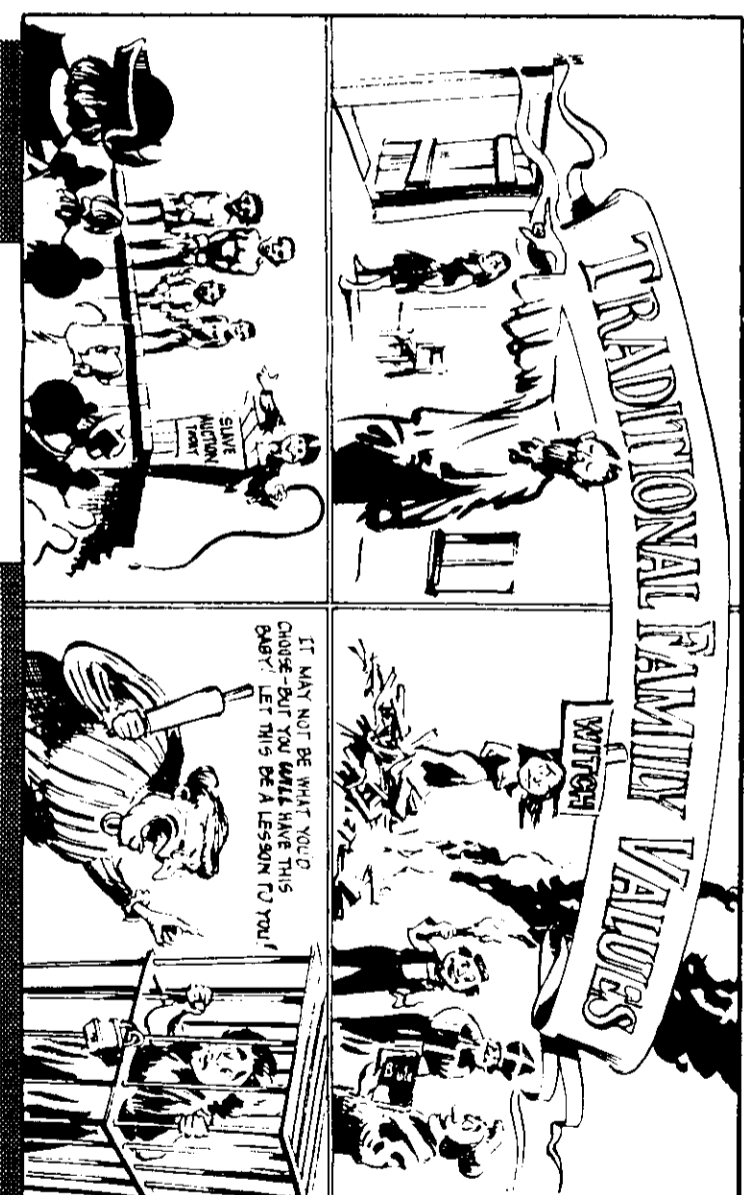
Yes, when the Far Right talks about tradi-

What is the Christian Coalition?

The purpose of the Christian Coalition is five-fold:

- 1) Represent Christians and advocate Christian values by all lawful means before the United States Congress, the various state legislatures, and local councils.
- 2) Train Christians for effective political action, with particular emphasis on preparing them to serve as responsible citizens, activists, and candidates.
- 3) Inform Christians in a timely manner of important issues and legislation to enable them to communicate with public officials at the federal, state, and local level.
- 4) Effectively communicate Christian values in the public arena and speak out in the media on Christian causes and issues.
- 5) Protest anti-Christian bigotry, and hold accountable those individuals, corporations, or agencies that seek to denigrate, defame, or discriminate against Christian values and those who hold them. To engage in legal and political action to protect the freedoms guaranteed under the United States Constitution.

tional values, they're talking about the good old days when parents lied to children and children lied to parents about their sexuality.



When unfaithfulness in marriage was no less commonplace than today. When a woman who sought a divorce was compelled to prove her husband's adultery by hiring detectives to catch him in the act. When perjury by a desperate spouse was so common in marital cases that our system of justice was in danger of collapse. The days when spouse rape was not a crime, and a wife was not permitted to testify in court against her husband. The days when one never even heard about the huge number of cases of incest and child abuse.

One of the principal family values standards in those days was concealment and deceit about family problems. They were simply swept under the rug rather than openly acknowledged and confronted.

A social revolution swept across the nation like a breath of fresh air in the '60s and '70s. It was a revolt against authoritarian figures who failed to practice what they preached, who professed to a morality to which they failed to adhere in their daily lives. America's children caught on to the fact that the preachments often were empty words; that their parents were telling them to do as they say, not as they do.

The fundamentalists wish to return to these traditional family values?

The family values crowd in the Republican Party simply refuses to recognize the realities of the social and economic changes that have come over our country in the past 30 years. They refuse to give recognition to the undeniable fact that white, European, male dominance in the life of the country has been undergoing dramatic change. Economic and demographic studies tell the real story.

Can we realistically expect the homeless, unemployed, single parent mothers struggling to put food on the table for their children to concentrate their energies on other than bread and butter, life and death issues?

I challenge the Pat Buchanans and Pat Robertsons to *get real!* Real family issues involve health care, child care, parental leave and workplace flexibility. Is it so difficult for them to understand and to distinguish between dire needs and moral preachments?

The family values of "hard work, integrity and personal responsibility" have not been discovered by the Republican Party or by the Far Right religionists.

The dominance of white males of Western European origin in the Republican Party has long been noted by our leading commentators. (continued)