

Atheists of Florida CHAPTER EVENTS

MIAMI: For more information about meetings, call the Atheist Hotline at: (305) 936-0210

TAMPA: Saturday October 31. (last Saturday of each month). 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. in meeting room B of the Clearwater East Public Library. 2251 Drew Street. Clearwater. FMI: Ed 813/839-7567.

PALM BEACH: Meetings are held the third Sunday of each month at the Herb Watt Rec. Building, just north of Palm Beach Library at 2:30 p.m. FMI: Charles Schisler (561) 624-9359.

NORTHEAST FLORIDA: Meetings will be notified by mail. FMI: C.W. Mitchell (904) 808-1884.

Finest

continued from page 1

We agree that minutia of bible criticism should not be encouraged because it is childish and unprofessional. It is far better to engage philosophically and analytically in principles. Those who do engage in biblical debate should make it clear that they peak for themselves and do not represent the official position of Atheists of Florida. Our mission should not be directed to negate any specific cult but rather to show as best we can the many important, positive aspects of atheism. We think such an approach is intellectually and psychologically most persuasive. Therefore, although this is not a farewell address since I would still be around and ready to offer my assistance or advice if needed. I would strongly urge you to support our new president. I am confident that Atheists of Florida, Inc. with the new guidelines and its helm at the capable hands of the newly elected president will become a model society not only to be recognized nationwide but to be emulated as well.

Now it is time for us to be more imaginative about what atheism really means if we seriously want to counter-act the religious extremists whose aim is the conversion of our democracy into theocracy. The task is in your hands. Thank you again for all the years of your support.

Most sincerely and atheistically,
Christos Tzanetakos
Founder

Join Us For Dinner!

The Tampa Chapter of Atheists of Florida will be holding their monthly dinner on Wednesday, October 28th, at CDB's Italian Restaurant located at 5104 E Fowler Ave just past USF. Dinner is \$8.75 per person plus gratuity and will be served from a special menu which gives you a choice from the following meals:

- Baked Ziti
- Manacotti
- Eggplant Parmigiana
- Hard Hat Grinder
- (Sandwich with a variety of meats)
- Pizza
- Soup of the Day
- Tossed Salad
- Spinach Salad
- Caesar Salad
- Chef Salad

The restaurant requests that all meals be paid for on one check. To help make this possible we ask that you bring exact cash to pay for your meal. If you have any questions or need directions, please contact:

Ed Golly-813/839-7567 or
Jerry Moore-727/526-4223

8 July/August 1998



P.O. Box 130753
Tampa, FL 33681-0753

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tampa, Florida
PERMIT No. 2020

ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED

Atheists of Florida

Dedicated to the absolute separation of State and church

New developments

WITH FOUR CHAPTERS IN THE state and the outlook for some student chapters to form this year, we now have obtained exclusive telephone lines for each chapter. The phones will typically be answered by a machine which will give current information about the chapters including the next meeting date, time and location. It will also allow callers to leave a name and address to receive more information about Atheists of Florida and receive our newsletter on a complimentary basis for three issues. The new phone numbers and e-mail addresses appear in the nameplate on the left side of this page.

The monthly charges for the service will be split between Atheists of Florida and The Mark Twain Scholarship Fund. Revenues from the Federal Campaign Fund will help defray the expense.

The Northeast Florida chapter has been advertising its meetings in the local paper and the Tampa Bay chapter has begun a print advertising campaign in the *Weekly Planet*. The free ad is listed under the heading *Volunteers, Clubs and Organizations*.

The Atheist Alliance website has featured a page for each member society including ours for over two years now and we have had a good number of responses from it. The expense of publishing a local web page is more than we think we should absorb at this time so we will continue to rely on our connection to the Alliance site, which now has registered the domain name: www.ATHEISTALLIANCE.org.

(see NEW, page 2)

Our finest half decade

Atheists of Florida founder Christos Tzanetakos has served five years as president. Stepping down, he offers his thoughts about the organization.

Dear Members and Friends,

All good things must come to an end, and so has my presidency tenure of Atheists of Florida, Inc.

As the founder and first president of our organization since its inception in 1992, I had the pleasure and privilege to know most of you in person or through your membership profile. Your moral and financial support has made Atheists of Florida a strong force in our state and society. For that I personally and sincerely thank you. Adherent to our democratic principles and my concern for the future of our organization, on May 17, 1998, when we held the sixth annual board of directors meeting, I nominated Ed Golly to be the next president of Atheists of Florida, Inc.



Tzanetakos

Golly is well known to all of you. He has served our organization in the capacities of vice-president and secretary. As its newsletter editor, he elevated our publication to be considered among the best in the nation. And so, I am delighted to inform you that he has graciously accepted the nomination and the board unanimously approved his election to the presidency. Besides the changing of the guards though, the sixth annual board meeting marked another milestone in our organization's quest for social reforms. The board unanimously accepted the recommendations of the committee for policy guidelines.

(see FINEST, back page)

New continued from page 1

In August, the A of F officers met to discuss the financial condition of the organization, our relationship with other freethought organizations, and the Miami International Bookfair which will be held November 15th - 22nd, 1998. Having voted at the previous board meeting to participate, we will be amassing books, pamphlets, booklets, T-shirts and coffee mugs to sell at our table. But the primary purpose of our inclusion is to promote the positive aspects of the atheist lifestyle. Anyone who can help occupy the table for any of the duration of the bookfair, please contact Christos at (561) 489-5505 or AthAFLC@aol.com.

Beginning this calendar year, we began sending notices for membership renewal to each individual member commensurate with the month in which they had joined. This has caused our income to be spread throughout the year which although initially causing some financial difficulties, has now worked out smoothly. Above all, it is the fairest system for the members.

Thanks to all our members for staying with us. It's always difficult for a non-profit organization to operate without any "hired help" since people must give of their time to make it work. Things won't always go as smoothly as we would like, but as our membership increases, we think we will generate more helping hands and see the group improve.

COLUMBIA, S.C. — An article from the Associated Press announced that South Carolina public

S.C. schools can display Bible's rules

schools can place the Ten Commandments on display. The declaration was made by the state attorney general last August in a non-binding, 10-page opinion.

"A public school is not a place of religion. But religion has a constitutional place in the public schools," said Charlic Condon (R).

The opinion, in which Condon also said school boards could begin their meetings with prayer and endorsed other recent controversial church-state policies, was prompted by a proposal from state Board of Educa-

tion member Henry Jordan to allow students to post the commandments.

Condon said the commandments must be part of an exhibit to teach students about law, history or culture. Posting them alone probably would be unconstitutional, he said. Students can display the commandments as a free-speech right, but the state cannot endorse them, Condon said.

Steve Bates, executive director of the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, said Condon's opinion invites South Carolina schools to violate students' religious rights. "He's put us on notice to gear up our legal machinery in anticipation of taking a number of these issues to court," Bates said.

The issue is not likely to be discussed at the next state Board of Education meeting because it is not on the agenda, Chairman Alex Stanton said. Some board members think local districts, not the state, should decide whether to display the commandments, he said.

The following statement was made by former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, on his 80th Birthday, during an interview by Norman Redlich for an article for *The Nation Magazine* (1966). To the question of: "What has been happening back home that gives you the most concern?"

Justice Hugo Black: "Religion. Too little knowledge of history, too little respect for diversity, too much talk of accommodation, people so sure that they've seen the divine light that they want the government to make everyone else see it that way, too..."

"There was nothing more important to the Framers of the Bill of Rights than the subject of religious freedom. They knew that religious differences can lead to hatred and persecution that can tear a country apart. What I don't understand...I can't understand...is how people in America can look at what is happening in the rest of the world, where people are killing each other because of religious differences, and then chip away at the constitutional rights that were put there for the very purpose of avoiding these problems. They gave us something new...a written guarantee of religious freedom, and they enforced that freedom by requiring that government and religion be separate — that government couldn't support any religions or all religions, whether through taxes, prayers, or giving money to religious schools, or putting the stamp of official approval on any religious faith."

Jesus in the joint

A of F member Alton Pittman submitted this letter which refers to the execution of the first woman in several decades in Texas earlier this year.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The recent execution of the woman in Texas



who claimed to have found God there reminded me of an item that appeared in the *St. Petersburg Times* on November 16, 1983. Radio commentator Robert W. "Bob" Snyder was up for sentencing before Circuit Judge David Seth Walker. After telling the judge of his strong belief in the Lord the judge wearily told Snyder that he knew the story. He said he had heard it from almost everyone being sentenced. "It has been said that perhaps the miracle of Easter is a myth and that God is indeed alive and well and living in the Pinellas County jail," the judge said, "because everyone who is sent over there seems to meet him shortly thereafter."

I would wager that the executed woman, if asked shortly before she committed her crime by a pollster if she believed in God, would have answered in the affirmative. Christians strongly believe that after they have "sinned" they can ask for forgiveness and be forgiven.

Religion has no place in the courtroom. To allow religion to be considered places non-conformists, such as atheists, at a disadvantage. The fact that atheists are such peaceful, law-abiding citizens should not obviate this principle.

Alton R. Pittman
Bronson, FL.

Atheism on the sleeve

Dear Editor:

I recently received an Atheists of Florida T-shirt that says: "Atheists are Beyond Belief." I am a paranoid individual so I wasn't sure that I could wear it in public. I don't like to be noticed, but I did wear it out one day. In the grocery store, one black female customer shrieked when she saw it. The black female checkout clerk said, "Oh, God!" Several men became visibly angry when they noticed it. At Tyrone Square Mall moving at high speed I got less of a response. One woman smiled. Two teenage boys said, "...That's cool," and I got the usual angry men. People wearing Christian crosses did not notice it, which may be significant. When I got to the end of the shopping mall, I looked around and as I glanced at an Orange Julius stand I saw the following: "Orange Judas."

This happens to me often. A naive person might think that he had betrayed Jesus by wearing the T-shirt. Fortunately, I am psychologically sophisticated. Psychiatrically speaking, seeing Judas instead of Julius was a misperception caused by my unconscious mind projecting its contents upon a stimulus. According to Ayn Rand (an atheist) the unconscious mind is an easily programmable machine. It has a location in the material brain. Religious people have always known how to condition or brainwash this part of the mind-brain. People are especially vulnerable to indoctrination before the age of six and it lasts for life in many people. Mentally ill people are especially at risk for these religious perceptual distortions.

Freud was an atheist, but we should bear in mind what was said by his religious disciples. Wilhelm Stekel boasted that his freethinking patients often dreamed about religious themes. Carl Jung admitted that Saint Paul was converted to Christianity because he underestimated Christianity's presence in the collective unconscious of the time. Apparently, Christianity is always lurking in our unconscious minds waiting to take us over, and the media and other parts of the environment are constantly reinforcing these fantasies.

If you are mentally ill or have recently been in contact with a church, cult or 12-step program and you were religious as a child you are in danger of regressing to the religious standpoint. As Satire said, "...There are no omelets because we interpret them as we wish."

David Barrera
Gulfport, FL.

Secularization of society

Yaciv responds to a column by George Will which appeared in the Tampa Tribune

Editor:

For once I agree with George Will, at least sort of.

Will is absolutely right that the confusion caused by attempting to deny the obvious religious nature of the Ten Commandments contributes to the secularization of society. I see this as a good thing, which undoubtedly Will does not. As an atheist, I don't know that my opinion of the basic concepts underlying most religions could be lessened, so that in itself is no reason for religionists to avoid circumlocutions while attempting to foist their ideas on the rest of us. However, my opinion of the believers is unquestionably sullied by such subterfuge. If you truly believe in this deity, in its omnipotence and similar qualities, then at least have the guts to say so directly instead of hiding behind the absurdity of redefining your beliefs as secular. All this legal and semantic maneuvering reaffirms my opinion that the most publicly devout believers are the biggest hypocrites.

Brent Yaciv
Tampa



Published eight times a year by Atheists of Florida, Inc., a non-profit, educational organization designed to heighten public awareness about atheism and to provide intellectually stimulating contacts for the membership. Membership dues and general correspondence should be sent to:

Atheists of Florida
P.O. Box 130783
Ft. Pierce, FL 34948-3883
E-mail: AthAI.FL@aol.com
Contact Phone: (305) 936-0210

Membership dues

<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member	\$ 500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student (under 25 yrs)	10.00

Send newsletter correspondence to:
Atheists of Florida
P.O. Box 130783
Ft. Pierce, FL 34948-3883
E-mail: AthAI.FL@aol.com

The A of F newsletter is provided free to our members as a service of the organization. All articles are published on a non-partisan basis. Articles may be edited for clarity or length. Atheists of Florida, Inc. is affiliated with the national Atheist Alliance for purposes of information exchange.

Officers

Chairman: John Xenopoulos, Ph.D.
President: Ed Golly
Vice President: Charles Schaefer
Secretary: Jim Strayer
Treasurer: Charles A. Ross
Atheist Hotline Coordinator: Celia Grantz
State Board of Directors: Anthony J. Schkestein, James Strayer, Rebecca Porto, Alan Altman, Lori Katz, Steven Kallies, Dan Eble, Christos Tzanetakos
Newsletter Editor: Ed Golly

— by Adam Butler

WHEN I FIRST read about Camp Quest, the Free Inquiry Group's secular humanist summer camp, I was very impressed. A young freethinker myself, I could remember the difficulties surrounding growing up "different" and I was happy to hear that a tolerant, humanistic program was being built for tolerant, humanis-

Camp Quest '98

tic children. So when I was asked to be a camp counselor in this, Camp Quest's third year of operation, how could I say no?

Held July 18-26 in a beautiful area near Lebanon, Ohio, this year's Camp Quest has already been hailed as the best one yet--and for good reason. The eight-day program was incredible for both campers and counselors alike.

Although the annual event included all of the traditional camp activities (canoeing, hiking, horseback riding, swimming, etc.), Camp Quest was much more than a glorified Boy Scout retreat. Interspersed throughout the schedule were various educational programs on such subjects as geology, biology, computer science, history, physics, and humanism. Expertly tempering learning activities with generous amounts of free time and games, Camp Quest directors Helen and Edwin Kagin provided campers with an extremely well rounded experience.

Among the educational programs was a trip to the Caesar Creek Spillway, an area near Caesar Creek Dam that is famous to fossil collectors. After a few tips from geology professor Steve Schafersman and a couple of hours of searching, each camper had his or her collection bag full of trilobites, brachiopods, and other calcified creatures from Earth's past. Darwin most certainly would have been proud.

Another exciting field trip took us to Ohio's Fort Ancient museum, which we toured before travelling to see an exquisite archeological find: two large stone snake effigies made by Native Americans to commemorate the winter and summer solstices. The snakes, which were discovered only a few years ago, consisted of long winding piles of stones and two large wooden poles. Known only as "Snake Effigy #1," the first snake fell perfectly in line with the shadow cast by its wooden pole on the morning of the summer solstice. The other snake, named "Snake Effigy #2" (archeologists are so creative), was the exact opposite, falling inline with its pole's shadow six months later. These extraordinary sights would serve as discussion topics for the rest of the week.

Adam Butler can be reached at:
<http://www.dpo.uab.edu/~abutler>
 or e-mail at: abutler@uab.edu

year's Camp Quest was biology teacher Jim Strayer and his continuous lessons about nature and the environment. Whether he was talking about evolution, presenting a slideshow on insects, or warning us about the different types of poison ivy around our campgrounds (I didn't know poison ivy could be red--did you?). Jim can only be described as a charismatic, evangelical scientist. Never before have I seen a teacher get people so excited about a subject. Regardless of whether he was talking about the sexual habits of preying mantises or the newly formed bark of a young tree, Jim's upbeat personality made every lesson not only fun, but memorable, as well.

Probably one of the most popular activities with the campers was Ed Golly's airplane rides. Golly, president of Atheists of Florida, has been a private pilot for over 25 years. Flying over our campgrounds and the nearby Kings Island amusement park, Ed gave each of his young co-pilots a lesson on the inner workings of an aircraft and the physics that surround its ability to stay aloft. One counselor, however, didn't learn any of that because he was too busy gripping his seat for dear life. Amazed by how his fear of heights had never bothered him in larger planes, this silly counselor (who will remain anonymous) was very different from the other passengers who smashed themselves up against the windows to take photographs and laughed as they felt the "G's" caused by a sixty-degree bank. Armed with the best toy around and the skill of a professional, Ed certainly knew how to show the campers the time of their lives.

Also on staff this year was Fred Edwards, Executive Director of the American Humanist Association. Although Fred had a leadership role in many different projects, most campers probably remember him as the "famous freethinkers guy." After every meal, Fred took a moment to discuss two famous freethinkers, sharing the incredible stories of great individuals like Bertrand Russell, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Charles Darwin, and Gloria Steinem with the room. Fred's biographies were well planned, interesting, and they made one proud to be a freethinker. They were an excellent addition to the Camp Quest program.

As for the campers, it was amazing to meet so many young men and women (forty in all) growing up without religion and, to tell the truth, I couldn't help but be a little bit envious of them. Had I received such a healthy dose of skepticism as a child, I might not have wasted sixteen years of my life in fear of invisible gods and tired religious authority.

These children are the future of freethought and, thanks to Camp Quest, the future looks better than we ever could have imagined. **A**

FOR THOSE OF YOU who haven't yet seen Jim Carrey's newest movie, perhaps because you think of him only as "Mr. Talking Butt-cheeks," don't let your prejudices deny you the pleasure. Go see it, and *then* read this, because I'm going to tell you how it ends. Go. Now.

Okay, welcome back. Great movie, wasn't it? Certainly not what most people have come to expect from Carrey. Truman Burbank, and his show, travels at a leisurely pace, allowing us to soak in all the levels and imagine what it would be like to live your entire life, unknowingly, as

book & film REVIEW

Truman or True Atheist?

Brent Yactaw



an actor on a TV show. Of course, it's not all that bad.

After all, Truman has a whole cast of characters to love and protect him. He even has, literally, a "heavenly father" named

Christof who watches over him, directing his life, making sure he doesn't get hurt too bad. Christof chooses his wife for him, and manipulates things so that another woman who catches his eye is "spirited away." From his 5,000 camera view, perched above Truman in a moon-view observation post, Christof and his cast of "angels" keep Truman's life as pleasant as the *Leave It To Beaver* show ever was. His angels are benevolent; they wear T-shirts that say "I love him, Protect him." Truman lives a perfect life.

Well, almost. Truman still pines for his lost love, secretly abhors his actress-wife, and wants to see the world despite all the psychological and physical

Hemlock Society of Florida, Inc.

P.O. Box 39561
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33339-9561
 800/849-9349
 954/563-7386

MARY BENNETT HUDSON

manipulation to keep him in his perfect little town. Crazy as it sounds, he begins to understand that the world revolves around him, and whatever he wishes for comes true, at least so long as Christof thinks it's best. Truman tries to make a break for it, is defeated at every turn, and eventually realizes his "wife" is "one of them," so she divorces him and another sexy blonde/replacement wife suddenly is assigned to work in the cubicle next to his. Sounds a lot like the heaven described by religion, does it not? Truman aches for freedom, and he eventually makes his way to the outside of his domed world, after several symbolic scenes including one Jonah-esque sailing voyage. He reaches the wall to his world, finds the door, and hears the voice of god. In this case, god actually exists, and speaks to him about how much he cares for Truman. Christof's pitch is so exactly like that of organized religion I'm surprised more reviewers didn't pick up on it, but I guess they're more interested in critiquing America's voyeuristic urges and TV shows than seeing the big picture.

Of course, I'm not a critic. I saw Truman, the searcher, seeking his god, seeking to understand or even exceed the limits of his reality. I saw Truman discovering, piece by piece, evidence that his god really existed, that the world was manipulated for his convenience just as those who pray in our world believe it is. Finally, Truman hears the voice of the controlling god, the deity of his world, who offers him safety and security and promises to care for him for eternity (okay, the rest of his life, but it might as well be eternity), if only Truman will turn back from the forbidden world and stay in his Eden.

Truman's response shows that he (or at least the show's writers) understands the mind of an atheist. For even given definitive proof of a deity's existence, even if we could know for sure that our days were controlled and manipulated to keep us safe and warm and happy, we would choose not to stay in Eden but to boldly go where others fear to tread. (Apologies for mixed metaphors, but one must do what one must do!) Truman tells god/Christof to have a nice day but he's leaving, no thanks, no need for a god to watch over him and control his life, he'll take his chances on his own.

It's the same choice any true atheist would make. **A**

Miami/Dade Chapter seeks new director

Rebeca Porto, Miami Chapter Director, would like to locate someone who can assist her or completely assume her position of Director. If interested, please contact either:
 Ed Golly (813) 839-7567 AthAI FL E@aol.com
 or Christos Tzanetakos (561) 489-5505 AthAI FL C@aol.com

This is an editorial column which appeared in the Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel last May. Following is a response by Atheists of Florida member George J. Meyer, M.D.

Religion and science still not shaking hands

Both churchmen and scientists would be wise to read 'Hamlet'

— Kingsley Guy, Editorial Page Editor

Religion and science answer different questions about the world.

So says a guidebook released recently by the National Academy of Sciences on how to teach evolution in the nation's public schools.

The words sum up the way science and Western religion have been relation to each other for the last 350 years.

The distinction between science and religion can be traced back to 17th century French philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes, who declared that matter and spirit are separate and distinct.

The widespread acceptance of Cartesian "dualism" permitted scientists to function in their own realm, examining the physical laws of nature, and clergymen to function in theirs, contemplating the ways of God.

This was an acceptable arrangement at the time, considering that earlier in the century churchmen had threatened the scientist Galileo with execution unless he recanted his claim that the earth revolved around the sun.

Concepts have changed since then. The cause-and-effect certainty of classical physics has given way to the uncertainty of quantum physics. Developments in the new sciences also are pointing to an interconnected universe, in which unity rather than duality prevails.

At this stage in human history, it's legitimate to question whether the neat distinction between matter and spirit, science and religion, devised by Descartes holds up to either scientific or religious scrutiny.

Among those who claim it does not are so-called scientific creationists. They say the theory of evolution is bunk, and insist that the universe and life on Earth were created quite recently, and suddenly. Their pseudo-scientific "theory" bears a striking

of Science's guidebook warns against teaching creationism in public schools, correctly pointing out that the data the creationists presently can't stand up to serious scientific inquiry.

All but the scientifically illiterate can concede that creationist dogma claiming the universe is tens of thousands rather than billions of years old is nonsense.

The creationists, however, are on solid ground in challenging Charles Darwin's contention that "natural selection" is the mechanism by which evolution takes place. Legitimate scientists also are challenging the concept of gradual evolution through random mutation.

Cambridge University's Roger Penrose has done computer calculations that show the odds that the universe came into existence through random chance are so ridiculously tiny as to not even be worth considering.

Other top scientists say their calculations demonstrate the human mind could not have evolved through random mutation to its present complexity in the mere 4.6 billion years of Earth's existence.

If evolution isn't random, then how did life evolve to its current state?

The answer to that question has immense religious implications. Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge have broached the theory that evolution takes place not gradually, but in rapid bursts, with new species developing in 5,000 to 50,000 years, a mere instant in geologic time. This would account for gaps in the fossil record.

Other scientists are exploring the idea that nature develops along pre-existing, archetypal patterns. This concept lends credence to Plato's contention that perfection exists in some mystical realm.

A few modern scientists even are pursuing the ideas of French biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who predicated Darwin by half a century, and surmised that evolution takes place through a learning process in nature. The quintessentially religious practice of prayer also has been subjected to rigorous scientific examination.

Double-blind studies indicate prayer helps in the healing process, even when the people being healed aren't aware others are praying for them. Is the efficacy of prayer due to something supernatural? Or is it entirely natural, with science not yet able to conclusively explain the mechanism by which it works?

In Hamlet, Shakespeare wrote: "There are more things in heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

The quote is worth contemplating by churchmen and scientists alike.

Meyer's response:

Religion, science never that friendly

— George J. Meyer, M.D.

The Kingsley Guy column of April 16 contained some erudite comments, and it pleases me that it mentioned some eminent scientists such as Stephen Jay Gould. Although I agree with much of what was written, especially Guy's (and Shakespeare's) observation that we know virtually nothing about almost everything, please let me take issue with some of the statements and conclusions.

I think that the relationship between science and religion has never been a friendly one. A few examples: The Greek philosopher Democritus (c. 460--c. 370 B.C.) postulated a world that did not require deistic or supernatural intervention, a less than popular viewpoint. Many of the most influential Christians resisted anesthesia, lightning rods, vaccination and the concept that our planet is not the center of the universe. Andrew Dickson White, the first president of Cornell University and a practicing Episcopalian, wrote the masterful *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1896). In my opinion, the reason for such "warfare" is that religion relies on authoritarian, non-critical faith, while science is based on facts. Believing is easier than thinking.

Cartesian dualism was and is artificial. Don't we know the "mind" is a function of the brain (and the brain is part of the body)? We do not know that the "soul" or "spirit" exists, as religion may define the terms.

I find fault with the statement that "The cause-and-effect certainty of classical physics has given way to the uncertainty of classical physics." The everyday laws of physics have not been repealed: if you jump off a 10th-floor balcony, you will go down. The colors of the spectrum of white light invariably line

all the loose ends of our knowledge has been going on for many years, and it may be triumphantly announced tomorrow. But that will not change or repeal the law of gravity, for example, as it relates to everyday life.

Guy gives undue credit to creationists who "are on solid ground in challenging Charles Darwin's contention that 'natural selection' is the mechanism by which evolution takes place." It seems to me that natural selection does explain how evolution can and does occur. That important matter is the fact of evolution is undisputed by all reputable scientists.

Indeed, scientists should and do raise questions about legitimate scientific concerns. The method or methods of evolution can fall into that category. Probably all the answers will never be forthcoming, but certainly they will not be provided by religion, as I understand "religion."

Guy questions whether evolution is random, then states that the answer to how life evolved, if evolution is not random, "has immense religious implications." I interpret this position as a belief that a supreme being is in charge of the universe, including its origin, evolution and day-to-day operation. But how did such an entity originate? Doesn't almost every religion have a different answer to that question? (I think Richard Dawkins in *The Blind Watchmaker* answers the "random" question as it applies to evolution.)

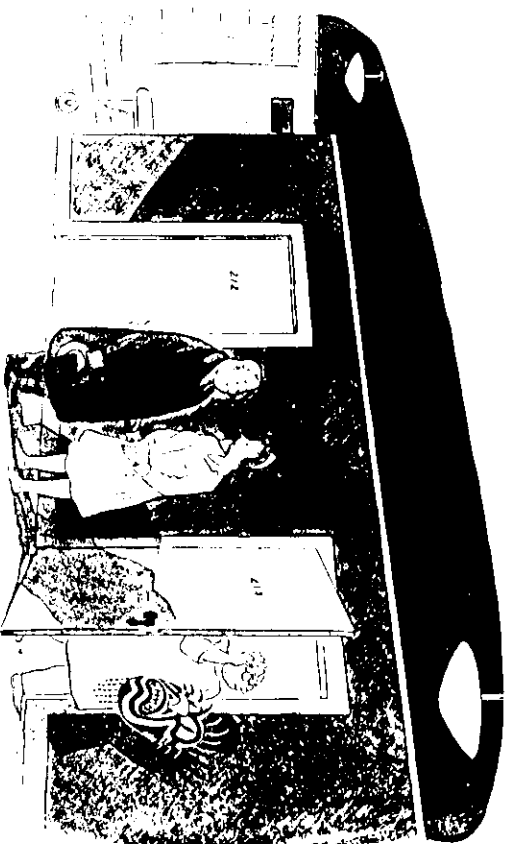
Finally, the "quintessentially religious practice of prayer" has failed for all the centuries of human history. I would like to see the references for the "double-blind studies" that show how prayer helps in the healing process. If religious prayer were efficacious, would not the mortality rates for Holy Cross Hospital in Fort Lauderdale be significantly more favorable than those for Broward General, Imperial Point or North Ridge? After all, Holy Cross has at least one chaplain, many prayerful nuns, many pious employees and hundreds of religious volunteers -- all imploring their God to grant health to the hospital's patients.

If intercessory prayer were really helpful, would not religiously oriented hospitals be overwhelmed with patients, to the detriment and chagrin of nonreligious hospitals? Would not all hospitals be obliged to maintain professionals to offer prayers to all the gods, if not for humanitarian reasons then because of possible multiplicative implications of their absence? This could open a whole new field of health professionals. And just imagine the immense effects generated by a nurse simultaneously practicing therapeutic touch and prayer!

Thank you for the thoughtful and thought-provoking column. I applaud Guy's emphasis on science and the rejection of teaching creationism in our public schools.

the relation-ship between science and religion has never been a friendly one

Atheists of Florida member Dr. George J. Meyer is a retired radiologist who was on staff of Holy Cross Hospital for 30 years. Meyer lives in Boca Raton.



Dr. Perry is doing everything humanity possible."

...You must try not to worry. ...up in a particular order. The time for the next eclipse of the sun or moon can be predicted accurately to within a few seconds. And so on. The effort to find a grand unification theory (tying together