

## Atheists of Florida CHAPTER MEETINGS:

### MIAMI:

Sunday, January 28th, at the Ft. Lauderdale Main Library, 2:00 pm in the Boardroom. Additional information -- Atheist Hotline: (305) 936-0210.

### TAMPA:

New meeting time this year but same location. Saturday, Jan. 27 at Clearwater East Public Library, 2251 Drew St., Meeting Room B. At 12:30 we will view a tape of a CNN program provided by A of F member Jack Basart, part time Colorado resident, featuring John Murphy, Chairman of the Coloradans for Fair Property Taxation drive. This movement seeks to have property taxes assessed on all churches in Colorado. Meeting follows from 1:00 to 2:00.

### MANA-SOTA:

Sunday, January 28, 1:30 to 3:30 at the Marie Selby Public Library, 1001 Boulevard of the Arts, Sarasota.

## Delphi

*continued from page 7*

THE BROAD GOAL OF THE SOCIETY  
WILL BE TO CONTRIBUTE TO  
THE GREATEST ISSUES THAT  
HUMANITY IS FACING TODAY:

- Prevention of global catastrophe
- Creation of an environment adequate for the peace and progress for all human beings
- Prevention of a sixth mass extinction of life on the planet, and preservation of the human species.

The Society will undertake the enormous task of translating these precepts into practical action. A plan of action will be designed based on objectives that might act as catalysts for global change. These objectives include the

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8 January 1996



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

ADDRESS CORRECTION  
REQUESTED

# Atheists of Florida

Dedicated to the absolute separation of State and church

Volume V Number 1

January, 1996



## Scholarship awards

THE MARK TWAIN SCHOLARSHIP Fund, Inc., the official scholarship fund of Atheists of Florida, Inc., is proud to announce the recipients of its 1995 grants. The grants are awarded on the basis of a competition judged by the board members of the fund.

First place award of \$300.00 to: **Mr. George I. Reyes of Harvard Law School.**  
Second place award of \$100.00 to: **Mr. Brent Yaciv of Florida State University.**

The checks and certificates of award will be presented to the winners on Sunday, February 25th, 1996, at 2:00 during the Awards Presentation of the Humanists of Florida seventeenth annual conference (see insert). The Seventeenth Annual Conference is organized by the Humanists of Florida in cooperation with:

- \* Atheists of Florida, Inc.
- \* The Council for Democratic & Secular Humanism
- \* The Freedom from Religion Foundation
- \* The Florida Unitarian Universalists

Atheists of Florida, Inc. will be represented by two speakers, Christos Tzanetakos, President of Atheists of Florida, Inc., will deliver a speech entitled: "Life: A Phenomenon of Organized Complexity" and John Xanthopoulos, Ph.D., Board Member of Atheists of Florida, Inc., will present a prescription for survival: "One World or None."

## Delphi Declaration

— *Christos Tzanetakos*

LAST JUNE, MY WIFE and I had the pleasure of attending an International conference, sponsored by the International Humanists and Ethical Union, and the Greek Ministry of Culture. The event took place at the ancient site of Delphi. It is my personal conviction that the new international Non-Governmental Organization "The Delphi Society" which emerged from this conference, has the potential of becoming instrumental for the betterment of our planet.

After a great deal of mail correspondence among the participants, including myself, I signed the final Declaration. Following is the text of the Delphi Declaration which will be submitted on our Agenda at the Atheist Alliance convention in Minnesota this April.

AUGUST 1995

### THE DELPHI DECLARATION

This Declaration derives from an International Multidisciplinary Conference on "Human Behavior and the Meaning of Modern Humanism", which was held at Delphi, Greece, from June 14-17, 1995.

The participants from many fields of Science and the Humanities pondered the human predicament. In a four-day intensive scientific exploration, participants from a wide range of disciplines\* debated the dominant issues of the existence of the human species. This was the first occasion on which such an intellectually diverse group has approached the subject of human existence holistically and from so

*(continued page 7)*

### Alliance Members:

Atheists United  
Los Angeles  
Atheist Coalition  
San Diego  
Atheist Network  
Houston  
Minnesota Atheists  
Atheists of Florida  
Atheists of San Francisco Region  
Atheists and Agnostics of Wisconsin  
Atheist Centre  
Vijayawada, India  
Atheist and Other Freethinkers  
Sacramento CA  
Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia  
Pocopson PA  
Metroplex Atheists  
Dallas/Ft Worth TX

new concepts of "population health", and "a new role for medicine" for a sustained balance of reproduction and optimization of the environment.

To promote these goals effectively, we will cooperate with governmental and non-governmental agencies, business and industry, mass media, environmentalists and conservationists, and advocates of allied causes.

The Society has the ambition to succeed where all the religions and all the ideologies throughout the centuries have been largely unsuccessful, *i.e.* to define the way that will unite the human species.

Signed this 13th day of September, 1995

By: *Christos Tzanetakos*  
President, Atheists of Florida, Inc.

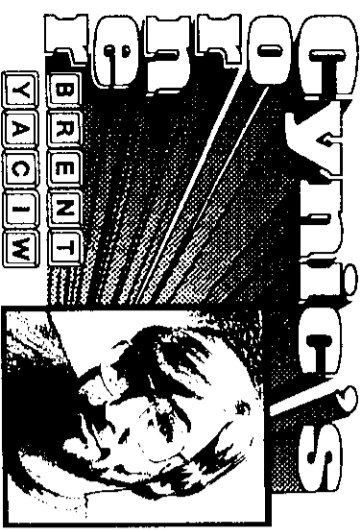
\* *Anthropologists, Sociologists, Biologists, Neurobiologists, Physicians, Physicists, Astro-physicists, Chaos theorists, Environmentalists, Economists, Management Professors, Writers, Artists, Theologians, Clergy, Philosopher, Humanists, Businessmen, Journalists and Politicians.*

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THESEMS DISNEY CORPORATION has been taking a beating from religionists of late. I'm sure everyone's heard the claims of "sex" in *The Lion King*, and you're probably aware of the asinine attacks by Florida's elected cretins concerning Disney's decision to allow same-sex couples to participate in its health plans. However demonstrate of the "too much time on one's hand" syndrome the former might be, and



**Disney: The "Anti-family values" company?"**

to be running around malls unsupervised. However, unquented "reproductive rights" and their effect on the intelligence level of the general population is another column.)

Your response, as a same atheist battling the indoctrination into make-believe=reality of children, is naturally something like: "You'd be wasting your money, kid. That "Santa" is just an ordinary guy with a fake beard and a cheap suit; in fact, there is no such thing as a real Santa!" The kid looks at you as do most Xians when you attempt to introduce rational thought into their world view, namely dumbstruck. You walk away, thinking that you've done the world a service planting a seed of doubt in that young mind.

**Not so fast, hucko!**

A few minutes later, you see the kid dragging an entourage of parents and mall security. Pointing in your direction and shouting, "There he is!" the guards escort you to the security office where you admit that, yes indeed, you told the truth about their Santa. They have you sign the statement after making you supply your name and other data. You leave somewhat relieved that you weren't falsely accused of child molestation, but curious as well. However, you forget about the incident shortly.

Next thing you know, you get a subpoena to appear in court on a charge of child abuse! Now it's your turn to be dumbstruck. When the court date arrives, you show up and are charged with "exposing the child to the reality that Santa is, in fact, make-believe." Questioned by the judge, you admit that the statement on file at the mall is correct. The judge finds for the plaintiff, and awards them

\$250,000 as "fair, just, and equitable damages for negligence leading to trauma and emotional distress." Battling the case as far as you can, you lose every time, and between legal bills and court awards you're now in debt to the tune of \$500,000.

**Reality check?**

I know some of you are shaking your heads thinking, "couldn't ever happen." Don't bet Disney that it can't, because there's little difference between actual Disney cases and what just happened in my make-believe make-believe. In October 1989, a couple in Idaho visited Disneyland and were detained on suspicion of shoplifting. While being questioned, the children saw Disney characters backstage carrying the heads to their costumes. The family alleged the children were traumatized, and Disney settled out of court for an undisclosed sum. This year, it happened again in August, while a family that had been robbed was being questioned by Disney security, and the lawsuit is quoted as stating that in addition to the hardship on the parents caused by "hours of questioning" concerning the robbery, emotional distress for the children was caused by "having employees of the Walt Disney Company exposing the children to the reality that the Disney characters were, in fact, make-believe."

**Why stop there?**

Of course, the accusations could really get ugly concerning adults. How often have you heard even atheists say things like "my parents/relatives don't know I'm an atheist, because I don't want to upset them" or "there's no point in telling people X-mess is just another myth borrowing the ancient Winter Solstice celebration, so let them enjoy their holiday cheer." I can just see it now, atheist organizations being sued left and right for the "trauma" we cause by exposing adults to reality! We don't have the deep pockets of Disney; defending just a few lawsuits that we can't get taken care of pro bono would break us. I have to think of myself as needing to

## Delphi

*continued from page 1*

many different perspectives. A consensus was reached on the seven issues below:

- 1) The carrying capacity of the Planet and its population growth, notably in the underdeveloped areas of the world, must be of primary concern, for it includes potential sources for unprecedented human and natural catastrophes.
- 2) The abundance of the resources of the developed world and the poverty in the underdeveloped countries are threatening political tension, mass migration and violent confrontations. This problem, addressed until now with policies of "sustainable development", must be approached anew with rational and scientific methods.
- 3) The human-made modifications of the planetary ecosystems ("environment") threaten to produce irreversible and catastrophic changes.
- 4) Wars, especially with the use of weapons of mass destruction threaten the survival of many forms of life, including humankind.
- 5) Ongoing advances in science, technology, and biology are changing the world dramatically. However, the basic characteristics of human behavior, and the central principles of ethics that earmark Human History and are responsible for Humanity's continuous swings

from the most glorious achievements to the most terrible monstrosities have remained unchanged throughout the centuries.

- 6) The study of patterns of human behavior from a holistic point of view, integrating the findings from biological, neurophysiological, cultural, philosophical, political and other points of view, is essential for the survival of the human species.
- 7) The development and implementation of a new global Ethic and Philosophy, adequate to the challenges of the new emerging world, is critical for human survival.

These issues are the most important in the world today. The future of humankind depends on resolving them. We cannot confront these issues with archaic philosophical, religious, and biological thinking. Such thinking explains the difficulties encountered at the recent International Conferences on Environment and Human Population Growth. We need a new approach and a new organization.

The conference has therefore unanimously decided to create the Delphi Society. This new Society will approach the problems of human existence and the future of humankind holistically and from a multidisciplinary point of view with a unifying concept based on the patterns of human behavior. An understanding of human behavior is absolutely necessary if we are to explain how we came to our present plight. The study of patterns of human behavior will be a long lasting project for the Society, but the action of the Society today will be guided by an approximate understanding of human behavior.

*Use this form and the envelope provided to join or renew your membership in Atheists of Florida for 1996. Next month, your mailing label will be coded on top indicating your membership status.*



## Atheists of Florida, Inc. MEMBERSHIP FORM

If your mailing label is correct on the reverse side of this form, you need only check the membership category you desire and send this form to:

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P.O. Box 530102  
Miami, FL 33153-0102**

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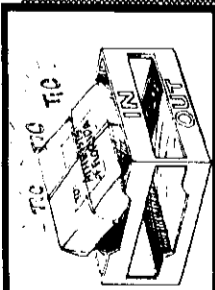
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(turn page)

## Strayer responds

When Jim Strayer was in Denver attending the FFRF Conference, a letter appeared in the Colorado Daily, the University of Colorado student newspaper. This letter attacked evolution and Darwinism. It said in part, "If Darwin's theory was accurate, there would be extensive evidence of gradual transitions in the



# Letters

fossil or bone records. There are none. Darwin seemed to confuse the minor distortions caused by adaptation to what he classified as a new creation.

A resident of Boulder, where the paper is printed, asked Strayer to answer this letter. He did and it was printed in the Colorado Daily last November. The reply is well worth reprinting here.

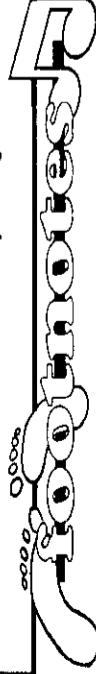
Colorado Daily  
Greetings,

I was in the Boulder area last week and read a copy of the Colorado Daily. I am submitting the following for your consideration for the Revolving Door.

Concerning, "Downgrading the human race as a whole" by Melanie Schurr.

Melanie Schurr's attack of Darwinism is a typical creationist ploy. Darwin did his work one hundred and thirty-five years ago. It should be apparent, even to the most unformed, that advances have been made in the evidence that supports evolution. Charles Darwin did not have the benefit of computers, ultra-sound, the electron microscope, radioactive dating, X-ray, plate tectonics, DNA sequencing, or any other scientific advancement of the last one hundred years. It is typical for creationists to attack the scientist and not the science, or refer to out-dated information and disregard recent discoveries.

To criticize Darwin's work by using the ex-



Dan Bridges sent a \$30.00 check in appreciation of receiving our newsletter.

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ample of fossils shows a complete lack of understanding of his works. Only eleven percent of his writings were based on fossil evidence. If there was no fossil evidence, evolution would still be a proven scientific fact because of all the other physical evidence.

Pasteur, Einstein, Newton, and Darwin, like all scientists, made mistakes. These mistakes were and are being investigated and corrected by other scientists. That is what science is - the use of evidence to support or change a theory. There has been no theory advanced to explain the diversity of life and the physical changes in the universe other than evolution. Hopefully, Ms. Schurr knows that even a hypothesis must have some evidence to support it. And once enough evidence is assembled and has been tested and investigated by others it may become a theory. Then it undergoes massive research and is either accepted by the scientific community or discarded. After one hundred and thirty-five years, no theory has replaced evolution, and the evidence to support it is overwhelming. A scientific law is just a theory that has so much evidence to support it that it seems constant. We should be referring to evolution as the "Law of Evolution" and not the theory of evolution. There is more scientific evidence to support the theory of evolution than there is to support the law of gravity. There is much evidence to show what gravity does, but almost none to show what causes it. We know what evolution does and we know what causes it.

The scientific instruments that are used in the study of medicine, immunology, endocrinology and other health-related fields are the same instruments that are used to study evolution. The instruments that are used to search for natural resources, develop agriculture, advance animal husbandry, investigate crimes, and further environmental studies are the same instruments that are used to study evolution. It would be ridiculous to accept all of the knowledge gained in these areas and ignore the knowledge acquired about evolution. But, of course, some people do.

If Ms. Schurr knows of a theory, or even a hypothesis, that is based on physical evidence and not on faith or superstition, that explains the diversity of life, she should share it with us...the world is waiting.

## From the I-net

To: Brent Yaciw AthAIFLB  
Hey! I saw you on TV last night, talking about descriptive versus prescriptive explanations of events. It got a little dull, but still it's cool to have "Atheist's Forum" scream at you from the TV page. You should put the listing in all caps to accentuate it!

Dennis Leach  
DLEACH01@servms.fiu.edu

support Disney, but I guess it's like the time the ACLU ended up supporting the Nazi march: Next time, the target could be us! So if your local politician is one who's joined the RRR attacking Disney's policies, let them

IN INDIA, HINDUISM is a broad term encompassing all aspects of the religion from the disciples of Vedantic philosophy and high-caste Brahmins on down to the lower-caste worshippers of various village gods and the barbarous aboriginals worshipping stones. The caste system is an important factor in the Hindu religion, with intermarriage, occupation, locality and outer tribes all playing a part in controlling the lives of the Indian people.

Hindu is all-inclusive and tolerant of other religions, often incorporating them into their own beliefs. After a listing of the "great" gods, Hindus follow many deities which are said to number over 330 million. The explanation for this is that each village has its own "guardian mother" and its own demon, plus various other deities (famous and lesser known men, animals, and even trees). Some of the most popular of the many thousands of gods worshipped are Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver (Buddha is

considered one incarnation of Vishnu); and Siva, the destroyer and also the "re-creator". An example of the primitive aspects of Hindu religion is found in worshippers of Siva who demonstrate their faith by such practices as keeping their arms and legs in one position with clenched fists until their nails grow through their palms.

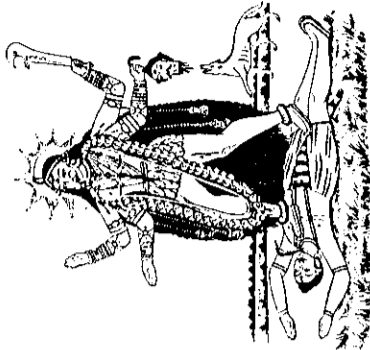
Hinduism incorporates many ancient rites and superstitions. Although human sacrifice is (hopefully) no longer practiced, animals are still offered to appease the evil spirits which Hindus dread. A typical Hindu villager still believes in many primitive superstitions. For example, a pregnant woman must not wear clothes over which a bird has flown, and she must have a knot in the middle of her dress. A boy is prized. At about 8,

know how disgusted you are. I doubt there is much we can do about a California case concerning "exposure to reality" as a crime, but let's try to make sure such a case never appears here!

he is given a sacred text known only to him and his guru. The guru is a holy man who must guide a family and a village in worship. It is said that it's better to offend the gods than a guru, because if you offend the guru, there's no one left to intervene to the gods on your behalf. Thus, the guru has great power over his followers (no journey is undertaken without his consent), and he often uses it to extract money and other "perks" in accordance with his position.

Religion pervades all aspects of Hindu life. Rituals are performed 2 hours morning and evening and 2 hour mid-day by the most devout followers. Brahmins, the high-caste Hindus, have exhaustive ceremonies. Before a Brahman eats his meal, he must feed his guests, then wash his hands and feet, afterwards tasting the water. He then may not eat before several rituals are performed, with customs differing from sect to sect.

Some of the most prevalent notions in Hinduism are 1. Fatalism - The belief that man's life is controlled by a deity and you cannot oppose the decree of god. 2. Maya/illusion - The belief that the miseries of life are created by man's ignorance and that his existence is merely a reflection of God, who created him for amusement because he was bored with being alone. 3. Transmigration of souls - The belief that you are re-born to a higher or lower status (from lower animal



## HINDUISM

forms clear up to a higher caste of Brahman) Hinduism in India cannot be characterized without touching upon the religion's suppression of women. The birth of a girl is seen as a misfortune. The wife of a higher caste male must be a servant to her husband, as well as the older women in his family. She must not speak to her husband in the daytime and cannot take her meals with him.

Modern Hinduism arose in the 1800's and its followers have worked to oppose the caste system, along with such practices as suttee, which is self-immolation of a childless widow on the funeral pyre of her husband. Suttee is now banned in India. - MLJ

As a special feature this year, the A of F newsletter will present a scenario of a different religion each issue.

## Atheists of Florida

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 530102  
Miami, FL 33153-0102  
Contact phone is (305) 936-0210

Annual dues: \$ 50.00  
 Sustaining 40.00  
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 Individual 10.00 all yr.  
Student (under 25 yrs )  
Tampa Bay Chapter  
P.O. Box 130753  
Tampa, FL 33661-0753  
AthAIFL@AOL.COM

The A. of F. newsletter is provided free to our members as a medium of exchange. Letters from members are published on a space-available 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.

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## The Collapse of Evolution

by Scott M. Huse

Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI.  
Distributed by Coral Ridge Ministries,

among others.

—review by Brent Yaciw



**Swiss cheese  
creationism...  
We aren't really here**

**most  
creation-  
ists are  
evidence  
enough  
that we  
didn't  
evolve  
from  
monkeys,  
since  
monkeys  
are  
smarter**

**Atheists of Florida board  
member Brent Yaciw is  
also president of the  
Humanists of the  
Suncoast**

geologist who made a claim that was based on evolution. If any circular reasoning is involved, it's creationist books quoting creationist books as scientific evidence, because they want to avoid quoting their real source, a book written by ignorant shepherds wandering around in the desert thousands of years ago!

I also love how they twist the Laws of Thermodynamics. For example, the idea that the processes of nature tend to decay, at least, in particular systems such as a single organism or structure. Buildings get old and crumble, so do animals including man. However, this applies to the single system, not to a species. Actually, life itself is proof that their "theory" is full of holes, for how many of us were born at our physical and mental peak? Okay, maybe creationists hit their mental peak at birth, but they grew physically.

Another cute example is the numerous references to Pasteur's "proof" that life cannot come from non-life. Actually, Pasteur made a great contribution in letting us know that germs and bacteria don't suddenly spring up in sealed containers. However, he certainly did not prove that under certain conditions, over millions of years, extremely simple life forms could not come into existence in an open atmosphere, subject to variations in temperature, changes in humidity, exposure to different chemicals, energy sources like lightning and sunlight, etc. Pasteur didn't have time to "prove" the impossibility of life from non-life in his minuscule period on earth.

The appendices are interestingly revealing. Appendix C lists supposed creationist-believing scientists who made great contributions. Of course, every one died before 1920, so we have no opportunity to question them about the strength of their belief in creationism, nor ask if their publicized belief was as much fear of Galileo-type retractions and punishments. Appendix B lists the numerous "creation-science" organizations, but of course none of them are known for real science of any other sort. Appendix D is a glossary, with their own definitions; you won't find most of these in Webster. For example, "antediluvian," a word normally meaning simply archaic or obsolete, is defined as "before the Genesis Flood." Right.

There is one chapter with which I am in complete agreement, and it might even be worth your 32-cent stamp to get the book sent to you free if you write an "inquiring" letter. That's the chapter that admits that the Bible and evolution are completely incompatible, and proceeds to give you chapter and verse of the misinformation in the Bible. In fact, it even has the creationist sloganeer's favorite bit of misinformation about evolution, that evolution contends man evolved from monkeys.

Though most creationists are evidence enough that we didn't evolve from monkeys, since monkeys are smarter, evolution states that we evolved from a common ancestor, which is not quite the same thing; accuracy is of no concern to Huse anyway. Let's also note that evolution is usually referred to as "atheistic evolution" and blamed for Hitler's Nazism and Marx Communism. Interesting, since the two systems are nothing alike.

Hitler's philosophy was based primarily on the theology of Christian Martin Luther, and Marx received

the typical indoctrination in religion before he came to his senses and rejected it, based on his observances of social phenomena, not evolution. But when he's right, he's right, and I'll happily agree that the Bible isn't compatible with evolution, or logic, or any other rational thought process.

Make them waste their money, since your tax dollars subsidize them any way. For a copy, write to:  
Coral Ridge Ministries  
P. O. Box 40  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33302-0040  
It's good for a laugh.

## The Collapse of Evolution

### Follow the Commandments -- or else

THERE ARE PUBLIC institutions that want the Ten Commandments displayed. If that is done, the penalty for breaking a commandment should also be displayed. The New Testament teaches that the Old Testament should be obeyed. This includes 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, ye 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**

the typical indoctrination in religion before he came to his senses and rejected it, based on his observances of social phenomena, not evolution. But when he's right, he's right, and I'll happily agree that the Bible isn't compatible with evolution, or logic, or any other rational thought process.

Make them waste their money, since your tax dollars subsidize them any way. For a copy, write to:  
Coral Ridge Ministries  
P. O. Box 40  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33302-0040  
It's good for a laugh.

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

**5th Commandment, Exodus 20:12**

"Honour thy father and thy mother."

**The punishment - Exodus 21:15**

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

**More punishment - Exodus 21:17**

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

**6th Commandment, Exodus 20:13**

"Thou shalt not kill."

**Some exceptions - Exodus 22:19**

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

**More exceptions - 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."

**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."

**8th Commandment, Exodus 20:15**

"Thou shalt not steal."

**The punishment - Exodus 22:4**

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

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 28:7-68. 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.