

Co-President's Message

“Christian Love” Hates Rationalists



The most recent Atheist Alliance convention in Sacramento was a resounding success. I am not totally sure of the number, but I think that nineteen members of AU were among the attendees. Cleo and Hank Kocol and other dedicated members of Atheists and Other Freethinkers of Sacramento put together an excellent program which everyone enjoyed, topped by a debate on Friday night between Dan Barker of the Freedom From Religion Foundation in Madison, Wisconsin, and John Morehead of the Watchman Fellowship Inc. organization debated the timely Easter topic “Did Jesus Rise From the Dead?”

This event received newspaper coverage in the *Sacramento Bee*, and a more than 100 Christians were present for the debate. Other Christians displayed the confidence of their convictions by calling the hotel and making threatening remarks. As a result of this, the hotel was forced to hire two security guards for the event.

Also interesting in this regard was the reaction of several Christians to my smiles and friendly demeanor. No smiles were reciprocated; no friendly gestures returned. I received suspicious looks and even scowls in return for my efforts to be friendly. What does that say about Christian love?

What it says is that Christian “love” is a misdirected love at best; it is directed at a god who doesn’t exist, and to a Savior who probably never lived. Christian

“love” is, at the most fundamental level, meant to be directed only toward fellow Christians; no one outside the cult is to be the recipient of Christian largesse. Obviously, may Christians would help out anyone in need, Christian or not, the fact remains that the hatred of anything non-Christian is a legacy of New Testament teachings. While it has died out or been watered down thanks to the advancement of the Enlightenment, what

I encountered in Sacramento was an example of some of the last vestiges of medieval Christianity in action: A real fear and perhaps hatred of anyone who doesn’t think in accordance with “accepted”

norms, or who dares to have a fundamentally different view about the world and about human nature.

One thing has always fascinated me about religious people.

“I received suspicious looks and even scowls in return for my efforts to be friendly. What does that say about Christian love?”

May General Meeting

Sunday, May 28, 2000

Judge Tanner Speaks on Religious Morality in Law

Judge Jack Tanner, retired from the Superior Court and noted television consultant, will be the speaker at the May 28 general meeting. The outspoken and popular Tanner will expand on the topic “How Religious Morality Influences Our Laws.” As a frequent guest on CNN’s *Burden of Proof*, Tanner’s opinions are often as controversial as they are thoughtful.

The meeting will be in the Center for Inquiry West, 5519 Grosvenor Blvd., in the Marina area of Los Angeles.

The board meeting will start at 11:00 a.m., with members’ concerns the main item on the agenda. (Another board meeting will convene at CFIW at 11 a.m. on the second Sunday of each month. This month that will be May 14. Members are welcome to attend that meeting.)

The social period will begin at 12:15.

The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. announcements and the speaker, followed by a break. Questions and answers will follow the break. We’ll have discussion and reports, then sound-off before adjourning. Those who wish will reconvene for after-meeting eating at Dinah’s, 6521 S. Sepulveda Blvd., L.A.

Are you young and rational?

Do you feel like everyone your age is out finding Christ?

NO, we’re not! Some of us are finding coffee and conversation at

AyoUth Coffee Night

8:00 p.m. Mondays at Lulu’s Alibi
1640 Sawtelle Bl., just south of Santa Monica Bl.

For more information call

Monica or Matt
(310) 383-8409 (310) 993-4876

AU Opens Lending Library

By Harvey Tippit

For your reading pleasure Atheists United now has a book-lending library in the formative stage. You have probably noticed the oaken bookcase on your left (the north wall) as you enter the Center for Inquiry-West. There the library committee will keep its books and loan them to AU members for four weeks at no charge. The library will be open the fourth Sundays during our general meetings and the second Sunday mornings when the board of directors meets. On the second Sundays the members are invited to participate in the board meetings by bringing their concerns to the board members, as well as inspecting our collection of books for any that meet their needs or interests.

The library will be staffed by Jerry Brown as volunteer chief librarian and two assistant librarians, Fran Troy and Harvey Tippit. Others wishing to volunteer their services and time in running the library, particularly record keeping, will be accepted to assist the librarians. Anyone who has experience in library work or likes books and dealing with your fellow atheists will be welcome.

At the start, the library will be stocked with books which AU owns and has had in storage. Donated books will be considered for addition to the supply. If we find we need more space for books, well, that will be managed. Monetary contributions will be welcome for meeting incidental expenses or for the purchase of books or equipment, and all donors will be recognized in the newsletter. Maybe some of you will want to suggest books that you think the library should have.

Unfortunately the library may not be able to accept for all donated books. Those books which are not needed by the library may be returned to the donors or the books may be sold or donated to schools, thrift stores, or those in need.

The librarians invite anyone who would like to contribute their time, money or books, to contact one of the members of the library committee.

For your records the names and telephone numbers of the committee members are: Jerry Brown, Harvey Tippit (562-436-4963) and Fran Troy.

Co-President's Message

Continued from page 1

Christians in particular. While many of them claim to be extremely confident about the tenets of their religion (and will often make a statement to the effect that Jesus is the only absolute in their life) they tend to exhibit extremely insecure emotional reactions when they encounter competent atheists. Why is this? If they really believe that they possess THE TRUTH, then why should they feel threatened by someone who doesn't share their views? Could it be that, deep down inside, they might not be quite as confident as they proclaim?

Of course, the human mind being as complicated and evasive as it is, it is always dangerous to draw general conclusions about human behavior; the human animal is just too slippery for that. Nonetheless, when you see the same reactions exhibited time and time again, you do have to wonder...

Jon Nelson

Atheists United, Inc.

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ATHEISTS UNITED is a 501 (C)(3) not-for-profit educational organization with two purposes: 1. Preserving the separation of church and state; and 2. Promoting atheism, primarily through education.

The *Atheists United Newsletter* is published monthly for members and is also available by subscription. Deadline for submissions is the first day of the month prior to publication, otherwise at the discretion of the editor. Submissions should be no more than 500 words long and are subject to editorial revisions, at the discretion of the editor, for reasons of clarity or space. Send all material to Editor's attention by mail to AU, P.O. Box 57435, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-2435, or by email to bkirkhart@aol.com, or by fax to 818-785-1743. Opinions and statements made by authors may not reflect the positions of Atheists United and are therefore not the responsibility of Atheists United, its officers, directors, nor editor. All material © 2000 by Atheists United. All rights reserved. Permission to use articles is explicitly granted to the editorial staffs of member organizations of the Atheist Alliance and of the Alliance of Freethought Organizations of Southern California. Credit should be given, and a copy is requested for our files. U.S. Postal Bulk Rate Permit No. 888, Van Nuys, California.

Atheists United

P. O. Box 57435 • Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-2435

Atheist Information Line: (818) 785 - 1743

Calls are machine-answered with a short message about our next open meeting. Messages may be left and will be relayed to the appropriate officer.

Sex and Science

Seeds of Life: The Story of Sex in Nature from Amoeba to Man, by John Langdon-Davis; Published 1955 The Devin-Adair Company; 172 pages.

Reviewed by Margie Farber

This book is about sex and how every living thing, except for man, is the master of its sexual instinct, not its slave. In the introduction, the author goes into "what is sex". The rest of the book is separated into three parts.

Part one, the author gives seven strange and wonderful sex stories, such as the termite, a composite animal; the orchid and the bee; and robins and other courting couples. Each has an unusual story to tell. I found them interesting and some of them very amusing as well.

Part two deals with the meaning and mechanisms of sex. The author tells us about the Chromosomes; what is the use of sex; and the courtship of animals. I found the section on chromosomes very informative.

Part three is all about sex in human beings. The author goes into the sexual structure of the body; the courtship in man; and the accomplishment of the sexual act.

Each part in this book has some important information for all of us to learn from. In my opinion, this book is an introduction into biology. It should be recommended to all junior high and high school students.

This book is a real gem. It is enjoyable, as well as informative. Anyone who reads this book has to know that *evolution* happened and that *creationism* is impossible. This gem of a book blows creationism out of the water. As the author says in the last chapter; "So long as we do not know the truth, we are slaves to false ideas and to their results."

VOTE for your favorite
Newsletter Name!

Name the Newsletter!

Finally, it's here, the first vote on the Newsletter change. Below please select the name you like best and return your ballot. One talented and creative member will win a cash prize of \$50.00 for coming up with our newsletter name.

Your ballots may be returned by mail or at the May meeting, but they must be received by June 15 in order to be counted. Unless one name gets more than 50% of the vote, a run-off ballot of the highest vote-getters will be printed in the July newsletter. These votes must be received by August 15.

At least 40 votes must be received in order to change the name, but if the name is not changed, the person whose submission gets the most votes still wins the \$50.

The winner will be announced at the awards banquet in September. Names of the entrants will not be announced until the contest is complete.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Atheists United Newsletter (no change) | <input type="checkbox"/> Living Without Theism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beacon | <input type="checkbox"/> Logical Enquirer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belief Relief | <input type="checkbox"/> A Moment of Truth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Blind Watchmaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Nihilum ex Machina |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinkers Forum | <input type="checkbox"/> No Excuses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinkers Press | <input type="checkbox"/> Nobody's Voice |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> A Freethinkers Forum | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing On Faith |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freethinkers Quest | <input type="checkbox"/> Rational Quest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Freethinkers' Society Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Rational Thinker |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> The Gospel Truth | <input type="checkbox"/> The Reason & Logic Society Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iconoclast | <input type="checkbox"/> Theism Free |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infidel | <input type="checkbox"/> The Theist Free Citizen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liberated From Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> The Ultimate Authority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liberated From Theism | <input type="checkbox"/> The United Freethinker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liberator | <input type="checkbox"/> United Freethinkers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lighthouse | <input type="checkbox"/> The United Front |

Web Site for our Silver Queen

Wendy McElroy, author of *Queen Silver: The Godless Girl* has set up a web site of pictures and text about Queen, a founding member of Atheists United, who was a staunch supporter of AU and of atheist causes until her death in early 1998.

The address is: www.zetetics.com/queen/

April General Meeting Sees Lively Debate

By Bruce Hemphill

This meeting was conducted by Mark Rockoff and Monica Davis and Bob Richert was the host of the friendly debate "Resolved: One can be a freethinker and still believe in God."

Arguing for the affirmative were Norm Boyd and Stan Unger. For the negative, Fran Troy and Milt Timmons.

The official timer of each 5-minute speech in this debate was Hal Thompson, President of Freethinkers' Toastmasters.

Norm Boyd is an Episcopal priest in San Pedro and is the only believer in Freethinkers' Toastmasters. He feels we are one nation under the Constitution and felt that the horrors put forth in the name of Christ were tragic. He feels that

the nonrational side of the brain (intuition) should be used as well as the rational side.

Milt Timmons is a retired communications professor at Los Angeles Valley College. He feels a belief in a god is irrational because there is not even indirect proof of one. Per Thomas Aquinas, the burden of proof is on the believer.

He went on to submit that ideas of the patterns of nature are projected from the mind. Evolution often is neglected in the harmony of natural design. The Bible is full of contradictions, and something in the human conscience must be described before it can be defined. ESP studies are flawed and people tend to retreat to the argument of faith and promise

ACCOMPLISHED MUSICIANS AND SINGERS



Interested in participating in
an atheist chorus?
Contact Mike Jordan by phone
(310) 572-9269.

March General Meeting Hears Sociologist on Race

At the March 26 General Meeting, Dr. Yahudi Webster, of the Sociology Department at Cal State LA, spoke on "Race as a Figment of Religious Imagination." Dr. Webster pointed out that the differences among the so-called races are not consistent and are, in all events, fewer than the similarities.

Webster believes that the primary reason for this artificial division of humans is the religious idea that people have souls. In order to enslave a group, it was then necessary to exaggerate the differences, giving a means of rationalizing that the victims have no soul.

The noted author and professor opined that these designations are harmful, even when used with good intent. With any racial designation, he said, comes a legacy of anger. He offers as an alternative to affirmative action programs more investment in nurturing and education of all children.

FAITHLESSNESS OF OUR FATHERS

Dads, step-dads, dads-in-law,
foster dads, surrogate dads
Join us June 18, as we combine with
HALA to honor YOU at our Fathers'
Day-Summer Solstice Brunch. Dads
accompanied by sons & daughters will
receive free brunch and gifts. And, we
absolutely promise, no one will sing
"Oh My Papa!"

Getting a New Car?

Remember,
you can
donate your
old car to AU!



We get all the profit, and you
get all the tax deduction!

The Ontological Counterargument: *The Unstoppable Force vs. The Immovable Object*

by Michael Jordan

Saint Anselm syllogized that a conception of god encompasses all the greatest conceivable characteristics, including existence. Thus, god must exist. Webster defines god as "The creator of the universe," and as such must be consciously aware of not only itself, but of its creating, and its creations.

There's a flaw in Anselm's syllogism. Saint Anselm failed to establish that consciousness is a greater characteristic than the lack thereof. A rock, such as a stone, or the Earth is neither greater nor less than human will power. They are simply different entities, neither trumping the other nor showing itself "greatest."

So, we don't know whether Saint Anselm's ultimate conceivable concept lies unconscious or active. The simple concept of reality might be the ultimate power in the universe. While the god concept is an involved, omniscient, active, unstoppable force; the reality concept is a static, objective, constant, immovable object; of which humans can decide whether or not to become aware.

In the abstract conflict between the immovable object and the unstoppable force, or reality versus god; neither is greater. It's a draw, 50/50. Neither concept tips the scale, based on their conceivability alone, to prove its superiority.

To tip that scale, humans must place the burden of proof. If one demands that atheists prove god does not exist; doubters will show a wealth of scientific, physical knowledge and mathematical probability to soundly overcome any counter arguments produced by theists. In fact, the theist position is one of faith, in spite of evidence. Religionists make a leap over the wealth of evidence shown by all our senses, rationality, and the above logic.

Thus, whether the proof burden rests on the theists or the doubters, only the atheist position can show enough evidence to tip the scale and show by a preponderance of evidence that a static reality is more likely than god to be the ultimate power in the universe. Therefore, god, as an ultimate power, cannot exist.

Report From Venice

By Henry Farber

Since October '91, a handful of us have represented our organization at our outreach table on the ocean walk at Venice Beach. Thousands of tourists and locals stroll the walk on weekends. Artists and amateurs of all sorts perform alongside palm readers to belly dancers. You find all kinds of cults: Jews for Jesus, Muslims for Moses, Hindus for Buddha etc.

We, at the Atheists table, are the only place where reason is displayed and distributed free of charge. We do, however, take donations. Our banner proclaims; "Atheists United, Separation of Church and State", Free Literature.

The reasons we go there are the following:

1. To show the "flag" for atheism.
2. To give out information about atheism.
3. To recruit members.

We are often asked what kind of reception we get out there on the "front". Amazingly, we have never had any physical violent encounter. Police patrols are quite visible on bikes, foot, horses and squad cars. They leave us be and we feel quite safe. We do get, once in a while, verbal abuse, but it is seldom.

Most of the passersby ignore us, one way or another, by looking away or mumbling to each other, giving us distant looks. One of our main occupations is people watching when there are no inquirers in front of our table. You can never tell when one or more people will approach the table. Sometimes one hour will pass by and no one will stop, and at other times we get clusters of 5 to 12 people.

Each one of us has a special field of knowledge that we use at the table. Yours truly is the anchorperson and the linguist. Margie, my other half, is a great debater on a variety of topics. Jerry Brown is an expert in scientific questions. Jon Nelson, our Co-President, is our Renaissance man, historian, teacher, musician and quick answer-man. Barbara Soldier, taking public transportation from Long Beach, is always there, our foot soldier. Jack Grooms loves to debate "Christian fishes" and helps us to pack at the end of the day. Latest recruits are: Moshe Alvarez, Matt Waggoner, and Frank Atkins. More on Venice next time.



**Atheist
INS
Agents?**

Miami Mayor Joe Carollo said he was outraged by the raid which reunited Elian Gonzalez with his father over the Easter weekend used the ultimate insult: "These are atheists. They don't believe in God," he said. "There was no need to do this like this. These are hard-working men and women. I had no information at all that this was going to happen."

We've Met the Challenge!

With approximately \$11,000 raised (exact figures are not available because some pledges are in percentages of income), the three-month challenge drive has exceeded its goal by ten percent! Thanks to all who participated.

The latest member to answer Don Latimer's challenge is:

Dick James

Though this marks the end of the official three-month fundraising drive, Don has asked us all to give more, to work harder, to prove that we care as much as the religionists. In this three months, several have done that, but our need to offer that proof did not end on April 30.

We're sure that many others will meet the challenge in various ways in the months to come.

Online? Join the AU eGroup!

Our newest Board Member Rachel Sene has set up a new online discussion tool for all our members. If you have access to e-mail or the web, you can join!

Getting on the list is easy:

- 1) Go to www.egroups.com:
- 2) Register with the e-mail address you want to receive postings. The register link is in the upper right of the page.
- 3) Search for atheistsunitedinc. You will see the description is our two main aims, and has the office number for more contact.
- 4) Click the subscribe link in the middle right of the page (below "You are not a member of this group")
- 5) Since this group is open only to members, you will get an e-mail from the moderator asking you to confirm your name, so that it can be checked against the membership roster.

That's all it takes to get on the eGroup!

Getting the most out of the eGroup postings: some helpful hints

- You don't have to receive everything as an individual e-mail. If you wish to change this option, you can do so by logging in at the eGroups site.
- Remember to use "reply" instead of "reply all" when replying to an eGroup post, otherwise multiple copies of the message will be sent.
- Remember that this mail will go to the entire group. If you want to personally reply to the sender, be sure to change the egroups address to their personal e-mail address (which is on the header of the original message).



Can do more with your support!

Please charge the following pledge amount to my Visa or MasterCard on the 3rd 18th of each month.

\$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 Other amount over \$10: _____

I prefer to help AU meet our goals with a quarterly pledge. Please charge the following pledge amount to my Visa or MasterCard on the 3rd of March, June, September, and December.

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 Other amount over \$10: _____

I would like to contribute to Atheists United with a one-time gift. Please charge to my Visa or MasterCard the gift amount of:

\$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other amount over \$10: _____

Visa/MasterCard number: _____ expires: _____

Signature X

Monthly and quarterly pledges are for a period of one year. You will receive notification of renewal time, but your pledge will be automatically renewed for the same amount unless you choose to change it. Your pledge can be cancelled at any time with 15 days notice before the transaction date by writing to Atheists United, PO Box 57435, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-2435, or by calling the office at (818) 785-1743.

Thank you for your generous support of Atheists United.

Meeting Dates, Times, Phone Numbers

AUGen - Atheists United General Meeting: Fourth Sunday, except December. 11:00 AM, board meeting, 12:15PM, social hour; 1:00PM, meeting. Center for Inquiry West, 5519 Grosvenor. Info: (818) 785-1743.

AUOC - Atheists United Orange County: Brunch. Second Sunday, 10:30AM, Irvine Ranch House Restaurant (formerly Jolly Roger's), 1727 E. Dyer Rd., Irvine, one block east of 55 Freeway. Info: David (714) 220-1777 or e-mail: ocou@thinkdontpanic.com.

AUSEV - Atheists United San Fernando Valley: Discussion Group. Third Wednesday. 7PM IHOP Restaurant, 6429 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys, one block N. of Victory Blvd. Info: Sam (818) 993-1353.

AUSLO - Atheists United San Luis Obispo: 3rd Saturday, 3PM. County/City Library. Info: Peggy (805) 544-1580.

AyoUth - Young Atheists Coffee Night, Mondays 8:00 p.m. Lulu's Alibi, 1640 Sawtelle (just south of Santa Monica Bl.) Info: Matt (310) 993-4876 or Monica (310) 383-8409.

ECLA - Ethical Culture Society of Los Angeles: First and Third Sundays, 11:00 AM, Children's Community School Auditorium, 14702 Sylvan Street, Van Nuys. Info: (310) 470-2873.

FTM - Freethinkers Toastmasters: Second and Fourth Saturdays, 2PM. CFIW, 5519 Grosvenor. Info: David: (310)479-6318.

GALAH - Gay and Lesbian Atheists and Humanists: First Sunday, 1:00 p.m., The Village Gay and Lesbian Center; Room 135; N. Mc Cadden Place Los Angeles, Info: Ken: (818) 500-9858

HALA - Humanist Association of Los Angeles: Third Sunday, 2:30PM, MGM Center, Colorado & Cloverfield, Santa Monica. Info: (213) 876-9036.

SHJ-Society for Humanistic Judaism, Third Friday Info: (213) 891-4303.

SHOLA - Secular Humanists of Los Angeles: First Sundays, 11:00AM, Center for Inquiry West, 5519 Grosvenor. Info: (310) 371-8469.

Membership Form

I support the aims and purposes of Atheists United which are to keep state and church separate, and to promote atheism. I apply for membership in Atheists United including a monthly Newsletter at the Level indicated:

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Telephone _____

Name(s) of other family members: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date _____ Email _____

Signature X _____

Payment Method Cash or Check Visa/Mastercard number _____ expiration _____

- Life Member @ \$500 Sustaining Member @ \$100 per year
 Regular Member @ \$30 per year Limited Income Membership - call or write for details
 Family Membership @ \$45 per year Other _____

(requires two signatures)

Newsletter Subscription Only @ \$12.50 per year/\$20.00 outside the U.S. (does not include membership, no signature required.)

Send Check or Money Order To: Atheists United, P.O. Box 57435, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-2435

Freethought "Links"

For those of you who are connected to the Internet, check out the following websites!

- au.atheism.org
AU's Website
www.atheistalliance.org
Atheist Alliance
www.slonet.org/~ipauslo
AU San Luis Obispo
www.egroups.com
Join the atheistsunitedinc eGroup discussion

Board member email addresses:

- Bobbie Kirkhart: Bkirkhart@aol.com
Jon Nelson: jonanelson@earthlink.net
AU Office/Margie Farber: margief2@juno.com
Henry Farber: margief2@juno.com
Harvey Tippit: hartip@earthlink.net
Ken Bonnell: Kbonnell@aol.com
Monica Davis: itonica@imanc.com
Steve Gage: steven.s.gage@boeing.com
Mark Rockoff: mark1377@juno.com
Rachel Sene: nontheist@mail.com
Newsletter contribution: Bkirkhart@aol.com

AU Cable TV Listings

AU is currently reorganizing our Public Access Outreach effort. During this time there may be some interruption in programming. Please bear with us.

Media One, Hollywood	Ch.37	Sunday	1:30 P.M.
Media One, Verdugo Hills	Ch.19	Monday	8:30 P.M.
Adelphia, Beverly Hills	Ch.37	Sunday	Between 9-11:30 A.M.
Adelphia, Marina	Ch.3	Sunday	Between 9-11:30 A.M.
Adelphia, West Hollywood	Ch.3	Sunday	Between 9-11:30 A.M.
Adelphia, All Others	Ch.77	Sunday	Between 9-11:30 A.M.
Out of State- Greater Seattle Area			
Washington	Ch.29	1st Sunday	6 P.M.

STUN (Superstition, Talking Snakes, Unjust Taxes & Nonsense) Program

Charter Cable, Long Beach	Ch. 65	Tuesday	4:30 p.m.
		Friday	8:30 p.m.

Would you like to see our programming on your local cable public access? Call the office to help! We need local residents in areas in order to get our programming on the air!

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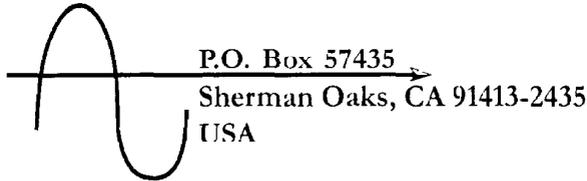
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Things to do:

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MAY 2000



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**POSTMASTER: TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
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U.S. Constitution, First Amendment:

“Congress Shall Make No Law Respecting an Establishment of Religion...”