

Editorial

Church/state debate

Church and state have no business crawling into bed together. Yet forces in United States politics are enticing them to make, at the least, an assignation; at the most, a marriage.

We think such a union would be ruinous to both the liberties and the rights of the American people.

A church and state embrace would, first of all, infringe on the Constitutionally guaranteed liberty of freedom of conscience, religious freedom. The First Amendment to the Constitution states in part: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Secondly, it would infringe on the civil right to worship, or not worship, as one chooses. When government begins legislating religious practice, it begins ceasing to defend religious diversity; it begins ceasing to protect the dissenting minority's right to disagree with the assenting majority.

We agree with Democratic vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro's statement that "this country is based on separation of church and state. I have been blessed with faith," she continues, "but others have not. I have no right to impose my beliefs on them."

In contrast, President Reagan, courting church groups inclined to legislate their beliefs, continues to back issues with religious overtones.

"We are for life and against abortion," he says. "We are for prayer in the schools; we are for tuition tax credits" (for parents of private and parochial school students). In addition, he is the first president to establish full diplomatic relations with a religious power, the Holy See, thus granting it political status.

To us these actions are as dangerous as they are well-intentioned.

Life is good; but a woman should be able to follow her own conscience regarding abortion. Prayer is good; but unbelievers should not be forced to pray or to feel shamed because they do not. Parochial education is good for those who wish to pay the extra money it costs so their children may receive religious instruction in school; but taxpayers in general should not have to subsidize their choice. Granting political recognition to a religious power, is, however, in no way good.

These are issues that cross party lines and inflame rhetoric from both Democratic and Republican camps. The Democratic platform states support for separation of church and state, yet many Democrats side with Reagan on the above issues.

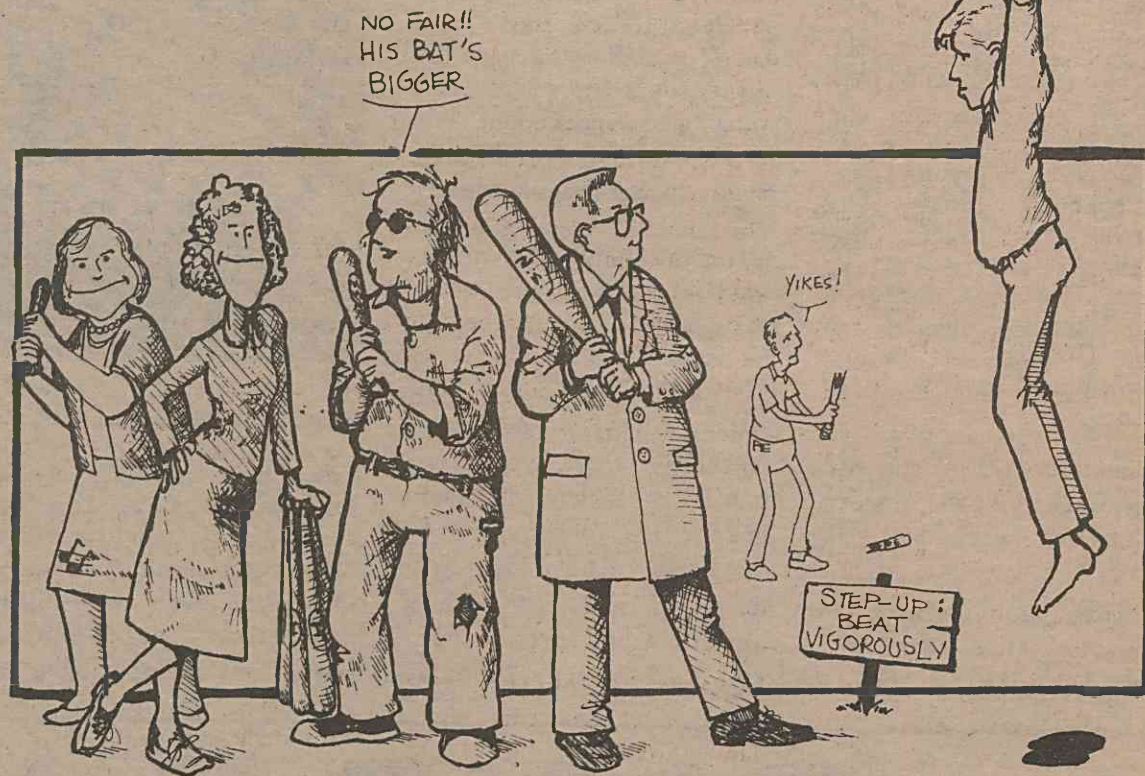
At the same time, many Republicans fault Reagan and the New Right for this stance. As Republican John Buchanan, former Alabama Congressman, says, "The New Right claims that it has a moral monopoly on being 'pro-family' and 'pro-God.' Those who disagree are branded 'anti-American,' 'anti-family,' or 'anti-Christian.' There is nothing more arrogant than a political leader who suggests that his politics are God's politics."

We must agree with Buchanan. If, as our founding fathers stated, God aided this country in gaining the freedoms it enjoys, then surely He does not support their abrogation. Freedom can be lost while we are asleep; but it is seldom gained without fierce struggle.

The promulgation of religion is the purpose of the church. The church should not, however, ask the state to help it accomplish this task. Neither should the state use the church for political ends. They should remain what they are, separate powers, never joined.

Sen. Lowell Weicker (R. Conn.) said it well when he compared combining religion and government with "putting nitroglycerin in a Waring blender."

Comer's Corner



"IT'S GOOD FOR YOU... REALLY!!" -
SO SAY THE TROOPS OF GENERAL ED.

Letters

Hunt defended

Dear Editor:

As Governor Hunt has said, "What's at stake is our future, our children's future, what we believe in, and the way we believe things should be done." We feel the N.C. Senate campaign is boiling down to a choice between the past and the future. Jim Hunt, as Governor of N.C. for eight years, has established a reputation for fairness, integrity, and working progressively for the future. While Jim Hunt has made offers of a mutual agreement between the Senate candidates to cut campaign spending and eliminate negative political ads, Jesse Helms has consistently refused to reciprocate. Hunt has been a governor for the people; Helms has been a senator against them.

Sincerely,
UNCA Voter Registration Committee.

Come register

Dear Editor:

This is a very important election year! Important issues are at stake. We feel all UNCA students should take the time to study the candidates and issues and register to vote.

The Student Government Association, the Political Science Association, the College Democrats, the College Republicans, and other concerned people at UNCA are joining together in the non-partisan National Student Campaign for Voter Registration.

Registrars for the League of Women Voters will be in the Highsmith University Center, Sept. 25 and 26 from 11-4 p.m. The registrars will only be registering residents from Buncombe Co. The deadline for applying for absentee ballots is Oct. 8.

People are needed to help with publicity and to assist on registration days. Students who wish to get involved should contact Ken Cagle, President of Student Government.

Our goal is registering 500 new voters. Do it Sept 25 and 26!

Sincerely,
The College Democrats, UNCA

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