

# Opinions

The Banner

## Editorial

### Hoop, hoop, hooray?

#### The party's over

The UNCA men's basketball season is in all likelihood over. Despite posting a 19-9 record and winning the regular season Big South championship, the Bulldogs will probably not even be considered for an at-large bid to either the NCAA or NIT tournament. UNCA will be overlooked by the tournament selection committees because the Bulldogs compete in the Big South, which is regarded by most as a weak Division I basketball conference. In the 15-year history of the conference, only the Big South Tournament champion, who is given an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament, has experienced the thrill of March madness.

This is a travesty. Our men's basketball team proved that they were the best team in the Big South by winning 11 out of 12 regular season conference games. During a regular season, every conference team plays each other twice. Season play is a much better indicator of ability than a three-day tournament, especially one held on the home floor of one opponent and only 50 miles away from the other.

However, the NCAA only gives an automatic tournament bids to conference tournament winners, rather than to the regular season champion, because by doing so every Division I has a chance to make the "Big Dance" until the final weekend of the season. While such an arrangement gives struggling programs eternal hope, it unfairly punishes teams like UNCA, who deserve to be in post-season play. By the logic displayed by past NCAA tournament selection committees, season play has no significance for teams in weak conferences. If we follow this logic to its end, why don't conferences such as the Big South simply abort their seasons and play a tournament in late February/early March, since the tournament games, no matter how many Syracuse and Tennessee you take to the wire, are the only games that seem to count anyway.

Since the NCAA refuses to give tournament bids to regular season champions, it should join with the NIT and work out a post-season selection policy to ensure that deserving championship teams like UNCA are given an opportunity to play in the post-season. When a conference such as the Big South crowns both a regular season and tournament champion, one team should be given a bid to the NCAA, the other a bid to the NIT. If this system were adopted, deserving teams like UNCA and Radford would both be rewarded with the opportunity to compete in a post-season tournament.

Regardless of what the tournament selection committees decide this coming weekend, our basketball team has proven over the past two years that it can hang with anybody. Last year UNCA demolished SEC champion South Carolina, and also pulled off a last second upset of New Mexico State. This year they took it to the wire with Syracuse (and their Big East officiating crew), and achieved the remarkable feat of going undefeated at home. These Bulldogs deserve to dance.

### The dogs that bit back

Even though the Bulldogs' loss to Radford remains hard to swallow, we at UNCA can take special pride in the courageous way in which the members of our women's basketball team accorded themselves at the conference tourney. After an agonizing 5-21 season (4-8 in the Big South), the ladies in blue proved that all season long they had been saving a big can of whup-ass for third-seeded Coastal Carolina and second-seeded Radford.

Although they fell short in the tournament finals to the Liberty Flames (their undefeated season is proof enough that God kinda likes fundamentalists), this group of Bulldogs showed that there is another team at UNCA that deserves the respect that has already been earned by the men's basketball team and the women's soccer team. In what was seen by many as a rebuilding year, Kathleen Weber deserves much credit for giving her team a "refuse to lose" attitude that should carry over to the rest of the athletic teams and the student body as a whole.

The women's team set a fine example for all of us by playing their best basketball after many people had already written off their season. It would have been easy to pack it in against Coastal in the first round, but these Bulldogs proved that they still had some bite left in them.

### A safer Doghouse... finally

Well, well. After searching the world over for our true love in public safety, the administration has decided that home is where the heart is by naming interim Public Safety Director Dennis Gregory to fill that slot permanently. Seventeen months is a long time to search for someone to fill a permanent position on campus, especially a position as vital as the one that ensures the safety of the campus community at UNCA. That we finally have someone in charge of Public Safety and that we have someone with an outstanding record of service to UNCA are good reasons why the selection of Gregory is good for the community. As for Gregory's modest reluctance to take the post during the first search, we at *The Banner* say, "Dennis, we can't all be Indians, and we're glad you decided to be the chief."

## A close look at the history book



Eric Millin  
columnist

One of the most hotly debated subjects of our time is whether Christian religion and Christian society can be equated. Some make this equation and assert that Christianity is responsible for the countless atrocities committed by so-called Christian nations. In making such an assertion, they imply that Christianity is at its heart tyrannical and violent, failing to give it credit for a great amount of good.

I know that most people are far more reasonable than this extreme. But there are people who, perhaps unintentionally, support this point of view. Even intelligent, well-educated college students and faculty fall prey to such characterizations. While Christianity has been used to justify plenty of violence, it's foolish to imply that because of this we are somehow unique. Westerners used popular religion to justify death and destruction, while in other places folk use different excuses. Violence is a cross-cultural phenomenon. But such logic escapes some people.

In such slanderous rants, people have gone as far as to claim that the Nazis were a Christian army, who, in the name of God, killed millions. This is a serious charge both at face value and what it implies. We all know that you should not distort information or create lies about other religions to make them seem evil or frightening, yet people continue to say such things. Because such misinformation persists, I thought it necessary to clarify the relationship of Nazism and Christianity.

Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*, had kinder things to say of Christianity than Judaism. His "Christianity," however, was one adulterated to fit his Nazi ideology. Hitler was a religious utilitarian--that is, he believed that people needed religion until there was something superior to replace it--and that while Christianity was superior to Judaism, it would not serve his needs. He went as far as to call Christianity the "first spiritual terror to enter the far freer ancient world" (*Mein Kampf*). When, in 1941, Hitler believed that the Germans were to win the war he stated, "the last great task of our age will be to solve the church problem. It is only then that the nation will be wholly secure. The church must rot away like a gangrened member."

Hitler saw National Socialism (Nazism) as that which could replace Christianity. This is not to say that when Hitler came to power in 1933 that Christianity disappeared. There was a movement called the German Christians that sought to bring Nazi ideology and Christianity together. They, in line with Nazi ideology, purged the Bible of all the Old Testament and parts of the New Testament that were seen as too Jewish.

The German Christian movement was largely unsuccessful. A note circulated in the Nazi Propaganda Ministry says of them: "the endeavours of this organization are well meant, but there is no interest either in assimilating Christian teaching in National Socialism or in proving that a reshaped Chris-

tianity is not fundamentally Jewish." Christianity was seen by most high-ranking Germans as a negative Semitic influence. Hermann Rauschning, a friend of Hitler, stated "the total abolition of Christianity is not a mere philosophical fad of the National Socialists, but an iron necessity of their system." Martin Bormann, secretary of the Nazi Party said, "Christianity and National Socialism are phenomena which originated from entirely different causes. Both differ fundamentally." Furthermore, "National Socialist and Christian concepts are irreconcilable."

At Hitler Youth rallies, which often intentionally and symbolically took place on Sunday mornings, children would recite "We are happy Hitler youth/we have no need of Christian virtue/for Adolf Hitler is our intercessor/and our redeemer." In addition, Good Friday was turned into a day of public mourning for the Saxons that were killed by Charlemagne for refusing to convert. These are hardly the signs of a Christian nation seeking to conquer others in the name of the Lord.

We shouldn't forget other Christians during the Nazi regime. Most people tried to pretend things were business as usual. Some Christians, however, saw the necessity of combating Nazi ideology and the German Christian movement by returning to the historic creeds and confessions of the church. They vehemently rejected the attempts to remove things too "Jewish" from the Bible and undermine historic orthodoxy; in doing so they were labeled as "narrow" and "fundamentalist."

Members of the group, the Confessing Church, wrote a letter to Hitler in 1936 stating "When blood, race, creed, nationality, and honor are thus raised to the rank of qualities that guarantee eternity, the Evangelical Christian is bound, by the first commandment, to reject the assumption."

Moreover, many Christians died for their faith in the face of fascism.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, enraged by the treatment of the Jews and a leader in the Confessing churches, was executed for his involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler. Others went to the concentration camps: 1034 clergymen died in Dachau alone. While this pales in comparison with the industrialized slaughter of the Jews, it does demonstrate that many Christians were far from complicit with the Nazi regime.

Despite the fact that the Nazis did not see themselves as Christian, it is often pointed out that "Hitler" didn't create his brand of bigotry in a vacuum."

There is a long history of anti-Semitism in European cultures and this should neither be justified nor explained away.

However, history is highly complex. Since the establishment of the church, it has visited violence and oppression on others" are one-dimensional and fail to point out the incredible self-sacrifice and compassion that have also marked the history of the church.

Just as we find in history self-proclaimed Christians who justified anti-Semitism, slavery, imperialism, and oppression, so we also find those under the same name--often at the same time--struggling for brotherhood, abolition, respect for other cultures, and liberty.

All the violence done in the name of Christianity for the past 2,000 years would be a fraction of that committed by 20th century post-Christian cultures such as Germany, the Soviet Union and their prodigy like China and Cambodia.

Let us hope that all such attempts to paint the Nazis as Christian result from misunderstanding. Otherwise, making Christianity the scapegoat of such an evil as the Holocaust is similar to the very logic that made a scapegoat of the Jews.

## Letters to the Editor

### A sensitive issue

Dear Editor,

I knew a girl who got pregnant. She wanted her baby. Her husband, who had two daughters from a previous marriage, was also excited. Unfortunately, two years before, a car crash left her with half a liver and permanent internal damage. She was told by several doctors that it would be impossible for her to carry a child without dying. Faced with the toughest decision of her life, this girl thought about her husband and his two little girls, to whom she was already a mother. And she made a choice.

The girl went to a clinic to terminate her pregnancy. Outside, protesters waving gruesome signs and screaming slogans tried to block her way, to talk her out of "murdering her baby." These people did not stop her from doing what she felt was right, but they did make an already painful situation worse. Admittedly, not all pro-lifers behave this way. But the ones who do are intrusive and completely out of line.

Jim Kirk was correct about one thing in his column on abortion (*Opinions*, Jan. 22): it isn't some faceless issue to be argued about over coffee. It's a deeply personal decision, something that is the business only of the person involved. It's foolish to say that once all pro-choicers come over to the anti-

choice point of view there will be no abortion controversy. That will never happen. The only way to end the conflict is for those who feel they can dictate what a woman does with her own body to wake up and realize abortion is not an issue of religious belief or political agenda. Only when judgmental groups, so-called Feminist or not, stop trying to decide the rights of individuals in different circumstances will we all be able to get along.

Kristi Howard  
Junior, undeclared

### Garren misses the mark, again

Dear Editor,

How dismaying it was to read still more trite platitudes from the mind of Heather Garren (*Opinions*, Jan. 29). Only weeks after her less than brilliant analysis of Halloween as the "Devil's Hohday" (*Letters to the Editor*, Nov. 20, 1997) we are treated to her all too predictable opinions on the White House scandal.

Since I vote Libertarian, I will never be hailed as the great champion of Bill Clinton, but thus far, Heather, the supposedly damning evidence seems less than all there. Independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr has thus far wasted \$30 million of taxpayers' money in an obviously partisan attempt to besmirch this presi-

dent. After \$30 million, what proof do we have that Clinton is a criminal? None. Now Kenneth Starr has decided to overstep all boundaries and investigate Clinton's personal life instead. How much more money will be wasted?

It has already been established that Heather looks at the world from her (rather ahistorical) "Christian" perspective. I cannot help but ask her to examine whether Bill Clinton is really any more amoral than the good King David of the Israelites? Any more lusty than the wise King Solomon? Please Heather, do us all a favor and learn to think for yourself. Pat Robertson made all of the same statements as early as two weeks ago. And more eloquently.

Thomas Tracy  
Post Baccalaureate, education

### Parking 101: the next gym class

Dear Editor,

Parking problems at UNCA are mentioned with grumbling frequency in the classroom and on the grounds by students and teachers alike. As a student who has been going to UNCA sporadically for the past decade, I can say that circling the campus looking for a parking place takes more time now than it used to. It has now become necessary to add an extra half hour to the daily commute, especially on

the days the humanities sections meet. Gone are the days when a student running late could speed up the main entrance and come to a screeching halt behind the very building in which her class was meeting.

Finding an empty space within jogging distance of the classroom today at UNCA has become an extra-curricular activity for which every student should be judged physically fit thus exempting them from the current Phys. Ed requirement. I know this would make me happy because at my age I feel silly when I hear myself say "Can't, gotta go to gym class." I think that once we all pass high school we should no longer be forced to suffer through gym class.

Of course, having passed high school we should not expect a professor to care when we say "Sorry I'm late, couldn't find a parking place". That excuse will not work in the professional environment at all. It only works as a line in a cut movie when delivered by a cut actor. According to Diane Williamson, Parking Services Manager at UNCA, there are 5,113 parking permits issued on campus. There are a total of 1,899 spaces available plus the space available in the overflow lots. Like the game of musical chairs, this means that we all must be quick and have big butts.

Susan Crockett  
Junior, mass communication