

The Daily Tar Heel

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Saturday, February 27, 1971
Tom Gooding, Editor

Awards of the week

Headline of the week award—To the Chapel Hill Weekly which ran the following head on their second section front Wednesday: "UNC Asks Legislature To Sweeten Pot."

The "Thanks for the help, but where were you last year?" award of the week—To UNC Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson who refused to speak against the war last spring during the strike, but who this week decided to join a big business anti-war group.

Right on, Chancellor.
The "You never really know who your friends are" award of the week—To DTH News Editor Mike Parnell who answered the phone one day this week to hear a voice tell him a bomb would go off in the office in precisely 30 minutes. Parnell said nothing to anyone, but 25 minutes later he got up and went to the snack bar. "I just happened to get hungry," he said.

The "Hit 'em where it hurts" award of the week—To the South Campus Coed who a week ago wrote a letter to the editor complaining that UNC males are a bunch of sex maniacs. The males, of course, immediately responded with a flood of letters crying, "Who? Me? Surely you jest."

The Sir Isaac Newton Memorial Mathematics award of the week—To the UNC budget office which, through a "slight computational error" managed to over-estimate the 1970-71 Student Government income by \$14,000. Everyone in the office wins a free class ticket for Math 1.

The "Isn't bureaucracy wonderful?" award of the week—To the U.S. Army intelligence network which, during a peace demonstration in Colorado, had spies spying on its own spies.

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79 Years of Editorial Freedom

Tom Gooding, Editor

Rod Waldorf Managing Ed.
Mike Parnell News Editor
Rick Gray Associate Ed.
Chris Cobbs Sports Editor
Frank Parrish Feature Editor
Ken Ripley National News Ed.
John Gellman Photo Editor
Terry Cheek Night Editor

Robert Wilson Business Mgr.
Janet Bernstein Adv. Mgr.

Ken Ripley

Soul food: Pessimism turns students to religion

Where is religion heading? What is the current state of religious feeling on campus? These are hard questions to answer. I didn't realize how hard it was until I began three weeks ago to analyze in depth the religious scene on campus.

The problem was that very few people, if any, really know where religion stands at UNC. Most of the chaplains, ministers, administrators, and the students I talked to—whose collected comments and activities would fill three pages of the DTH—were able to tell me how they were responding to religious change. But the essential question, "Religion on campus: growing or fading?" still remains anyone's guess.

The evidence I found goes both ways, fueling both the pessimist and optimist. The pessimist can cite declining church attendance, a realignment of religious centers to the periphery of campus life, and trends towards a more

society-oriented and less God-oriented campus ministry as signs of the decline and fall of religion on campus.

The optimist can look to an upsurge of enrollment in religion courses, the growing presence of religious themes in culture, the slight rises of participation in some church and center activities, the growing momentum of the evangelistic Christian groups among some students, and the apparent increase of inner "soul-searching" among students to find hope for modern religion.

Trends further confuse the issue. The biggest and most obvious trend is to move away from institutional religion to a more personal religious expression. Yet chaplain Carl Culberson has found, more students this year wanting to enter the ministry. Eastern religions are growing in popularity, observers note, yet not only have eastern religion movements—such as the followers of Baha'i and

Krishna—failed to capture widespread campus interest. Dr. Shutz of the religion department noted an unusual "strain" of revived interest in orthodox Christianity. The appearance and strength of evangelistic, orthodox Christians and their cousins, the "Jesus-freaks," further complicates analysis.

During my interviews, chaplain Bob Johnson probably went as far factually as anyone else when he said, "We're dealing with a different world." But if no one really knows what is happening, plenty of people are willing to take a guess.

One such guess was offered by former Tar Heel columnist John Agar, who pessimistically feels that religion is dying. He believes the recent upsurges in religious interest, especially in orthodox Christian theology, are manifestations of America's new mood of nostalgia—a fad that when it ends will fatally weaken the church.

Agar has a keen critical mind, and his guess may be a good one. Larger national trends show that the institutional church over the last decade has slumped considerably since the last "revival" of religious interest in the early 1950s. Polls show students massively turning off from the institutional church. The institutions have also suffered declines in both membership and financing. The apparent revival of interest in orthodox Christianity, seen in the growth of evangelistic groups and spontaneous religious interest, could very well burn itself out—and burn out the institutional church with it. Especially since both evangelistic groups and spontaneous religious interest are person-oriented rather than institution-fostering.

But my guess is that religion is growing, not fading as Agar believes. The institutional church, whether or not the pace of religious "revival" increases, is

being hurt badly by the growing number of people who are interested in religion and not in the church. The church as an institution may "slip away." But the institutional church is undergoing change, too, and has yet to show that it should or cannot survive. The institution has shown its durability.

More importantly, however, I feel religion and religious interest will grow regardless of its institutional fate. The current revival of religious interest—especially in orthodox Christianity—is occurring mostly outside the institution. Religious interest is growing because religion is meeting more fundamental needs. Students have grown more inner-directed, more searching in their quest for meaning fulfillment, and the "best way to really live," as one boy said. This search, these questions, are religious questions.

Religion will grow because these questions will multiply. "Frustration and cynical despair" with the political process, one chaplain ventured, have contributed greatly to student "withdrawal into themselves." Sociological trends of growing urbanization, technology, and depersonalization continue to make us ask the basic questions of life, death, and meaning to life. My guess is that, faced with a pessimistic future, more students will turn to religion—whatever its form—for the answers they need to understand themselves and their relationship to the world around them.

My guess is also that Christianity will continue to survive and grow because of the answers it provides. The true strength of Christianity is not an institution, but the power of the Gospel message.

This, at least, is my guess.

Letters to the editor

Room inspections invade privacy

To the editor:
As a result of this letter, I hope the DTH can publish the regulations drawn up by this University governing inspection of dorm rooms. I would like to know exactly what the inspector is allowed to do. Can he open a closet door? Can he rummage through someone's drawers in search of illegal appliances?

The rules as I have understood them are that the inspector is not allowed to search any closed drawers or closets. He must be accompanied by a maid when he enters a room; can she restrain him in any way if he does do any of these prohibited things?

I am well aware of the fact that the inspections are for our own safety. Walter Hamilton, of the Physical Plant, informed me of the reasons behind the searches, and I agree that too many appliances constitute a fire hazard. It seems to me, however, that the way in which the inspections are carried out is an invasion of privacy. I do not object so much to the rationale for the operations as I do to the methodology.

Aside from the inspections themselves, I want to discuss the physical structure of the older dorms, especially Cobb, with which I am most familiar. My first question is why, in this day and time, when we depend on electricity to such a great extent and have so many electrical appliances that we use almost daily, are three rooms put on a circuit that can only support six volts? That way, it is so easy to blow a fuse, causing inconvenience for at least six people. Re-wiring is only one of the difficulties in the older dorms.

Physical facilities themselves are inadequate. Ostensibly, we are not allowed to cook in the rooms. The physical plant proudly points to the fact that we have a kitchen that we can use. The problem here is that there is one kitchen to be used by over 300 girls. Needless to say, the facilities are grossly inadequate.

It seems that one possible solution to the problem would be to reserve some of the room rent from each semester to be channelled into a fund for improvements or renovations to each dorm. It seems only fair, even with the outstanding debt the university owes, to use some of this revenue for physical changes to the dorms. If money could be used in this way to make the older buildings more attractive to live in, perhaps the university would not be quite so far in the red.

I invite response from the physical plant and from any other students who have complaints along the same line. If my suggestion could be followed, I think many people would benefit in the long run.

Melissa Daniel
419 East Cobb

Students are 'had' by Student Stores

To the editor:
Once again the omnipotent/omnipresent money-grubbing Student Stores lays a milestone in the basic human philosophy that "man jest ain't worth a dam."

Mind you, I'm not complaining about the blue books going up 2 cents "accidentally" just before Fall exams, neither am I griping about being frisked, X-rayed, scrutinized, and televised as I enter and leave the textbook division, nor would I ever think of becoming enraged as I pay \$9.95 for a \$6.00 book. All these things are merely rules of the game and part of the terrible task that poor Mr. Shetley must endure in order that he may better serve the poor student and provide scholarships for us all.

What, however, does get me in the eye, you guessed it, is that the local Eckard's can (does) undersale ye ole S.S. a grand total of 59 cents on such a hot item as a typewriter ribbon. Not only was said item the same quality at Eckard's but also it was the same name brand as the item at the Student Stores.

Henceforth, the poor befuddled student need not worry of being "had" as he enters those golden portals of the local gig shop, he can consider it a fact.

David Simpson
Route One

Walking on bricks will save the grass

To the Editor:
I read with extreme interest the editorial about "Bricks, bricks and ..." on Feb. 26. I am in complete agreement with the author of the article except for the last paragraph. It is a well known fact that most (if not all) species of grass will not survive the constant trampling which they receive on one of the local campus paths (the non-bricked type that are so common). For some reason many students believe the old adage that the shortest distance between two points is across the grass. Also believing the adage, it seems that the University Walk Department has tried to brick up the existing dirt paths so that the rest of the campus can remain green and lovely (Sounds like a nice thing to do!). Unfortunately, once completed, each of the new brick walks only leads to other disembarkment points where the students can once again test the ability of genotypes to withstand trampling.



THE WAY I SEE IT, THIS CONCERT IS SORT OF A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR JUBILEE!

BLACK SABBATH HEAVY METAL ROCK CONCERT

LIMING Daily Tar Heel 2-27-71