

The Daily Tar Heel

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Saturday, March 20, 1971

Tom Gooding, Editor

Awards of the week

Lizard of the week (animal division)—The iguana that the New University Conference put in the Pit Monday. It was a good iguana, but not a great one.

Mysterious note leaver of the week—Former Daily Tar Heel editor Wayne Hurder who has developed a habit of wandering through the office when there's no one in and leaving notes saying, "I was here. Where were you?"

What we want to know is "Where the heck is Hurder?"

The "Thank God it's finally over" award of the week—To March 16 which meant that this year's all-campus elections were ended, that the candidates got to be regular people again and that the students didn't have to hear anymore "Hi. I'm Joe Blow and I'm running for..."

The unwanted alumnus of the week—Sports Illustrated staffer and former DTH sports editor Sandy Treadwell who went into the Journalism School Friday to write his story on the Eastern Regionals for SI only to be told he had to leave because the building was closing.

Ad campaign of the week—To the national Mental Health Association which sends out an anti-drug abuse campaign for papers to use as public service messages. The campaign includes ads saying, "Have you counted your diet pills lately?" "If you think 'hash' is corned beef and potatoes fried in a skillet, you're in trouble." and "If your child has been buying a lot of model airplane glue lately, ask to see the airplane."

The Daily Tar Heel

79 Years of Editorial Freedom

Tom Gooding, Editor

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Mike Parnell News Editor
Rick Gray Associate Ed.
Chris Cobbs Sports Editor
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Ken Ripley

Soul food: the Bible must be taken in its context

What do you do with a book that millions of people over the last two thousand years have called the "Word of God" and others have called another religious waste of time?

We can do several things. Some accept the Bible blindly on faith, headedly defending the Bible against the "assaults" of different interpretations, science, and Biblical criticism.

Others, equally fervent, have jumped on the bandwagon of human "reason," scorning the Bible as a pietistic fable. Still others, tired of the whole theological mess, ignore the controversial book.

In short, despite two thousand years of Christianity, the various bizarre ways people react to the Bible show we really don't yet know what to do with it.

Last week I said that religious belief and faith, like any other belief and faith, cannot effectively exist in a vacuum of knowledge. Because we are forced, sooner or later, to confront the claims of religion with its demand for intelligent decision

and commitment, we've got to look long and hard at what the different religions say—not just at what we think they say. We can't just react to our particular beliefs about Christianity, building up religious strawmen to knock down. Intellectual honesty and the seriousness of religious claims, for the real "seeker after truth" to examine carefully the Christian beliefs themselves.

Christian apologist Clark Pinnock has rightly pointed out, "The heart cannot delight in what the mind rejects as false." But the "heart" of man doesn't stand a chance at all if a closed mind refuses to grapple with religious claims. To reject Christianity off-hand without even examining it, as I have said before, is intellectual if not moral cowardice.

But if we're going to look at Christianity, we have to look at the Bible, which Christians accept as the primary source document of Christian belief.

It isn't hard to see why the Bible is so important to Christianity. The endless

argument about whether the Bible is "inspired" is a matter for theological debate and personal conviction. What makes the Bible so essential to Christianity is that, regardless of its inspiration, it remains virtually the only information we have—or can agree upon—of what Jesus was like as a person, what he said, and what he and his apostles believed and did. Historians are forced to the Bible for their studies of Jesus and early Christianity. No less forced are we.

But how we look at, or interpret, the Bible is all-important, because so much of what we get out of the Bible depends on our assumptions we begin with.

One way, of course, is to read the Bible only as a good story. But if the Bible is a good story, such an approach comes nowhere near the critical examination of Christianity we need.

Another way is to take the Bible symbolically, treating it as a collection of myths and fables pointing to some

"higher truth." But while there is profound symbolism in the Bible, to treat the whole book as merely symbolic is to ignore the increasingly legitimate historical claims of the Bible as well as the historical assumptions of the early Christian church. If Jesus Christ is merely a legend and did not do or say what the Bible claims he did, Christianity as a religion is worthless.

Even worse, to interpret the Bible completely as symbolism is to open the door to making Christianity whatever we want—not what Christianity, in fact, is. Christian history is full of cases where Christian "truth" was twisted to fit human ambitions.

The best way to interpret the Bible is to take it literally. A literal interpretation, in the way I mean it, does not mean to take the whole book blindly at face value as some Christians unfortunately do. Nor does it mean to argue over whether or not a comma has been left out, or which version is correct.

Instead, a literal interpretation of the Bible means to take the Bible in the ways it was meant to be taken—part history, part poetry, part teaching, part symbolic. A literal interpretation also means that we refuse to accept the Bible for what it is not—a science or history textbook rather than as a record of a God active in history, science, and the lives of men.

The biggest demand of a literal interpretation is that we take the Bible in context and on its own terms—judging what it means versus what we want it to mean. Here Biblical criticism has played a useful role.

Contrary to popular assumption, the hundreds of years of biblical criticism do not wage war against a literal view of the Bible. The soundest studies of the Bible, some of which are critical of traditional Christian beliefs, are based on a literal approach to the Bible. Much of what we have thus learned about the Bible—what it means, what its authors intended—has

contributed greatly to our understanding of Christianity.

To say, however, that Biblical criticism has "disproved" the Bible and Christianity is naive. Biblical criticism by scholars has gone through so many evolutions of thought—from the early rational to modern existential viewpoints—the Bible still remains as controversial and as open to study as ever. Significantly, the Bible has generally withstood well the close scrutiny of critics. It has been rejected and reinterpreted, but has yet to be conclusively refuted.

What remains for the real "seeker" is essentially the same as it has always been—into the controversy, to look at the Bible literally and honestly, and to arrive at some intelligent conclusion about the worth and validity of the Christian message.

And such a search means work and hard thinking, not an intellectual cop-out



CUMMINS
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Letters to the editor

Dog cruelty upsets Granville resident

To the Editor:

I am a senior chemistry student living in Granville Towers South. There are times when I wished I majored not in Chemistry but in Journalism or English so that I might express my thoughts and experiences better. This is one of those times.

Last night, I walked my fiancee home to Granville East. In the lobby was a dog

looking like—and about the size of—a German Sheppard. I am quite fond of dogs, so I naturally stopped to pet it. That is when the nightguard behind the desk noticed the dog and said, "that dog ain't stayin' here." He then reached down and grabbed the dog by the loose skin on the side of its head (around the jaw region), pulled it toward the door, lifted it off the ground and kicked it out the door! All the time the dog was "yelling" from the pain!

That was my experience, now my thoughts are quite obvious. First, the dog was quite friendly and would have been easily led out the door. Second, this guard apparently has no concern for animal life, and because of this, I do not want to see the money of students supporting this type of person in a job on this or any campus.

I'll be the first to agree that the dog should not have been there, but I'll never agree that the guard's method is justified. I, personally, do not want any of my money supporting this "man" (I must use quotes around man, because I don't think his actions justify that title.) nor do I think any other person would condone this.

I was not the only witness. As I said before, my fiancee was with me, and was visibly shaking from the experience. Other students were there, and they, too, were ostensibly appalled by his cruel and inhumane actions.

I know what I would like to see done to this guard, and I would encourage any person to apply pressure on Granville Towers to remove this guard from his position.

Steve Hemmig
2629 S. Granville

Rococo bum-out called impossible

To the Editor:

This letter is in reply to the front page blast about Rococo weed and the supposed "bad trip" that was experienced by the smoker. There is no way possible that one can bum-out on Rococo. I have been smoking Rococo with the founders of this incredible weed for about five weeks now and have not even had as much as a slight queeziness, even after smoking Rococo on all-night binges. (Which I must say are extremely exhilarating.) I did have a bad trip once, but that happened because I was so

stoned I couldn't tell at which end of my body my feet were, and fell over my St. Bernard which I thought was a giant pillow. I used to visit a friend who lived on a farm in Tennessee and he turned me on once with Jimson weed. I got quite ill for many hours and I very well remember what Jimson weed looked and smelled like, and I can assure you that the person who bummed-out could not have smoked Rococo weed. There have been several uncouth freaks capitalizing on the Rococo weed name, and it is probably these people who have been passing around some other kind plant as Rococo. Rococo weed has not yet been released in large quantities, but as soon as it is, people will know and everyone will be able to see for themselves what an incredible highness it will attain.

John Craddock

Subtle dog control urged by non-lover

To the Editor:

I am a member of the scorned ranks of non-lovers of dogs, (along with Mr. Stevens and the late W. C. Fields), however, I find it difficult to advocate shooting dogs' heads off because their habits include defecating in my yard, going through my trash cans, attacking me on my bicycle or barking day and night.

I'm lucky, in a way, because I know who most of my canine neighbors belong to. This knowledge gives me a different course of action from Mr. Stevens' suggestion of annihilation.

Whether it is the beagle who sings me to sleep every night from his home on Glendale Lane or the German Shepards who give impromptu concerts from their home on Glenhill, I can always sign a warrant against their owners with the Chapel Hill police department, which I will do if too few of them read this letter.

Peter Deane
211 Glenhill Lane

Mr. Nixon taking most realistic path

To the Editor:

Mr. Bello's last article seems to be an attempt to convince the so-called "Silent Majority" that the core of their group is against Nixon and the United States

involvement in Southeast Asia. No one has ever doubted that there are members of the "over-thirty generation" that are totally opposed to our involvement. Surely the group that was present at this particular gathering cannot be thought of as a representative group. I imagine the people who heard Mr. Schoenbrun knew his views before they came and those who disagree with him showed less interest in attending.

The fact that Mr. Schoenbrun was a dynamic speaker is admirable, but there have been many others before him who have had this trait. Adolph Hitler and George Wallace are both recognized as great speakers, yet their final success was limited. It is not difficult to "tear to shreds" another stand when there is no one to retaliate from the other viewpoint.

Mr. Nixon is surely aware of the feelings of the American people, and he is taking the most realistic path towards peace.

James Stewart
03 Avery

Owners should get complaints on dogs

To the Editor:

"I've seen dogs beaten, shot at, and run over by speeding cars. The next human who mistreats a dog is going to get a bullet in his head."

That was my first reaction to Reed Stevens' letter to the Tar Heel, before I realized that I was stooping to his level. Shooting dogs or people is unlawful. If I am to fight people who are cruel to animals, I must seek court action against these people.

Stevens has a legitimate gripe if the dogs tear up his yard and chase his car. The complaint, however, should not be directed at the dogs. Attack the people who are supposed to be responsible for the dogs. I detest these people for allowing their dogs to eat out of nasty trash cans and to roam the streets unprotected from speeders and dog-haters. I detest them for my reasons as much as Stevens does for his reasons.

If Stevens is still plagued by destructive dogs, let him talk to the owners in an effort to solve the dog problem, before he ends up in court for shooting a dog. Better yet, Stevens should move to Carrboro, where the leash laws are enforced.

Ron Moos
119 Pine St.



Bill Day