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# The Daily Tar Heel

92nd year of editorial freedom

## Needed: incentive for teachers

It's popular for politicians to talk about ways to improve North Carolina's public education: to suggest making class size smaller, to commend the new idea of teachers learning better teaching techniques by watching themselves on videotape machines, to propose improving the basic skills curriculum, or to consider widening the curriculum. Although each of these ideas has merit and would inevitably improve the quality of education, schools will never realize their full potential unless the best possible people become teachers. And in order to lure talented teachers into positions, the state must pass the legislation necessary for a substantial increase in teachers' salaries.

It is disgraceful that public education has become a mere nail in candidates' platforms, and that through hammering the issue back and forth, candidates have both bent it out of shape and ignored it. All candidates for N.C. offices support a salary increase for teachers, but an election year is a dangerous time to suggest the tax hike which might be needed to fund it. Gov. Jim Hunt proposes to fund salary increases through the state's economic growth, but other people have questioned whether this will make enough of a difference. Moreover, Sen. Jesse Helms, Hunt's opponent for the upcoming U.S. Senate election, has repeatedly attacked the governor's education record.

Although North Carolina candidates have succeeded in ignoring teachers salaries for some time, it is difficult to ignore the statistics: North Carolina ranks

44th out of the fifty states in its average salary for teachers, which was \$17,936 in 1982-1983. A teacher with a bachelor's degree can start with a salary of \$13,660 with the possible maximum of \$19,680 after eight years. The salary for a teacher with a master's degree is not much higher.

Small wonder that teaching has lost its appeal. In 1972-1973, 22 percent of college freshmen wanted to become teachers. In 1982-1983, the figure dropped to a measly 4.7 percent. The best qualified and most intelligent people turn to better paying professions. As Phillip C. Schlechty, an education professor at UNC, said, the best students drop out of teaching programs while in college, and the brightest who enter teaching tend to leave within five years.

In spite of the politicians' fear of the public's reaction to a tax increase, a recent poll conducted by the UNC School of Journalism showed that public opinion is in favor of a tax increase if it is necessary for the improvement of education. Ideas on how to use this money are myriad. Differential merit pay plans in which there would be increasing according to performance have been debated. A career ladder plan has also been suggested. These proposals seem ideal solutions to a serious problem, but they are useless unless put into effect. If North Carolina is to raise the quality of public schools to the same high standards the state holds for its universities, a pay increase for teachers, regardless of whose pocket it comes from, is crucial.

## A question of cookware

In a classic example of the pot calling the kettle black, Sen. Jesse Helms has taken to criticizing Gov. Jim Hunt recently for raising campaign funds outside the state. Helms' attack against Hunt, his Democratic opponent in the U.S. Senate race, is a television commercial focusing on a Park Avenue-based New York Committee to Elect Jim Hunt.

It's not that Helms doesn't have a good point. It's just that it's difficult to take such blatant hypocrisy seriously considering his past record on campaign contributions.

Helms, well-known for his association with the National Congressional Club, has never been reluctant to use money from outside North Carolina to finance his costly, media-buzz style of campaigning. In 1983, he raised a majority — 75 percent by some estimates — of his campaign funds elsewhere. This year Helms has made several out-of-state fundraising trips, visiting Texas, California, Pennsylvania and Florida during the congressional recess.

Helms' interstate activity still doesn't erase the fact that Hunt is also guilty of relying heavily on out-of-state contributions. During a news conference Monday that was held in response to the Helms ad, Hunt said that because Helms had not accepted his suggestion to stop soliciting money from out-of-state, he would stick

to his goal of raising two-fifths of his funds from sources not in North Carolina.

Of course, some people argue that out-of-state contributions aren't such bad things. Certainly Helms and Hunt don't think they are. Hunt said at the news conference that he didn't believe fund raising was a major issue for the average North Carolinian, but a recent Carolina Poll indicates that at least some people in the state are concerned about the level of out-of-state contributions. While 37.8 percent of those surveyed said it made no difference to them where campaign money comes from, 41.1 percent said they thought such contributions were a poor idea.

The concern is certainly warranted; enormous sums are being spent in the race. Maybe a small number of out-of-state contributions wouldn't be so bad — the race, after all, has national implications. But when \$20 million is being spent, many of those dollars undoubtedly will come from sources who, hoping to be remembered after the election, will contribute with little concern for what's good for North Carolina. It will be hard enough for Hunt or Helms to serve the interests of the state when faced with the complexities of national problems. Being tied to purse-strings that lead everywhere but home can only make it that much harder.

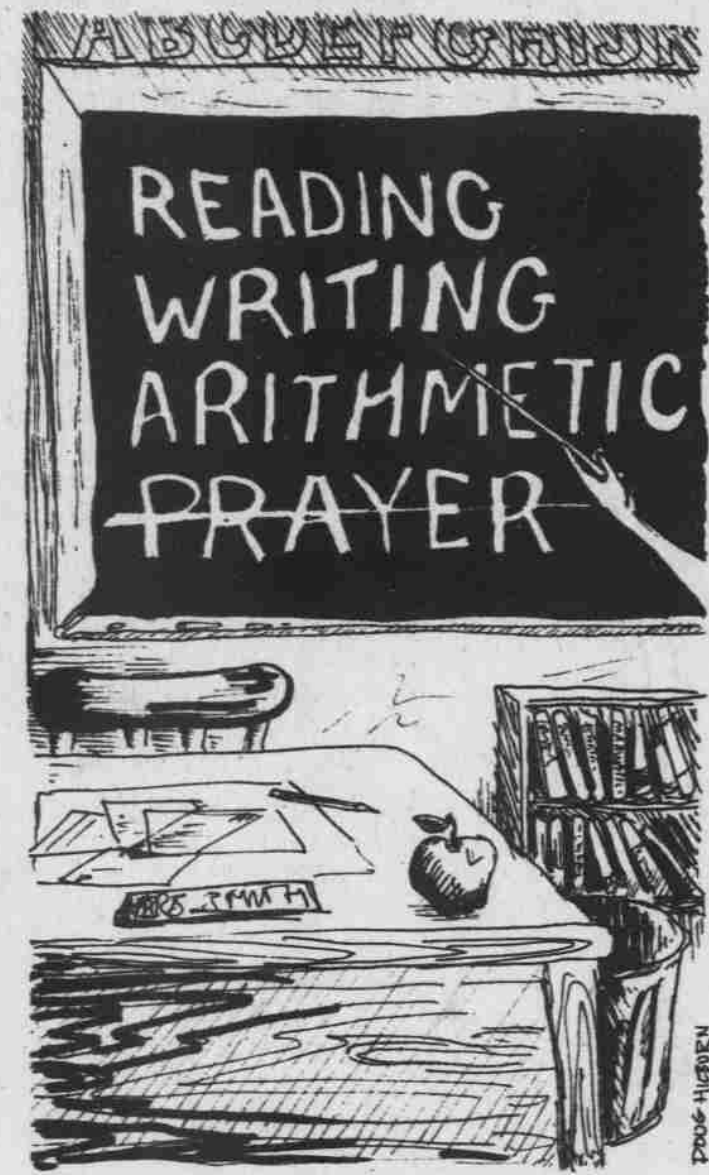
The debate over whether or not prayer has its place in public schools is one that promises to stick around for a long time. Although the Senate Tuesday rejected President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment to permit organized, spoken prayer in U.S. public schools, Reagan will undoubtedly bring the issue up time and again during the '84 presidential race. And the votes of senators on the question will undoubtedly also come under close public scrutiny. Today's editorial page gives students at UNC a chance to respond to a recent column supporting school prayer.

## Let schools teach not pray

By CHRIS BEARD  
and  
STEVE GRIFFIN

We were amazed when reading Dave Fazio's article in support of the school prayer amendment ("On prayer's place in school," *DTH*, March 16) to see how either shallow or misguided his understanding of this issue is. His argument is both internally inconsistent and displays a minimal comprehension of the Constitution and the intentions of its authors.

Fazio alleges that the Supreme Court's banning of group prayer and Bible reading in schools is a violation of the First Amendment. That amendment reads in part, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." We feel this wording could hardly be more direct and, thus, the Supreme Court could not have ruled any other way in prohibiting group prayer in schools.



Our contention here is in keeping with many Supreme Court decisions in which the court applied a three-part test to identify violations of the First Amendment. If a statute fails any of the three parts, it is shown to be unconstitutional. The three-part test is, "First, the statute must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advocates nor inhibits religion ...; and finally, the statute must not foster an excessive government entanglement with religion." (*Stone v. Graham*). We feel that allowing group prayer in public schools fails all three of these tests.

Even those who support prayer in schools must at least unconsciously realize that their position is unconstitutional, for they advocate a constitutional amendment rather than a mere act of Congress to achieve their ends. In other words, they realize what they are proposing is a direct contradiction of the First Amendment.

Fazio and others argue that so long as the prayer is non-denominational, it does not establish one religion at the expense of others. This is clearly irrelevant, because the Supreme Court in *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947) ruled that "neither (state or federal government) can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another." Thus, since prayer is a purely religious activity, the prayer content is inconsequential.

In order to make this proposed amendment seem less noxious to the public, proponents such as Fazio emphasize local, as opposed to federal, control over prayer content. Fazio writes that "the prayer amendment will decentralize government authority by allowing individual communities to decide if and how they should pray." The assumption here seems to be that absolute homogeneity of religious preference exists at the local level. While we do not profess to know exactly what Fazio means by "individual communities," we do know that even in Chapel Hill there is a vast array of religious preferences, precluding the possibility of formulating a prayer acceptable to the entire community.

Proponents of the school prayer amendment stress the "voluntary" nature of participation in prayer, again attempting to render it less baneful to the public. Fazio claims that organized group prayer in public schools would not force anyone to pray contrary to his beliefs. However, school children are of an especially impressionable age and we feel that one can hardly expect a six-year-old first grader to express autonomy and abstain from participating in a group prayer which may be contrary to the beliefs of his family.

Fazio makes the disjointed comparison between

peer pressure on such a student to participate in group prayer and peer pressure to "use drugs, drink alcohol, and engage in premarital sex." Fazio states that in relation to the latter, the former is insignificant. We feel that both forms of peer pressure encourage a person to do something against his will and are therefore both inherently pernicious. Because one form of peer pressure is worse than another does not mean that we must also accept the lesser evil.

In light of the fact that individual prayer was never (and could never be) outlawed in public schools, there is no need for organized group prayer in public schools. However, we can foresee two consequences of organized school prayer: It would provide a litmus test for separating Christians from non-Christians and it would encourage tepid Christians to be more dutiful in their prayer habits.

The purpose of public schools should be the teaching of academic subjects such as math, English, science and history, which prepare a person for being a productive member of society. It is just as ridiculous to force public schools to indoctrinate children into religious practices as it is to force churches to teach the Pythagorean theorem. U.S. District Court Judge William Overton wrote in a 1982 case that "No group, no matter how large or small, may use the organs of government, of which the public schools are the most conspicuous and influential, to foist its religious beliefs on others."

We feel that religion is a deeply personal matter; each of us probably has slightly different beliefs concerning our origins, purpose in life and eternal destiny. We therefore encourage individualism in the formation of personal conscience and strongly oppose the herd mentality of a standardized and sterile group prayer.

Finally, it is a pathetic political situation when the president of the United States, who pledged to preserve and protect the Constitution, is willing to restructure the obvious intentions of the document in order to fulfill his personal and political ambitions. Evidently, the view from the White House is that school children need organized prayer activity while the President does not, for he has attended church only nine times in the past 38 months. We urge Fazio and other proponents of the school prayer amendment to abandon their support for this un-democratic measure and re-examine the motives of a president who stands more for hypocrisy than democracy.

Chris Beard is a senior zoology/anthropology major from Lenoir. Steve Griffin is a senior zoology major from Fayetteville.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The reverse side of prayer's place in school

To the editor:

According to Dave Fazio, ("On prayer's place in school," *DTH*, March 16) pressure on non-Christians to convert is "virtually non-existent" compared to the pressure students face to take drugs and engage in pre-marital sex. My own experience tells me otherwise. At a high school I attended, there was always a moment of silent prayer during assemblies. As an agnostic, I did not choose to participate. I was not loud or obnoxious about it. I simply crossed my arms and stared straight ahead, refusing to adopt the prayer position of bowed head and folded hands.

Teachers glared at me during the moment of silence. Tracts were slipped into my locker. Once, during lunch break, I was backed into a corner by an outraged teenage girl who demanded that I justify the fact that I wasn't a Christian. The kinder Christians gave me looks of melting pity and told me in hushed tones that Jesus loved me. It is true that there were people who offered me drugs. When I refused, they simply shrugged and changed the subject. But when one of my born-again classmates accosted me, "no" was taken for an answer. If I tried to make excuses and walk away I would be followed, exhorted all the while to read this tract, come to tonight's meeting, talk to that minister.

Fazio writes that "69 to 85 percent of the public support prayers. Why won't the government give the people what they want?" Well, the fact is that while atheists, agnostics, Jews, Buddhists, Moslems, and other non-Christians comprise only a small portion of the American population, there are no less U.S. citizens than the Christian majority. Our rights are endangered by the prospect of school prayer.

Pamela Troy  
Colonial Arms Apt

To the editor:

Prayerful columnist Dave Fazio ("On prayer's place in school," *DTH*, March 16) contends that the prohibition on public prayer infringes his constitutional rights. He is wrong. Fazio can pray before an exam, between classes or in any corner of the campus at any time. Unlike the president, he may even choose to go to church occasionally and pray there. What he cannot do, of course, is involve me in his prayers in public places. Nor can I involve him in mine. It is a tidy arrangement. Consider the consequences of the ill-conceived constitutional amend-

ment he advocates. Prayers would not be written by government agencies, including schools, but presumably churches and other religious groups would be invited — or permitted — to submit a rotating prayer of the week. Even in North Carolina, they would not be just old-fashioned, Bible-thumping Baptist prayers. They would include Catholic and Jewish prayers and more. Undoubtedly the Moonies, the Hari Krishnas and other crazies would demand their prayers be given equal billing. Probably even the atheists could insist on a week of their non-prayer.

The result would be a rotating gallery of deities as complex as a Roman temple. Fazio might one day send his kids to school to pray and have them come home with shaved heads trying to sell him flowers. He'd be better off as things are now, praying at home, in church, in private. Maybe that's why the Good Book recommends it.

Robert L. Stevenson  
Associate professor of journalism

To the editor:

In the last issue of *The Daily Tar Heel's* 91st volume, Dave Fazio made faulty inferences and used insensitive assertions to conclude that America needs a school prayer amendment ("On prayer's place in school," *DTH*, March 16). Actually though, any further application of the political process to the "voluntary" school prayer question can only restrict the ideal of religious freedom which led to the foundation of this country.

Fazio correctly points out that Reagan's amendment proposal did not call for government officials to write a school prayer. But, he neglects to point out that the proposal didn't specify who is to write, or even designate, the prayers that would be used. The parents of each given community could decide, but would they choose a Catholic, a Protestant or a Jewish prayer? Would they rotate prayers according to the religious composition of their community? Maybe they would write a non-denominational prayer, so that everyone could worship together.

This compromise, though, might be offensive to those who strictly follow their own faith. Given this problem in every community across the country, it would be logical to call for government to devise one ultimate solution. Although the Constitution would root the resulting solution in compromise, the ideas advocated could be seen as a government-sanctioned

religion — and this would contradict the Constitution.

Fazio also asserts that since the 1963 Supreme Court decision, "the rights to exercise religion have been gradually diminishing." The nationwide increase of religious worship and interest clearly shows the validity of that point. While supporters of the prayer amendment will tell you stories of five-year-olds who have been denied the right to recite "...thank you, God..." rhymes, opponents can tell you shocking stories. Like that of the Bell and McCold families which were run out of their Little Axe, Okla. homes for protesting the coercion they felt from a "voluntary" prayer program. The question to ponder is: Is it up to government to see that children are exposed to religion, or is it up to government to guarantee that every American has the right to pray if he or she so decides?

As the Constitution reads now, Americans have an enviable religious freedom, and contrary to popular belief, one can even pray in school. What isn't allowed is school-supervised prayer. This measure was taken to ensure the continued freedom of religion in the United States by avoiding direct control of religion by the State. As a country that was established for religious freedom, and as a country which has thrived for 200 years thanks to religious freedom, we must pray that government will always allow free religious worship, but never try to provide it.

Mark H. Pavao  
Grimes

To the editor:

I am an atheist. Quite a few people will never read this sentence because the first was so horrifying. Some will read on with a narrowed attitude, hoping I unwittingly prove that it should be horrifying. Instead, these people are themselves proving how horrible I think a constitutional amendment for school prayer would be.

Dave Fazio in "On prayer's place

in schools" (*DTH*, March 16) presented a valid and practical argument for organized prayer in public schools from his point of view. But it is a personal point of view — and so is religion. Nothing about it is so cut and dried or across the (school?) board. No matter who decides its content, a memorized standard prayer read in public schools seems to me a valueless way to expose children to religion.

Fazio's supporting percentages of the majority in favor lose meaning as well. The rights of one concentrating student in the library supersede the 99 percent who want to socialize loudly there, because a library is meant for study. Likewise, a public school promises an objective, secular education — where else can I get one? If I don't want to be exposed to religion there, I shouldn't have to be. How would amendment supporters react if a prayer-length list of atheistic beliefs (believe me, one can be both atheistic and religious, dedicated to personal faith and moral integrity) was recited each day in school?

Such declarations wouldn't do much good, because no faith could ever be summed up that way. I'd be very sorry if yours could and needed continued public affirmation. I love learning about different religions, but by personal contact and heartfelt discussion.

In no way does this deny the free exercise of religion, as Fazio claims. Every individual should cherish that right; no law prohibits uninterrupted prayer in school. But we all must respect that right to choose in others, too. Of course, Fazio should practice his private set of beliefs at all times! I just don't know why he needs a diverse homeroom to practice it with him.

Voluntary prayer may not be a pressure, but it is an influence. A few minutes of silent meditation are sufficient, I feel, though unnecessary. When children discover their own prayers, they won't need a teacher to tell everyone else to be quiet. And they won't need somebody else's prayer, either.

David Schmidt  
Connor

### Letters?

The *Daily Tar Heel* welcomes letters to the editor and contributions of columns for the editorial page.

Such contributions should be typed, triple-spaced, on a 60-space

line, and are subject to editing. Column writers should include their majors and hometowns; each letter should include the writer's name, address and telephone number.

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