

The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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You wouldn't recognize her

It's nice to know that in this age of great renewed construction at UNC — only matched in dimension by the construction of the early 1960s — certain people have not forgotten to keep an eye out for details. But actually, the details we're speaking of aren't concerned with the Student Activities Center that is reputed to be nearing completion; nor are they concerned with the aesthetically transcendent new dorm, or with the new computer center on the block. Nope, they're right here on our own home turf.

Or rather, they're right here in our own little Student Union building. You see, there is hope that instead of merely jumping on the construction bandwagon to suit the Student Union's "changing needs," we can cultivate a useful old Southern tradition of reconstruction.

Any student who frequents the Union building these days must have gotten the chilling sensation at least once or twice that things have become disjointed within our young but still highly vital building. But have no fear, for as was reported Wednesday in the *DTH*, the Student Union building has at last been slated for . . . shall we say, redecorative purposes.

Well, the old Fastbreak area (what a cagey misnomer!) has been in a state of disuse for some time now, perhaps dating even to the time when it was still open. Today, in fact, it resembles a museum exhibit more than anything else (and by now its appearance certainly must have led many a freshman to ponder the reason why such curios as old hard-plastic chairs and imitation wood-top tables are to be valued so highly and imprisoned in such environmental stasis at such great pains). As recently determined plans state, the

space is due to be renovated by our own dear Physical Plant within the course of a few months. The intended outcome is the installation of a new vending area (offering a wider variety than exists in the Union), and the creation of a new, dare one say, clean, student lounge.

As for the bowling alley downstairs, one must certainly almost cry each time one passes by. Such a waste of space for the pleasure of so few cannot ever have been known to man before this day. Unfortunately, not all things come to an end, and the bowling alley has apparently not yet met its peak of disuse. Our guess is that bowling is "out" with the younger generation, but perhaps we're not hip enough to comment — we'll consult our *Playboy* style guide and get back to you on that one. At any rate, the old alleys are bound to suffer under direct competition. Part of the alleys' quarters are soon to take on the aspect of a vast field of green.

No, we're not talking about the "links." We've already got a golf course near campus. Rather, the "pool hall" will be moving in from across the way. And in its former place, students may be happy to hear that there will be a student cabaret, complete with a sound system and lighting equipment. Thus, at long last, all social affairs need not be recklessly sunk into that great pit of seriousness which we call Great Hall.

What this all spells out, behind the jocularly with which we treat the matter, is a profound change in the nature of the Student Union. On a campus that often seems to be seeking a center for its energy, the Student Union has become less and less defined in recent years. But these current plans hold promise for the future.

Fighting over worldwide rites

There's apparently no limit as to what Rupert Murdoch will get his hands into. Murdoch, the Australian entrepreneur turned American citizen, already seems to have it all. You want a movie studio? He owns half of Twentieth-Century Fox. TV stations? He's about to acquire seven of the largest independents in the nation from Metromedia. Newspapers? He has an international chain on three continents, ranging from the prestigious (*The Times* of London) to the outrageously sleazy (tabloids such as the *New York Post*). Furthermore, Murdoch just stole gossip columnist Suzy — she broke the news about Madonna's engagement — away from the *New York Daily News* to work for him. So what's left for Murdoch to do — grab up syndication rights to a column by the pope?

Not anymore. He's done that, too. More than 200 newspapers worldwide began running a column based on the writings of Pope John Paul II over the weekend, and the Vatican is blowing smoke about the whole thing.

"Astonishment and disapproval" was the reaction from the press quarters of the Holy See. The column was further blasted for copyrighting the pope's

A good lesson to learn

The Senate's killing Tuesday of legislation aimed at permitting organized prayer in public schools was another low blow to the New Right's agenda of social issues. That alone makes the Senate's action commendable, but it should also be applauded for simply being the correct thing to do.

The bill, sponsored by none other than our own Sen. Helms, would have removed the prayer issue from federal court jurisdiction, giving state and local governments power to allow prayers in schools if they chose to do so. It was a tricky attempt — known as "court-stripping" — to slip the issue past the federal courts.

Trickiness aside, Sen. Helms' bill died a justified death. The school prayer issue has too long served as a political football; and the Senate's 62 to 36 vote not only strongly rejects the proposal, but signals, we hope, declining public support for religion-related crusades of the New Right.

Every time the prayer issue comes up many New Right politicians are more than happy to use it to challenge opponent politicians' commitment to family, home, God, the American way,

words, thus indicating "exclusive rights" to the material.

His "rights" to the material notwithstanding, Murdoch is carrying the column for all the wrong reasons. While Murdoch may have some noble intentions in spreading the word of the world's most powerful religious official, it seems that his primary motivation is greed.

Unauthorized writings are not uncommon, but more often than not they are the stuff that quickie bestsellers are made of, you know, fly-by-night biographies of Michael Jackson, Madonna, and most recently, Lee Iacocca. But the pope is not an entertainment figure; he is a man to be respected, whether or not you share his religious beliefs.

The pope deserves better than this. He has dedicated his life to religion, shunning personal gain. Murdoch is virtually the opposite, and only reinforces his on-again, off-again reputation of shoddy journalism with his latest venture.

Murdoch, in short, has two options: Donate the column's earnings to the church (something he is loathe to do), or discontinue it altogether.

Stick to Suzy, Rupert.

and everything else that is good, right and moral. Somehow opposition to organized school prayer for whatever reasons is construed as opposition to religion — at least, that's what some proponents seem to want the public to believe.

Organized school prayer is a clear encroachment into the proper separation of church and state that this country was founded upon. A publicly run school system should in no manner appear to endorse or favor any particular religious belief. The rights of those students who do not believe in prayer should be respected. This does not thwart religion in any way, it is not anti-God, it merely takes organized prayer out of an improper setting.

There are those who will probably say that our opposition to organized school prayer only confirms the ridiculous accusations that our choice of the Nietzsche quote reflects our editorial opinion, religious bias, moral corruptness, etc. Apparently these same people won't be satisfied until there is one national religion and persecution becomes the order of the day.

—The 'God is dead' Uproar—

'DTH' shows some boldness with controversial quote

To the editors:

As both a concerned agnostic and a socially conscious student appalled at the current political and economic power of the various Christian/fascist New Right groups both on campus and across the country, I applaud the *DTH*'s use of Nietzsche's now infamous "God is dead" quote (Sept. 4). It is not that I would deny the right for some people to believe that their God is alive, but rather, I am happy that the *DTH* has become bold enough to ruffle the feathers of the so-called Christians so soon into the semester.

I am surprised that the *DTH* did not wait at least until these same people, who complain about things they would rather not hear, begin their lunchtime barrages in the Pit, effectively forcing thousands of people to listen to their antiquated fundamentalist blurbs that many of us do not want to hear. Born-again Christians enjoy a religious freedom that allows them to try to impose their moral values upon those who are not so adamant. Yet at the same time, they object to the expression

of any religious or non-religious views that contradict theirs. Is freedom of religion only acceptable if it is Christian? Hypocrisy seems to flourish here.

I am sure that if the *DTH* instead had run the generic fundamentalist quote "God is alive" the born-againists would have been ecstatic that they had finally taken control of our newspaper's moral slant — something that they most aspire to, but moreso on a world level. I am also sure that had such a quote been printed, the less religious people among us would have condoned it, but would have attributed it to be one of the more unsavory byproducts of the First Amendment.

Now I am waiting patiently for the *DTH* to print something to the tune of "Lucifer is alive and well and living in West Virginia," so that God's renowned disciple on this earth, Jerry Falwell, can unleash his wrath upon this newspaper. Praise the Lord!

Michael Smith
Chapel Hill

Religious totalitarianism?

To the editors:

A challenge is an invitation to debate, argue and reason. Ken Throckmorton's "challenge" to "good" Christians ("Christians must fight the good fight, 'DTH,'" Sept. 11) is hardly that. It is nothing more than a thinly veiled call for religious totalitarianism, something no democracy can tolerate. It puts him on a par with Rabbi Kahane and Ayatollah Khomeini, both religious men contemptuous of democracy. The ultimate irony behind the poisonous closed-mindedness of those so highly offended by the Nietzsche quote is their failure to acknowledge the source of the following day's quote by St. Augustine ("Hear the other side," Sept. 5) — hardly an atheist.

Of course God is alive. Our faith in the Holy Spirit, whether Jewish or Christian, is a testimony to that life. I do not know about Throckmorton's faith, but mine teaches compassion, not persecution, and the ability to reason, not strike out in blind hatred.

Throckmorton might wish to consider another of Nietzsche's quotes, "What does not kill me, makes me stronger." If one cannot survive such a mild challenge to faith as a quote in the *DTH*, then the faith was sorely lacking to begin with. To survive the challenge with faith intact can only make one stronger. It's a shame it can't make Throckmorton wiser, as well.

Brad Torgan
Chapel Hill

A view from The Far Side

To the editors:

In response to the column by Ken Throckmorton ("Christians must fight the good fight, 'DTH,'" Sept. 11): I admire your strength and conviction, Ken, but if all Christians

at UNC stopped reading the *DTH*, they would miss out on *The Far Side*, and humor can be just as important as God.

Dexter Mandrake
Chapel Hill

Accusation of blasphemy fanatic in nature

To the editors:

Ken Throckmorton ("Christians must fight the good fight, 'DTH,'" Sept. 11) is an interesting sort of Christian. He is apparently gifted with a positive knowledge of right and wrong, and seems to find the distinction between good and evil as sharp as that between night and day — everyone is either on the side of the angels or the demons. The battle lines are clearly drawn, and there's no spiritual "no-man's land." Right or wrong, good or evil, Christian or heathen, period.

I can imagine all sorts of circumstances in which such confident ethical judgments would come in handy — why, if you worked at it, you would never make a morally incorrect decision! Unfortunately, the price for such sure judgmental ability is steep: You must be willing

to completely sacrifice your reason and become a fanatic. When a writer levels the charge of blasphemy at the editors of a student newspaper for running a historically significant quote by a largely discredited philosopher as their daily salute, and interprets this as a deliberate frontal assault on the Trinity with potentially dire consequences ("Only God knows what you may have done . . .") I say he can safely be labeled a fanatic . . . though I prefer the term "nut."

The real world, Throckmorton, is not some massive stage on which a morality play is constantly being acted out; it's not that simple. Distinctions between good and evil are often very hard to come by, and those of us who don't see things with the clarity you possess because of your particular brand of madness

must often make moral decisions the hard way — by thought, reflection and prayer, rather than by a stamped-out set of moral prejudices. The "theology" you espouse, Ken, is an offense to intelligent people, and especially intelligent Christians, everywhere. Your hysterical, splenetic study in overreaction that ran as a column in the *DTH* Wednesday makes a mockery of the principles you claim to champion.

The *DTH* wasn't launching an atheistic assault on Christianity by

running the Nietzsche quote. If you want a reason to stand up for Christ and Christian justice, why not find a real one: Scan the front page of any good newspaper, identifying the uncountable injustices and indignities chronicled there, and do what you can to better one or two of these situations.

You might also look at the front-page quote that ran the next day in the *DTH*.

Barry Campbell
Chapel Hill

Varied ideas a blessing

To the editors:

Can you say overreaction? C'mon Ken, do you really think that because the *DTH* prints a quote by Nietzsche (whom you failed to mention in your column, "Christians must fight the good fight, 'DTH,'" Sept. 11) that the editors are compelled to proclaim it as their own belief? Does it really seem to you that simply because they printed one man's view of religion in the modern world that they "slapped Jesus Christ in the face" and "launched an attack" on God? I am quite proud of the fact that I attend an open-minded, liberal university that is free of the senseless censorship of the Moral Majority and other such groups. It is an invaluable asset to the University

community in general to be exposed to as many varying views as possible. I may not find the slightest bit of truth or sense in some of them, but I feel that I have given myself a broader understanding of life and that I have given a new idea at least a chance at validity.

I do not agree with Nietzsche's idea that "God is dead." I feel that he is very much alive in this world. I also do not agree with Ken Throckmorton's exaggerations of the intent and implications of printing this quote. I am glad to have been exposed to both these views, however, and I am glad to be able to expose mine.

Paul J. Pickhardt
Alexander

Playing politics with God

To the editors:

In response to Rick Spargo's letter "Is there no room at the Inn for the house of God?" (Sept. 6), I would like to express my concern that our society has reached the point where we have had to establish such restrictions on the use of our public buildings by religious groups. I believe, however, that such regulations are necessary to preserve what little separation is left between church and state in our nation today. Too many people are com-

binning their religious and political views into one political philosophy and then trying to establish the combination as our system of government. No one points this out as clearly as Rick Spargo, who argues that his religious group is being denied the privileges of other groups which are political in nature and then signs the letter as a representative of the College Republicans.

Alice Marshbanks
Chapel Hill

To the editors:

I attended the "Rock and Roll — A Search for G-d" seminar last Thursday with a search for a good laugh in mind. Instead, I learned that all rock 'n' roll is evil and uses Satan for a medium. I learned that if I detest rock 'n' roll music because of its anti-Christian message, I will reach G-d. I learned that rock music uses Satanic backward masking to persuade this nation's youth away

from the true Savior and into the clutches of sex, drugs and violence. I learned that an innocent freshman cannot be lured and deceived by a religious cult called Maranatha Campus Ministries. How could this happen at a state institution called UNC? In a country with such lofty founding principles such as separation of church and state?

Jackie Carr
Chapel Hill

Gosh darn, Throckmorton!

To the editors:

Gosh darn, Ken Throckmorton ("Christians must fight the good fight, 'DTH,'" Sept. 11). I missed where the *DTH* declared God is dead. All I saw was a quote (i.e., someone's opinion) on the bottom of the front page. It's not like the editors put "God is dead" in a banner headline without ascribing it to anyone or wrote an article citing conclusive evidence that God has kicked the bucket. Quoting

Nietzsche's "God is dead" is as meaningless as me quoting Throckmorton's "God is alive now, today" because that is his opinion not mine, just as Nietzsche's opinion is not necessarily the *DTH*'s.

And, Rickert and Schmidt, please keep printing these controversial quotations, they make your Reader Forum very amusing. I like to see how "offensiveness" people can be.

Allyson Mathis
Parker

