

The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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A holiday fit for a King

Martin Luther King spent almost 20 years fighting racial injustice, but in North Carolina after two years of opposition, the fight continues to proclaim his birthday a state holiday.

Fifty-seven years ago today King, perhaps America's greatest leader in social justice, was born. This year, however, is the first time America will pay tribute to a man who gave not only all his talents and energies but even his life to the conviction that no human being should be denied the right to live with self-respect and dignity.

After a long battle in the senate, extended for the most part by our own Jesse Helms, the bill proclaiming King's birthday as a federal holiday finally passed last year. All but three states have made the day a state holiday as well. However, in states which have not enacted a King holiday, federal employees will receive a day off with pay but state employees will not.

Several arguments against celebrating Martin Luther King's birthday have been raised. One is that it is not the state's responsibility to come up with the money for a paid holiday for all its employees. Honor, however, is priceless.

An education in commitment

Whether we like it or not, our actions have political implications. Simply being at UNC is a matter of politics. Do we honestly think that it is chance that, for the most part, blacks at this university live on distant South Campus, at the base of a laborious hill, while whites live at the top of the hill within easy access of classes, stores, indeed, all the necessities of life?

Accepting this as "chance" allows us to leave our beliefs and our assumptions about the world unchallenged. But possessing such impervious beliefs has dangerous consequences for all of us.

Two good examples of our innate need to turn subjectivity into "fact" were addressed in DTH editorials this past week. On Tuesday, the editorial board brought attention to the failed planning of UNITAS — a housing program which would have allowed students of various races and nationalities to live together in a single dorm, thus promoting cultural harmony. The failure has been attributed in part to obstinance in the Residence Hall Association. Some members of that organization opposed UNITAS because it differed from their own solution to racial disharmony by moving blacks onto North Campus in small groups. Thus, though RHA recognized the problem, it would only act upon its own particular solution. The failure to recognize common grounds effectively killed the UNITAS project.

The value of King's contribution to the rights of the minorities and impoverished of our society surpasses the value of any money the state might save without the holiday.

The notion that King was a Communist is grounded in the era of McCarthyism. King transcended that era. So should we.

King's most important contribution to our society was his philosophy of love. Following the example of Ghandi, King led his movement without violence. "Love your enemies," King told his people, and when his house was bombed, he was arrested, and even when he was stabbed, King practiced what he preached. While the Birmingham police used fire hoses and billy clubs against King and his followers, they fought back with an even stronger weapon: non-violence. And it worked so well that the civil rights movement advanced more during the decade King was its leader than it had during the entire century prior to King.

Washington fought for the freedom of America and Lincoln fought for the freedom of blacks. King fought for the freedom of us all. A state holiday is the least we can do to honor a man so important to the hearts and minds of the people of this country.

A second example of reliance upon subjectivity revealed itself in the wake of my recent editorial on rape. I recognize that this is no easy issue to address. We often feel uncomfortable when speaking out on certain issues, fearing that our audience will simply lump us with those whom we're trying to defend. But I'm afraid in the case of rape — and other tagged "women's" issues — that lumping is the reason why rape is still a problem. The logic of the skeptical male audience is quite simple: 1) Women say that rape is a crime against women, therefore they are blaming men; 2) I am a man; 3) I would never rape a woman; 4) Since I am a man and I would never rape a woman, women cannot blame men, and I am personally insulted that they would; 5) I wash my hands of the whole thing.

Both examples give real cause for despair. I will accept excuses for not acting — sometimes it is impossible to know where to begin — but I'm tired of people making excuses for not thinking. We must learn to take some responsibility for our education — we are learning, after all, how to think correctly. We ought to apply what we learn to our community and to the world. For if we deny our education, we deny our responsibility. And that denied, all else is lost.

— SALLY PONT

The Daily Tar Heel

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In honor of a birthday

By SIBBY ANDERSON

"... through two centuries a continuous indoctrination of Americans has separated people according to mythically superior and inferior qualities while a democratic spirit of equality was evoked as the national ideal."

Equality, having the same rights, privileges and abilities as one's counterparts. In recent years, we have assumed that the premise of this entity was ours by birth. However, resounding cries of an era past linger distantly as a reminder of the struggles and sacrifices experienced by a race of people for the sake of justice.

One man most instrumental in this movement was minister and civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Born Jan. 15, 1929, he spent his life protesting the inequalities of a nation while striving for world peace.

Choice classes, beggar's wishes

To the editors:

We came back from our holidays comfortably pudgy, wonderfully well-rested and looking simply marvelous in our new duds. We had new music to boogie to, new toys to play with, maybe even some new money to spend. Oh, what happy children we were . . .

Then came registration. And drop-slash-add. Slash throat.

Now we're all miserable. We walk slowly and kind of bent over. We dress in drab, baggy clothes (not P.J.'s, Doug, but begging attire). We wait in endless lines with others like ourselves, moaning and mumbling. "Hey, bud? Can you spare a class for someone down on his luck?" But the line moves on slowly. We get to the front and hold out our trembling hands, covered with the stickum of red tape, hoping for a mere morsel of an add card.

"No, I'm sorry. We're all closed out." Depressed and disillusioned are we. As we turn to leave, we wonder why we even enrolled here. "Wait a minute!" says the lady. "Here's something!" Everyone freezes, too excited to budge. "Yes, yes — here's an opening for underwater basketweaving!" Pathetic pre-med and pre-law students, pharmacy students, journalism majors and RTVMPers reach out and grovel for that one gold card — that magic cardboard. I however, must try my luck elsewhere. I had that class last semester.

Yesterday was the last add day, and I sincerely hope we all found classes to take. Perhaps next semester we can get some of the classes that we need (I would say 'want,' but I'd be reaching, I think). Dr. Bill Graves in the Steele Building, won't you please help this beggers' system of registration?

Marnee Smith
Everett

Born Jan. 15, 1929, civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spent his life protesting the inequalities of a nation while striving for world peace.

An advocate of non-violence, King traveled throughout the country speaking out against segregation and discrimination, leading numerous demonstrations, boycotts and marches. King's outstanding leadership won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1963.

His most successful march followed in

Washington, D.C. More than 250,000 people gathered to march from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial. Here, King delivered his most memorable speech, "I Have a Dream," in which he expressed his vision of a day when blacks and whites would live together as brothers in a nation where people would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. King's strong commitment to social justice encouraged Congress to enact the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Today, this American giant lives on through the eloquent words of his speeches and prolific writing, but, most importantly, his memory is instilled in the hearts of the American people. His death gave assurance that Brotherhood would be the condition of man, not simply the dream of man.

Sibby Anderson, a junior speech communications major from Winterville, is president of the Black Student Movement.

READER FORUM

Students ticked off by distribution

To the editors:

I must admit there are advantages and disadvantages of attending a university as large as UNC. One of the main advantages is our fantastic basketball team. With such a large student body and such an impressive past record, Dean always manages to put forth a winning team. Yet a huge disadvantage is created by this phenomenon — ticket distribution.

Sure, with the new SAC there are many more tickets to be distributed than ever before. Yet here we are back to the old "first come, first serve" method. People camped out all along Stadium Drive for first-level tickets. I think I would rather die than join the slumber party outside Fetzer with a few hundred other fanatical Tar Heels, especially when it's cold enough to freeze you to that spot permanently.

There is another answer. With the

extra seating in the SAC, there were still tickets for the Georgia Tech game left to be distributed Monday. Of course, I will have to settle for a seat in the rafters, but it will do. Unfortunately, those in charge of ticket distribution messed things up once again.

Monday morning, everyone was seating themselves in Carmichael, left to right, across four sections according to time of arrival. Everything appeared organized until the geniuses who opened up ticket distribution created a reconstruction of a Who concert.

"OK, come and get it!" and about 300 people pushed toward one doorway. I had arrived at 8 that morning and never did get a ticket to the game. I stood by, locked in the crowd, and watched people who had just straggled in go up and get a ticket. Not only did they arrive later than I and get a ticket for themselves, but they also managed

to get a ticket for the friend who can't get up for distribution.

The final blow came when I was 20 feet away from the ticket counter and the call "no more Tech tickets" came bellowing through. I marched off to my 9 o'clock class 45 minutes late, without even a ticket to ease the pain.

Something has obviously got to be changed. I can understand the people camping out, I can even understand the advantages of getting two tickets for each person present, but what happened Monday morning at distribution was criminal. If I ever find out who was responsible for the human sardine act in Carmichael on Monday, I will personally string him/her up by the toes from the top of the Bell Tower.

Kelly Gallagher
Chapel Hill

Pit listeners don't see the light

By STEPHEN E. WILLIAMS

Speakers on religion perform with the same color and energy at UNC as elsewhere. Trying to rally believers, bring their messages to unconverted listeners, or both, they lure hundreds of students, when weather permits to listen in the Pit. But the audience at UNC differs from that of an ordinary church or religious television show. As students at a fine university, we are bright enough to question anyone who addresses us, including speakers of religion.

How do speakers address us differently from the way they might approach a rough sample of society? Advocates of religions based on free thought have adapted to survive mainly in places such as colleges and universities, where people are trained to think. It is the speakers who represent the traditional Christian denominations for whom proselytizing in an academic environment is often a struggle. Students are taught to listen critically. We can look beyond the eloquence, intimidation, and verbal tricks that constitute much evangelism. Contemporary Christian speakers, of "preachers of the gospel," as some call themselves, must tune their messages on campus for the bright person who is likely to hear them there.

At UNC, the efforts of preachers to adjust, if they have made any, have been incomplete. Unless they evaluate their rhetoric and change their ways of address, they may lose ground to supporters of free thought.

Always preachers have carried the credibility of agents to the supernatural. A century ago, an ordinary audience might acquiesce humbly to such authority. Now that a chain of cultural events, notably the advances in science and technology, have removed the church from its former position, we have grown sensitive to their criticism and reprimand. The slightest infringement on our integrity cannot pass without contention.

Sometimes the criticisms issued by preachers in the Pit have backfired by summoning storms of resentment from the crowd. When a female student interrupted one preacher with a question about women's rights, he blared out to her without warning, "Don't tell me that! You're probably a lesbian!" Even though her question had pertained not at all to homosexuality, he leveled charges against her of it. Had he intended to silence the crowd, doing so by inciting the

fear of being labeled was unnecessary. And squelching the woman at the expense of her identity was lowliness. That behavior must have cost him the support of anyone who until then had bordered on general agreement with his opinions.

On the same day another preacher skillfully dodged a question while distracting the attention of the audience from hearing his answer. The question was interjected at a pause by a student who later called himself a freshman English major. He asked how trying to understand the universe without relying on faith is destructive. A conversation between the student and preacher ensued:

"Do you understand the air you breathe?" asked the preacher.

"Not entirely — but people study it for the benefit of mankind," said the student.

"I challenge you to hold your breath long enough," the preacher said, "to find out."

Would the student risk death by asphyxiation to study the air? The speaker made it seem that way, and he made the student look irrational. At the same time he avoided facing the student's point, a serious inquiry into the limits of faith. Indisputably, the study of the air as matter has solved problems. Science transcends the Bible in explaining countless natural events. Where does reason end and faith begin, and vice-versa? This question must be explored. Yet the preacher avoided comment while making the student look foolish. And he solicited laughter from a few in the audience who admired his wit. He had avoided a question at the unnecessary expense of the person who asked it. Granted, the diversion would have worked on a normal audience. But not on one whose current freshman class arrived with an average SAT of 1100. How could he persuade someone capable of noticing the scheme of rhetoric he used?

An elderly preacher who visited UNC was unfamiliar with a part of our social lives, rock music, to the point of absurdity. He lacked the ability to separate the Beatles, Lionel Richie, and Twisted Sister. He called Amy Grant a commercialist and sinner. "John Lennon," he said, "sowed the seed that killed him." The emotions of the late Beatle's assassin, he maintained, had been stirred by rock music to the point that he contemplated murder. Though anyone would agree the loss of John Lennon was tragic, isn't the purpose of music to excite the emotions? By means of what several people called ignor-

ance, the preacher stopped many listeners from taking him seriously.

Besides showing us detachedness from issues they are discussing, such as rock music, preachers at times have misused the subject matter involved. To err is human; our powers of reason, including those of clergymen, are subject to fault. But when an audience is listening, an error in logic can be disastrous. Defenders of free thought stand ready to pounce on preachers who let faith overstep reason.

Consider a preacher who last November in the Pit compared following the word of the Bible to, of all things, baking. For a minute, a long time in public speaking, he described the directions on a box of brownie mix. Following the directions, he said, gives you what is promised, fudge brownies. Similarly, he said, adhering to the word of the Bible gives you the "joy of knowing Christ." Aware that everyone could grasp the first half of the comparison, he expected us to derive an inference from the second, spiritual part.

But in his attempt to draw an analogy the preacher had committed a serious error. He reduced a topic of infinite complexity — finding self-satisfaction through faith — to one of comparative simplicity, baking. While the former has claimed lifetimes of contemplation by great thinkers, the latter has been mastered by everyone's grandmother and Duncan Hines. The analogy, which may first seem simple and direct, is false. A person who has learned to analyze, such as the typical listener in the crowd of university students, should have found it ridiculous.

Not all of the preachers in the Pit are guilty of insulting the audience, showing ignorance, or sidestepping questions. Admittedly, only shortcomings and only a few preachers are described here. But all have in common a need for change. If they want UNC students to listen, they should adapt to the bright audience we give them. They should respect our dignity and face our questions. Perhaps collectively, they should sit down and reconcile the differences between faith and reason for the practical purpose of inviting owners of analytical minds. Then we can make a leap of faith. Until these changes come, their efforts should leave many observers unconvinced.

Stephen E. Williams is a freshman economics major from Chester, N.J.