

Opinion

Boy preachers lose youth

When the three Strode children leave for elementary school, they take ordinary textbooks in their backpacks — with one difference. They also carry their Bibles, so they can back up their sermons with Scripture.

Duffey Strode, 10, was suspended from his school in Marion again last Friday. For Duffey, this was the fourth in a series of suspensions, including one for fighting and three for failing to enter school.

Duffey refuses to enter school because he is busy giving his fire and brimstone sermons. In his latest speech Friday before he was suspended, he preached to the arriving cars and teachers: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Thou shalt not commit adultery! You're guilty! Even your eyes are filled with adultery! Men can't keep their eyes off women, and women can't keep their eyes off men. Adulterers shall be put to death and their blood shall be upon them!"

Now, how many 10-year-old boys even know what "adulterers, fornicators or whoremongers" are? And how can Matthew, Duffey's 5-year-old brother who has three preaching suspensions to his name, know what the theological implications of adultery are?

The boys are supported by their parents in their preaching. Their father, David, also a street preacher, says the problem is not his children but that "this country

is gone."

But the bigger problem is that of the childhood these boys are having, that their parents encourage them to have.

The Strodes seem unconcerned about the self-righteous anger they are instilling in their children as they support the preaching and, presumably, warn their children of the evils within their teachers. And they seem unconcerned with how this affects their children socially and emotionally. Duffey says he has only two friends, but that is of no concern to David Strode, who says it doesn't matter — "he never had friends before."

Worse yet, they appear unconcerned that the young children walking into school every morning are forced to have those hate-filled messages streaming into their ears.

It's true that the world is not perfect, and children will eventually have to learn that. But at 5, or even 10, the world should still seem pretty darn near perfect, and children should be allowed to realize its imperfections slowly. The Strodes, though, are hurling the world's problems at their offspring faster than the children can interpret them.

Most of us can look back at our childhoods fairly fondly. But it'll be a wonder if the Strode boys will have fondness left in their hearts with which to look; they seem destined now to grow up only with anger and hatred, rather than with the love that usually comes from childhood.

No faith left in Reagan

In the first aftershocks from Donald Regan's recent kiss-and-tell book on the First Family, Nancy Reagan's influence over her husband was scrutinized and soundly denounced.

But the next wave of reaction held that we should pity Nancy for the bashing she's received. A column by Sen. Alan Simpson of Wyoming portrayed Nancy as simply an equal partner in her marriage, a loving and devoted wife who gives her husband the same support as any other good wife. Nancy should be respected for standing by her husband and helping him in difficult decisions, he said.

Sorry, Senator, but that won't wash. Certainly other first ladies have given their husbands support and offered advice when they needed it, as was the case with Bess Truman or Rosalyn Carter. But the ultimate decisions and power resided in their husbands, and the country counted on that. After all, it elected Harry and Jimmy, not Bess and Rosalyn.

But now it appears likely that Mrs. Reagan has been the "ultimate power" and that the decisions her husband makes, he makes because she told him to.

The decision to force the resig-

nation of a dying CIA chief, for example, or to kick out Cabinet members before their agreed-upon resignation date seems to have come straight from the First Lady's lips to her husband's. That's not likely to instill a real sense of faith in the president (especially when that advice may have been heavily influenced by astrological garbage.)

It has been inspiring to see first ladies taking on specific causes and working hard for them — it's good to have first ladies with minds of their own. "Say no to drugs" was a good cause for Mrs. Reagan — it's hard to fault anyone working for a cause that's as in the public interest as stopping the flow of drugs to schoolchildren.

But staff, domestic and foreign policy issues should be left to the president, simply because he, and only he, is the country's elected official. Mrs. Reagan should back off and, with only a few months left, prove to the country that the president really is capable of making decisions. More and more, even with the dozens of learned advisers Reagan has at his fingertips, that's looking extremely doubtful.



Blue heaven is not black heaven

Debbie Thompson
Guest Writer

In my endless search for the appropriate college to attend, I managed to narrow my choices down to two schools, UNC and Howard University. I chose UNC simply because I realized that attending a predominately white college would better prepare me for the predominately white world. But UNC is not completely blue heaven. For it to be that, UNC administrators and white students need to concern themselves with the feelings of inequality experienced by their black students.

Initially, Carolina manifests social inequalities. For the white student there are several avenues for social pleasure. First, there is Franklin Street with all its predominately white bars. When you are tired of barhopping Franklin, there is always the opportunity to invade a fraternity or sorority house party.

On the contrary, Carolina offers few social outlets for its black students, who consider themselves very fortunate if there is a dance in Great Hall once every two weeks. Their only other alternatives for entertainment are to go to the movies or to go out of town. Many blacks often travel to black colleges in Durham, Greensboro and Winston-Salem just for social encounters.

After evaluating the situation, I decided to take the initiative to mix socially with some of the whites on campus. First, I attended Purdy's, a mostly white bar/club where a few blacks occasionally go. In Purdy's,

whites assembled on one side of the room and blacks on the other. I could have thought I was back in the 1940s or '50s where total segregation existed, except for the interaction of the popular, black athletes with several white females.

The University is also limited in facilities available to black students. Upon the opening of Upendo Lounge, black students were guaranteed use of the lounge at anytime. Now the University has gone back on its word and black students have to make reservations to use the lounge.

After countless years of fighting, the Black Student Movement finally was given a Black Cultural Center. Ideally, this is supposed to be a place where blacks can go to find a sense of identity and fellowship. Disappointingly, the room donated for the BCC is only slightly bigger than a dorm room and is very plain.

The University also exhibits prejudice in its selection of performers at the Student Activities Center. Of the few black performers who have come to the SAC, even fewer are truly black groups. Officials refused to book hard-core black groups like RUN-DMC or LL Cool J. Their reason was that that they disapprove of the wild crowd associated with

such groups. Yet they booked Pink Floyd, which has been known to carry a wild crowd. Does this not seem to be some form of discrimination or stereotype?

Academically, the black student feels at a disadvantage with his white colleagues. White students come from better-educated and economic backgrounds than do most black students. But many black students are the first generation to have the opportunity to seek a college education.

Also, white students who come from economically stable families do not have the pressure of working while attending school that many black students have. This pressure often poses a threat to the black student's study time and, consequently, his grades.

UNC needs to concern itself with the social and academic problems facing its black students. The decrease in the enrollment of black students could be the result of black students going home to tell potential students of their feelings of inequality. For Carolina to solve its racial problems, people should work to understand and respect others' beliefs and practices. They should rid themselves of the prejudices and stereotypes of yesteryear and take advantage of the different cultural exposures that Carolina has to offer.

Debbie Thompson is a junior psychology and communications major from Burlington.

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