

# Wesleyan's slogan, education defended

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dent — and I refer you back to the third paragraph of this letter when you feel that the student hasn't been put first. But I also know most of the faculty and staff on campus, and for every one I know who deserves your slap, I know a lot more who deserve better treatment.

*The Decree* looks good this year. Keep raising the standard, don't lower it.

Al LaRose

## Parties must unite, not divide country

Dear Editor:

I am writing in response to a letter that was published in the paper Nov. 6 titled, "Keep standing for the right." Why must people continue to split the country into two parts?

In the letter the writer splits the country into conservatives and liberals. When are people going to learn that we must work together to accomplish and truly make America best?

I encourage all to read Thomas Jefferson's first Inaugural Address of 1801. This was the first time that the country had a change of power from one group to another. Jefferson did not criticize the policies of the Federalist party that was leaving office. Instead he called for the nation to pull together and work as one to accomplish goals for the good of the country.

Remember what Abraham Lincoln said about the Civil War:

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." How many of you know that this is actually a quote from scripture? In Ross Perot's book, *United We Stand*, he writes on Page 95, "The melting pot is our strength, not our weakness. Our culture is dynamic because it is varied. Our nation became the envy of the world because it is a unique tapestry woven of many strands drawn from every part of the globe."

When the people of this country realize that we must work together to accomplish our goals, then something might happen. Until that time, though, just remember that we are all in the same boat. If you really want to make America better and the best, then work to bring the country together as one, not as many little parts.

Patrick Brannan

## A liberal education offers basis for views

Dear Editor:

The battle between religion and intellect at institutions of higher learning has continued since these institutions were founded. Thomas Hardy captures the spirit of this battle in his novel, *Jude the Obscure*, as he describes the battle at the University of Christminster: "At present intellect in Christminster is pushing one way, and religion the other; and so they stand stock-still, like two rams butting each other (121)."

Kenneth Leonard touched upon the spirit of this debate be-

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tween religion and intellect in his essay included in the Nov. 6 issues of *The Decree*. Just as Leonard examined the Statement of Institutional Purpose of North Carolina Wesleyan College, I too would like to invite the readers of *The Decree* to examine this same Statement. However, while Leonard examined only parts of this Statement out of context, I am examining this Statement in its entirety in order to arrive at an educated conclusion.

Just to refresh everyone's memory, the Statement of Institutional Purpose is found near the front of the college catalog and reads as follows:

"North Carolina Wesleyan College strongly affirms the ideals of Christianity and the freedom of intellectual inquiry. The liberal arts are the foundation for its degree programs. The College provides its students the opportunity to develop intellectually, spiritually, and physically, to appreciate artistic expression, to understand and respect the Judeo-Christian heritage, and to value learning as a lifelong endeavor."

The first sentence refers back to the battle that I mentioned earlier between religion and intellect. Wesleyan *strongly affirms* the ideals of Christianity and at the same time *strongly affirms* the freedom of intellectual inquiry. Our school motto is "Wisdom and

Courage Through Christian Education." How is it possible to obtain wisdom and courage through a Christian education that strongly affirms both the ideals of Christianity and the freedom of intellectual inquiry?

The College responds that this goal can be achieved if the student takes advantage of the opportunities to develop intellectually, spiritually, and physically. As a result of this process the student will be able "to appreciate artistic expression, to understand and respect the Judeo-Christian heritage, and to value learning as a lifelong endeavor."

Leonard is concerned that this process of learning does not hold true to the Statement of Institutional Purpose, since he has experienced professors who ask him to question everything that does not sound reasonable; has spent more class time discussing Buddhism (which has far more followers) than Fundamentalism; is exposed to individuals who advocate human rights to everyone, including homosexuals, who have suffered through a long history of discrimination; and in general is receiving a liberal arts education.

There is a danger to developing the intellect of individuals because along with this development comes an awakening of the curious and questioning mind. The individual then applies the intellect towards everything that once was taken for granted, including religious beliefs. If the individual is unwilling to maintain an open mind while develop-

ing the intellect, this process can then be described as "putting new wine in old bottles."

Perhaps my point can be better understood when examining this phrase in its original Biblical context. The entire verse comes from Matthew 9:17: "Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; if it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins and so both are preserved." (RSV).

If an individual is trying to incorporate new learning within the existing structure, the pressure will cause the individual to tear apart, as would an old wineskin under the pressure of new wine. There is no room for both under the existing system.

A student cannot just wake up one morning with an understanding and respect for the Judeo-Christian heritage, or any of the other goals that Wesleyan strives for its students to achieve. These goals are achieved through intellectual inquiry, inquiry that is free from any of the restraints that may be imposed by the Judeo-Christian heritage or any other moral code.

Does this sound immoral? Perhaps, if you have reached the level of being omniscient. However, I suspect that no student has reached this level and therefore can always stand to learn more. Then, after receiving a liberal education, the student may define his own religious beliefs based on a process of free intellectual inquiry.

Judith Boyd

# Assassination heralded era

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Then she quickly gathered her stuff and hurried back to the other side of town. She was afraid.

All of this was earthshaking to me. A man had died and people were reacting in ways I didn't understand. Some people thought he deserved it. Others thought it meant the sky was about to fall on them. As so often happens during childhood, I didn't know how to ask the questions that were only vaguely rising to consciousness. A friend of mine who went to the Catholic school came home later than usual that day, and still another way of looking at the man arose.

It is also trite to say that the country drew together that week-

end. The pictures of Mrs. Kennedy's pink suit, of President Johnson's somber face, of Walter Cronkite showing emotion, and of the first live television killing. The images of John Jr. saluting, of Carolina and her mother kneeling at the casket, of the riderless horse snorting in the autumn air. I had a sense that we all cared, and the initial contradictions sank back into unconsciousness. I accepted the grief as real and as communal. We survived.

The point about John Kennedy's assassination for my generation is that we never found that acceptance again. Not only did too many people face the same kind of death, but also we knew why Malcolm and Martin and

Bobby died. We grew up expecting another headlined assassination as someone else decided to blow away the opposition. Most of us did not accept violence as a solution to our problems with the political system, but we expected other people to do so.

The murder of John Kennedy still means something to me because I remember it as the last time I was surprised that someone would use death to solve his or her problems or to get on TV. I'm hurt by it, but I don't think I'm very surprised any more. Perhaps if it had been an isolated incident, it would have remained a tragic historical event. To me, however, it seems to have heralded in an era.

