

Relativism Runs Counter To Tenets of Christianity

We live in a society and culture today that clings to the battle cry that all moral truth is relative. What is right or wrong seems to depend on who you are, where you were raised and what you believe.

Whenever we hear someone talking about right and wrong as being relative, it makes us want to punch him in the mouth! Do not get me wrong — it is not because we are upset or angry with him. Instead, we just want to help him realize that even he does not believe his argument. After our punching bag picks himself off the ground, he yells, "What did you do that for, idiot?" "No reason, really."

"Are you kidding me? You can't just walk up and hit me. That's wrong." "But I thought nothing is truly wrong." "Oh."

The point is that there is a standard that everyone lives by, even if we deny it. Over and over, we show the existence of this standard because we are offended when someone breaks it at our expense. This works for all kinds of things: lying, cheating, stealing, selfishness and much more. We justify these things when they are our actions, but we realize they are actually wrong when we become the victims.

This sense of right and wrong exists in all people. Regardless of who you are, where you were raised or what you believe, no one wants to be hit, lied to, cheated on, stolen from or taken advantage of.

JOSH SELF AND MARTY BALDWIN POINT OF VIEW

The problem is, however, that no one lives up to this standard of right and wrong. For as many times as we are the victims of the standard being broken, we are also the perpetrators.

What we see is that this standard does not apply to what we do, but what we "ought" to do. Where does our sense of "ought" come from? Maybe we are biologically born with it. However, the question of right or wrong involves circumstances, such as "When the teacher leaves, I ought not cheat." But the right response to all circumstances cannot be predicted by one's genetic code. Maybe we learn what we "ought to do" through our families or through our culture.

However, this cannot be true because a communist in Nicaragua hates to be lied to just as much as a lovely mother in North Carolina. (I know. I have tried it on both).

Neither can we look within ourselves for what we ought to do, because none of us actually do what we ought to do. Therefore, the standard itself must come from something beyond us — something that is itself perfect. Throughout the ages, people have looked to Christianity for the source of this standard. But how does it

measure up to the ideas raised thus far?

In Christianity, God is the reference point for right and wrong. He is perfect, and thus he is the standard from which humans sense what they "ought" to do. Again, the problem is that no one keeps this standard.

So what is God to do? He is perfect and holy, but also loving and compassionate. Yet the people He created buck against Him and break the standard. His perfection requires Him to push everything imperfect away from Him. Yet, His compassion forces Him to do just the opposite. In sending His Son, Jesus Christ, He says to us, "I know you do not live, think and act according to the way I created you — but I still desire you."

"Due to my perfection, your failures and shortcomings deserve death — but I love you too much to require it from you. So I sent my perfect Son to die the most brutal death and raise Him from the dead."

"He will become the bridge over the eternally deep canyon between us, created by your imperfections."

The Christian God thus maintains His standard of perfection, while also showing us love and mercy.

We have shown that we realize there is a true sense of right and wrong, even though some might argue it is all relative. We have also discussed how this standard must come from something outside of us. Finally, we proposed that the Christian God sets this standard while also providing an answer to our



imperfections. But let us go back to where we began. What is it about relativism that is so attractive? While people are attracted to the ability to decide right and wrong for themselves, what they ultimately are attracted to is the freedom relativism offers.

Christ offers this and more. God's love through His Son's death offers us the ultimate freedom — namely, freedom from the consequences of break-

ing the standard. Truly, it seems relativism is just scratching the surface of something deeper and more freeing.

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OPEN TO ALL

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader submissions. Their opinions do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of the DTH or its editors.

Candidates Present Platforms for 2000-01 Editorship of DTH

As editor, I will strive to foster a renewed focus on balanced reporting, to engage readers through more analysis of major news events, to produce a more streamlined and striking visual look and to encourage the proliferation of the online site.

Striking a Balance

The main focus of my platform is taking a back-to-basics approach with the paper. While the emphasis on bold and colorful writing perhaps has made The Daily Tar Heel more readable and compelling, it too often has had the unwanted side effect of compromising content for the sake of presentation.

I simply want to institute something of an attitude adjustment at the DTH, where our focus is as much on fair, balanced reporting as it is on making our news presentation more palatable. This means curbing this year's emphasis on "journalistic license," which essentially allows reporters to make conjectures presented as fact. Any such reporting practices will be highly scrutinized.

I will also encourage the staff to widen our source base to include more voices that often go unheard and ensure that everyone gets a fair shake.

For whatever reason, this has not been the case at critical times this semester, most notably during student elections and the debate surrounding faculty salaries. A renewed emphasis on balanced, objective reporting can only serve to boost the DTH's credibility in the University community.

Engaging and Enlightening

One of the constant criticisms of the DTH, both internally and externally, is that many stories, while usually taking care of the who, what, when, where, how and why, often fail to answer the "Who cares?" and the "So what?"

This can, of course, be partially remedied by looking for local angles in day-to-day stories. But for some issues, the answer is not that simple. It is difficult to make a story on the latest Board of Aldermen or Board of Governors meeting much more than a dry, fact-based account. While the issues discussed might be vitally important and compelling in themselves, the environments in which these decisions are



MATTHEW B. DEES
CANDIDATE FOR EDITOR

made are rarely enthralling.

To counteract this, I propose creating three new columnist positions. The columnists will be assigned a beat corresponding with the three main news desks. They will cover all of the major news events on their beat and write a weekly column to be published on Page 3, giving analysis and perspective on the latest news.

They will also serve as ex officio members of the editorial board, allowing them to offer the board firsthand accounts of news events. The result will be more thoughtful, fact-based editorials on the back page and more engaging coverage on our news pages.

Visual Appeal

The Achilles' heel of the DTH has long been its visual elements. The main key to solving this problem is integrating photographers, designers and the graphics staff into the news process. As editor, I will implement a system where a representative from photo, design and graphics will be present at pre-budget meetings to map out the next day's paper.

There, the united staff can place the stories that will obviously be on our two main pages and discuss the best ways to present them visually. This will give our visual team ample time to produce a clean, striking design, compelling graphics and photos that add depth and perspective to stories.

I also plan to work with our design team to come up with a template for Pages 1 and 3. While we obviously will be flexible under special circumstances, this will give the DTH a professional, streamlined look.

This plan will also have the added benefit of cutting our daily budget meeting in half, allowing desk editors

more time to coordinate stories, graphics and photos with their respective staffs during the most critical part of the news day.

The DTH of the Future

The DTH has already made significant improvements to its online site. But the improvements are largely going unnoticed by the University community. While staffers' parents and alumni frequent the site, we have failed to attract our core reader base to it. This problem can be addressed by increasing the site's visibility in the paper. I propose placing the Web address at the top of the front page and plugging any additional information online within the corresponding story.

I will work with the editorial staff to find creative ways to extend their news coverage utilizing the online site — that is, with additional statistics, full texts of legislation and speeches, sporting events schedules, links, etc.

As we attract more locals to the online site, we can begin placing whole stories online when paper space is scarce without fear that it will not be read.

As I see it, the DTH must do this to remain competitive in the 21st century.

If It Ain't Broke ...

While I do see many ways to improve next year's paper, I would be remiss if I did not pledge to continue some of the significant strides made by the paper this year.

Matthew B. Dees is a junior political science and journalism and mass communication major from Fayetteville. Reach him at mbdées@email.unc.edu.

The Daily Tar Heel will become more community-focused and more visually appealing under my leadership. With a renewed focus on writer training, reporting depth and editorial color, the DTH will provide its staffers with an unparalleled student journalist experience and its readers with the best college daily in the country.

We will create a paper of elevation and innovation — while working on the strides made this year, we will make an even stronger visual and editorial foundation for the future.

And as we build our ties with the University and town through stronger community relations programs, we will never forget that the DTH is their primary news source. We will utilize every resource we can to provide more news, faster and better.

Pushing the DTH into the Community

Rob Nelson put the DTH on the right track this year with his community relations projects. But asking members of our community to join our groups is not enough.

I propose that we take the DTH out to where the news happens, not just into a boardroom. We will push for more while maintaining projects already in place.

The DTH will launch a fall voter registration drive that will accompany an editorial series on political issues pertinent to our generation. This drive will bring the DTH together with campus groups to provide a nonpartisan yet powerful activist front.

We will provide unbiased coverage by which voters can make their informed choices, and we will also pro-



CATE DOTY
CANDIDATE FOR EDITOR

vide them the chance to make that choice.

A spring community relations project will focus on the area's graduating high school seniors. This project will pull interested seniors into our newsroom and give them a feel for college journalism. This will tie the DTH into the area schools and further our educational mission.

Training Our Writers to Do More

The DTH is, above all, a learning experience. We should do everything we can to enhance that.

While making changes that would streamline the newsroom and make it more professional and efficient, I would at the same time provide training and resources for editors and writers that will improve the copy and, perhaps more importantly, the depth of journalistic ability.

A renewed focus on the Special Assignments Team, which will include the online DTH Tech Review. A separate editor will be assigned to this desk, which will provide in-depth, groundbreaking reporting.

A streamlined editorial system by which a managing editor or the editor will read every story with each writer before that writer leaves for the night. This provides greater writer accountability and boosts writer-management interaction.

A use of the online edition to provide more news for our readers. We will increase the reach for the Tech Review and provide community resources as well.

Online projects such as multimedia presentations of special projects, a journalist's resources Web page, and breaking news posted right after the DTH is informed about it will increase our

online presence and accountability. These steps will allow the DTH to provide more for our readers, better and faster.

A re-examined approach to special projects. Rather than filling individual desk quotas, the newsroom will provide more carefully researched projects with strengthened visual emphasis.

We will cover aspects of our community never before touched upon by the DTH, such as the professional community and the enormous amount of groundbreaking research in the area.

The copy desk will do all the paperwork, which includes headlines and read-ins. This allows the desk editors to focus on their primary job — working with writers and strengthening their skills. It also gives the copy desk a more active, creative role in the paper.

A visual approach to the daily work that will promote creativity and innovation while providing a stable, reader-friendly design. A design template will be implemented, which will help designers in their daily process as well as improve the paper's look. A template also gives designers a better background from which to work on special projects.

Open communication lines between graphics, photo and design and push for news editors to think visually. Graphics must become informative and innovative.

They strengthen the quality of information and make the paper more attractive to readers.

We will push our writers to think about each word they use. Space is limited, and each word counts.

We will show them how to put color in everything they write, and we will emphasize that it's not enough to tell readers something — a good journalist shows them a story that they remember.

We will do this through management interaction with writers, intensive training at the beginning of the semester, editors' training, a writer's handbook and an extensive collection of writing resources in the newsroom.

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READERS' FORUM

Northern Student's Doubts Over Southerners' Smarts Put His Own IQ in Question

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Aaron Breedlove's letter printed Thursday. Aaron takes issue with the recent article titled "A Cultural Divide." Evidently Aaron finds that during his last eight years since moving to the South from the North that people here "are no more polite" and "pre-judge (him) more." Aaron also tells us that our Southern hospitality is "superficial in many cases" and questions the intelligence level of Southern people in general.

Well Aaron, if you have been here for eight years that means one of two things: Either you

moved down with your parents at the tender young age of 14 or so, went to high school in the South and are getting ready to graduate from Carolina after your four-year tenure, or you moved down here after you finished high school in the North (or some time later) and it has taken you eight years to become a senior in psychology.

Either way, if you ask me your opinion is subject to scrutiny. If you came down as a youngun then I question how well you remember your youth in the North. (Did you commonly find yourself in strange new situations as a 13-year-old where you were able to make lasting judgments about the tendencies of Yankee peoples as compared to Southerners?)

Or if you came here as a high school graduate (or later) your opinion is suspect because it is

seems entirely possible that it has taken you eight years to become a senior in Carolina's psychology program (hardly the mark of an erudite).

In general Southerners don't have a problem discounting what seems to be jealous invective from contentious Northerners. Thank y'all and have a nice day!

Jay Wilson
Chapel Hill

Law School to Host Session On Controlling, Regulating Growth in North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to extend an invitation to all stu-

dents and faculty to the Carolina Law Public Policy Symposium.

The symposium focuses on growth in North Carolina and will be held today at noon in the Law School Rotunda.

For all students from North Carolina, or those who would like to make North Carolina their home, the issue of state growth is an issue that deserves attention.

From the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks, North Carolina is undergoing unprecedented growth without a solid game plan to preserve our natural heritage.

For example, North Carolina was second only to Texas in lost farmland to development in a recent study by the American Farmland Trust.

The symposium will host a panel discussion of public policy groups that represent the different

sides of unmanaged growth and state leaders who have worked with growth in their communities.

Participants include former Raleigh Mayor Tom Fetzner; state Sen. Eleanor Kinnaird, D-Orange; and Durham Mayor Nick Tennyson.

Special thanks to the Student Bar Association, the Office of Distinguished Scholarships and Intellectual Life and the Office of the Dean of Students for making this event possible.

Thad Woody
Chairman
UNC Law Public Policy Symposium

Thad Woody is a second-year law student from Waynesville. He is also president-elect of the Graduate and Professional Student Federation.