

# Editorial

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## Racism still strong

### No time to relax fight against bigotry

The events surrounding the two civil-rights marches in Forsyth County, Ga., underscore the truly recent character of the social consensus on race. Considering that only 30 years ago much of the Southern establishment was apparently intransigent on the race issue, substantive gains have been made.

Yet the real shock of the respective marches wasn't that so many opposed racism, but that so many were still racist. That over 1,000 racist counter-demonstrators appeared at last Saturday's march shows that the social consensus supporting racial tolerance is still fragile.

The counterdemonstrators probably could be more easily ignored if they were all aging Southern rednecks. But in interview after interview on networks such as CNN, relatively young

people were echoing racist sentiments virtually identical to those that racists espoused 30 years ago. It is obvious that much progress is yet needed. That some people aren't welcome to live (or even pass through) some areas in 1987 America because of their skin color is intolerable.

As always, the problem is not limited to the area below the Mason-Dixon line. Northerners are not immune from similar acts of racial terrorism. To wit, the death of a black man essentially at the hands of white marauders in a New York suburb. Racial oppression does not need to be legal to be effective: If members of minority groups are kept in fear of injury if they happen to cross the wrong political boundary, their oppression is as real as if racially exclusive zoning laws were still in force.

## Homosexuality survey no surprise to ASUN

I am always pleased to see ASUN get the coverage it deserves. Thus, I was delighted to see five — yes, five — ASUN-related articles in Tuesday's Daily Nebraskan. I wish to thank the DN for this week's extended coverage.

I do not wish to label any writing in the DN as a "bigoted abortion" of a column. Rather, I wish to set out a few facts and intentions the DN would have received, if it had bothered to ask.

First, ASUN is still ASUN. Any constitutional amendment — and a change of name is a constitutional amendment — must be placed on the ASUN ballot. Until two-thirds of the voters in the ASUN election ratify this constitutional amendment — or any other — it does not take effect. Thus, ASUN is still ASUN, not "UNL Student Government."

### Guest Opinion

Second, I have no idea why columnist Chris McCubbin feels ASUN senators were taken by surprise at last week's senate meeting. Perhaps he has a basic misunderstanding of the legislative process. Each piece of legislation McCubbin mentions — the name change, the homosexuality ballot survey and the request for alcohol at ASUN installation — were submitted to the ASUN Executive Council, were directed to committees, and only then were they discussed before the entire senate. In the case of the homosexuality ballot survey, the ASUN executives discussed the bill on Jan. 11. It was discussed and amended on Jan. 15, and was then passed by the ASUN Senate on Jan. 21. ASUN President Chris Scudder has since signed this bill. Not only is this "bigoted abortion" of a bill in the light of day, it is already passed. As can be seen, however, any interested students — McCubbin included — had ample opportunity to express an opinion on the bill before it was passed by the ASUN Senate.

In regard to McCubbin's specific comments on the homosexuality ballot survey, he voices three concerns:

- The third question is "amazingly dumb."
- The first question is "incredibly offensive."
- The entire survey "will only either be manipulated or ignored."

The Committee for Fees Allocation, the committee that makes the initial determination to fund the proposed University Program Council Gay/Les-

bian Programming Council, advanced the bill unanimously and left this question intact. CFA looked at its experience and did not feel the question was amazingly dumb. Perhaps McCubbin has experience in this area which allows him to make his judgment. Perhaps not.

If McCubbin is offended by the first question, he need not answer it. He need not even vote in the ASUN election at all. The GLSA urged President Scudder to leave this question in. Apparently they aren't as offended as McCubbin.

Perhaps the ballot survey will be manipulated. Perhaps not. But, then, any ballot survey could be manipulated. Even the ratification of the constitutional amendment to change ASUN's name. I wonder why we have ballot surveys at all. McCubbin goes on to say, "If it ever does pop up on the ballot it should be manipulated. I call upon every open-minded individual on this campus, regardless of sexual preference, to answer 'yes' to question one." I would remind McCubbin that several students were convicted before UNL's Student Court (not ASUN, as the DN's unsigned editorial implies) for urging students to manipulate a demographic survey in last year's ASUN election.

As an aside, I would recommend to McCubbin that slanderous terms often get negative results. When I, as an ASUN senator, vote on whether the proposed UPC-GLPC should be funded, I will try to forget that I wrote a "bigoted abortion of a bill."

Finally, I fail to see why my sponsorship of both the homosexuality ballot survey and the request for alcohol at an ASUN installation should elicit McCubbin's surprise. If he bothered to examine the pieces of legislation I have sponsored, he would find that a great many draw a great deal of response. The beauty of a democracy, however, is that every student has an opportunity to participate — McCubbin, myself, and any other student. Along with that opportunity comes a responsibility to participate in a meaningful way. If McCubbin chooses to abdicate that responsibility and instead to merely criticize after the fact, it is not at ASUN's feet that he should lay the blame for his dissatisfaction.

Doug Weems  
ASUN senator  
senior  
arts and sciences

## Of bank robbers and God

### Roberts' financial quest hits 'apex of religious opportunism'

"Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1 (NIV)

About 12 years ago, my girlfriend sent me a card that said, "Those of you who think you know everything are upsetting those of us who do." It took me awhile to figure out that I had been insulted. You'll be glad to know that I didn't marry that girl, although I tried my dead-level best at the time. At any rate, her card was useful, if degrading, and I have at times found occasion to employ its philosophy.

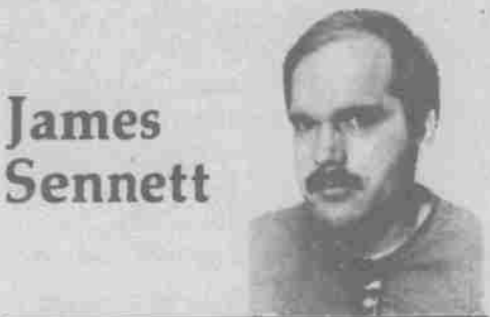
The idea is this: A lot of legitimate — and even important — enterprises around get bad names and reputations because some people who think they know what is happening steal the limelight and convince everyone else that the whole business looks and smells like they do. At such times, those who do know have an obligation to stand up and say that such charlatans are in no way representative of the true breed.

Such a time has come for me as a religious person, a Christian and a minister. Over the years I have endured the shenanigans of electronic preachers, faith-healers and other caricatured perversions of the vitality of Christianity. But now one of their flock has just gone too far. The granddaddy of them all, Oral Roberts, has announced that God told him that he would be "called home" unless he could raise \$4.5 million (or some such exorbitant amount) by March. The popular and lucrative practice of squandering money from those who need it most has reached an

all-time low.

It's easy to joke about this ridiculously transparent ploy. Saturday Night Live reported that the FBI told Roberts, "If that guy calls back with another threat, keep him on the line and we'll trace the call." I have a friend back in Illinois who is beginning a new church called L.O.R.D. (Let Oral Roberts Die). I have already sent in my first contribution.

James  
Sennett



But the sinister nature of the situation silences me in mid-guffaw. I object strenuously to what this defiler of the precious gospel has done. In rank capitalistic fashion, he has cast that which is holy to the dogs. He has reached the apex of religious opportunism, drawing on the faith that millions have in him as a true prophet of God in order to line the coffers of his own megalomania. But I wax sermonic.

Besides his unrepentant bilking of those who trust in him to provide some special link to the Throne of Grace, the main thing that upsets me about Roberts' monetary monkeyshines is that I and many like me who try to maintain integrity and credibility in our faith, wind up having to explain or defend such nonsense. I refuse to do either. This one who thinks he knows is vastly upsetting me and those like me who do.

Neither the Christian faith nor any religious conviction that catches a glimmer of the divine makes its lot in such unashamed using of people. There can be no compromise with or condoning of one who uses the name of God in such an ungodly fashion.

When Jesus walked on earth, his first concern was with the welfare of others — physical, emotional and spiritual. His attitude toward himself was one of sacrificial availability. He was a giver, not a taker; one who died willingly for others rather than pleading for his life at the expense of those who were lost without him. I believe that the world needs Jesus. I do not believe that the world, the church, or any circle of searchers earnestly desiring a word from God needs Oral Roberts.

Any time a person of faith seeks to maintain integrity before God and people, he will inevitably be faced with moments when a choice must be made between such integrity and the support of one who professes the same faith. Oral Roberts has made such a choice easy for me this time, although he has vastly dented my campaign to convince people that my faith is in a God who is in touch with the needs and concerns of people.

Of course, there are those who will say that old OR is crying all the way to bank over my rebuke — and the money is pouring in, folks. But they said the same about Al Capone and John Dillinger. And even Jesus had a word to say about rich men and the kingdom of heaven, didn't he?

Sennett is a campus minister with College-Career Christian Fellowship and a graduate student in philosophy.

## Reagan must be wary of Soviets seizing upon his loss of popularity

With pressure on him to recapture the psychological initiative by some bold action, yet any hope of congressional cooperation approaching absolute zero, many conservatives fear that President Reagan may be tempted to seek some early, dramatic agreement on arms control with Soviet boss Mikhail Gorbachev.

The indications certainly are that Gorbachev himself is thinking along some such lines. He has recently taken a number of striking steps to soften the Soviet image: allowing the noted dissident Andrei Sakharov to return to Moscow from exile in Gorky, withdrawing provocative Soviet military dispositions along the Chinese border of Siberia and declaring a unilateral six-month ceasefire in Afghanistan. More recently still, he replaced the Soviet arms-control negotiator in Geneva with a much higher-ranking diplomat, who pretty clearly is coming to the bargaining table with new and presumably more-fertile proposals.

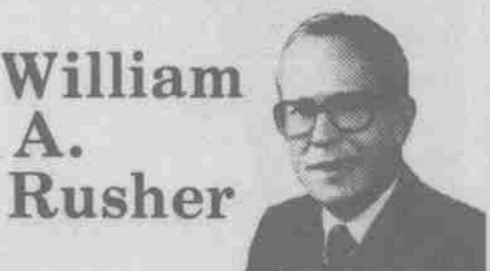
Whether Gorbachev calculates that Reagan would be a particularly easy mark right now, in view of his presumed desire to take the play away from Congress's heavy concentration on the Iran controversy, is not known. If so, however, he may well be mistaken, for Reagan discovered after Reykjavik last October that a firm refusal to abandon a principled position — specifically, the concept of a space shield in return for sweeping Soviet promises to reduce their nuclear arsenal — is good for a swift rise in the popularity polls. (That interesting piece of information may turn out to be the most disastrous setback the sellout brigade has suffered since Reagan's original election.)

But Gorbachev isn't the only adversary Reagan has to contend with, or even necessarily the most persistent or effective. As Rep. Jack Kemp warned recently in an open letter to the president, the U.S. State Department has its own agenda that bears precious little resemblance to Reagan's.

"I am concerned," Kemp told the president, "by threats from within our own government and our own Congress

to the goals we share. . . . If left unchecked, the State Department detentists and others would substitute false diplomacy for the victory we all want for freedom and democratic capitalism throughout the world."

William  
A.  
Rusher



Specifically, Kemp told Reagan he was deeply worried that State Department officials will push for "an unwise arms control agreement with the Soviets." He also expressed concern that Secretary of State George Shultz's recent meeting with African National Congress boss Oliver Tambo will be interpreted as "a message that the United States has abandoned those who are working for peaceful and democratic change in South Africa." (The State Department itself recently admitted that "roughly half the 30 members" of the governing council of the ANC "are known or suspected" members of the South African Communist Party.)

Kemp's letter also expressed fear that the State Department would endorse premature and unfavorable agreements between freedom fighters and the Marxist governments of Nicaragua and Afghanistan.

These are not imaginary concerns. The State Department bureaucracy has proven itself virtually immune to the policy prescriptions of every recent president, including Ronald Reagan, and alarmingly capable of co-opting high-ranking presidential appointees to the service of its own ends. Alexander Haig devoted his last press conference as secretary of state to babbling the praises of his captors, and George Shultz has not shown much more independence of spirit in the face of the foreign service mindset.

The typical State Department official is an intelligent, highly competent and utterly bloodless paragon, dedicated to bringing about a world in which nobody makes waves. They seek "agreements" the way a bee seeks nectar, and they are a major part of the reason why postwar U.S. foreign policy is so largely a chronicle of Soviet betrayals and Soviet triumphs. Let President Reagan be on guard.

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### Letter

## MacLaine's mission: fight guilt, make people aware of dreams

Thank you, Charles Lieurance, for your column on Shirley MacLaine and the New Age (DN, Jan. 26). While it was written in a pejorative tone, it helped get some issues out in the open. Why not escape from theologies that make you feel guilty? The only purpose guilt serves is to help us to get along better with each other. Guilt is not constructive if it is a blanket condemnation of every individual.

Why not say, "I am God, you are

God?" Isn't this better than seeing others as devils and treating them as such? While MacLaine's mission is not that of Mother Teresa, who is doing such a fine job of helping the poor, she is fulfilling her own mission in making people aware of things they have scarcely dreamed of. Her novel "Out On A Limb" is very inspiring.

Bernie Joelson  
graduate student  
philosophy