

## UNL evangelism

*Local sect threatens to cross fine line*

When evangelistic preachers stand outside the Nebraska Union, point their fingers and screech about sinners, most students get a good laugh.

These would-be Jimmy Swaggarts are good entertainment between classes and their traveling Bible shows generally are harmless, unless the Broyhill Plaza congregation gets out of hand.

But recently another kind of fundamentalism has risen on campus, and it's not nearly as easy to dismiss.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln administrators have become worried about the presence of Campus Advance members in the residence halls. They don't stand outside and preach; their recruiting techniques are stealthy and effective.

Administrators are nervous because Campus Advance is affiliated with a group that a nationwide watchdog organization considers a cult. A similar group was booted off campus last semester at Washington University in St. Louis.

In their anxiety over the UNL group, officials have to deal with the situation carefully. UNL is not a private university; it cannot bounce the group simply because its doctrine is different.

Throughout history, religious groups have become outcasts in the eyes of conventional society because of their unconventional practices. In the homogeneous late 20th century, Campus Advance members may sound like a bunch of quacks, but their alleged rituals aren't that unusual in a lexicon of religious eclecticism.

Other groups also have practiced baptism by immersion, deprived their members of sleep, asked for money and encouraged dating only within the order.

Even mainstream religions ask for commitments from the flock. Members head to church on Sundays and go home with lighter wallets. And every religion has its share of dogma and curious rituals.

But that doesn't mean cult-like groups and mainstream religion are one and the same.

Campus Advance, and the groups it has been linked to, have a rigid, authoritarian system. Former members of the congregation say members use group confessions and other techniques to pry into students' personal and sexual lives.

Americans value freedom of religion, and Campus Advance members have the right to their beliefs. But a group that prevents members from leaving once they join doesn't have much to say about freedom.

University officials can't keep Campus Advance from meeting, as long as members do nothing illegal or against UNL policy. If the group does break the rules, if it actively solicits students in the halls, administrators can take action. Until then, the fine line remains.

If religion is the opiate of the masses, cults are a particularly strong narcotic for those with addictive traits. UNL administrators can't just say no to that drug. But they can educate students about it and encourage them not to get hooked.

—E.F.P.

## Reader criticizes Nazi analogy

Mr. Baylor, I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to read and respond to my letter. I'm happy that you picked up "my gauntlet." However, I don't think that we see eye to eye, so I want to make myself clear.

I don't have any argument against what you call the courage of Gary Hanna. He signed a contract, went back on it, and that's that. If someone wishes to claim conscientious objector status out of true conviction, that is none of my business. But if that means not fulfilling an obligation, then there is a problem. If someone is going to claim CO, fine. But they should be required to finish their obligation to their country in some other type of service (social or otherwise).

Mr. Baylor, while you see me as "stupid, irresponsible, impudent and narrow-minded," at least I'm not ignorant enough to equate the Nazi party with today's American military. I cannot believe that you would have the audacity to make such an outrageous statement. Ignorance is bliss, but it is also dangerous. Blind obedience was a trait of both the Nazi government and military. And I definitely question our government. But in the American military, blind obedience, as you call it, saves lives. Questioning authority in the middle of a firefight will get you killed. But blind obedience is not the basis of our country's military hierarchy. The basis

of today's military is professional leadership (not solely management) and all of the qualities that go with being a professional soldier. Troops don't follow because of blind obedience. They follow because they have faith in the competency of their officers and NCOs. I suggest you study the Nazis with our armed forces is like equating Adolf Hitler with Saddam Hussein, and you certainly see that that is somewhat rhetoric. Hitler and Hussein may have a mentor/student relationship, but they are not equals.

In closing, Mr. Baylor, your letter stated that in the military, the poor and middle-class soldiers are merely "pawns of a contemptible foreign policy." But my letter was written in support of the pawns, not the war or what you call blind obedience. Tell me this, if you lose a chess game, do you blame the pawn or the chess player?

Richard J. Schmidt  
sophomore  
political science

P.S. While General Duggan's hands are "clean of bloodshed" as you say, I don't think he intentionally leaked information so that he could get out of fighting. Air Force generals, when given the choice, would rather work for the Air Force, not CBS.

## GEN. ARNOLD SCHWARTZKOPF

in

## DESERT STORM



## PAT DINSLAGE

# America breeds the 'right' life

As Native American literature course I'm taking this semester has taught me more than I bargained for — about the white American culture.

I expected to read stories about Native Americans and learn about the different tribal cultures. I really didn't expect to learn that the American white culture, in many ways, isn't much different than it was more than 100 years ago.

Through movies and books, most people are familiar with the way the white people in the 1800s and 1900s tried, with near-total success, to obliterate the Native American culture.

It was a many-pronged attack on a culture.

The media of the time reflected and promoted the stereotyped image of uncivilized savages out to destroy "decent" white peoples' families, livelihood and way of life, or, at best, portrayed them as "children of the forest," needing to be taught civilized ways. The underlying attitude of white superiority colored both perceptions.

White people's progress had a price that someone had to pay, we said as we used up the Native Americans' resources.

The military, regarding the Native Americans as less than people, saw nothing wrong with destroying villages, women and children, as well as warriors. It was war.

As the U.S. Army of the time achieved success after success, the white Americans cheered. As our greater firepower, equipment, supplies and numbers defeated the Native American tribes one by one, Army members were awarded, honored and praised for making America "safe" from savagery.

As Native American homes and the future of their cultures was destroyed, the "benevolent" white government relocated the Native Americans to unwanted, unproductive reservation lands, giving them neither voice in the decision nor choice. They were told to change their culture to conform to the white, civilized ways.

A shameful, mistaken page in American history. But we now know better, right? That took place when America was a young country. That was before Americans defined the human rights violations concept; before



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our consciousness got raised; before Americans began to appreciate cultural diversity.

Because American culture is now enlightened, we can become angry about South African apartheid. It's totally unlike how blacks, Hispanics and other groups in America are treated, of course.

Now that we Americans are enlightened and tolerant, we regard ourselves as the saviors of those values in the world. And we will fight, as we are now fighting, for the right of any people to choose democracy and freedom — the American way.

We are still, however, not stopping to ask ourselves if our way is what the people of other cultures want. We are still assuming that we are civilized and that they are ignorant or uncivilized.

It never occurs to us to wonder why they don't want to be just like us.

We still believe that because we are the wealthiest nation in the world, our way of life is the "right" way. We are still equating an emphasis on material goods acquisition and consumption with being a more civilized culture.

And we are still stereotyping. Rather than trying to understand Saddam, his motives and the Iraqis' religion, culture, politics and beliefs, we label him "Hitler" and the Iraqi people as unintelligent, misguided fanatics.

As we are busily obliterating Iraq, its people, economy and future, the American forces are cheered by the average white American.

American commanders are euphoric that the much greater firepower, equipment and numbers of the primarily American forces are defeating the best people and resources of one nation, one culture.

Instead of admiring another culture, Americans, especially the media, are focusing on the ease with which our battles are won, telling ourselves that God and civilization are on our side.

With satisfaction and condescension, we describe the bedraggled, poverty-stricken state of the defeated Iraqi troops.

And we do not want to leave until the defeat is total — their identity, pride and capability to survive independently, are destroyed.

Of course, we will help Iraq and Kuwait after we win. We will pour in money through a new Marshall Plan to rebuild them our way. We will establish military bases to make sure they never rise again.

We will aid in the relocation of the Iraqi people because the bombing has left no homes or businesses to go back to, no jobs, no economy. We will help the "poor unfortunates" — if they get rid of their leaders, stay on their "reservation," make no trouble and accept only what we feel like giving them.

After all, we are the saviors of the "right" way to live. And we have nothing to learn from them or their culture.

We have come a long way in 100 years.

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