

Quayle makes sense

America's moral values need a good look

Vice President Dan Quayle has continued his assault on "Murphy Brown" and declining traditional moral values of the United States, but is anyone listening.

Although the debate is focused on a fictitious sitcom mother who bore a child out of wedlock, Quayle is addressing a very real issue.

In a Tuesday speech to the Southern Baptist Convention in Indiana, Quayle said that the decaying traditional family was the root of America's problems.

"The cultural elites respect neither tradition or standards," he said. "They believe that moral truths are relative and all 'life styles' are equal. They seem to think the family is an arbitrary arrangement of people who decide to live under the same roof, that fathers are dispensable and that parents need not be married or even of opposite sexes. They are wrong."

They are wrong.

Many families today are not what they should be.

Husbands should honor and love their wives and wives should love and respect their husbands.

Parents are responsible to be an example to their children and to train them in up in the way they should go so that when they are old, they will not depart from it.

Children, in turn, are supposed to obey and honor their father and mother and in return receive the reward of long life. These maxims also can be taken outside the home.

If traditional values like doing unto others as you would have done to you were still predominant, this country wouldn't be torn by cultural disputes, domestic violence and drug abuse.

If people loved their neighbors, people wouldn't be killed for the color of their skin or their nation of origin, the homeless would be cared for and crime in general would be on the decline.

We Americans like to be told how good we are, how we're the most advanced, civilized, moral nation on the planet. Quayle's charges against our society and its cultural elites aren't pleasant to hear, but that doesn't make his point less valid.

However ridiculous Quayle makes his concerns look by picking on someone who doesn't even exist, this is a serious issue. But while editorial columns and cartoons take pot shots at his methods, the moral decay of our society remains to be addressed.

Quayle said that to appeal to our country's enduring basic moral values is to invite scorn and laughter.

OK, laugh and scorn.

AL

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Summer 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are: Adeana Leftin, editor; Cindy Kimbrough, features editor; Jeff Singer, copy editor; Stacie McKee, photo chief; James Mehsling, art director.

Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion is left to the editor's discretion.

Board of Regents.

Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author.

The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper.

According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



Quayle uses sitcom for election

Dan Quayle has finally tackled something that he can handle: a television sitcom, "Murphy Brown." A couple of weeks ago, our vice-president attacked, without mercy, the show's title character, an urbane, intelligent professional woman, for having a baby out of wedlock and key. It seems he was more outraged at the immoral actions of a fictional character than some of the real ills out here in America, the ones not staged on television.

If we can only imagine him or his handlers to have the crafty intelligence of Richard Nixon, Quayle was cynically using Murphy Brown as a cheap but effective vehicle to carry the Bush/Quayle "family value" concerns that they hope will endear them to the average American voter. The savvy politician knows that the media can almost be counted on to latch onto simple, snappy issues like this.

Probably predicted by Quayle's handlers, Murphy Brown's introduction into the campaign brought talk of the previously ignored touting of family values to the forefront of our nation's media. It was the issue of the week, not quite a Long Dong Silver, but probably close approaching the interest of, say, the "Air" Sununu revelations. Newsweek's June 8 issue featured Bush and Quayle's push for family values as its cover story, "Whose values?"

Unfortunately for Quayle, he had to retreat a bit, even from the fictional scenario of Murphy Brown. For at least single mother Murphy Brown, more than one thinking person reasoned, made the right "choice" and decided to have the baby and not an abortion. Catching himself in this political quicksand must not have been anticipated by our intrepid veepee. Quayle had to waffle on his theretofore solid anti-Murphy-baby stand, in order to stay clear and consistent on his anti-abortion stand. This political

godfather did not want Murphy to have the baby or have an abortion. What to do? How to wiggle?

Murphy Brown's show is, to tell by the few times I've seen it - which is, by the way, a few more times than Quayle has seen it, reportedly never a quality show intended not for kids, but a more adult audience. There is snappy humor by way of witty repartee between the adult characters which make the show enjoyable to watch, more so for an adult, it would seem, than an impressionable 12 year old. So it would seem that role modeling is not so much a factor here than in, say, "Full House," which is surely geared toward kids with its cute kiddy cast and sugary-sweet dialogue, which is almost sure to cause tooth decay and/or brain rot.

Yes, I would agree with Quayle that the two parent (one mommy, one daddy) family is the ideal and desirable provided both are reasonable, caring people who are willing and able to take on the awesome life task of raising children. But, then again, so is it the ideal to have an intellectually astute, not challenged, vice president. And yet we seem to survive and sometimes thrive, even when we exist in an environment short of the ascribed ideals. I have survived, albeit not perfectly, growing up with only one parent, due to my father's death when I was seven years old. And so the country will survive with the fictional overlay of Murphy Brown as a single mother; and so also, probably, will America survive the vacuous mind of the vice president. Keep well, Mr. President.

Now that Quayle/Bush have seized the stage on family values, will they do anything about it besides talking? Sad to say, we as the American public are part of the blame. We passively take in political posturing as it immerses us with the stultifying effects of formaldehyde. Aren't we in a pickle,

or, more precisely, pickled by not making our politicians accountable to their election campaign maneuvers/promises/pleas? The politicians have us where they want us, stewing about insignificant issues like Murphy Brown's propriety, while they tackle the more important business, like what... I don't know, because I'm in a pickle. Witness Bush, the Read My Lips/Environmental/Education/ Jobs, Jobs, Jobs president. When he finishes standing up with a pretty label, it seems he would just want to wish away all the attendant responsibility of living up to the self-affixed label.

Part of the real solution to the American Family, if I may be so bold as to not want to be elected President, is to plain turn off that damn television every once in a while, and actively relate to one another within the family. Go with what you have and build on it. Don't worry about what the administration has to say about values, what with all their sometimes crafty, sometimes dubious, not always moral policy decisions. One must take note that Mr. Quayle is not much a better role model, if at all, than Murphy Brown, and moreover, is not as funny, at least not intentionally so.

Should we brace ourselves for Quayle's next hapless television sitcom target of scorn? Perhaps Quayle's next policy stand should be to encourage everybody to dress like him, in WASPy and preppy attire. In that case, the natural bull's-eye of shame is one Mr. Cliff Clavin, the perpetually white-socked mailman on "Cheers." It is a disgrace to the nation, Quayle might think, to see a man dressed so gaudily, a man whose tacky manner of dress shut him out of the Reagan years' prosperity. Watch out, Cliff.

Todd Burger is a junior philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.