

OPINION PACKAGES

Guest VIEW

Magic trip Dissolution of NEA would hurt society

From The Iowa State Daily

AMES, Iowa (U-WIRE)— Congress is about to consider severing the lifeline of the cultural heart of the United States.

Although the National Endowment for the Arts has survived drastic budget cuts during the past few years, it now faces the threat of complete elimination. Appropriations hearings won't begin until March, but conservative Republican Congress members had already developed an informal agreement with House leaders back in 1995 that said the agency would be terminated in October, according to the Feb. 2 issue of The Washington Post.

The details of when and where battle lines will be drawn have not yet emerged, but politicians and activists are already choosing sides. Rep. Frank Riggs (R-Calif.), who chairs the Education and Workplace subcommittee that has direct jurisdiction over the NEA, said he plans to conduct a hearing about whether arts funding is an "appropriate federal mission," according to The Washington Post.

But what kind of message will the United States send about its priorities if even the federal government doesn't support the arts? We can't expect children to grow up with values their role models don't even display. Without government support, the often subtle beauty of the arts will drown in today's tidal wave of flashy commercialism.

Children growing up without exposure to the arts will lack a fundamental part of their education because art forms such as literature, dance, theater, opera, film, music, painting, photography and sculpture provide insight into history and human nature textbooks can't offer. Both President Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton endorse the NEA's value as a valuable educational enricher.

Without these art forms woven into our culture, life would be a dull, flavorless existence, and the NEA seasons our culture with beauty through its efforts to foster excellence in the arts and broaden public access to them. To achieve this mission, the NEA provides grants to organizations and individuals, and establishes partnership agreements and leadership initiatives.

Since the Endowment's inception in 1965, the number of nonprofit theaters has risen from 56 to 425, large orchestras have grown from about 100 to more than 230, opera companies have gone from 27 to more than 120 and dance companies have expanded to more than 400, according to the NEA's web site. But without the NEA's support, this growth would not have been possible, and our lives would not have been enriched by opportunities to leave the mundaneness of everyday life and leap into the magical world of the arts.

Mehsling's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Not for Everyone

God. What other name stirs up more controversy, more arguments, debates and shapes peoples lives? J.J. Harder could be a start.

He introduces his column "Praise 'The Man'," with references to a series of professional athletes who gave glory to god, and in particular, the Christian god. OK, big deal. What about the multitudes that deny Christ or what about those that recognize another god?

I also can give examples of professional athletes who recognize their religion publicly. Cassius Clay, heavyweight boxing champion who changed his name to Muhammad Ali in respect to his Muslim life.

Or Chris Jackson, who is now known as Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf because of his faith. So, do I now try to promote Islam as the one almighty religion? No, just like I wouldn't with Christianity. Harder uses Don Beebe's hat with John 3:16 on it as an example of Beebe's thanks to Christ.

If the Bible is used as the backbone of Christianity, then "God" help us all. I know of no other books that are as openly sexist and unprosecuted as the Bible.

Why are there no hats with Genesis 3:16, which speaks of the man ruling over the woman? It is amazing how people claim to be "Christians" and after being informed of many themes of the Bible, openly criticize it.

In today's society of being open to vast cultures and ideas, how does Leviticus 20:13 apply? It speaks of killing anyone who commits a gay act. How about all the people that claim to be Christians, and participate in parties and become drunk? Ephesians 5:18 openly rebukes this "evil" act.

What we have here is a religion that many claim to be in, but I know of very few who actually understand the whole Bible and follow it. For those few who follow the Bible's actual intent, I wish you the best and hope you find inner peace. I just regret those Christians who feel



MATT HANEY/DN

morally obligated to impose their views on others.

I find Christians that lecture others on morals very hypocritical and I personally am repulsed by the Bible. I find those who follow verses such as those mentioned beforehand, need as much moral lecturing as me. I am not sure what makes Holyfield and Danny Wuerffel heroes. Is it because they accomplished good athletic careers? Is it because they proclaim their religion openly and are good citizens? Or is it because they are Christians? I dare not hope the latter.

Jason Shearer
freshman
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Stop Digging

In the column "Praise 'The Man'" on Wednesday, we once again get to hear J.J. Harder's love for Jesus Christ.

Since J.J. likes telling me all about the warm fuzzies his savior gives him, maybe it's time that I get to force some of my views back in his direction.

Jesus Christ and the religion that he has spawned can be attributed to more needless death and violence than any other institution known to

man. Millions of innocent men, women and children have been needlessly tortured and butchered in the name of your savior, J.J.

Be it the Spanish Inquisition, the Crusades, bombings in Ireland, Nazi Death Camps (yes, the Nazis were Catholics, and they used your Bible to justify their acts), or pointless witch hunts, your savior has been behind most of the atrocities our world has seen since his death.

But let's not forget the mass suppression of knowledge caused by the church. The Dark Ages, a bitter period caused by none other than your savior, set humanity back hundreds of years in almost every scientific field, and left our entire species intellectually dormant for a long period of time.

Don't forget the bias, racism, sexism and hate that your culture breeds still today. The negative effects of your religion have managed to seep into nearly every crack of modern day life.

Thomas Jefferson understood the problem, too, when he called Christianity "that religious intolerance under which mankind bled for so long."

Your savior is hardly a role model.

So what is my point, you may be asking?

It's great that you love Jesus Christ, J.J. Now realize that there are many people who don't. All you do by writing articles about your faith is work to dig that trench that separates Christians from everybody else even deeper.

Instead of going around and preaching your religion to everyone that has ears, try living life as a human being, embracing the differences that people have.

Stop the preaching, start accepting. I'm sure you didn't like it when I forced my views on you up above. That is the same way I feel when you force yours on mine.

Jason Nord
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