

A question of morals

Complacency on immorality has dangerous consequences



A trend is sweeping across the nation. And as it blows in, it endeavors to erase any semblance of that one nation under God. The trend is the cultural and social acceptance of immorality. From complacency about adultery, to free love, to acceptance of the homosexual agenda, we embrace it all.

And, boy, I tell you what, our acceptance of this trend will have further reaching consequences than just making baby Jesus cry. The next thing you know, the phrase alternative lifestyle will extend to encompass the rights of pedophiles. Stay with me.

It seems as if we are consumed by these "alternative" lifestyles. Why, just look at the lineup of front page stories from your beloved Daily Nebraskan this week. What you'll find is the emotional account of some of your local homosexuals in their journey laden with "homophobic gatekeepers" and the plight to be recognized by Lincoln moron, I mean mayor, Don Wesely.

You'll meet homosexuals excited to be at the very threshold of the new millennium, rushing forward with gay pride, wiping the tears from their eyes.

Well, the gays came out and had their day in the sun. And here in academia we can all understand why they should have their "one day," right?

Of course we do, because we have all familiarized ourselves with the agenda of the homosexual community.

I know - who am I to define the homosexual agenda? Come on, people, get real. We always hear about the conservative agenda, or the Catholic agenda, or the Republican agenda. Groups of people endeavor to achieve certain goals. Activists have an agenda - otherwise, what would they act on?

And while I will not try to outline specifically the agenda of the gay community, there are a few things that I think are pretty obvious.

The foremost thing the homosexual community seeks to do (perhaps what it is having success at) is to redefine the American family - to redefine what is socially acceptable in terms of "companionship" and love. The redefinition of the family extends from acceptance of a homosexual couple to custody and adoption rights.

Homosexuals also seek to have the society in which they live understand that being gay is natural - after all, who would choose to live a life wrought with discrimination and injustice?

So it's fair to say, with these goals, that we can identify a working agenda. One that simply seeks to redefine the American family, like the Gay Pride Rally that was held in Lincoln last year in which the catch phrase was, "The new face of Nebraska family values."

But if you want to look a little deeper into the homosexual rhetoric, you'll find a clearer picture painted. Dennis Altman, a homosexual and author of "The Homosexualization of America," happily reported that more and more Americans were thinking and acting like gays by participating in a number of "short-lived sexual adventures either in place of or alongside long-term relationships." Hence, the acceptance of sexual immorality.

The danger I foresee is how far this redefinition and acceptance goes. As we begin to welcome those who choose these lifestyles and see them as agents of diversity rather than sexual deviants, where do we draw the line?

Well, eventually we won't. If unacceptable sexual practices are socialized and accepted based on the claim that they are "natural," then we will eventually accept almost any sexual practice.

We're well on our way, actually. Recent studies have been conducted to question the cul-

tural taboo of sexual relations between men and boys.

One study, "A Meta-Analytic Examination of Assumed Properties of Child Sexual Abuse Using College Samples," published in the American Psychological Association's Psychological Bulletin, claimed that sexual abuse of adolescents does not really cause enduring psychological trauma for victims, and that "a willing encounter would be labeled simply 'adult-child sex,' a value-neutral term."

The authors of this study, Robert Bauserman, professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, and Philip Tomovitch, professor of psychology at Temple University, interviewed college students who had been sexually abused to reach their conclusions. They also asserted that encounters between pre-adolescents and adolescents could produce positive reactions.

Bauserman previously con-

tributed to the Journal of

Homosexuality and held that critics of sexual relations between men and boys were "irrelevant" or "biased."

Am I the only one who sees what's happening here? Acceptance of this unthinkable behavior is beginning to creep into the mainstream of American society, and the journey of pedophiles from deviants to "chic" will be shorter than you think. Why? Because the homosexual community has paved the way.

The avenues to gain acceptance have already been identified. You can bet there will be some movie about the emotional journey of an adult and a minor and their love. We'll begin to feel ashamed of ourselves for previously scorning this behavior. The next thing you know there will be diversity classes on the subject. And why not, the Romans did it, right?

As a society, we have turned a blind eye to traditional morality. We've opened the door of "preference" and "orientation," and history and present-day reality tell us what to expect next.

Incident sparks concern about children's exposure to religion

I was driving my nephews home from the mall one day this summer when I heard Cameron, 7, whispering something to Timothy, 4, in the backseat.

"Um, Unca Jay?" Tim said.

"Yes?"

"Umm, Cameron says you, umm, don't believe in God."

"Yes ... yes, that's right." I responded, surprised by the question.

"But Unca Jay, if you don't believe in Jesus, you're gonna go to hell!"

I was taken aback of course - how often does a 4-year-old tell you that you're going to hell? I guess I should have expected something like that when my sister married a minister. Not that he's a mean fire-and-brimstone type of preacher - he's actually one of the nicest guys I know.

"Well Tim, you see, I don't believe in hell," I finally said. And then I found myself in one of the oddest situations of my life - I was arguing religion with children!

I tried to change the subject,

Muslims think all non-Muslims are going to hell, etc., when no religion offers any better evidence than any other.

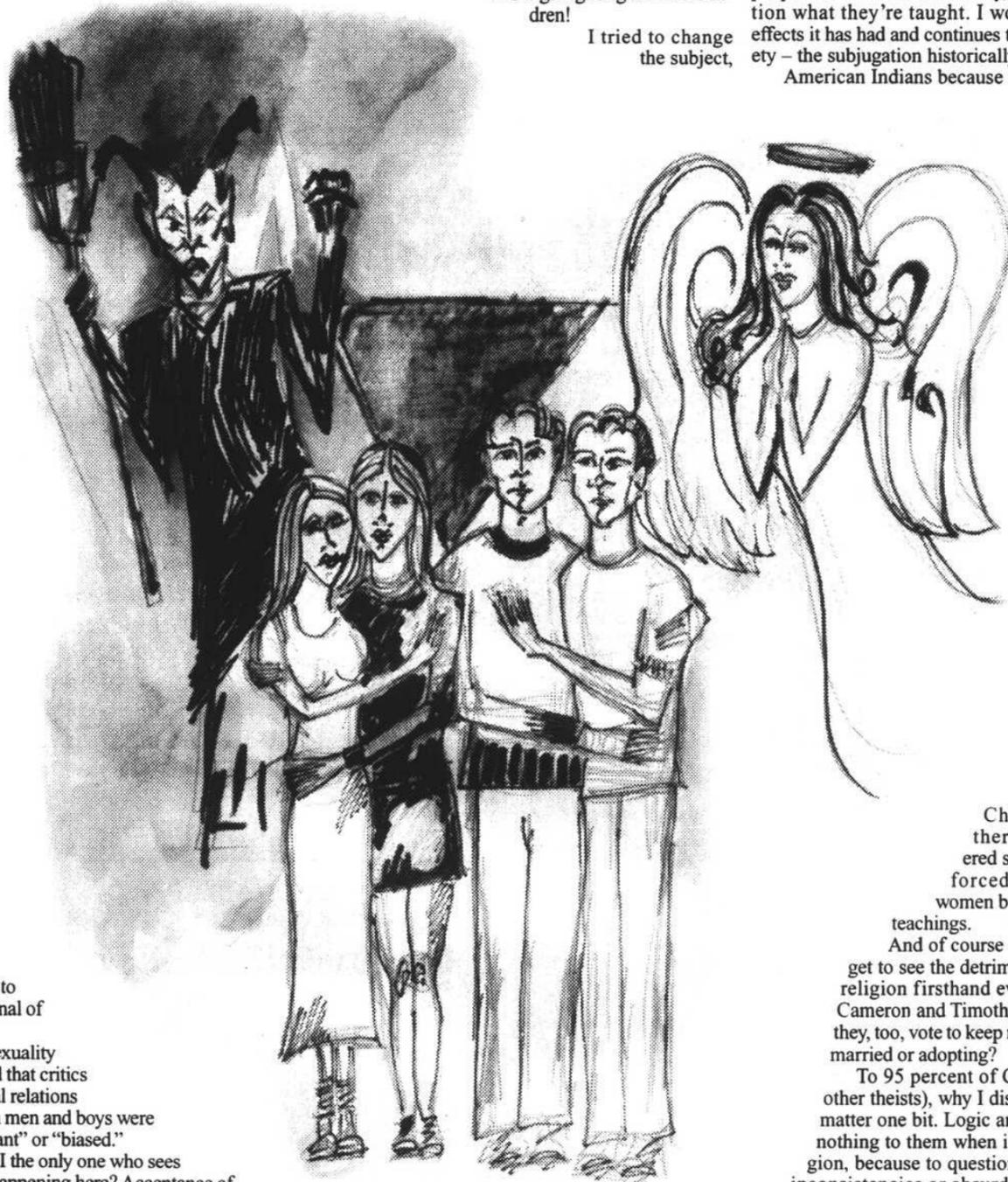
Not that my arguments worked, of course. Part of the reason was probably that they were philosophical and abstract, difficult to convey to kids who think Santa Claus is real and delivers presents on Christmas.

Part of it is that "Jesus" is a fact told to them by their mom and dad, and at that age, mom and dad can't be wrong.

After our discussion ended, and we got back home, I took them to the park. I watched them on the swing set laughing at nothing in particular, just because they were happy. (When did I lose that ability?)

I wondered why anyone would worry their kids with ideas like "sin" and "damnation" and "hell." They'll grow up soon enough - why not let them just be kids?

I worry about religion - about how it makes people afraid to think critically, afraid to question what they're taught. I worry about the effects it has had and continues to have on society - the subjugation historically of blacks and American Indians because they were "un-



DEB LEE/DN

but they were adamant about converting me. Cameron especially knew his Bible and kept telling me how I'd miss out on the "raptor" (I think he meant "rapture").

I wasn't sure how to respond, and I especially didn't want my sister to get mad at me for "corrupting" her children. At the same time, I'm an argumentative jerk and won't let anyone, even my dear nephews, think they've beaten me in a debate about something I'm passionate about - like religion.

So I started telling them all about theodicy, about the problem of Cain's wife, about how I thought it was silly that all Christians think all non-Christians are going to hell, just like all

Christian" and therefore considered savages; and the forced servility of women based on biblical teachings.

And of course as a gay man, I get to see the detrimental effects of religion firsthand everyday. When Cameron and Timothy grow up, will they, too, vote to keep me from getting married or adopting?

To 95 percent of Christians (and other theists), why I disbelieve doesn't matter one bit. Logic and reason mean nothing to them when it comes to religion, because to question is to sin. Any inconsistencies or absurdities you force them to confront are solved with the magic wand of "The Lord works in mysterious ways."

Adults who believe in God are like children who believe in Santa Claus - it's almost impossible to convince them they're wrong, and even if you somehow succeed, you feel somewhat guilty for shattering their happy illusions.

Religion is a crutch - people rely on it when their lives get difficult. I'd rather stand on my own two feet and risk falling.

I actually think what my nephews tried to do was kind of sweet - it showed that they care about me, and the funny thing is, they seem to like me just as much now as they did before they learned that I was going to hell.

Just in case, however, I think I'll slip some books on dinosaurs and evolution in with their birthday gifts. Hey, it's never too early to plant the seeds of doubt.

Jessica Flanagan is a senior English and philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Jeremy Patrick is a first-year graduate student at the NU College of Law and a Daily Nebraskan guest columnist.