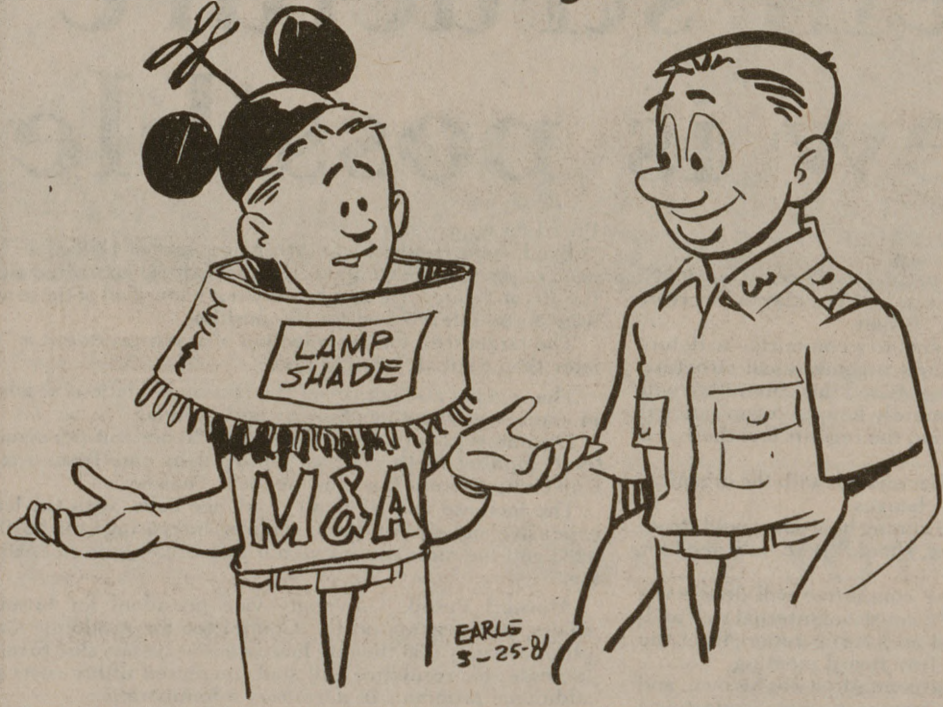


VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 25, 1981

Slouch By Jim Earle



"Do you mean it? Today isn't April Fool's Day?"

Dems shy away from program

By ROBERT SHEPARD
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Having been badly mauled in the last election, Democrats in Congress seem to be biding their time and avoiding a direct confrontation with the Republican forces, particularly with the Reagan White House.

Democratic leaders are clearly skeptical of President Reagan's plan to revive the nation's economy by drastic budget and tax cuts, but they are faced with the harsh reality of the election sweep that put Reagan in the White House, turned control of the Senate over to Republicans, and sharply reduced the Democratic majority in the House.

The voters expressed their will and the Democrats are not anxious to oppose that will, lest their ranks be further decimated in the next election. Their chief hope seems to be that the voters will have a change of heart or that the administration's proposed remedies will be proven wrong.

Speaker Thomas O'Neill promised Reagan a political honeymoon, free of criticism, for the first several months of his administration. And in his daily meeting with reporters, O'Neill regularly intones

that the Democrats "are not going to be obstructionists."

In both the House and Senate the Democrats have gone to remarkable lengths to cooperate with Republicans in arranging timetables for the administration's proposals to get prompt and fair consideration.

And when the administration was slow in getting details of its economic plan to Congress, the Democrats complained indignantly that their cooperative spirit was being abused and the committees could not begin work on Reagan's plan.

The Democratic leadership's record of cooperation with the Reagan mandate is thus exemplary, but in their hearts the Democrats remain firm nonbelievers. And they expect — or at least hope — that the public will soon see through the plan.

There is "widespread misunderstanding" about the administration's economic program and few people understand how drastically they will be affected if the program goes through, O'Neill said recently.

"I think the average person on the street has no concept of the severe changes" in store for them under the Reagan administration, he said.

In the past few weeks, O'Neill has indicated he expects the public will eventually reach such an understanding, presumably, protest.

In a recent television news interview, O'Neill thought he saw a glimmer of a turning tide, and promptly mentioned the next day in his meeting with reporters.

But so far O'Neill and the other Democrats do not have evidence of a change in public sentiment. He says that Reagan is doing a better job of the public than the Democrats.

The Democrats find comfort in the fact that some of Reagan's budget proposals were opposed by some of his fellow Republicans.

One of the first proposals to reach the full House will be a bill to delay a scheduled increase in dairy price support program that has enjoyed GOP support in the past.

"Opposition seems to be coming from Republicans themselves," O'Neill said with satisfaction recently.

And, as if anxious to hurry the matter, Republican discomfort, O'Neill said, would quickly be brought up for a vote in the full House.

Contrasting views from inside, outside

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — "We are not to become part of the bureaucracy," Secretary of Interior James Watt says. "Frequent Cabinet meetings keep us isolated and in unity. There's comfort in that."

That is just one of the fascinating and conflicting views of the Reagan Administration offered in the new issue of Public Opinion magazine, the always provocative journal published by the American Enterprise Institute. The insider view is offered in a joint interview with Watt and Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane J. Kirkpatrick; the outsider view, by Herbert Stein, the conservative economist who has seen it all before as a member and chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Nixon Administration.

The contrast in perspectives could not be more dramatic. Kirkpatrick, a political science professor, and Watt, a successful attorney, are among the brightest and most ideologically sophisticated people in the Cabinet.

She says in the interview that "the pursuit and defense of the American national interest is a moral goal fitting for a free people." He says he has a "theological commitment" to the belief that in "seeking to establish the freedom of the individual," he can also assure the "accountability of that free individual not only to society and its fellow members but to a higher authority, being God."

Well, this is weighty stuff, but what is striking is the chirpy tone in which these two heavy thinkers describe the euphoric sensations of being part of the Reagan movement. The tone is less that of a skeptical scholar or a cautious lawyer than that of teen-agers telling their friends about their first dates.

"We are not to become part of the bureaucracy," Watt says. "Frequent Cabinet meetings keep us isolated and in unity. There's comfort in that. When I go against my bureaucracy, the issues are often against me. But when I come back to the fold, I am nurtured."

Kirkpatrick sounds the same theme. "Frequent Cabinet meetings serve to remind us that we are a team, that we have certain shared purposes, and that these purposes override all our other functions.

The idea of collective decision-making continually reaffirms our corporate identity and purpose I come out of every Cabinet meeting feeling good. I almost always go in concerned about problems in

my own area. And I come out of them almost high...."

In explicit and perhaps intentional counterpoint to this intellectually intoxicated burbling, the editors lead off the magazine with a sober — almost churlish — piece by Stein, Nixon's no-nonsense economist.

Stein's message to his fellow-conservatives is simple: Sober up. He casts a cold, fishy eye on the rhetoric of the Reagan administration and says the promise that massive tax cuts will spur economic growth and productivity, while funding big increases in defense spending and protecting everyone against poverty is a dangerous oversimplification.

"The whole tenor of the recent discussion ... has generated the expectation that rather simple and pleasant measures will yield large and prompt results in the form of more rapid growth," Stein writes. "This is dangerous in many ways. One of the most serious is that it supports the belief that the inflation problem can be solved without having to take any of the bitter medicine of spending cuts, tight money, high interest rates and unemployment. This belief is almost certainly in error, and basing policy upon it will lead to more inflation and to slower rather than more rapid growth."

And then Stein does something that no liberal commentator would dare do. He reminds the euphoric Reaganites that their belief that "wishing can make it so" has led other Republicans to disaster.

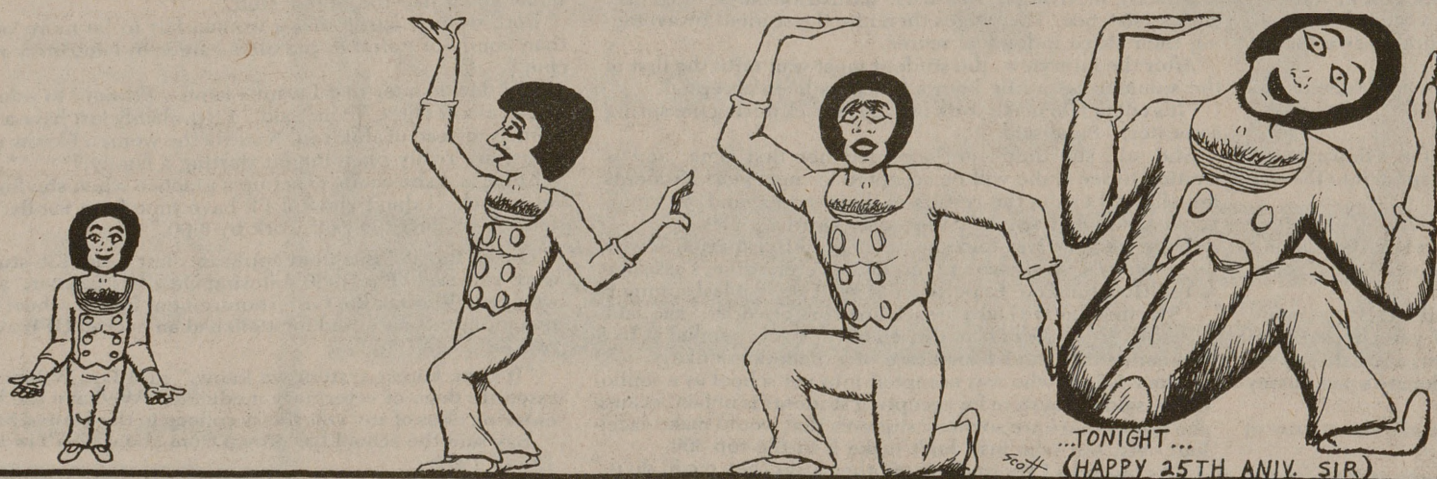
"Many examples come to mind," he says — and cites the cruelist. "Herbert Hoover in 1932 recommended a tax increase in the thought it would help restore 'confidence' and so get the country moving again."

Almost 40 years later, he notes, Richard Nixon slapped on wage and price controls, "not because he thought they would really cure inflation but because he thought that a period of months in which prices did not rise would lead the public to expect price stability, and that would result in actual price stability."

It did not, of course. At the moment, the Reaganites are not in a mood to listen to cautionary tales from their party's past. "Isolated and in unity," they prefer to bask in a constantly reaffirmed "corporate identity and purpose."

But those of us who do not share in the Cabinet "high" might ponder a point Stein makes about his fellow-conservatives. "Conservatives," he says, "are typically leery of government action, and so they like to believe in homeopathic solutions for the problems they see — solutions which give big results for little action."

Warped



By Scott McCullar

Editor:

An advertisement in the March 11th Battalion crucified a student group that is trying to organize on campus — CARP. The person who bought the ad (Mr. X) didn't identify himself/herself, but wasn't afraid to fill it with emotionally charged words, narrow-minded views, and intolerance.

Mr. X charged CARP with being deceptive about its affiliation with the Unification Church. CARP members are not required to be "Moonies" and the CARP representative I spoke with told me the Unification Church was a major supporter of CARP. She didn't attempt to "deceive" me — just told me the truth.

Mr. X accused CARP (I assume he meant the Unification Church. We shouldn't confuse our organizations.) of a series of "deceptions" involving interpretation of the Bible. All of these accusations are summed up in two sentences Mr. X wrote:

1) "... almost everything that CARP teaches (sic) is diametrically (sic) opposed

to what the Bible clearly states ..."

2) "The Bible is not taken literally ..."

Mr. X is upset because Moon's interpretation of the Bible is different from his own.

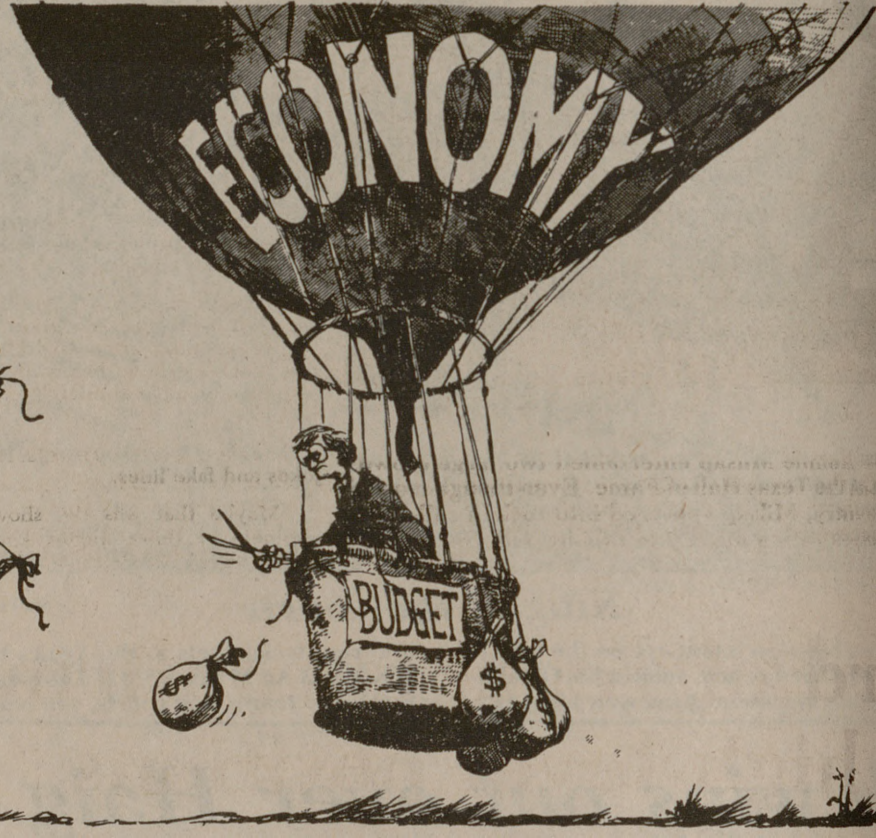
There are many ways to understand the Bible and a "literal interpretation" is just one. If the Bible "clearly states" its messages, then why are there so many different Christian denominations? How can so many people (including Mr. X) spend so much time and money telling us what the Bible means? How can you condemn an individual or a group for thinking differently than you do?

The CARP members I've heard about

and the ones I've met really are, to quote Mr. X's words "... harmless, loving people. God, Jesus Christ, love, unity and peace. They open their homes to you to invite you on weekend retreats. They make you feel warm, wanted, and valued. Well, maybe Mr. X overdid it a little. We are approximately two CARP members on campus, less than twenty in the entire area. Come on, give them a break."

David White

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by 3 other signatures.



It's your turn

Mr. X should give CARP a chance

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography courses within the Department of Communications. Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 350 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the author's name and phone number of the writer. Columns and guest editorials are also welcome and not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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