

Opinion

My book is better than yours

When I was in high school I used to hate taking English courses. The teacher would make the class read a book, tell us what she had been told it meant and then ask us to repeat what she had said. I felt insulted. I could read. I could come up with my own interpretations about a book. Why did she have to force her interpretations on me? Why couldn't she ask herself a few questions?



Karl Pallmeyer

Four years ago I hated English. Now I'm minoring in it. Now that I'm in college my view of English courses has changed because English courses have changed. My teachers make the class read a book and then ask us what we think it means. Now that I'm allowed to form my interpretations of what I read I feel closer to the book. There are big class discussions over the book and everyone is allowed to form his or her own opinions and interpretations of the book. In the discussions you can further your understanding of the book.

But there still are a lot of people like my high school English teacher out there. These people have a book they like so much that they feel they have to force their interpretation of that book on everybody else. That book is the Bible.

People feel strongly about their Bibles. These people think that since their Bible is the absolute word for them it is the absolute word for everyone else. Since there are so many Bibles which one is the absolute word?

Go to a book store and look for a Bible. You will be able to find The King James Concordance, The Rice Reference Bible, The E.W. Bullinger Companion Bible, The Holy Bible in the Language of Today: An American Translation, The Modern Language Bible, The Visualized Bible, The Scofield Reference Bible, The New Scofield Ref-

erence Bible, The New English Bible, The Cambridge Pitt Minion Bible, The Cambridge Compact Bible, The Cambridge Cameo Bible, The KJV Compact Text Bible, The Bride's Bible, The Smallest Bible, The Tiny Testament, The Master Study Bible, The Crown Reference Bible, The Riverside Reference Bible, The Personal Reference Bible, The Ryrie Study Bible, The Open Bible, The Thompson Chain Reference Bible, The Thompson Chain Reference Handsize Bible, The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, The Oxford NIV Scofield Study Bible, The NIV Family Bible, The NIV Study Bible, The Woman's Bible, The Book, The Book for Children, The Word, The Word for Children, The Living Bible, The Living Bible for Catholics, The Living Bible for Children, The Children's Story Bible, The Bible Illustrated for Little Children, The Lindsell Study Bible, Nave's Topical Bible, The New Nave's Topical Bible, Nave's Compact Bible, Nave's Study Bible, Baker's Topical Bible, The One Year Bible, The New Catholic Study Bible, The Good News Bible, The Amplified Bible, The New Jerusalem Bible, The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha (Expanded Edition), The Bible in Dramatic Stereo, The Bible (New Testament) narrated by Alexander Scourby, Bible Challenge, Bible Challenge (Youth Edition) and many, many, many others.

There are about 40 major English translations of the Bible and countless translations in every written language on earth. It has been translated, re-translated and re-re-translated over thousands of years. No one is really sure who wrote it or when it was written. Few people can read the original Hebrew and Greek in which it was written. Many people are willing to argue what it means. Many people have died because of these arguments.

Some Bibles are distinctly different from others. The Old Testament contains either 24, 39 or 46 books depending on whether you're Jewish, Protestant or Catholic and there is some disagreement about these books within

each particular denomination. The Apocrypha and several other gospels are considered by some scholars to be a part of the actual Bible while other scholars discount some of the books that have been included in most Bibles for thousands of years. There's even a huge argument over who can be considered a biblical scholar and who cannot.

There are five Bibles — the King James Version, the New King James Version, the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible and the New Catholic Edition — that are used by the majority of the English speaking world. There is a bit of a difference between the five.

Proverbs 14:15 in the King James Version reads: "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going."

Proverbs 14:15 in the New King James Version reads: "The simple believes every word, but the prudent man considers well his steps."

Proverbs 14:15 in the Revised Standard Version reads: "The simple believes everything, but the prudent looks where he is going."

Proverbs 14:15 in the New English Bible reads: "A simple man believes every word he hears; a clever man understands the need for proof."

Proverbs 14:15 in the New Catholic Edition reads: "The innocent believeth every word; the discreet man considereth his steps."

Most of you are intelligent people. Obviously you can read. Read your particular Bible and form your particular interpretations. You can talk to others about your interpretations and perhaps improve your understanding of the book. But don't be like my high school English teacher. Don't force your views on everyone else. Don't be afraid to ask yourself some questions.

An idiot believes everything he's told. A wise man asks questions.

Karl Pallmeyer is a senior journalism major and a weekly columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Letters must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

Not on the right side

EDITOR:

The Battalion Editorial Board has not come out in favor of the point right on a single partisan issue this semester. In the Feb. 5 issue, ("Not Sharp") the Editorial Board attacks both the CIA and the Contras they support, perhaps justifiably, but makes no mention of the oppressive Marxist game the contras are trying to overthrow.

Certainly none of the regular editorial writers — Michelle Powe, Murtha, Loren Steffy or Cynthia Gay — could be described as conservative either.

This is fine! These people are entitled to voice their own opinions in a free country such as ours. What concerns me is the overall balance of Opinion Page. Visitor to this campus, knowing nothing of its strong conservative background, might think after reading The Battalion, that they are liberal t.u!

Mark Ude, guest columnist in the Jan. 28 Battalion, wrote an article in favor of military aid to the Contras. Since then, not one editorial has appeared in favor of the conservative view. Have we heard anything about the Angola or the bloodbaths in Cambodia or Afghanistan? No, but we sure have heard all about South Africa.

It would be nice to hear from Bill Buckley again, but apparently, he has been replaced with someone more in line with The Battalion's own opinion (i.e. Richard Cohen).

I believe the students of this school deserve to hear the opinions on both sides of an issue. After all, is balance not part of accurate journalism?

Bobby Weisman '88

Testing one two

EDITOR:

I think Gov. White has taken, with the state-wide testing program for teachers, the wrong approach toward the quality-of-teaching dilemma. Teachers need more pay, not more hassles; they need, and deserve, respect — not a kind of subtle condemnation that a "quality assurance" test gives. Besides that's the purpose of principals, and locally-elected school boards: to monitor the personal level, the teaching staff of their schools and school districts.

Gov. White has taken the "Big Brother" approach, trying to replace a wide range of individuality and diversity allowed various regions (as demonstrated by their schools) under the present system, with a state-wide uniformity. He would do what the Gramm-Rudman Act has done to the federal government — centralize control, reduce the people's input to a bare minimum, distancing us from the apparatus which is our constitutional prerogative.

I say the governor, too, should be given a test, on decision-making. For example, what's more important, money to improve the state penitentiary system, or \$30,000 for a playhouse for the governor's kids. White chose the latter. And how would you choose between a major cutback in all state programs, versus a modest state income tax? And just how effective do you think the governor's teacher testing will be? Is high teacher morale and good will in the classroom more vital to education, or an obtuse, rarified/arrogance? On time, of course, will tell — I for one hope Gov. White's gambit pays off.

William H. Clark II

Right to bear arms

EDITOR:

What are full automatic weapons for? What are cars that can be driven three times the national speed limit for? What are X-rated movies for? What lies in the federal Constitution of the United States — freedom.

Michelle Powe's Basement Arsenal article should never have gotten out of the cellar. Ideas like the ones expressed in her column on Friday are best implemented into laws through a "Five Year Plan."

Sure! I wouldn't hunt deer with an AR-15 rifle (grossly miscalled an M16) because the 5.56 caliber is not sufficient to down large game. However, most deer hunters use other rifles the military employs; the M1A, FN-FAL and HK91 are all good for deer since they all use a larger caliber than the "M16."

No! You cannot buy "guns and bullets" through a magazine, its against the law. All firearms and ammunitions can be purchased only through licensed dealers.

Soldier of Fortune is a very good survivalists' medium magazine. Survivalists — those people who still believe in the tradition that the far left in the world can destroy life as we know it. Its just unfortunate there are those bad apples who exploit the magazine for their own personal gain, like gun for hire and uninformed newspaper editors.

Charles H. Young

Monopolizing the friendly skies

I have very mixed feelings about permitting Eastern Airlines to join up with New York Air. The two carry the majority of passengers between Washington — New York — Boston, and have been the only ones providing competition in the Northeast corridor.



Art Buchwald

New York Air is known as the bagel airline, because on mealtime flights its stewardesses throw paper bags filled with bagels and cream cheese at the passengers. It also serves drinks, coffee and beer. This doesn't sound like much until you've flown the Eastern Shuttle. The only thing they give you is a stale timetable. The reason the Eastern Shuttle will not allow food in the air is that it prefers to use its aisles in flight to collect your fare for the trip.

Instead of an Eastern stewardess asking if you want coffee, tea or milk, she wants to know if you are going to pay with cash, check or Mastercard.

To make up for the lack of refreshments in the air, Eastern keeps a hot pot of coffee cooking in the waiting area with free Danish on the side. As a seasoned shuttle traveler I have always preferred a New York bagel in the sky to an Eastern Danish on the ground. Eastern tries to make up for the no-food-while-flying policy by advertising that it gives

away Frequent Traveler trips to Hawaii instead.

And then there are the seating arrangements on the planes. New York Air proudly claims it has only five seats across, while Eastern jams in its passengers with six. Some people prefer the five-seat configuration, while others would rather sit in the six.

Before the recently announced merger (actually Texas Air, which owns New York Air, bought Eastern) we saw competitive merchandising forces at work. While prices were the same, the services were different. We the consumers benefited from two ruthless competitors, each determined to steal customers away from the other.

But now we must face the prospect that New York Air and Eastern will be under the same management. What can we expect from the merger? I talked to a leading airline passenger consultant.

He said, "The good news is we have always found when two airlines merge the service inevitably goes down as the fares go up."

"What is good about that?"

"The company's stock goes up and Wall Street is impressed with the profits."

"But what about the bagels?" I said. "Aren't the loyal passengers who have flown with New York Air entitled to their bagels?"

"There is no need for New York Air to serve bagels if it is no longer competing against Eastern. And if they don't

serve bagels New York Air no longer has to provide cream cheese. Without bagels and cream cheese you might as well dump the coffee out the window. Without coffee you don't need a galley, and without the galley you can add four to six seats."

"That's awful."

"Mergers aren't made for people — they're made for companies. It isn't just New York Air that will benefit from the economies, it is also Eastern. If New York Air doesn't serve bagels Eastern won't have to serve Danish. Both airlines no longer have to worry what the other does because they're not competing anymore."

"Isn't there a monopoly here?"

"Why do you say that?"

"With two airlines flying the same route we had the choice of five seats across or six, and we could leave on the half-hour or the hour, and we could opt for a bagel, a Danish or a Hershey bar."

"Nothing will change for the first six months. Then naturally the New York Air-Eastern people will have to tighten their seat belts."

"Does the merger violate the law or doesn't it?"

"It depends on how many friends you have in Washington."

"I smell a first-class antitrust violation."

"That's impossible. The Reagan administration would never allow it."

Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

