

# Opinion

## Religious group threatens cornerstone of democracy

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*



**Karl Pallmeyer**

— The First Amendment, Constitution of the United States. When our forefathers wrote the Constitution they realized that Americans wanted freedom. Freedom to criticize the government. Freedom to get together. Freedom to write anything. Freedom to say anything. Freedom to worship in any fashion. People came to this country because they had been denied these freedoms back home, and our forefathers wrote the Constitution to protect these freedoms. Now there is a group who wants to take away one of those freedoms.

Americans for Biblical Government thinks that the Bible should be used as the basis for our government. Although the First Amendment provides for the separation of church and state, Americans for Biblical Government wants to put God in control of the country.

One of the main reasons people came to America was to escape religious persecution. Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, Puritans, Quakers and other groups were being denied the right to worship according to their beliefs in their home countries. Sometimes people

were jailed and even put to death if their religious beliefs didn't fit in with the beliefs of their countrymen. In many countries the church controlled all affairs of state.

On occasion monarchs would decree that their nations had to follow a specific religion. Then the monarch would do his best to get rid of everyone who didn't follow that religion. After a few years the people would get tired of this oppression. They would revolt and put a new monarch on the throne. More often than not, the new monarch would decree that his nation had to follow another religion. Then the new monarch would do his best to get rid of everyone who didn't follow the new religion until the people revolted and set up another monarch who would set up another religion. A lot of people got tired of this cycle of stupidity, so they came to America.

Our forefathers realized that America was filled with many different people who had many different beliefs. They realized that the best form of government would be one that allowed all people the right to believe what they wanted. They realized the best government would not force people to worship in any particular fashion. They realized that a government should not come between man and God. Americans for Biblical Government wants to change that.

Americans for Biblical Government claims that our government and our Constitution was formed on a religious background. That is simply not true. Many of the founding fathers, including Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, were deists. Deists believed in God but they didn't believe that He took an

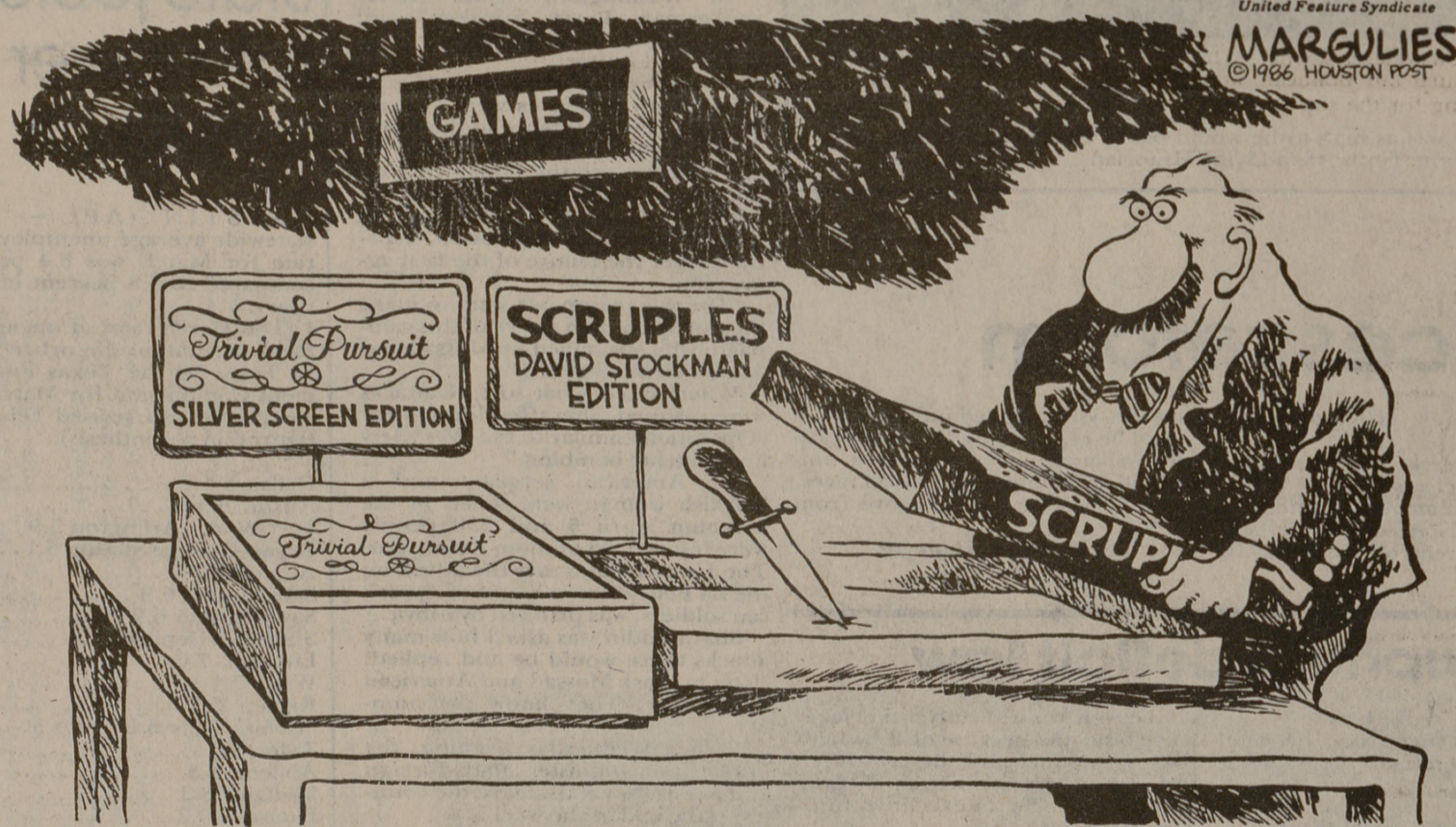
active role in man's affairs. Deists believed that man must make a conscious effort to make the best out of the world God gave him.

Americans for Biblical Government claims that most of our laws, laws that prohibit killing and stealing, are based on biblical precedents. Laws that prohibit killing and stealing predate the Ten Commandments by thousands of years. It didn't take divine inspiration to realize that killing and stealing is wrong. Common sense shows that a society that allows its members to kill and steal won't last long.

Last week Americans for Biblical Government held a meeting on campus. The purpose of the meeting was to gain support for President Reagan's plan to send \$100 million to aid the Contras in their battle against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. It's ironic that a group that claims to be Christian supports wholesale killing in Central America. It seems this group is using religion as the basis for their political ideas. By claiming that aiding the Contras is the Christian thing to do, Americans for Biblical Government can get support from those who feel they have to prove their faith. Religion is a personal thing — a matter of the heart. It should not be used to control the minds of others.

Freedom of religion is one of this country's greatest strengths. Many nations have failed because they allowed certain religious groups to take control of their country. In a nation of varied beliefs, a government cannot serve all of its people if it adopts one particular religion and denies its people the right to worship any way they wish.

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



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**MARGULIES**  
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## White House staff booked solid

It was Monday afternoon and everyone in the White House was bent over his desk hard at work — on his book. David Stockman had inspired the entire administration to pursue writing careers.



**Art Buchwald**

Harlequin looked up from his typewriter, "What's the vice president's first name?" he yelled above the din.

"I think it's Harry — no, it's George," Stretcher said. "I envy you. I'm not even up to how we took Grenada."

"My publisher said to start with Libya and work backwards. Did you have any luck with the paperback rights yet?"

Harlequin shook his head. "No but CBS wants to see a typed manuscript. They're thinking of doing 'Behind Closed Doors II.'"

"Will you guys shut up?" Beerbaum said. "I'm writing the definitive chapter on Mike Deaver."

Harlequin was flabbergasted. "What right do you have to write about Deaver? You hardly knew the guy."

"I knew him well enough to buy a BMW from him."

Harlequin was red in the face. "Deaver belongs to me. I taught him everything he knows about acid rain."

"Okay, I'll give you Deaver for your book if you give me Meese for mine," Beerbaum said.

Harlequin thought it over and then said, "It's a deal. But from now on I'm going to write about anybody in the White House I want to."

The phone rang and Stretcher picked it up. "Aw gee, Mr. Regan, I'd love to do it but I'm working on my book *Why Reagan's Roses Failed*. Is it really important? . . . Don't yell, don't yell. I'll write the damn speech."

Stretcher hung up. "Wait until I do my observations on Regan. He'll be sorry he talked to me like that."

Dumbarton, who had been correcting galleys, looked up and said, "Was Bob McFarlane National Security Adviser before Al Haig or after him?"

"Haig was never security adviser. McFarlane took over from Clark who replaced Richard Allen. Clark was secretary of the state and he was succeeded by George Shultz."

"You're making a mistake including facts," Stretcher said. "The publishers don't want history. They want reputations wrecked, character assassinations and cuthroating of the first order. That's why they are offering us such large sums of money."

Harlequin said, "Have you been offered a large sum of money?"

"Not yet, but my agent tells me when they see my chapter on Pat Buchanan's tantrums I'm a sure 'Book of the Month.'"

The phone rang again. This time Beerbaum answered. "Yes, Mr. President. You would like to redo your entire fiscal budget? . . . Yes sir, it can be done, but could it wait until tomorrow? You see I'm researching the upstairs-downstairs part of my book, and I've set up an interview this afternoon with the chef. While I've got you on the line Mr. President, what do you eat for breakfast? . . . Yessir, Mr. President, I'll get on the new fiscal policy right away."

Beerbaum said, "Was he burned up! I thought he was going to jump into the receiver with both feet."

Harlequin said, "You lucky dog. You can now write an entire chapter on how you were personally chewed out by Ronald Reagan."

"I wish he had fired me," Beerbaum said. "When you get canned by the president you sell a lot more books."  
**Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.**

## Mail Call

### Powe's dream state

EDITOR:

Michelle Powe's Friday column seems to miss some important points. True, the American raid on Libya will provoke more terrorist acts, as it already has, but it was just about Reagan's last option. It seems that the thing that Khadafy understands is violence as evidenced by the failure of diplomatic efforts and international condemnation of Libya's support of terrorist activities.

I really don't believe that other Arab nations are as strongly allied with Libya as they say they are, and no one really believes that Khadafy would any popularity contests in Libya. He is currently hiding out in the desert reportedly afraid of a coup attempt.

Powe claims that the United States attacked innocent people in the Libya raid. Sorry, dear. The targets were carefully chosen military installations, were known to support terrorist activities. I really don't believe any innocent people were living in the Soviet-made transport planes at the Tripoli airport. It is unfortunate that some civilians were killed in the raid, but it is also to see 20 innocent people gunned down in two European airports.

Powe claims that because Lebanon, Iran and Syria are closely allied with the Soviets, they are not likely targets for retaliatory attacks. Well, Michelle, I'll let you in on a little secret: The Libyans are pretty tight with Soviets. The reason that these countries have not been attacked is because the United States has not been able to pin down the groups responsible for the terrorist acts. I do remember American ships shelling terrorist headquarters in Lebanon after the embassy bombing there.

Michelle, I hope you come out of your dream state and realize that the Soviet government really doesn't want world peace, and that the Soviets are behind most of the terrorism in the world. Oh, and tell the French we're sorry about their embassy.

**Mike Grubbs '88**

### Pasturized humor

EDITOR:

Let me express my feelings concerning the pathetic humor displayed in *The Battalion* cartoonists. For too long cartoons lacking common sense have plagued Aggieland's newspaper. I have long since given up waiting for a change and have decided to help push for one.

Is it too much to ask for *The Battalion* staff to review the cartoons to assure that ignorant works do not go to press along with other readable material contained in *The Battalion*? It is already obvious to me that cartoonists should not be allowed to have their works published, and if they should even lose their job.

This is not to say that I want cartoons to disappear from the pages of *The Battalion*. I am merely suggesting that the current cartoonists be put to pasture where their senses of humor will blend in quite nicely with the surroundings.

**Gordon Jones '88**

### Not the desired effect

EDITOR:

President Reagan's decision to bomb Libya appears to be very popular with most Americans. This action was aimed at reducing terrorism by making terrorists think twice before they carry out attacks against U.S. interests. I should ask ourselves if the air strike against Libya had the desired effect.

The answer is clearly no. Instead of frightening terrorists, Reagan's actions have only made them more resolute. The fact that several U.S. ships that failed to explode were found intact in civilian areas miles from any Libyan military targets has not only infuriated Libyans but alienated our European allies, and has even caused a few thoughtful Americans to wonder.

Now terrorists are more determined than ever. Further U.S. reprisals only result in a cycle of bloodshed that could lead to war. Those who ultimately will not be terrorists but rather innocent Americans, Europeans and Libyans.

The attack on Libya achieved none of the desired objectives. Now Americans and Libyans are more hateful to one another than ever. Instead of considering ourselves as part of the same humanity, we look at one another being less than human.

Terrorism is a sick, reprehensible act of violence, and we must not allow it to cause us to lose our composure. We should remember that terrorism kills fewer Americans in a year than are killed in automobile accidents in a day. Let us put the acts of a despicable few in perspective and seek responses that will be of benefit to all, regardless of nationality.

**John Wendt**

### Khadafy not evil at heart

EDITOR:

Col. Moammar Khadafy may be the "mad dog" of the Middle East, but he may in fact be the arch-fiend of the universe. But Khadafy is not evil at heart. Khadafy is a human being. A human being whose 15-month-old adopted daughter is dead at the hands of an American bomb.

Truly evil men don't adopt orphaned children. We must stop escalating this "eye-for-an-eye-mentality" as it is leaving us all blind. So I urge the percent of Americans who support the president's militaristic actions to put in mind the old adage: Two wrongs don't make a right, before putting "Nuke Khadafy" bumper sticker on their cars.

**Derek Bercher**

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