

Search for truth only leads to more questions

Quae res veritas?
 What is truth?
 This is the question Campus Crusade for Christ is asking in the Veritas Forum, a week-long series of lectures designed to encourage rational discussion on how Christianity relates to modern life.

JASON BROWN
 COLUMNIST



Although Campus Crusade for Christ has a bad track record with rational discussions, the lectures have surprisingly stuck to their purpose. Respected, intelligent scholars from around the country have come to Texas A&M and offered food for thought on the role of religion in contemporary society.

Unfortunately, none of them has succeeded in finding the undisputable truth they and the rest of us are seeking.

Monday night's program, "Fulfilling the Human Quest for Meaning," featured Dr. J.P. Moreland, a philosophy professor at the Talbot School of Theology.

After giving an impressive presentation on the importance of religion in society, Moreland suddenly abandoned logical thought and suggested that Christianity is the most rational major religion and is supported by more evidence than others.

The problem with Moreland's assertion is that religion is based on faith, not evidence, so no religion is really rational. Besides, few Christians are Christian because it seems practical, or be-

cause evidence says it is true. After all, the Virgin Mary's records from her Ob/Gyn no longer exist, so we will never know for a fact that she was impregnated without having sex. Still, many people believe the story because of faith.

Unlike facts, the validity of different faiths cannot be measured. So, Moreland's claim about the superiority of

Christianity failed the test of logic.

Sadly, a person who listened and agreed with Moreland's view would have found reasons to be intolerant and insensitive toward people not like them, a problem that is already too common around here.

On Tuesday night, Dr. Thomas Schmidt, a professor of religious studies at Westmont College, addressed the issue of "Homosexuality and Christian Morality."

In an unexpected move, Schmidt refused to judge homosexuals and even implied that same-gender sex was no more of a sin than extramarital sex. His message was that homosexuals cannot find happiness through unnatural relationships.

As evidence, he quoted statistics about the

large percentage of homosexuals with psychological and health problems, such as depression, drug use and AIDS transmission. Of course, he quoted the Bible, too.

The focus of his compassionate speech was the misery many homosexuals feel, all of which cannot be imposed by societal stigmas. His solution was that a stronger relationship with God would give them a peace they do not experience.

But, Schmidt never addressed the issue of gay gays — homosexuals who are genuinely happy with their lifestyles.

With his reasoning, a person should feel at peace with his or her life, but what happens when a homosexual is at peace?

There is no sense in solving a problem that does not exist, so homosexuality cannot always be treated as incompatible with Christianity.

Dr. David Larson, a physician and president of the National Institute for Health Care

Research, spoke Wednesday night on "The Benefits of Spiritual Commitment to Health."

Larson cited many statistics showing that churchgoers are healthier, less likely to commit suicide and less likely to abuse drugs and alco-

hol. His conclusion: Religion and spirituality have a significantly positive effect on the physical and mental health of people.

He might be right, but he neglected to mention other possible reasons for the relationship. One could be that unhealthy and unhappy people do not feel up to going to church. Another could be that happy, healthy people go to church because they mistakenly believe that religion contributes to their well-being.

His reasoning would be like saying suicide attempts provoke depression.

True, there could be a cause-and-effect relationship between spirituality and wellness, but I'm not about to get rid of my health insurance.

The forum continued last night, and will finish tonight.

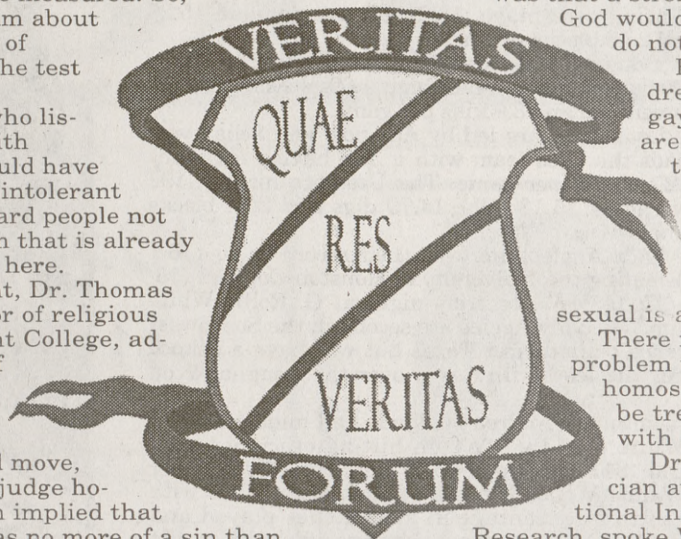
Despite their flaws, I was impressed with the mature treatment all the speakers gave to sensitive topics. However, their search for truth hit a few brick walls.

A true forum would have consisted of several perspectives on each topic, not just one man's opinion. A true discussion would have consisted of dialogue instead of a moderator screening written questions from the audience. As a consequence, the Veritas Forum's search for truth came up empty-handed.

Instead of asking "What is truth?", Campus Crusade for Christ should first ask "How do I find truth?"

Then, maybe we'll all learn something.

Jason Brown is a senior economics major



MAIL CALL

Aikman one of best players ever

I am writing in response to Nick Georgandis and his column on Troy Aikman. I find it hard to believe that he would discuss this subject in such a manner.

The element of surprise has lost its effect somewhere along the way on opposing teams, which happens if your team is tops, as is Dallas. Couple that with the fact that an athlete will put forth a mediocre performance at times, and it becomes clear that leading everyone else by "leaps and bounds" is idealistic and illogical.

It would make more sense to say that Aikman stands in the shadow of his fellow teammates, and is not overrated by any means. One can generally expect Irvin to collect over 100 yards receiving every time out.

However, he'd have a tough time doing it all by himself week after week.

Troy Aikman is America's Quarterback — a shoe-in each year for the Pro Bowl, owner of more Super Bowl rings than Marino and Elway combined, and the most consistent and dependable passer in the game.

If Georgandis really feels this way, I hear that there's a great team down the road in Houston who would love his support and omniscient criticism.

*Paul Paris
 Class of '98*

This is in reply to Nick Georgandis' Oct. 26 column on Troy Aikman as the "Most Overrated Cowboy."

If he is going to write a column degrading someone like Aikman for 40,000-plus students to read, he better make sure his facts are correct.

Georgandis said that Aikman was a mediocre quarterback surrounded by an awesome offense.

The reason Aikman does not have the high passing yards like some of the other great quarterbacks in the league is because he can hand the ball to Emmitt and let him gain five, 10, 20 or more yards on the ground each carry.

Aikman ranks right at the top as far as touchdown passes go, and at the bottom as far as number of interceptions thrown.

And in regard to last Thanksgiving's game against Green Bay, Wade Wilson was not the quarterback while Aikman was out. Wade Wilson just signed with the Cowboys this season.

While Aikman was out, Rodney Peete stepped in and was also injured.

The Cowboys then brought in the number 3 quarterback, Jason Garrett, no slouch himself, who led the team to victory.

Just a few weeks ago, Aikman

went down with a calf injury in their first drive against the Redskins, and the Cowboys went on to lose in his absence.

This was the only loss of the season so far, and the only time Aikman was out the whole game.

Aikman, one of the most important players on the team, will lead the Cowboys to triumph again in this year's Super Bowl.

*Andrew Kollman
 Class of '96*

People can, should trust police officers

I took offense to Erin Hill's Oct. 25 column on trusting authority. Hill is guilty of the same generalization that she has accused others of in past columns. Just because she fears that she's an easy target doesn't mean that all police officers can't be trusted.

This community has well-trained and professional police patrolling its streets.

Few professions require agility, drug and written tests; criminal and driver history checks; credit, employment and reference checks; psychological evaluation; physical fitness evaluation; review boards and administrative interviews to be considered for employment.

I doubt the officer handling the accident was trying to take advantage of Hill. A number of departments don't hand out fine lists when issuing tickets, and officers don't always know the fine amounts.

If she feels the officer was taking advantage of her ignorance, a quick call to Bryan Police Department would answer her questions about police procedures — not a column in the Battalion.

Individuals must take measures to educate themselves to have the common sense to recognize dangerous situations and shaky business deals.

To add another position of power to Hill's list: journalists. Their words and opinions are read by many. Rebuttals come several issues later.

One final note, never hand out your deposit slips as note paper. They have account numbers on them and should be protected like credit card numbers.

*Annette Hallmark
 University Police Department*

Don't pretend it's not happening

Society needs to take the responsibility to end domestic violence

When I first moved to College Station, I experienced a very disturbing situation between two of my neighbors who happened to be dating each other.

In the beginning, I would hear loud arguing and the slam of a few doors. The growing pains of any relationship, right?

Over the course of the next few months, not only did their arguments grow louder and more frequent, but they escalated into physical violence.

I would hear objects being thrown against the walls, obscene profanity and muffled cries from the woman. Yet, despite what I heard, I would just lie in my bed and hope that the arguing would stop. Well, the arguing never did stop.

Everyday, I would watch them act as if nothing had happened the night before. She would smile and hold his hand. He would open her car door and carry in the groceries. What was I supposed to do? She obviously cared for him.

Furthermore, she had no intention of leaving the relationship — one in which love had been mistaken for pain and bruises. Eventually, the couple moved.

But I cannot forget the anxiety and guilt I felt, and still feel, because I made no effort to stop the situation.

At the time, I felt it was a private matter. I falsely believed that if she had really wanted to get out of the abusive situation, she would have taken some action on her own.

I now know that, as Ellen Steese of the Christian Science Monitor says, "battered women are invisible refugees in our midst, fleeing a war declared on them alone."

The time has come for each one of us, as members of communities across the country, to take the individual responsibility of extending our hands to eliminate this crime.

AMBER WETTSTEIN
 GUEST COLUMNIST



Because October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Bureau of Justice Department has released some staggering statistics: Every 15 seconds, a woman is being beaten in the United States; 40 percent of all female homicide victims are killed by relatives or boyfriends; and 40 percent of women who

commit homicides are battered women who kill their batterer.

One of the most disparaging statistics of all is that in the homes of battered women, 60 percent of sons will grow up to be batterers, and 50 percent of daughters will grow up to be battered women.

Domestic violence is blind to race, culture, religion and socioeconomic status. It can happen to anyone.

Currently, many people may wonder why the district attorney in Houston is so adamant to prosecute the famed Warren Moon in the beating of his wife.

Mrs. Moon has made a fervent plea to drop the charges against her husband, claiming that "her family needs to heal privately." Despite her pleas, the DA is firm in the belief that batterers have been hiding under the protection of victims for decades, and it must come to an end.

If the charges against Warren Moon were dropped, what kind of message would be sent to the other countless victims across America? It's all about accountability.

A batterer has committed a crime and must be held responsible. A public "I'm sorry and will seek counseling," is only a beginning. Mr. Moon, along with every other batterer, should go before a judge and receive just punishment.

The question remains, what can each one of us do to help eliminate this crime?

Although there are many ways which could be discussed in greater detail, the following is a list of suggestions that we can be-

gin to work on immediately.

First, we must display absolutely no toleration for such acts of violence. We must learn to make it our business not tolerate perpetrators.

What is meant by no toleration? Simply put, let the perpetrator know of your disapproval and disgust.

Discontinue playing ball and having drinks with a guy who thinks nothing of slapping his wife or girlfriend around.

Each of us must recognize our responsibility toward battered women and learn to live our lives more aware of those around us.

If the perpetrator is a celebrity, do not patronize their current activities.

A person will not change if the society he lives in continues to support him without any type of reprisal.

Second, we must actively help women protect themselves from batterers.

This can be done by educating ourselves on how to counsel a victim, by becoming aware of shelters in the community and by accepting that abuse is not a private affair.

Remember, hugs are not going to help. Victims need constructive advice and a way out.

Each of us must recognize our responsibility toward battered women and learn to live our lives more aware of those around us.

A woman is being beaten every 15 seconds. To put that into perspective: By the time you have finished reading this column, approximately 20 women have suffered violent abuse.

Educate yourselves and those around you. You have a lifetime to make a difference in another's life.

Amber Wettstein is a senior psychology major

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