

OPINION

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Should the Christian Coalition remain tax-exempt?

Group endorses candidates based on positions, not party



Organization cannot mask its Republican affiliation

Who is using whom? Sue Wrenn, chairman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, said the Christian Coalition "is nothing more or less than an arm of the Republican Party, an arm that has been used to bend and break the law."



JENNI HOWARD
COLUMNIST

ian Coalition, has called the FEC lawsuit "totally baseless," and that is exactly what it is. While accusing the coalition of coordinating its political activities with campaigns of Republican candidates, the lawsuit does not specify the type of coordination.

The Christian Coalition should be allowed to continue its participation in politics without having to report its expenditures or be subject to taxation. It does not endorse candidates based on their party affiliation, but on their stand on the issues the coalition deems important.

Jenni Howard is a Class of '96 economics and international studies major

Three things are inevitable in life: losing to the Aggies, dying and getting taxed. Well, not everyone gets the honor of losing to the Aggies, but all of us die and pay taxes.

All of us except the Christian Coalition.

Ralph Reed is the executive director of the Christian Coalition. Both he and his organization claim to be strictly educational and non-partisan. Under the guise of a religious organization, the Christian Coalition doesn't have to report where its



MARCUS GOODYEAR
COLUMNIST

money comes from or where it goes. And since the coalition is not classified as a Political Action Committee, no federal spending limits are enforced upon it.

The FEC has brought a lawsuit against Ralph Reed's group for illegally spending thousands of dollars to promote certain Republican candidates. From the FEC's perspective, the issue is simple: If the Christian Coalition is not going to pay taxes, report its financial records or abide by federal spending limits, then it sure better remain non-partisan.

Mike Russell, Christian Coalition communications director, claims that the lawsuit "is a completely baseless and legally threadbare attempt by a reckless federal agency to silence people of faith and deny them their First Amendment rights."

Please. The lawsuit is not about the Christian Coalition's freedom of speech; it is about government control of campaign spending.

If Mike Russell and his people of faith don't want to abide by FEC regulations, then the Christian Coalition should not give money to political campaigns or spend its own money collaborating with these campaigns. It shouldn't rank Newt Gingrich as "a Christian Coalition 100 percent." It shouldn't have distributed 10 million "Reclaim America" voter guides that distinguish between "Good and Misguided" congressmen, and it shouldn't be planning to distribute 60 million of them for the 1996 elections.

In 1992, it shouldn't have accepted a \$60,000 donation under the stipulation that the money will be spent on George Bush's campaign, as Coalition bookkeeper Judy Liebert claims the group did.

None of these activities is nonpartisan. The voter guides and money contributions coordinated with a campaign are illegal if the Christian Coalition wants to avoid FEC jurisdiction and paying taxes.

The group can do what many other organizations have done. The Sierra Club and the Chamber of Commerce have set up PACs that are subject to federal reporting requirements and spending limits, and they funnel all of their partisan activity through these committees.

The Sierra Club doesn't have to remain nonpartisan when 74 percent of the delegates to the Republican National Convention oppose environmental groups. They would be stupid to remain nonpartisan.

But if they want to endorse candidates who support environmentalism, then they must do it through a regulated PAC that pays taxes.

Ralph Reed claims "that people of faith have every right to be involved as citizens and as voters." He's absolutely right.

The people of the faith of Ralph Reed and Mike Russell can vote for whoever they want. They can volunteer for the Republicans or even the Democrats, but they can't organize themselves into a political organization that aids candidates' election campaigns without paying taxes.

The lawsuit is not an attempt to crush these people of faith and their organization. The Christian Coalition will eventually die on its own, anyway. But before it dies, it is going to pay its taxes.

Marcus Goodyear is a Class of '97 English major



Culture shock leads to appreciation, assimilation

Last week, a couple of friends and I decided to meet at one of the Northgate establishments for lunch. While I was casually flipping through one of my school books, one my friends arrived; and as if by instinct, I almost got up to greet him with a kiss on the cheek.



ROSIE ARCELEY
COLUMNIST

Music was an area where I did not expect much difference from back home. After all, I grew up listening to radio stations that played Top 40 hits — with a few bits and pieces of salsa and merengue — and I expected to listen to Top 40 songs here. Country was not unknown to me, but experience had taught me to hate it. Little did I know that College Station was a big branch of the country music tree. The next thing I knew, it was like in the movies: the unusual accent, the boots and the 10-gallon hat, and George Strait blaring from every other pickup truck.

Yet, slowly and steadily, I became not only an Aggie, but a hybrid Texan. Knowing nothing about football, I stood all through my first Aggie game and fell in love with the Aggie Band. My view of the Corps shifted from an idea of an obscure organization of "them" to "My Corps Boys." A GMC Sierra became my wish for a graduation present — not a Lexus like before. "Y'all" became my favorite word in the Texan vocabulary, and I'm gathering enough courage to give chicken-fried steak a try.

The thought of home is something you bring with your suitcase when you arrive at college, and that stays with you the rest of your life. I still listen to my merengue; postcards and pictures of beaches and emerald mountains decorate my walls.

And I can't wait for the day when I'll get a kitchen where I can cook an honest-to-goodness, full-scale, Puerto Rican meal — real food, for once in three years. Nuked rice never tastes quite like homemade.

Although I knew I would encounter different cultures when I came to A&M, I expected the local culture to embrace me; I did not expect to adopt it myself. Somehow I've managed to assimilate while keeping my original cultural identity, although I'm still a bit disappointed that I can't greet my closest friends with a kiss on the cheek.

Rosie Arceley is a Class of '98 history major



MAIL CALL

Bomb calls to mind cavalry, not Calvary

This letter is in reference to Ray Hernandez's column in the July 30 issue of The Battalion called "Bombing Causes Reflection." I am a senior in Parsons Mounted Cavalry and am flattered he

thought the Spirit of '02 had been fired when he witnessed the explosion at Centennial Park. However, it would behoove him next time to think about the words he is using. His quote mentioned "the Parsons Mounted Cavalry cannon." One thing I can assure you is that Jesus was not in the cavalry, but he did die on Calvary. I am speaking on behalf of all other

Cav Jocks when I ask you not to get Calvary and cavalry mixed up again.

Bradley Frye
Class of '97

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

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