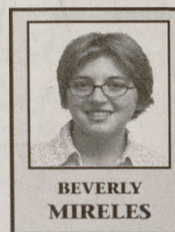


The Battalion

LET THEM WORK TO EAT CAKE

New policy forces New York's homeless to work for shelter

With an idea that is Republican to the core, New York mayor Rudy Giuliani has leapt past conservatism and into Dickensianism.



BEVERLY MIRELES

Last week Giuliani proposed a plan that, if enacted, would affect more than 80,000 homeless people in New York City. The plan would force all able-bodied homeless people to work for a bed in one of the city's crowded shelters.

Initially, Giuliani's plan seems to have a very American "pick yourselves up by your bootstraps" kind of idealism. What could be better than a plan that would get the homeless off the street and put them to work? After all, it is assumed, homeless people are in need of direction, not pity — never pity.

Unfortunately for everyone who hopes this idea will rejuvenate Giuliani's campaign and the city's outward appearance, the plan is both a logistical and a social nightmare.

No one knows how Giuliani is going to enact the proposal. Will the homeless paint houses or clean windows?

Many of the homeless might already have experience with cleaning windshields — will they now do the same in the city's name?

The provision rewrites the definition of "unfair." Certainly, as hundreds of thousands of parents can attest to saying, no one said the world was fair.

However, life in the United

States is dictated by certain freedoms, whether they are fair or not. People have the right to not work, the right to not bathe and the right to be homeless without being punished.

Failure is an option, if not the most optimistic one.

By making homeless people work, Giuliani converts a the shelter system into a Northern version of share-cropping.

According to the *New York Times*, even those homeless who do work but do not make enough money to afford a place of their own, would have to spend the excess on their shelter bed, up to the actual cost of \$20,000.

When money is definitely an object, spending one's small excess is a problem.

It takes away a person's right to save money.

Giuliani may think he is saving the city money with the working-for-shelter plan, but he is only relegating the homeless to continue in their poverty — an endless cycle of attempting to get out of the system while the city pulls out an already scant pocketbook.

Homelessness should not be perpetuated by the city.

The proposal actually contradicts the city's former policy, which put those waiting for permanent shelter into temporary shelters.

Being in the shelters acted as a shortcut to permanent residency, but the plan backfired when the shortcut pushed many people into a more permanent homelessness.

Also, by modifying shelter procedures into a stepping stone to the subsidized housing system, the city perpetrated "big government," because the more people there are in

the shelters now, the more people will be affected by the shelter plan. The city's plan may affect many homeless families. By law, all people in the shelters must have qualified for welfare.

If shelter residents lose welfare eligibility, they cannot stay in the shelter, and their children can be taken into foster care. This will put even more of a burden on the city. Giuliani's idea also is vague.

As of yet, no one really knows what homeless people will be forced to do. And by leveraging beds for work, Giuliani could make people do almost anything. Beds are always preferable to



MARK MCPHERSON/THE BATTALION

cement, but just what will these untrained and perhaps mentally unbalanced people will be forced to do for the city? And where will Giuliani draw the line on their ability to work?

So far, he has said that only the able-bodied and mentally healthy will be forced to work. But the line between healthy and unhealthy is arbitrary.

Perhaps Giuliani would have the city's doctors give the homeless physicals to confirm their ability to work. However, this would only cost the city more money and red tape.

Is Giuliani ready to put more monetary pressures on the city just so he can authorize a plan which can only serve to get him more press time?

Until Giuliani is clearer about his plan, it remains a useless proposal manufactured to get him more publicity in his Senate campaign against Hillary Clinton. He may try to get the plan passed, but in the long run, people will be able to attest to its senselessness.

Politicians cannot be expected to solve every problem, especially in a metropolis like New York City. But they should not be allowed to make more problems.

Giuliani's plan is — superficially — an interesting one. If he could have every able-bodied citizen in New York join the work force, it would be a feat indeed.

However, with a plan as problem-riddled as this homeless shelter one, he is only making the problem more difficult. It is easy for him to decree what the homeless must do for a bed in the city. But for the homeless themselves, it is a problem deserving of a solution, not just a press release.

Beverly Mireles is a junior microbiology major.

Baptist call for Jewish conversion not constitute religious intolerance

Several times in the past few years, the Southern Baptist Convention has issued resolutions calling for an increase in the efforts to convert others.

These resolutions invariably have targeted specific religious groups, most often Jews but also Muslims and Hindus. The wording for the 1996 resolution is typical. In it, the Southern Baptist Convention resolved to "direct our [the Convention's] energies and resources toward the proclamation of the Gospel to the Jewish people." At times, these resolutions have called for these increases in efforts during Jewish holy days.

This series of actions has not endeared the Southern Baptist Convention to their prospective converts, but the outcry against Baptist attempts to convert members of other religions is religious hypocrisy and media one-upmanship at its worst.

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Website, Abraham Foxman, ADL national director, said, "It is pure arrogance for any one religion to assume they hold 'the truth.'"

Hari Sharma, president of the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago said in a CNN interview, "Whoever publishes such a book does a disservice to the society. People should understand one another's religions, not go back into history when we were attacking one another."

Curiously enough, most statements attacking the Southern Baptist Convention resolutions assume one particular fact not in evidence. Each reaction has been grounded in the belief that the Southern Baptists are acting out of contempt and intolerance toward other religions, which Foxman's comments illustrate very well.

In a letter to the ADL which attempted to explain the resolutions, Convention President Rev. Paige Patterson outlined evangelical Christian arguments for efforts to convert Jews. "The letter expressed no remorse for the prayer appeal and contemptuously invited us to return the gesture

and pray for them...We will not engage in this kind of base spiritual narrowness, as the Southern Baptist leaders have done," Foxman replied in a press release.

Foxman fails to note that the Baptist offer to pray is religious tolerance at its best. Instead of condemning the ADL, the Baptists are turning the other cheek. This gesture is especially courageous of the Convention, as Foxman and the ADL do not appear to be doctrinally sound. By stating no religion should assume they hold the truth, Foxman's statements accuse his own religion of arrogance.

That is a contradiction. While the ADL preaches tolerance and understanding, Foxman is clearly misunderstanding the intent and purpose of the Baptist Convention's resolution, and in doing so is promoting intolerance.

John Herring, university minister at First Baptist Church in Bryan, said the purpose of the Resolution is to share the good news of Jesus' salvation with everyone, and that when the Convention singles out a particular religious group it is so that members can pray for that group. Herring said Christianity teaches salvation can be achieved only through the redemptive grace of Jesus.

Herring referred to John 14:6, which says, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through Me.'"

Note there is no disrespect here. Jesus did not say Jews are bad people and that Judaism is bad. He simply said, and Christians believe, that he is the only path to salvation.

Even a lukewarm Christian knows Christianity is itself an extension of Judaism. Judaism preaches the coming of a Messiah, and Christians believe that Christ was the Messiah. By definition, to illegitimize Judaism is to illegitimize Christianity. To Christians, Jews have the right religious idea. They just missed one critical fact — that the Messiah has come. To share that fact, especially during holy days, when awareness of God and religion is heightened, is an expression of love and respect.

But by waving the Holocaust and acting sufficiently outraged, it appears Foxman and the ADL are looking to score political points at the expense of the Baptists' honest attempt to help others. By stating that not supporting Jewish solidarity is somehow an attack on Judaism is a lie that is itself an affront to the Jewish people.

The Southern Baptist Convention attempted to reach out to those they saw were in need, and groups who would place themselves before the ideals they espouse are raining hell-fire upon them.

Chris Huffines is a senior speech communication major.

Mike Luckovich



MAIL CALL

Pro-life protests not pro-violence

In response to Amy Hinze's Oct. 21 mail call.

Having spent multiple hours in peaceful, prayerful and non-confrontational protest outside Planned Parenthood, I have to comment on the fact that Hinze's recent letter grossly misrepresented the actions of the Brazos Valley Coalition for Life (BVCL).

The BVCL does not use, and does not support the use of, "scare tactics" as described. In fact, when the BVCL was created, it adopted the following Statement of Non-Violence: "Peaceful resolutions to the violence of abortion are the goal of the Brazos Valley Coalition for Life." Opposing abortion with the violent tactics such as those described by Hinze are against the principles of the BVCL.

Hinze also commented that abortions account for only seven percent of Planned Parenthood's business. This statement voids the real issue: Does

Complaint about cartoon wrong

In response to Sabas Abuabara's Nov. 1 mail call.

I disagree with Abuabara's recent mail call letter. While "Fish" sometimes misses the mark, it is nowhere near as inane as the "Side Burn Club." The creators of the "SBC" have yet to make me (or anyone I know) crack a smile.

Their strip is so unfunny it is insulting.

Players should display Ag spirit

I just wanted to thank the three football team members who stood with the rest of the students during the War Hymn at the end of the game Saturday.

It was quite refreshing after having the team sing with us last year at the end of every game, only to have the team just head to the locker room this year. I hope the rest of the team will acquire the same team spirit as the Twelfth Man does.

Cory C. Stoddart
Class of '02

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Beth Sutherland
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