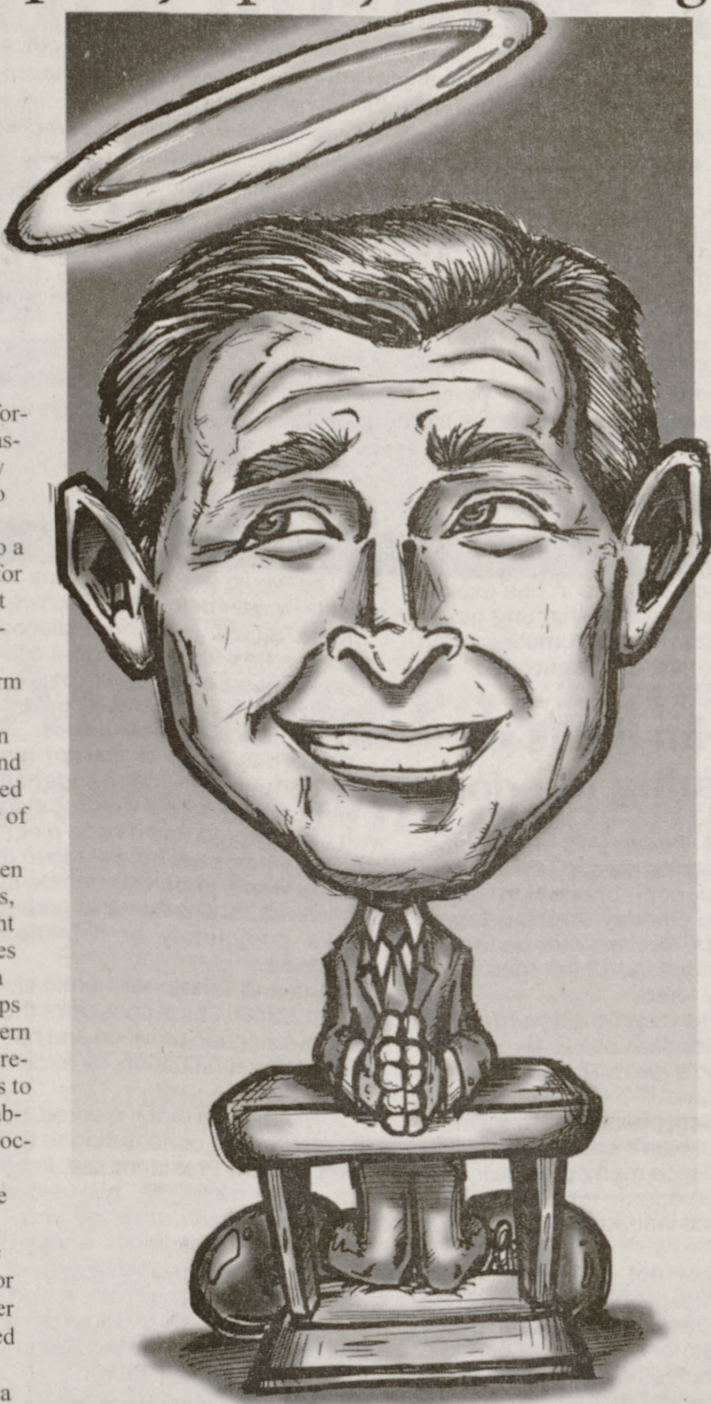


What would Jesus do?

Bush sets example by openly embracing Christianity



HEATHER CORBELL



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

One of the most memorable images for many Texas A&M students in the 1999 Bonfire episode was Governor George Bush sitting in the pews of Central Baptist Church during memorial service. It is memorable because of his presence, and because he refused to speak. Pastor Chris Osborne began his message by saying that he had asked the governor to say a few words, but was refused because Bush would not bring politics into a memorial service. This kind of respect for sanctity of life is continually evident in the governor's campaigns for the presidency. His profession of the Christian faith is sincere, backed up by his platform of transparency that he allowed members of this community to see when worshiped here last fall. As hymns and organs floated through the still, shocked of Central's sanctuary, the Governor of Texas wept. Few things were more encouraging to Christians at that time, when gedy and death hung over the campus, in discovering that the man who might one day be President of the United States had a legitimate spiritual side. Bush is a sincere, devoted Christian who sidesteps self-promoting compromise of modern politics, as evidenced by his unpopular position of abortion (though he continues to push for exceptions) and his push for absence education instead of safe sex doctrines.

There has been some debate over the sincerity of Governor Bush and other presidential candidates who claim to be Christians. *The Des Moines Register*, for instance, skeptically counted the number of times that Republican candidates used the names of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in a debate that took place in Iowa last Monday night. *The Register* argues that candidates spout broad-based Christian jargon in order to secure votes in the Judeo-Christian community. Bush rebuts such claims saying that he wants people to vote for him because they believe in his platform and they trust him — not because of his religion. Bush is every way honest, answering questions but his faith and influences truthfully but not manipulating them to secure votes.

Other newspapers have dredged up Bush's former alcohol use in an attempt to falsify his claims of clean living, as they successfully did with President Clinton and marijuana in 1992. Instead of defending his actions as Clinton did, Bush admits his fault and credits his reform to the spiritual renewal he experienced after a heart-to-heart with Billy Graham in 1985. He

describes Graham's influence as having "planted the seed in my heart that grew over time." Many Christians go through similar periods of self-evaluation at intervals in their lives when they realize that they have strayed in their relationships with God. Though always Christians, they may struggle with particular sins that separate them from God, as Governor Bush did with alcohol. Graham's example of living a life above reproach opened Bush's eyes. Today, when asked about influential people in his life, Bush responds, "Christ, because He changed my heart."

It is easy to understand, however, why the media (and voters) might be confused about what the claim of being a Christian really means to politicians. They have seen too much contradiction in the rhetoric of Bill Clinton, who professes to be a member of the Southern Baptist Church. His painfully public struggles with adultery, perjury and cover-ups have desensitized Americans to genuine Christianity. President Clinton loses his credibility as a Christian because he attempts to explain away these struggles, as many people do under intense pressure. By lying, he doubles his burden of fault. In admitting mistakes and explaining redemption, Governor Bush allows himself to be covered by the infinite mercy of a forgiving God and the temporal empathy of a sinful nation.

The media may ask what a true Christian is, and they can find the answer in George W. Bush. Christians recognize their mistakes and their inability to redeem themselves. This is the story of redemption for Governor Bush and all Christians. He explains the change as "a renewed purpose that I hadn't had in my life prior to that."

George W. Bush has as many skeletons in the closet as anyone, but the world is welcome to look at them in the context of a freshly cleaned house. He is the kind of man who has gained wisdom from tough experience. He is the kind of man one trusts because his humanity is obvious. He is the kind of man that could lead a nation.

Heather Corbell is a junior English major.

Students insensitive to B-CS community



SUMMER HICKS

The majority of students attending Texas A&M do not call College Station home. Undergraduates hail from many cities in Texas, as well as other states and countries. Most students come to Bryan-College Station to attend school and leave immediately after graduation without giving a second thought to the city in which they lived. Students see this community as a pitstop on the journey to a better destination without ever contributing to its improvement. In a sense, students are guests that show disrespect for this community.

While at A&M, students attend classes, work part-time jobs, study and party. They live in Bryan-College Station because it is the home of A&M, not because they toured the city during a college day and appreciated what it had to offer. The city of College Station is not able to pick and choose which residents to accept into its city limits as a university does. If a student is accepted to A&M, the city is forced to accept him or her as well.

A&M takes pride in the existence of hundreds of student organizations, which range from fraternities and sororities to the Traditions Council to intramural sports. Most groups target students looking for social, campus or sports related involvement. Finding service organizations that interact with the Bryan-College Station community is a difficult task. This fact points out that as visitors of this community, students are too self-absorbed in their own activities to consider the lives of those living around them.

Most students reside here and move on without considering the effect their presence had on College Station residents and the city itself. Aggies may consider these mere facts as part of the college experience, but the truth is that many other people are involved. These people are permanent residents that deal on a daily basis with the negative consequences that students bring. They are forced to cope with the overcrowding of their roadways and businesses, the debasement of their property and the disturbances of negligent undergrads.

The problems that Aggies cause in Bryan-College Station are manifold. The added number of vehicles on the streets causes a higher occurrence of accidents and heavier traffic. The careless driving of students frustrates native residents. The increase of people patronizing local businesses and restaurants result in longer lines, extended waits, and difficulty finding parking spaces.

Students also contribute to the problems

of pollution and litter. Their lack of concern for the cleanliness of roadways and neighborhoods contributes to the overwhelming task of highway cleanup. Aggies leaving trash and beer cans at the Brazos River and Lake Bryan shows a lack of respect for other visitors.

Aggies promote the existence of the over-abundance of bars and clubs. Their inclination to abuse alcohol is irresponsible, and their risky behavior results in legal problems such as DWIs, MIPs, assaults and noise disturbances. This also sets a negative example for local high school students as they see their older friends drowning themselves in beer every night at Northgate.

The need for inexpensive, temporary housing results in the building of an abnormal number of apartments and private dormitories that devalue neighborhoods and surrounding property. Residents find it difficult to sell property in neighborhoods that are predominately occupied by college students. Rent prices become higher because owners know that several tenants can each pay more than the total income of one family can afford. In addition, approximately 25 percent of the student population live in on-campus dormitories and are not forced to pay property taxes. This creates a disparity between the number of people using city services and those that pay for them.

It is true that college students improve business in the Bryan-College Station area. However, only a small percentage of the local population actually benefits these businesses and profit from this additional patronage.

Programs such as Big Event are designed to assist and give back to this community. While these projects exhibit good intentions, the fact remains that getting involved a day or two out of the year does not constitute as community involvement. Only a small minority of A&M students actually contributes to the well-being of these two cities that are overrun.

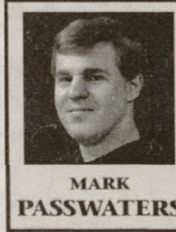
Aggies must realize the impact they have on Bryan-College Station and its residents, and make a conscious effort to respect both. They have to remember that these people tolerate frequent displays of irresponsibility and indifference. Students need to make sure that their presence does not become an overwhelming burden to neighbors.

Every semester, the conclusion of final exams brings a sense of freedom to Aggies as they pack up their cars to head home for the break. If students were to listen closely as they reached the city limits, they would hear a faint sigh of relief from the city.

Summer Hicks is a senior English major.

An idiot's guide to being attorney general

Reno will be remembered for administration of incompetence, not heroics



MARK PASSWATERS

As the sand in the Clinton administration's hourglass becomes less and less with each passing day, the word "legacy" is uttered more often. Clinton and members of his cabinet are going to great lengths to ensure their place in history is secured.

Among those concerned about their legacy is Attorney General Janet Reno. She has a dozen members of her staff working on a book trumpeting the successes on her watch. If that is the case, it may be a short book. A longer book that documents the positives and the negatives would be a more accurate portrait, as it would show multiple instances of incompetence, arrogance and outright ignorance of the law. Since her appointment in 1993, Reno has trampled the Constitution, helped mask evidence of Justice Department foul-ups and refused to investigate potentially serious wrongdoings by the Clinton Administration.

It was not long before Reno made her impact. Thirty-six days after being sworn in as attorney general, she signed off on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms' (ATF) assault on the Branch Davidian compound. The assault — a surprise attack which consisted of ATF agents riding up in buses — cost the lives of four agents. The reason given for the assault was that the Branch Davidians had automatic weapons, none of which were banned at the time.

After the explosive conclusion of the Waco incident, claims of government mishaps quickly drew attention. Reno testified before Congress that the gas that flooded the compound before it burned was not flammable and was merely tear gas. She also said that no federal agents fired into the compound on the last day. In the last several years, after substantial interference from the Department of Justice (DOJ), it was proven that little of what Reno said under oath was actually true.

Former Senator John Danforth's commission into the disaster found that some of the gas shells fired into the compound were not only flammable but were slightly less potent versions of a gas the Israelis used to kill Palestinian terrorists.

Videos surfaced of federal agents firing into the compound. Reno has since admitted to all of these mistakes, claiming that they were "minor oversights." Then again, Reno also defended the use of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the Army's primary armored personnel carrier, at Waco by saying it was "an upscale rental car."

Another Reno supported issue is forfeiture. Under current federal law, a citizen that is arrested is susceptible to having their property seized. Even if the property does not involve the case or if the suspect is found to be innocent, the government is allowed to keep

White House or illegal campaign contributions from China.

Both times, she claimed there was not enough evidence to support an independent counsel, even though FBI director Louis Free publicly disagreed. Reno was found to be in contempt of Congress after refusing to turn over documents to Senator Fred Thompson's committee investigating China's illegal campaign contributions to Clinton's 1996 re-election campaign.

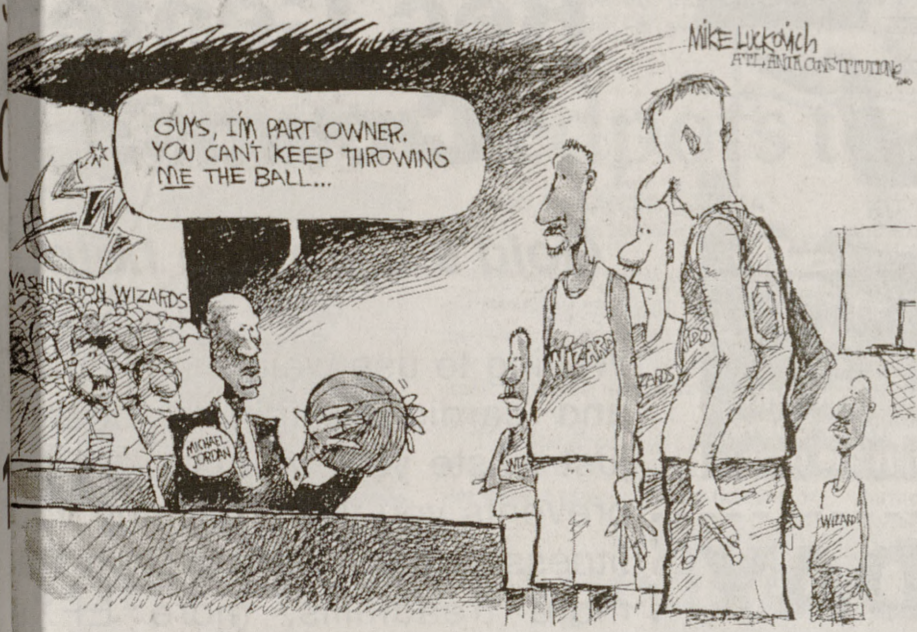
Reno's rejection of the Constitution does not stop at the second and fifth Amendments. She also targeted the first Amendment as well as the separation of powers. In 1993, Reno threatened to increase federal supervision of television if networks did not tone down their acts. Now that the networks have decided to reject the Clinton Administration's attempt to bribe them into making programs that they deem acceptable, Reno again made rumblings about increasing federal control over content.

Now, during the Elian Gonzalez episode, Reno overstepped her bounds. In saying that the INS decision on Gonzalez will stand and that he must be in Cuba by Feb. 1, she is ignoring the powers of Congress and the judiciary.

Elian has been subpoenaed to appear before Congress and a restraining order placed against his leaving the country. If Reno knew the law, she would know that she cannot arbitrarily overrule Congress or the court.

Reno's legacy not only shows that she does not know the law, but that she does not care. Such disdain for the Constitution is mind-boggling. A person has the right to think that free speech should be limited or that guns are wrong. They even have the right to think that the federal government should have more power. What a person does not have the right to do is simply decide that their ideas are right and ignore the rule of law. Even if they are attorney general.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.



MIKE LICKOACH
ATLANTA, GA

MAIL CALL

Concept of 'family' difficult to define

response to Heather Corbell's Jan. 28 column.

I am constantly astounded at the number of ways people manipulate Christian scripture in order to justify gotry. I saw it once again in Corbell's column.

It seems that spouting a Bible verse two is sufficient to invalidate the role concept of a homosexual family, according to Corbell's philosophy I did not grow up in a "family" either, as my dad was predominantly absent. I'm sure there is a Biblical anecdote that might conveniently explain my situation as well.

Also, I'd like to point out that it does take one man and one woman to make a child as Corbell decrees. It takes one egg and one sperm and, despite the best efforts of science and education, people like Corbell still believe that AIDS and other human sexually

transmitted diseases are exclusively a homosexual problem.

I can't believe this kind of blatant discriminatory rhetoric can even be printed in a college publication. The last time I checked we were engaging in "higher learning."

Caleb Kennedy
Class of '00

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

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX
77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111
Fax: (409) 845-2647
E-mail: battletters@hotmail.com