

OPINION

THE BATTALION

Page 7 • Monday, September 6, 2004

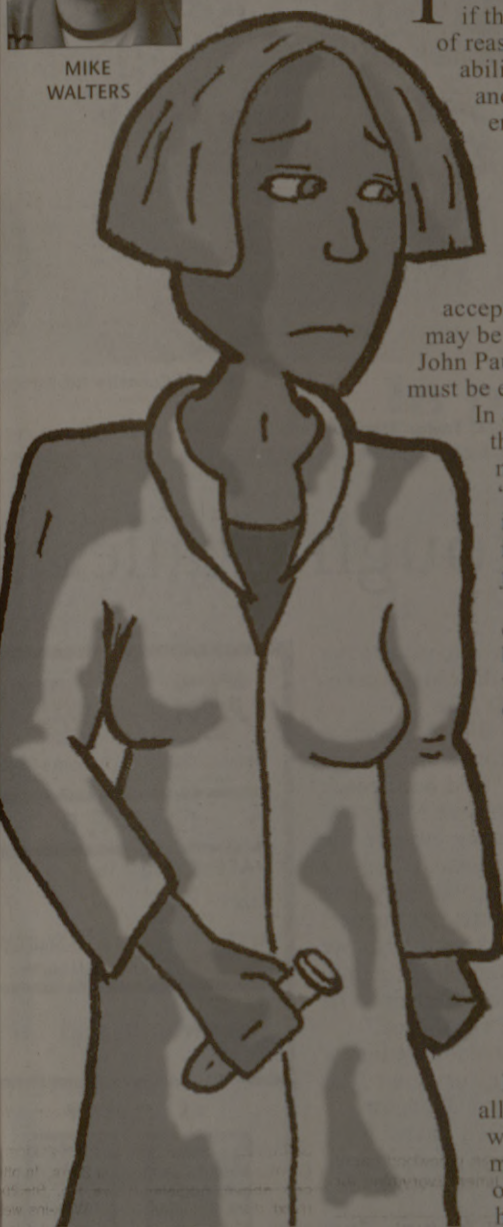
PAGE DESIGN • MATT RIGNEY

Technological regression

Mike Walters questions the Pope's view on technological advances



MIKE WALTERS



Thomas Jefferson once advised people to "question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blind-folded fear." It's the human ability to question and reason that has fueled science and technology and is responsible for the prosperity enjoyed by people every day.

There are many things that guide people through their daily lives — their philosophies and religious beliefs, especially. And while there's a tendency to accept basic tenets of religion and philosophy, it's important to always question what leaders say, rather than blindly accepting things asserted as truth. While many people may be reluctant to question things preached by Pope John Paul II, his recent comments regarding technology must be examined.

In a message written on Aug. 6, the Pope criticized the British government's decision to permit human cloning for research purposes, denouncing "the sense of power that every technical progress inspires in man." While cloning is a separate issue, it's appalling that the pontiff chose to attack not just this recent breakthrough, but technology itself.

"The results achieved in various fields of science and technology are considered and defended by many as a priori acceptable," he said. "In this way, one ends up expecting that what is technically possible is in itself also ethically good."

Few people would disagree that just because something is possible, it's good. For example, it's possible to blindly annihilate every human being on the planet given this nation's nuclear arsenal, but obviously this would be a terrible act.

But technological advancements are directly responsible for the exponential increases in life expectancy over recent times, as well as improved standard of living for young and old alike. The Pope criticized cloning efforts as a manipulation of human beings, saying that its researchers believe their efforts to be better than the efforts of God.

But hasn't that been the purpose of technology all along, to increase the quality of man's life above what he may be without it? Technology is man's means of survival. Man does not have the strength or claws to compete with animals for survival; he must create tools to live. Those tools began as spears and fishing and evolved into industries that

creators? The power to control one's own life is natural and inherent in the acts of living and creation, which is necessary for life. Medicine certainly "manipulates human beings." It's ironic that the thing which eases the Pope's health problems is part of the same things he's condemned.

There are talks given every year on this campus regarding the compatibility of science and religion, and it's widely believed that it's possible to maintain an interest in science without giving up one's religious belief. The question of how to integrate both of these into one's life must be answered individually as students will soon enter any number of scientific fields.

Author

Jacob

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As a generation of

men and women soon

to take the world's stage

as the new scientists,

doctors, engineers and

teachers, it is important to

realize that blindly accept-

ing the words of others will

bring only stagnation, but if

they all value progress and advancement, every-

thing must be questioned and accepted as truth only

after careful thought and study.

It's the ability to question everything that will

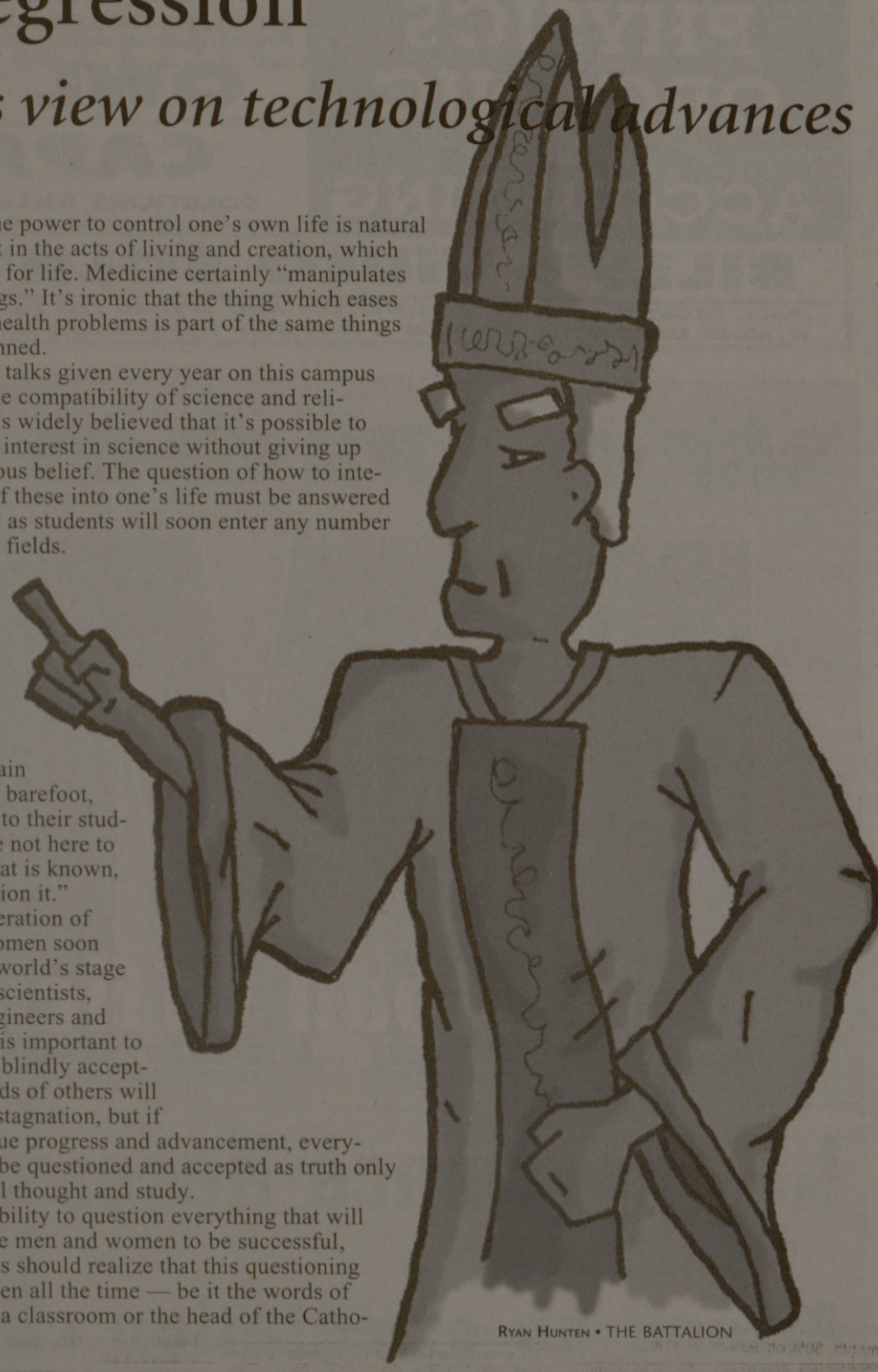
enable these men and women to be successful,

and students should realize that this questioning

has to happen all the time — be it the words of

teachers in a classroom or the head of the Catho-

lic Church.



RYAN HUNTEN • THE BATTALION

Mike Walters is a senior psychology major.

Joshua Dwyer says Democrats need to listen to their own party members



JOSHUA DWYER

With less than two months before the presidential election, the Democratic and Republican parties are working hard to energize supporters and influence undecided voters.

One of the largest hurdles each national party must face is portraying a

clear picture that its candidate will better represent the voters while providing a clear sense of direction. Often, this challenge can become daunting when either party neglects to recognize a large group of potential supporters. Discernment is necessary, as appealing to divergent groups to win an election can make a candidate appear too political and insincere, though insufficient outreach depicts an aloof, unresponsive nominee.

"Our party's diversity is just one more reason why Democrats represent the real values of America," said Terry McAuliffe, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee. The Democratic Party now faces a significant challenge in its attempt to win the presidential election in November: representing its constituents.

In light of recent polls by the nonpartisan polling firm Zogby International, the Democratic Party should openly engage the abortion debate if it truly wants to represent the values of America.

In an interesting report, 43 percent of Democrats agreed with

the statement, "Abortion destroys a human life and is manslaughter." The Wall Street Journal reported a more recent poll by the same firm that concluded 47 percent of Democrats opposed abortion, except in cases of incest, rape or when the health of the mother was in jeopardy.

A steadily more vocal segment of Democrats describe themselves as pro-life, yet the national leadership isn't addressing their concerns. In fact, none of the speakers at the Democratic National Convention were pro-life, nor did any of the speeches mention the issue of being a Democrat and opposing abortion. In contrast with the Republican National Convention where several speakers were pro-choice, including some in primetime television spots, the Democratic leadership has some explaining to do.

The facts were the same for the 1992 Democratic National Convention, but the party may not be able to count on the same outcome — winning the presidential election — given the current political climate.

This may be partly attributed to the fact that the national responses to the polls present an even graver picture for the current stand of the Democratic Party on abortion. The statement, "Abortion destroys a human life and is manslaughter" was favored by 56 percent of Americans. To think that the Democratic Party can avoid an open and honest dialogue on an issue that is supported by a majority of Americans seems like

a rather reckless way to run a political party.

Not only has the Democratic party failed to address the concerns of groups such as Democrats for Life, it promotes candidates such as presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry, who will use abortion as a litmus test to nominate federal judges, according to his Web site. This may not be the best way to run a successful bid for the White House.

Other instances of the Democratic party's disconnect with the electorate on the abortion issue include opposing parental notification and supporting the Intact Dilation and Extraction procedure, or partial-birth abortion. Parental notification involves notifying a minor's parents when she seeks to have an abortion and partial-birth abortions are late term abortions performed as the doctor delivers all except the head of the fetus, "but then punctures the back of the skull and removes the brain before completing delivery," according to About.com. The Democratic Party doesn't entertain debates on either issue, though the public response to both has been overwhelmingly at odds with the party's positions.

If it seeks to represent Americans with any conviction in the future, the Democratic Party should not exclude certain people just because they may have different opinions, even on controversial subjects such as abortion.

Joshua Dwyer is a sophomore political science major.

MAIL CALL

All groups should receive football block seating

I would like to request that my roommates and I be given a reserved block of four seats on first deck for all football games this year. Just like the Aggie Greeks, we give many things back to A&M and this community every day in our own special way, and thus we think we deserve the best seats in Kyle Field every week.

One of my roommates regularly does more community service around College Station than the average Greek student is required to do. Another one of my roommates is an executive in Town Hall and is responsible for bringing music and culture to our campus. My other roommate is a writer and a painter who brings honor and prestige to our Liberal Arts department on a daily basis. Finally, by working at CIS, I make it a priority everyday to make sure your Internet and computing technology is always up to date and in working order.

We understand that we haven't been around as long as the Corps, but we feel that our accomplishments are just as important. I know that the Greek community will support us 100 percent because they are fighting the same fight. They are working hard to remind all of

us that they are more important than every other Aggie in Kyle Field because of the size of their membership.

Joel Edwards
Class of 2005

Assault rifles don't have impacts on violent crimes

In response to John David Blakley's Sept. 3 column:

According to state reports from Florida, California and a number of other states, before the 1994 gun ban was put in place, assault weapons were used in approximately 2 to 3 percent of all crimes. A police chief in New Jersey said that his men were more likely to face a tiger on the street than a criminal with an assault rifle. The National Institute of Justice and the Justice Department recently completed a study in which they could find no correlation between the assault weapon ban and crime reduction. With these facts in mind, Mr. Blakley's claim that assault weapon-related

crime was reduced is meaningless.

Mr. Blakley said that this ban is not an effort to curtail Second Amendment rights. The purpose of the Second Amendment was to guarantee that the people always be armed to be able to defend themselves against all enemies and to prevent tyranny in this country. For this reason, the idea of a standing army was rejected by many of our Founding Fathers, because a standing army could easily become a tool of the government in enslaving the people. Apparently, Mr. Blakley does not trust his fellow Americans with their rights as citizens.

Timothy Cook
graduate student

College Station should let everyone recycle

I applaud the efforts of the City of College Station for their curbside recycling program, although currently no program is in place for multi-family recycling. Multi-

family recycling would include recycling in apartment complexes. Due to the high amount of apartments located within College Station, it is disappointing that this service is not provided for the large population living in multi-family units.

In the past, the city has tried several multi-family recycling pilot programs but due to high amounts of contamination levels the pilot program was dropped. I believe that people living in multi-family units are just as capable as those living in single family units as long as information on separation and on what can and can not be recycled is available and visible at all locations.

The City of College Station has received considerable citizen input about implementation of a multi-family recycling program, but due to the current economic environment this proposal has yet to make it to the final budget. This may change if more residents in multi-family units support a multi-family recycling program by notifying the recycling coordinator of College Station either by phone or e-mail by going to the City of College Station's Web site.

Tyann Blessington
graduate student