



## QUOTE, UNQUOTE

**"We're getting ready to send a letter to everyone on that list guaranteeing them housing for the fall."**

Gretchen Koehler-Shepley about students on the housing waiting list

## College evangelist Brother Jim manipulates audience

**CHRIS SALMON**  
COLUMNIST

I realize that by now the entire religious right at this school is simultaneously praying for my eternal soul while wishing for my timely death in some horrible and poetic way. But I gotta continue to call 'em like I see 'em until I either perish or see the light. Since neither option is probable in the near future, here goes.

If you didn't happen to attend the Brother Jim Revival on the Russell House Patio Thursday and Friday, ignore the following statement. If you were there, listen up.

Y'all outta be ashamed of yourselves! We finally get some worth-while entertainment on this campus and you have to go and ruin it by getting angry. How often at USC do we get dinner and a show in the middle of the afternoon? Let me answer for you—never. Y'all got worked up and spoiled it for the rest of us.

By getting ugly, y'all turned a bright, sunny day of very specialized stand-up comedy into a screaming match. Of course, there were some noteworthy exceptions.

There was the guy who made the observation that "this is the most fun I've ever had without drugs or alcohol" or the woman who attacked the Reverend Jim with a very appealing mixture of intelligence and vulgarity. Is it just me, or is there something inherently sexy about a woman who is smart and

yet, can cuss like a truck-driver? But I digress. The point I'm trying to make is these people, along with a few others, watched the Brother Jim's performance like it was a circus, which it was. The only thing missing was a half ton of elephant crap and a troop of obnoxious clowns. Wait a minute—my mistake, we had the clowns.

Now, usually I'm the first to applaud when things get ugly. There aren't too many things I enjoy more than watching a good old-fashioned screaming match, or better yet, an honest to goodness brawl.

Since no one took any frat boy's beer away—because there wasn't any—I didn't really expect a riot; it was just wishful thinking. It's my own fault really. Next time I'll remember to bring a keg to all public religious events to keep things bearable.

What I was expecting, however, was a whole lot of yelling, and I wasn't disappointed. But even I was embarrassed at what transpired.

It seems, for some reason, the crowd took it personal when Brother Tommy...er, excuse me, I meant Brother Jim (I can't seem to tell the self-righteous apart sometimes. Once again, my mistake. It won't happen again.) called them whores or drunkards or masturbators or whatever.

As fun as this usually is to watch, I couldn't help but cringe because I was embarrassed for y'all. I was embarrassed because most people were so mad they didn't realize they were being manipulated by a master.

This particular preacher-man has been doing

his shtick for 14 years. He knew how you would react before you knew how you would react. The hard truth, ladies and gentlemen, is you were not only baited, you swallowed the hook.

Think about it: What would his show have been without an audience? If he had just started preaching, how many of you would have stayed as long as you did? After four hours, whether or not you agreed with him became a moot point. By the end, he had the majority of the crowd defending their faith, and he had everybody present thinking, not to mention shouting.

I hate to be the one to point this out, but he won. He'll move onto the next school and forget about us, but this campus will remember him for a long, long time.

It's important not to look at this indiscretion as a defeat, but as a learning experience. Next time someone thumps a Bible at you, don't play their game. Use comedy or sarcasm or even-tempered, yet vulgar, insults or, better yet, use logic and cynicism. Hell, use anything but the Bible. This book has been twisted and interpreted thousands of ways since its creation, and it is of very dubious origins at best. Personally, I still subscribe to the theory that it was written by the original chapter of Lamda Lamda Lamda at Jerusalem U while they were on acid. Scoff if you will, but you can no sooner prove my faith wrong than your own right.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Man's image, not God's, has suffered because of tragedies

In his April 4 article entitled "Historical tragedies tarnish God's image," Chris Salmon makes an impassioned case for why we can ignore God. His premise is that God has lost the right to instruct us on how to behave because he has allowed bad things to happen on Earth. Chris' point is clear: There is no God-given moral law that we are bound to follow, so we must make our own. Chris' arguments surely contain emotional appeal for some readers, but the logic he employs contains the inherent weaknesses of relativism. His premise self-destructs before the reader gets past the title.

Chris holds that there is no absolute moral law and that we are left to create our own. But if there is no absolute moral law, Chris cannot say God has done anything wrong! Once Chris begins to use his homegrown moral law to judge the behavior of God and other people, he is assuming his moral law is superior to that which others have made for themselves. This type of intolerance is exactly what he purports to loathe. Chris claims injustice is being done in a world where no absolute standard of justice exists. In Chris' world view, there is no wrong and no right, only differences of opinion. He may not accuse Hitler or the Christians or homosexuals of being any more right or wrong than he is.

Chris attempts the difficult task of proving the unprovable, unable to hide his underlying frustration, hatred and confusion.

Chris is convinced the God of the Bible is "too apathetic" to carry out his promise to relieve the world of tragedy. Such a promise is not found in the Bible. Jesus made it clear that the world, particularly his followers, would be subject to great suffering on Earth. He promised inner peace and the afterlife to those who take the time to get to know him. The Bible makes clear that tragedy will be used by God to bring people to him and to sift out the weak in spirit. Chris does not realize God promises no relief to those who refuse him. Instead, God promises that those who accept him will find new strength to live through tragedy. Chris wants God to perfect the world. God wants to quietly perfect individual hearts.

Chris says those involved with the Inquisition and the Crusades were doing God's work, and he lumps them in with Hitler and Stalin as proof that there is no justice in the world. Chris chooses, out of convenience, to judge Christianity by the behavior of its worst abusers. He fails to recognize that the Inquisition and the Crusades had no basis in the Bible. They were complete aberrations with regard

to the teachings of Jesus Christ. In contrast, Hitler's and Stalin's deeds were logical results of their Godlessness. Their actions were entirely consistent with a world view that contains no moral absolutes.

Chris says that men, not God, have fought and died for freedom. He insisted on the nobility of Americans who have given their lives for the freedom that is "clearly defined in the Constitution." He forgets that the framers of the Constitution championed freedom because they believed all humans were equal in the eyes of God, which is a concept introduced to the world by Jesus Christ. In Chris' world of no absolutes, freedom holds no particular value. It is only an idea to which Chris assigns importance. It is remarkable Chris would glorify killing others in war merely because they place less value on a particular idea than he. Chris harbors disdain for those who have faith in the Bible, and he sees no contradiction in putting his faith in the Constitution. He should not forget that even the Constitution rests firmly on the shoulders of absolutism.

Finally, Chris says it is "cowardly and lame" to say homosexuality is wrong just because God says so. Obviously, if God has said so, it would be wise to fall in behind him on the issue. The fact is, God has said homosexuality is sinful. The Bible says a lot of behavior is sinful. True Christians are not intolerant of people who sin because Christians believe we are all sinners. What is difficult for the Christian to tolerate is the celebration of sins. Christians have become defensive because homosexuality is another sin that has become accepted and is even force-fed to us by our culture.

While true Christian intolerance comes in the form of sorrow and grief over man's fallen state, Chris' intolerance leads him to hatred. His lack of knowledge about the Bible does not stop him from castigating those who have chosen to accept it. Chris has spent a lot of energy making up Christian doctrine in order to hate it. Unfortunately, this is the inevitable result when we look everywhere but the Bible for information about the nature of God.

History shows that tragedy will cause some people to lean on God and cause others to hate or deny him. To claim God has not kept his promises shows a misunderstanding of what God has promised. To say God does not know suffering is to overlook the life of Jesus Christ. Chris is wrong. It is man's image that has been tarnished through tragedies in history. God knows about man's propensity to bring about tragedy. Man killed Jesus on the cross, and million-

of times since then man has crucified Jesus with words.

**Adam G. Morsereau**  
First year law student

### College Republicans challenged Comer's honesty during Board election

As a concerned USC student and resident of the 10th Circuit district, the circuit for which former SG President Brian Comer and former State Rep. Robert McLellen recently vied for a USC Board of Trustees seat, I think it necessary to set the record straight concerning the USC College Republicans' involvement in that matter.

The Gamecock's April 12 editorial, "Lost election for Comer bigger loss for Carolina," misses the mark on one key point—that the College Republicans' involvement was based on "partisan politics."

The fact of the matter is the College Republicans were simply concerned with making the state legislators aware of (and Mr. Comer accountable for) an outright lie on Mr. Comer's part. He was attempting to curry favor with conservative lawmakers by claiming he held conservative views while serving as SG President and presently holds these views.

In fact, nothing could be farther from the truth. Indeed, Mr. Comer describes himself as liberal-leaning and has made that fact known through his support of the most liberal elected officials (e.g., Joseph Riley and Tim Rodgers) and ideals.

Political affiliation aside, Mr. Comer would have done well to be more truthful both with himself and to the legislators he was trying to impress. If Mr. Comer practices such blatant dishonesty to achieve personal gain, how can we be sure he wouldn't try it again and again as a voting Board of Trustees member?

In any event, I hope Brian Comer learns to be more honest in his future dealings, especially when they concern the well-being of this fine institution. I also wish Robert McLellen much success in his new post on the Board of Trustees.

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## IN OUR OWN OPINION

### Forum provides opportunity to discuss housing fees

The Department of Housing is having an open forum at 8 p.m. today in the Russell House Theatre. People in-the-know such as Dr. Gene Luna and members of his staff will be there to answer questions about proposed increases in housing fees. Many times students hear the words "rate increase" and immediately temperatures start to rise.

Why? As college kids with low incomes and ever-increasing financial aid rates, we have to pinch and fight for every penny. The proposed rate increase of 3 percent will translate into a semester increase of \$24-\$43 per student in the residence halls and \$11-\$17 per month for those in family and graduate housing. While this, without a doubt, is a substantial increase, we should look into why this is going on.

There is going to be lost revenue with the demolition of Burney and Baker and the renovation in Maxcy will also cost a pretty penny. These renovations are all in conjunction with Dr. Palm's plan to create a "world-class living and learning environment." Basically they signify

the continuing progress with what is known as the Master Plan—the University's struggle to increase all areas of academic life by the year 2001. (Hey, guess where they got the year. Just in case you can't remember, think about football season.)

It isn't fair that students of today have to pay to improve the system for students of tomorrow. Perhaps there are other areas that could be cut to finance the renovations.

From the memorandum sent out by the Department of Housing, it seems this is the lowest rate increase in some years. Maybe it still doesn't make it right, but at least they do appear to be watching out for us as students while trying to accomplish their goals.

Most importantly, the Department of Housing is trying to keep up to date with all the changes.

Let's bicker over the how's and why's about the housing rate increase at the forum, but for now let's just be glad they thought enough of us to have discussion about the subject before they implemented them.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Hootie concert keeping parents from resident halls

I love my parents. I have not seen them since Christmas, and they will be in Columbia, S.C. for only one day this semester, April 19. I live on the Horseshoe and would like for them to come to see me. Oops, they can't. I forgot, someone famous is coming to the Horseshoe that night, and no guests will be allowed in the Horseshoe apartments. Is the Pope coming again? Is President Clinton coming to town? Nope, it's...it's Hootie and the Blowfish!

Thank God Rich and Deb D'Alberto won't be allowed in my apartment that night. My dad has recently been caught listening to the Sex Pistols, and my mom was the one who taught me how to make Jell-O shots. In fact, they recently put in an order to Guns and Ammo magazine for one of those Lee Harvey Oswald-style sniper rifles. Hootie better watch their asses. But seriously...

I'm as big a Hootie fan as the next guy, and I very much appreciate everything they've done for Columbia and USC, but they are, after all, just a band made up of former students. I'm sure if you asked them about this new regulation, they would disagree with it. They were once students like us. They shouldn't receive such preferential treatment.

Then why will guests not be allowed in Horseshoe apartments during the concert? Apparently, USC, MTV and other major bureaucracies feel that would be unsafe, unsanitary and any other un-something that sounds like a good excuse. No one I know, not even my crazy parents, would want to make USC look stupid on nationwide television, so why the ban on guests in Horseshoe apartments? All my friends, my parents, as well as any other people who might be in my apartment that night love this university and would not do harm to its reputation. As long as residents abide by the existing party regulations, what is the problem?

I ask the administration to put a little trust in the students they supposedly support. I ask MTV to put a little trust in the generation they supposedly represent. Let us have people in our apartments. I promise my parents will not kill Hootie and the Blowfish.

**Dan D'Alberto**  
Political science junior

**The Gamecock Viewpoints:**  
**We're keeping you up-to-date for at least two more spring issues.**

**The Gamecock**  
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Marketing freshman