

► Felicia Brown and Kurt Johnson will make their views known to the world.

VIEWPOINTS

"I know that I can hit and it's just mind over matter, that's what it comes down to."
junior Kim Pietro, USC softball

The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1968

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TAKE OUR WORD

Sexual Predator bill a merited plan

Ridding the neighborhood of those pesky repeat sex offenders has now become easier. The South Carolina House of Representatives passed a bill last week that would keep criminals who repeatedly commit sex crimes away from society, even after the person served his time in jail. These criminals include rapists, pedophiles, sex predators.

PROBLEM

Too many people are becoming victims of repeat sex offenders.

SOLUTION

This bill separates the criminals from society, even after prison.

Officials concerned because they are afraid that funding this program will take away from their treatment of the mentally ill. Despite the money concerns, this program will protect a lot of people. Nine other states have similar laws and many more are soon adopting them.

The main focus is to protect innocent women and children from a person who was supposed to be rehabilitated while serving for his first offense.

This same idea shared in detaining those with mental illnesses and the offenders would be treated as so.

This is definitely a program with merit and a convenient way to keep such criminals separated from society. Patrick Lynn is one such Columbian man who fits these "requirements."

When he came out of prison in 1996 after 15 years, within months he was linked to several Shandon-area rapes. But by that time, he was already back in jail in Kansas for raping a woman.

These are the type of people that need to be contained and controlled, not only for our benefit, but for theirs as well.

The attorney general or a solicitor are the ones who can ask that repeat sex offenders be deemed a sexual predator and be instituted in the program, and after evidence from both sides, the final decision will be left with a judge or jury.

The bill still has to pass the Senate, but South Carolina is already making preparations for funding the program.

The program's cut will come from the Department of Mental Health's budget. However, this has some of

THE LYIN' KING

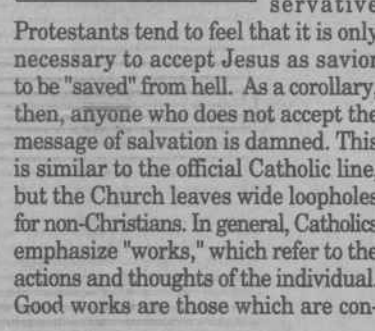


college press EXCHANGE

How to get to heaven debated

As a cradle Catholic, my former habit of dating semi-fundamentalists sometimes proved unfortunate. Inevitably, my love and I would find ourselves in theological debates, the worst of which was the "faith vs. works" controversy.

For those of you who have been lucky enough to avoid this topic thus far, it is an argument over what we must do to get into heaven. More conservative



Keiki McCormick
Columnist

Protestants tend to feel that it is only necessary to accept Jesus as savior to be "saved" from hell. As a corollary, then, anyone who does not accept the message of salvation is damned. This is similar to the official Catholic line, but the Church leaves wide loopholes for non-Christians. In general, Catholics emphasize "works," which refer to the actions and thoughts of the individual. Good works are those which are consistent with the teachings of the Bible, especially those of Jesus himself.

Two readers wrote in with lists of quotes to support faith's case. Jeremiah Schwartz pointed me to Ephesians 2:8, which says "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast." And John 14:6, submitted by Kirk Whitworth, says "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Other good evidence for this argument is found in John 3:3 and Acts 4:12, but the main idea is summed up in the two passages I have quoted.

Convinced? Frankly, I'm not. My gut reaction to such arguments is to make an appeal for the many people who will never hear the "good news," or even for those who don't accept it for some good reason. For instance, what do we do with someone who, through no fault of her own, has very negative associations with Christianity. Perhaps this person might have been introduced to the Bible by one of the many street preachers who threaten their listeners with "hellfire and damnation." How could we, or God, expect her to be receptive to Jesus' message, when her thoughts about Chris-

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tianity are colored by negative experiences.

I can use the Bible to support the other side. Matthew 7:21 says "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my father in heaven." Therefore, we can't rely on our faith, but must do the works God wants us to do. And Romans 2:6 says that "(God) will repay everyone according to his works: eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and perseverance in good works..."

We sort of have a draw, then. The Bible seems to contradict itself on this issue. There are statements that faith and works are each necessary. The two are really interrelated anyway, as both readers point out. Schwartz says, "If one is truly saved, then their faith in God's grace will be evident by their convictions and their deeds." The Bible

agrees: James 2:26 says, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."

It is an interesting dilemma, but these days, both arguments bother me. Whether your currency is faith or works, you are simply trying to buy your way into heaven. You are trying to manipulate God, cutting a deal with him, saying, "Okay, God, in exchange for eternal life, I'll give you a profession of faith and a modest title." Either approach, then, is inherently selfish. My understanding of Jesus is that he never condones selfishness, so you're really in trouble if you care about the fate of your soul.

Maybe, then, we aren't supposed to concern ourselves with the future. After all, as it says in Matthew 6:34, "Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil."

Vatican's apology fails to blame Pius

Last week the Vatican released a 12-page report that admitted to a failure of Roman Catholic worshippers to help Jews during the Holocaust.

PROBLEM

The Vatican released a report that blamed worshippers during the Holocaust but not Pope Pius XII.

SOLUTION

Pius' faults should have been admitted.

John Paul II had promised that the document would be written over a decade ago. Not only is the report long overdue, it refuses to concede that Pius could have, and should have, done more to reach out to the Jews and speak out against their annihilation by Hitler. By taking a stand, Pius could have prevented the deaths of some of the millions of Jews persecuted in the Holocaust.

The report, written by the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism, is considered a landmark document because the Vatican is publicly repenting for the sins committed by church members who did not protest the slaughter of Jews by Nazi Germany.

Because Pope John Paul II has done more than any other previous pope to strengthen Catholic-Jewish relations, he deserves to be commended. But by declining to acknowledge the error of Pius' inaction during World War II, this report will only serve to frustrate and possibly anger Jewish leaders and worshippers.

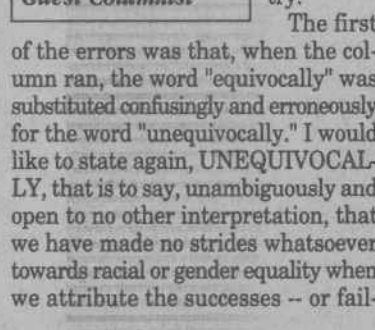
The report simply falls short of doing any real good. Sure, it expresses the Vatican's sorrow as to the actions of its members during the Holocaust, but it doesn't place any of the blame on Pius, which is where the blame should have fallen. Simply, it's too little too late.

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Columnist responds to criticism

Under normal circumstances I would not write any sort of "response" column, but due to a misunderstanding between the copyediting staff and me, two grave errors occurred when my previous column was run, and to be fair to both those who appear to agree with me and those who appear to disagree, I would like to clarify my views on affirmative action issues in this country.



Emily Streyer
Guest Columnist

The first of the errors was that, when the column ran, the word "equivocally" was substituted confusingly and erroneously for the word "unequivocally." I would like to state again, UNEQUIVOCALLY, that is to say, unambiguously and open to no other interpretation, that we have made no strides whatsoever towards racial or gender equality when we attribute the successes -- or failures -- of individuals to their reproductive organs or skin colors.

The details of the second error are unimportant, but its result was consequential. The intent of my column was to strip away that which affirmative action claims to do, and leave what it actually does, and slight changes made to my sentence structure obfuscated this point.

In another note, I stand corrected on the fact that Thurgood Marshall was the first black member of the Supreme Court, but as that point is irrelevant to my argument, I haven't further comment.

I do not challenge the good intentions of affirmative action; I understand the idea behind the policy, although I must question the desire to work for a racist or sexist boss, especially if that employer was required against his or her wishes to hire a minority or a woman. But I take issue, however, not with what affirmative action intends to do, but with what affirmative action ultimately does.

Whether you like it or not, affirmative action, if it does not outright imply that a person received a job because of sex or race, nonetheless leaves a smudge of doubt on the fact that a person has achieved through merit

alone. I would not find complimentary the idea that I have received anything -- a scholarship, a place in any program, a job -- because I am a woman. I imagine others, among them Sandra Day-O'Connor, Clarence Thomas and all other successful people who have been told that affirmative action got them their jobs, feel similarly.

Affirmative action does not merely "suggest" to employers that they should "consider" hiring a minority; it mandates that they do so, all other things equal. In practice, especially when quotas are involved, this commonly results in standards being lowered to accommodate the desire to achieve diversity.

This desire for diversity is valuable to society, but when diversity becomes a priority above merit, it comes at the price of progress towards racial and gender equality.

The premise of my previous column's proposal, crucial to the decision to accept or reject it, asks if it is acceptable to declare "the Potential to Contribute to the Diversity of Society" a valid quality, just like any other non-race or non-gender quality such as experience or intelligence. If so, then certainly we should just be honest about

it and do so, to hell with this dance-around-the-issue affirmative action crap.

But I urge every reader to question my premise. As a society, do we accept the risk involved in such a subjective declaration? To return to the opening statements of my previous column, we know, whether our daily actions support it or not, that we shouldn't judge people by the amount of melanin in their skin or the number of X-chromosomes in their DNA; why should we support actions which mandate favor or disfavor to anyone based on either of these two reasons?

This isn't to say that diversity is not a desirable element in our society. But that choice must occur on an individual level; any attempt to choose it on society's scale will have the same shortcomings as affirmative action, because diversity is not an objective quality, and therefore no objective guidelines will apply to everything.

This country will not achieve racial or gender equality kicking and screaming its way to the finish line; it will achieve it through the perpetual, multitudinous, daily disproof of centuries-old prejudices, and through the repeated demonstration of achievement by minorities and women.

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The Gamecock is the student newspaper of The University of South Carolina and is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the fall and spring semesters and five times during the summer with the exception of university holidays and exam periods. Opinions expressed in The Gamecock are those of the editors or author and not those of The University of South Carolina. The Board of Student Publications and Communications is the publisher of The Gamecock. The Department of Student Media is the newspaper's parent organization.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Challenge issued to student organizations

To the editor:

This article is in response to the comments made by Ken Caudle's letter entitled "Fair coverage given; rally went too far." It was clearly written out of ignorance.

I can not help but believe that if Caudle believes what he says to be true, then many others concur with him. The facts of the matter at hand:

- 1) NAACP's budget was not cut. In fact, their budget was increased by \$700.
- 2) At the rally, the students who made reference to The Gamecock said that it was biased, not racist.
- 3) The rally was not held by "African American students who wanted an all African American ballot to be put out, because the SG President and Vice President are both Caucasians." The rally was held to address apathy, the biased Gamecock, and budget cuts to AAAS.

No blame should be placed on the constituents and supporters of AAAS for speaking out about their budget cuts. I strongly believe that the other organizations who also received cuts should have been bold enough to speak out outside of their appeal as well.

More specifically [this letter] is "to the editor" to request accountability. It has been evident that there is a lack of racial harmony on this campus as well as a lack of understanding among student leaders and organizations. I challenge The Gamecock to help bring about some closure to this "us against them" mentality. It cannot happen overnight, but we can make a start by having open dialogue. Not dialogue that is played out in "letters to the editor," but dialogue that is open, non-threatening, and including warm bodies. This type of dialogue leads to accountability and a greater sensitivity and understanding of individuals and races.

I challenge not only The Gamecock, but Student Government, Carolina Productions and Fraternity and Sorority Council. I singled out these organizations because of their capacity to reach and influence students and because the majority of their membership and leadership is composed of students that are not of color. It is important for the crusade for racial harmony to be led by the majority. For any leaders of the "challenged" organizations, think twice before you say no. Say yes to a greater Carolinian community.

Jessica D. Roberts
 Philosophy

The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 250-300 words and must include full name, professional title or year and major if a student. Hand written letters must be personally delivered by the author to The Gamecock newsroom in Russell House room 333. E-mail letters must include the author's telephone number. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letters for style, possible libel or space limitations. Names will not be withheld for any circumstance.