

# Letters

## Confront issues

The Associated Press report "U.S. vitality linked to colleges: Paper written to next president" (The Register-Guard, Dec. 17) describes a "laundry list" of demands presented by 33 members of the Commission on National Challenges in Higher Education in a memorandum promising to "do a better job of teaching college students the importance of telling the truth."

This goal is interesting in view of our educators' failure to convey truth to students as evident in college curricula and the compromised condition of many college library collections. Publications challenging religious claims are suppressed in sophisticated ways indicating knowledgeable religious influences — local libraries not excepted.

In his books, "The Sacred Canopy" and "Precarious Vision," sociologist Peter L. Berger describes the evolutionary sociological processes that allowed religious leaders throughout human history to create, adopt and adapt concepts and experiences to fashion a psychological view of "reality" — often in conflict with empirical reality — that deprives individuals of their personal and intellectual liberty, undermining the democratic process.

Many subscribe to this religious "reality" because they do not have the courage to face a reality in which there is no God. Death offers no prospect of paradise, and one must concede a lack of many answers.

Theologians expound "process theology" seeking to forge new religious concepts devoid of irrational theist dogma. They usurp enlightened social positions in an effort to protect their positions of power. Just as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" no longer met the need of a society in transition from agriculture to industry, so too the Bible, with its myths of national superiority, chauvinism and savagery, no longer suffices

to guide people ethically and morally in a world shrunk by modern communications and interdependence.

Until we shed the intellectual chains imposed by self-serving religious leaders who use socialism and atheism as scapegoats to distract public scrutiny from overwhelming religious depredation, occasionally illuminated by incidents like the PTL scandal, our nation will not resolve our increasing world and domestic problems. The key is a truthful, courageous college curriculum that confronts the religious issue forthrightly.

Bert P. Tryba  
Eugene

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## Cause and effect

All this talk about summit, glasnost (publicity) and treaties obscures the fundamental and continuing differences between a collectivist and a free man as they define themselves, structure their environment and their institutions, and measure human value.

A free man "is endowed by his Creator with... Liberty" or the ability to choose.

A collectivist is allowed some privileges by his government.

A free man experiences freedom; the opportunity to make choices.

A collectivist is told what to do.

A free man's government exists to safeguard his natural rights.

A collectivist serves his government.

A free man is the basic unit of value as an individual.

A collectivist is valuable only as he is a useful member of the group.

Unless and until collectivism

defines human nature in natural, or Jeffersonian, or Biblical terms (Man: The choicemaker), such cosmetic and image-oriented activities as glasnost (USSR) or "peace treaty" (Nicaragua and Afghanistan) are pure illusion intended for control purposes.

Remember: Peace is not a cause... it's an effect.

James Fletcher Baxter  
Carlsbad, Calif.

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