

# White House street closure prudent

The First Family will be a bit safer now, after a move made over the weekend to curtail vehicle access near the front of the White House.

President Bill Clinton acted on the recommendations of the Secret Service and others on Saturday as he closed Pennsylvania Avenue, the main Washington thoroughfare to vehicle traffic in front of the White House. Several other recommendations, including a review of air traffic in the vicinity of the White House, were also approved.

Improving security at the White House is a prudent idea. The world was a different place back when a road was built in front of the White House. Federal buildings weren't bombed and threats against presidents weren't as common as they are today. The world seemed safer than it does today.

**I**t makes the area safer for everyone, including the general public.

But the fact is the world is more dangerous today. Presidential politics inspire some people to take drastic measures against the president and his family. Only several months ago, a man sprayed the area around the White House with gunfire from in front of the building. Before that, a man crashed a light plane into the side of the White House. Obviously, security must be a major concern of White House officials.

Closure of Pennsylvania Avenue to vehicle traffic will not solve all security problems at the White House. People who are bent on firing on or bombing the White House will still be able to fire a gun from the sidewalk or find another way to injure the president, but eliminating vehicles from the security equation will give the Secret Service and local police a better chance at protecting the White House from violence. It would seem much easier to have police officers monitor people walking around Pennsylvania Avenue rather than have them try to patrol drivers traveling by the building.

Some who have disagreed with the closure have said closing Pennsylvania Avenue to cars will have a psychological impact on the public, implying the White House and government is less accessible in general.

However, the White House isn't any less accessible to the public with the closure of Pennsylvania Avenue to vehicles. Instead, it makes the area safer for everyone, including the general public. No longer will it be possible for a car to ram the gates around the White House or for a car-bomb to explode in front of the building. The area in front of the White House gates will be converted into a "pedestrian mall" of sorts, which will allow people a larger area to walk in front of the White House or assemble for protests.

President Clinton made the right choice in moving to ban vehicle traffic from the front of the White House. For the minimal impact it creates, the action helps to make the White House and surrounding area safer for everyone.



OPINION

## Jim's word not necessarily gospel



BRIAN WOMACK

Just as sure as vehicles going eight miles under the speed limit on Coburg Road, Bible Jim made his spring term visit to the University.

Though I've only been here since last year, I understand he is a regular feature to the grassy knoll in the EMU courtyard. That soap box and the blue cap are all too familiar to us students.

The words he spews are all too familiar to us as well.

While listening to him last Tuesday, I heard him threaten bodily harm to a listener because he was being interrupted (like he should complain about that). This is the same person who tells his listeners they're just not that bright.

A friend told me Bible Jim uses such wonderful props as the "fag funnel" and the "fag whistle." I'm sure that will sway more people than even Jesus thought possible.

More than anything though, his style must not be forgotten. This man has the approximate grace and charm of Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, only without the smile. He has to have one of the most acidic personalities I've witnessed in recent history. Yelling at people like he's on fire seems to be all he knows.

Personally, I am a Christian. And when people like Bible Jim decide to inflict the campus with the venomous speech he does, it's frustrating to me and those who call themselves Christians.

The situation reminds me of the time when stories surrounding Jimmy Swaggart were ruling the airwaves.

It was a difficult time for Christians. Most of us weren't committing adultery or abusing

power. But that's about all we heard Christians were doing. It seemed we were portrayed by the media as greedy, immoral hypocrites.

The very image of the church was damaged by the Swaggart episode and other scandals.

This is not to say that Christians aren't human, and they won't fall. It is to say that those who fall, like Swaggart, shouldn't rush back into the ministry and morally crash again.

Bible Jim, in many ways, is like the Swaggart of the University. Though he's not falling morally (as far as I know), he gives a bad name to Christianity.

I'm not the only one who thinks Bible Jim is hurting Christianity.

Danny O' Neil (that's the former quarterback of the University football team for you people that never make it to the back of the Emerald) got up next to Bible Jim toward the end of the day and said that Bible Jim and his cohorts were an "embarrassment" to Christianity.

As you can imagine, this didn't go over too well. Danny was promptly called "Biblical vomit" and a "jerk" by one of the cohorts.

Yet O' Neil stayed calm and asked one of the cohorts to find a place in the Bible that said his venomous style was sanctioned by God. He couldn't find one. Trying to give some balance to the previous tirades of Bible Jim, O' Neil then said the message of the gospel was that of love.

Amen, Danny. "For God so loved the world."

A friend and myself tried to converse with Bible Jim after he had boxed up his soap box. We were attempting to show him that love was a lot better approach than venom. He wouldn't listen and even dared to say God's love didn't do any good for the non-Christian. This especially infuriated me because love is the very thing that draws people to God.

Obviously, many of the onlookers were not taking the

"Bible Jimmites" seriously. It seemed to be more of a source of entertainment.

This became all too clear during the noon hour last Tuesday. At that time, a mainstream Christian got up in front of the sandwich board people and started sharing the truth of the gospel. He was giving a balanced approach to the Bible, sin and the whole message of salvation.

Some stayed and listened. But Bible Jim took off "preaching" again, and I noticed many of the listeners going over to hear Bible Jim instead of the man who was balanced in his approach to preaching.

A lot of people apparently didn't want to really know the true message of the gospel as much as they just wanted to see a show — a show Bible Jim delivered.

It was almost circus-like.

Yet this a University where even church attendance isn't something most of us see every week. It worries me that in today's society no one knows what true Christianity is anymore.

Christianity is a message of hope. It's a message of love just as the cross showed.

Yes, they are rules and standards. The user-guide to Christianity, the Bible, is clear about that.

Yet unlike what the soap box people would have you believe, it's a lot more than just rules, it's a personal relationship.

I have another year to go here, so I'll get to witness the Swaggart of our campus one more time.

But I would hope instead of turning his show into a success, let's try something different — let's ignore him.

This way, though the slow drivers on Coburg Road will probably continue to be something we can count on, maybe Bible Jim won't.

Brian Womack is a columnist for the Emerald.

# Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159 EUGENE OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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