

# Crime is not a gun-control problem

by Russ Jones  
The Print Staff

"Clinton pushes gun control campaign". "Weapon-ban campaign steps up rhetoric". Headlines such as these have been the order of the day from Capitol Hill over the last few weeks. President Clinton, with impassioned rhetoric, presses for a ban on 19 specific 'assault' weapons, contending that this legislation will help bring order to our streets and purpose to the war against crime. Once again, the policy-makers, in their isolation and insulation, completely miss the point.

President Clinton is urging hunters to help outlaw firearms "designed for the battlefield". If the truly objects to these weapons on this basis, why doesn't he dedicate more energy to outlawing battlefields? Remember, this is the man who advocates arming the Muslims in Bosnia so they can defend themselves, yet seeks to

deny law-abiding Americans the same basic right. Take a good look at Bosnia, my friends, for that inexcusable tragedy is taking place, in large part, because the weapons of government were turned against an unarmed populace.

President Clinton states that he "...knows the difference between a firearm used for hunting and target-shooting, and a weapon designed to kill people". This remark indicates either the depths of his ignorance regarding the subject, or his complete disdain for the innate intelligence of the American people.

Hunting weapons are designed to kill, target weapons are designed to develop your ability to hit what you're aiming at. There is no distinction based upon what a weapon is 'designed' to do and what it is actually capable of doing in any given person's hands. Any weapon can kill any person if

that is the intent of the user, and any knowledgeable person knows that one well placed shot is worth four magazines worth of spray.

So what's going on here, and what does it have to do with you? There are some things which must be faced here, and some of the answers are stuck right in the center of the founding of this great nation.

Our country was born out of a struggle against tyranny and the usurpation of basic rights. Our founding fathers knew well the inherent dangers of government and, in their struggle to safeguard our freedoms, instituted the Second Amendment. The rhetoric of today would have you believe that gun ownership and gun rights is a question of hunting and defending your home and person from 'criminals'. This is surely a component of the debate, yet the guiding concept was to provide a means by which the citizenry could de-

fend themselves from their own government.

All citizens, gun-nuts or not, should be concerned when the government institutes a policy designed to leave the general public defenseless. On the one hand, we are told that today's criminals, in many instances, out-gun the police. On the other hand, we are told that we need more police officers because law enforcement cannot keep up with the increase in violent crime. Considering these two realities, why is it that the governmental solution is to disarm those of us who are the victims of criminal behavior? It is obvious to most people, except the politicians, that laws have no deterrent effect on criminal behavior. I, personally, have no great longing to live in a country where only the criminals, police and military are allowed to possess weapons. I can assure you that when that day comes, you

won't be able to tell the difference.

There is a premise expounded in criminal law relating to the use of force, in which the victim is generally justified in using comparable force in the defense of life and property. No government or society should fear the ability of law-abiding citizens to exercise this basic right.

The threat posed by the President's list of 19 specific 'assault' weapons is no greater or less than the threat posed by all weapons in general. Firearms are simply tools, and have no sense of purpose, design, intent or destiny. This cannot be said, however, of the people who would have you believe otherwise.

The problem of crime is not a gun-control issue; it is a crime control issue which will only be exacerbated by limiting the legitimate right of responsible citizens to defend their homes and families.

## Religious claims shouldn't be viewed as historical facts

■ Faculty comment: Campus Crusade for Christ advertisement misleading

by Marlene Tufts  
Social Science Department

I would like to comment on the ad paid for by the Campus Crusade for Christ which appeared in *The Clackamas Print* of April 6, 1994. This ad indicated that the resurrection of Jesus is a historically reliable fact, so well documented that it "Makes you wonder how anyone could not believe!" It is this claim regarding evidence and documentation that I am concerned about. A religious belief supported by an appeal to faith or religious authority is nobody's business but your own. However, it is another thing altogether to say that a religious claim is a reliable historical fact. When such an assertion is made, the claim moves from the realm of personally held religious belief into the realm of research and science and becomes subject to critical evaluation.

The evidence for the resurrection which is available to believer and skeptic alike is found in the New Testament, which does not claim that any human witnessed the actual resurrection. However, the Gospels, written three to six decades after the crucifixion of Jesus, do contain descriptions of events which purportedly followed the resurrection. The relevant chapters are Mark 16, Matthew 28, Luke 24, and John 20.

I invite the reader who is interested to read these accounts. While there are similarities and overlapping passages, there are also differences involving who went to the tomb, whether one or two angels or men appeared, the role of Peter and the other disciples, whether Jesus himself actually appeared at the tomb, etc. Eyewitness accounts of the same event are usually not identical. However, when major differences occur, testimonies tend to lose their power to convince and begin to sound more like hear say and rumor.

For example, Mark states that the women were commanded to tell the disciples of the resurrection but that they were frightened and said nothing to anyone. Matthew, on the other hand, states that the women responded to the command with great joy and immediately ran to tell the disciples. These reports cannot both be true.

Matthew's story is especially problematic. His is the only account to include an earthquake, an event worth noting in a narrative, if it did occur. In the other three Gospels, the

tomb accounts, the New Testament goes on to record mass sightings of Jesus as evidence for the resurrection. However, sometimes strange mass hallucinations occur. For example, relatively few non-Catholics believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, actually appeared to the children at Fatima, Portugal, in the early part of this century, although thousands of witnesses reported that they saw the sun "dance" in the sky. (Those not at Fatima failed to report anything strange about the sun.)

Many people have unusual, "spiritual" things happen to them and conclude on the basis of the experience that their religious beliefs must be true. Personal experience is very compelling to all of us, as fundamentally we must rely on our own private experience to make our personal decisions regarding what is true and what is not.

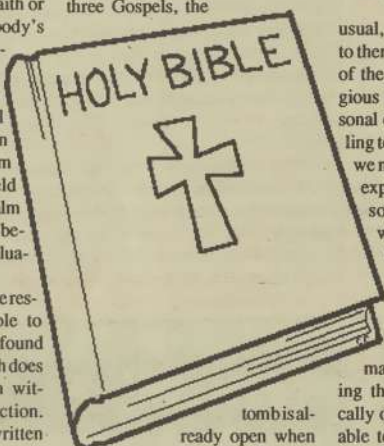
However, the problem with regarding one's own personal experiences as evidence which should be convincing to others is that many religious groups, including those which have diametrically opposed belief systems, are able to elicit these kinds of unusual experiences in their members and potential converts. Thus, while one's own special experiences may be compelling for oneself, they cannot function as evidence for everyone that a religious belief is actually an objective fact.

Let me reiterate that I am not attacking belief in the resurrection as such. Rather I am criticizing the claim that the evidence for the historicity of the resurrection is compelling. When a statement is made that the evidence is so strong that it "Makes you wonder how anyone could not believe," the next logical step is to answer that question, often with the conclusion that those who are informed about but who nevertheless reject such a belief must be evil, stupid, stiff-necked, etc. If the evidence for the resurrection were as strong as the ad suggested,

most people of good will and reasonable intelligence, including Jews, Unitarians (like me), Muslims, Hindus, atheists, etc., would become believers. This process of over-estimating the strength of evidence for a belief and, consequently, devaluing those who fail to agree has often had destructive consequences.

While I am not denying that the resurrection of Jesus may

have occurred as a real event in space and time, it seems to me that the available evidence for that position is not compelling. Belief in the resurrection remains a matter of faith: that is, a matter of belief that does not require objective evidence. It is not a reliable historical fact which should be accepted by all because of the evidence and documentation, as the ad would have us believe.

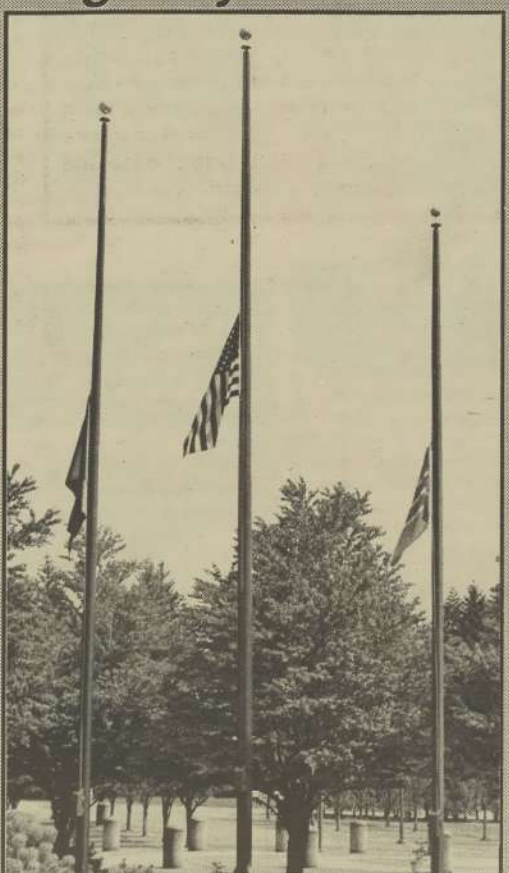


tomb is already open when the women arrive; however, in Matthew the women and the guards are said to observe the angel roll the stone away from the tomb. (Reading on, the soldiers, who were so frightened of the angel that they became like "dead men," then go on to behave in a psychologically implausible way.)

In John, Mary Magdalene goes alone to the tomb, unaccompanied by the other women. She finds the body gone and believes that it was stolen. Peter and the "other disciple" come and leave, Mary remains behind and sees two angels. She is then met by Jesus and mistakes him for a gardener who may know where the body has been taken. As told by the Gospel of John, the story is quite different from the other three Gospels.

Following the empty

## "Tricky Dick" Dies: Flags Fly Half-Staff



On April 26, the nation finally paid its last respects to a great man. We'll miss you Dick.