

# Truth & Consequences: In search of an Absolute

I have spoken often in this space about what is wrong and what is right. I have made claims of the most bold and daring sort, all the while portraying these values as "moral" and "true."

reflections of another, "higher" standard, the yardstick by which moral codes are judged.

But what do we mean when we say that the one view is right and the other wrong? We are admitting

that there really is an Absolute Principle behind the codes of the cultures—a something that "right" can mean. Otherwise "right" means nothing more than "I like it best this way," and of course, if

I like punching your face better than waving and saying hello, you are hard pressed to argue the point on those terms.

Relativism is a sure killer of a culture. It is when the hedonism and moral decay of the Rome finally caught up with her that she found herself with a crumbling societal foundation, and the barbarians stormed her gates.

Relative values are a personal scourge as well. Beginning with only human reason, without anything higher to judge against, ends in futility and despair. Leonardo Da Vinci, one of the most brilliant humanists of history, discovered this pessimism of humanism at the end of his life when he realized he could never find meaning from pure reason.

The lesson here is that without a standard, what the late philosopher Francis Schaeffer calls the "universal," reason is meaningless and argument worthless. Without an Absolute, there is nothing left. There is no regret at the Holocaust; there is no rage at the atrocities of the Middle East and Asia. There is only, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we all die."

But I assert that there is more. I believe that there is a light of truth, perceived by Socrates, proclaimed by Christ, and disseminated by Paul of Tarsus, by which we can live our lives. *I show you a more excellent way.*

## THE ALTAR OF AN UNKNOWN GOD

JOEL P. SHERPERT

Copy Editor



The question of course begs to be asked, "What is true?" We certainly are confronted in today's intellectual world with legions of adamant viewpoints, all arguing their own moral superiority and claiming status as "truth."

They can't all be true, can they?

I believe that without an absolute standard of truth there can be no ethical decisions of any kind, and reject the kind-hearted yet ill-conceived notion that all points of view can be equally accommodated.

To some extent, there is a move in our society to do exactly that—to reconcile all beliefs as equally valid, equally true. This partly arises from a belief that moral principles arise from cultural values, and thus are relative to each society.

This claim is a reversal of the Aristotle's hierarchy of the purpose of knowledge—from Truth to Morality to Technique. What is true about the universe leads to the formulation of moral principles; then (and only then) can the practical use of knowledge be wisely determined.

A collection of ideas do not suddenly become "morality" simply because a majority of people in a given group decide that they happen to like them. Rather the ethics professed by a society should be



# Pay Now, Educate Later

The first week of November is coming upon us fast. In the month of October, Rock the Vote registered approximately 400 new voters among the students on the

Clackamas campus.

Now is the time to translate those 400 votes into action. There are a number of important ballot measures that concern college students across the state; one of them is measure 55, which would expand the state government's financial guarantee to a state-run prepaid college tuition program.

This is a safe way for families to pay now for college tuition with a plan that will protect them against future college tuition increases. The family will be guaranteed that the tuition they pay now will be all that they pay no matter how much the costs have gone up. The drawback to this plan is that if the tuition costs raise faster than the interest earned by the state on the collected funds, they will come up short when it is time to use them. The Legislature possibly would have to pay for the difference, and this would cause budget cuts in other areas.

Also, this is a plan that benefits the middle class—it probably would not be a financial aid to low-

income families.

This measure directly influences the ability of families to pay for college in the future. It is an important decision for voters, who must weigh all the outcomes of either its passage or defeat. For our 400 new voters, it offers an opportunity to cast their ballot and make a difference—a good proposal to cut their teeth on.



## THE SACRED & THE PROFANE

ROBERT SCHOENBERG

Editor-in-Chief



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WHY DIDN'T GOD GIVE POLITICIANS 3 MOUTHS?

# THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

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