

# GENERAL NEWS

## **Commentary: "The Last Temptation of Christ"**

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Fundamentalist Christians might just be the most misunderstood subculture in America. But then again they haven't exactly done anything to change their image.

I know. I'm one of them.

We theological conservatives, who believe the Bible to be literally true, who believe that Jesus really was both human and divine, and who believe that an intimate relationship with God is not only possible but desirable, have a reputation for stirring up trouble.

Irenaeus, a student of Polycarp, told a story about the disciple John, who entered a public bath at Ephesus only to discover that Cerinthus, a heretical gnostic teacher was there. Gnostics believed that the Jesus who walked the earth could not possibly have been both human and divine. John ran out of the bath shouting that people should flee for their lives lest God unleash his fury and

the building collapse, because Cerinthus was there.

And then there are the accusations against the early Christians of destroying beautiful Greek and Roman statues by breaking off their arms and legs. (Never mind that Caesar was tossing people to the lions).

There are other examples.

Like the way conservatives responded to that great work of agnostic confusion—a movie that came out in the late 1980's A.D., *The Last Temptation of Christ*, showed a picture of Christ that didn't entirely jibe with the picture in the gospel accounts.

The Christ in the movie was a bumbling idiot who didn't really know who he was, who was amazed at his ability to perform miracles, and who stuttered over his public denunciations of the establishment.

If we were to compare these things to the actual accounts, we'd find that at a young age, Christ had a strong inkling of who he was, that he commanded

spirits and death itself with authority and that the people were amazed at his ability to speak publicly and outwit the Pharisees time after time.

I could go on with other examples of inaccuracies, but the important question still hasn't been answered. What was filmmaker Martin Scorsese's intention in making the movie? After all, he's been charged with blasphemy.

I'm still confused.

As a humanities student, I'm willing to allow that perhaps the movie can't be taken at face value; maybe it's trying to bring out something completely unrelated to a historically accurate telling of the gospel story. I can allow for this, because I've seen allegory used to good effect, by writers like C. S. Lewis, for example.

The problem, as I see it, is the issue of using biblical characters to populate an allegorical fiction story. I can't believe Scorsese wouldn't have seen the potential for misinterpretation, but I guess it's possible.

But not only do people seem to be misinterpreting it, they're downright ignorant of it.

Ask a fundamentalist about the movie's message, and you're likely to be told, with a Clint Eastwood air of defiance, "To blaspheme God's son."

You might continue the conversation, like this:

"Oh yeah? What bothered you about it?"

"I couldn't really tell you—I haven't seen the film."

What can be said about this? I have no apologetic, no explanation, except that as the culture continues to become increasingly secularized (thanks to the enlightenment), conservative Christians who haven't made Reason their god feel increasingly boxed off from the outside world. They feel as if their point of view is being ignored or misrepresented, especially in the media.

Overall, and with few exceptions, the media tend to treat as outsiders those more Temptation on 7

## **The Grounds Crew: Sprucing up around campus**

**Cynthia Vartenisan**  
Capital Times Contributor

How many times have you planned or attended an on-campus event that required special room preparations, furnishings and seating? Surely we've all seen those men doing that moving and arranging through the day, but do we ever think to stop for a few seconds to thank them? What about all that grass that needs mowing?

This summer I had the pleasure of working with the groundskeeping crew on campus. Not only did I get some exercise and a nice tan but I also gained an appreciation for them and the campus. I just want to take this time and space to give credit to a group of people who do so much for us with so little thanks.

***It is taking time and patience to improve the look of Penn State Harrisburg, but it is happening.***

We've all probably heard at least one person complain that our campus is not as attractive or scenic as many others we've seen. But it is not an easy task to transform a bare, open Air Force Base into a natural woods park-like college campus. It is taking time and patience to improve the look of Penn State Harrisburg but it is happening. The driving force behind the scenes is Michael Ray, work management Coordinator of Facilities and Operations. It is with him that the changes begin.

Until Mike Ray came five years ago there was virtually no landscaping done at all in the twenty years since Penn State acquired the base. Ray came to a campus of 171 acres that displayed only a "handful of geraniums." In these last five years landscaping has been done at

the Continuing Education building, the dorms and dining hall, and admissions. Vatan Plaza in front of the Olmsted building and the Sculpture Garden in back were designed by Mike and created by the grounds' crew in those years also.

Five years ago, there may have been 1/2 acre of shrubs and flowers altogether. Today we have about 1 1/2 acres. Last year 5,800 annual flowers were planted and more are planned for this year. Mike has ordered approximately 8,000 tulip bulbs alone. He makes sure to plant at least two or three trees every year also although at this time there is no major tree-planting plan in place.

Another project that occurred two years ago was the rebuilding of the hard ball field. This project consisted of new drainage material, new seedage of the infield, and new topdressing. The field is so nice that the first year the Senators played in Harrisburg (1987), they used the field for practice because RiverSide Stadium was flooded.

To all these areas improvements and changes continue to be made. For instance, when the flower beds were first made in Vatan Plaza, it was found that nothing would grow because of the calcium put on the walks during the winter that washed into the ground. The solution was the building of raised wooden beds which we now see blooming full of impatience.

Ray is working from his philosophy that "first impressions are lasting impressions." When anyone comes onto our campus, before they see one staff person or faculty member, they see the grounds. It is his hope that those who come both from near and far, will see a proper and correct way of maintaining grounds that they can use in their own backyards. It certainly isn't as simple as it looks at first glance.

There are many variables that can help or hinder the progress of grounds improvement. One of course is the weather. Before Ray came every bank on campus was nothing but weeds. Three years ago wildflowers seeds were sown on the banks, but due to the drought two years in a row, many of

them were lost.

A second consideration in landscaping is the selection of plant material. It is important to get the right plant in the right place and that means considering its needs, what it will look like in 20 or 30 years and giving it enough space to grow naturally with little maintenance. Therefore, one must look not only at the initial appearance of newly planted flowers, shrubs or trees, but also visualize how they will look in 30 years.

Another consideration when landscaping is the maintenance of those areas when completed. Presently there are only six full time employees supported by some part-time help. Two of these men take care of student related activities such as set-ups and clean up for events on campus, two are driving tractors or mowing units, and two maintain the grounds (i.e. pulling weeds, mulching, etc.). The department is always in need of more help and would be glad to talk with any student interested in part time work.

The Facilities and OPerations Department consists of several different areas all managed by Ken Witmer: Utility Operations headed by Russ Conrad, Fleet Operations, Grounds (which includes snow removal) of which Clarence Hardaway is Grounds Foreman, Skilled Trades which handles the building of flower beds and much of the interior renovations in the buildings, and the night Custodial crew headed by Ken Watson.

University Park was so impressed with the grounds work that has been done here at Capital that they asked Ray to give seminars at the Penn State University Regional Maintenance Seminar Conference of the Facilities and OPerations departments of all the PSU campuses. But when anyone calls Ray to say thanks, or gives praise, he turns it to those who are the backbone of these changes - the ones who make the dreams and ideas a reality: George Atticks, Ben Horst, Ken Kline, Bill MacFarlane, John McLaughlin, Melvin Neal, Steve Royer, and Vern Witmer. Ray is happy to

receive calls with your comments, suggestions or questions at the Physical Plant.

One last point is to mention that it is not always tuition money that is used to purchase trees and flowers. Often it is through in-kind gifts of money that was part of an initial project on a building. Many times employees of the school will donate money to be used in a way they designate. One graduating class donated the lights in the Sculpture Garden.

Most of us are not here long enough to notice the changes that have taken place on our campus but there has been much improvement in the last five years and these kind of changes take time - for trees to grow taller and shrubs to fill in. A little thanks and appreciation is due to these men so please stop and tell them occasionally. They do a lot for us.

Note to my co-workers and bosses: Thank you all for a great summer and for a special education that no classroom could provide.

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