Troops Can’t Just Leave

By Drew Roynon
Columnist

I am a Republican. I voted for George Bush when he was elected President. I supported military action in Afghanistan. I supported military action in Iraq. I listen to Rush Limbaugh in the afternoons, and watch Fox news. I was disappointed when Rush resigned from ESPN and even more so to his admitted pain killer addiction.

I supported the California recall, not on strict party grounds, but because it was the right thing to do. I tell you this now so that you, as the reader, will know exactly where I am coming from, and what my personal bias is.

While I was sitting here trying to decide what to write this article on, several things came to mind: the difference between Clinton and Bush’s misinformation, the difference between Limbaugh and Bush’s discrepancies, and even the California recall. Through all of this, I kept coming back to one issue, Iraq.

Surrounding this issue are many questions, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction that were found in Iraq? None that we have found...yet. However, there is concrete evidence that there were programs in place to make both chemical and biological weapons that were unknown to the U.N. These include over two dozen labs hidden in Iraq that had banned equipment. Others include Iraqi scientists taking their work home with them. This includes keeping botulinum toxin (to learn more, Google search it), anthrax, and others, along with equipment, technology, diagrams and documents in their own homes. That is just the start. There is much more going on there than what most people realize.

The most pressing question is should we spend $87 billion on Iraq? Yes, it is our responsibility to make sure that we have not destroyed this country and then fled while it was in ruins because of what we did to it.

This means that we need to rebuild Iraq, make sure that a government is set up, and make sure it can stand on its own before we pull our troops out. Democratic Presidential hopeful Rep. Dennis Kucinich (OH) wants to pull our troops out now. This is unacceptable. We cannot cut and run. To do so would hurt our image even more, and the U.S. cannot afford to lose any more face than it already has. Another hopeful, Carol Moseley Braun wants to leave Iraq with honor, which sounds a little like the peace with honor that Nixon wanted before he pulled our troops out of Vietnam.

I must say now that using Rep. Kucinich (from my home state) and Fmr. Sen. Braun as examples is not intended to imply that Fmr. Sen. Braun is in any way like the late Richard Nixon, nor that Rep. Kucinich would not make a good President. They were merely examples.

In closing, I urge the student body to keep this issue in mind, whether you are for or against this President, administration, or this $87 billion military expenditure. Because if we do not, we run the risk of having troops there indefinitely, and basically forgotten, like those in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

As we are all aware, some of the issues that we as a community at EMU have been facing have turned into discussions where we do not all see eye to eye. I have great concern for what goes on at EMU and also believe the student newspaper can be a significant factor in the reflection of the campus. This being said, there is obviously reason for concern.

However, it is not the disagreements on the issues that concern me the most anymore, but the way people on opposite sides interact as a result to show what they believe. As people debate and go back and forth, it seems that something has been missing in the process. I have pondered this, a song with the words “Life without Jesus is like a donut, with a hole in the middle of your heart” has come to mind. Now don’t jump to a bunch of conclusions where I think people don’t have Jesus, I just believe the concept needs to be put more in the middle of what we are about and how we interact with each other in search of the truth. This includes hearing out each other’s viewpoints by filling our hearts with the love, spirit and understanding of our God.

At times this may come in the form of criticism, but it must be respectful criticism (backstabbing, gossip, and sarcasm don’t seem to usually work very well).

In the Mennonite environment where we interact, we are at times quick to bash our government and the decisions it has made on a global level, particularly with Bush when he rushed into war in Iraq while refusing to listen to the rest of the international community. Do we possess the same closed-mindedness and jump to conclusions while failing to truly listen to another’s point of view?

If you get the chance to go curse at Bush about his decisions straight to his face, do you think he will really respect you and listen? We must show respect in the way we conduct ourselves no matter what the differences as we deal with other individuals, which is something President Brubaker stressed in an announcement over one semester ago. This has not always happened based on our own silly conduct that has been put on public display within the EMU community. If the diversity we have as a university does not need to and is not meant to tear us apart. I was always taught it can be a good thing where you listen and learn from one another, even if you do not agree with them. Diversity can strengthen us as a community and bring us together in ways we never imagined were possible if we use it properly.

Unfortunately, enough people on all sides of the controversial issues seem to have made comments that have been taken as insensitive, sarcastic remarks. It has created a domino effect that seems to be only tearing us further apart, so here is a word of caution: be careful and sensitive to others. As we go about our differences in a world where we are often told there is no absolute truth, let us look to God’s word to fill the holes that exist in our donut here at EMU as we search for the real truth that life’s dilemmas bring upon us.

We are all in this together as a community and we are all a part of the solution whether left-wing or right-wing, Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative. We must learn to meet people where they are at by listening to them without continually stepping on each other’s toes. May we unite spiritually, not take ourselves so seriously, have some fun, eat some donuts, and look to God, His purpose, and His truth to fill the holes that exist, for the Truth will set us free.

Joe Friesen