

CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY

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"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'"

Isaiah 40:3; John 1:23

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They All Nourished Me . . .

By Joe E. Trull, Editor

My long-time personal friend Chuck Doremus sent me a wonderful story from his Bakersfield home. It seems a church attender wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper complaining that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me I can't remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters" column, much to the delight of the editor. For weeks the debate continued until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall what the menu was for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals, I would be dead today!"

No comments were sent on the value of sermons after that letter.

Immediately my mind applied the story to our Journal. *Christian Ethics Today* began in 1995. If you have read it from day one, you have scanned 33 issues, a total of 1056 pages containing over 400 articles—and that's not counting Kudzu!

How many do you remember? Not many by name, only a few by author or subject, but you can no doubt testify, "*They all nourished me.*"

The Journal—What Is It?

Since last July, *Christian Ethics Today* has been a totally independent publication. We are not related to *any* institution. I need to say one more time for many of you who keep asking, **we are no longer a part of the Center for Christian Ethics** [the Center is located at Baylor and is ably directed by Robert Kruschwitz—read his explanation in Issue 30]. The Journal is now totally on its own. Articles are organized in my study in Wimberley, published with the help of five others from Dallas to Des Moines, and totally supported by your gifts and contributions.

WWW.CHRISTIANETHICSTODAY.COM

Good things are happening. Thanks to Ray Waugh, bivocational pastor in Beeville, Texas (and his church), the Journal is on line. Soon all issues will be available at this web-

site. Every week we get new subscribers from this source. Check it out.

What Does It Cost To Publish?

Probably the most common question I am asked. After publishing four issues and overseeing an audit of our financial records, the following statement gives the answer:

Financial Summary: June-Dec. 2000

INCOME:

Beginning Balance:	\$36,000
Contributions	\$ 8,387*
Sale of Sets	\$ 2,448
Interest Savings	\$ 267
Total Income:	\$47,102

*One church & 63 individuals.

EXPENDITURES/ASSETS:

Expenditures	\$32,484
Balance in Acct.	\$14,718

At our first Board Meeting last month (via telephone), these realities were noted:

- Eliminating some initial one-time costs, the average issue requires about \$8000-\$10,000 for our 2600 subscribers—about \$4 per issue.
- Most of the 63 contributors gave about \$25 to cover the cost of their subscription.
- However, 95% of our readers (over 2500) did not contribute.
- The \$36,000 provided by the previous Board covered the three issues in 2000; the reader contributions covered about one issue!
- One long-time supporter provided a large gift in January "to sustain us while we develop a financial base"—this gift will allow us to continue until October.

Quo Vadis

Where do we go from here? Everyone I talk with about the Journal, including our supportive Board members, agree that **Christian Ethics Today is special—a much needed publication.** The Journal provides an inspiring and prophetic voice unavailable elsewhere.

A reader called last week and indicated he thought the Journal was "heavily endowed" and did not need his financial support. He felt many readers, like him, need to be informed.

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Religious Liberty as a Baptist Distinctive

By James Dunn, Wake Forest Divinity School

Visiting Professor of Christianity and Public Policy

Past Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

Editor's Note: This address was delivered at the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission Annual Conference held on February 12, 2001, at Tarrytown Baptist Church in Austin, Texas.

There is an unbroken chain from the historical and theological starting point for Baptists: soul freedom, to religious liberty for all and its necessary corollary, separation of church and state.

See three concentric circles like the movement in water when a pebble hits a pond. The center circle is the point of impact, representing the experience of one person with the Divine, the central event of one's life, an Act of God's Grace, the immediate engagement of heaven with earth: soul freedom.

The inevitable ripple, the next circle out represents the certain consequences of a saving faith, the moral, ethical and social result of an individual encounter with God. Loving one's neighbor as self, doing unto others as one would be done unto, people plural...we call it religious liberty.

The third ring is as logical and theological in sequence. Because human beings are frail and fallible, limited and sinners all, because God has ordained both church and state, because their purposes, constituencies, functions and fundings are different from each other, the separation of church and state follow as night follows day.

Baptists do not base our basic belief in church-state separation on some enlightenment theory or implied, social contract. We lean not merely on the Constitution and Bill of Rights, or even on a biblical passage. We do not pretend to depend on some experiential pragmatism, claiming to have discovered that it works. (It does, but our foundation for freedom is firmer.)

We root our soul freedom in the very nature and person of God. We and all three religions of the book affirm the imago Dei, the radical idea that we are somehow "made in the image of God. We know that one major meaning of that belief is that we are able to respond to God—respons-able, responsible and free. We are wired up with a chooser and we live with the consequences of those choices.

F.J. Sheed said, "Being human is itself so vast a thing that the natural inequalities from one of us to the other are in themselves trivial." All made like God—persons and free, indeed.

There is in each of us a God-shaped empty place that can be filled only by the Divine. But it's more than a piece of a puzzle, a pattern, a cut-and-dried Calvinistic plan. It's the living energy, the dynamic dimension, the vital voluntary nature, the heart of our humanity that signals always beep-beep—

made in God's Image. That's the living truth of soul freedom.

At least the idea is worth investigating that each individual has the ability to find answers in the Bible, exercise the centrality of religious liberty, hold to the sacredness of individual conscience in matters of religion and practice the separation of church and state.

Soul Freedom

God refuses to violate one's moral nature even in order to save him. That base-line belief gets at the heart of soul freedom, it's gospel—remember the rich young ruler.

Martin Marty in a well-known article, *Baptistificate Takes Over* (1983), points out that this emphasis is not new. St. Bernard in his *Treatise Concerning Grace and Free Will* about 1128 wrote "Take away free will and there remaineth nothing to be saved....Salvation is given by God alone, and it is given only to the free-will..." As Marty puts it to "make Baptist" whether or not it meant joining a Baptist church "zeroed in on the key issue that modernity posed for religion: choice."

E.Y. Mullins set out (1908) the doctrine of [the] soul's competency in religion under God as the distinctive historical significance of the Baptists. We call it soul freedom.

Hear the testimonies of the scholars:

Robert Bellah (1997): "What was so important about the Baptists was the absolute centrality of religious freedom of the sacredness of individual conscience in matters of religious beliefs."

H. Wheeler Robinson: "The Biblical significance of the Baptists in the right of private interpretation [of] and obedience to the Scriptures. The significance of the Baptists to the individual is soul freedom....The political significance of the Baptists is separation of church and state."

Fisher Humphreys sums up soul freedom as "the freedom, ability and responsibility of each person to respond to God for herself or himself."

Walter B. Shurden contends for the patent principle if one accepts biblical authority. The appeal of soul freedom to Baptists is anchored in "the nature of God, the nature of humanity and the nature of faith."

Bill J. Leonard echoes "Faith is the free response of persons to the gift of God's love. Such faith cannot be compelled by church or state."

This doctrine of soul freedom has immediate, unfiltered application to Baptist battles. Harold Bloom, America's best known literary critic sees "Mullins concept of 'soul competence' destroying fundamentalism," because it "sanctions endless interpretive possibilities, the weird metaphor of a 'literal' or 'inerrant' reading totally vaporizes." Even Karl Barth told Louie Newton, "How I thank God for Mullins. [He] gave the world a mighty phrase—the competency of the soul. One cannot improve on Mullins' definitions of soul freedom: "The capacity to deal directly with God." and "The sinner's response to the gospel message [as] an act of moral freedom."

Religious Liberty

Religious Liberty, the next circle out must follow soul freedom. It is based on the biblical view of persons. Created in the image of God, a human being is the crowning work of God's creation (bio-centrists notwithstanding). To deny freedom of conscience to any person is to debase God's creation. When anyone's religious freedom is denied, everyone's religious freedom is endangered.

George W. Truett put the concept in Victorian rhetoric that sounds strange to the ear but rings true to the soul. In his famous 1920 speech on the steps of the United States Capitol he said, "The right to private judgment is the crown jewel of humanity, and for any person or institution to dare to come between the soul and God is blasphemous impertinence and a defamation of the crown rights of the Son of God."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 recognizes religious liberty as an entitlement of all human beings, a human right whatever their race or nation. We claim it as the basic human right, the primary human right, the ultimate human right. That is so because through the lenses of religious liberty we know ourselves, come to understand and value others and try to figure out the world. George Jellinek argued convincingly that "freedom of conscience may be the oldest Right of Man, at any rate it is the most basic Right of Man (pre-gender free language) because it comprises all ethically conditioned action and guarantees freedom from compulsion, especially from the power of the state." Religious liberty then as the basic human right is universal in

its appeal and application.

The late James Ralph Scales of Wake Forest University stressed the universal and inviolable nature of religious liberty as the basis for church-state separation. He wrote in 1976 that religious liberty is "as nearly absolute as any safeguarded by the constitutions or practiced as a natural right."

For Bloom, consequences lie far beyond Baptists or religion or even "political, socioeconomic and anthropological implications" if religious liberty is neglected. That liberty "was also the stance of John Milton and Roger Williams...if that vision abandons the United States forever, then more than our spiritual democracy will yet be threatened."

Robert Torbet also linked religious liberty directly with church-state separation. He saw "an emphasis upon the accessibility of God to all men [and women] and the free responsibility of each individual before God, hence a free church in a free state."

Separation of Church and State

This last of our irreplaceable circles coming off a pebble in a pond or a shock-sending earthquake is in separation of church and state. It is an organic part of core Baptist belief, an appendage which if amputated would bleed dry the Baptist life blood.

Only last Friday the Executive of an American Baptist State Convention told me about a layman who lamented, "Why we did not just quit worrying about Baptist doctrines and be Christians?" She asked, "like which doctrine?" and he replied, "like the doctrine of church-state separation."

There are many possible explanations to this sort of misunderstanding of church-state separation. The doctrine has been so distorted, diminished and deprecated that it's easy to see how one could arrive at that point. Yet, it's not just a Baptist doctrine, separation of church and state is an indissoluble aspect of our take on the essence of Christian faith.

True, separation of church and state does not define Baptist theology but it is a logical, inextricable inevitable corollary of religious liberty as we know it. It is the plug which if pulled out of our machine, the motor dies. We go no more.

So when anyone says, "Oh, I'm all for religious liberty but



I really don't know about separation of church and state," I'm ready to say "you really don't know."

Baptist soul freedom allows you to take that view, you can be that way, you have every right to say that but it's a sign you haven't thought it out.

I must still offer you more than grudging respect and honor as a creature made in God's image of inestimable worth. I still must extend to you real freedom, not mere toleration. Beyond that I may even embrace you as a fellow believer, a part of the family of faith, a joint heir with Jesus. This is rightly far more important than any doctrine and since ultimate judgment is God's alone, we had all better consider and treat all professing others as if they too are Christians. But if you dismiss the separation of church and state as some irrelevant, optional teaching, I can say you are not a Baptist.

To use a T.B. Maston word play, I can say "to the degree that" you can not see the coercive state as separate from the church, "to that degree" you are not a Baptist.

Walter Glick, my major professor at Texas Wesleyan College, a great Methodist layman loved to tell of Farmer Brown's cow Maggie and how she symbolized claims of Reformers and Baptists to be the true New Testament church.

As the Reformation unfolded after a thousand years of captive Christianity there were those who wanted to see in their credentials a historical, documented chain that linked their beliefs, their spiritual pedigree, even their ordination, link by link, all the way back to Jesus, nay, even John the Baptist. (J. M. Carroll tried that in his *Trail of Blood*). John the Baptist baptized Jesus and also "so and so," who baptized "so and so jr.," who in turn dunked "so and so II," who then baptized the great grandchild of "so and so," and so on down the line to "so and so the 73rd," who baptized *me*. The same with ordination!

Farmer Brown lost his cow and found it down the road apiece on Dollar Bill's place. Dollar Bill said, "Okay we will follow her tracks back to your cow lot . . . just like some theologians looking for tracks all the way back to the River Jordan.

Sure enough the tracks went right down to the creek and disappeared. She had come down the creek. But Brown insisted, that she had all the markings of his Maggie the miracle milkmaker who had misplaced herself. Witnesses prevailed and Brown took Maggie home.

I contend that there is a Baptist identity. There are Baptist spots on our herd and you can tell them from the others.

There's a Thomas Helwys spot: "I'll serve the King, I'll fight for the King. I'm willing to die for the king, but the King is not Lord of the conscience. And so, that very King whose name is in the front of the favorite Baptist Bible, King James, put him to death.

There's a Roger Williams spot: "To call a nation a 'Christian Nation' may make a nation of hypocrites; but it will not make one single true believer."

There's a John Leland spot: "The fondness of magistrates to foster Christianity has done it more harm than all the persecutions ever did."

There's a Gardner Taylor spot: "We need church-state sep-

aration so that neither will ever hold the other in a bear hug."

And there's a Truett spot, and a J.M. Dawson spot, and one shaped like Maston and Estep and, yes, Newport.

So, without those spots you may be a wonderful person, maybe a devout and dedicated Christian, far closer to the Jesus model than I may ever be, but frankly, my dear, you are not a Baptist. I personally and passionately believe that Baptist Christians are an identifiable breed. One of our marks is separation of church and state. There is no doubt that there is an unbroken chain in our "baptist bonafides" from soul freedom to religious liberty to the separation of church and state, all part of the package.

Thank God Texas Baptists are not among those so-called, semi, pseudo anti-Baptists who have turned away from our blood-bought heritage.

The proposed White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives would be a turning away from the American way in church-state relations. We have never in our nation's history had a federal office for funding religious groups. The relatively low-level people in the White House who were charged with making connections for faith groups had no "initiatives" and more important no budget.

This proposal by President Bush would have Madison and Jefferson spinning in their graves: Five billion dollars to be funneled through churches. Mr. Bush insists that it would be done "without changing the nature of those groups." How many organizations in this real world do you know that are not shaped to some degree by their funding? And all this activism is itself set in motion by an idea.

"Charitable-choice" is a whole set of tinkering with established law that allows government money to flow into "pervasively sectarian" organizations, mostly churches and church agencies. For years tax monies were taken and used for a range of social causes by "religiously affiliated" institutions. Since the first so-called "charitable-choice" amendment was tacked on the Welfare-to-Work laws in 1996 by Senator John Ashcroft, it has been "Katie bar the door." Our tax dollars have been flowing freely into profoundly proselytizing programs.

This scheme is bad for the citizen. We do not know what our tax dollar is buying, there is little, in some cases no accountability on the part of the receiving spender.

It's bad for the church. He who pays the fiddler calls the tune. Ultimately there will be regulations and guidelines, must be, ought to be. And there will be reporting (pages of questions to answer) and monitoring. How's that for religious freedom?

So folks all across the political spectrum are beginning to get a little nervous about "charitable-choice." Is it really so loving after all? How long will there be a choice?

At the very least Baptist Christians should lead all concerned citizens in calling for extensive Congressional hearing on "charitable choice." Surely, the Congress can do that. But then, maybe they'd rather be investigating something. ■

GWB VISITS FBC

The First Faith-Based Programs Meeting

An Interview with Dr. Roger Paynter

Pastor of First Baptist Church, Austin, Texas

The picture on the front page of the Austin-American was eye-catching. President elect George W. Bush in a metal folding chair, encircled by thirty dignitaries. Behind was a multi-colored bulletin board emblazoned with pictures of youth groups, a cross decorated with a fish symbol, posters advertising “Angels Over Austin,” and names like Mary Kathryn, Jeff, and Jean. What were these national leaders doing in the Youth Department of FBC, Austin?

Two days earlier President-elect Bush invited these thirty ministers and religious leaders to meet with him to discuss his plans to expand greatly the role of churches and charities in federal welfare programs. The closed meeting at FBC Austin lasted more than an hour. Bush reportedly asked the leaders how his administration should proceed with “faith based” initiatives, a catch-phrase for providing funds for churches and private charities to take over government welfare functions and for using tax breaks and incentives to spur charitable donations.

In less than one month after taking his oath, President Bush created a White House Office of Faith Based Action, which would “encourage religious institutions to compete to run drug, poverty, and other social programs now administered by government agencies.” Many religious leaders expressed concern, fearing the office will lead to government interference with their ministries, favor politically-connected ministers, and will violate the separation of church and state by providing government funds for what amounts to proselytizing.

The day after the meeting at FBC, Austin, the Editor had lunch with the pastor, Dr. Roger Paynter and one of his members (and one of our favorite writers), attorney Hal Haralson. The discussion was most interesting. As pastor of the church, Roger was invited to attend the entire meeting, which was closed to the press. The story of how this meeting came to be held at FBC, plus many behind-the-scene details, make this interview interesting as well as vital for understanding President Bush’s proposal.

Editor: Why and when did then Governor Bush choose FBC for the meeting?

Paynter: There has never been a clear reason given for their choice, other than the fact that he was in Austin during the transition, we are a downtown church, he has been to First Baptist on one other occasion, and we have long been involved in providing ministry to the downtown area. Or, it could simply have been that First Methodist was booked!

Q. Who chose the Youth Assembly Room for the meeting and what preparations were made?

A. Members of the Bush “advance team” came to our building and chose that room because it was bright, colorful, focused on youth and had more potential for a good “photo op.” Three different people came at three different times during the 24 hours prior to the meeting and met with our Minister to Students, Kevin Mitchell. Each person had a different idea about how the room should be arranged, which included moving furniture several times, painting the main wall, covering the wall with different posters and pennants, etc. Kevin worked with the Bush team until 11:00 p.m. on Tuesday evening only to have them come on Wednesday morning, change their minds and rearrange the room one more time. Several times Kevin had to remind them that this room belonged to our youth group, that our youth had picked out the color schemes and decorations and that it could not be severely altered for photo opportunities.

Q. When President elect Bush arrived, did you greet him?

A. The Secret Service came and got me from my office exactly six minutes before Mr. Bush arrived and briefed me on what to say. The remainder of our staff was sequestered in the office under the supervision of the Secret Service. When the motorcade pulled up to the front door, I walked out and said, “Mr. President-elect, my name is Roger Paynter and I want to welcome you to First Baptist Church.” Before I could finish, Bush replied, “Yes, I know who you are. We met last year at the Martin Luther King service at Central Presbyterian. You had to read that difficult passage of scripture about the genealogy of Jesus and I told you then that I was impressed that you got through all those names without stumbling.” That was impressive and caught my attention. I then asked him if he was ready to go upstairs for the meeting and he said, “In a minute. It looks like the Secret Service has your staff held hostage. Let’s go liberate them.” And he proceeded to cross our atrium into the office where he talked with every member of our staff, shaking hands and signing a few autographs. He was personable and engaging and in that moment I think the members of my staff who voted for Al Gore would have changed their vote!

Q. Who were some of the religious leaders present? Were evangelicals represented?

A. Bishop Fiorenza, President of the U.S. Catholic Bishops

was present as was the President of the American Jewish Congress, Jim Wallis of Sojourners, Tony Evans of Promise Keepers, Ron Sider of Evangelicals for Social Action, Rep. Floyd Flake who is a congressman from the Bronx as well as an A.M.E. pastor, Rev. Cheryl Sanders, A.M.E. pastor from Washington, D.C., Eugene Rivers, head of a project in Boston, and Rev. Kirbyjohn Caldwell of Windsor Park United Methodist Church in Houston. An Imam from Detroit was also there. In addition, Marvin Olasky, editor of *World* magazine and the author of *Compassionate Conservatism* and the Honorable Stephen Goldberg, (I think that is his name) former Mayor of Indianapolis.

Q. You also told me the President elect pulled you aside to ask a private question—do you mind sharing that with our readers?

A. Not at all. At the close of the meeting which lasted almost 90 minutes, everyone had an opportunity to shake Mr. Bush's hand and make personal comments to him. After everyone had done so, there was a moment when everyone had stepped back to give him room and allow the Secret Service to step forward. For several minutes Mr. Bush was standing alone and I was standing near his side. He turned to me during this time and said, "Roger, I really want my administration to be strongly influenced by my faith. Tell me how I can do that." You can imagine that I was stunned. What I said was, "Mr. President-elect, the book of James says that faith without works is dead, which means that if you want your faith to be taken seriously in the White House, then you need to find tangible ways to express your convictions. Historically, the most credible way to do this is to care for those in our society who are on the margins—the poor, those who experience all kinds of discrimination, and those who need a word and sign of hope. If you will be a President that gets out of the White House and goes to these people and listens to them, then those who are cynical will have to take you seriously. Secondly, because there will be forces both within and outside of the White House who will be opposed to you expressing your faith, you need to surround yourself with a balanced group of people who will regularly pray with you and speak the truth in love." He paused and said, "That makes a lot of sense."

Q. What were your impressions of the religious leaders present? Why were they chosen?

A. First, not all of them had voted for Bush and he quickly acknowledged this. He started the meeting by sharing his journey of faith and asking us to give him guidance on what he could say about his faith in his Inaugural Address and any suggestions we might have about the possibility of a Faith-based office in the White House. That opened up a flood of conversation and opinion, with the Catholic Bishop reminding him that the Catholic Church had been doing faith-based ministry for a long time and that Catholic Charities was the number two provider of social services behind the Federal Government. Several of the African-American pastors talked about strong ministries they have in urban areas such as

Boston, Pittsburgh, Houston, and Detroit. In addition, several of the African-American pastors made statements to indicate that they were not followers of Jesse Jackson and they were more concerned about reaching their communities than taking on every political issue.

The Rabbi (President of the American Jewish Congress) and I were the only two people to mention the danger that a Faith-Based office held for the historic separation between Church and State. Mr. Bush dismissed our concern, simply saying, "Don't worry. Nothing will happen to harm that separation." His response in that moment was flippant and naïve. Joining him in dismissing that concern was Jim Wallis of Sojourners and Ron Sider, both involved in the Call to Renewal movement. Wallis told me in private that his primary concern was for the poor and he did not have time to waste on some theoretical constitutional principle when people were hungry. Sider told me he thought the Baptist Joint Committee had become an extremist group over this issue.

Q. What was the expressed purpose of the meeting?

A. The expressed purpose was for this group to be a sounding board concerning the possibility of establishing a Faith-Based office in the White House. However, it became obvious that this decision had already been made and that Bush was wanting help with gaining an appropriate "faith-language" to use in his public declarations and that this was a media event that gave the impression that the faith community at large was supportive of this idea.

Q. Was any opposition or discontent expressed by the participants?

A. I mentioned the concerns raised about church-state separation. The only other discontent raised came from the Rev. Cheryl Sanders, an A.M.E. pastor in Washington, D.C. Rev. Sanders pointed out to Mr. Bush that her congregation was located in a ghetto just 6 blocks away from the White House and yet a million miles away from hope. She pointed out that their church had gone to great lengths to educate their youth about sexual abstinence, worked very hard to see that 98% of their kids graduated from high school, taught their young fathers about family responsibility, and provided enormous numbers of adult males to patrol the hallways of the schools to help stop violence. She had embraced all of the conservative values Mr. Bush espoused. Yet, when these kids graduated they still could not get jobs or get out of the ghetto because they live in a society that still suffers enormously from racial prejudice and racial injustice. What could he do about that, she wanted to know.

Mr. Bush made, at that moment, a very cryptic remark to Rev. Sanders to the effect that he did not know what she was talking about when she spoke of injustice and he didn't know how he could help her. Later, to his credit, he apologized, saying that his comment had been curt and rude and that he needed her help in understanding the problem. He went on to say that he had grown up in a privileged setting, that he had never wanted to be President when he was growing up, only

the Baseball Commissioner, and that he needed a lot of help in understanding issues of injustice. It was an honest, even vulnerable answer and yet, the truth of his answer was chilling. Indeed, he is a person of great privilege, he has not experienced injustice and even more, has made very little effort to expose himself to the realities of injustice. That admission on his part was why I gave him the advice I did when I had the opportunity.

His bias against government programs was very clear, combined with his fascination with what several urban congregations were doing for the poor. Indeed, his still young, evangelical faith is driving him to think that the answers to our social concerns are much simpler than can be implemented. I think he is trying very hard to act on his faith and to develop a social conscience, but his anti-government bias and his rather naïve perspective on church “solutions” is leading him to some simplistic answers.

Q. One of those present was Marvin Olasky, University of Texas journalism professor, editor of *World* magazine (an ultra-conservative religious journal), and self-acclaimed religious counselor to George W. Bush. How did he come across?

A. I read Olasky’s column in the Austin paper so I was prepared to hear a lot from him in the meeting. However, he sat on the edge of the room and said little until the end when he declared that *World* had the fourth largest newsmagazine circulation behind *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. Of course, he did not say how FAR behind the Big Three they were in circulation, but he implied that he had lots of readers. He used that declaration to pledge to Mr. Bush that his magazine could be counted on to “get the Bush message out” in an uncritical fashion. That one statement, in which he sacrificed all journalistic integrity, told me all I needed to know about Mr. Olasky. He is the founder of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Austin, a tiny 5-point Calvinistic congregation near the University of Texas campus. Olasky is a former self-proclaimed communist and atheist who converted to

Orthodox Judaism a few years back only to then convert to fundamentalist Christianity and begin the magazine and church while teaching journalism at UT. In my other encounters with him in Austin I have found him to be argumentative, aggressive, and a historical revisionist, constantly quoting “facts” about the Founding Fathers to support his ultra-conservative positions.

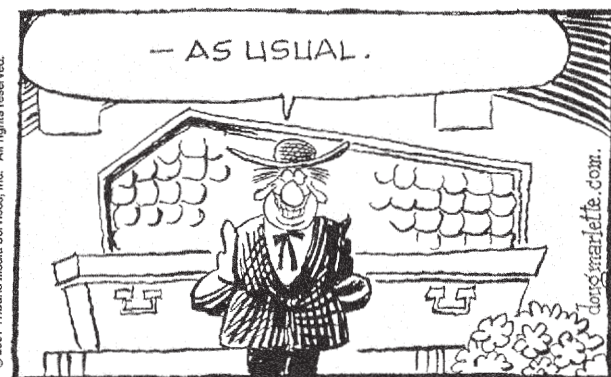
The Sunday following the meeting at FBC, Mr. Olasky was on CNN in a dialogue with Welton Gaddy. Welton did a superb job of countering every point of Olasky, finally getting him to admit that he had close ties to Pat Robertson. This is not surprising, but it had never been indicated in any of Mr. Olasky’s columns in the Austin paper.

Q. What do you think of the President’s “Faith-Based” programs proposal?

A. According to the Saturday, March 3, *New York Times*, the administration may well be in trouble. Not only is Mr. Bush experiencing criticism from those who want to protect the “wall of separation,” but now his proposal is being criticized by Pat Robertson because it allows “non-Western” religions such as Hare Krishna and newer religious movements like the Church of Scientology and Unification Church to get in line for money. Surprise! Did they NEVER consider this possibility? This is not unlike what James Dunn has always said about prayer in schools—whose prayers? Is their world-view so parochial that when the word “faith-based” is used they think it only means evangelical Christians? On the other hand, Olasky has now come to the awareness that if the government provides funds they just might begin to tell churches HOW they can do their business and whether they can be evangelistic.

My guess is that eventually the office will be closed but Bush will be able to say to the Religious Right that he kept a campaign promise. That is probably “wishful thinking” on my part, but you asked!

Q. Did President Bush’s view of the media come through in the meeting?



A. The media was not allowed into our meeting except for less than 3 minutes at the end of our time (despite all that we did to make our youth room look good for photographs!). Before the media was brought in, he apologized to us that he even had to talk to the media and then said to us, “Now watch how I handle these guys.” He then proceeded to make a series of “sound-bite” statements about faith-based initiatives and social programs and the need for America to recapture religious values. Each statement was a “stand alone” statement and no sentence followed another in any kind of logical progression. The media was not permitted to ask questions, only to take pictures and turn on the microphone and then they were ushered back out of the building. In fact, the President did not leave the building until all of the media had dispersed. I don’t suppose his attitude was anymore cynical towards the media than any other politician, but it was clear in his tone of voice and facial expression that he viewed them with suspicion.

Q. Any final comments or observations you would like to share with CET readers?

A. While it was very interesting to be part of this meeting, it was a surreal experience at best. I was amazed at the amount of preparation that went into this 90 minute meeting. The Secret Service built two security towers on adjacent buildings for this one meeting. At what cost to the taxpayer? The “advance team” spent all of one day re-doing our youth Sunday School room three times. The local media interviewed me four times for over an hour and used 30 seconds at the most with none of what I said about church-state separation. The President moved back and forth at times between listening in earnest on the one hand and then making somewhat derisive remarks at other times. At least three times he apologized for being “sarcastic.” He is personable, likeable, and at times, a bit petulant. He reminded me of friends in college who had great social skills and were well-liked but who came to your dorm room the night before a test begging for the class notes because they had never bothered to study. And, because of their charm, you always gave them the notes! I think he was telling us the truth when he said that he never wanted to be the President, only the Commissioner of Baseball.

When Republican friends asked me about the meeting, they wanted me to tell them how wonderful Mr. Bush is and when Democratic friends asked me, they wanted me to tell them that Mr. Bush was dumb and mean. He is much more complex than either of those caricatures. He is charming. He is not dumb. He has a good sense of humor. He is quick to rely on other people’s expertise and admit his own shortcomings. At other times he is more confident than he should be about some issues. One thing is very clear. He IS savvy about people,

he is intelligent, and he is quite the politician.

One final vignette. After the frustration of working with the Bush advance team for a day, our student minister, Kevin Mitchell, was then bitten by the Secret Service “bomb” dog! They had brought a German Shepherd into our building to sniff out possible bombs. The handler was distracted momentarily and the dog clamped his mouth on Kevin’s leg, tearing his slacks and drawing blood. Fortunately there was an EMS unit that travels with the President and they attended to Kevin’s bite. However, he had to get a tetanus shot the next day, plus purchase a new pair of slacks. At this writing, the Secret Service has yet to pay for any of this, though they gave Kevin their address. Our custodian, Robert Moore, philosophically mused, “Well, Kevin, look at it this way—at least you were bitten by the President’s dog!”

There is a sense in which I feel as if we had been bitten by the President’s pet, the “faith-based” initiative meeting. It was our privilege to host the President of the United States and numerous national religious leaders. However, as Baptists, we can not endorse any idea that would damage the Wall of Separation or allow our conscience to be purchased with government funds or have any government directives as to how we should conduct our ministry. No matter the President’s charm, no matter the honor of it all, this is an idea that will bite both the church and the state.

Editorial Postscript: The *Christian Century* (September, 2000) carried an interesting article on Marvin Olasky’s “compassionate conservatism” and President Bush’s faith-based remedies. The writer notes that most of the nation’s poor are the working poor, whose poverty can be largely attributed to social inequities, and who elude “compassionate conservatism,” which some say is a program for transforming the “underclass” into the working poor. The real claim the working poor have upon the rest of us is a claim less to compassion than to distributive justice, a claim which compassionate conservatives have trouble understanding.

Faith-based programs are plagued with problems, not the least of which is how a “faith”-based program can be administered without the religious values of that “faith.” In addition, what faiths are out of bounds? Philip Jenkins, professor of history and religious studies at Penn State and author of a new book on cults and new religions in American society states: “Either you fund all faith groups, even groups you radically don’t like, or you fund none. . . . How do you distinguish between a Methodist and a Moonie? The answer is, you can’t.”

Rep. John Lewis of Georgia concludes, “I don’t want to see religious groups out trying to convert or proselytize with federal dollars.” Nor do I.—JET ■

What Is Really New About The President's Faith-Based Proposals?

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By Dwight A. Moody, Dean of the Chapel
Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY

President Bush made good on his campaign promise and created a White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. He wants more federal dollars to flow to those religious groups that supply community services.

In Kentucky, those federal dollars will come hard on the heels of state money already pouring into the treasuries of churches, hospitals, colleges, and various religiously-affiliated organizations.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky gives money to the children's homes, such as those run by Baptists and Methodists. This is a per diem amount intended to support children referred to these organizations by state and local courts.

In Northern Kentucky, the Commonwealth has a contract with the Catholic Diocese to provide drug and alcohol counseling in the area high schools. The Kentucky Excellence in Education Scholarships (known as the KEES program) allows every high school student to receive up to \$2500 per year in college financial aid payable to any institution in the state, public or private. This is essentially a voucher program.

In all of the programs above (and many others), the money goes directly to the religious institution, not to the individual. Last summer, the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision allowing states to provide bus transportation to children going to religious schools, such as Lexington Christian Academy and Owensboro Catholic High School.

Then there is Medicaid and Medicare, which funnels millions of dollars in government money to hospitals affiliated with religious groups. Our list can include federal student aid money that comes directly to private colleges and universities to support students. These are all modeled upon the very successful G. I. Bill that educated an entire post-war population.

All of this helps us understand two things. First, the proposals of President Bush are not so radical. He wants to accelerate a trend that has been emerging for thirty years; and he wants to make it public and explicit.

Second, the famous "wall of separation" between church and state is, in fact, more like a split rail fence. It marks the

boundary between two centers of cultural influence; but it is hardly sturdy enough to prevent an exchange of resources and influence. It was Thomas Jefferson who introduced into our political rhetoric the phrase, "a wall of separation."

These words express our national conviction that the government should not control the church, nor should the church control the government. "A free church in a free state" has been our policy.

I support this fundamental element of our national history and identity. I am alarmed at both the religious rhetoric that belittles this principle and the government programs that blur the distinction between church and state.

But religion also has helped build and maintain a wall of civility and morality, protecting American society from anarchy, cynicism, and outright wickedness. Thank God religious faith is alive and well in Washington and Frankfort, Kentucky.

The Bible has two wonderful wall stories. Joshua led the people of Israel to march seven times around Jericho and those walls came tumbling down; it was a prelude to the conquest of the Promised Land. A thousand years later, Nehemiah equipped the people with tools and weapons as they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem; it was the end of the Exile.

There is a time to tear down and a time to build up.

We must tear down barriers that protect public officials from the religious ideals of justice, peace, and freedom; and we must remove as well those counter-productive policies insulating elected people from the power of religious practices like prayer, confession, and forgiveness.

But on the other side, we must build strong and wide the legal wall that keeps tax money from ending up in the treasuries of synagogues, churches, or mosques. Religious organizations and agencies must resist the temptation to seek government money to fund the work that God has called them to do.

It is not always easy to know when to tear down and when to build up. ■

Should This Marriage Continue?

By Hal Haralson,

Attorney in Austin, Texas

The young woman who sat before me had called the day before to ask advice about getting a divorce.

I told her I didn't give legal advice over the phone but would be glad to meet with her at my office. Since I don't charge for an initial consultation we could talk and I could help her decide what to do.

This was a practice I started almost 30 years ago. It enabled the client to determine whether they wanted me to represent them. It also gave me an opportunity to decide if I wanted them as a client.

I get lots of calls wanting to know what my fee is for a certain legal problem.

Same answer. If it's not important enough for us to sit down and talk, then I can't help you. This is about the same as you calling and saying, "My car's broken down. How much will it cost to fix it?"

Two things about this young woman struck me immediately suggesting this was not the usual divorce conference.

The first was the breathtaking beauty of this woman. She could have worked as a model in New York City anytime she wanted to.

The second was the cool attitude with which she began the conversation.

"Why don't we begin with you telling me about your marriage?"

I've learned that most people want someone to listen to their story. Answers are important but that's not the real purpose of most of these interviews.

After 30 years of practice I thought I had heard all the "divorce" stories.

I was wrong. I wasn't prepared for this one. Jane [not her name] began telling her story.

"Someone told me you were a minister before you became a lawyer. I thought that might enable you to answer some of my questions. Joe [not his name] and I have been married about two years now. We took a vacation in the mountains about six months into our marriage. Sort of a second honeymoon."

"We were blissfully happy. The marriage was all we had hoped for. Both of us had good jobs and finances were no problem. We had talked about having a baby in a year or so."

"The narrow two-lane highway wound its way upward. The scenery was breathtaking. There was a high bluff on our right. We rounded a sharp curve and a truck hauling logs appeared to be traveling way too fast. He pulled into our lane and we had no room to maneuver. There was no space that

would allow us to avoid a collision."

"Joe grabbed me and shoved me down to the floor board of our car and covered me with his body. Everything went blank."

"I woke up two days later in the intensive care room of a hospital. The doctor said I would be very sore for several weeks, but as far as he could tell, there should be no further complications."

"What about my husband?"

"What your husband did when he threw his body on yours saved your life. It almost cost him his. I'm afraid he will be paralyzed from his neck down for the rest of his life."

"He will be in a coma for several weeks. It's impossible to know just how long. He can go home eventually, but will require constant care."

"The doctors predictions were right. My husband has been home for nearly a year. I could not have made it without the help of friends. One in particular has been especially helpful. He is Joe's closest friend."

"These circumstances have brought Bill [not his name] and me to a point that we realize we are attracted to each other. We are both aware of this mutual attraction but have allowed nothing to happen so far. The feelings I have for Bill cause me to ask questions I have found no answers for."

"I'm only 25 years old. My whole life is ahead of me. Am I to spend it bound to a man who will never move? Never to have children? Never again to know the pleasure of a sexual relationship?"

"I know his condition is what it is because of his love for me. If he had not thrown his body on mine, I would probably be dead and he would be alive. That makes my decision worse."

"We married for better or worse and I believe that. Yet I find myself attracted to someone else."

The conversation lasted almost an hour. She talked. I listened.

I had no pat answers. I gave her the name of a therapist I thought might help her. She never returned.

I have often wondered how she finally resolved her problem. How would you have handled this situation? Are there any scriptures that would have eased her pain? Was divorce appropriate here?

This interview took place almost 30 years ago. Somewhere these two play out the drama that began on that mountain highway. ■

The First First-Lady

By Calvin Miller, Professor of Preaching

Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama

Editor's Note: Addressed to his wife, Calvin Miller's inspiring tribute to his mother is published by permission from his autobiographical work, *A Covenant for all Seasons: Wheaton, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1984.*

Perspective

Three decades past I skipped along beside
Her. Soul tired—I carried grain and grumbled.
How tall she looked! How large the fields! Her stride
Was smooth. Attempting to keep pace, I stumbled.
She sat the grain where all the grass seemed dead,
And ran her fingers through my tangled thatch.
“Some day the fields will seem so small,” she said.
“When you’ve grown large, the fields will be no match.”
The fields are very big,” I said. “You’ll see!”
She grinned and kissed my immaturity.
Our shadows were El Greco-esque as we
Trudged across the endless earthen sea.
She sleeps beneath those fields where she stood tall.
And I, at last, can see the fields are small.

She was some twenty years before you. She was there when my father left—when the bombs shattered the balmy air above faraway Hawaii. With her covey of little ones and no means of support except her two good hands, her strong intention was to serve. She vowed that her life would give life to her brood of nine.

I don't know that she was brave, but I remember her as fearless. I believe she saw fear as an unnecessary tremulous contagion. Fear was always contracted in dread and spread by those who volunteered to quake. If she was afraid, I never knew it. In her confident presence, I grew up braver than I might have been.

I never knew I was poor, either. From time to time, there are those who do spin straw into gold. She was one of those who could create a sense of strong abundance from the thinnest poverty.

The house my father left to us was unfinished. However, not knowing what a finished house looked like, I was not aware of its uncompleted state. I could tell it was small—three rooms and no indoor plumbing. We burned wood when the Oklahoma winter was short, and coal when it was not.

My mother was such a pragmatist that none of us ever viewed her as a miracle worker. Wood ranges were supposed to yield hot berry pies and overflow with yeasty loaves of bread. For countless winters I stood before that iron icon and learned that abundance is never what we have but what we suppose we have. I was rich because my mother seemed rich and I never saw the actual poverty of those days.

At Christmas, she would read Dickens's Christmas stories by the light of a kerosene lamp—which we called a “coal-oil” lamp. With never so much as a goose of our own for Christmas dinner, we all felt sorry for the Cratchits. In the midst of a life that others viewed as desperate and hard, my mother's inner wealth was spirit so abundant that it fostered and made real a luxuriant deception: I too was rich.

Still, thrift is the kinsman to wealth. Nothing was to be thrown away. I only later saw the wonderful wealth she demonstrated. Life was an economy! Subtle were her greatest lessons. She gave dignity to thrift. She taught all her children to feel pride in constructing the indispensable from things others threw away. A rummage sale bristled with opportunities to keep the winter warm. Secondhand clothes were not vile items cast away by others. Hand-me-downs from my two older brothers were an opportunity to wear things that had already twice proven themselves worthy. There were wonderful things all about us that, in their simplicity, were usable, and left us no need to frequent pretentious shops. Those stores were for people with limited ingenuity.

She also taught us that we were only managers of heaven's gifts. The Lord provided everything. Our daily bread had come from Him, my mother said, and like manna, it lay on the ground to be taken fresh every morning.

Our house backed up to “the tracks.” The great locomotives ran only an alley away from our rough-weathered dwelling. The tracks were the parallel footprints of the mammoth dragons that stalked the land in which I lived. The trains came day and night, and left me dreaming by the steel rails. I much romanticized the great locomotives. Enraptured, I waved at the engineers who rode the iron dragons like powerful warlords on armored beasts.

I think she knew how my reveries constructed dragons from these “puffer-bellies” that drew strings of namby-pamby cars along the silver strands. Some said the tracks went all the way to St. Louis and ended in Los Angeles, but neither of these suppositions intrigued me. The rails held a mysterious enchantment of their own. The tracks were real; so were the steel dragons. So real that their heavy iron wheels would flatten pennies to the size of silver dollars. Those same iron wheels sent earthquakes up and down the line as the grumbling steam rattled every window in our tiny house.

But the tracks were not dreaming places to her. While I celebrated their intrigue, she celebrated their gravel beds in which the cross ties, splintered by the spikes, held more than rails. The old wooden cars jolted and banged around during harvest. They

would leak, and their spillage was the manna—the daily bread—the windfall to our economy.

She would take a pail and broom and go to the tracks to sweep the spilled grain, and I would accompany her. The grain we found not only fed our meager flock of chickens, but was staple in our diet as well.

When the cars were full of wheat, so indeed were the rusty barrels behind our house where we stored the grain we had retrieved from the leaky cars. At harvest time, we worked at gathering the immense piles of trackside grain. I despised the practicality rooted in her thrift. Yet her mundane view of the tracks held life for all her little ones.

I know now it is sometimes necessary to make trains out of dragons and demythologize strings of cars until we can see a kind of life in them. I took the bread for granted and supposed that it only existed to nourish my imagination. Out of my mother's practical concerns came the bread for dreaming, and she knew that dreams would all degenerate to poverty if her little ones went hungry.

I was the seventh child, born just after the older children had absorbed the slow-departing pain of the Great Depression. Her firstborn was barely eight when Black Tuesday occurred. In her painful management of life during the "dirty" thirties, she tirelessly celebrated the warm abundance of even that improvident providence. She knew life would be handled; harvest would come. There would be wheat between the rails.

"We are gleaners," she seemed to say as we crossed the fields on the way home from the "far tracks." This was a second spur a mile or so from our home, and we gleaned the distant rails as well as those at hand. The distant rails were always the most fruitful: since the old cars sat there longer, their spillage was more abundant. Thus we crossed the wider fields carrying sacks or pails to gather all the grain we could.

I hated the work. There was little romance in lifting the chubby burlap sacks of grain. The drudgery of such toil crushed by imagination into powder. Reluctantly I was learning to trade enchantment for bread.

They say every son marries his mother, and though I cannot prove this proverb, it does seem to me now that you and my mother were remarkably alike. You both loved things that should be, but not too much to deal with things that must be. It has always been my nature to dream the turbulence from whirlpools. You, like her, could see so well the troubled waters I

denied. How much I've had to trust the both of you to tell me where my visions could not swim through cold reality. Yet your honesty, like hers, was compassionate. Her greatness once protected a child, and your greatness, the visions of a too-reluctant man.

And yet, the fond distinction between the child and the man I learned by walking the fields and crossing "the tracks." I cannot, as the apostle Paul suggests, put away these childish things because I have become a man. A thousand times no! For in such childish things is wisdom rooted. I know that in the crossing of those distant fields, my manhood was defined.

Postscript: Calvin Miller recently reflected on lessons learned from his mother:

There were a number of adages that she spun out that, woven into a single fabric over the years, would become the common tapestry of my sixty-year old world view:

- *Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.* She was big on the golden rule.
 - *The Lord is my shepherd.* She was big on the golden rule.
 - *If you have two pence, spend one for bread and the other for hyacinth for your soul.* She wanted her children to work hard some of the time, but not all of it.
 - *No use cryin' over spilt milk, you only make it salty for the cat.* This is another way of saying, *when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.*
 - *Laugh and the world laughs with you. Weep and you weep alone.* An alternate way of saying, *misery loves company but doesn't get much of it.*
 - *Every tub must sit on its own bottom.* A "Poor Richardism" for, *be proactive, take responsibility for your actions.*
- But while these grand adages kept my eyes on the horizons of emotional and spiritual maturity, I also appreciate the common things she taught me:
- *Wash your face.*
 - *Don't hit your sisters.*
 - *Wear your galoshes to school, it's raining.*
 - *It's time for your Saturday-night bath.*
 - *Always wear the best you have to the house of God.*
 - *Don't hold your book so close, you'll ruin your eyes.*
 - *If your teachers have to spank you for misbehaving at school, you'll get another one when you get home.*
 - *Sit up and listen to the preacher—don't giggle in church.* ■

To All Our Mothers We Say, "Thank You Mom"—Editor



Brann vs. the Baptists: Violence in Southern Religion

By Charles Wellborn

Professor of Religion Emeritus, Florida State University

Mainstream Southern religion has rarely been distinguished by either restraint or lethargy. Historically Southerners have, at least partly, agreed with Augustus Longstreet's "honest Georgian" who preferred "his whiskey straight and his politics and religion red hot."¹

The result has often been scenes of conflict, usually verbal but sometimes violent, within the ranks of the predominant southern religious groups. The current arguments dividing Southern Baptists are but the latest in a long series of disputes, going back in history to the days before the Civil War, when Southern Baptists split with their northern brethren, largely over the issue of slavery. In the 1920s, amid controversy similar in some respects to the present situation, several leading professors at Southern Baptist seminaries were driven from their posts and went to other institutions, just as many teachers have been forced to do today. Such internecine struggles have often amazed outside observers. The Scopes "monkey trial" in Tennessee and the flamboyant antics of the Reverend J. Frank Norris² in Texas strike many people as exaggerated, overly dramatic, and foggily emotional. Yet to dismiss such personalities and events as mere aberrations in the history of Southern religion is unjustified. They are indicative, albeit in a grotesque way, of the deep roots of "Bible Belt" religion in the American frontier culture.

The emergence of the American South as the "Bible Belt" was profoundly shaped by the unique experiences of the early 19th century Second Awakening camp meetings in Kentucky and surrounding areas. The revivalistic style of Christian conversion, set out as the norm in those meetings, both posited and demanded a decisive and virtually instantaneous separation of the converted person from the secular, non-Christian, Satan-dominated "world." In the frontier atmosphere of the camp meetings this separation was sometimes validated by distinctive emotional and physical manifestations (the notorious "jerks") and always by a deep-seated hostility toward certain selected and easily identifiable aspects of the "world"—liquor, gambling, dancing, and the theater, for instance. This hostility was not one-sided. Secularists, along with representatives of more genteel religious movements, found the Southern revival experiences distasteful and disturbing. Denominational groups such as Presbyterians and Episcopalians refused to participate, but other groups, particularly Baptists, Methodists, and Disciples of Christ, benefited enormously in terms of numbers from the meetings. And the gap between "Bible belt"

religion and its detractors sometimes, and not unexpectedly, was bridged with violence.

In the last decade of the 19th century William Cowper Brann, self-styled the "Iconoclast," indulged in a series of hot-headed assaults upon a large and influential segment of Southern Protestantism. He attacked Texas Baptists and their most important educational institution, Baylor University. His story offers not only a fascinating vignette of Southern religious history but also a case study in the violent working out of the hostility between church and world.

Born in rural Illinois, Brann spent most of his adult life as an itinerant journalist. At the age of 39 he settled in Waco, Texas, which became the headquarters for a new magazine, *The Iconoclast*. This journal, a monthly compendium of personal philosophy, invective, and current comment, rapidly achieved an amazing degree of national and even international popularity. By 1895 Brann could describe his publication as "the first American magazine that ever secured 100,000 readers in a single year."³ The staple ingredients in *The Iconoclast* menu, as the title indicates, were unrestrained attacks upon the central ideals and institutions of the contemporary political, social, and religious scene. Brann called his journal an "intellectual cocktail," and his verbal and journalistic talents served up a heady brew.

Waco, where Brann first came as an editorial writer for one of the local newspapers, was incongruously known both as the "Athens of Texas" and "Six Shooter Depot." Both slogans could to some extent be justified. The sixth largest city in Texas at that time, Waco was the home of four important educational institutions. They were Waco Female Academy (Methodist), Catholic Academy of the Sacred Heart, Paul Quinn University (African Methodist), and Baylor University (Baptist). Of these the largest and best known—indeed, the pride of Texas Baptists—was Baylor, headed since 1851 by Dr. Rufus Burleson, a Baptist minister widely respected in Southern religious circles.

And, like ancient Athens as described by the Apostle Paul in Acts 17, Waco could be perceived as filled with people who were "very religious." Indeed, from the 1930s until after World War II, another popular sobriquet for Waco was "one tall building surrounded by Baptists."⁴ No skyscraper marked Waco's skyline in Brann's day, but the city of 25,000 contained more than fifty churches, most of them Baptist with a sprin-

king of Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Catholics. Four monthly religious pamphlets, three of them Baptist, were regularly published in Waco.

Coupled uncomfortably with the educational and religious image of Waco was its reputation as “Six Shooter Depot,” a hard-drinking, fast-living frontier community, many of whose citizens wore guns regularly in daily life. Shooting deaths were not uncommon, and in the 1880s Waco shared an unusual distinction with only one other American city, Omaha, Nebraska. A city ordinance set aside certain downtown blocks, known as the “Reservation,” where prostitution and associated activities went on virtually unmolested by the city police.

Into this volatile civic atmosphere Brann tossed the explosive contents of *The Iconoclast*. He not only embraced unpopular religious and political beliefs; he also knew that controversy sells magazines. Where there was a divisive issue to exploit, Brann did not hesitate.

The long and bitter conflict between Brann and Waco’s religious forces centered about a number of issues. One of Brann’s favorite targets was the organization called the American Protective Association (A.P.A.), which exploited Protestant-Catholic tensions. Organized in the early 1890s in Canton, Ohio, the A.P.A. was not only anti-Catholic but anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant. It flourished briefly on the American scene and then disappeared. The A.P.A. sponsored traveling lecturers, some of them ex-Catholic priests, to espouse its cause. In April, 1895, Joseph Slattery, ex-priest and recently ordained Baptist minister, gave a series of lectures in Waco, heavily attended and financially supported by the local Protestant majority, especially Baptists. His most flamboyant effort was a “For Men Only” lecture on the evening of April 25. In a previous talk Slattery had made a long list of accusations against the Roman Catholic Church, outlining the so-called “Romish conspiracy” and including the claim that he had personally seen a true copy of a papal bull calling for a Protestant massacre in the United States “on or about the Feast of St. Ignatius in the Year of our Lord, 1893.” He did not explain why the massacre had failed to take place.⁵

Word had spread in Waco that Brann planned to make an

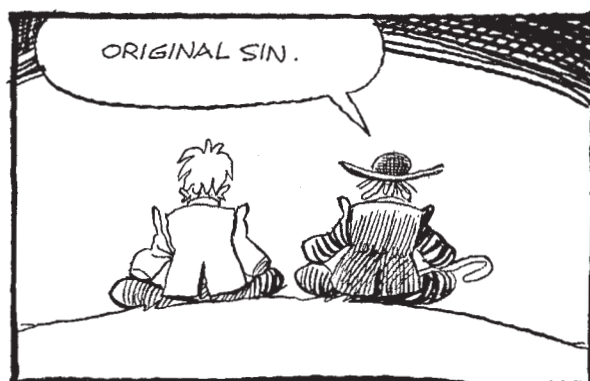
appearance at the Opera House where Slattery was speaking. The editor of *The Iconoclast* had already directed his attention to Slattery. In an edition of magazine published earlier in April, he had written: “Ex-priest Slattery and his ex-nun wife are still at large in the land, pandering to anti-Catholic prejudice and collecting money of cranks. . . . With some hundreds of Protestant preachers in the penitentiaries—and as many of their female parishioners branded as bawds—it were indeed remarkable if all priests were paragons of purity; but Slattery’s sweeping denunciations would be promptly punished by due process of law did Catholic prelates consider him worthy of their serious consideration.”⁶

Slattery had promised to reveal shocking and secret Catholic practices, too dissolute to discuss in mixed company, to his male audience. In the midst of his lecture, he deviated to attack Brann. “He is simply a pipsqueak scrivener who has soiled your city with a calumnious rag called *The Iconoclast*, a fetid tangle of lies and half-truths, hiding his slander behind altars and anti-Christ slogans.”⁷

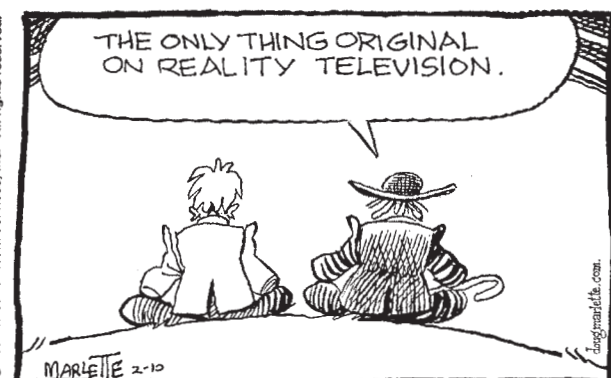
Brann was indeed present in the hall. In the midst of the applause that followed Slattery’s diatribe Brann rose to his feet, waited for silence, and then responded, “You lie and you know it, and I refuse to listen to you.” He then walked leisurely to the door of the Opera House where, according to newspaper accounts of the incident, he blew a contemptuous kiss to the lecturer and left.

Later, Brann hired the Opera House at his own expense and delivered a public lecture replying to Slattery. His opening remarks set the tone of the controversy: “*The Iconoclast* does not please ex-priest Slattery, ‘Baptist minister in good standing,’ and I am not surprised. Its mission, as its name implies, is to expose frauds and abolish fakes, to make unrelenting war upon Humbugs and Hypocrites; hence it is not remarkable that Slattery should regard its existence as a personal affront. It is ever the galled jade that winces; or to borrow from the elegant pulpit vernacular of the Rev. Sam Jones, ‘it’s the hit dog that yelps.’”⁸

Brann included another shot at Slattery and his supporters in the May, 1895, issue of *The Iconoclast*. “Ex-priest



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MARLETTE 2-10

Slattery and his ex-nun wife swooped down upon Waco recently and scooped in several hundred scudi from prurient worldlings and half-baked Protestants. . . . Brother Fight-the-Good-Fight was out in force, and many a Baptist dollar went into the coffers of these brazen adventurers. . . . The audiences were representative of that class of so-called Christians which believes that everyone outside its foolish sectarian fold will go to hell in a hemlock coffin.”⁹

In subsequent issues of his journal Brann continued to berate the A.P.A., which he dubbed the “Aggregation of Pusillanimous Asses,” and the Baptist establishment. He branded the nationally known Baptist minister, T. Dewitt Talmadge, whose columns were carried in 3000 American newspapers, a “wide-lipped blatherskite.” In an article which reveals Brann’s own racial prejudices he objected to the zealous foreign mission efforts of Baptists, while at the same time criticizing the wealth of the churches. “For a specimen of audacity that must amaze Deity, commend me to a crowd of pharasaical plutocrats, piously offering in a hundred thousand dollar church prayers to Him who had not where to lay His head; who pay a preacher \$15,000 per annum to point the way to Paradise, while children must steal or starve. . . . Everywhere the widow is battling with want, while these Pharisees send Bibles and blankets, salvation and missionary soup to a job-lot of niggers, whose souls aren’t worth a soumarkee in blocks of five. . . . Let the heathen rage; we’ve got our hands full at home. I’d rather see the whole black-and-

tan aggregation short on Bibles than one white child crying for bread.”¹⁰

In another issue of *The Iconoclast* Brann turned his caustic sarcasm on the influential monthly publication, the *Baptist Standard* (still today the official journal of Texas Baptists), edited by Dr. J. B. Cranfill, a Baptist patriarch. His special target was the advertising featured in *Standard* pages. “It grieves me to note that the purveyors of ‘panaceas’ for private diseases regard the religious press as the best possible medium for reaching prospective patrons. . . . It shocks my sense of proprieties to see a great religious journal . . . like the Texas *Baptist Standard* flaunting in the middle of a page of jejeune prattle anent the Holy Spirit, a big display ad for the “French Nerve Pill”—guaranteed to restallionize old roues.”¹¹

The event, however, which was to bring Brann’s feud with the Baptists to a raging boiling point was one that shocked and intrigued all Waco. In the spring of 1895 the impending motherhood of an unmarried Baylor student from Brazil, Antonia Teixeira, became public knowledge. Antonia had come to Texas from Brazil at the age of 12, sent there by Baptist missionaries to be educated at Baylor. During her first year at Baylor she was a boarding student on the campus, but then Dr. Burleson, Baylor’s president, took her into his home where, in return for her board, room, and clothes, she assisted Mrs. Burleson with the housework.

Rooming in a house in the Burleson yard and eating his



Used by permission of Ben Sargent

meals with the family was Steen Morris, the brother of Dr. Burleson's son-in-law. Morris worked for his brother, who published a Baptist monthly, *The Guardian*. According to Antonia, Morris sexually attacked her on three occasions, after first drugging her. She further asserted that she had reported the first incident to Mrs. Burleson, but that when Morris denied the story, no one believed her. Thereafter, she remained silent.

In April, 1895, it was discovered that Antonia was pregnant. On June 16 the *Waco Morning News* reported the story in detail, including interviews with the Brazilian girl, Steen Morris, and Dr. Burleson. Morris was arrested on a charge of rape and released on bond, protesting his total innocence. Dr. Burleson denied that his wife had ever been told of any trouble between Antonia and Morris and labeled the idea of rape as preposterous. He declared that Antonia was "utterly untrustworthy. . . and in addition to other faults, the girl was crazy after boys."¹² A daughter was born to Antonia on June 18, but the baby soon died.

The situation was made to order for Brann, who saw the whole affair as a sordid scandal encompassing all the hypocrisy of the Baptists. In the July, 1895, *Iconoclast* he set in motion events which were to lead to the deaths of four men. "Once or twice in a decade a case arises so horrible in conception, so iniquitous in outline, so damnable in detail that it were impossible to altogether ignore it. Such a case has just come to light, involving Baylor University, that bulwark of the Baptist Church."

Brann went on to attack Burleson for using the Brazilian girl as a "scullion maid" in the "kitchen curriculum," instead of giving her an honest education. With regard to her pregnancy, Brann asked rhetorically: "What did the aged president of Baylor, that sanctum sanctorum of the Baptist church, do about it? Did he assist in bringing to justice the man who had dared invade the sanctity of his household. . . ? Not exactly. He rushed into print with a statement to the effect that the child was a thief and 'crazy after the boys.'¹³

Attacks on Burleson were inflammatory enough, but Brann compounded his offense in the eyes of Baptists with a general denunciation of Baylor. "I do know," he wrote, "that Antonia is not the first young girl to be sent from Baylor in disgrace—that she is not the first to complain of assault within its sanctified walls." And he concluded with a dramatic prediction: "I do know that as far as Baylor University is concerned the day of its destiny is over and the star of its fate hath declined; that the brutal treatment the Brazilian girl received at its hands will pass into history as the colossal crime of the age, and that generations yet to be will couple its name with curses."¹⁴

As usual, Brann wrote in hyperbole. His prediction has not come true. But in 1895 his intemperate barbs aroused the resentment of every Baylor and Baptist partisan. Dr. Burleson, after conferring with his Board of Trustees, issued a four-page pamphlet entitled "Baylor and the Brazilian Girl," in which he defended the university's role in the affair. The controversy continued for months, with Brann making new charges and

rehearsing old ones in each succeeding issue of *The Iconoclast*. Morris's rape trial was delayed until June, 1896, resulting finally in a "hung" jury, seven of the jurors voting for conviction, the other five for acquittal. In September, 1896, Antonia Teixeira executed an affidavit exonerating Morris of her charges, then quickly returned to Brazil. Brann, predictably, asserted that the girl had been paid to sign the affidavit: "When Capt. Blair (Morris's attorney) asks the court to dismiss the case . . . let him be required to state why the drawer of the remarkable document purchased Antonia's ticket, and who furnished the funds. Of course, her long conference with Steen Morris and his attorney on the day before her departure may have been merely a social visit. If the currency question was discussed at all, it may have been from a purely theoretical standpoint."¹⁵

In the year that followed the dismissal of the Morris indictment Brann continued to raise questions in print about Baylor and the Baptists. He ridiculed a plan, proposed in the *Baptist Standard*, that Waco Baptists should buy only from Baptist merchants. He attacked Waco's Sunday "blue laws," mocking the preoccupation of Baptists with Sabbath sales while they winked at the Reservation and the city slums. Again and again, he recalled Antonia Teixeira, whose "diploma" from Baylor was a dead illegitimate child.

A new dimension of the controversy emerged in October, 1897. Dr. Burleson was about to retire from the Baylor presidency, and a political struggle to succeed him arose between Dr. B. H. Carroll, chairman of the university's Board of Trustees, and other aspirants for the office. Brann commented: "I greatly regret that my Baptist brethren should have gotten into a spiteful and un-Christian snarl over so pitiful a thing as Baylor's \$2000 a year presidency—that they should give to the world such a flagrant imitation of a lot of cut-throat degenerates out for the long green. . . ."¹⁶

Evidently these new thrusts were the final straw for some Baylorites. On October 2 Brann was forcibly abducted by a group of Baylor undergraduates and taken to the campus. Had not several Baylor professors intervened, a lynching might have occurred. After being badly beaten the editor was finally released, but the violence was not ended. Four days later Brann was attacked by a Baylor student, George Scarborough, aided by his father, a distinguished Waco attorney. Young Scarborough threatened Brann with a revolver, while his father beat the journalist with a cane. A second Baylor student joined the fray, striking Brann with a horsewhip. Brann fled for his life, escaping this time with a broken wrist, along with cuts and bruises.

The chain of violence was not fully forged. After an initial public scuffle between them had inflamed tempers, Judge George Gerald, a friend and supporter of Brann, and W. A. Harris, the editor of the *Waco Times-Herald*, met on a downtown Waco street. Present also was J. W. Harris, an insurance salesman and the editor's brother. Shots were fired; both of the Harris brothers were killed, and Judge Gerald was wounded.

The final act in the mounting tragedy occurred on April 1,

1898. Brann was to leave the following day on a nation-wide lecture tour. In the late afternoon he went downtown. From the door of a real estate office an anti-Brann zealot, Tom Davis, shot at Brann. Wounded, Brann drew his own pistol, returning the fire. Within hours both men were dead. Two bystanders were slightly wounded.

Why did Davis shoot Brann? His motives were not clear. He had a daughter attending Baylor, and he had expressed his hatred of Brann on many occasions. He was also thought to have political ambitions, counting on his attack on Brann to win for him the sizable Baptist vote.

With Brann dead *The Iconoclast* soon ceased publication, and his feud with Baylor and the Baptists gradually faded into obscurity. Brann's career, however, is an interesting sidelight in Southern religious and political history. The ethical demands of Southern frontier religion did not prevent its adherents from violent reactions to Brann's attacks. It is perhaps significant that the thrust of those attacks was not primarily theological, though Brann was clearly a religious heretic in Baptist eyes. Instead, Brann picked on at least three areas of special sensitivity in nineteenth century Southern Protestantism: the conviction that "foreign" Roman Catholicism represented a major threat to the society and its values; pride in a major educational institution; and Southern sexual mores, a mixture of Puritan conviction and what Brann saw as Victorian hypocrisy.

The bloody outcome of the struggle may testify to the underlying violent elements in both emotional Southern religion and the contemporary frontier culture. The reservoir of violence implicit in the intense emotional and even physical experiences of frontier revivalism was usually held in check by the ethical demands of the faith. The revivalistic conversion experience most often produced a constructive change in behavior and attitude, but it is not difficult to see how that violence could, under the proper circumstances, and without the creation of great feelings of personal guilt, erupt in destructive ways.

A study of Brann's work reveals him as a master of brilliant and usually alliterative invective. He was a kind of provincial Voltaire who did not care if he sometimes twisted the truth so long as his efforts were directed against the "enemy" and brought him notoriety and profit. The affair of the Brazilian girl would probably have been quickly forgotten, had not Brann nagged at it. Though, it is impossible, after more than a century, to determine all the facts of the case with certainty, it is clear that Brann had some basis for his criticism, but it is also clear that he often tarred both innocent and guilty with the same brush. Brann's great talent was an unerring instinct for the vulnerable spots. He consistently went for the jugular vein. In retrospect, given the religious and social context, Brann's violent end seems almost inevitable.

Are there any lasting lessons from this small historical vignette? Perhaps we should reflect on the reality that, because religious experience and commitment involve every part of the human psyche, they carry with them both constructive and

destructive potential. The frontier culture of 19th century Waco has largely passed away, and in today's world, the potentially violent elements in religious faith most often, at least in America, find expression in verbal attack, bitter argument, and vitriolic abuse, rather than in physical violence. But we must not forget that in other parts of the world—in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosova, and the Middle East—deep seated religious differences are still capable of producing tragic human consequences.

Brann was buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Waco, and a monument capped with a Grecian urn inscribed "Truth" was erected at his grave by his friends. Carved into the stone was a profile mask of the dead writer. Scarcely had the monument been erected when someone, under the cover of darkness, crept into the cemetery and fired a pistol shot at the stone memorial, shattering away a portion of the mask. The scar in the stone can still be seen, a vivid reminder of the passions inspired by the "Iconoclast." ■

ENDNOTES

1 Quoted in Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 137.

2 Norris was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, from 1909 until his death in 1952. During his turbulent career he was accused of burning down his church auditorium to collect the insurance. He also shot a man in his church office but was acquitted of a charge of murder on a plea of self-defense.

3 Charles Carver, *Brann and the Iconoclast* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1957), 71. Carver's volume is the fullest available study of Brann.

4 The "one tall building" was the headquarters of the Amicable Life Insurance Company, erected in the early 1930's.

5 Carver, 8.

6 *The Iconoclast*, vol. V, no. 3 (April, 1895).

7 Carver, 14.

8 *The Complete Works of Brann the Iconoclast* (New York: The Brann Publishers Inc., 1898), vol. XII, 204-205. See also Carver, 14-16, for Carver's account of the incident, which differs from the account given here. Carver describes Brann as engaging in a long debate with Slattery in the Opera House. The description given here, taken from the collected edition of Brann's works, is probably more accurate.

9 *The Iconoclast*, vol. V, no. 4 (May, 1895).

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., vol. V, no. 2 (March, 1895).

12 *Waco Morning News*, June 16, 1895, 5.

13 *The Iconoclast*, vol. V, no. 6 (July, 1895).

14 Ibid., vol. VI, no. 8 (September, 1896).

15 Ibid., vol. VII, no. 9 (October, 1896).

16 Brann consistently denied that he was an atheist. In the March, 1896, issue of *The Iconoclast* he wrote: "There is a Deity. I have felt his presence. I have heard his voice. I have been cradled in his Imperial robe. . . I ask no written covenant with God, for he is my Father. I will trust him without requiring priests or prophets to indorse his note."

Woman in the Pulpit

By Frances Willard, Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publication Society, 1978.

Reviewed by Mimi Haddad, Executive Director of Christians for Biblical Equality

Editor's Note: CBE is an evangelical organization focusing on gender equality and will hold its 7th Biennial Conference in Dallas on June 22-24, 2001. For details write 122 W. Franklin Ave. Suite 218, Minneapolis, MN 55404 or visit www.cbeinternational.org.

President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), Frances Willard (1839-1898) was one of the most influential women in the US in her day. The WCTU, deemed one of the largest 19th century women's organizations with two million members, had a three-prong mission of abolition, suffrage and temperance. Comprised of an army of women, the WCTU had an outreach ministry to workers of many trades. Willard, a convert of a Methodist revival, was a coworker of D. L. Moody.

An outspoken advocate of the woman's suffrage, Willard believed God intends Christian women to advance the well-being of their families through their political vote. Willard combated prostitution, exposed the need for laws against rape, and called fashion designers to eliminate pencil thin waistlines, which were deforming women's bodies. As evidence of her own achievement as an educator, Willard was made president of Northwestern Ladies College, which later became Northwestern University.

Willard was always an advocate of women in ministry. She encouraged women to pursue a ministry not limited to work among other women, as she herself had often felt confined. She believed God had work for women as evangelists and in every branch of church work and public life. She opposed the prejudice that keeps women from using their gifts for God's glory.

A brilliant exegete, Willard approached Scripture with a dedication to excellence and consistency, as well as a commitment to female equality. In 1889, Willard inspired her peers by writing *Woman in the Pulpit*, an examination of the interpretive methods used to limit women in ministry. She even invited a renowned biblical scholar, opposed to her own position, to critique her exegesis.

Woman in the Pulpit had three main objectives. Her first purpose was to teach that Scripture be interpreted consistently—especially that the difficult passages on women be viewed in light of the main thrust of Scripture. Second, she examined the lives of women already serving in public ministry. And third, she presented opposing viewpoints by offering to theologians on either side of the issue a platform for their ideas.

An Exegesis of Consistency

Tackling faulty methods of reading the Bible, Willard exposed the tendency to literally interpret select portions of Scripture. "Why," she asked, "do some interpret literally the

first part of 1 Timothy 2:11 ("Let a woman learn in silence"), while ignoring the remainder of 1 Timothy 2 and the mandate that women avoid 'braided hair, fine clothing and jewelry?'"

Similarly, she points out that Christ commanded his disciples to "wash one another's feet" in John 13:14, and yet we are not compelled to make this a matter of church practice. Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul elevates singlehood and celibacy over marriage, and widowhood over remarriage. "Why do not the churches teach likewise," she ponders? For Willard, to interpret Scripture with such variability confuses the "plain Bible-reading member of the laity" (p. 21).

Moreover, theologians would "outlaw as unorthodox anyone who did not believe Christ an equal member of the Trinity" (p. 29), yet these thinkers readily "preach and practice the heresy that woman is in subjection to man, when Paul distinctly declares that her relation to man is the same as that of Christ to God" (p. 29).

Interpreting God's Word for personal advantage is always a temptation, warned Willard. Issues such as slavery and the leadership of women have fallen prey to a preferential reading of Scripture. Since most people enjoy being waited on, Willard feels this attitude has led to the promulgation of slavery. As many people enjoy seeing women beautifully dressed, and most would prefer marriage to singlehood, Christians tend to establish church practice according to our natural predilections rather than a consistent reading of Scripture.

To avoid such errors Willard charged her readers to read Scripture through Scripture. 1 Timothy 2:11 should be understood in light of the example of women leaders in Judges 4:4-5, 1 Corinthians 14:3, Acts 18:26 and Romans 16:3-4. Similarly, the call for women to "keep silent" in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is best read in light of Joel 2:28, 1 Corinthians 11:5, Acts 21:9-10 and 1 Corinthians 11:11. Indeed, verse 35 is further clarified through Luke 2:36-38, Philipians 4:3, John 1:1-3 and Romans 16.

Harmonizing Scripture with Scripture, Willard called us to remember that there are more than thirty passages "in favor of woman's public work for Christ, and only two against it, and these not really so when rightly understood" (p. 34). Rendering women's subjection as anything but a product of the curse is an affront to God, as the "whole tenor of the Scriptures is to show that in Christ the world is to be restored to the original intent of its creation when 'there shall be no more curse.'"

The Fruit of Women in Ministry

As president of the WCTU, perhaps the best-organized women's movement of any era, Willard observed the advance of Christ's kingdom through the leadership of women. Women served as superintendents over "departments of Evangelism, of Bible Readings, [and] of Gospel Work for railroad employees, for soldiers, sailors, and lumbermen; of prison, jail, and police-station workers" (p. 57). These women regularly studied and expounded "God's Word to the multitude, to say nothing of the army in home and foreign missionary work, and who are engaged in church evangelism" (p. 57).

One woman, after 25 years as a pastor and preacher, states that "there is not work outside the home circle upon which women can so consistently and properly enter as that of the Christian ministry . . . none can be so well fitted by nature for understanding the great problems of character and destiny as those whom God has appointed to give birth to new life and to mould the characters of the young."

Yet, the ministry of these women remained outside the church, "not because they wish to be so, but because she who has warmed them into life and nurtured them into activity is afraid of her own gentle, earnest-hearted daughters" (p. 98-99). A church that breathes life into a woman's soul, while bidding her to serve elsewhere is a spectacle that is "both anomalous and pitiful," (p. 58) claimed Willard. When will the church call in "these banished ones, correlate their sanctified activities with her own mighty work, giving them the same official recognition that it gives to men?" Prayer meetings in which women's voices are excluded are declared lifeless and poorly attended, noted Willard .

Both Views Presented

Willard next offers renowned theologians and preachers a venue to defend or oppose women's public ministry. Each tackles a difficult passage or defrocks biblical interpretation that is considered inconsistent. An anonymous contributor, whose editorial services reaches "several thousand readers per month, and is foremost among the leaders of a great denomination" writes:

"I believe women should be authorized as ministers in the church of God. . . [because] man has no greater natural or spiritual rights than a woman to serve at

the altars of the Church, as a minister of the Gospel. If a woman possesses gifts, graces and usefulness, she occupies the same vantage-ground before the world, and is under the same obligations to God . . . If women can organize missionary societies, temperance societies, and every kind of charitable organization . . . why not permit them to be ordained to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments of the Church? If women should withdraw from the churches and all missionary and merciful work, we would begin to think that the foundation had dropped out of our civilization" (p. 58).

Another collaborator suggests that while there is no support in the New Testament that women or men received formal ordination at the commencement of their ministry, "we have unquestioned proofs that women exercised the essential functions of ministry" (p. 76). Moreover, the whole notion of the subordination of women, he suggests, stems from the fall. "If Christianity is completely to restore that which was lost in Adam, how can it stop short of completely abolishing the subordination of women, which the Bible declares to be the direct result of sin" (p. 76-77).

To her credit, Willard invites an articulate opponent to critique her theological defense of women in ministry. This critic rightly noted a tendency in Willard to suggest that women possess natural attributes making them superior to men. Women are not, her opponent correctly argues, "holier by nature than men, and if they were this would not make them better ministers. An angel from heaven is not more fitted to preach the grace of Christ than was Saul, the chief of sinners." We cannot, I would agree, sacrifice the foundations of "Christian theology for the misty sentimentalism that expatiates on the natural goodness of woman" (p. 78).

Perhaps the greatest strength of *Women in the Pulpit* is that it exposes the myriad of ways in which Christians read the Bible inconsistently. "A practice prohibited in one sentence and regulated in another, by the same author, shows either variability in opinion, or else an intended limitation in the original prohibition" (p. 117). Clearly, the Bible allows for women's preaching and public ministry, and to deny women this right is a poor reading of the text, a hindrance to the kingdom of God, and an injustice to those created in God's image. ■



Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition

Christine D. Pohl, Eerdmans, 1999.

Book Reviews by David Gushee, Union University

In a time in which many scholarly works are both hastily written and of dubious significance, Christine Pohl's fine work on hospitality is quite the opposite on both counts. It will stand as the benchmark work on this subject for a long time to come.

This is a work in ethical archaeology. Pohl digs through the centuries' layers and discovers hospitality as a way of living out the Gospel that was once central to Christian experience, but for several centuries has been marginalized. She argues convincingly that the church needs to recover the practice of hospitality, not only because it meets the needs of the poor but also for the church's own sake.

The biblical demand for hospitality, Pohl shows, is clear in both Old and New Testaments. The people of God are aliens and strangers whom God has welcomed into the "household of faith." In turn, God's people are to "make room" for the stranger, not only in the community of faith but also in their own personal households. This is the biblical meaning of hospitality—making room for the stranger, especially those in most acute need. Such care must not be reduced to mere social entertaining nor may it be self-interested and reciprocal; instead, biblical hospitality reaches out to the abject and lowly and expects nothing in return. Hospitality is not optional, nor should it be understood as a rare spiritual gift; instead, it is a normative biblical practice that is learned by doing it.

Hospitality is implicitly subversive in the way it shatters social boundaries, especially those boundaries enforced by table fellowship. When we eat with the lowly and welcome strangers and "sinners" to our table, we topple social expectations and bear witness to the kind of love God has for all his creatures. It is not coincidental that Jesus perhaps most scandalized his critics in his practice of table fellowship. "He eats with tax collectors and sinners"—this was not a compliment. And it was precisely the radical nature of Christian hospitality, Pohl shows, that characterized the early church, helped spread the Gospel, and healed the dramatic social barriers that initially confronted the church as the Gospel permeated the Greco-Roman world.

The connection between hospitality and Jesus is indeed rich and mysterious. As Pohl shows, in New Testament perspective Jesus is simultaneously guest, host, and meal. He is guest whenever we welcome and care for the stranger and the broken (Mt. 25:31-46). He is host, for example, when he hosts the Last Supper, during which "we . . . celebrate the reconcili-

ation and relationship available to us because of [Jesus'] sacrifice and through his hospitality" (p.30)—and when he will host the Great Supper in the Kingdom. And he himself, as our paschal sacrifice, is the meal we eat, not only in Communion but in ongoing Christian experience as we feed on his life to nourish our own.

In tracing out the history of the Christian practice of hospitality, Pohl marshals an array of quotations from such church leaders as Chrysostom, Lactantius, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley, as well as 20th century practitioners of hospitality such as Dorothy Day and Edith Schaeffer. It is clear from the historical account given here that extraordinary attention was paid to hospitality as a normative Christian practice through the entirety of church history until relatively recent times.

Interestingly, the decline of hospitality as a widely shared tradition is in part traceable to the specialization of hospitality under the pressure of human need. I was reminded that such institutions as hospitals, hostels, hospices, and even hotels—note the shared etymology of all these words as well as "hospitality"—all were developed by Christians as they responded with increasing specialization to various forms of human need. Yet the specialization and eventual bureaucratization of care weakened hospitality as an aspect of everyday Christian practice. Today most Christians do not welcome refugees or the homeless into their homes; if we are concerned at all about such people, we most often send money to help fund specialized efforts undertaken by someone else.

Yet hospitality is a practice that is good for the Christian soul. We lose something of the distinctive nature of Christian discipleship when we delegate the work entirely to specialists. This Pohl most appealingly demonstrates in the latter chapters of her work, as she walks through what might be called a "thick description" of the actual practice of hospitality as it exists today. Her visits to several contemporary Christian communities that practice Christian hospitality—such as L'Abri and the Catholic Worker—infuse this work with the warm wisdom of hospitality's most experienced practitioners in our present day.

My family has extended itself more in recent years than previously to welcome the stranger and I resonated deeply with Pohl's description of the difficulties as well as the rewards of hospitality. It was clear that Pohl herself has undertaken extensive hospitality efforts and thus writes out of a base of

experience rather than dispassionate research. This is the rare academic effort that one could easily see occupying a valuable place in the thinking of those who actually do hospitality most extensively.

If the discipline of Christian ethics is to serve the church well in years to come, we must do more of this kind of work—retrieving aspects of the Christian moral tradition for contemporary application, writing both out of personal moral practice and richly researched scholarly effort. We must be both moral archaeologists and practitioners. Christine Pohl's *Making Room* can be a model for such efforts in the years to come. ■

The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview

Gregory Baum, ed., Orbis, 1999.

The editor, Gregory Baum, attempts in this work to bring a team together that can reflect theologically on the monumental and oftentimes disastrous events of the twentieth century. It is a project that only succeeds in part.

The work is divided into two parts. The first seeks to trace “the impact of historical events on theology.” The second part offers “theological evaluation of events and movements.”

The first section covers World War I, modernity, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Depression, the Nazi era, the Holocaust, world capitalism, globalization, and the emergence of a world church. The second deals with secularization, the ecumenical movement, Vatican II, Marxism, feminism, liberation theologies, the ecological crisis, and postmodernism. Contributors include mainline stalwarts Rosemary Ruether, Harvey Cox, Douglas John Hall, Virgilio Elizondo, Gary Dorrien, and a host of lesser-known figures.

I was interested in this book not only because of its coverage of historical events and trends of signal importance, but also because of my growing conviction that evangelical theology and ethics generally do not adequately take historical events into account. While mainline and radical theology/ethics tends to be deeply and self-consciously contextual, evangelical versions often seem to be the last bastion of an ahistorical approach that attempts to jump from Scripture to application without remainder. Or, alternatively, certain strands of evangelical thought are tied so closely to particular theological figures and traditions (e.g., Calvin, Luther) they sometimes seem to learn nothing from the historical events that have occurred since the esteemed Doctors made their appearance on history's stage.

The book succeeds only in part because of the uneven quality of the contributions, always the bane of edited collections. The discussions of the Catholic response to modernity, the Communist Revolution in Russia, the ecumenical movement, and liberation theologies, in particular, were weak enough as to damage the overall impact of the book considerably.

On the whole, however, *The Twentieth Century* helps to open a conversation that needs to continue: what should we

make of the bloody century just past? How do we speak of God and the church in the context in which we actually find ourselves? These are questions well worth asking, and Baum is to be thanked for his contribution to the quest for answers. ■

Goebbels

Ralph Georg Reuth (translated by Drishna Winstoon), Harcourt Brace, 1993.

This is an engrossing biography of one of Adolf Hitler's closest henchmen. As such, it is predictably enraging and depressing. For in Joseph Goebbels, as Ralf Georg Reuth depicts him, we have in many ways a prototypical Nazi functionary, the kind of man Hitler needed by his side to help destroy the soul of a nation and consume millions of lives.

The Goebbels we meet in these pages is a small-souled man, driven by bitterness over childhood slights, relentless and self-centered ambition, an imperial sense of his own importance, a paganized faith in the Nazi cause, and an almost childlike (or romantic?) loyalty to Hitler himself. He is not without energy, talent, or organizational ability, and it is hard to imagine the triumph of Nazism apart from his sometimes ingenious propaganda skills.

In the end, as Reuth shows us, Goebbels is perhaps most remembered for the cult-like decision of himself and his equally fanatical wife to kill themselves and their own children rather than to live in a world without Hitler and Nazism. “The world that will come after the Fuhrer and national socialism won't be worth living in,” he wrote, and he was as good as his word.

Reuth's biography is a bit short on analysis. Little effort is made to offer an eloquent summing up, evaluation, or reflection on the life being considered here. This is more of a documentation than a reflection on a life, but the documentation reveals a frightening soul whose appearance on the historical scene did no one any favors. ■

In Defense of Multiculturalism

By Rob Sellers, Connally Chair of Missions
Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University

Editor's Note: Dr. Sellers joined the faculty at Logsdon in 1998. This address was delivered at the Hardin-Simmons University Chapel on November 2, 1999.

My wife and I spent almost a quarter century living among the peoples of Colombia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. For more than two decades we were Baptist missionaries on the Indonesian island of Java, one of the most densely populated places in the world, with 100 million people living in an area the size of Tennessee. Our home for 13 years was the cosmopolitan mega city of Jakarta, with its multicultural collage of 10 million faces drawn from Indonesia's 300 or more ethnolinguistic people groups. Later we lived in the Central Javanese seaport of Semarang, a bustling "country town" with only one and a quarter million inhabitants. All around us we observed striking reminders of the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity of our adopted homeland.

Every neighborhood, for example, had its own mosque, where faithful Muslims went each Friday to pray, give alms, and repeat their confession of faith. On *Idul Fitri*, the day of celebration that marks the end of the fasting month, almost 200,000 would crowd the city square in front of Semarang's main *mesjid*, bowing toward Mecca in submission to the will of Allah. Less than a kilometer from the Baptist seminary where Janie and I taught classes—and well within the sound of the Muslim call to prayer—is *Gedung Batu*. This centuries-old shrine was built to honor the Ming Dynasty sea captain Cheng Ho, whose visit to Semarang in 1406 led the Chinese of the region to identify him as the deity Sam Po Kung.

Today thousands of supplicants come regularly to this grotto to burn incense and pray before one of the brightly painted plaster images—or to sit, as we did, beneath the huge, blossomed trees to honor the memory of their ancestors. Overlooking this temple complex and dotting the lush hillsides surrounding Semarang are dozens of smaller communities populated by simple farming families. Many of the villagers plant and harvest their crops under the watchful eye of Dewi Sri, the rice goddess, or annually carry orchid offerings to the rocky, southern coastline to placate the jealous Goddess of the South Sea. Not far from these traditional folk religionists are located two of the ancient wonders of Javanese religious life: *Borobudur*, the largest Buddhist temple in the world, and its magnificent Hindu counterpart, *Prambanan*—each a noble testament to the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms that flourished in Central Java more than 1200 years ago. Late one balmy night in May, Janie and I watched as saffron-robed monks led a candlelit processional of worshipers up the winding pathway of *Borobudur* to commemorate the Buddha's

birth. On another occasion, under a full moon, we sat listening to the gongs and clangs of percussion instruments as hundreds of Javanese dancers enacted stories from the Hindu *Ramayana* on the hand-carved stone terraces of *Prambanan*.

Living amid these treasures of religious antiquity, among peoples who practice such disparate rituals but with similar dedication, gave us an appreciation for the rich cultural diversity in the world. Relating to neighbors, friends, and colleagues of so many ethnolinguistic backgrounds forced us to accept others whose ideas, beliefs, and customs differed from our own.

Multiculturalism Locally

Multiculturalism can be expected when one lives in another part of the world. But what about in America? How about here in Abilene? And more to the point, why should multiculturalism be a concern on our Hardin-Simmons campus? The fact is that America is becoming more culturally diverse each year. But the "melting pot" of my grandparents' generation has become the "mosaic" of the present generation. No longer will Americans contentedly perceive themselves blended into some generic stew as citizens of the United States, but rather require a specific and proud focus upon each group's distinctive cultural contributions to American life. Today our country—even our city—is a place where ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse peoples interact with increasing regularity. You need not move to Java to discover that your neighbors, friends, and colleagues are different from yourself! Moreover, it is a goal of our university to encourage the diversity of faculty, staff, and student body so that our campus will more accurately reflect the plurality of the larger world.

Tragically, however, prejudice and intolerance continue to create a festering wound on the face of America. I grew up in Florida of the 1950s, first becoming aware of racial unrest through the frequent fistfights between Hispanic and Anglo boys on my inner city junior high school playground. Later, I attended a high school where the lines of distinction were drawn, not racially, but economically. It was a school of the rich and the poor, with few friendships that successfully crossed over those material barriers. Graduating at 17, I headed for college in Mississippi—where my first serious encounters with racial prejudice would occur. I was shocked that

September of 1963 when, en route to Jackson, my Greyhound bus made its first stop in the Magnolia State. There at the bus station were separate bathrooms, water fountains, and lunch counters designated for “Whites” and for “Coloreds.” I remember being vaguely uncomfortable drinking from the “White Only” water fountain. I had a gnawing feeling in the pit of my stomach that I couldn’t really articulate. I was entering Mississippi College, then an all-white bastion of Baptists, many of whom didn’t seem to notice that we were living through the days of “Mississippi Burning.” It had been just a year since President Kennedy had sent 10,000 National Guardsmen to Oxford to protect one black man, James Meredith, who wished to register for classes at the University of Mississippi. By the fall of 1963, the local newspapers often headlined stories of church burnings, freedom riders, and racial violence. Ross Barnett and George Wallace, the governors of Mississippi and Alabama, were heroes of many white Mississippians, who supported their segregationist policies.

Two experiences during my freshman year of college shaped my views concerning racial distinctions for the rest of my life. First, I spent the weekend at the home of a friend in Meridian, Mississippi. On Sunday morning, as we sat in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church, he pointed to two men seated near us in the all white congregation. “See those men over there?” he gestured. “They’re two of the men who’ve been indicted for the murder of those freedom riders from Philadelphia. They’re out of jail now, awaiting their trial.” “Why are they here?” I stammered. “They attend this church regularly!” I was dumbfounded that active church members might commit murder. Since that weekend in 1963, I’ve learned the embarrassing truth that Christian history is stained by brutal crimes of intolerance perpetrated in the name of religious or racial purity. But I was naïve then and so that shocking moment, as I watched two accused murderers calmly singing Christian hymns with their children, etched itself unforgettably in my mind.

The other event occurred one evening as four college friends and I arrived at the campus of Tougaloo College, a black educational island in the midst of a vast sea of cultural whiteness. We slipped into the back row of the auditorium to hear the concert of Joan Baez, the famous folk singer so identified with the Civil Rights movement. We were, as far as I could see, the only whites in the crowded auditorium. The concert was wonderful, but the most stirring song of all was her trademark closing. As she broke into the opening lines of the Freedom Hymn, the beautiful “We Shall Overcome,” everyone in the audience stood and began singing with her. We five were linked to all the rest, arms intertwined, raising our voices to sing as one mighty choir: “We’ll walk hand in hand, we’ll walk hand in hand, we’ll walk hand in hand some day. O deep in my heart, we do believe, that we’ll walk hand in hand some day.” The emotion of the moment was overpowering. A feeling of profound rightness burned itself indelibly onto my heart. We were not frightened being the only whites in a huge crowd of blacks, for at that moment we were *all* one in spirit. Our concern, to be perfectly honest, was that after we left Tougaloo

and began crossing the dark countryside toward our own campus, our little company of idealists might be pulled over by some carload of angry Anglos. But if we were tense, we were also hopeful—speeding through the night on eagle’s wings of optimism and passion.

Any anticipation we had, however, that the sort of powerful message about love and mutual acceptance expressed that night could eventually end racial strife was certainly unfounded. America today remains a nation where racial, religious, and social discriminations are common. Globally, there is international terrorism, sectarian conflict, ethnic cleansing, tribal wars, gay bashing, spousal, child, or elderly abuse, and much more. In the 37 years since I entered college, how far has our society progressed? Sadly, there are still people in America who are excluded, ridiculed, manipulated, oppressed, battered, falsely jailed, and even murdered because of their racial, religious, gender, social, or sexual differences. The 1998 dragging death of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas, is a horrific reminder, much too close to home, of what some people still do to one another!

Welcoming Multiculturalism

And so I raise the question some of you are probably asking yourselves: why, on our campus—where we have very little diversity anyway and no ethnic, religious, or social violence—why HERE do we need a program on multiculturalism? Why must WE embrace others who are unlike ourselves? Why must Hardin-Simmons initiate conversations about such distinctions? I’d like to suggest five reasons.

First, because it is appropriate. This is the personal answer. Racial, religious, or social discrimination is our problem. Perhaps our awareness has been dulled by our insulation on this predominantly white and Christian campus. Therefore when we hear about the clash of cultures, we assume the conflicts will always be out there. We mistakenly think these are African American, Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic American problems, or that they are Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist problems. But intolerance and injustice are our problems. We have to think about multiculturalism and the acceptance of others because discrimination is a problem we suffer personally. One might argue that there is no one, regardless of racial or religious identity, that has never felt intolerant or held some untested, unfair opinion about others. While this may be true, WE are not excused from our prejudicial thinking simply because everyone is similarly tempted.

Nor, in our defense, may we claim that prejudicial ideas have been instilled within us from childhood. It *is* true that we aren’t born with these views. Our unfair attitudes and stereotypical thought patterns have been passed on to us. To quote from Rodgers and Hammerstein’s musical *South Pacific*:

You’ve got to be taught to hate and fear. You’ve got to be taught from year to year. It’s got to be drummed in your dear little ear. You’ve got to be carefully taught. You’ve got to be taught to be afraid Of people whose eyes are oddly made, And

people whose skin is a different shade, You've got to be carefully taught. You've got to be taught before it's *too* late, Before you are six or seven or eight, To hate all the people your relatives hate, You've got to be carefully taught! You've got to be carefully taught!¹ We are not free from culpability simply because we may have been taught this intolerance all our lives. For racism is more than the racial prejudice one has learned since childhood. Racism is *individual* prejudice PLUS the power of the *system* to enforce those prejudices.²

It is the unique problem of the dominant group, because they are the ones with enough power either to keep others subservient or to grant them freedom and equality. It is therefore *our* responsibility—those of us who are in the white majority—to take the initiative toward minority groups, because for far too long we have been part of the problem.

“How,” you might ask, “am I a racist? I don't use racial slurs. I don't tell offensive jokes about minority groups. I don't hate people who aren't like me.” Nevertheless, according to Will Campbell—a white, grizzled, old Tennessee lay preacher and Baptist defender of human rights—you and I and ALL white people of our society *are* “racists.” In his words:

“*If we are white we are racist.* For racism is the condition in and under which we live. It is the structures in which we live and move and have our being. . . . By the accident of my white birth, I could have become President, Governor, manager of a major league baseball team or pastor of [the largest church in my city.] I can and do live where I want to. I can and do participate in a society every facet of which has afforded me the edge. I can change my attitudes. I can be educated out of a mind filled with hate and bigotry. But I cannot stop being a racist. It has nothing to do with how liberal, or radical, or enlightened, or educated, or good I am. Nor does it have to do with how reactionary, conservative, ignorant, or bad I am. It just has to do with being white within these [white] structures.”³

At Hardin-Simmons we MUST talk about what it means either to discriminate or to accept one another in love because most of us here at HSU are white. *We* are part of the problem, even if unconsciously!

Second, we should accommodate discussion about multiculturalism because it is smart. This is the practical answer. It's also somewhat egocentric. To put it in the language of ethical reasoning, it's “utilitarian.” It's useful to us to welcome cultural diversity. We learn from others whose viewpoint differs from our own. Their life experiences, drastically different from our own, enrich us and bring us new insights. Their stories challenge our presuppositions and narrow assumptions. They stretch us and cause us to grow.

Some time ago I had the privilege of hearing Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa lecture on “Forgiveness and Justice.” This elderly recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize stood before the large, predominantly white audience, his face both reflecting the pain of all the hatred that he has witnessed and yet shining with the hope he feels for reconciliation. Tutu described how he counseled forgiveness for the white South

Africans on trial for their role in the oppressive system of apartheid. “We blacks need the Afrikaner whites,” he concluded, “and *they* need us. Just as a rainbow needs all the colors to be most beautiful! The rainbow would not be so glorious if it consisted of only one color. Its diversity creates the beauty.”⁴ We at Hardin-Simmons MUST celebrate our distinctions, because our lives will become more beautiful and rich because of this diversity. At one level this sounds self-serving, but the truth is we *all* will be enriched by a mutual celebration of our differences.

Third, we accept others because it is right. This is the political answer. “Justice for all” is our national heritage. Our founding fathers' and mothers' dream was to live in a place where people of religious, cultural, and ethnic differences could coexist and flourish. “We hold these truths to be self evident . . . that all are created equal . . . with certain inalienable rights . . . that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” This statement expresses our Constitutional convictions about how life should be ordered in our country. People fought and died for the freedom to live in such a place.

But unfortunately, political rhetoric—even such a hallowed sentiment as this—doesn't guarantee the cooperation of the governed. Consequently, our ancestors were plunged into Civil War, the nation split down the middle so that brother fought brother, sister betrayed sister, and blood was shed throughout the land. That dark conflict having finally ended, legislators began to pass laws to bring society back into line with our national vision, the American Dream.

One whose courageous life was spent calling for *all* Americans to be given the same opportunity to realize this dream was a Baptist pastor from Alabama named Martin Luther King, Jr. In the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial in August 1963, he stood before the quarter million blacks and whites who had flooded the nation's capital to plead for justice. Not even the featured speaker of the afternoon's rally, King electrified his audience and became a national symbol. Among his prophetic words were the following:

“We are simply seeking to bring into full realization the American dream—a dream yet unfulfilled. A dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege, and property widely distributed; a dream of a land where [people] no longer argue that the color of [one's] skin determines the content of his character. . . . When [this dream] is realized, the jangling discords of our nation will be transformed into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood [and sisterhood], and [people] everywhere will know that America is truly the land of the free and the home of the brave.”⁵

King's message and eventual martyrdom helped to bring about the passage of federal legislation outlawing discrimination against minority groups—first on the basis of race, but later also due to differences of gender, physical or mental well being, or sexual orientation. But again, realistically, ratifying new laws can't always regulate attitudes or behaviors. Even on denominational campuses like ours. Years after the enactment of some of these laws we are *still* a nation that lives a segregated

life. In so many ways, don't we *really* still live apart? We may attend school together, work together, and play together. Sadly, however, we are not so much doing these things *together* as we are simply in the same place doing them *separately*, but in each other's presence.⁶

Here's a valid reason to begin relating across those barriers that separate us: we do it because it's right—because it's the law. We **MUST** guarantee that everyone at Hardin-Simmons has equal opportunities for success and happiness, because our nation was founded on the belief that this equality is a basic human right. Yet, there's a higher motivation for welcoming multiculturalism.

That is the fourth reason—namely, we look out for others because to do so is good! This is the moral answer. Morality demands more of us than legality. Why do we try to get along with others? Well, we relate to each other with tolerance because that's the way we should act.

Moral philosophers have long taught this kind of regard for others. Plato considered the crowning human virtue to be justice, understood as “the virtue of harmonious action [that] forges a link between the individual and the social dimensions of life.” Justice, thus, “is not merely a personal virtue but is preeminently a social one”⁷ that determines how one treats others. The German thinker Immanuel Kant argued centuries later that people should act in such a way that they could be satisfied were their action to become a universal behavioral norm.⁸ But these European ideas were preceded in time by similar wisdom from Asia. For example, Confucius taught his followers to cultivate loyalty, humanity, integrity, mutual respect, personal self-restraint, and harmonious family and social relationships.⁹ Likewise Shantideva, an ancient Buddhist philosopher, taught the importance of a proper attitude toward one's enemy. “If you can cultivate the right attitude,” he said, “your enemies are your best spiritual teachers because their presence provides you with the opportunity to enhance and develop tolerance, patience, and understanding.”¹⁰

We tolerate those who are different from ourselves because sages and saints of world history have believed that this kind of mutual acceptance is the *just* way to act. At Hardin-Simmons, we **MUST** treat everyone fairly, for such actions will distinguish our campus as a place where *all* can feel at home and

where *none* is excluded. To do less would be to behave unjustly and immorally.

But there is a higher reason still for embracing multiculturalism on our campus: we reach out to others because it is compassionate. This is the Christian answer. Tolerance is the secular answer, the philosophical norm. But love is Jesus' way. And love is more demanding than tolerance. Jesus crossed all kinds of barriers that separated the respectable religious folk of his day from the “riff raff” of Palestinian society. He gathered his disciples from among simple and uneducated Galileans. He related positively to women, ministered to them in ways that were daring, and praised their examples of godly living. He touched the diseased bodies of the infirm to restore both their health and place within the community. He took the side of the poor and the dispossessed. He did battle with spiritual, demonic powers to rescue the helpless and hopeless. He celebrated the innocence of little children. He reached out to social outcasts, Samaritans, and Gentiles. Little wonder that Paul, one who felt accepted by Christ and miraculously called to be his missionary, penned a tribute to Jesus' risky, inclusive love. Paul wrote: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all . . . are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Because of Jesus' embrace of diverse peoples, in other words, Christians should not practice racial, socioeconomic, or gender discrimination, for all are one in Christ. We can only speculate what other barriers, knocked down by Jesus' compassion, Paul would articulate were he to write this reminder to believers in today's divisive world!

We **MUST** love others here because that's the godly thing to do, for God is love. That doesn't mean that we will necessarily appreciate someone's behavior or choices, even as we love them. It certainly doesn't mean that we have to condone their actions before we can accept them. That would be conditional love, yet we know that God's kind of love—the agape we are commanded to practice toward others (John 13:34-35)—is unconditional. Frankly, if Jesus walked the streets and hallways of our campus today, he would meet everywhere people who differ from him—people whose behavior and choices sadden him. How might he respond?



What would Jesus do? I believe he wouldn't demand that we first conform to his standards or look exactly like him so that we might become loveable! He would love us in all our diversity and in spite of our many limitations. He would accept us as we are while encouraging us to become everything we're intended to be. He would treat us with unconditional, sacrificial, and abundant love—despite our failures and foibles (Rom. 5:8)!

Why must we accept others here at HSU? Because it's appropriate. Discrimination is our problem. Because it's smart. Celebrating diversity enriches us. Because it's right. The law requires that we treat others with equality. Because it's good. Accepting others is the just thing to do. Because it's compassionate. Jesus did it, and he commands that we do the same.

You might expect cross-cultural missionaries to embrace multiculturalism. But I believe WE should celebrate it *here* also. And so I must ask us all today: when people look at us here on the "Forty Acres," what do they see? Are we pulling down the barriers at HSU that separate people? Is our campus an alternative community where everyone is welcomed and appreciated? Are the diverse "Faces of America" who live on *our* campus happy faces? What do you think? ■

1 From *South Pacific*, Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II and Music by Richard Rodgers, 1949.

2 Joseph Barndt, *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 28.

3 Will D. Campbell, "The World of the Redneck," in *Moral Issues and Christian Response*, 2nd ed., ed. Paul T. Jersild and Dale A. Johnson (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 158.

4 Speech at Baylor University, October 1999.

5 James H. Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 58.

6 Barndt, 54.

7 Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 63.

8 Immanuel Kant, "Good Will, Duty, and the Categorical Imperative," trans. T. K. Abbott, in *Vice & Virtue in Everyday Life: Introductory Readings in Ethics*, 3rd ed. Christina Sommers and Fred Sommers (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993), 152.

9 *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of World Religions*, ed. Chris Richards (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1997), 70.

10 His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *The Good Heart: A Buddhist Perspective on the Teachings of Jesus* Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1998), 48.

They All Nourished Me . . .

(continued from page 2)

Thus, this column.

I am no alarmist. I do believe the Journal will continue—it must! However, as the new editor, I feel compelled to explain to our readers these realities. As a pastor, I always tried to follow the adage, "Trust the Lord and tell the people."

Our Board will meet again in June to discuss options. Your input is solicited. Now that we have just received a 501 (c) (3) designation by the IRS, large donations are more possible. Another suggestion is a "fund-raising letter" to all readers. We wish more churches would follow the example of Northminster BC in Jackson, who have had us in their budget.

Finally, My Brothers and Sisters

What can you do? Much. When I ask for your prayers, I'm not pretending to be religious—to fulfill Foy's dream and keep the Journal alive is a divine enterprise. Consider a worthy gift in 2001. Many who receive the Journal will not be able to give for valid reasons—include 3 or 4 subscriptions in your gift. Represent us to others. Search out donors who can undergird the Journal. Enlist new readers. Remember, our goal is not raising financial support, but spreading the word of *Christian Ethics Today*.

I know you have been "nourished." I am also confident, "A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Luke 6:38). JET ■

Diatribes on Cybernetics . . .

(continued from page 31)

Love's wide-open, brand-new gate—

Machination for man's greed,

Shining prospect for his need—

Countdown for the human race,

Hotline to the world's last place—

Through your compressed little pad

Runs man's fate for good or bad.

And you must know that I did actually buy a cell phone some three months ago. I've already learned to turn it on and off. The dialing bit, however, is coming along very slowly and with great anguish.

Who knows? If I can't beat 'em, I might some day just join 'em.

No less an eminence than Ralph Waldo Emerson has noted that "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

So, please stay tuned. I'm putting all of this under advisement. ■

Turning Bread Into Stones

By J. Randall O'Brien, Professor of Religion
Special Assistant to the President, Baylor University

Editor's Note: *The sermon was delivered at the Truett Seminary Convocation on August 24, 2000, during the time Dr. O'Brien served as the Acting Dean of Truett Seminary.*

Text: Matthew 15: 32-16:1, 5-12; 4:1-4

Have you ever noticed how many stories there are in the Bible related to bread? The preceding are two of my favorites, but there are many others. On 384 occasions in the Old Testament, seven different Hebrew words are translated bread or food, although one word, *lechem*, appears in almost 300 of the instances. In the New Testament three Greek words for bread are used 108 times, while there, too, one word, *artos*, predominates with nearly 100 occurrences, bringing the biblical total to roughly 500 citations.

Ah, but man cannot live on literal bread alone; he must have metaphor. So from Moses to Messiah bread holds a symbolic and religious significance, as well as literal. In the Tabernacle and Temple, for instance, the Bread of the Presence (literally "faces") rests on the table in the Holy Place to symbolize the Presence of God (Lev. 24:5ff). Isaiah speaks of the Bread of Affliction (30:20), and the Psalmist of the Bread of Tears, each a figurative bread of mourners. The writer of Proverbs warns of the Bread of Idleness (31:27), the Bread of Deception (20:17), and the Bread of Wickedness (4:17). Jesus describes himself as the Bread of Life (John 6:35), the Bread of Heaven (John 6:41), the True Bread (John 6:32), the Living Bread (John 6:51) and the Bread of God (John 6:33). Bread is also used in the Eucharist to symbolize the Body of Christ (Mk. 14:22; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Bread was a dietary staple, the food of most people in biblical times. Sometimes bread was made with yeast or leaven, and sometimes not. Originally leaven, because it fermented and could therefore corrupt, was viewed as a ritually unclean substance. Consequently, it was forbidden in the offering to God in the Feast of Unleavened Bread associated with the Passover and Lord's Supper. In general in the New Testament leaven symbolized any evil, corrupting influence. So Paul could write that we believers, by contrast, are "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

Now back to our stories. It is against the backdrop of breaking bread and feeding 4,000 men (besides women and children), that Jesus warns, "Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." As the always clever disciples begin to exchange recipes, Jesus wonders aloud, "How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? . . . Then they understood that he did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the *teaching* of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

The Pharisees, you may recall, were the most important and

numerous sect of their day. They accepted both written and oral law as authoritative and could become quite militant in their insistence upon proper observance of the Sabbath, tithing, and other rituals. They believed in the resurrection, angels, demons, and rewards and punishments in the afterlife. Too, they were quite missionary minded about converting Gentiles. Jesus was much too liberal for the Pharisees. The Sadducees, on the other hand, accepted only the Torah as authoritative. They denied the resurrection and the existence of angels and demons. Leaning toward Hellenism, they were materialistic, aristocratic, rich, and worldly. They were in charge of the Temple and stressed strict observance of the Torah, but not the rest of the Hebrew Bible, such as the prophets, nor oral law. Jesus was much too conservative for the Sadducees.

Writing before Matthew, Mark preserves a different warning from Jesus in this bread story. "Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and *Herod*," rather than Sadducees, Jesus admonishes (Mk. 8:15). Some ancient manuscripts read "Herodians." Herod was Herod Antipas who had already beheaded John the Baptist. The Herodians were wealthy, worldly people who supported Herod Antipas and his dynasty. They accepted Hellenism and foreign rule. The clear interests of both Herod and the Herodians were political rather than religious. To reconcile the separate readings from Mark and Matthew we might simply note that Sadducees could also be Herodians.

In any event, representatives of these groups demand a sign from Jesus AFTER he feeds the thousands. They just don't get it! They question His authority. So the issue IS indeed authority! "Whom will the disciples follow? Whom will *we* follow? What will we feed on, be sustained by, be nurtured on? Whose teaching will nourish us, grow us? Whose call shall we heed? Whose path shall we flee?"

"Beware the leaven of the Sadducees, or Herod or Herodians." The choice between the two readings on one hand is quite different. One group is religious; the other political. On the other hand, both were "this world" oriented. The Sadducees did not believe in the afterlife, nor in divine Providence. Although some Herodians may well have come from conservative religious ranks, their unifying agenda was a secular one. Both Sadducees and Herod were a part of the domination system of Israel. With Temple and throne they oppressed the people. To them the "here and now" mattered ultimately. If the secular worldview accepts reality as "this world alone," whereas a religious worldview believes in "more than this," then both

Sadducees and Herodians were decidedly secular. It is of *this* settled conviction which in turn affects all of life that Jesus warns. Ultimately there is no room for God in the secular mindset. This leaven would destroy the Bread of Life. “Beware the leaven of the Sadducees—beware the leaven of Herod.”

Today spiritual (and I use that term loosely) descendants of the Sadducees and Herodians yet offer us their leaven. Modernity is grounded in and dominated by a secular worldview. Since the Enlightenment and the advent of modern science, reason has trumped revelation. Reality is reduced to scientifically verifiable facts in the secular worldview. “Truth is objectivity,” claims Descartes, the father of modern philosophy. “God is dead,” we are told by philosophers, theologians, and scientists. “If not, show Him to us in this microscope or telescope.”

Yet, a competing branch of the secular worldview might be called “post-modern relativism.” Instead of claiming that truth is knowable through scientific objectivity alone, this philosophical persuasion argues there IS no such thing as truth, not with a capital “T” anyway. Truth, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder. Everything is beautiful; everything is relative. Truth becomes subjectivity supreme here. Truth is what YOU say it is, for you. Someone else’s competing opinion is no less true.

Both of these branches of secularism are enemies of God and would destroy God. Both the Sadducees and Herodians challenge divine authority, setting themselves over against Truth as competing powers. To eliminate authority, one must eliminate the author, either literally or metaphorically. Either way Jesus has to go. When science or reason replaces revelation, both the revelation and the Revealer are lost, both authority and the Author are banished. God is dead! Science sits on the throne. Or when post-modern relativism removes authority from the text, and gives it to the reader, the Author dies. In the case of Scripture, ultimately who might that be?

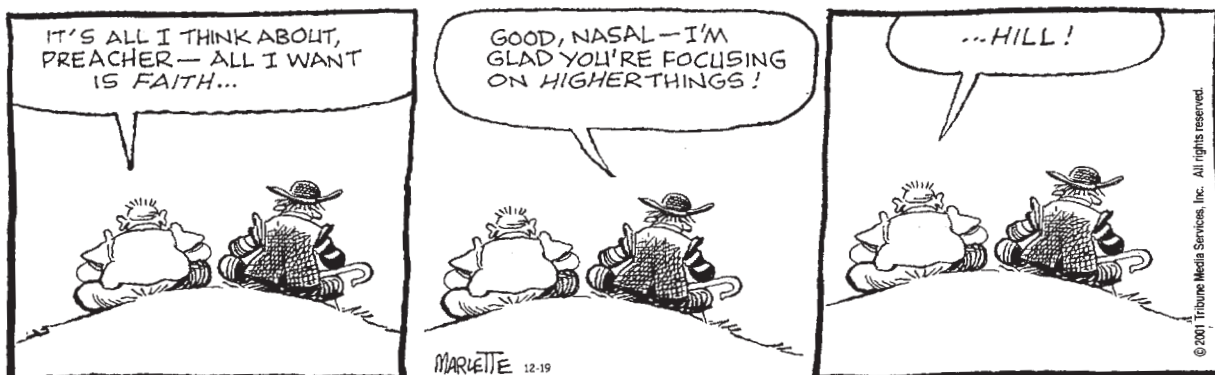
John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, and others associated with the “Jesus scholarship” group could not be more clear: “the Gospels are not literally true, but history metaphorized, though

there be some history remembered; the Bible is not divine, but a totally human product of two ancient communities; there was no virgin birth, no bodily resurrection, no Second Coming, and Jesus was a Jewish peasant, certainly not divine.”

In his book, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, Bishop John Shelby Spong writes, “The Bible is not the word of God in any literal or verbal sense. It never has been.” He adds, “There is no God external to life. God is not a being superior to all other beings.” In fact, the Gospels contain “embarrassing moral and intellectual concepts. The divine nature of Jesus or the interpretations of Jesus as the incarnation of the theistic deity was also a late-developing reality,” not a part of original Christianity. (I am considering writing a book entitled, *Why Bishop Spong Must Change or Die* ©) In sum, as surely as did the secular Sadducees and Herodians, these Neo-Sadducees reject the Jesus of the Gospels.

Is it any wonder then that Neo-Phariseism has experienced a rebirth? As a reaction to modernity and secular humanism, fundamentalism offers, for some, a strongly attractive alternative worldview. This belief system builds upon a foundation of biblical inerrancy. Doctrines of creation, the virgin birth of Jesus, the incarnation, the atoning death of Christ on the cross, the bodily resurrection, and the Second Coming are embraced as fundamentals of the faith. Miracles are historically factual. Judgment and Heaven and Hell are realities, not metaphor. Along with these bedrock beliefs comes an emphasis on personal salvation and soul-winning, as well as missions. So what’s the rub? For some there is no rub. For others, however, fundamentalism is too militant, whether it is housed in the first century or the twenty-first. Stances on anti-evolution, anti-education, anti-women’s rights, anti-abortion, anti-sex education, anti-separation of church and state, and anti-social ministries, have caused society at large to view fundamentalism as the “anti-movement,” largely negative, often hostile, and generally offensive.

The truly honest, healthy Christian today, however, may confess sympathy with these competing ideologies before rejecting their extreme expressions. Who among us would return to a



pre-scientific age? And what is wrong with reading texts from new angles of vision as literary criticism invites us to do? Were not the Pharisees devout people? Are not fundamentalists devoted to God and His Word? Certainly we can give thanks for the advances of modern science, hermeneutics, and religious devotion. Might we go too far, however, in either direction? Indeed, Christ warned of the danger, did he not? In the case of the Pharisees, it is tragic that when Jesus' deeds did not fit their creeds, religion grew sick. When Jesus' beliefs and behavior related to fasting, the Sabbath, healing, washing hands and other areas failed to conform to the doctrine and practice of the Pharisees, legalism betrayed love, rules preempted relationships. Christ saw it coming. The danger of devout religion is that we may love our beliefs more than our brother, our system more than our sister. To show our love for God, we are willing to hate one another. We rush to win our fights and lose our souls. Alas, we can surely lose our love and keep our religion, but we will have lost our God. "Beware the leaven of the Pharisees," Jesus warned.

All of this leads to our reflection upon Jesus' temptation in the wilderness regarding bread. The Tempter finds Jesus hungry in the wilderness and tempts him saying, "If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." This I take to be a seduction of the material, an enticement away from his first love of the spiritual. Jesus' response? "Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word which comes from the mouth of God." Perhaps we could exist by bread alone. But live? Never! The word of God, not literal bread, is the sustenance necessary for true life. Thus he who is the Word of God soon reveals himself as the Bread of Life, in time taken, blessed, broken, and given to us on a crude banquet table on a hill called Golgotha.

Yes, Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. But what about the reverse possibility? What about *turning bread into stones*? Make no mistake about it, throughout our ministries we too will be tempted, like Jesus, to place the material over the spiritual in our priorities. Turning stones into bread is a front for a global demonic operation which has long afflicted humans with street addictions such as materialism, workaholic-ism, hedonism, and yes, paganism. Naming demons frightens them, and us too, doesn't it?

What *do* you think about "turning *bread* into stones?" Could that *too* be a dangerous seduction? If Jesus were tempted to transform cold, nutritionless stone into foodstuff, might not we be tempted to do the same? Yes, but also the reverse. To take the bread of life and turn it into useless stones—how might we do that? When might we fall into so grave a sin? It is already being done!

The sacred substance and sustenance of the Gospel is being challenged, as we speak, by the voices of some in the modern academy of biblical scholarship. The word (lower case "w") and the Word (capital "W") are for many no longer divine or divine-human. Is biblical teaching, for some, turning to stone? Shall the hungry cry out for bread, only to receive from our hands stone—cold, lifeless, nutritionless stone? I pray that you and I in this place, on this "holy ground" called Truett Theological Seminary, will reject the corrupting leaven of the Herodians and Sadducees. For to be sure, a purely secular worldview transforms the Bread of Life into the bread of death—for the founders of Christianity in the first century and for Christianity in the twenty-first century. "Beware the leaven of the Sadducees and Herodians," Jesus said.

But the bread which gives life may be turned into stones not only by Neo-Sadducees and Herodians, but also by Neo-Pharisees. The letter of the law kills; the Spirit gives life. Upon what or whom will we hope? Let us be careful! Leaven, or teaching, or settled convictions affect the whole life. To reject fundamentalism is not to accept whatever the cultural winds may blow our way. By all means we stand against some things and for other things! Our culture is stuffed with information and starved for values. But we are the people of God, the body of Christ. So we beware the leaven of the Pharisees *and* the Sadducees and Herodians. Ironically, each group tramples morals and true spirituality while violating the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." For they turn bread into stones, tragically exchanging the bread of life for the bread of idolatry. Unless our righteousness, Jesus warned, exceeds that of the Pharisees and Sadducees we will not see the kingdom of Heaven

Rather let us behold the *Bread of Life*. Let us reject secularism on the left and fundamentalism on the right. Let us embrace historic orthodox Christianity. For God has not left us clueless in Seattle or in Waco. God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, the incarnate, crucified, risen, coming again Savior of the world. May we all repent of our appetites for evil and sinful leaven and receive the Bread of God. May we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind. And may we, by God's grace, love our neighbor as ourselves. Let us resist the yeast of the Tempter and accept the feast of the Savior. Let us, by God's grace, refuse to turn bread into stones by rejecting both worldliness and religious dysfunction. Rather, may we accept the invitation to the grand banquet table set at Mount Calvary. There let us say in one accord, "Pass the Bread of Life please." And let us hear the celestial words of our Host, "Take. Eat. This do in remembrance of me." ■

Diatribes on Cybernetics

By Foy Valentine, Founding Editor

The hottest places in the Hereafter, it has occurred to me, may be reserved for the purveyors and promulgators of the cybernetic revolution.

I condemn it, of course, because I don't dig it.

Its mechanical mysteries frustrate me.

Its electrical complexities confound me.

Its charm eludes me.

Its devotees antagonize me.

Its evangelists drive me away before the invitation.

And its vocabulary paralyzes me: hard drive, floppy disks, bytes, megabytes, gigabytes, dot com, dot org, web page, download, software, on line, chat room. All this and more—much, much more, *ad infinitum*.

Like the Roman Catholic Inquisitors of Florence who put Galileo on trial, and then under house arrest for the rest of his life, for advocating a view the Pope held to be “absurd and false philosophically, because it is expressly contrary to Holy Scripture;” like English Luddites who wrecked all the new fangled weaving machines they could swing a sledge hammer at; like the Amish with their horses and buggies; like a smart but appropriately credulous old relative who never to his dying day one minute believed that we ever put any man on the moon, I choose to withdraw as discreetly as possible from this cyberspace business.

It is a bad dream.

Maybe it will all just go away.

Computerites are from Mars.

Even typewriters were a misbegotten step in the wrong direction, starting us down a slippery slope from which we have found no way of turning back.

If a body is under some compunction to write, he needs a legal sized pad and a fountain pen.

If God had wanted us to peck out email messages on a computer, why would he ever have given us stationery, postage, and mail boxes?

Now tell me the honest truth.

Could you ever again have any respect for a grown man who would look in a tiny window of a miniaturized machine that flashed up orders which he would then, like a robot, mindlessly obey? O course not! To take orders from such a glorified adding machine is altogether unseemly, not totally unlike bowing down before a wooden god which we might whittle out of a piece of lumber cut out of our own woodpile and then placed reverently between two candles on the mantel in the living room.

Dumb city.

Like happy-clappy church services, SUVs, broccoli, rap music, boom boxes, television sets left on all the time, cold

houses, barking dogs, indoor cats, line crashers, call waiting, and telephone marketing, I think the computer is just going to have to get along as best it can without me or my blessing. I have made up my mind.

Oh, if I were fifty years younger, it likely would be a different story. But that is a condition contrary to fact. So I plan to continue to trudge along in my familiar rut, not at all perturbed that a dreadful virus has just been reported to scare the living daylight out of my with-it friends who have all likewise with one accord bowed their knees to this baneful Baal. I wish them no ill. In fact, if the word had not been so pitifully and painfully politicized in recent times, I would say that I feel some authentic compassion for them.

Why this diatribe about cybernetics?

There are those who might say, “He has gotten crotchety in his old age.” But the truth is that I have always been crotchety.

Others might think, “The complexities of this transistor-driven revolution have simply pushed him over the edge.” But actually my mind seems to be about as clear as it ever was, which of course is not a very compelling observation.

Still others could analyze my mind-set on this matter thus, “Surely he has assumed this know-nothing stance out of some deep-seated inferiority complex.” But if this is so, I don't feel it in my bones.

Yet another explanation might be put forward, “He is a Baptist.” But my quintessentially Baptist disposition, while arguably predisposing me to certain contrarian leanings can hardly be blamed for my profound abhorrence of cybernetics for, after all, there are lots of my fellow-Baptists, just as principled as I am, or more so, who do not share my mind-set about this genre.

What then makes this tic tick?

In a word, I'm 77.

And besides, just because I'm not paranoid is no sign they're not really after me.

Of course, to show you that I am not totally intransigent and hopelessly out of touch but in fact am a congenial and quite sweetly reasonable chap, I have written this little squib about transistors:

Ode to a Transistor

Little devil, little god,

Miniscule and passing odd—

Key to mankind's gnawing needs,

Tool of earth's outreaching creeds—

Hope of hungry, light for poor,

Upthrown window, open door—

Tiny instrument of hate,

(continued on page 27)

CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY

A Journal of Christian Ethics

“We need now to recover the prophethood of all believers, matching our zeal for the priesthood of all believers with a passion for the prophethood of all believers.”

—Foy Valentine, Founding Editor

PURPOSES

- Strengthen and support the cause of Christian ethics.
- Champion moral values without which civilization itself could not survive.
- Interpret and apply Christian experience, biblical truth, theological insights, historical perspectives, and current research to contemporary moral issues.
- Maintain an independent prophetic voice for truth and righteousness.
- Address the ethical dimension of public policy issues.
- Utilize the contributions of responsible stewards who designate resources to further the cause of Christian ethics.

Christian Ethics Today was born in the mind and heart of Foy Valentine, as an integral part of his dream for a Center for Christian Ethics. In his words, the purpose of the Journal was “to inform, inspire, and unify a lively company of individuals and organizations interested in working for personal morality and public righteousness.”

During its first five years, the Journal established a life of its own, addressing a variety of subjects relating to Christian social concerns. Creating a rare combination of substantive material, provocative commentary, titillating dialogue, whimsical stories, and reprints of classical expositions, the Journal developed a large and growing list of readers. When the Center was transferred to Baylor University in June 2000, with the calling of a permanent Director, the disbanding Board voted to continue the publication of *Christian Ethics Today*, appointing a new editor and a new Board.

The Journal will continue to be published six times per year. The purpose envisioned by the founding editor remains: To “clarify, communicate, cultivate, and champion those basic ethical values without which neither the churches or civilization itself could survive: wisdom, courage, temperance, justice, righteousness, peace, faith, hope, love, and freedom.”

From the beginning *Christian Ethics Today* has been sent without charge to anyone requesting it, six times per year, “as money and energy permit.” A new editor brings added energy to the mission. But more than ever before, your financial support is “greatly needed, urgently solicited, and genuinely appreciated.” The Christian Ethics Today Foundation is a non-profit organization and has received a 501 (c) (3) status from the Internal Revenue Service.

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