

CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS VOLUME 9, NUMBER 2 AGGREGATE ISSUE 44 APRIL 2003

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" Isaiah 40:3; John 1:23

EthixBytes

How Baptists Got Into This Debate Over Women *Audra E. and Joe E. Trull*

BF&M 2000—The SBC Totem Pole? *Bill Simpson*

Henlee Barnette: Giant in the Land *Ron Sisk*

We Support Troops—Until They Get Home and Need Our Help *John Young*

What Constitutes Christian Citizenship in Wartime? *Robert Parham*

An Evolving Faith: Does the President Believe He Has a Divine Mandate?

Deborah Caldwell

United We Stand—In Irony *Paul J. Piccard*

A TRILOGY ON CHURCH AND CULTURE

One Nation Under God

Evangelism and the Middle East War

Should Clergy Continue Their Control of Education

Dwight A. Moody

And Justice For All: The Price of Freedom and Security *Bruce Prescott*

A Place For You *Hal Haralson*

BOOK REVIEWS

Stand With Christ: Why Missionaries Can't Sign the 2000 BF&M *Reviewed by Rick Dill*

When Religion Becomes Evil *Reviewed by Douglas Groothuis*

The Courage To Be Catholic: Crisis, Reform, and the Future of the Church

Reviewed by Theresa Zolner

Building Materials For Life *Reviewed by Darold Morgan*

The Letter Giveth Life *Foy Valentine*



KUDZU by Doug Marlette
www.dougmarlette.com

EthixBytes

(A Collection of Quotes Comments, Statistics, and News Items)

“A long habit of not thinking a thing *wrong* gives it a superficial appearance of being *right*. . . Time makes more converts than reason.”
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

“The federal budget deficit is back with a vengeance [\$159 billion for 2002] and deficitwatch.org is keeping track—cost estimates for the war on terrorism: \$139 billion last year and a projected \$287 billion in 2003. That’s more than we spent in 25 years on the space program.”

Dr. Saul Wilen, CEO of San Antonio consulting firm

“The President asked for over \$3 billion for Homeland Security, Congress approved less than half of that—\$1.3 billion. And yet we are about to spend \$95 billion on the war in Iraq. Have we confused our priorities?”

Commentary on CNN, 3/07/03

“There never was a good war or a bad peace.”

Benjamin Franklin

“I didn’t know we needed \$10 million for a South Pole station—I didn’t know al Qaeda had reached the South Pole.”
Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) responding to an amendment to the \$80 billion war funding Senate bill which included \$62 billion for the Pentagon, \$8 billion for aid to supporting countries, and \$4 billion for terrorism at home.

“Former CSX railroad executive John Snow was sworn in February 3 as Treasury secretary, leaving a corporation which made billions of dollars in profits while paying no taxes and offering him a \$15 million severance package!”

Associated Press.

“To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or

wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public.”

Teddy Roosevelt, *EthicsDaily.com*

“I think what we need to do is convince people who live in the lands they live in to build the nations. Maybe I’m missing something here. I mean, we’re going to have kind of a nation-building corps from America? Absolutely not.” Then Gov. George W. Bush, in campaign remarks on Oct. 11, 2000.

President Bush in 2003 outlined a vision for transforming Iraq and the entire Middle East into a democratic region.

“A fondness for power is implanted in most men, and it is natural to abuse it, when acquired.”

Alexander Hamilton, 1775

“The Republican-controlled House Budget Committee voted to cut \$25 billion in veterans’ benefits over the next 10 years. The Bush administration proposed cutting \$172 million from impact aid programs, which provide school funding for children of military personnel.”

Austin-American Statesman, 4/4/03

“I am angry that so many of the sons of the powerful and well-placed . . . managed to wangle slots in Reserve and National Guard units. Of the many tragedies of Vietnam, this raw class discrimination strikes me as the most damaging to the ideal that all Americans are created equal.”

U.S. Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell in his autobiography.

“Smith & Wesson has introduced its biggest handgun, a .50-caliber Magnum, five-shot revolver with an 8½-inch barrel. The primary market is for hunting,” said a spokesman. Tom Ortiz of the Violence Policy Center said the new gun would create “a new order of threat to law enforcement.”

(continued on page 19)

Editor: Joe E. Trull

Publisher: Christian Ethics Today Foundation, 101 Mt. View Rd.; Wimberley, TX 78676. (512) 847-8721; FAX (512) 847-8171.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY is produced in the U.S.A. and is published bi-monthly, mailed from Dallas, Texas, where third-class postage is paid. Articles published in CET express the views of the authors and not necessarily the viewpoint of the Journal or the Editor.

Send corrections and change of addresses to P.O. Box 26, Wimberley, Texas, 78676.

How Baptists¹ Got Into This Debate Over Women

By Audra E. Trull and Joe E. Trull

Note: This article is the introductory chapter of the book, *Putting Women in Their Place: The Baptist Debate Over Female Equality* to be released in June, 2003, by Smith & Helwys. See the special offer of this book to our readers elsewhere in this issue.

The summer of 2000 was a crucial turning point for both of us. After fifteen years of teaching Christian ethics and working with students at a Baptist seminary, we returned to Texas to begin a new phase of our lives, one we had not anticipated (more about that later).

One afternoon the telephone rang. On the line was the wife of a former seminary student. She had difficulty speaking as she asked, “What did I do wrong?”

At the seminary where we first met the couple, Penny was invited to join the first group of females to receive a new degree in women’s ministries. After the first year of study, an opportunity arose for Penny to serve for a week as a chaplain on a cruise line—“a time of ministry I shall never forget.” Upon returning to the campus and sharing her experiences aboard the ship, her major professor (a female) called her aside privately.

Gently but firmly Penny was told never to serve as a “Cruise Chaplain” again! Why? No woman should occupy such a role—this was a position for a man. In addition, she had brought embarrassment to the seminary, for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) meeting in their city that very month had approved a document forbidding female pastors.² She was further warned never to discuss this matter with anyone—professors, students, or other ministers.

As best we could over the phone, we gave Penny our comfort and counsel. We also directed her to an organization that provided support and information for women in ministry who faced opposition. In time she was able to write her own account of the incident, which was published by that organization under the title, “Woman Overboard.”³

Penny’s repeated question remains with us to this day: “What did I do wrong?” The summer of 2000 was for her a crucial turning point.

That same summer was also a watershed moment for Southern Baptists. Like a perfect storm, the takeover of the SBC by ultra-conservatives had reached maximum intensity. By the year 2000, faculties and curriculums at theological schools were drastically changed. Mission agencies had revised their purposes, restructured their programs, and re-assigned missionaries. Denominational agencies had reorganized under new mandates. Churches that assumed the squabble was a “preacher fight” suddenly realized the short

and long-term effects of the takeover were impacting their congregations.

And along the path of the storm where the winds were strongest, scores of victims lay injured and bleeding—presidents and professors, mission board leaders and missionaries, agency heads and staff members, editors and secretaries, and many innocent bystanders like Penny.

The Takeover of the SBC

For the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S., the summer of 2000 marked the culmination of twenty years of religious warfare between two groups. In the late 1970s a well-organized and well-financed cadre of ultra-conservatives launched a plan to gain control of the SBC. Moderate Baptists at first were reluctant to engage in this battle that resembled secular politics more than religion. When they did organize opposition, it was too late.

The strategy worked. By the 1990s the takeover was complete, as the organizers had put themselves into positions of leadership and control in the SBC. During the last decade of the twentieth century the leaders of this “conservative resurgence” (as they called it) relished their victory and immediately began the radical change of every institution and agency under their direction.⁴

In order to solidify their political successes, SBC leaders began rewriting the convention’s history from their perspective and rewriting the convention’s faith statement, *The Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M)* to reflect their narrow fundamentalist-conservative beliefs.

Although this twenty-year struggle for control had many faces and numerous issues, in recent years one subject has become the focal point of debate—female equality. The two most significant revisions of the *BF&M*, one in 1998 and one in 2000, focused on the role of women in the home and in the church.

High profile personalities who were instrumental in the takeover engineered the controversial revisions in this SBC confession of faith, which had served the convention for 153 years. According to the former President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Russell H. Dilday, “This revised statement of faith . . . is being used as an official creed to enforce loyalty to the party in power. To refuse is to risk isolation or even expulsion from the denominational circle.”⁵

One issue became the major test of orthodoxy—how a person or a congregation understood gender roles determined doctrinal soundness. To believe contrary to the *BF&M 2000* statement was to deny the “inerrancy of the Bible,” so the revisers claimed.

The Struggle for Female Equality

This battle over female equality did not begin with Baptists or even with Gloria Steinem. From the earliest chapters of Genesis, the devaluation of females has been a constant story in human history. Patriarchy, male domination, discrimination, and sexism have characterized almost every civilization.

The Greek myth of Amazon female warriors who ruled a society in Scythia is pure fantasy. Also idealistic was Plato's just state composed of three social classes of equal people. The reality is that in every society, including Plato's Greek state, women have been treated as second-class citizens, sometimes not much more than disposable property or worthless slaves.⁶

Only in the twentieth century has complete equality for women come close to realization. In the United States, women gained the right to vote in 1920. Today they are elected as mayors, governors, senators, and Supreme Court justices. Sixty years ago women were called into the workforce to aid their country during World War II. Today career women work in almost every vocation. Five decades ago, women in America had no guarantee of equal access to employment, housing, education, or credit. Today these rights are established by law.

In this past century a dramatic reversal has occurred in society's attitude toward the abuse of females. In language and in law, in business and in family life, the mistreatment of women and sexual harassment have become major concerns. The plight of oppressed Afghan women has increased American awareness of this world problem.

In light of the twentieth century emancipation of women from domination, discrimination, and sexism, where does the church stand? Have not Christian beliefs and practices sometimes perpetuated female subordination? Has the church been more prone to uphold social customs and cultural traditions concerning women, than to declare and sup-

port God's creative intent for female and male relationships?

The Response of Churches to Christian Feminist Movements

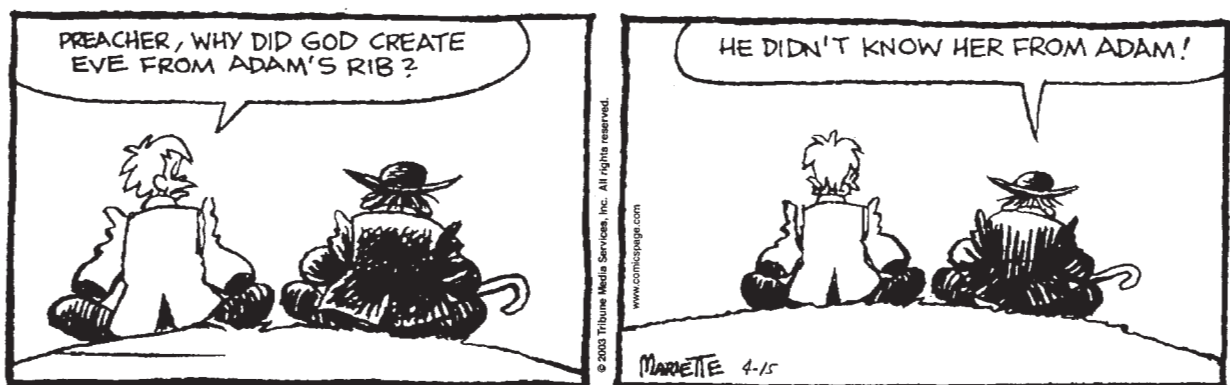
As we enter the third millenium, few topics have generated more heated discussion among both Protestants and Roman Catholics than gender roles and relationships. Feminist studies are common in theological schools, with no shortage of books and articles for the bibliography. Feminist theology is the topic of conferences, as well as a major “bone of contention” in many denominations.

No one denies the important role of women in the family and in the religious community. At the same time, traditional understandings of female roles, usually supported by biblical passages, have often placed women in a secondary position and deprived them of full involvement. Today, as never before, Christians are debating the proper place for women.

Evangelicals have carried on a friendly but serious dispute on this subject for more than 15 years. In 1990 the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) held their annual meeting on the New Orleans Seminary campus. Members of this group are known to be conservative scholars who hold a high view of Scripture. As we browsed in their display area, we discovered two groups promoting opposing views of male and female roles. Leaders in both circles were well-known theologians who based their views on the biblical revelation, and who (unlike many Baptists) were able to discuss their convictions with candor and mutual respect.

At one table marked Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) sat Dr. Catherine Kroeger, an expert in the ancient Greek language, classical Greek literature, and the Graeco-Roman culture of the first century. As a minister's wife and foster mother of numerous children, she returned to the University of Minnesota late in life to earn her doctorate in the classics, convinced that many traditional understandings of gender were based on a faulty interpretation of the Bible in its first-century setting.

Through research, writing, and speaking, Dr. Kroeger has expanded our knowledge of the New Testament world and of biblical teachings concerning females (see Chapter Eight, “Paul and Women”). In 1987 she founded CBE, “an organi-



zation of Christians who believe the Bible, properly interpreted, teaches the fundamental equality of men and women of all racial and ethnic groups, all economic classes, and all age groups.”⁷

At a second table at the ETS meeting was a representative of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), established for the purpose of “studying and setting forth biblical teachings on the relationship between men and women, especially in the home and church.” The council was formed in 1987, in response to CBE, to clear up the “confusion about male and female roles in the Christian world today” and to affirm that “God made men and women equal in personhood and in value, but different in roles.”⁸

At the first CBMW meeting, leaders in the group developed “The Danvers Statement,” a declaration of the organization’s rationale, purposes, and affirmations, published in final form in November 1988.⁹ In 1991 this traditionalist group published a 566-page book of twenty-six essays, significantly sub-titled *A Response to Evangelical Feminism*.¹⁰

As evangelicals debated the meaning of biblical teachings on gender issues,¹¹ the World Council of Churches called mainline denominations to a decade-long (1988-1998) focus on women. A central element in the feminist emphasis was the need for God, the community, and the church to be “re-imagined.”

A RE-Imagining conference in the fall of 1993 brought together two thousand participants representing thirty-two denominations and twenty-seven countries. Most conferees represented the “gender feminist” perspective, rallying around key themes of women’s suffrage, male patriarchy, sexism by the traditional Christian church, and the need to reinterpret the Bible and its teachings.

Few would deny that feminism has played a major role in bringing full equality to twenty-first century women. Many Baptists, however, fail to distinguish between the founding mothers of feminism who wrote and worked for equality from the 1840s to 1940s, and the various contemporary expressions of the movement.

Today there is pluralism within feminism. In the 1960s and 1970s a radical feminist ethic emerged that taught that the only way to alleviate women’s plight was to achieve total autonomy—political, economic, sexual, and reproductive freedom, either through separation or seizing power from men.¹²

Many contemporary theologians have noted a split in the Christian feminist movement. The more radical “gender feminist” theologians emphasize the meaning of femaleness and the need to “re-imagine” traditional beliefs,¹³ while “equity feminism” affirms orthodox Christianity is essentially correct but needs structural reform to achieve equality, civil rights, and to end discrimination.

This distinction is crucial for Baptists, who tend to lump all movements for female equality into the radical feminist category. Such stereotyping is at best naïve, and at worst intentionally deceptive and misleading.

The Baptist Debate Over Female Equality

How does this brief overview of the struggle for female equality during the last century, and particularly its impact on American religious life, relate to the present Baptist controversy? As we have noted, the powers-that-be who control today’s SBC have consolidated their dominance, using the 1998 Family Amendment and the 2000 BF&M statement and its pronouncements on women as a line of demarcation for passing the muster of “doctrinal accountability.”¹⁴ In a word, if you don’t put women in their assigned place (so say SBC leaders), we will put you in your place—outside the boundaries of orthodoxy and partnership.

In order to understand the present Baptist debate over female equality, we need to look briefly at the SBC record concerning female equality, and then we will examine closely three documents that ignited this present firestorm.

The debate over the place of women in Baptist life did not begin with the recent takeover movement. The issue was argued even before the beginning of the SBC in 1845. Four decades later, in 1885, two women from Arkansas tried to register as voting messengers to the SBC annual meeting. This attempt triggered a change in the wording of the SBC constitution regarding who could be seated as voting messengers, from “members” to “brethren.” Not until 1918 was the change reversed, but this was still two years before women in the U.S. were given the right to vote.¹⁵

In an article in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* published in 1958, Juliette Mather identified a major flaw in the SBC. Noting the financial support of missions stimulated by the Women’s Missionary Union and the large number of women leaders serving in local churches, she expressed disappointment that females had been largely overlooked as denominational leaders.¹⁶

Coinciding with the publication of *The Feminine Mystic* in 1963, the SBC elected its first woman officer, Marie Mathis of Texas, as second vice president. In the same year that the Equal Rights Amendment was passed (1972), Marie Mathis was nominated for president of the SBC—the only woman so nominated to date—but she was defeated.¹⁷

The 1984 Resolution. The 1984 convention meeting in Kansas City signaled a radical change in SBC attitudes toward women. The conservative leaders who began the takeover of the SBC in 1979 fueled the heated debate over female leadership by sponsoring a strongly worded resolution opposing ordination of women, which passed by a vote of 4793 to 3466.¹⁸

Resolution Three took the position that the Bible excludes women from pastoral leadership positions, concluding: “We encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination.” Even more inflammatory was the written justification given for the action: this rule was to “preserve a submission that God requires because man was first in Creation, and woman was first in the Edenic Fall.”¹⁹

Reaction was vigorous and varied. To proclaim male

superiority based on the supposed chronology of Genesis was widely challenged as poor exegesis. To blame Eve for original sin in the Garden of Eden, which resulted in a penalty upon all females, exposed the superficial theology of the Resolutions Committee. But Pandora's Box had been opened. A lively debate about the origin of sin ensued, often including Paul's statement in Romans 5:12, "Sin came into the world through one *man*."

One year earlier, a group of SBC women had met in Louisville, Kentucky to begin the formation of a new organization: Southern Baptist Women in Ministry.²⁰ The 1984 resolution seemed to energize this new association (now renamed Baptist Women in Ministry), which immediately became a rallying force in opposition to the SBC attempt to limit female leadership. In 2002 over 1900 women serve as ordained Southern Baptist clergy, mostly as chaplains and staff members. Ironically, the majority of them received their ordination after 1984.²¹

Article XVIII: The 1998 Family Amendment. The 1984 Resolution was a harbinger of things to come. A key concern of the new leadership in the SBC was to establish a very definite role for women—to put them in their "assigned" place at home and in the church.

The new leaders of the SBC had always held a traditionalist view about women. But now, the gender issue seemed a perfect tool for ostracizing and eliminating their moderate Baptist opponents. Two SBC power brokers, Richard Land (Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission President and a member of both the 1998 and 2000 committees) and Paige Patterson (Southeastern Seminary President) had been Dean and President of the ultra conservative Criswell School of Theology. Patterson's wife Dorothy was appointed to the 1998 committee. As newly elected SBC President, Patterson in turn appointed the 2000 committee, which included his brother-in-law, New Orleans Seminary President Chuck Kelley.

Recent SBC President Adrian Rogers (Chair of the 2000 Committee) and his wife Joyce, along with Paige and Dorothy Patterson, were original Board Members of the traditionalist Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Al Mohler, the young Southern Seminary president was also appointed to the 2000 *BF&M* Committee, following his wife Mary Mohler's role as one of seven on the 1998 committee. Is it any surprise that this core group would draw some very specific boundary lines about women's roles?

Article XVIII, an Amendment to the 1963 *BF&M* document, is titled "The Family" and consists of a four-paragraph (272 words) statement accompanied by a twenty-paragraph commentary.²² On first reading, the brief statement (followed by a long list of supportive Scriptures) seems "thoroughly biblical" and innocuous to the casual reader. Paragraphs one and two affirm the family and the purposes of marriage. The last paragraph discusses the parent-child relationship.

The controversial third paragraph reads: "*The husband and wife are of equal worth before God. Both bear God's image*

but in differing ways. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to his people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead the family. A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being 'in the image of God' as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and serve as his 'helper' in managing their household and nurturing the next generation."

The underlined phrases need closer examination. It is obvious upon a second look that the committee of seven intended to define very specific male and female roles in the home. Traditionalists love to utter the oxymoronic idea that men and women are "equal . . . but in different ways." As gender issue scholar Rebecca Merrill Groothuis has noted in an extensive article on this very subject, "The idea that women are equal in their being, yet unequal by virtue of their being, simply makes no sense."²³

Note the subtle but definite assignment of "God-given" roles: men are responsible "to provide for, to protect, and to lead the family." In other words, the husband alone is to work outside the home and to be in charge as the guardian of the family. On the other hand, the wife's "God-given" responsibility is to "submit graciously" to her husband's leadership, to "respect" him and "serve as his 'helper' in managing" the household and "nurturing" the children. In other words, the wife is ordained by God to remain in the home primarily to pay the bills, cook the meals, clean the house, and raise the kids.

Now, all of these family tasks are important. But the obvious problem with such boundaries is the assumption that the husband has little or no responsibility to nurture the children, manage the home, or help the wife with household tasks. Likewise, the subtle implication for the wife and mother is that she should not work outside the home or consider herself a provider, protector, or leader of the family. In this description of gender roles we have a solid basis for "Men Only" in the pastorate.

The greatest repercussions to the *Family Amendment* came from the phrase, "*A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband*" based primarily on a flawed exegesis of Ephesians 5:21-25 (See Chapter 10 for an extensive discussion of this passage). Though traditionalist's claim to be "biblical," the word "*graciously*" is nowhere in the passage. Does this additional adverb mean that wives must *not* say, "O.K. I'll do it," and frown, but rather they must smile and be sweet as they submit?

Dorothy Patterson was questioned by a reporter about female submission in the amendment she helped frame: "As a woman standing under the authority of Scripture, even when it comes to submitting to my husband when I know he's wrong, I just have to do it and then he stands accountable at the judgment," she replied.²⁴

Think about that statement. For a wife to claim that she is not accountable to God for a decision required by her husband, but only he is responsible, is close to theological heresy!

This viewpoint contends either the husband knows best, or if not, he alone will answer to God.

This hierarchical view of marriage, made popular by Bill Gothard's "Chain of Command" model, has authority flowing from God to Husband to Wife to Children. Many wives love this approach because it relieves them of responsibility. As the family leader, the husband is the one accountable to God for the family, while the wife is accountable to her husband. We have now in this theory an ironic reversal of the traditionalist interpretation of the Fall, where Eve and women are blamed for sin.

The 2000 BF&M. The leaders of the SBC were unrelenting in their quest for "doctrinal uniformity." They seemed determined to exclude all Southern Baptists who do not agree with them on certain key issues, a major one being the role of women.

Two years after the *Family Amendment*, a 15 member committee (appointed the previous summer by SBC President Paige Patterson) released proposed revisions to the *1963 BF&M*. The SBC meeting in New Orleans in June approved *2000 BF&M*.

Numerous changes troubled large numbers of Baptist leaders across the convention. In a compelling and well-documented analysis of the *2000 BF&M*, the former president of the SBC's largest seminary summarized eleven major concerns about the revision, including the new pronouncement that the Bible prohibits women from being pastors of local churches.²⁵

Initial reactions to the *2000 BF&M* revision focused on one sentence in Article VI. The Church: "*While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.*"²⁶ This latest revision of the Baptist confessional statements moves from putting women in their place in the home to assigning females their place in the church.

Criticism of this position was immediate, centering on two key questions: biblical interpretation and local church autonomy. Strong reactions appeared in speeches, sermons, articles, editorials, and state convention resolutions. Robert Parham, director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville, said the new document "pulls up a drawbridge into the 21st century and padlocks Southern Baptists into a 19th century cultural castle." Daniel Vestal, coordinator of the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship told the New York Times the proposed revision "is based on a bad interpretation of Scripture, an insensitivity to the Holy Spirit and an unwillingness to see what God is doing in the world today."²⁷

Committee members defended their prohibition of women as pastors. Al Mohler declared the statement is "not culturally driven" but "a matter of biblical conviction." James Merritt, who ran unopposed as SBC President in 2000, asserted the practice of ordaining women is "unbiblical." Paige Patterson added, "Our positions are not going to be dictated by culture. They're going to be dictated by Scripture."²⁸

It is most interesting that committee members brought up the issue of culture—actually, that issue is one of the most serious weaknesses of the SBC framer's position on female roles. Historically, Southern Baptists often have been guilty of reflecting culture, more than challenging it. On the issue of race, for over a century Southern Baptists used the Bible to defend slavery and the practice of keeping African-Americans in their place. Both of us were seminary students in the 1960s, and we well remember how Scripture was misused to prove racial inequality and support racial discrimination.

These same arguments, and often the same Scriptures, are now used to support female inequality and discrimination. To their credit, most of the SBC leaders have finally got it right on the race question, but they fail to see the connection with female equality. In supporting their position, the defenders of the traditional view of women's roles play "Bible Poker," flinging down on the table proof-text Scriptures. Traditionalists fear to admit that the Bible must be interpreted in the cultural context in which the Word of God was first delivered, which is a basic hermeneutical principle.²⁹

As we examine carefully these recent SBC pronouncements about women, we are forced to conclude that all three are flawed biblically, theologically, and procedurally.

Biblically, the framers of these documents have used the Bible selectively; as well as used a method of interpretation that every first-year seminary student is warned to avoid. To quote proof-texts out of context, to add non-biblical words like "graciously," and to attach questionable commentary raises basic hermeneutical suspicions.

Theologically, the group proposes a false hierarchical view of marriage and male authority based on the patriarchal idea that men answer to God and women answer to men.

The procedural flaws may not be as obvious. To understand who was chosen to serve on these key committees and how they functioned, especially in comparison to similar committees in the past, is a commentary on power politics in religion.

In 1963 there were twenty-four representative persons on the BF&M committee, one from each state convention, who sought feedback and information from a wide spectrum of resources. Compare this to the seven members in 1998 (one SBC executive, two state convention executives, two wives of seminary presidents, and two pastors) and the thirteen men and two women appointed to the *2000 BF&M* committee. All were known for their extreme right position on most issues, and they deliberately worked in secret until just before the convention.

Another procedural concern has emerged in relation to the application of this document. The preamble to *2000 BF&M* clearly states that "*we do not regard them as complete statements of our faith, having any quality of finality or infallibility*" and that the statements "*are not to be used to hamper freedom of thought or investigation in other realms of life.*"³⁰ Yet, despite the traditional Baptist aversion to creeds at every level—national, state, associational, and church—Baptists are now being required to endorse this statement or face

ostracism, isolation, or downright expulsion! Local church autonomy and the priesthood of every believer, long-cherished doctrines among Baptists, are now being threatened by this push for SBC-style uniformity, which resembles a hierarchical form of church government that Baptists in America have opposed since the days of Roger Williams, John Leland, and Isaac Backus.

Even though *BF&M 2000* only forbids women to serve as pastors, the practical fallout has been disastrous. SBC seminaries, mission agencies, state offices, and churches have regressed in their recognition and use of women.

In the seminary where I taught (along with the other SBC seminaries), women can be considered to teach only “safe subjects” such as music, children and youth work, social work, and religious education. At the Baptist school from which I graduated in 1957, a wonderful female Old Testament professor taught some of our most admired ultra-conservative pastors. No one complained. Today that same school will not consider any woman to teach as a Bible professor.

Just before this chapter was sent to the publisher, I received an email from my former Teaching Assistant/Grader, who this year received her Ph.D. in New Testament. Although she and one other were the first women to receive a doctorate in New Testament from the seminary in New Orleans, that fact was not announced. To add insult to injury, both of them were presented differently than were the male graduates, treated in a way that was condescending and demeaning at the graduation ceremonies.³¹

In many SBC churches women cannot teach men or boys, cannot chair a mixed-gender committee, cannot stand behind the pulpit, cannot lead music—where will this craziness end! This is the fallout from these formal declarations about the place of women in our homes and churches.

As we implied at the beginning, this controversy has a personal side for us. In 1998 as we were preparing for our second sabbatical study, the new seminary president startled Joe with the words, “Have you thought about early retirement?” After a year of sabbatical study our plan was to return to teach for another five to ten years. “You are not being forced to retire,” said the President, “but I urge you to consider this window of opportunity.”

Since 1985, Joe had been the only teacher of Christian ethics at the New Orleans seminary. In many ways he had brought renown to the school, including the publishing of two textbooks widely used.³² He could not understand the offer until he was told by a reliable source, “Your position on women as outlined in your new textbook could cause problems with our Trustees. Our new president will not be able to protect you.”

A few months later, the SBC approved the *1998 Family Amendment*, which the President’s sister helped to frame. And the president himself would soon be on the 2000 committee, even though he later told Joe that he was no theologian and asked his brother-in-law not to appoint him.

If we returned to the seminary, our days were numbered.

An agreement was reached whereby we did not return.

Putting women in their place is a deep conviction we both treasure, as do many others who, like us, consider integrity more valuable than job security. A new advertising logo at CBE says it best: “Put Women in Their Place—Beside Men!” ■

¹ Although there are numerous types of Baptists all holding various views about women, the editors have chosen to use “Baptists” and “Southern Baptists” as synonymous terms, as the debate over female equality has become a major divisive issue in the largest Protestant denomination in America.

² The *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* document, written by a committee of which the professor’s husband, the president of the seminary, was a member.

³ See “Woman Overboard” by Penny Glaesman in *Mutuality* (Fall, 2001, 16), published by Christians for Biblical Equality, 122 West Franklin Av., Suite 218, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

⁴ Readers who wish to understand the SBC controversy should read: Grady C. Cothan, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention* (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 1993) or Fisher Humphrey, *The Way We Were* (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2002). For the ultra-conservative viewpoint, see Paul Pressler, *A Hill On Which To Die: One Southern Baptist’s Journey* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999).

⁵ Russell H. Dilday, “An Analysis of The Baptist Faith and Message 2000,” *Christian Ethics Today* 40 (June, 2002): 4. This article may be accessed from www.ChristianEthicsToday.com

⁶ For a full discussion of the issue of Human Equality and Gender, see Joe E. Trull, *Walking in the Way: An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 189-211.

⁷ A full statement of the organizations beliefs and mission, as well as the endorsement of over 100 leading evangelicals, may be found at their website: cbe@cbeinternational.org or by writing to them at 122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 218, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

⁸ Advertisement in *Christianity Today*, 13 January 1989, 40-41, whose address is P.O. Box 1173, Wheaton, IL 60187.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991). Only 3 of the 26 chapters, 25 of the 566 pages, are written by women.

¹¹ See Agnieszka Tennant, “Nuptial Agreements,” *Christianity Today*, 11 March 2002, 58-65, for a good summary of the present debate between evangelicals on the issue of gender roles.

¹² Margaret A. Farley, “Feminist Ethics,” *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. James F. Childress (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 199-200.

¹³ See Elizabeth Achtemeier’s “Why God Is Not Mother,” *Christianity Today*, 16 August 1993, 16-23.

¹⁴ Tony W. Cartledge, “Positive Signs or Posturing” in the *Biblical Recorder*, 12 July 2002.

¹⁵ Juliette Mather, “Women, Convention Privileges of,” *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman Press,

1958), 2:1543.

¹⁶ Ibid., 1544.

¹⁷ Catherine Allen, "Women's Movements and Southern Baptists", *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (1984), 4:2561.

¹⁸ Cothan, 145.

¹⁹ See *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention 1984*.

²⁰ Betty McGary Pearce, "A History of Women in Ministry, SBC," *Folio*, Summer 1985, 9-10.

²¹ Dr. Sarah Frances Anders, who has been keeping data on the number of ordained SBC women since the ordination of Addie Davis in 1964, confirms 1788 in 2002, but she estimates the number to be over 1900 including: 378 Chaplains; 224 Pastors, Associate, and Co-Pastors; 163 Staff Members; 28 Professors; 25 Other Denominations; 22 Retired; 9 Missionaries; 6 Students; 3 Deceased; and 951 Other (Secular, Wives, etc.). BWIM Board Members believe the number is over 2000.

²² The full text may be found in the *Baptist Message*, 25 June 1998, 6-7, or in *Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention 1998*.

²³ Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, "Logical and Theological Problems with Gender Hierarchy" in *Pricilla Papers*, Spring 2000, 3-5. Also worth reading are her two classic books: *Women Caught in the Conflict: The Culture War Between Traditionalism and Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994) and *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Baker Book House, 1997).

²⁴ "Patterson's Election Seals Conservative Control," *Christianity Today*, 13 July 1998, 21.

²⁵ Dilday, 4-11.

²⁶ *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 13, published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC, Nashville, TN.

²⁷ Bob Allen, "Reaction to proposed statement focuses on women's ordination," ABP News, May 23, 2000, Volume: 00-45.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Conservative scholars Gordon Fee and Douglass Stuart explain this as "The Problem of Cultural Relativity" [*How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982, 65-71].

³⁰ *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, 5.

³¹ In her words, after the hooding of the graduate, "While the person walks down the steps he is introduced as Dr. So and So who currently is [place of service]. I said 'he' on purpose because this was only done for the men. It was a perfect way once again to humiliate us women. You see women cannot teach in biblical studies or theology. In fact, women cannot even teach Greek. . . . When I was asked what I was currently doing, I said I was nine months pregnant and about to go into labor. So while the men walked down and were presented as Drs., neither woman was presented as Dr." For years this talented couple has been committed to missionary service; presently they are seeking appointment by American Baptists because of SBC restrictions on women.

³² *Walking in the Way: An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (1997) and *Ministerial Ethics* (co-author James Carter, 1993), both published by Broadman & Holman.

SPECIAL OFFER

Putting Women In Their Place: The Baptist Debate Over Female Equality

Editors and Contributors Audra E. and Joe E. Trull
Published By Smith & Helwys, May 2003

This important book on the role of women in church and society will be sent postage paid to anyone contributing \$100 or more to the ministry of *Christian Ethics Today* in 2003. All gifts are tax deductible.

The Book Is Must Reading For All Informed
Baptists And Includes These Chapters

Women and the Southern Baptist Convention
William Hull, Samford University

One Woman's Response to the SBC
Julie Pennington-Russell, Waco

The Female of the Species
Charles Wellborn, London

Still A Baptist Woman
Gladys Lewis, Central Oklahoma University

Can You Believe In Inerrancy and Equality?
Dan Kent, Ft. Worth

Women Leaders in the Bible
Audra E. Trull, Editor

Jesus and Women
Ruth Ann Foster, Truett Seminary

Paul: Friend or Foe of Females?
Catherine Clark Kroeger, Gordon-Conwell

Is God Male or Female? Both or Neither?
Sheri Adams, Gardner Webb

Is the Head of the House at Home?
Joe E. Trull, Editor

Women Leaders in the Church
Karen Massey, McAfee Seminary

Women Ministers in the Church
Fisher Humphreys, Beeson Divinity

Write to the address on the back cover to request your copy, which will be sent postage paid to anyone contributing \$100 or more in 2003 to *Christian Ethics Today* (All gifts are tax-deductible).

BF&M 2000—The SBC Totem Pole?

By Bill Simpson, Retired Baptist Hospital Chaplain
San Antonio, TX

It appeared to be quite a celebration. All the newly installed professors in one of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) seminaries, wearing their academic robes, were each signing the Baptist Faith & Message (BF&M) 2000 in a well publicized ceremony. It appeared to be akin to a genuine worship experience. I imagine that such a ceremony has been duplicated in many SBC institutions.

Upon seeing a photo of this in one of our Baptist papers, I recalled a taped message, by Tony Campolo, which I heard some 18 years ago. In the introduction of his message Campolo told of the escapades of world renowned Sociologist, Emil Durkheim, who did much of his work toward the end of the 19th century. Durkheim had the distinction of being able to lead an expedition into a part of Australia where a tribe of Aborigines were actually coming out of a Stone Age existence. The purpose of this expedition was to study how a tribe came up with their concept of god.

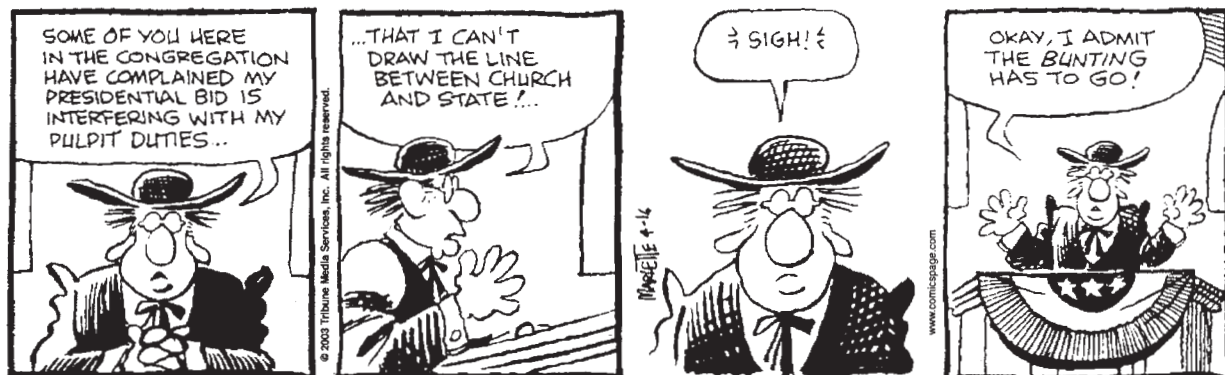
Durkheim's group discovered that the tribe gathered, led by appointed leaders, to discuss the traits that members of the tribe needed to possess in order to ensure the survival of their tribe. Such traits as speed, wisdom, strength and cunning were among the traits selected. The tribe's next step was to assign these traits to animals that displayed each trait. Speed was assigned to the deer (quick as a deer); wisdom was

assigned to the owl (wise as an owl); strength was assigned to the ox and bear (strong as an ox/bear); cunning was assigned to the fox (sly as a fox). Symbols of these animals were then made into a totem pole to be displayed in an area where the pole could be clearly seen. The next step in the process was the tribe began to worship this totem pole, made up of these animals that represented the traits the tribe felt were required for its survival.

Sociologists, therefore, concluded that religion was the group worshipping its own value system. The tribe's members, according to the researcher's conclusions, were essentially worshipping themselves.

I see a tremendous parallel to this in the SBC's relationship to the BF&M 2000. Is not this document a compilation of traits assigned to it by the SBC leadership as being absolutely necessary to ensure the survival of doctrinal integrity and purity? Is it possible that the BF&M 2000 has become the object of worship, and has caused the SBC leadership to demand that all SBC employees worship the same totem? Is it possible that the SBC has fallen into the Aborigines tribe's practice of essentially worshipping themselves, by bowing at the BF&M 2000 altar?

Food for thought! ■



Henlee Barnette: Giant in the Land

By Ron Sisk, Professor of Homiletics and Christian Ministry
North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD

Into his tenth decade now, Baptist ethicist, author, and preacher Henlee Barnette continues his unflinching call to Christian integrity in thought and action. His career spans seven decades of Baptist history in the South. From the time of his conversion as a teenager from the cotton mills of Kannapolis, North Carolina, Barnette has brought to the task of ethics both his strong biblical faith and his willingness to examine honestly any issue.

His career as an activist began with a seminary chapel at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, and a call by the Baptist prophet Clarence Jordan to minister to Louisville's Haymarket district of flophouses, tenements and bordellos. With Walter Rauschenbusch's social gospel as a guiding light, Barnette spent years as pastor and friend to that blighted neighborhood, earning the nickname "Bishop of the Haymarket."

As a Baptist professor of religion in the 1940s, he found himself confronted with the quintessential Southern issue of racism. In the activist spirit that would characterize all his work, he began to search for things he could practically do. While a professor at Howard College (Samford University), he was instrumental in founding the Interracial Ministerial Association in Birmingham. After returning to Southern as professor of Christian ethics, Barnette marched for fair housing in the city of Louisville and invited the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to the campus.

He has always been in trouble. Friends long ago gave him a pair of asbestos gloves to use in opening his mail from outraged Baptists. In every issue though, Barnette searches for a way to bring the biblical principle of love to bear in concrete ways. He describes himself as an SCO, a *selective conscientious objector*. "I reserve the right," he says, "to decide which wars I will support and which I will not."

During the Vietnam conflict, he found himself forced to re-examine his convictions in a particularly personal way. Of his two young adult sons, one became a bomber pilot in Vietnam and the other fled to Sweden as a conscientious objector. Asked which of his sons he supported, Barnette always replied, "I support them both. Each is doing what his conscience under God leads him to do." No father, he believed, could ask for more.

Along with his second wife, the late Helen Poarch Barnette, he championed the role of women in Baptist life. Describing their marriage as a "co-archy"—a partnership of equals—Barnette found ample biblical evidence for the freedom of Christian women to assert both relational and spiritual equality with men.

An accomplished author, Barnette has always written about ethics with a Southern Baptist audience in mind. His text *Introducing Christian Ethics* served for many years as a standard for those taking their first venture into the field. From ecology in the 70s to biomedical ethics in the 80s and 90s, he applied his voracious curiosity to researching and writing on ethical topics.

His method is both simple and sophisticated. He seeks the best possible scientific input. He never flinches from the facts. As an academician his first task is to understand. But then, as a theologian, he searches for and applies relevant biblical principles. And as an activist Christian he seeks the leadership of the Holy Spirit to discover what can actually be done.

Often he's paid a price for his candor. Retired at age 65 by a seminary administration weary of his ethical forthrightness, Barnette found a home in the University of Louisville Medical School where he continued and expanded his research in biomedical ethics. Later brought back into favor at the seminary by a friendlier administration, and then once again alienated by the fundamentalist takeover, Barnette never missed a beat.

Today, he continues his work from the same little white house next door to the seminary where he raised four children and generations of conservative hackles. His ethical interests remain catholic in their inclusivity. He maintains a lively interest in local and national politics. His letters to the editor, often about the evils of fundamentalism, appear frequently in Kentucky Baptists' *Western Recorder*.

At noon on the first Thursday of every month he hosts a luncheon called "Barnette's Buddies," where Louisvillians gather to discuss topics of interest in Baptist life and beyond. In an article written for *Baptists Today* just this summer, Barnette dealt with the issue of a Christian response to terrorism. "Outthink them!" and "Outlove them!" were two of his pithy and salient conclusions.

As a graduate student at Southern in the early 80s, I wrote a dissertation on the career and ethical method of Henlee Barnette. I sought to sum up and characterize his work. Silly me. I seem to have been at least a quarter of a century too early. But I can say this: As long as we have Henlee Barnette among us, faithful Baptists have an articulate advocate and friend.

We need not fear those who would force us into an intellectual or ethical box. We have a giant in the land. ■

© 2002 EthicsDaily.com. EthicsDaily.com is an imprint of the Baptist Center for Ethics. Reprinted with permission. www.ethicsdaily.com

We Support Troops—Until They Get Home And Need Our Help

By John Young, Editorial Writer

By Permission of the Waco Tribune-Herald

Forget “light at the end of the tunnel.” Forget “war to end all wars.”

Bullets are flying. People are dying. And House Majority Leader Tom DeLay has uttered words to enshrine among battle cries divorced from reality:

“Nothing is more important in the face of a war than cutting taxes.”

Really.

The sad thing is that, in so many words, he was speaking for the president.

He and fellow House Republicans passed a \$726 billion tax cut urged by President Bush at a time when the deficit is ballooning and costs of war are only starting to trickle in.

When \$74 billion is just a down payment, you have a costly incursion. Hearing that 4,000 smart bombs had been expended on Baghdad in 14 days, one observer calculated and sighed, “There goes the cure for AIDS.”

Of course, bombs are only part of it. Add U.S. occupation, and rebuilding. And some in the administration are urging health care for all Iraqi citizens post-war. If we cripple the infrastructure that keeps innocents alive, we owe no less.

OK, so what about health care for U.S. veterans? Congressmen carrying water for the president voted to cut \$28 billion in veterans’ health care and disability payments over 10 years.

By review, veterans are what today’s honored troops become when they return.

“Has Congress no shame?” wrote Edward Heath, national commander of Disabled American Veterans, in a letter read on the House floor by Texas Congressman Chet Edwards.

“Is there no honor in the hallowed halls of our government,” wrote Heath, “that you choose to dishonor the sacrifices of our nation’s heroes and rob our programs . . . to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy?”

I wonder if, as the commander wrote those words, he thought some comfortable son of the trickle-down brother-

hood would accuse him of “class warfare.” We’re waiting.

“Class warfare”—what a convenient term. It is as divorced from reality as the honorable Mr. DeLay. It implies that we have all this money floating around to return to the taxpayers—money unobligated, bills paid. And so why shouldn’t every man get his share? Stop beating up on poor, defenseless multimillionaires, you bullies.

It doesn’t imply a federal debt of \$6.4 trillion and a national deficit exceeding \$400 billion. It doesn’t imply sloughing costs such as homeland security onto cash-starved states. And it doesn’t imply fiscal realities under which we say, “Sorry, veterans, we just don’t have the money.”

Many will wonder what motivates Congress to cut veterans benefits. The reason is that lawmakers have less wiggle room when cutting the budget than many people want to believe.

Veterans’ services happen to be in the increasingly small slice of the non-defense federal budget that is discretionary. They are not entitlements. They are at the mercy of each Congress. They are something Congress can control.

This budget would cut each category of veterans programs—mandatory benefits and discretionary funds for health care. The House voted for these cuts only hours after approving a resolution to support America’s troops in Iraq.

So as we make more combat veterans, we curb services to them at home. All in the name of delivering to the president the tax cuts he craves.

Fortunately, the Senate voted to slice those tax cuts in half, zapping the provision to end taxes on stock dividends. But Team Bush isn’t giving in. Key corporations are hammering at Republicans who defected from the fold on dividend taxes.

Meanwhile bullets fly and people die. When it’s all over, the people who set these priorities will say, “For these freedoms, thank a vet.” ■

What Constitutes Christian Citizenship in Wartime?

By Robert Parham, Executive Director
Baptist Center for Ethics, Nashville, TN

Before rallying around the flag chokes off critical thinking, let's review what constitutes authentic Christian citizenship, according to the teachings of Jesus.

1. *Practice discernment.* When Jesus commissioned his followers to go into the world of wolves, he said, "Be wise as serpents" (Mt 10:16). Wisdom means prudent thinking, careful consideration about the validity of what our and other leaders say, what they mean and what they really do.
2. *Preserve a high wall between Christ and culture.* Jesus said, "Give...to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21). Had Jesus accepted the head and title of the emperor on the Roman coin, he would have given his complete loyalty to the state. Jesus refused to worship the state. Indeed, war has a seductive power—power in which culture becomes our Christ, our source of worship. When that happens, we engage in idolatry.
3. *Pray for enemies.* Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44). Contrary to popular religion, Jesus never said pray only for our troops and ask for a shield of protection only around America. One of the greatest dangers of this hour is spiritual nationalism, in which we merge our nation with the will of God. Of course, we should pray for those in authority and for American troops, but authentic Christianity understands that we must pray for the welfare of all, including Saddam Hussein, his family, Iraqi soldiers and Islamic fundamentalists.
4. *Profess the limits of our vision.* Jesus said, "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times" (Mt 16:3). In fact, we can predict some immediate, obvious events. But we most often fail to understand the deeper flow of global events with their unpredictable consequences. It is far better to admit that we see dimly than to trust in those who forecast the future with haughty certainty. Real Christian citizenship is rooted in humility about our limits of knowledge.
5. *Protect against the dangers of blindness.* Jesus warned about "blind guides" (Mt 23:16). He also said, "If one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit" (Mt 15:14). Parents often repeat Jesus' practical wisdom when they want their children to keep good company and tell their children not to follow blindly the crowd. Yet we often fail to follow our own advice when it comes to national matters. We get swept up in going with the majority opinion. Christians should keep both eyes open and resist the temptation to go with the crowd.
6. *Prepare for criticism.* Jesus said, "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account" (Mt 5:11). Jesus knew that being self-defined and speaking truth could result in intense opposition and even persecution. When American Christians voice their moral principles today, they may experience name-calling, isolation, false accusations and even economic boycotts. But from the whipping posts of Virginia to the fire-hoses of Alabama, Christians have suffered the consequences for their convictions.
7. *Pursue peacemaking.* Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt 5:9). War-making makes the mission of the peacemaker more complicated. But war-making does not negate Jesus' high call to peacemaking. It does necessitate that Christians find ways to pursue peace, even if it means being drum majors against a crusade mentality and for human rights. ■

© 2003 EthicsDaily.com Ethics Daily.com is an imprint of the Baptist Center for Ethics. Reprinted with permission. www.ethicsdaily.com

An Evolving Faith: Does the President Believe He Has a Divine Mandate?

By Deborah Caldwell, Senior Religion Producer at Beliefnet.com

Note: This article appeared originally on www.beliefnet.com, the leading website on multifaith religion, spirituality, inspiration, ethics & more. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

In the spring of 1999, as George W. Bush was about to announce his run for President, he agreed to be interviewed about his religious faith—grudgingly. “I want people to judge me on my deeds, not how I try to define myself as a religious person of words.”

It’s hard to believe that’s the same George W. Bush. Since taking office—and especially in the last couple weeks—Bush’s personal faith has turned highly public, arguably more so than any modern President. What’s important is not that Bush is talking about God more, but that he’s talking about him differently. We are witnessing a shift in Bush’s theology—from talking mostly about a Wesleyan theology of “personal transformation” to describing a Calvinist “divine plan” laid out by a sovereign God for the country and himself. This shift has the potential to affect Bush’s approach to terrorism, Iraq, and his presidency.

On Thursday at the National Prayer Breakfast, for instance, Bush said, “we can be confident in the ways of Providence. . . . Behind all of life and all of history, there’s a dedication and purpose, set by the hand of a just and faithful God.”

Calvin, whose ideas are critical to contemporary evangelical thought, focused on the idea of a powerful God who governs “the vast machinery of the whole world.” Bush has made several statements indicating he believes God is involved in world events and that he and America have a divinely guided mission:

- After Bush’s September 20, 2001, speech to Congress, Bush speechwriter Mike Gerson called the President and said: “Mr. President, when I saw you on television, I thought—God wanted you there.” “He wants us all here, Gerson,” the President responded.
- During that speech, Bush said, “Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.” The implication: God will intervene on the world stage, mediating between good and evil.
- At the prayer breakfast, during which he talked about God’s impact on history, he also said, he felt “the presence of the Almighty” while comforting the families of the shuttle astronauts during the Houston memorial service on Tuesday.
- In his State of the Union address last month, Bush said that we place confidence in the loving God “behind all of life, and all of history” and that “we go forward with confidence,

because this call of history has come to the right country. May He guide us now.”

In addition to these public statements indicating a divine intervention in world events, there is evidence that Bush believes his election as President was a result of God’s acts.

A month after the World Trade Center attack, *World Magazine*, a conservative Christian publication, quoted Tim Goeglein, deputy director of White House public liaison, saying, “I think President Bush is God’s man at this hour, and I say this with a great sense of humility.” Time magazine reported that “Privately, Bush even talked of being chosen by the grace of God to lead at that moment.”

The net effect is a theology that seems to imply that God is intervening in events, is on America’s side, and has chosen Bush to be in the White House at this critical moment.

“All sorts of warning signals ought to go off when a sense of personal chosenness and calling gets translated into a sense of calling and mission for a nation,” says Robin Lovin, a United Methodist ethicist and professor of religion and political thought at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Lovin says what the President seems to be lacking is theological humility and an awareness of moral ambiguity.

Richard Land, a top Southern Baptist leader with close ties to the White House, argues that Bush’s sense of divine oversight is part of why he has become such a good wartime leader. He brings a moral clarity and self-confidence that inspires Americans and scares enemies. “We don’t inhabit that relativist universe [of European leaders],” Land says. “We really believe some things are good and some things bad.”

It’s even possible that Bush’s belief in America’s moral rightness makes the country’s military threats seem more genuine because the world thinks Bush is “on a mission.”

Presidents have always used Scripture in their speeches as a source of poetry and morality, according to Michael Waldman, President Clinton’s chief speechwriter, author of “POTUS Speaks” and now a visiting professor at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. Lincoln, he says, was the first President to use the Bible extensively in his speeches, but one of the main reasons was that his audience knew the Bible—Lincoln was using what was then common language. Theodore Roosevelt, in his 1912 speech to the Progressive Party, closed with these words:

“We stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord.” Carter, Reagan, and Clinton all used Scripture, but Waldman says their use was more as a “grace note.”

Bush is different, because he uses theology as the guts of his argument. “That’s very unusual in the long sweep of American history,” Waldman says.

Bush has clearly seen a divine aspect to his presidency since before he ran. Many Americans know the President had a religious conversion at age 39, when he, as he describes it, “came to the Lord” after a weekend of talks with the Rev. Billy Graham. Within a year, he gave up drinking and joined a men’s Bible study group at First United Methodist Church in Midland, Texas. From that point on, he has often said, his Christian faith has grown.

Less well known is that, in 1995, soon after he was elected Texas governor, Bush sent a memo to his staff, asking them to stop by his office to look at a painting entitled “A Charge to Keep” by W.H.D. Koerner, lent to him by Joe O’Neill, a friend from Midland. The painting is based on the Charles Wesley hymn of the same name, and Bush told his staff that he especially liked the second verse: “To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill; O may it all my powers engage to do my Master’s will.” Bush said those words represented their mission. “What adds complete life to the painting for me is the message of Charles Wesley that we serve One greater than ourselves.”

By 1999, Bush was saying he believed in a “divine plan that supersedes all human plans.” He talked of being inspired to run for President by a sermon delivered by the Rev. Mark Craig, pastor of Bush’s Dallas congregation, Highland Park United Methodist Church. Craig talked about the reluctance of Moses to become a leader. But, said Mr. Craig, then as now, people were “starved for leadership”—leaders who sacrifice to do the right thing. Bush said the sermon “spoke directly to my heart and talked about a higher calling.” But in 1999, as he prepared to run for President, he was quick to add in an interview: “Elections are determined by human beings.”

Richard Land recalls being part of a group of about a dozen people who met after Bush’s second inauguration as Texas governor in 1999. At the time, everyone in Texas was talking about Bush’s potential to become the next President. During the meeting, Land says, Bush said, “I believe God wants me to be President, but if that doesn’t happen, it’s OK.” Land points out that Bush didn’t say that God actually wanted him to be

President. He merely said he believed God wanted him to be President.

During World War II, the American Protestant thinker Reinhold Niebuhr wrote about God’s role in political decision-making. He believed every political leader and every political system falls short of absolute justice—that the Allies didn’t represent absolute right and Hitler didn’t represent absolute evil because all of us, as humans, stand under the ultimate judgment of God. That doesn’t mean politicians can’t make judgments based on what they believe is right; it does mean they need to understand that their position isn’t absolutely morally clear.

“Sometimes [President] Bush comes close to crossing the line of trying to serve the nation as its religious leader, rather than its political leader,” says Dr. C. Welton Gaddy, president of the Interfaith Alliance, a clergy-led liberal lobbying group.

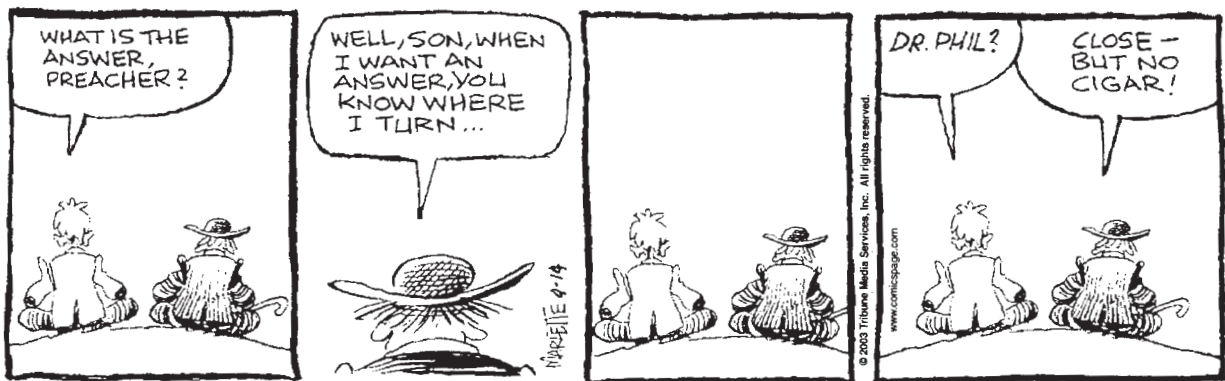
Certainly, European leaders seem to be bothered by Bush’s rhetoric and it possibly does contribute to a sense in Islamic countries that Bush is on an anti-Islamic “crusade.”

Radwan Masmoudi, executive director of the Washington-based Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, worries about it. “Muslims, all over the world, are very concerned that the war on terrorism is being hijacked by right-wing fundamentalists, and transformed into a war, or at least a conflict, with Islam. President Bush is a man of faith, and that is a positive attribute, but he also needs to learn about and respect the other faiths, including Islam, in order to represent and serve all Americans.”

In hindsight, even Bush’s inaugural address presaged his emerging theology. He quoted a colonist who wrote to Thomas Jefferson that “We know the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Do you not think an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm?” Then Bush said: “Much time has passed since Jefferson arrived for his inauguration. The years and changes accumulate, but the themes of this day he would know, ‘our nation’s grand story of courage and its simple dream of dignity.’”

“We are not this story’s author, who fills time and eternity with His purpose. Yet His purpose is achieved in our duty, and our duty is fulfilled in service to one another. Never tiring, never yielding, never finishing, we renew that purpose today; to make our country more just and generous; to affirm the dignity of our lives and every life.”

“This work continues. This story goes on. And an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm.” ■



United We Stand—In Irony

By Paul J. Piccard, Professor of Political Science Emeritus
Florida State University

UNITED WE STAND

But I live in a gated community with private security guards to protect me from my fellow Americans.

But I send my children to a private school with nice classmates and I want to drain money from the public schools to provide vouchers that will subsidize my kids' tuition.

But where I worship we think that other religions are misguided if not damned to Hell and I think any religion that preaches pacifism during wartime ought to be outlawed.

But my fraternity/sorority doesn't accept the wrong kinds of people and my country club requires new members to be sponsored by old members and approved by the membership committee.

But we're too easy on immigrants. The original ones from northern Europe were OK but today they come from God-knows-where and they refuse to assimilate.

But I'm straight and I hate gays.

UNITED WE STAND

But I'm a "fiscal conservative" and I can't stand those "tax and spend" liberals. I want the government to borrow and spend so I won't have to pay for it.

But I don't want shipments of nuclear waste hauled through

my home town and I think that people living downwind from Yucca Mountain are selfish to complain about the disposal site that's best for our country.

But as "labor" and "management" we maintain a hostile adversarial relationship, each trying to squeeze the most we can out of the other without worrying about the business owners or customers.

But as a manufacturer or doctor I want "tort reform" to keep greedy trial lawyers and juries made up of my fellow citizens from holding me liable for the injuries and deaths I cause accidentally.

But I want cheap petroleum products and I despise tree huggers and all the other environmental nuts.

UNITED WE STAND

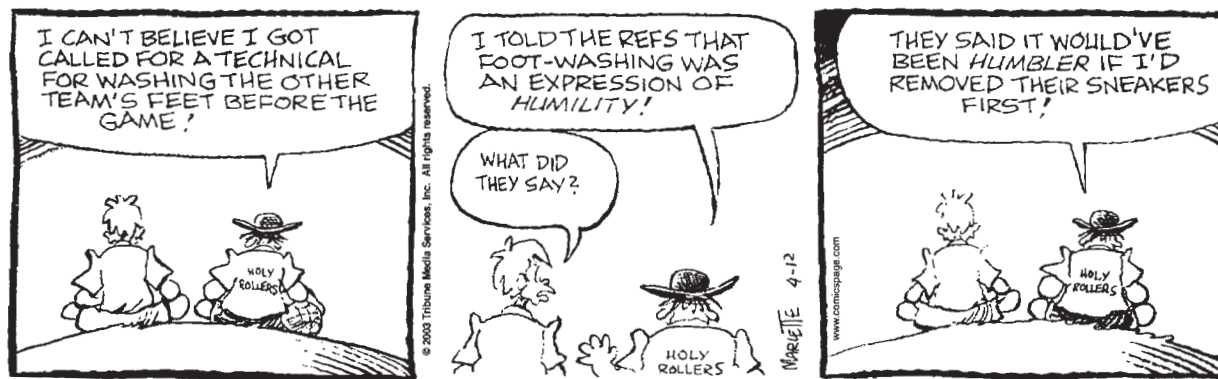
But I always and naturally think in terms of "us" and "them;" "we" and "they."

But I don't want my daughter or sister to marry one. Or my son or brother either for that matter.

But people who don't support our Commander-in-Chief are unpatriotic.

UNITED WE STAND

And I fly the Stars and Stripes to prove it. ■



A TRILOGY ON CHURCH AND CULTURE

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

One Nation Under God

There are two narratives about the founding of our nation. Which one most resonates with your mind and soul may well determine how you respond to the recent court decision about the pledge of allegiance.

Narrative number one goes something like this: Long ago, Europe and England were places inhospitable to religious freedom. Wars of religion had racked the continent and things were not much better on the English isle.

Those who sought a purified form of Christian worship were not welcomed by the established church. They set sail seeking a place to practice religion according to the dictates of their own conscience. They boarded ships like the Mayflower bound for the New World, determined to be forever free of those who pressed upon the populous their own ideas of faith and practice. Thus was born the great experiment in religious liberty, later enshrined in the Bill of Rights. It eventually took structured form as the separation of church and state.

It is a noble narrative, and a true one. It is much needed in the world today, where religious violence is rampant and religious freedom is rare.

But there is another narrative and it goes something like this: Long ago, Christian people sensed a call of God to abandon their homes in England and create a community on this continent. They sought a city that would embody the very truth of Christ and practice the virtues of the Spirit. John Winthrop, the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, even termed it 'a city set on the hill' (invoking the words of Jesus himself).

From this hill of hope, the bright light of the gospel of God would shine over all the land, dispelling the darkness of sin, superstition, and pseudo-religion of all kinds; and do so in such a way as to influence what was done throughout the world.

In this way, the epicenter of Christian life and thought was shifted away from the Old World to the New. It became a reality alluded to in later documents that grounded our life, liberty, and happiness upon the kind providence of the Creator.

It also is a noble narrative, and a true one. In a world increasingly secular and among a population either indifferent or outright hostile to Christian things, it also is refreshment to the soul.

At the intersection of these two stories about who we are as a nation stand the children at school. Every morning they face the flag of a good and mighty nation and recite a pledge of allegiance.

'I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.'

It is not the pledge my father said growing up in Davies County, Kentucky. His was the original, the one written and promulgated long before his birth by the minister from upstate New York.

When I was just a baby, when the country was fearful of atheistic communism, our elected leaders in Washington added the phrase familiar to us, the two words that have become so formidable an issue before the federal bench. 'Under God.'

Does this simple phrase define who we are and who we were meant to be? Is it a fitting title to the narrative that tells the story of our country? In its expression of religious vision, does it gather up the great ideas and commitments that constitute are national identity?

Or does it undermine who we are and who we are meant to be? Does it subvert the story that tells the truth of our past and present? In its expression of religious vision, is it too narrow, too shallow to gather up all the people and pull us toward peaceful and fruitful future?

Your answer to these questions may well depend upon which narrative of our country you deem most true and faithful. ■

Evangelism and the Middle East War

The American intervention in the Middle East will become a significant factor in the Christian witness here and around the world.

Congregations and denominations that seek to attract people to Christian life and faith will reap the harvest, at once blessed and bitter, of the seeds that are being sown in the cities and deserts of Mesopotamia.

In the first place, and perhaps in the short run, American people are attracted to churches that support the war.

Opinion surveys show that evangelicals in general are the only religious group with strong majorities that approve of the military strategy of the United States. This may be con-

nected to their long-standing support for Israel, as well as their admiration for the American president and the British prime minister, both of whom are evangelical Christians.

Evangelical churches have shown significant numerical increase over the last decades. They are in tune with the mood of the people.

On Sundays past, present and future, these religious communities will find that sermons, music; testimonies and prayers that mention the military and express the patriotic fervor of the people will prove valuable in attracting members.

None of these, however, will surpass a video recorded on site among the troops. Visuals are powerful and those that show the troops at prayer and at play, at worship and at war will hold the people spellbound.

Technology may provide the winning edge here as well as there.

Churches that integrate these elements to their gatherings will see a modest surge in attendance during the Middle East conflict and a sustained increase for a considerably longer time.

On the other hand, churches and ministers that critique the war or avoid verbal and visual displays of patriotism will struggle to keep the loyalty of their people.

There is, however, a dangerous flip side to this evangelism equation: it will work only in America. In other parts of the world, Christians (and especially missionaries) will find their work much more difficult.

Difficult, first, because it will be dangerous. Already Muslim majorities in Iraq are taking out their anger on the 400,000 member Christian community among them. One religious news service is reporting that a 70-year-old Chaldean Catholic nun was stripped naked, cruelly tortured, and then beheaded; another reported the murder of three doctors.

But beyond this clear and present danger, the result of any invasion into the Middle East may be a growing hostility to American ideals and institutions, including the witness of its Christian missionaries.

This is especially true throughout the Muslim world (which constitutes an impressive and expanding slice of the demographic pie). One evangelical pastor in Iraq admits that the pressure against them is "because of our relationship with and support from American and British friends."

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, well intentioned though they may be, are perceived by many in the region as a Christian attack on Islam. Such conviction translates into public rhetoric, which further inflames radical opinion in the region.

But there is more. For the first time in its history, America finds itself as the sole power on the world scene. It has no rivals for military and economic power. This power is resented by many allies as well as most enemies.

The recent revolt of France, Germany, Russia, Mexico, Chile, and China on the matter of military efforts in Iraq may have been rooted as much in their fear of the unin-

dered will of Uncle Sam as in the uncertain ways of Saddam Hussein.

The ill will being generated by our diplomatic and military efforts around the world may create a grass roots resistance to American missionaries and their Christian gospel.

So while the rhetoric of war may work here, it may not work there: and in the long run, "there" is more important than "here." ■

Should Clergy Surrender Their Control of Education?

Ministers have played a major role in founding institutions of higher education. There are literally thousands of such cases: including universities like Harvard, Chicago, St. Louis and Southern California as well as Liberty, Baylor, and Notre Dame.

The same can be said of many Jewish and Muslim institutions, in America and around the world.

Leaders of all faith traditions intend for these institutions to (among other things) train ministers, promote morals, and teach Truth. But too often the Truth they want taught is only the Truth as understood and embraced by the ministers.

For instance, one Christian university in Florida recently surprised its theological faculty by distributing a doctrinal summary. All professors are to sign this document each year confessing 'without mental reservation' their agreement with its affirmations.

Professors there and elsewhere want what John Milton once called 'the liberty to think, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all things.' Ministers who impose doctrinal orthodoxy on professors think such liberty violates 'accountability,' a word that frequently refers to clergy control of education.

So somewhere down the line (and often in the midst of a theological controversy) leaders of such a school file divorce papers on behalf of their institution and declare themselves independent from their sponsoring religious organization or authority.

Many ministers take this change as tragedy. Catholic scholar James Burtchaeff called it 'the dying of the light' just a few years after the Evangelical George Marsden described how such episodes had over time stripped American higher education of its soul.

It is certainly true that many institutions once hospitable to religious thinking in general and to Christian theology in particular have now become thoroughly indifferent if not downright hostile.

Many no longer have departments of theology, religion or even religious studies. More depressing, some that do are like the one represented by a professor to whom I asked this question: "How many of your 18 religion professors participate in a community of faith?" "None," she said.

Even so, such tacit disdain for the worship of God is hardly preferable to the opposite extreme: the use of religious

dogma to control the process and product of learning.

Baptist theologian James McClendon understood this: shortly before his death and in the final chapter of a three-volume work, he proposed an inventive alternative.

The university, he wrote, is religion's gift to the culture. Its true purpose is to 'stretch minds, challenge complacencies, open difficulties, explore utopias, and explode orthodoxies.' Long ago, Catholic intellectual John Henry Newman summarized the unique mission of the university: to make philosophers (but not necessarily believers!) of all students.

The ancient name for this task is liberal (or liberating) education.

To fulfill this mission, the university must be free of all control, not only by the church, but also by the corporation, government, or even its wealthy patrons. Only then can the institution discover and embrace its true identity.

But likewise, the true vocation of the university requires the work of the theologian, that intellectual trained to 'discover, understand, and transform the fundamental convictions of the university and their relationship to whatever else there is.'

If the college or university grows into its own liberated yet burdened role in the human community, theologians (including those who understand and even embrace the gospel of Christ) will be at the center of scholarly conversation.

It is a radical vision of education, especially for institutions birthed and nurtured by the churches. It is, however, a challenge to both ends of this ideological and institutional tug-of-war: clergy surrendering their control of education and scholars surrendering their resistance to theology.

It sounds so unlikely, doesn't it? But who knows: it just might describe the arena for what another American intellectual (Jonathan Edwards) termed 'the surprising work of God.' ■
Copyright ©2003 Dwight A. Moody

EthixBytes

(continued from page 2)

~~~~~  
"In 2001 and 2002, about 75 million people under age 65 went without health insurance for at least one month. Nearly three in four were in working families and more than half were white."  
Associated Press, 3/08/03.

~~~~~  
"The director of chaplaincy evangelism of the SBC North American Mission Board was forced to resign because he did not enforce the board's newly-tightened doctrines on female chaplains and divorced chaplains stringently enough, according to observers. NAMB officials declined comment."
Baptist Message, 1/30/03.

~~~~~  
"What if President Bush were as eager to control guns as he is to control weapons of mass destruction? While he is asking for full weapons disclosure on the part of Iraq, his administration is loathe to consider any form of gun registration within our own borders, where on any given day an average of 79 gun deaths occur—30 by homicide, 45 by suicide (the rest the result of accidents, police action and unknown causes).  
The Christian Century, December 18-31, 2002.

~~~~~  
"Osama bin Laden is a Saudi. (Ayman al) Zawahiri is Egyptian. Saif-al-Adel is Egyptian. Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is Pakistani. Then down here is a Jordanian, a Palestinian, a Saudi, a Yemeni, an Indonesian, a Kuwaiti and an Egyptian. One thing kind of leaps out at you: Not one of them is an Iraqi."
U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin, citing a chart of al Qaeda 'high-value targets.'

~~~~~  
"President Bush punched a dangerous hole in the wall between church and state by signing an executive order that  
(continued on page 25)



---

# And Justice for All: The Price of Freedom and Security

By Bruce Prescott, Executive Director  
Mainstream Oklahoma Baptists

**Note:** This speech was delivered in the House chambers at the State Capital in Oklahoma on February 11, 2003, at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Day at the Legislature for the Oklahoma Conference of Churches.

Justice, freedom and security all exist within a context. The context in which we now live was shaped by events seventeen months ago when a small group of men boarded airplanes determined to hijack them and fly them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the White House. They sacrificed the lives of thousands of innocent victims in order to signal their dissatisfaction with the way the world is ordered.

Dissatisfaction with the way the world is ordered is nothing new. No one is completely satisfied with the way the world is ordered. We are all looking for justice. The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur says the *telos* or goal of every human life is “aiming at the ‘good life’ with and for others, in just institutions.”<sup>1</sup> People divide over the meaning of “the good life,” we differ about the size of the circle of “others” with whom and for whom we wish to share “the good life,” and we disagree, sometimes violently, about how “institutions” lay claim to being “just,” but in one way or another we are all looking for justice. The problem is that we all have a tendency to believe that justice serves our own personal purposes and some strive to enlist the power of the state to further their own private interests. These tendencies have roots deeper than all the historical conflicts between competing nations and clashing civilizations. It’s a story as old as Cain and Abel.

At times, Americans have realistically acknowledged the dangers of self-interest and we designed our constitution with checks and balances and safeguards like the first amendment to help us overcome the tendency. But we have altered our rituals in ways that deprive our ideals of meaning. For instance, we teach our children to recite that we are “one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” but the word “justice” is as meaningless as the word “God” in our pledge of allegiance.<sup>2</sup> When the most religiously diverse country in the history of the world pretends to be unified under the same God, it also reveals the pretense underlying our commitment to justice in the sense of “fairness” for everyone.

At its root, justice in the sense of “fairness” for everyone is nothing more and nothing less than practicing the Golden

Rule. Jesus gave the rule a positive formulation when he said “Do to others as you would have them do to you,” but the Golden Rule is not unique to Christianity. Judaism teaches, “What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man.” Islam teaches, “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.” Even Buddhists, some whom deny the existence of any God, teach, “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.” Some formulation of the Golden Rule or some principle of respect for other persons seems common to most societies. We all give lip service to the Golden Rule or the principle of respect, but few of us want to live by it.

Almost all of us prefer justice that is more than a little unfair and unequal – a system of justice that tilts the scales in our own favor. For many of us it is obvious that as long as society is ordered in such a way that we can find work with wages adequate to provide for our families, we feel free to view the desperation of the minimum-wage, working poor as a just reward for their laziness. As long as we enjoy the privileges of a good education and the freedom to advance socially, we find it hard to identify with those whose nationality or race or social status has deprived them of equal opportunities. As long as we are strong and healthy and have access to health care, we don’t feel threatened by the lack of a safety net for those who are disabled, in poor health or denied the care and affordable medications they need to sustain life. In brief, as long as the world is ordered in our own favor, life seems free and secure to us.

Shift the scales, even in the slightest degree, to the benefit of others and a sense of injustice seems to immediately spring up within us. Just look at the speed with which Americans became sensitive to the slight injustice of “affirmative action.” After Anglo-Americans had rigged the scales to our benefit for more than four centuries, we judiciously allowed the scales to favor a few minorities. Now, in less than a single generation, the majority has found new reasons to justify tilting them back in our favor.

Justice is always hanging in the balance. It’s scales are always teetering up and down, trying to find the right balance between competing goods and interests within society. Justice

that is truly “justice for all” is not subject to any utilitarian calculus that would sacrifice any individual for the welfare of the group. Justice that is “fairness for all” must be constructed by a deliberate procedure where everyone has the right to a fair hearing and has hope for a wise and prudent decision.

Many times, however, our procedures do not yield wise and prudent judgments. All too frequently we see that the wealthy and powerful have loopholes exempting them from justice while the poor and powerless receive the harshest sanctions. Actually, it’s worse than that—there are times when the innocent have been convicted and possibly executed. Even one death row inmate exonerated by DNA evi-

dence is too many, and many have been exonerated. How can we be sure that others have not been wrongly convicted? Dare we risk executing a single innocent person? If we were serious about applying the Golden Rule, the least we would do is enact a moratorium on executions until we have thoroughly re-examined this issue.

The urgency for striving to secure “justice for all” increases daily. Whenever people perceive that the scales of justice have been rigged completely against them, a sense of moral indignation begins to grow. Indignation at injustice, whether real or perceived, prompts much of the action for social change. When change is slow or when all hope for just redress against wrongs suffered has been blocked, indignation can become outrage and there is danger that the fanatical among us will resort to violence.

Terrorism has become the weapon of choice for the fanatical—both within and without our country. The truth is, the violence we have suffered from domestic terrorists has been both more sustained and more unsettling, than that from international terrorists. An American masterminded the sniper attacks that killed ten people and terrorized our nation’s capitol. The anthrax that killed five people and threatened the lives of members of congress was homegrown. And, no one needs to remind the people in this room that it was Americans who detonated the bomb that killed 167 people and destroyed the Murrah Federal Building.

We are not going to solve the problem of terrorism until we stop looking for scapegoats on which to displace our own moral outrage. The solution to terrorism is neither war nor better technology. War escalates violence and inevitably injures the innocent. Technology aggravates the problem. Today the terrors of the biblical accounts of Great Tribulation and the battle of Armageddon seem tame in comparison to some sober assessments of the consequences of nuclear, biological or bio-chemical weapons falling into the wrong hands. Even if we succeed in keeping weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of fanatics, low-tech terrorist methods are more than sufficient to keep our lives disrupted. Methods that our own government—and you and I as its cit-

---

*We see that the  
wealthy and powerful  
have loopholes  
exempting them from  
justice while the poor  
and powerless receive  
the harshest sanctions.*

---

izens—bear great responsibility for training people to use as we implemented our foreign policy around the world.<sup>3</sup>

The solution to terrorism is not war or technology, it is better justice. The need is urgent for us to recalibrate our scales of justice. The world desperately needs America to renew its commitment to human rights, to refrain from using force to achieve our interests, and to truly commit ourselves to the ideal of “justice for all.”

But, instead of recalibrating the scales of justice our leaders seem determined to secure the interests of wealth and power at the expense of everyone’s liberty. At a time when America faces the greatest economic uncertainties since the Great Depression,

we envision enormous tax cuts for the wealthiest ten percent of Americans and promise a few more nickels and dimes for the poor. At a time when the cost of medical care, long-term care, and prescription medications outpaces the rate of inflation, governmental assistance for the elderly, the poor and the disabled is being drastically reduced. Emergency care is all that remains available for them—and those costs are being shifted to working people in the form of higher premiums for health insurance. Then, to compound these indignities, at a time when unemployment is the highest in nearly a decade, when millions of hard-working Americans have lost their jobs and another round of layoffs is announced every day, when thousands of Americans have had their salaries and benefits reduced, and when a deflationary spiral threatens the revenues of government at every level of society—now, the burden of caring for the poor and needy is being dumped at the doorstep of “faith-based” institutions.

I sincerely believe that Americans will come to rue the day that we ever began the process of shifting the material and physical welfare of our people to religion. Religion is well equipped to address spiritual needs, but we have never had and never will have enough resources to meet the nation’s material and physical necessities.

I come from a faith tradition that emphasizes tithing—giving ten percent of your income to the Lord’s work—but less than twenty percent of us actually tithe and the truly affluent are less likely than others to do so. The contribution records of every church, synagogue, mosque and temple in America have long confirmed that Jesus was right-on-the-mark when he said that it is easier for the rich to go through the eyes of needles than for them to enter a kingdom that demands that they give to the poor. Now our tax rolls are confirming it as well.

It doesn’t take much to see that the well the government has dug to fund “faith-based initiatives” is pretty shallow. The only question is whether the well runs dry before, or after, our houses of worship have lost the integrity they need to challenge the wealthy and powerful to share from their deep wells that the government is taxing all of us to fortify. Many

of those private wells were dug at public expense and some of them were dug with much harm to the public's health and well-being. Where today are prophets like Amos in Israel, or Martin Luther King or Caesar Chavez? Today the very houses of faith that campaigned for civil rights in the 1960's are lining up to enlist in programs that are designed to undermine the constitutional safeguards that protect the rights of minorities. Once their integrity has been compromised, who will be left with any credibility to speak for God?<sup>4</sup>

The days when religious organizations were the only places the poor and sick and the elderly and disabled could find assistance were not "good old days." A nation that turns a blind eye to the indigent and the unfortunate is not good; it is calloused and unjust. The scriptures of many faiths tell us that such hard-heartedness rouses the wrath of the Divine more than anything else.

But, few Americans fear divine retribution anymore. That fear has been replaced by the fear of terrorists. Terrorists are people who have given up hope of finding justice in this world. Their aim is either to change the world or destroy it. In their eyes, they've got nothing to lose.

The fact that some people have nothing to lose, while the rest of us have a lot to lose, is probably what frightens us most. Nihilistic despair in a world with weapons of mass destruction threatens everyone with annihilation. But, rather than doing something to restore the spirit and dignity of those who have no hope, we keep ignoring their grievances, compounding the injustices that lead them to despair, and developing ever more sophisticated technology to save ourselves from their murderous wrath.

We seem to have a lot more faith in the God of technology than in the God of justice. That's where our treasure is. We spend a lot more on technology than on people. At a time when our systems for health, education and criminal justice are in crisis, we're building missile defense systems to protect us from nuclear weapons, developing vaccines to save us from germ warfare, and designing computers and databases to spy on each other.

Don't get me wrong. I am not opposed to technology and I am not saying that technology cannot help us. Some of the things our government is doing are prudent, necessary and just plain common sense. We do need to give more attention to homeland security. The emergency preparedness it entails,

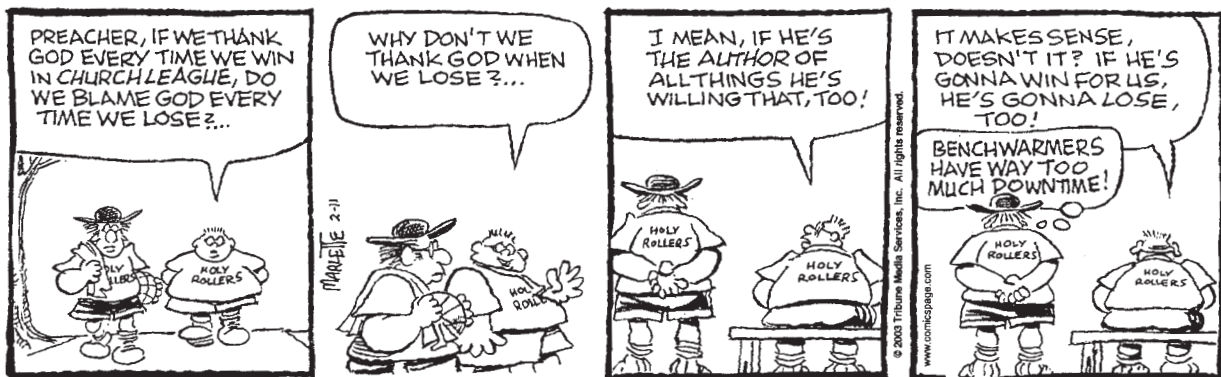
the training involved, and the coordination of disaster response is invaluable. Stockpiling vaccines, sharing some kinds of information, and coordinating law enforcement efforts are long overdue. But these measures will not solve the problem of terrorism and they will lull us into a false sense of security.

Technology cannot save us from ourselves. The computers we build to preserve our freedom threaten to enslave us. The information we store in databases to protect us threatens us with real harm. Who does not know that human, all too human, beings will be making the decisions about who poses a threat to society, and who has access to information, and how that information will be interpreted and used? How could we so soon forget that blind faith in human institutions is always misplaced and the people leading them often prove untrustworthy? What kinds of politicians expect to hold the trust of a freedom-loving people when they continually arrogate powers that are devoid of constitutional checks and balances?

Freedom-loving people are ever willing to make shared-sacrifices, but only after a realistic and honest assessment of the needs and the risks. In a free society, risks must be assessed openly, in public, and exposed to the fair light of scrutiny by all concerned parties.

Openness is especially important at the present moment—when memories are still fresh of the trust we misplaced in corporate executives who concealed the risks of their decision-making and squandered much of the wealth of our nation. Those same corporate executives, and others, influenced elections, shaped legislation, and used their wealth and power in ways that continue to undermine the foundations of our democracy. We desperately need to enact some campaign finance reform legislation that will give us clean elections and restore our faith in the democratic principle of one person, one vote.

Our material wealth can be forfeited and regained, but the spiritual wealth of our civil liberties and personal freedoms are not so easily exchanged. We must especially beware that any liberty we suspend for fear of terrorists, could easily be forfeited for generations to come. The freedoms we enjoy in our democratic society are worth whatever dangers we will face, whatever risks we must take and whatever sacrifices we choose to make. America must not retreat from two and a



quarter centuries of hard won civil liberties. Never before have we settled for being the land of the safe and the home of the secure. We've always had the courage to strive to be the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Instead of the frightful overreaction we have witnessed since September 11th, our nation would do better if it would respond to terrorism the way the people of Oklahoma responded to the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building. That bomb did not prompt us to surrender our civil rights or to infringe on the rights of others. Unlike our federal government:

We did not suspend the constitution.

We did not send the police out to round-up, lock-up or expel all the foreigners and immigrants in town.

We did not hold suspects indefinitely without access to the courts or to counsel.

We did not tape conversations between suspects and their lawyers.

We did not suspend the laws requiring probable cause for wiretaps or search warrants.

We did not expand the role of the military in domestic law enforcement.

We did not torture suspects to obtain information, nor did we allow surrogates to torture suspects for information.

We did not create a military tribunal to try and execute suspects without applying the Constitution or state and federal laws.

We did not endorse assassination as an alternative to capture.

We did not create a private foundation to issue ID cards to all citizens.

We did not create a network of free-lance spies to report anything that might be considered suspicious.

We did not create a massive computer system to keep tabs on every aspect of our citizen's daily lives.

And, we did not use the bombing as an excuse to suspend the first, second and fourth amendments and then attack militias or invade white supremacist compounds to make them disarm.<sup>5</sup>

What we did was to rescue survivors, clean-up the wreckage, rebuild our city and bring the criminals to justice. The bombing of the Murrah Federal Building did not destroy the freedom loving, risk-taking, self-sacrificing spirit of the people of Oklahoma. Neither should the criminal acts of a few terrorists destroy the freedom loving, risk-taking and self-sacrificing spirit of our nation.

Since September 11, 2001 it has become commonplace to say that the world changed that day. Several thousand precious, unique and irreplaceable lives were lost and the lives of many more were irreparably harmed.

I must object, however, to assigning any significance to the evil that transpired that day. In my mind, the most important lesson to be learned from that day is to be found in the images of heroism and the examples of self-sacrifice demonstrated by the men and women of the New York City fire department and police department and others like them.

We need to learn from the people who left places where they were safe and secure and walked courageously into harm's way to rescue the victims of a grave injustice. From them we learn that there are some things in life that are more important than safety and more valuable than security.

Only those who have learned that lesson have the capacity to truly calculate the price of freedom and security. ■

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 172.

<sup>2</sup> In the Supreme Court decision *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668 (1984) Justice Brennan wrote, "[S]uch practices as the designation of 'In God We Trust' as our national motto, or the references to God contained in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag can best be understood . . . as a form of 'ceremonial deism' protected from Establishment Clause scrutiny chiefly because they have lost through rote repetition any significant religious content." (emphasis added) 716-717. The reasoning the courts are using to circumvent the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment would be highly offensive to persons of sincere faith if its implications were widely known. It involves the government leading persons of faith from the Abrahamic traditions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) to commit a grave sin. Meaningless recitation of the name of God is precisely what the second command in the ten commandments prohibits: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Exodus 20:7 (KJV)

<sup>3</sup> In media coverage after September 11, General Norman Schwarzkopf acknowledged several times that the United States had helped train Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda. They were considered freedom fighters when they were engaged in a jihad against the Soviet Union. See Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (San Francisco: Harper: San Francisco, 2002), 181; and John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9-11.

<sup>4</sup> There is an obvious allusion here to the title of Jim Wallis's book, *Who Speaks for God?* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1996). Wallis is an advocate for faith-based initiatives while I oppose them. I admire Wallis's activism for the poor, but I view his willingness to surrender the first amendment's constitutional safeguard protecting the rights of minorities with alarm and disdain. Wallis is sacrificing the long term needs of the poor to meet their short-term immediate needs. The result will be more suffering and injustice for the poor, not less.

<sup>5</sup> This list of suspended civil rights is a modification of the list enumerated by Jonathan Turley, professor at George Washington Law School, in his article "Liberty Ebbs by Degrees" in the *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 2003. For additional insights see Michael Salem, "Safe and Free?" *Oklahoma Gazette*, July 4, 2002.

# A Place for You

By Hal Haralson, Austin, Texas

The 400-acre farm at Loraine, Texas (8 miles north of the town of 700 people) was my home for 18 years. My brother, Dale (18 months younger) and I share many adventures on these rocky slopes.

I outran packs of Indians, leaping from rock to rock and crowned myself “the fastest boy in Mitchell County.”

About 200 yards behind the barn was “holy ground.” The ground was dry and flat. “Caliche” was the name of the material spread on the county roads in West Texas. This holy ground was caliche.

I was twelve and Dale was ten. After getting home from school (a two-hour bus ride) we did our chores. Then we worked on our cave.

With grubbing hoe, shovel, and post-hole diggers we fashioned a hole in the ground about three feet deep, six feet wide, and six feet long. The roof was covered with sheet iron and cedar posts.

There was a chimney where smoke from our cedar bark cigarettes floated skyward much like the Indians we pursued. We held secret conversations, mostly about girls. We didn’t know much about girls, but pretended we did. This was my first experience of Place in my life.

As I grow older this concept of Place is reinforced by an exchange between Jesus and the disciples. Jesus had begun to talk about dying—about leaving them.

Since they had left their homes and jobs to follow Jesus, this kind of talk made them very nervous. Jesus told them, “I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and get you, so that where I am you may be also.”

A place may be important because of location or because of the people involved in life in that place or because something important happened there in the past.

I witness how the sharing of the experiences involving Place can draw people together.

Keith Miller, fresh out of the Oklahoma oil field in 1963, was invited to lead small group worship at Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio. Buckner Fanning (the pastor) told us that Keith, an Episcopalian, was bringing four Episcopal laymen from Kerrville, Texas, to give their witness.

Judy and I decided to go. We had never worshiped in small groups and had never seen an Episcopalian.

Keith used the “Quaker Questions” he had learned from Elton Trueblood while studying at Earlham College (Quaker). We were divided into groups of eight and asked to go around the circle answering the following questions. Everyone answered the first question before going on to the next one:

1. Where did you live between the ages of seven and twelve and how did you heat your home?





2. What do you remember as a place of warmth in or near your home?

People talked about tree houses, attic rooms, wood burning stoves, coal stoves, and newborn lambs brought before the fire on a cold night.

I was amazed that the sharing of their special place drew these total strangers so close together.

Browning Ware wrote in his column "Diary of a Modern Pilgrim," of heading west from Beaumont to Crack Springs Ranch in Junction, Texas. For years a small two-room shack had been the place where hunters shared their meals and talked about the deer they had seen that day.

Tallahoskegee was the name the hunters gave this shack. It was an Indian name. No one knew what it meant. The translation given by the hunters can't be written on these pages.

The shack was being torn down after forty years. The owner was building a house on this location.

Browning got some weathered boards and a rusty hinge to remind him of his place.

Place does not need to be elaborate. The memories shared are what make a Place.

The late Bill Cody, while director of Laity Lodge, dreamed of a place where people could come and experience closeness to God. That dream became a reality known as the Quiet House. It is an elegant cottage on top of a hill above Laity Lodge. It has become a holy place to many pilgrims over the years. Cody knew the importance of Place.

I have a rusty windmill fan hanging on the barn where I live. It reminds me of a sacred place: the prairie outside Monument, New Mexico. One hundred sixty acres homesteaded by my grandparents one hundred years ago.

Seven children lived in the dugout. The land is still in the family. It is a Place that means roots.

When I announced my retirement, Judy (my wife of forty-six years) said jokingly (I think it was jokingly): "If you are going to be around all the time, I have to have a place where I can get away from you."

That was the beginning of Judy's dream Place: fifty yards behind our house surrounded by oak trees. The first floor has a stove, refrigerator, sink, toilet, and chairs for three or four people. A ladder goes to the second floor loft where there is a bed and an easy chair for reading. The Little House has windows on three sides and a view for miles to the west. A six-foot fence encloses the atrium. It has a wood burning stove and an outdoor shower.

Judy's dream became a reality. The Little House is Judy's Place. We share its quiet each morning for meditation and Bible reading. Judy goes alone and spends the night occasionally. Judy's dream became a Place where two sixty-five year old people have found more meaning in life.

"I go to prepare a Place for you," doesn't necessarily mean sometime in the future. We can claim that promise in the here and now. ■

## EthixBytes

(continued from page 19)

eases the way for religious groups to receive federal funds to run social service programs [and] to win converts and discriminate in employment. It should be struck down by the courts." Editorial, *NY Times*, 12/30/02

"Most Americans believe that between 1 million and 5 million people live in poverty in the U.S. when the actual number is nearly 33 million. A random national survey revealed 47 percent of Americans think it takes almost \$35,000 to adequately house, clothe, and feed a family of four, but the government's threshold for that family is \$18,100."

Catholic Campaign for Human Development

"Federal regulators are seeking about \$323 million in penalties from Tenet Healthcare over allegations that the hospital chain submitted nearly 17,000 false claims to Medicare during the mid-1990s. . . . At least 70% of claims for pneumonia patients (\$4000 more per patient) and 27% of claims for patients requiring ventilators (\$27,000 per case) were false."

*USA TODAY*, January 10, 2003

"Wearing the crucifix as fashion . . . makes an ironic statement about those in our culture who continue to wear it out of (pre-Xer) piety. Xers show that there is nothing so sacred about a religious symbol that it cannot be turned into a fashion accessory." Tom Beaudoin quoted in *Christianity Today*

"When critics of W.'s tax cuts say they favor the wealthy, the president accuses them of class warfare. That's designed to intimidate critics by making them seem vaguely pinko. Besides, there's nothing more effective than deploring class warfare while ensuring that your class wins. It is the Bush tax cut that is fomenting class warfare."

Maureen Dowd, *N.Y. Times*

"I'm wary of argument for generic-masculine English [in translations of the Bible] on the basis of 'plenary inspiration' of Scripture. . . . If so, why did Jesus and his disciples quote from the Greek Septuagint version of the OT, which departs from the original Hebrew in many small details?" ■

Sam Torade, *Christianity Today Letters*

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

# Stand With Christ: Why Missionaries Can't Sign the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message

Robert O'Brien, Editor (Smith & Helwys, Macon, GA), 2002, \$14.\*

\* May be ordered through [www.helwys.com](http://www.helwys.com) for 20% discount.

*Reviewed By Rick Dill*

IMB Missionary in Residence, Ouachita Baptist University

My wife, Nancy, and I were delighted to bring greetings at the Annual Meeting of a rural Arkansas association in the fall of 2002. Although we were strangers, we were greeted warmly and given a place on the program. I remember thinking to myself how far this small association of Southern Baptist churches was from the controversy destroying the fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention. The usual string of greetings and reports followed by a doctrinal message and heart-felt singing filled the first hour of the meeting. In the latter half the moderator stood to give a report from a committee recommending a new set of by-laws for the association. To my great surprise by-laws were being proposed that would allow the association to exclude from fellowship any church not approving the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and to expel any persons from the association, who accepted the "heretical teachings" of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. There ensued a rather heated debate in which it became evident that not all members of the committee had been in favor of the recommendation and the pastor of at least one church stood to take issue with the proposal. We experienced how a spirit of unity was replaced by a spirit of division and the driving force of evangelism and missions were sidetracked by the attempt of one group to impose their brand of doctrinal purity on their brothers and sisters.

As we departed the meeting before a decision could be reached, we were saddened by the realization that the division within our convention has come from the top leadership to reach the smallest and most rural of associations. It was clear to us that its legalistic nature will begin destroying the fellowship of that association, as it has destroyed the fellowship in churches, among missionaries, in state conventions, as well as our national convention. It is a tragedy beyond comprehension.

What lies behind such obvious divisiveness? Why would any believer in Christ be so obsessed with the imposition of such blatant legalism? What possibly could be gained by denying our Baptist heritage and exchanging the freedom we

have in Christ for a new form of man-written laws? Although Nancy and I, as 20-year veteran missionaries, had refused to sign the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, there was still much about the happenings in our convention over the past 20 years that we did not understand. Although I recognized many of the significant changes in the new BFM 2000 as deviations from my own understandings of scripture, I was just beginning to understand the dangers inherent in those changes. The book *Stand with Christ* is a tremendous help in understanding what has happened and the implications of the new directions Southern Baptists are taking. I would recommend it to every Baptist—regardless of his stand in the present controversy. I believe that we would be well advised to contemplate its warnings and take seriously our obligation to seek God's leadership in determining our own stand.

Shortly before leaving the field to return to the States for a yearlong furlough, I sat with an 18-year-old young man, who had been raised an atheist in former Communist, eastern Germany. Gunnar had found his way to the church through a school friend, herself a new Christian. For two hours I shared with him his need to receive Christ as Savior and Lord. After much soul-searching and true spiritual warfare, he prayed to receive Christ. Before he left, I shared with Gunnar three things that he really needed to do now that he was a child of God: follow Christ in baptism, grow in his relationship to Christ through Bible reading and prayer, and become an active part of the family of God, the church.

Gunnar groaned at the mention of a Sunday morning worship service. He'd never actually been in a worship service and, like most young people, relished the extra hours of sleep on Sunday morning. He asked me point blank, "Do I have to come to Sunday morning worship in order to be a Christian?"

I underlined for him again that his salvation was by faith and not by works, that Christ actually gives us a great deal of freedom in our lives of service to him. I suggested, however, that it would be important to his spiritual growth and pleasing to God if he would come.

He persisted: "But do I have to?"

In my thoughts I prayed feverishly that God would help me give wise instruction to this new child in faith. Finally, I suggested that he ask Jesus personally what he should do. After all, I'd just told him that Christ would live in him through the Holy Spirit and would help him grow and understand what he should do. Could Christ not help him in this, his first "crisis" of faith?

"Gunnar," I said, "ask Jesus whether or not you should attend the services. If He tells you not to come, then don't come. If He tells you to attend the worship services, then you should be there." On Sunday Gunnar sat before me in one of the first rows. After the service he simply said, "Well, I asked Jesus what I should do. You can see the answer he gave me."

What a wonderful privilege it is to be able to go directly to Christ for the wisdom and direction we need. In prayer and Bible reading he directs us through his Holy Spirit. It became apparent to me how much we sacrifice when we replace that freedom with man-written laws and regulations. Jesus lives. He lives through the scripture and he lives in our hearts in those daily questions that plague us all. Let us return to trusting him for answers instead of depending on the answers of fallible men. Perhaps the book *Stand with Christ* can help us as we seek his direction. ■

## When Religion Becomes Evil

Charles Kimball (San Francisco: Harper, 2002) \$21.95

*Reviewed by Douglas Groothuis*

Associate Professor of Philosophy at Denver Seminary

An old saying is that we should never discuss religion and politics among friends. This notion has always been suspect (aren't these rather important subjects that make for bracing conversation?), but after last year's terrorist attacks, the idea seems laughable. Now that America has been attacked by violent Islamicists, the topics are unavoidable. How should we understand religions' connections to politi-

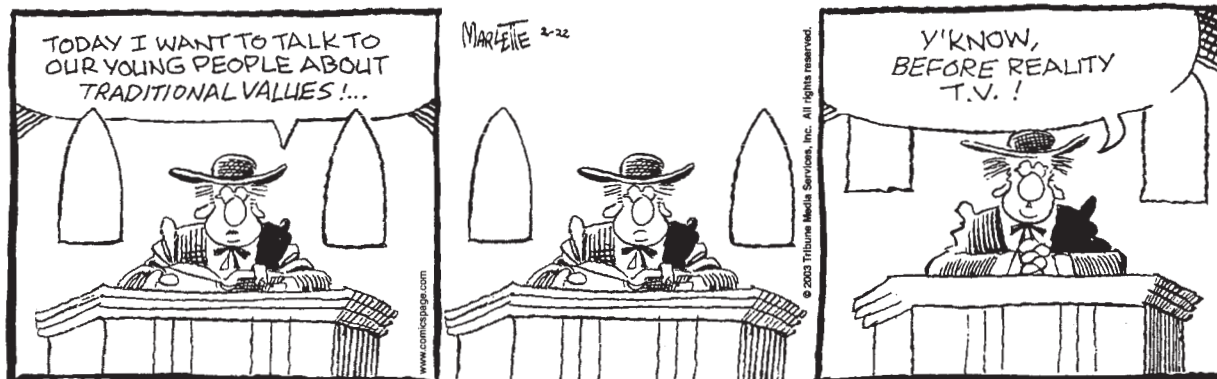
cal and military goals? Can we tell when religions become "evil"? Religion professor Charles Kimball attempts to shed light on these questions in his wide-ranging book.

Kimball believes the well-established religions should be respected, despite evils committed in their name, because they all "converge in teaching both an orientation toward God or the transcendent and compassionate, constructive relationships with others in this world" (p. 39). However, this does not imply that "all roads lead up the same mountain" (p. 25). Religions may defect from their "authentic sources" and thus even *become* evil in several ways.

For example, religions may make "absolute truth claims," require "blind obedience," "establish an 'ideal time'" (attempt to set up a utopian theocracy), teach that "the end justifies the means" or "declare holy war." Kimball addresses these matters in the context of various religions (ancient and modern), such as providing insights into the dynamics of doomsday groups such as the Branch Davidians and the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo, which required total commitment to irrational beliefs that led to destructive behaviors. He also attempts to explore the religious motivations of Osama Bin Laden and his followers, but spends less time on this than expected.

Kimball rightly observes that truth claims are foundational for religion. But, he claims that believers err when they hold their religious beliefs in a "rigid" or "absolute" manner. So, when some Christians criticize the Islamic view of God (Allah) as deficient, they reveal their ignorance and bigotry. Kimball asserts that, "there is simply no ambiguity here. Jews, Christians, and Muslims are talking about the same deity" (p. 50). This is because the Qur'an claims that Allah inspired the Hebrew prophets and Jesus. Moreover, the Arabic word "Allah" means "God."

Is this true? While Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all monotheistic, they differ considerably in their conceptions of God. Islam denies the Trinity and the Incarnation, both of which are well-established Christian doctrines. But God cannot be both a Trinity (Christian) and not a Trinity (Islam). This is logic, not religious intolerance. Moreover, these religions' different concepts of God explain why Muslims and Christians try to convert each other. If mutual understand-



ing is key to tolerance, then disagreements between religions should not be dismissed by deleting “absolute” truth claims from their “authentic sources.” It is certainly possible to tolerate someone who holds religious views quite contrary to one’s own.

Kimball wants to soften biblical claims about the uniqueness and centrality of Jesus by saying that they should be taken as pious exaggerations (p. 68-70). However, such affirmations are plentiful in the New Testament and have historically been seen as objective descriptions, not embellishments. Kimball seems to be calling for a revision of Christianity’s “authentic sources,” not a return to them. Likewise, most Muslims would reject this kind of revision of the Qur’an. Muslims claim that Muhammad was the last and greatest of the prophets, not just one among many. Being “rigid” on this doctrine is necessary to Islam.

In addition, Kimball never really faces the possibility that a religion’s “authentic sources” themselves may contain moral errors that encourage evils. He also tends to overemphasize the abuses of Christians—such as the Crusades—while underemphasizing similar abuses by Muslims, such as *dhimmitude*: an institution that places heavy restrictions on non-Muslims in Islamic nations (p. 201).

Kimball’s ambitious book highlights the need to make reasoned and well-informed judgments on religions and their ethical implications. However, we still await a book that adequately handles this controversial topic. ■

## The Courage to be Catholic: Crisis, Reform, and the Future of the Church

George Weigel (Basic Books, New York, NY: 2002), \$22.

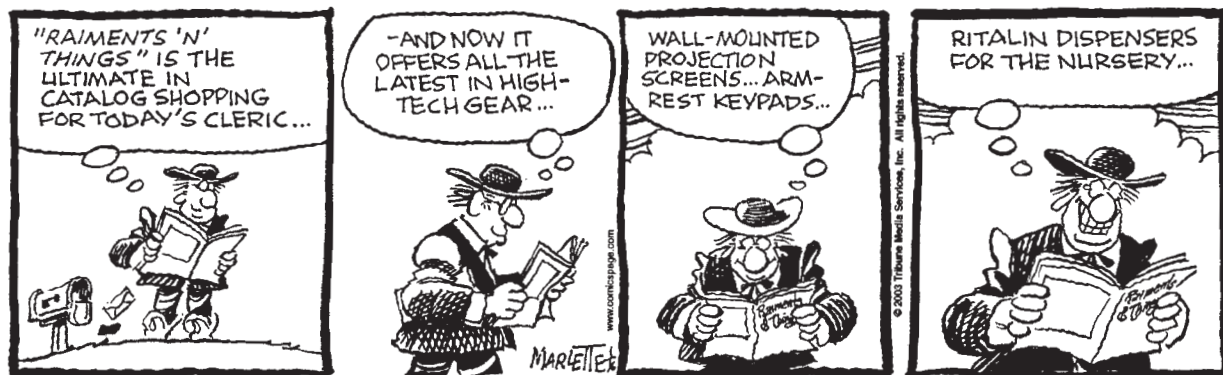
*Reviewed By Theresa Zolner, Associate Professor of Psychology  
St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, Canada*

Over the past few months, George Weigel’s text, *The Courage to be Catholic*, has received some favorable reviews as a tonic for the sexual abuse crisis with which the

Catholic church has been coping. Fortright and, at times, captivating, the text situates the current crisis of the Church in the context of past crises, pointing out that during trying times, return to roots and fidelity is what ultimately has both strengthened and saved the Church from peril. While there is no doubt that George Weigel has a tremendous knowledge about the history and nature of the Catholic church as well as moral theology, Weigel’s arguments are based on assumptions about sexual abuse perpetration that are misguided. If clergy are to seriously begin to address the problem of sexual abuse, effective problem solving must start with careful and competent understanding of the nature of the problem, not just as one of morality but as one of mental disorder and criminal behavior.

Weigel and others have recently made a point of distinguishing between “ephebophilia” and “pedophilia,” although the two terms refer to essentially the same “paraphilia,” which is a type of mental disorder. The difference between ephebophilia and pedophilia lies in the maturational level of the child, pedophilia referring to sex with a prepubescent child and ephebophilia referring to sex between an adult and a child who has entered puberty.<sup>1</sup> Ephebophilia is not by any account a commonly used term in most lay or professional circles, pedophilia being the commonly used term. Weigel describes pedophilia as “sexual attraction” to prepubescent children. However, sexual abuse is not about “attraction” but about physiological arousal in relation to disturbed desires for power, control, manipulation, and abuse of a vulnerable human being.

Weigel wants readers to believe that the crisis in the Church is not one of pedophilia but of ephebophilia, which he equates in “normal English” as “homosexual molestation” (p. 20), ignoring altogether the fact that ephebophilia could also apply to the abuse of adolescent girls. Weigel’s argument leaves readers with the impression that he considers it somehow better or less heinous for priests to have had sexual relations with adolescents in school settings or seminaries rather than with children. The implication of Weigel’s logic is that adult-adolescent sexual relations may imply less heinous behavior as well as homosexual relations between mutually consenting partners. The thrust of his argument is that it was gay culture and the Church’s tacit acceptance of homosexual-



ity that caused the sexual abuse crisis within the Church.

Weigel blurs this distinction between sexual misconduct (vow violation) and sexual abuse, normalizing the concept of adult-adolescent sexual relations as simply one form of sexual misconduct on a continuum of sexual misconduct types that can and do occur both in the priesthood and amongst seminarians. In other words, he makes sexual abuse not an issue of crime and mental disorder but of sin and a violation of vows. Assuredly, sexual abuse is a form in which some clergy violate their vows, but it is also much more than that.

Weigel's moral and rhetorical stance that homosexuality is "sign of spiritual disturbance" (p. 77) makes it simple for him to say that the gay subculture in the Church is directly responsible for the sexual abuse of children and adolescents. However, it is not at all just to equate homosexuality or "gay culture" with child abuse. The North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) promotes adult-youth sexual activity, but they are in no way representative of the entire gay community. The problem with both NAMBLA's and Weigel's arguments is that they presuppose that consensual sexual relations can occur between an adolescent and an adult, when, given the developmental status and level of most adolescents, it cannot. Even the mental health professions have had their share of dissent and discussion regarding the issue of adult-adolescent sexual relations because some researchers have ignored the fact that adolescent boys are vulnerable due to their developing sense of identity and their relative level of immaturity in comparison with the average male adult. This immaturity makes it impossible for most youth to be able to give true consent to sex with an adult.

Although Weigel keeps using the term "homosexual molestation," his arguments within this book leaves the impression that it is not molestation because priests are having sex with teenagers, but it is molestation because it is sinful "gay sex." Weigel likely would be horrified if his ideas were in any way associated with NAMBLA. Nevertheless, his turning to the ephedophilia argument also turns him to the same line of reasoning that supports NAMBLA's stance on adult-adolescent sexual relations.

Weigel mentions that seminary reforms "seem to have proven effective in preventing sexual abuse" (p. 50), a grandiose claim at best, but then focuses on the rejection of homosexuality as the primary problem underscoring present problems relating to sexual abuse. Rather than focusing on homosexuality, Weigel would do better to understand that people who have a homosexual orientation are not *de facto* child and adolescent sexual predators. Instead, he blames the Church for not having better seminary discipline and for failing to address issues of gay lifestyle amongst its seminarians, faculty, and clergy. He also places blame squarely on the Church for either accepting or failing to address the sexual revolution of the mid-twentieth century, as if somehow both gay culture and the sexual revolution are at fault for the occurrence of child and adolescent sexual abuse within North American society. This is like blaming democracy for crime.

In addition, Weigel contradicts his own very astutely made point that homosexual behavior in the Catholic priesthood was noted as a problem as far back as eleventh century, suggesting that the current crisis is not one that has been caused by the modern system of formation and conversion of candidates. Engagement in sexual relations with other adults is a violation of the vow of celibacy. Engagement in sexual relations with children and immature adolescents is a crime, a mental disorder, and the fault of individual sexual predators, not the Church or the gay community or the celibate lifestyle. Nevertheless, failure to address a known problem in a responsible manner surely is the fault of the episcopate.

Rather than blaming the culture of therapy for episcopal failure, Weigel might have recognized that bishops who moved pedophiles from parish to parish likely were acting within the scope of their own authority and not on the recommendation of a psychologist or psychiatrist who is competent and experienced in working with pedophiles. It is very unlikely that a psychologist experienced in working with pedophiles would ever have recommended that a person at high risk for re-offense be transferred to another position of trust and authority over children and youth. For a psychologist knowingly to do so would constitute a breach of their professional duty to protect children and youth from imminent harm. People in authority within spiritual communities, therefore, have a special duty to ensure that they are working with and being advised by competent, trained professionals, not just "therapists," which could refer to nearly anyone with or without proper training and experience.

Furthermore, Weigel identifies "sexual misconduct by persons placed in positions of trust and responsibility for the young" as being "wicked and scandalous" (p. 21). Sexual abuse being more than misconduct, it is also more than just wicked and scandalous—it is a mental disorder and a crime of high recidivism, particularly when it occurs between adult men and boys. Therefore priests have a special and particular duty—exactly like that of physicians, psychologists, and psychiatrists—not to engage in sexual relations with their parishioners or others who are involved with them as a consequence of their clerical role. In addition, Weigel's claims are wholly unsatisfactory because he implies that formation and conversion are primary forms of prevention for both mental disorder and criminal behavior by priests, ignoring the need for careful psychological screening of candidates as well as treatment, rehabilitation, accountability, and ultimately, redemptive grace for those who fall.

Weigel also misses the incest analogy that is apparent when we consider the priest as pastor or father to the people in his community and parish. The incest analogy of sexual abuse applies due to nature of the priest-parishioner or shepherd-flock relationship and is even more poignant when the vulnerability of children and adolescents is considered. Discussion of sexual issues in parishes is a crucial starting point. Strong pastoral leadership, just like strong parenting, gives good moral direction and decision making around sexual issues and does not "keep things silent" in the family,

which is more the hallmark of incestuous relationships, parental ineffectiveness, or spousal/familial over-control.

Priests must be held to a higher standard of behavior (like psychologists and medical doctors), and churches must take the problem of pedophilia's chronicity and recidivism seriously. The challenge to church leaders today is not to take responsibility for the crimes and sins of individual priests but to deal effectively with those crimes and sins as leaders of a faith community. Allowing secular authorities to deal with violations of secular law according to principles of due process and the rule of law would enable church leaders to focus on the salvation and ministerial issues as well as canon law and the proper shepherding of their flocks.

Age difference between the persons involved is also taken into account, with two or more years typically considered a clinically and, often, legally significant age difference. ■

## Building Materials for Life

Millard Fuller (Smith & Helwys, Macon, GA, 2002), \$10

*Reviewed by Darold Morgan*

President Emeritus of the Annuity Board, SBC

The name Millard Fuller rings a resounding bell in today's world as a person who is genuinely making a difference for people and the Lord. We know him as the affable, gifted, capable founder, and president of Habitat for Humanity. Few charitable organizations in the land are more respected or effective than this unique group which has built tens of thousands of homes for people who otherwise could not afford them. Habitat for Humanity has enlisted thousands of people as volunteers, raised great sums of money for these housing needs and has given a tremendous quality of life to new homeowners. Currently they are expending these same techniques of volunteerism, charitable giving, and responsible home ownership.

The delightful book is a series of brief essays sharing personal insights and experiences from Fuller's fascinating life. Immensely practical, consistently readable, and laced with biblical insights, these chapters point to the convictions and

foundations of Fuller's life. Apart from these principles and values, one cannot understand the thrust of his motivation, which is absolutely germane to the momentum of Habitat for Humanity. The book is far more autobiographical than one might realize at first glance. What emerges is a portrait of Fuller's background: his childhood days in rural Alabama, delightful reminiscences of a growing family, the long educational processes at Auburn University and the University of Alabama, and the overseas missionary work. This is not the main intent of this book, but one cannot understand Habitat for Humanity without the convergence of all of these factors.

His repeated references to Clarence Jordan are worth the price of the book. Their paths crossed at a formative time in Fuller's life. Jordan, the founder of the famed "Koinonia Farms" who was preacher, teacher, theologian of the "Cotton Patch Gospel," and groundbreaking leader in authentic racial understanding in the South, deeply influenced Fuller in the initial formulation of the underlying philosophy of Habitat.

Interspersed in these pithy essays are multiple references to Jordan's teachings of prayer, the kingdom of God, integration, non-violence, biblical ethics, biblical salvation, and sensitivity to the poor.

With us today is a viable, practical, and enthusiastic concept that bridges denominations, races, age, and national boundaries with a concept of hard grueling work. Community support from a thousand different directions results in probably the best-organized numbers of affordable housing for the poor anywhere to be found. Habitat for Humanity has taken a giant step in eliminating homelessness for the poor and brings an unprecedented sense of dignity to people who desperately need it.

President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter have wisely contributed their time, energy, and influence to Fuller's dream. The support of the Carters has been monumental.

What you have is a book full of common sense, sound business acumen, and a healthy dose of faith in Jesus as Lord. If you want your heart warmed, your emotions stirred, and your soul reminded that God is still working in this world, get this book. Read it. Give it to family and friends and rejoice that multitudes of people right now are having their lives changed through this beautiful ministry. ■



---

*“Whatsoever things are lovely . . . think on these things” Philippians 4:8*

## The Letter Giveth Life

*By Foy Valentine, Founding Editor*

The world has Brother Paul to thank for the valuable saying that “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor. 3:6). How very true. The wisdom of the saying is crystal clear. We are not to get so bogged down in dotting the “I”s and crossing the “T”s that we lose the sense of what is intended. Especially in good old freedom-loving America we are inclined to such a rejection of rules and standards, to such a bias against instructions and guides, and to such negativism about directions and “How To” counsels, however, that we are now edging perilously near to a general lawlessness that is closer to anarchy than it is to civilization.

I am remembering that two of my friends were flying one day to a meeting that I had called. One of the friends, John Claypool, was much inclined to deep thoughtfulness bordering on authentic profundity. He turned to his traveling companion in the seat next to him, Henlee H. Barnette, and asked, “Henlee, isn’t every issue in life characterized by ambiguity?” John told me later that Henlee looked out the window in silence a long time and then turned to him to say, “Yes and No.”

We are agreed, I trust, that “the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life.” Please ponder, however, the possibility of truth in this proverb’s mirror image. Consider, “The spirit killeth but the letter giveth life.”

Please don’t fly off in a fit of rage, withdraw fellowship from me, or write me out of your will. At least, not just yet. Maybe later.

When asked whether or not Pentecostals would get to heaven, my old theology professor at seminary replied, “Why, yes, of course—if they don’t run right past it.” He was a wise man and not given to disparaging remarks about the religion of others. He was simply reflecting a rather commonly held opinion in those heady days of Pentecostalism’s early zeal that “spirit” sometimes seemed to eclipse “letter” in their wonderful enthusiasm.

If we have an overdose of “spirit” and an under dose of “letter,” then we tend toward such self-centeredness, lack of discipline, and even lawlessness that our energies and life itself can be poured out like water. In truth, we need buckets in which to hold the water. We need fences to keep us in the pasture. We need rules that will give us some sort of ordered environment. We need governance to keep every person from simply doing that which is right in his own eyes to his own detriment and to the possible harm of those about him. We need the letter of the law, lest following what is subjectively thought at the moment to be the spirit of the law each person sets his own boundaries, acts on his own whims, and is motivated solely by feelings so that nothing is agreed on that is for the common good. With such a scenario, civilization would vanish in a fog of egotistical formu-

lations guaranteeing that we would not learn from those who have gone before us.

Anarchy can never be as appropriate for humanity as the order which is characterized by boundaries, fences, walls, and rules.

In this light, then, too much “spirit killeth” but the letter “giveth life.”

In our Western culture, musicians accept a contrived scale within which they function professionally. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, “Hence diatonic music gives a general impression of strength, simplicity, and solidity as distinguished from the more restless and poignant character of that in which notes from foreign keys are introduced by accidentals.” Without the agreed on boundaries, music as we know it would not be possible. The “letter” of the boundaries “giveth life” to the music we love.

Those libertines who seek to live outside the laws of society and of God, unrestrained by convention or morality, consistently dash their life vessels against the rocky breakers of dissolution and ruin. Acceptance of the laws of God and the disciplines of society could save them from this folly.

In the Christian social ethics garden in which I have, to use the somewhat inelegant phrase from the King James version of the gospels, “digged and dunged,” a lot of passers-by have sniffed that specific attention to the “letter” of Christian social ethics is beneath them. They choose to pass by on the other side, think deep thoughts, philosophize about profound principles, write weighty position papers to be read by their peers, and to publish ponderous tomes.

In the meantime, average students and ordinary church members smoke cigarettes and get lung cancer, drive carelessly and kill themselves, drink alcohol and become addicts, take a little marijuana and then become hooked on cocaine, play it cool with a little gambling and slip into pathological compulsiveness in an immoral effort to get something for nothing, toy with pornography and trash the possibility of a happy marriage, and dabble with a little adultery but then slide painfully into abortion.

For heaven’s sake.

Get real.

The “spirit giveth life” and light on all these things to be sure.

But plain, practical, specific, unambiguous, unvarnished talk, teaching, preaching, and action are needed if the slippery slope to ruin is to be avoided. Multitudes will miss the message unless it can be remembered that too much of the spirit killeth, but the letter giveth light. ■

# 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

### MISSION

The Christian Ethics Today Foundation publishes *Christian Ethics Today* in order to provide laypersons, educators, and ministers with a resource for understanding and responding in a faithful Christian manner to moral and ethical issues that are of concern to contemporary Christians, to the church, and to society.

### PURPOSES

- Maintain an independent prophetic voice for Christian social ethics
- Interpret and apply Christian experience, biblical truth, theological insights, historical understanding, and current research to contemporary moral issues
- Support Christian ecumenism by seeking contributors and readers from various denominations and churches
- Work from the deep, broad center of the Christian church
- Address readers at the personal and emotional as well as the intellectual level by including in the Journal narratives, poetry, and cartoons as well as essays
- Strengthen and support 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."

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.

From the beginning *Christian Ethics Today* has been sent without charge to anyone requesting it, six times per year, "as money and energy permit." 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.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dr. Patrick R. Anderson, Chair**

**Dr. Tony Campolo**

**Dr. Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler**

**Dr. Carolyn Dipboye**

**Dr. Fisher Humphreys**

**Dr. Darold Morgan**

**Dr. David Sapp**

**Contributions** should be made out to the Christian Ethics Today Foundation and mailed to the address below. Your comments and inquiries are always welcome. Articles in the Journal (except those copyrighted) may be reproduced if you indicate the source and date of publication. Manuscripts that fulfill the purposes of *Christian Ethics Today* may be submitted to the editor for publication consideration and addressed to:

Joe E. Trull, Editor  
101 Mount View  
Wimberley, TX 78676-5850

Phone: (512) 847-8721  
Fax (512) 847-8171  
email [jtrull@wimberley-tx.com](mailto:jtrull@wimberley-tx.com)

VISIT US ON OUR WEB SITE: [www.ChristianEthicsToday.com](http://www.ChristianEthicsToday.com)

CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY  
Post Office Box 26  
Wimberley, Texas 78676

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
DALLAS, TX  
PERMIT NO. 3648