

CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS VOLUME 9, NUMBER 3 AGGREGATE ISSUE 45 SUMMER 2003

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

To Lie or Not To Lie . . . *Joe E. Trull*

EthixBytes

President Carter's Nobel Lecture *President Jimmy Carter*

Faith-Based Funding, Booze, and Greed *John Young*

Reflections on T. B. Maston *Joel Gregory*

The 'Morality' of This President *Al Staggs*

U. S. Media Caved In *Eric Margolis*

Response to Brent Walker's Review *C. Truett Baker*

Response to C. Truett Baker *Brent Walker*

The Parable of the Lost Saddle *Hal Haralson*

Not a Band-Aid: Debunking Myths About Foreign Aid *David Beckmann*

Never Know What To Expect at a Wedding *Dwight A. Moody*

Post-Abortion Depression and the Ethics of Truth-Telling *Paul Simmons*

BOOK REVIEWS

The Way We Were • Choosing the Good • Remembering Jesus

Reviewed by Jeph Holloway

Street Smart Ethics *Reviewed by Douglas Beyer*

When Ladies at the Lattice Lose Their Luster *Foy Valentine*



KUDZU by Doug Marlette

www.douglmarlette.com

To Lie Or Not To Lie . . . ?

By Joe E. Trull, Editor

That is the question. The big question faced by politicians and presidents—by corporate executives and newspaper columnists—and even by ministers and missionaries.

In our society, deception has become a way of life. Samuel Waksal, former chief executive of ImClone, recently received a seven-year sentence for stock market fraud. In regard to the related case of Martha Stewart, prosecutor James Comey handed off her case of insider-trading charges to the SEC, noting “This case is about lying.”

Defending Stewart, columnist William Safire (*NY Times*) responded, “Lying is a harsh word; I used it myself about Clinton’s congenital falsification. But perjury is a much harsher word . . . Martha Stewart has not been accused of perjury.”

The recently signed \$350 billion tax cut bill has been defended by politicians as “a benefit to all Americans as well as a shot in the arm for the sluggish economy.” However, a last-minute change in the legislation by congressional Republicans before passage means the child care credit increase from \$600 to \$1000 will not be available for families whose income is between \$10,500 to \$26,625. Those families include 11.9 million children, or one of every six children under age 17. The promise to “leave no child behind” rings a bit hollow!

A group of Christian leaders—some of the most prominent supporters of Bush’s “faith-based initiative”—is expressing frustration over the President’s record on issues of economic justice for the poor. “I am within a hair’s breadth of concluding that the faith-based initiative is a cynical cover for ignoring the poor,” said Ron Sider (*Evangelicals for Social Action*), who was joined by Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, and 34 others.

Proponents of the tax bill also claimed exaggerated results based on lower “Capital Gains” tax rates, but the truth is, as one writer noted, “Most of my co-workers in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 two-income household will receive no capital gains this year, and less than \$100 in stock dividends.” Millionaires will do better. More double-speak!

And what about the war in Iraq—especially the moral justification for waging this battle? A letter writer put it well: “Lying to the American people—especially if these lies are

directly linked to the deaths of American soldiers and Iraqi citizens—is a major offense. President Clinton was impeached for lying about . . . the affair, but his lies did not cause anyone’s death, nor did they cost billions of tax dollars.”

Some would retort, “Lying is sometimes justified, especially in wartime.” Is it? Ethicists for centuries have debated this question. In fact, major ethical positions can be determined by answering this question, “Is lying ever allowable?”

Absolutists from Augustine to Kant would say, “No—never lie for any reason.” Lying corrupts our humanity and robs others of their freedom to choose the truth. Truth-telling is an obligation for a moral person.

On the other hand, consequentialists from Aristotle to Joseph Fletcher (*Situation Ethics*) contend the rightness or wrongness of an act is determined by the end result. Utilitarians claim that actions, including lying, are morally acceptable when the consequences maximize benefit or minimize harm. Some modern voices would add, “What is the responsible action—what fits the total situation?”

Few Christians would question the importance of truth-telling. The Scriptures command, “You shall not bear false witness” (Exod. 20:16) and “Speak the truth” (Eph. 4:15). At the same time the Bible seems to approve the Hebrew midwives lying to Pharaoh (Exod. 1:19-20), David’s deception of Ahimelech (1 Sam. 21:1-6), and Rahab’s lies to protect the Hebrew spies (Josh. 2:5-6).

What can we conclude? The biblical ideal for Christians is to be honest and to tell the truth. This is the norm. However, there are *rare* occasions when you face a moral conflict between two values—such as telling the truth OR saving a life. Corrie ten Boom faced such a choice when she lied to the Nazis in order to save Jews hiding in her home. Just War theories are also developed on this premise.

Baptist missionaries face that conflict in countries where they serve in secret, in order to minister. In this case is lying a “lesser evil” in order to achieve a greater good? Some SBC leaders who would never lie about inerrant biblical truth, have justified deception and outright falsehood to achieve the supposed “greater good” of eradicating liberalism. Some lead-

(continued on page 7)

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.

EthixBytes

A Collection of Quotes Comments, Statistics, and News Items

“We are redefining war on our own terms.”

President Bush, April 2003, St. Louis (*CNN*).

“The war was sold on the basis of what was described as a pre-emptive strike, ‘Hit Saddam before he hits us.’ It is now quite clear that Saddam did not have anything with which to hit us in the first place.”

Former British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

“George W. Bush took a dim view of the Clinton administration’s use of military forces to help rebuild failed states in places such as Haiti and the Balkans. ‘If we don’t stop extending our troops all around the world in nation-building missions, then we’re going to have a serious problem. . . .’ Now Bush has assigned the Pentagon to head up the reconstruction of Iraq, the largest nation-building exercise in 50 years.”

Bob Deans, *Cox News Washington*

“They asked us if there are any hidden chemical weapons, and we told them that to the best of our knowledge there weren’t any. Why would we lie now?”

Dr. Alaa al-Sayheed, senior scientist considered one of the top 10 in Iraq’s chemical weapons program.

“In media coverage after September 11, General Norman Schwarzkopf acknowledged several times that the U. S. had helped train Osama Bin Laden and al-Queda when they were considered freedom fighters in a jihad against the Soviet Union.”

Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*.

“Capitalism is the most productive economic system society has yet devised. [But it] has no mechanism for taking care of those who cannot earn their own way: children, the severely handicapped, the elderly, those who want to work but can’t find a job, those who work but cannot earn enough to survive.”

Donald C. Lelong,

Former University of Texas Economics Professor.

“The humanity of our ‘enemies’ doesn’t seem to register with many Christians these days. I heard one evangelical leader say that Desert Storm was carried out with a minimum number of casualties. Of course, he was referring only to U.S. casualties, because in the context of war those on the other side don’t matter.”

Tony Campolo in *Prism Epistle*.

“At least 3,240 civilians died throughout the country, including 1,896 in Baghdad. The AP count is based on records

from 60 of Iraq’s 124 hospitals, and covers the period between March 20, when the war began, and April 20, when things were dying down.”

Niko Price, *Associated Press*.

“My remarks, which some bishops found offensive, were deadly accurate. I make no apology.”

Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating upon resigning as chairman of a panel of lay Catholics examining sex abuse after stating some bishops have shown a Mafia-like devotion to secrecy.

“The first comprehensive review by the Environmental Protection Agency of what is known about various environmental problems, after heavy editing by the White House, has whittled a long section describing risks from rising global temperatures to a few non-committal paragraphs.”

Andrew C. Revkin, *The New York Times*

“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

“‘High taxes strangle the economy. Lower taxes produce economic growth and jobs,’ argued President G. W. Bush. But history offers contrary evidence. Some of the nation’s strongest growth has occurred when the top tax bracket was higher than the 35% that became law last week.”

Study of Tax Rates and Economic Growth 1936-2002,
Austin American-Statesman, June 1, 2003.

“Households with taxable income from \$50,000 to \$75,000 will receive an average tax cut of \$703, a boost of 1.2 percent; \$200,000 to \$500,000 taxable incomes will receive a tax cut of \$5,015 and a boost of 2.2 percent. Millionaires tax cut will exceed \$93,000 and the boost of household income of 4.4 percent.”

Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center.

“I want God to bless America. And America needs to support Israel more than Israel needs our support because Israel has an ally far stronger than the United States of America. [Support for the Jewish state and her people] is biblical. God blesses those who bless the Jews, and God curses those who curse the Jews.”

Richard Land, president of the SBC
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
at a prayer breakfast at the Israeli embassy

"The national government . . . will maintain and defend the foundations on which the power of our nation rests. It will offer strong protection to Christianity as the basis of our collective morality. . . . I pledge that I will never tie myself to parties who want to destroy Christianity. . . . we want to burn out the poison of immorality which has entered into our whole life and culture as a result of liberal excess during the past (few) years."

From *The Speeches of Adolph Hitler, 1922-1939, Vol. 1* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1942), 871-2.

"I have no right to refuse to call a Baptist my brother merely because he does not happen to be my twin brother. Another Baptist has no right to refuse to call me brother (and nag and torment me) because I am not his twin."

E. Y. Mullins, Baptist Theologian.

"The SEC should be enforcing the law to its fullest extent, not negotiating compromises."

Mitch Marcus, former WorldCom manager after WorldCom paid a \$500 million fine for inflating its earnings by \$11 billion.

"Without holding executives and CEOs personally accountable for the wrongdoing that occurred under their watch, I do not believe that Wall Street will change its ways or that investor confidence will be restored."

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., Chair of Senate Banking Committee in response to remarks by business leaders and disclosures of compensation packages.

"It's not fair to tax something twice," said President Bush in pushing Congress to eliminate taxes on stock dividends. However, "There's double taxation all around. Workers pay taxes into the Social Security system, even pay income tax on the Social Security withheld, then when they retire, their benefits are subject to income taxes," noted Reuben Aviyonah, Director International Tax Program.

"I do believe that I learnt more from her than I should have learned from any six doctors of divinity of the sort we have nowadays."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon commenting on Mary King, English pulpiteer and gifted theologian.

"Underage drinking accounts for one-fifth (19.7 percent, \$22.5 billion) of the nation's alcohol consumption."

Columbia University's National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse.

"The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Louisville has agreed to pay 243 victims of clerical sex abuse in Kentucky \$25.7 million, but it represents only a fraction of outstanding claims nationwide, guaranteeing more financial pain ahead for U.S. dioceses."

Rachel Zoll, *Associated Press*.

"Former education secretary and drug czar William Bennett, author of *The Book of Virtues* and one of the nation's most relentless moral crusaders has lost in the last decade more than \$8 million to casinos in Atlantic City and Las Vegas, where he is a 'preferred customer.' *Newsweek* and *Washington Monthly* also said he earns \$50,000 for each appearance in speaking fees on the lecture circuit, where he inveighs against various sins, weaknesses and vices of modern culture."

The New York Times.

"He's never going again."

Elayne Bennett in *USA Today* responding to reports of her husband's affinity for casino gambling.

"Despite political rhetoric about enforcing gun laws on the books, it isn't happening. Two percent of federal gun crimes are prosecuted, and it's an absolute outrage."

Matt Bennett, spokesman for Americans for Gun Safety Foundation.

"Oklahoma has the second highest divorce rate in the nation (32% of adults compared to 21% nationally), even after Gov. Keating launched a program to cut the divorce rate by taking \$10 million from welfare funds serving poor families and trained 400 persons in PREP. The program has yet to cut the divorce rate, but 1000 pastors have pledged not to perform weddings in their church unless the couple is willing to prepare for marriage. President Bush is pumping \$300 million into the program to duplicate the Oklahoma experiment in other states."

The Oklahoma Observer, April 25, 2003.



President Carter's Nobel Lecture

By Jimmy Carter, 10 December 2002

Your Majesties, Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I accept this prize. I am grateful to my wife, Rosalynn, to my colleagues at The Carter Center, and to many others who continue to seek an end to violence and suffering throughout the world. The scope and character of our Center's activities are perhaps unique, but in many other ways they are typical of the work being done by many hundreds of nongovernmental organizations that strive for human rights and peace.

Most Nobel laureates have carried out our work in safety, but there are others who have acted with great personal courage. None has provided more vivid reminders of the dangers of peacemaking than two of my friends, Anwar Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin, who gave their lives for the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Like these two heroes, my first chosen career was in the military, as a submarine officer. My shipmates and I realized that we had to be ready to fight if combat was forced upon us, and we were prepared to give our lives to defend our nation and its principles. At the same time, we always prayed fervently that our readiness would ensure that there would be no war.

Later, as President and as Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces, I was one of those who bore the sobering responsibility of maintaining global stability during the height of the Cold War, as the world's two superpowers confronted each other. Both sides understood that an unresolved political altercation or a serious misjudgment could lead to a nuclear holocaust. In Washington and in Moscow, we knew that we would have less than a half-hour to respond after we learned that intercontinental missiles had been launched against us. There had to be a constant and delicate balancing of our great military strength with aggressive diplomacy, always seeking to build friendships with other nations, large and small, that shared a common cause.

In those days, the nuclear and conventional armaments of the United States and the Soviet Union were almost equal, but democracy ultimately prevailed because of commitments to freedom and human rights, not only by people in my country and those of our allies, but in the former Soviet empire as well. As president, I extended my public support and encouragement to Andrei Sakharov, who, although denied the right to attend the ceremony, was honored here for his personal commitments to these same ideals.

The world has changed greatly since I left the White House. Now there is only one superpower, with unprecedent-

ed military and economic strength. The coming budget for American armaments will be greater than those of the next fifteen nations combined, and there are troops from the United States in many countries throughout the world. Our gross national economy exceeds that of the three countries that follow us, and our nation's voice most often prevails as decisions are made concerning trade, humanitarian assistance, and the allocation of global wealth. This dominant status is unlikely to change in our lifetimes.

Great American power and responsibility are not unprecedented, and have been used with restraint and great benefit in the past. We have not assumed that super strength guarantees super wisdom, and we have consistently reached out to the international community to ensure that our own power and influence are tempered by the best common judgment.

Within our country, ultimate decisions are made through democratic means, which tend to moderate radical or ill-advised proposals. Constrained and inspired by historic constitutional principles, our nation has endeavored for more than two hundred years to follow the now almost universal ideals of freedom, human rights, and justice for all.

Our president, Woodrow Wilson, was honored here for promoting the League of Nations, whose two basic concepts were profoundly important: "collective security" and "self-determination." Now they are embedded in international law. Violations of these premised during the last half-century have been tragic failures, as was vividly demonstrated when the Soviet Union attempted to conquer Afghanistan and when Iraq invaded Kuwait.

After the Second World War, American Secretary of State Cordell Hull received this prize for his role in founding the United Nations. His successor, General George C. Marshall, was recognized because of his efforts to help rebuild Europe, without excluding the vanquished nations of Italy and Germany. This was a historic example of respecting human rights at the international level.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Twelve years ago, President Mikhail Gorbachev received your recognition for his preeminent role in ending the Cold War that had lasted fifty years.

But instead of entering a millennium of peace, the world is now, in many ways, a more dangerous place. The greater ease of travel and communications has not been matched by equal understanding and mutual respect. There is a plethora of civil wars, unrestrained by rules of the Geneva Convention, within which an overwhelming portion of the casualties are

unarmed civilians who have no ability to defend themselves. And recent appalling acts of terrorism have reminded us that no nations, even superpowers, are invulnerable.

It is clear that global challenges must be met with an emphasis on peace, in harmony with others, with strong alliances and international consensus. Imperfect as it may be, there is no doubt that this can best be done through the United Nations, which Ralph Bunche described here in this same forum as exhibiting a “fortunate flexibility”—not merely to preserve peace but also to make change, even radical change, without violence.

He went to say: “To suggest that war can prevent war is a base play on words and a despicable form of warmongering. The objective of any who sincerely believe in peace clearly must be to exhaust every honorable recourse in the effort to save the peace. The world has had ample evidence that war begets only conditions that beget further war.”

We must remember that today there are at least eight nuclear powers on earth, and three of them are threatening to their neighbors in areas of great international tension. For powerful countries to adopt a principle of preventive war may well set an example that can have catastrophic consequences.

If we accept the premise that the United Nations is the best avenue for the maintenance of peace, then the carefully considered decisions of the United Nations Security Council must be enforced. All too often, the alternative has proven to be uncontrollable violence and expanding spheres of hostility.

For more than half a century, following the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, the Middle East conflict has been a source of worldwide tension. At Camp David in 1978 and in Oslo in 1993, Israelis, Egyptians, and Palestinians have endorsed the only reasonable prescription for peace: United Nations Resolution 242. It condemns the acquisition of territory by force, calls for withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories, and provides for Israelis to live securely and in harmony with their neighbors. There is no other mandate whose implementation could more profoundly improve international relationships.

Perhaps of more immediate concern is the necessity for Iraq to comply fully with the unanimous decision of the Security Council that it eliminate all weapons of mass

destruction and permit unimpeded access by inspectors to confirm that this commitment has been honored. The world insists that this be done.

I thought often during my years in the White House of an admonition that we received in our small school in Plains, Georgia, from a beloved teacher, Miss Julia Coleman. She often said: “We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles.”

When I was a young boy, this same teacher also introduced me to Leo Tolstoy’s novel, *War and Peace*. She interpreted that powerful narrative as a reminder that the simple human attributes of goodness and truth can overcome great power. She also taught us that an individual is not swept along on a tide of inevitability but can influence even the greatest human events.

These premises have been proven by the lives of many heroes, some of whose names were little known outside their own regions until they became Nobel laureates: Albert John Lutuli, Norman Borlaug, Desmond Tutu, Elie Wiesel, Aung San Suu Kyi, Jody Williams, and even Albert Schweitzer and Mother Teresa. All of these and others have proven that even without government power—often in opposition to it—individuals can enhance human rights and wage peace, actively and effectively.

The Nobel Prize also profoundly magnified the inspiring global influence of Martin Luther King, Jr., the greatest leader that my native state has ever produced. On a personal note, it is unlikely that my political career beyond Georgia would have been possible without the changes brought about by the civil rights movement in the American south and throughout our nation.

On the steps of our memorial to Abraham Lincoln, Dr. King said: “I have a dream that on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.”

The scourge of racism has not been vanquished, either in the red hills of our state or around the world. And yet we see ever more frequent manifestations of his dream of racial healing. In a symbolic but very genuine way, at least involving two Georgians, it is coming true in Oslo today.

I am not here as public official, but as a citizen of a trou-



bled world who finds hope in a growing consensus that the generally accepted goals of society are peace, freedom, human rights, environmental quality, the alleviation of suffering, and the rule of law.

During the past decades, the international community, usually under the auspices of the United Nations, has struggled to negotiate global standards that can help us achieve these essential goals. They include: the abolition of land mines and chemical weapons; an end to the testing, proliferation, and further deployment of nuclear warheads; constraints of global warming; prohibition of the death penalty, at least for children; and an international criminal court to deter and to punish war crimes and genocide. Those agreements already adopted must be fully implemented, and others should be pursued aggressively.

We must also strive to correct the injustice of economic sanctions that seek to penalize abusive leaders but all too often inflict punishment on those who are already suffering from the abuse.

The unchanging principles of life predate modern times. I worship Jesus Christ, whom we Christians consider to be the Prince of Peace. As a Jew, he taught us to cross religious boundaries, in service and in love. He repeatedly reached out and embraced Roman conquerors, other Gentiles, and even the more despised Samaritans.

Despite theological differences, all great religions share common commitments that define our ideal secular relationships. I am convinced that Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, and others can embrace each other in a common effort to alleviate human suffering and to espouse peace.

But the present era is a challenging and disturbing time for those whose lives are shaped by religious faith based on kindness toward each other. We have been reminded that cruel and inhuman acts can be derived from distorted theological beliefs, as suicide bombers take the lives of innocent human beings, draped falsely in the cloak of God's will. With horrible brutality, neighbors have massacred neighbors in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

In order for us human beings to commit ourselves personally to the inhumanity of war, we find it necessary first to dehumanize our opponents, which is in itself a violation of the beliefs of all religions. Once we characterize our adversaries as beyond the scope of God's mercy and grace, their lives lose all value. We deny personal responsibility when we plant landmines and, days or years later, a stranger to us—often a child—is crippled or killed. From a great distance, we launch bombs or missiles with almost total impunity, and never want to know the number or identity of the victims.

At the beginning of this new millennium I was asked to discuss, here in Oslo, the greatest challenge that the world faces. Among all the possible choices, I decided that the most serious and universal problem is the growing chasm between the richest and poorest people on earth. Citizens of the ten wealthiest countries are now seventy-five times richer than those who live in the ten poorest ones, and the separa-

tion is increasing every year, not only between nations but also within them. The results of this disparity are root causes of most of the world's unresolved problems, including starvation, illiteracy, environmental degradation, violent conflict, and unnecessary illnesses that range from Guinea worm to HIV/AIDS.

Most work of The Carter Center is in remote villages in the poorest nations of Africa, and there I have witnessed the capacity of destitute people to persevere under heartbreaking conditions. I have come to admire their judgment and wisdom, their courage and faith, and their awesome accomplishments when given a chance to use their innate abilities.

But tragically, in the industrialized world there is a terrible absence of understanding or concern about those who are enduring lives of despair and hopelessness. We have not yet made the commitment to share with others an appreciable part of our excessive wealth. This is a potentially rewarding burden that we should all be willing to assume.

Ladies and gentlemen:

War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children.

The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices. God gives us the capacity for choice. We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these changes—and we must.

Thank you. ■

To Lie Or Not To Lie . . . ?

(continued from page 2)

ers (both moderate and fundamentalist) continue to appoint unqualified persons to positions on the basis of friendships, financial donations, or political alliances. In the words of Jesus, "Do not even pagans do that" (Mt. 6:47)?

It seems clear that there are occasions when it is allowable to tell a "loving lie" in order to achieve a higher good, but most of the time people tell lies and deceive when they should not. In order to have the discernment to know when a "loving lie" is called for, one needs to be habitually truthful. Only then are your "greater goods" truly good and not self-serving.

In a day when deception is common and leaders political and religious twist the truth to serve selfish ends, God calls us to be that company of disciples who like their Lord, are people who walk in the Way, talk the Truth, and live the Life (Jn. 14:6). ■

Faith-Based Funding, Booze, and Greed

By John Young, Editorial Writer

By Permission of the Waco Tribune Herald

Sometimes, Red Tape Can Be A Good Thing

I'm a born-again believer in red tape. Hallelujah. Born again and bathed in the holy sea of accountability.

As an editorial writer, I have strayed. Name an editorial writer who never denounced bureaucratic red tape. Can't find one.

Red tape is bad, we write, even non-Reaganauts like me who don't see government as the Great Satan. Government is OK, we write, but not red tape.

I'll tell you when I became a born-again believer in red tape. It was when Texas awarded a charter school to a group of Waco residents who, though they were running a state agency, effectively told the public what they did with taxpayer money was nobody's business.

The state shut down the Emma L. Harrison Charter school after a year of misspent dollars and disserved families. Combined with several other charter-school horror tales, it accented the abominable way Texas set up a program with few safeguards about how public dollars would be spent and how public information would be kept public.

Texas lawmakers had to come back with a long list of accountability provisions. The naivete of handing out gobs of public money without holding recipients to public accountability should infuriate any taxpayer.

But don't assume lessons will be learned from such a fiasco.

President Bush, who as governor signed off on Texas' hole-filled charter school legislation, is now setting out to award federal contracts to church groups to perform social services.

As an example that Bush didn't take seriously the pitfalls of parceling out money in such fashion, last week the administration awarded a \$500,000 grant to Operation Blessing International.

That's newsworthy not just because it's a faith-based organization but because it is chaired by Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition.

Operation Blessing says its mission is hunger relief, certainly commendable. But can it be trusted?

A few years ago, the state of Virginia openly questioned what the Virginia-based organization was doing.

TV preacher Robertson used the "700 Club" to raise funds for the charity, saying in one appeal that Operation Blessing was using cargo planes to aid refugees from Rwanda fleeing civil war. Then it was discovered that the planes were being used to haul mining equipment for Robertson's diamond mining company.

State officials criticized the charity for slap-dash bookkeep-

ing and for mixing non-profit and for-profit activities.

Whether or not Robertson's charity gives new meaning to "fly-by-night," it points out the perils of putting public funds into private hands without sufficient safeguards.

The Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy, directed by the Rockefeller Foundation, has raised "serious concerns about the government's ability to track public funding of faith-based social services" after a 50-state analysis.

Of course, going faith-based isn't the only way for public funds to get used in less-than-accountable ways.

One of the most popular conservative policies is privatizing public services. But privatized services can leave taxpayers out in the cold when they want information about how private enterprise spends public dollars. You see that can be proprietary.

That, of course, is ridiculous. If the dollars are public dollars, the proprietary rights are ours.

The Big Deal About Booze

Some have been convinced they are what they drink. All is calm on the streets of McGregor this morning, which should be a relief.

That's very much the norm on the streets of McGregor, but a few days ago it faced a tempest in a plastic cup.

Preparations for Founders Day, the annual celebration of the city's birth, were ensnarled in controversy when the city council lifted a ban on the open consumption of alcohol during the event.

You can't buy alcohol in McGregor, but apparently the Founders Day practice of good ol' boys was to imbibe discreetly in the alleyways or shadows. This year the city council made the practice legal. This resulted in a packed council chambers as people protested the change.

Apparently Founders Day last weekend went off without incident. No harm, no foul, right? Well, not this time. Cross-fingers for next time.

Most of us would admit to ambivalence about a controversy like this. I don't drink. I don't berate those who do and I don't take offense when they do it responsibly. What I do find useful, occasionally, is to ask people to explain why booze is such a big deal to people.

I'm not talking here about the Lady's Temperance League. The ladies' concern is understandable. They're caring about our afterlives.

What is harder to understand is the other people who make a big deal about booze—they who personalize their poison, who firmly believe that you can't have celebration, relax-

ation or recreation without inebriation.

Fortunate in My Influences

Growing up, I was fortunate to have parents who didn't drink, doubly fortunate to have teen peers who didn't, either. When we got together for fun, even after we reached the "legal" age, we didn't have a "party." That had a connotation we didn't wish to convey. We had a "get-together."

I often wondered, how did the word "party" get hijacked?

Simple: Most Americans pledge to the flag, think of the cross as sacred and honor a badge as the law. But by far the most prevalent symbol in our land is intoxicating fluid.

Beer. An amber liquid. Sort of dull on the tongue. You have to acquire the taste.

Just an amber liquid. Yet to so many young people it is King Arthur's sword—the symbol of maturity, the symbol of conquest, the only way to have fun, the way to legitimize one's self. It's such a symbol that to reach the drinking age and not drink is social heresy.

Some people will say that certain evangelicals, like tee-totaling Baptists, make too big of a deal about beer. I tend to agree. Beer consumed in moderation at a proper place and proper age shouldn't concern anyone. But the Baptists aren't the ones who make the biggest deal about booze. It's the adherents of "can't have fun without it." And a large portion of them are age 15 to 18.

Can't have fun without it? That sounds like an alcoholic's line. Are we an alcoholic society?

Consider, for instance, the question of whether or not to serve beer at football games. Judgmental opponents may overstate their case, but the better question is why at a football game?

Do we need people who are already emotionally charged to further alter their brain waves? As for Baylor University, we'd better be glad it doesn't sell beer at Floyd Casey Stadium. The last thing Baylor fans need at those games is a legal depressant.

No, a depressant is the last thing needed by a lot of people who turn to booze under the pretext of "having a good time."

While it's true that booze likely would be replaced by another crutch, and that Prohibition was one of the dumbest things America ever did, it is instructive to imagine what the world would be like if booze and bars never existed. We'd need half the prisons and one-third of the divorce attorneys.

It would be safer to drive and safer to grow up. Instead, too many young people come to think that "grown up" means: "bottoms up."

The Goodness in Greed

When Jesus gave exceedingly long odds to a rich man's inheriting the kingdom, he wasn't talking about the "death tax." Was he?

When he talked of "faith, hope and charity," was he speaking of the 1040 long form?

Last week at Baylor University an army of academics discussed dual faiths—in the Lord and in capitalism.

The event was "Christianity and Economics," a research

conference under the Pruitt Memorial Symposium.

Some will ask, "Say what?" The object of capitalism isn't to make people godly. It's to make them wealthy. The point at Baylor, and a signature of President Robert Sloan's administration, is to align faith and learning at every turn.

Baylor has had other such conferences—faith and ecology; faith and science; faith and the science of life's origins, or so-called intelligent design. Sloan's signature has been the central debate on campus; next to how many miracles it would take to keep the University of Texas football Longhorns from scoring on their first possession.

Some faculty members, particularly in the sciences, object to the mandate to bring religion to bear on every discipline on campus. Science is science. Study it, understand it and live your life as your conscience dictates, they say.

It takes some stretching to bring a Christian perspective to a science that basically is about supply and demand, and the science of sating demand, also known as consumerism.

Conference participants heard such assertions from clergy on the agenda, and also heard discussions of Christian business ethics and environmental concerns. But the underlying theme was how or if the Xs and Os of economics track God's game plan.

In the session "Moral Foundations of Capitalism," three economists discussed how free markets fit into God's plan of providing for all.

Edd Noel of Westmont College sought to demonstrate how market forces might have shaped Jesus' world-view, saying that the carpenter "likely earned an income well above subsistence level" and that Galilee was a regional trade center.

Hope College economists Robin Klay and John Lunn presented a paper called "The Providence of God in Relationship to Market Economies and Economic Theory," in which ingenuity is treated as a godly virtue.

"As God hovered over the waters at the time of creation, perhaps God's spirit also hovers over markets and their participants," they wrote.

Seattle Pacific's Douglas Downing spoke of the life-affirming freedom built into capitalism.

Not that these economists ignored that bad things can come from markets—say, opium cartels or monopolies. But seemingly understated was the fact that free markets disproportionately benefit people depending on their access to them.

In the book *Development as Freedom*, Nobel Prizewinner Amartya Sen asserts a truth well evident in America's inner cities. One may be "free" to drink from capitalism's bounty. But if one is afraid to leave one's home in a neighborhood where gunplay is recreation, where the nearest grocery store is six miles away, freedom is just a word on a paper.

That lends itself to political decisions. To what extent should government act to address inequities? Or, like Providence, shall we trust the free market to provide?

As effective as capitalist theory has been in providing for general welfare, putting evangelical faith in the free markets is like trusting a level playing field to bring 340-pound Longhorn linemen down to size. ■

Reflections on T. B. Maston

By Joel Gregory
Ft. Worth, TX

Note: This email statement from Joel Gregory came in response to the news story that Southwestern Seminary was halting its doctoral program in Christian ethics and a subsequent letter from this editor quoting a report that an administrator wanted “to get away from the legacy of T. B. Maston and be more biblical.”

After reading the Baptist Standard story and the letter, I have thought about augmenting that letter with some things I know personally from having pastored T. B. Maston for five years.

Dr. Maston was in the hospital hovering between life and death, having suffered a heart problem. I flew back from the BGCT to see him at Harris Hospital. By his bedside were papers, one of which had sentence after sentence of closely written, cramped script. I asked him what he was writing. He told me that he was re-reading the gospels again and writing down something he learned about Jesus from each verse! There they were—hundreds of sentences, one for each verse. This is the man who is not biblical.

Further, twice a week Dr. and Mrs. Maston or he alone would make the rounds of the very poor homes of older local residents around Seminary Hill. There were people he had gone to see every week for decades, helping impoverished widows and ill people with their needs, when he himself was in his eighties and needed to be driven. I wonder how many of the current inerrant stewards of the heritage at Southwestern have found themselves in the little frame homes of old poor people on the perimeter of the wealthy campus, caring for their basic human needs?

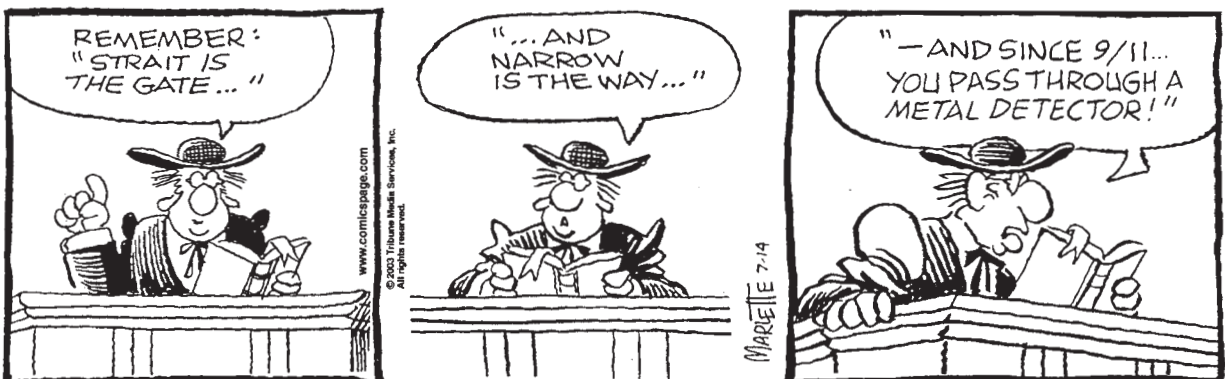
All of this as he continued to take care of a 60-year old Tom Mac Maston who suffered cerebral palsy. Dr. Maston

told me that never in Tom Mac’s life had he, Dr. Maston, been up less than six times a night to turn him

The tragic ignorance of the current administration and faculty at Southwestern goes beyond the normal prejudice of ignorant fundamentalists. The cringing stupidity of claiming that a biblical giant did not believe the Bible demonstrates the pygmy stature of the current Lilliputians who have ambled into an institution that they did nothing to build and do not understand at all.

When the crown sits uneasily on the king’s head, he must find bogus enemies to detract from his own vapid non-entity. T. B. Maston, Yale Ph.D. and venerated founder of Southern Baptist ethical studies, will stand tall in history when the entire crowd of theological dwarfs now leading Southwestern, whose power politics landed them in a place, the heritage of which they cannot even grasp, have vanished into the trivial footnotes of the institution’s history as a tragic anomaly to its earlier, greater existence.

That any of them would make such a remark about T.B. Maston only underscores the tragic depth of the hijacking of a once great seminary. The institution that produced a William Hendricks, John Newport, Bill Pinson, William Estep, Curtis Vaughan and a great cloud of others deserved a better destiny. ■



The 'Morality' of This President

By Al Staggs, Chaplain and Performing Artist

Bedford, Texas

During the last years of Bill Clinton's presidency, much was said and written about the Monica Lewinsky affair and the gross immorality of this president. President Clinton reaped a whirlwind of criticism from all sectors of American society and the most vehement responses came from leaders of the Religious Right. Clinton's infidelity and impropriety were admittedly abominable and egregious in nature. His moral failure put his entire two-term presidency, with all of his political and economic accomplishments, under the specter of scandal.

In contrast, George Bush's two years in the Oval Office have been free of personal moral scandals. He has been forthcoming concerning his membership in the United Methodist Church and his experience of conversion following a meeting with Billy Graham. Whereas Clinton was the recipient of a constant barrage of criticisms by the Religious Right, both before and after the Monica Lewinsky debacle, George Bush has enjoyed the unwavering support and affirmation from this powerful religious and politically influential body. There is little about this president that leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, John Hagee, D. James Kennedy, Franklin Graham and others do not admire. They threw their outspoken support for him during Bush's run for the presidency and they have not ceased in that support. Many of these leaders refer to George Bush as "God's Man" for the job.

How does one measure the morality of a presidency? As important as personal virtues are to the measure of the person holding the highest political office, do not the economic, political and military policies of a president carry even more moral weight in the discussion of morality? Concerning the issue of war with Iraq, the Religious Right has provided carte blanche support to President Bush's decision to launch a full-scale and deadly invasion on Iraq. The invasion, which resulted in the deaths of more than 4000 Iraqi civilians and likely thousands more casualties, did not meet the criteria for a just war and could not even be termed a "pre-emptive war." It was, as Noam Chomsky has cited a "preventive war," an attack carried out by our country against another nation which might pose a potential challenge to our security. Such a policy violates international law. Whatever moral high ground the President and his minion of religious supporters could claim for unleashing this deadly force against an already weakened nation was eliminated by the fact that to date no weapons of mass destruction, Bush's rationale for invasion, have been found. Additionally, the invasion was carried out in spite of an ongoing international effort to

locate weapons in Iraq and Saddam Hussein's reduction of arms. The reason for the invasion clearly was oil, the ruse was weapons of mass destruction and the "liberation of the Iraqi people." The Iraqi people have not in any sense of the word been liberated. Thousands of bombs destroyed this nation's homes, buildings, hospitals and infrastructure, not to mention the thousands of dead and wounded and the looting of property continues. Making war should be the last option. For the Bush Administration it was the first and only option. Any question of George Bush's morality must be viewed in respect to his decision to launch military action against Iraq and not to listen to the voices of protests of millions of U.S. and world citizens and to the protests of leaders of his own Methodist family to "give peace a chance." Peace was never given a chance, and this president is morally culpable.

The other major issue in the discussion of George Bush's morality must be viewed in the light of his Tax Cut program, the centerpiece of his economic policy. The 318 billion dollar cut will favor the wealthiest of Americans while penalizing the poor and middle class and deprive states of desperately needed funds for health, welfare and education. Once again, leaders of the Religious Right have been unstinting in their support of President Bush's economic policies. In the public statements by Religious Right gurus there is never any mention of the economic disaster that will befall millions of Americans and needlessly and unjustly reward the wealthiest of Americans as a result of this tax cut policy. The teachings of the Hebrew prophets and the message of Jesus about favoring the rich and the neglect of the poor are never cited in the sermons and proclamations of those who wear their ministerial identities with an air of self-righteousness and moral certitude. The moral vices of Bill Clinton, as unseemly as they were, did not affect the poor and middle class nearly as much as the tax cut policies of George Bush.

The question of a president's morality must be viewed not only from the perspective of personal habits and virtues, but more importantly, from the perspective of systemic justice and systemic evil. Using the power of the presidency to wage war and the refusal to wage peace combined with an economic policy of rewarding the rich while penalizing the poor is systemic injustice and systemic evil. Just as Bill Clinton's presidency can never be viewed without the vale of scandal, so George Bush's presidency can never be judged without consideration of the issues of justice and peacemaking. ■

U. S. Media Caved In

By Eric Margolis *The Wisdom Fund News & Views* (www.twf.org)

Why, readers in the U.S. keep asking me, are so many Americans unconcerned their government appears to have misled them and Congress over Iraq, and then waged a war with no basis in law or fact.

Why is there growing outrage in Britain over Tony Blair's equally exaggerated or patently false warnings over Iraq, while middle America couldn't seem to care less about George Bush's "Weaponsgate"?

One answer is found in an old joke.

Greenberg is sitting in a bar. He goes up to Woo, a Chinese gentleman, and punches him. "Why'd you do that?" cries Woo. "Because of Pearl Harbor," snarls Greenberg.

"But I had nothing to do with Pearl Harbor, I'm Chinese!" says Woo.

"Chinese, Japanese, it's all the same to me," answers Greenberg.

A month later, Greenberg sees Woo in the bar and apologizes to him. The Chinese gentleman smiles, then punches Greenberg.

"Why did you do that?" cries Greenberg?

"Because of the Titanic."

"What do I have to do with the Titanic?" asks Greenberg. "Greenberg, iceberg, it's all the same to me."

"Iraqis, Iranians, Pakistanis, Saudis, Taliban, al-Qaida . . . it's all too much for many geographically challenged Americans. Don't bother us with the details and strange names," they say, "kill 'em all, God will sort 'em out."

"The Muslim 'A-rabs' did 9/11 and we got revenge. Whacking those I-raquis made us feel a whole lot better. So

what if Saddam didn't really have the weapons of mass destruction good ol' George W. Bush said endangered the entire world? All politicians lie. So what?"

First, venting national outrage over 9/11 was one factor that helped form this group-think.

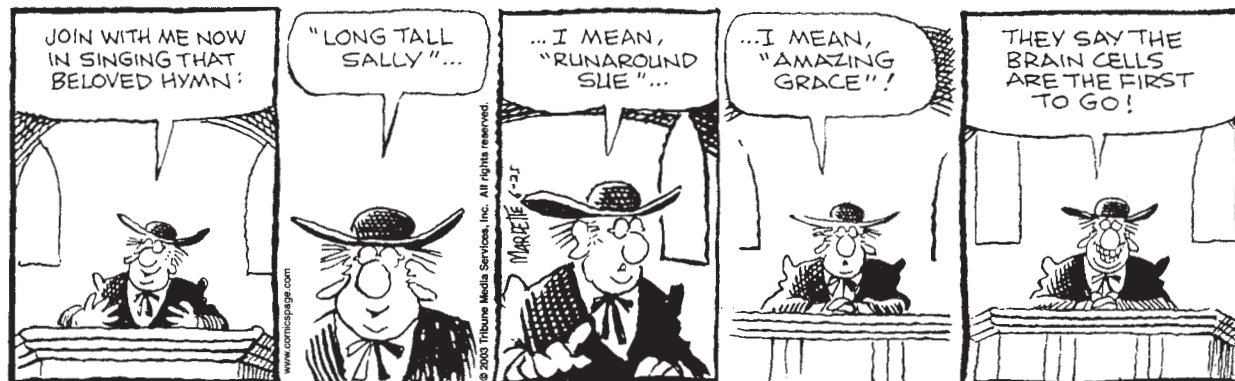
Second, starting with Afghanistan, the Bush White House threatened big corporate media it would be held "unpatriotic" and occasionally hinted at unspecified reprisals if coverage did not actively support the war effort there and in Iraq. Big media too often caved in, sometimes sounding like a public relations arm of the administration.

Third, there was near total domination of Iraq media commentary by the special interest groups that helped to engineer this phony war. Almost all of it in the lead-up to war was done by self-serving Iraqi exiles, uninformed generals, and neo-conservatives from Washington think-tanks sometimes echoing the views of Israel's Likud party. In short, a media lynch mob developed, endlessly repeating that Baghdad's terrifying killer weapons were about to blitz the U.S.

I scanned the major U.S. networks for voices challenging the distortions and bunkum coming from the White House and neo-cons. There was virtually none.

Group-think and the big lie prevailed. The British and Canadian media carried both pro-war and anti-war views; as a result, there was far more healthy skepticism in both nations about the war than in America.

By contrast, much of the U.S. mainstream media muffled criticism, became part of the war effort and devoted itself



to patriotic flag-waving. Americans would have been totally misled had it not been for such Internet sites as Antiwar.com, Bigeye, and LewRockwell, and incisive magazines such as *American Conservative* and *Harpers*.

Even the august *New York Times* allowed itself to be used. Right now, the *Times* is hand-wringing about two cases of plagiarism and phony reporting by staffers. It should instead be anguishing that its pages trumpeted phony reports about Iraqi weapons and links to al-Qaida that came from anti-Saddam exile groups and the pro-war cabal in the Pentagon.

Most so-called Iraqi “experts” on TV, including some colleagues of mine, merely regurgitated what they had read in the morning’s *Times*. The *Times* and much of the major media were duped, to put it politely, abandoning their vital role in our democratic system as tribune and questioner of the politicians.

So, too, the Democratic party, which, as war fever was being stoked by the Bush administration and the press, shamefully rolled over and played dead—with the exception of that great American, Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia, who long ago denounced Bush’s Iraq misadventure, and who now demands a full investigation of how Americans and their Congress were misled.

Absurd exaggerations.

The black comedy continues: Bush citing what turned out to be crudely forged documents in his state of the union address. “Drones of death” that turned out to be rickety model airplanes.

The “decontamination” trucks cited by Colin Powell that turned out to be fire trucks when inspected by the UN.

The notorious “mobile germ labs” the British press now reports were for inflating artillery balloons and, in fact, were sold to Iraq by the U.K.

Some British and American intelligence officers are accusing their governments of outright lies or absurd exaggerations.

Maybe Americans have become brain-dead from too much TV. Maybe they don’t care terrorism is surging, or that recent polls show the U.S. is reviled, hated, or distrusted around the globe thanks to this administration and its neo-con mentors. Maybe they don’t understand that over 288 Americans and an estimated 26,300 Iraqi civilians and soldiers have so far died in a totally unnecessary conflict. Or that the U.S. is now stuck in an ugly little colonial war in Iraq, its very own West Bank and Gaza.

(Note to American hate-mailers: spare Canada, I’m a New Yorker.) ■

Response to Brent Walker’s Review

By C. Truett Baker, *President Emeritus*

Arizona Baptist Children’s Services

Note: In the interest of dialogue on a vital issue, the editor asked Truett Baker to allow his letter to be published, followed by a response from reviewer Brent Walker. Truett is a friend from college days and a strong believer in our Journal.

Brent Walker’s review of Philip Hamburger’s book, *Separation of Church and State* (February, 2003), motivated me to obtain a copy. I liked what he had to say about the book. However, his comments were more of a defense of his own church-state relation’s point of view than a fair review of the book. I could have overlooked that liberty he took, but I have a great deal of difficulty overlooking his point of view. I understand Mr. Walker’s position as I have read his comments on this subject on several occasions and it is a popular viewpoint. Mr. Walker employs a tool we all use unwittingly from time to time when we feel so strongly about a subject—fitting the facts to justify our position.

No doubt, I am guilty of the same thing but my position is based upon thirty-five years of experience in balancing obligations to Caesar and to God. From 1984 to 1999 I was President of Arizona Baptist Children’s Services. We provided foster care and behavioral health services to children in state custody and were paid for those services as any other legal guardian would pay for their children’s care. We contracted with the State of Arizona to provide that care. We did not accept “government support” as the staunch separationist are fond of describing that process. Our programs were licensed by the State; otherwise we could not have provided the care. Licensing was required regardless of our contract relationship and we were monitored both by state licensing and state contract management in addition to Joint Commission oversight.

We did not discriminate in hiring on a religious basis and yet we shared our faith through voluntary Bible study and worship services. More professions of faith were made each year in our programs than were experienced by many of the Southern Baptist churches in the state. We did not force our faith on the children. That doesn’t have to be done. People are drawn to the Gospel—not repelled by it. We were often told by state caseworkers that they preferred to send their children to us because of the values they learned and they knew the kids would be safe with us. At no point did we disregard the law or try to manipulate it to

suit our purposes. Neither did we compromise our faith. We literally rendered to "Caesar" what the state required and rendered to God what He required of us.

In the best of all possible scenarios, the Church should pay for the care of troubled and homeless children. If all Christians tithed, that could happen. In this case, our budget was several times greater than that of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention. The other option was to simply get out of the child-caring work altogether and let non-sectarian agencies and the state provide the care, disregarding the meeting of children's spiritual needs. It has always amazed me how intelligent, well meaning Christian leaders like Brent Walker would rather let children be cared for by secular agencies, where impressionable children would not hear about Christ, rather than cared for in Christian agencies who work with the state.

The jurisprudence history of First Amendment matters is a relatively late development. It actually began in 1925 with *Gitlow v. New York*. I guess we can attribute any motive we want to the founding fathers, but one point of view is that the First Amendment was intended to apply only to the Federal government since the statement begins, "Congress shall make no law..." There was absolutely nothing that would have prevented the establishment of a state church and many believe this was part of the motive behind the amendment. Only much later was the venue enlarged to include government at all levels. There is example after example in Europe and Colonial America when government provided funding to help the poor and disadvantaged but used "church wardens" and other church means to distribute the aid. Objection to that cooperation was rare.

Why do we not see our strict-separationist friends lobbying Congress to revise the Internal Revenue Code to remove tax exemption for church property and minister's housing allowance? (Talk about government subsidy!!) Why don't we change the law to allow denominations to support their own chaplains in the military as we support missionaries? Why don't we object to state/local building codes which dictate building standards and health standards in our church kitchens?

Why can't church and state work together without feel-

ing that one will dominate the other? The state has a role in health and safety and the Church has a role in pursuing its spiritual mission. In fact, the state has a responsibility to protect churches. Why shouldn't the Church have a role in providing a spiritual influence with the state? Accommodation is a dirty word to the separationist. That scares me because it smacks of fundamentalism. There was absolutely nothing in the ethical statement of Jesus to render to Caesar what belongs to him and to God what belongs to Him that, mitigates against church and state working together toward the common goal of serving mankind.

Having said that, I am concerned about President Bush's "Charitable Choice." He would exempt faith-based agencies from the rules by which others must play. Showing that partially opens a door through which I don't want to go. For years fundamentalist groups have lobbied state legislatures to exempt their organizations from state licensing, i.e., Evangelist Lester Roloff in Corpus Christi, TX. That would then enable the organization to treat people any way they wish and ignore any health and safety standards they chose to ignore. Government is remiss in its responsibility when it allows this to happen in the name of church-state separation. Again, the state has a place in organized religion and the church has a place in the public square. This can be done by each respecting the venue of the other and neither attempting to dominate the other. The paranoia and persecution complex mentality of earlier centuries is not appropriate in the 21st Century. ■

Response to C. Truett Baker

*By Brent Walker, Executive Director
Baptist Joint Committee, Washington, D.C.*

Truett Baker has used the occasion of my review of Philip Hamburger's book, *Separation of Church and State*, to critique the separationist point of view in general



and my views of church-state relations in particular.

My main problem with Hamburger's book is that he sets up a caricatured view of the separation between church and state and then attacks it as being hostile to religion. Baker, in his response to my piece, does much the same thing.

The separation of church and state is not hostile to religion. The two clauses in the First Amendment—no establishment and free exercise—both require the separation of church and state as an avenue to ensure religious freedom for all. The goal of religious liberty often requires the government to treat religion *differently* under these two clauses.

Sometimes religion gets unique accommodations to lift burdens on the free exercise of religion. This includes a variety of concessions such as tax exemption for churches, housing allowances for clergy, exemption for churches from some non-discrimination provisions in civil rights laws and a reprieve from having to register under the lobbying laws. By the same token, full religious liberty is promoted by imposing on religion certain constraints or disabilities under the no establishment clause. Government can spend tax dollars for many things, but it does not support the teaching of religion. Teachers can say a lot of things in the classroom, but they should not lead in prayer.

Treating religion differently on *both* sides of the First Amendment promotes religious liberty, protects the rights of conscience and preserves the autonomy of religious organizations. The separation of church and state is simply what we call this salutary treatment of religion under the First Amendment.

Baker himself recognizes the dangers associated with government-funded religion and religious discrimination. The "charitable choice" provisions of the president's faith-based initiatives—which allows tax dollars to be funneled to churches and other pervasively religious organizations—would clearly violate this principle and threaten the autonomy of religious organizations.

But, there are many ways that government and religious organizations may work together to promote the common good without running the risks that attend government-funded religion.

- Government and even pervasively religious organiza-

tions may cooperate in non-financial ways. They need not be in opposition or engaged in a tug-of-war.

- Government should lift onerous restrictions and regulations on religious organizations that unreasonably interfere with their ministries. (I, like Baker, do not count reasonable licensing and health and safety regulations among these.)
- Government may encourage increased private giving by changing the tax law to expand the deductibility rules for charitable giving.
- Finally, houses of worship and other pervasively religious organizations may set up a separate, affiliated organization to accept tax funds to pay for social ministries. These ministries can be discharged out of religious motivation, to be sure, but without integrating religion in their programs.

These are the right ways to do right. They create a win-win situation: social services are delivered by religious organizations and the autonomy of houses of worship is ensured, all without violating the constitutional principles that protects everyone's religious liberty.

Thus, there is a place for the delivery of religiously based social services—including the kind of child care to which Baker has dedicated his life—without foregoing the protections for religious liberty that have served us well for over 200 years.

I am amazed that Baker thinks this sensibly balanced view of church-state separation can now be discarded without dire consequences. He concludes by saying, "The paranoia and persecution complex mentality of earlier centuries is not appropriate in the 21st Century." Oh really? I wish I could be so sanguine. You don't have to be paranoid to understand that someone might want to take away your liberty. The September 11 tragedy, the atrocities of the Taliban, and modern-day theocracies from East to West show what can happen when cock-sure religious zeal is combined with deadly, coercive power—even in the 21st century. I don't want to take even the first step in that direction. The stakes are simply too high. ■



The Parable of the Lost Saddle

By Hal Haralson, Austin, TX

I was traveling North on Highway 70, about ten miles south of Sweetwater, Texas. It was April 29, 2003, and I had never been down this route before.

This is ranch country. Few trees, rolling hills, and mesas leading into canyons. I could imagine buffalo and deer roaming this land years ago. It was home to the Indians.

My thoughts were on the committee meeting at noon. Buck's Bar-B-Que in Sweetwater sounded like the down-home place it turned out to be.

I was meeting four of my classmates from the 1953 graduating class from Loraine High School. We were the largest class in the history of the school . . . there were twenty-three of us. Loraine is a farming community twenty miles west of Sweetwater. We lived on a 400-acre farm eight miles north of town. We were closer to Hermleigh than we were to Loraine.

As I drove along, deep in thought, I passed a tall steel archway, the entrance to the Double Heart Ranch. On the top of the gates were two hearts about two feet across.

I slowed down and turned around. The gate was obviously old. If I entered, I would be late to my meeting and I am compulsive about being on time. But I was intrigued.

I opened the gate and drove through. I had waited too long to pass this up. I was coming to the end of a journey that had lasted sixty-four years.

The story begins in 1939—my fourth year on earth.

By the time I was four years old I was riding horseback almost every day. Since there was only one horse on our

farm, my selections of mounts was somewhat limited.

"Old Mary" was a red sorrel mare my father had traded for a bull. She looked as old as she was. That accounted for part of her name. I had an aunt named Mary, but I don't think she had anything to do with the other part.

Since there was no saddle on the farm except for Papa's, I rode bareback. I could ride better without a saddle than trying to reach stirrups that were much too long for me.

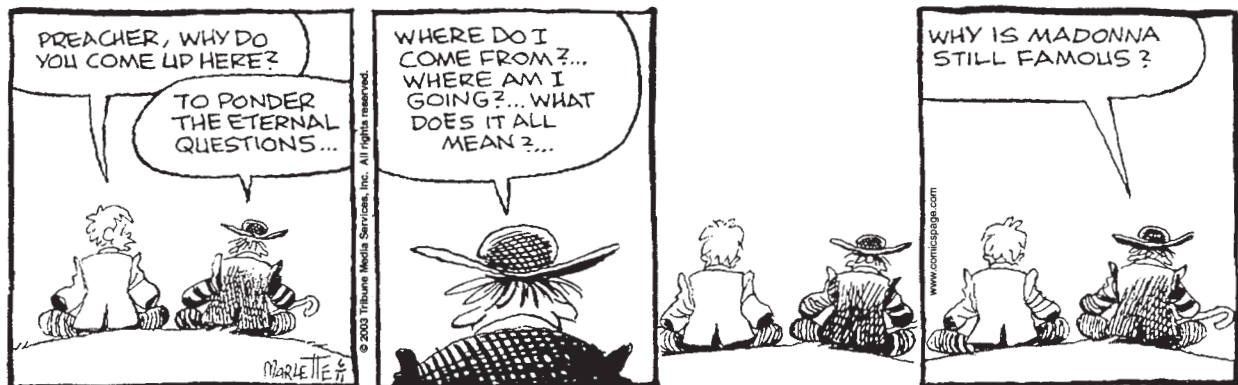
The only way I could get on Old Mary was to lead her up to the board fence around the cowpen. Since she was a gentle mare, she would stand in place until I climbed the fence and placed my left leg over her back and crawl on.

In a flash I became an Indian (who, of course, rode bareback). Old Mary and I chased cowboys up and down hills, and leaped over cactus and huge canyons (about six feet across).

I had no problem staying on until one day a jackrabbit jumped right in front of us before we got to his hiding place.

Old Mary went left and I went right. I got up, dusted myself off and caught the horse. I had to lead her to the barn to get back on her again.

Then one day my world changed. Papa came home from a stock sale and showed me the most wonderful gift I had ever been given. In the bed of the pickup was a kid saddle with stirrups I could reach. This was no Sears & Roebuck saddle. It was custom made by R & R Saddlery of San Angelo, Texas. He had traded a cow and a calf for a saddle.



Stamped into the leather skirt of the saddle on each side were two hearts. On the cantle was the name "Billie" engraved into the leather.

I rode the saddle for years until I was too big for it. After that, my two younger brothers used it. Papa sold it because he had no use for it after his sons had grown.

Fifteen years later, when his first grandson was old enough to ride, Papa spent three months locating the saddle and bought it back. When Brad outgrew it, we hung it in the barn. It has been hanging in my barn, unused, for the last twenty years.

For sixty-four years I have wondered what the double hearts stood for and who Billie was.

I was about to find out.

I drove up a dirt road for about half a mile. On my left were three earthen dams on a creek that had no water. At one time these tanks (ponds to some of you) were filled with spring water. On the gate a sign said, "Pay for water at the ranch house." There had been better days.

I knocked on the door and a man about seventy-five years old came to the door and stepped out. He kept two dogs back by holding the door half shut. The way they barked I was glad they were kept in.

"What do you want?" I could tell he was not interested in visitors on a hot afternoon.

I introduced myself. Then I told him about the saddle my father had given me sixty years ago: "He bought it at the cattle sale in Colorado City. It had two hearts in the skirts and the name Billie on the cantle. I've wondered who Billie was and what the hearts stood for all these years."

He interrupted me. "Just a minute." He stuck his head through the door and yelled, "Ma come out here just a minute."

Only then did W. A. Oatman introduce himself and his wife, Audrea.

"Tell her what you told me," he demanded.

I told Audrea the story of my saddle and she got tears in her eyes. "That was Billy's saddle," she exclaimed. "It was stolen from the Tack Room about 1940. Billy, my sister's son, died in a plane crash in 1950."

They invited me in and offered something to drink. The 4,000-acre ranch had been bought by her father, Ollie Cox, in 1923. When he died she and her sister inherited the ranch.

The house resembled a museum. "That was the last buffalo killed on the ranch," W. A. stated as he proudly pointed to the head mounted on the wall.

I left after about an hour of stories about Billy and the Double Heart Ranch. They gave me a copy of the newspaper story (with pictures) of their 50th wedding anniversary. It was in the Roscoe Times.

I had made two new friends.

By the time I got to Sweetwater, I knew what I was going to do.

One month later I called and asked if I could drop by

the ranch the coming Tuesday.

"Sure, we'll be here. We'll be glad to see you."

I put the little saddle in the trunk of my car and drove the 225 miles to Maryneal, which is the closest town. I drove through the gate of the Double Heart Ranch.

The Oatmans came out and I opened my trunk. There were tears of joy as the saddle that had been lost over 60 years was welcomed back home.

W. A. wanted to know, "How much?" My reply, "It's not for sale. It's a gift. The little saddle is back where it belongs."

This was one of the most tender moments I have ever experienced. I eased out the door and left as this old couple embraced and shared memories of the days when their nephew rode the saddle.

As I locked the gate I looked up at the double hearts and it reminded me of my journey.

Jesus told the parable of the "Prodigal Son" who strayed from home—was lost for years—and was welcomed home by his Father when he returned.

God made me. I became lost. He brought back his creation and welcomed me home. ■

BOOK OFFER STILL AVAILABLE

Putting Women In Their Place is available as a gift to anyone contributing \$100 or more to CET. Over 150 readers have received the book, based in part on articles from CET. The text was featured at the recent CBF meeting in NC, and is an excellent primer on the Baptist debate over women.



Not A Band-Aid: Debunking Myths About Foreign Aid

By David Beckmann, President

Bread for the World

Fanny Makina, a farmer in Malawi, is tilling her plot of land with a hoe and spade. Next she will plant crops of corn, peanuts, squash, beans and cassava, and mark each row carefully with a stick. In most years, Makina harvests enough food for her family and has food left over to sell. Even in years of limited rainfall, she has income to buy fertilizer and other supplies.

“My children don’t lack for clothes or shoes. I am able to pay their tuition for school,” she says proudly. By Malawian standards, Makina is tremendously successful.

Makina’s success is due in part to U.S. foreign aid. She is a member of the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM), an organization supported in part by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). NASFAM farmers join together to learn about new agricultural methods and to negotiate better prices with truckers and with the merchants who buy their crops. Compared with other farmers, NASFAM members have higher incomes and are less likely to go without food in the annual “hungry time” before harvest.

For Makina and millions of others, aid-supported programs like NASFAM have made the difference. “People think Africa is a lost cause because we are so far away,” says Makina. “But if they came and saw what we have achieved with the aid we are receiving, they would think otherwise.”

This kind of aid—aid that supports communities and responsible governments—could dramatically reduce world hunger over the next decades. At the UN conferences of the 1990s, the nations of the world agreed to cut world hunger in half by 2015. In this period of relative peace and prosperity, we could achieve this goal, but only if U.S. leaders join other leaders in increasing the funding for poverty-focused foreign-aid programs.

Over most of the past 50 years, the U.S. took the lead in advancing foreign aid for developing countries. Foreign-aid priorities were driven by the cold war, and the U.S. saw fighting hunger and poverty as a way to slow communism and woo Third World governments. For example, the biggest recipients of U.S. aid in Africa in the 1980s were dictatorships in Somalia, Sudan and Liberia that contributed to the violence still afflicting these countries today.

Since the end of the cold war, however, funding for aid has dropped. Without a clear statement of purpose for its post-cold-war aid program, Congress has bogged down the

work of USAID, the main aid agency within the U.S. government. In the absence of a strong commitment to foreign aid, debilitating myths about such aid have become widespread. Before we sustain a commitment to reducing hunger and poverty around the world, we must debunk these myths.

Myth 1: Foreign aid doesn’t work. Most foreign aid hasn’t helped poor people because it was never intended to help poor people. Over 20 percent of U.S. foreign assistance goes to Israel and Egypt, although neither country is a low-income nation. Other programs in the “aid” budget help U.S. businesses, or underwrite some senator’s pet organization back home.

But when aid is focused on reducing poverty, it produces results. In the 1980s a UNICEF-led “child survival revolution” taught low-income parents worldwide how to do simple things to reduce health risks for their children. A sugar and salt solution, for example, can keep diarrhea from dehydrating a child. Now, in 2001, thousands more children live rather than die each day because of this program.

There are fewer hungry people in the world today than 25 years ago. The proportion of undernourished people in developing countries has dropped from one-third to one-fourth. Since 1960, adult literacy in sub-Saharan Africa has increased by over 280 percent; infant mortality has declined in East Asia by more than 70 percent; the under-five mortality rate has declined by over 75 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean; and life expectancy has risen by 46 percent in South Asia. Development assistance has contributed to these advances.

Myth 2: Most foreign aid gets lost to corrupt bureaucracies in the developing countries. Yes, corruption is a problem. But since the end of the cold war, USAID and other aid agencies have become tougher on corruption. They are selective about which countries receive aid and what local agencies they fund, and they work with governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to monitor how money is spent. Where corruption is rife, USAID can fund projects through NGOs rather than government agencies.

Even more important, people in many developing countries have fought successfully for democracy, so local citizens are better able to hold governments accountable. People can criticize government officials, and the local press discusses mistakes and abuses.

Myth 3: Foreign aid is a big slice of the federal budget.

A recent poll by the Program for International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland showed that most Americans still imagine that 20 percent of the federal budget goes to foreign aid. In reality, less than 1 percent of the budget is for foreign aid, and only about one-third of that is development assistance.

U.S. development aid has declined steadily over the past 15 years. The U.S. now ranks last among the 22 industrialized countries in percentage of national income given away in development aid: less than 0.1 percent. Tiny Denmark contributes ten times as much of its national income as American taxpayers do. Japan has been the largest provider of official development assistance for ten consecutive years.

Myth 4: Americans want to cut foreign aid. This is what members of Congress and their staffers like to tell us. But a University of Maryland study reveals that a vast majority of Americans would support an increase in aid focused on reducing poverty. Eighty-three percent of Americans favor U.S. participation in a plan to reduce world hunger by half by 2015, and nearly all these people would be willing to pay more in taxes to make it happen.

Even more intriguing, U.S. strategic and economic interests, long the prime rationales for U.S. foreign aid, rank last in the minds of Americans as reasons to grant aid. Most believe that alleviating hunger and poverty and encouraging economic development in poor countries are the most compelling reasons for aid.

Myth 5: We should take care of problems at home rather than devote resources to helping other countries. Yes, we should tackle hunger and poverty within our own borders. In the U.S., 31 million people—including 12 million children—live in households that don't always have enough food to eat. The U.S. is the only industrialized country that still puts up with widespread hunger within its borders. But as the richest and most prosperous country in the world, we can afford to—and should—both help people here and respond to the needs of people around the world.

In addition, helping people in other countries helps Americans. Rising incomes among people around the world means a more dynamic market for U.S. exports, especially agriculture. U.S. trade with sub-Saharan Africa already exceeds trade with all of the independent states of the former Soviet Union. Development reduces conflict and the costs

incurred when the U.S. government responds to crises overseas. Americans also have a self-interest in curtailing communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and in preserving rain forests and other environmental resources in poor countries.

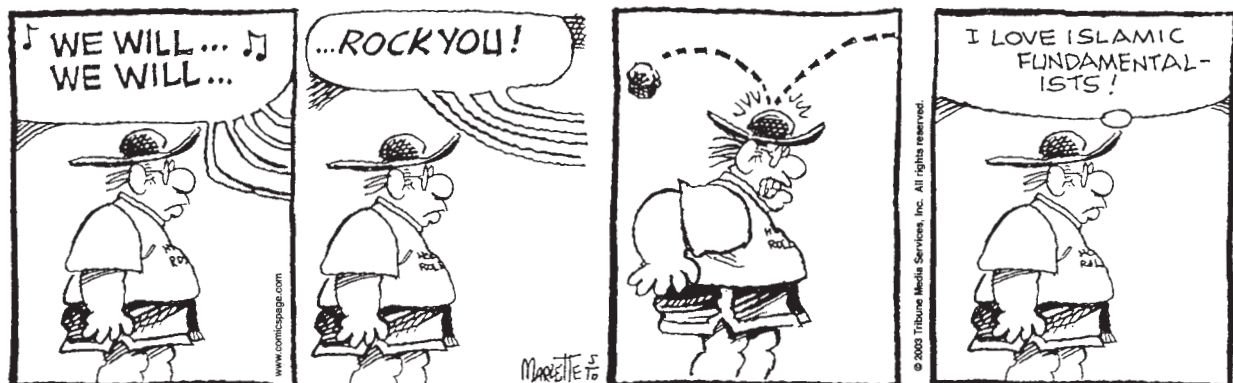
Myth 6: Charities can do the job of helping poor people around the world. Americans give generously to charities such as Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Relief, Oxfam and World Vision, and these agencies do excellent, much-needed work. USAID already directs 38 percent of bilateral foreign aid through these and other agencies. Some in Congress would take that a step further: Senator Jesse Helms (R., N.C.) has proposed replacing USAID with a foundation that would channel money to U.S. charities.

But private charities can't do the job alone. The U.S. government can mobilize resources on a larger scale, and government-to-government aid can improve public-sector functions that are crucial to making progress against poverty. These include economic policymaking, protection of human rights, and providing public services such as schools and clean water.

Myth 7: Foreign aid isn't important. How countries manage their own resources is much more important than foreign aid. But foreign-aid programs influence how local resources are invested and give a boost to countries that are using their resources well. Some critics claim that the only way to reduce poverty is to restrain capitalism. They see aid programs as a Trojan horse for multinational corporations. But many developing countries have found that some reliance on free markets stimulates economic growth.

Critics at the other extreme argue, "If these countries would just open their markets, they wouldn't need aid." They point out that international trade and investment are much larger financial flows than aid. But trade and investment tend to bypass poor people. They are no substitute for aid.

We need to expand programs that focus on reducing poverty and that involve poor people as active partners. At the top of the list should be aid to agriculture, because 70 percent of the world's undernourished people live in rural areas. The best agriculture programs listen to local farmers, including women, and involve them directly in agricultural research and extension. We also need to expand programs that fight AIDS. The rapid spread of this disease in Africa is due largely to pervasive poverty, so we must combine the attack on AIDS with a broader attack on poverty.



Programs providing credit to tiny businesses, or micro-enterprises, are another opportunity. Over the last 20 years, pioneering institutions such as the Grameen Bank have been channeling small loans to very poor people. One key has been the focus on reaching the poor. The other has been the involvement of groups of poor people in order to reduce administrative costs and improve repayment rates.

The international debt relief initiative is an example of effective aid. Protestants, Catholics and others in the Jubilee 2000 campaign have pressed the industrialized-country governments to write off some of the unpayable debt of the world's poorest countries. Churches and Bread for the World's members mobilized an estimated 250,000 letters to Congress in 1999 and 2000. Thanks to this successful advocacy movement, 22 of the world's poorest countries have received \$34 billion in debt cancellation. Their debt payments for this year have been reduced \$1.1 billion.

In addition, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been instructed to focus on reducing poverty in low-income countries by asking those countries to develop poverty-reduction strategies through processes of public consultation.

Debt relief is working better in some countries than others, but reports are generally encouraging. In Uganda, debt relief has more than doubled primary school enrollment. The public consultation process has also led to innovations that reduce corruption in the education sector. Now, when the Ugandan government disburses money for schools, there are announcements on radio and in newspapers. As a result, corruption in the education sector has dropped from more than 50 percent to less than 10 percent.

Sustained progress against hunger and poverty will require a sustained increase in development assistance. We could cut global hunger in half by 2015 for a U.S. contribution of \$1 billion more a year in poverty-focused aid. (One billion dollars is less than one penny per day per American.) Bread for the World is pushing to increase annual development assistance to Africa by at least \$1 billion in its campaign, "Africa: Hunger to Harvest." We are focusing on Africa because it is the only part of the world where hunger is both pervasive and increasing.

The Bush administration is talking about global poverty issues, but the same administration proposes cutting funding for development and humanitarian assistance by \$200 million. The congressional budget resolution proposes to cut another \$700 million from foreign affairs spending.

Meanwhile, U.S. Representatives Jim Leach (R., Iowa) and Don Payne (D., N.J.) have introduced the "Hunger to Harvest" resolution in the House and Senators Chuck Hagel (R., Neb.) and Patrick Leahy (D., Vt.) are ready to introduce it in the Senate. Concerned citizens can urge their representatives to cosponsor the resolution. We still have a chance to reduce world hunger by half before 2015. ■

©Copyright 2001 Christian Century Foundation. Reprinted by permission from the Aug. 1-8, 2001, issue of the Christian Century.

Never Know What to Expect at a Wedding

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

My three children have ten cousins on one side of the family and many of them traveled to Ohio to celebrate with the first of the thirteen to marry. The bride was beautiful, the crowd was large, the rain held off, and a good time was had by all.

Mostly the marriage was traditional: held in a church, led by a minister, filled with music, and included the customary vows, rings and candles. The reception that followed featured a tent, a cake, and a memorable toast by the brother of the groom. We took lots of pictures.

Fortunately, this family occasion did not have to adjust to any of the marital innovations that others have had to deal with over the years: such as mail order brides, living-together engagements, or mass marriages (remember the Moonies?).

Neither was it just another matrimonial stop on the bus known as serial monogamy, that vehicle of modern transportation that, thanks to relaxed divorce laws, takes people from one spouse to another.

No, this was a rather conventional ceremony by two young adults with strong Christian convictions; and thus was a day of thanksgiving and inspiration for all of us.

But there were some things in the wedding I had never seen.

A total of 24 attendants lined the front of the sanctuary. A PowerPoint presentation flashed pictures of the life and times of both bride and groom. Each had written for public hearing a confession of "Why I Chose You."

But best of all: with her gorgeous gown of white silk, the bride wore tennis shoes—which none of us noticed until, after cutting the cake, she lifted her train ever so slightly to display her wonderful mixture of sly humor and sensibility!!

These innovations, though, do not hold a candle to what happened the same week further north in Canada.

Heather and Lisa exchanged vows mere hours after an Ontario appeals court voted to extend full marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples.

Earlier, judges in British Columbia ordered the federal government to rewrite the rules of marriage so as to define it as "the lawful union of two persons."

Toronto, it is predicted, will become the new Las Vegas for couples wanting to get married. Canada, unlike Belgium and the Netherlands, has no residency requirements for securing and using a marriage license.

This, of course, solves some problems, especially those that deal with the civil, financial and legal rights of homosexuals.

But it raises some questions as well.

Like, why two? Why not three women, or four men, or one man and four women? What, after all, are the rational, moral and practical grounds for limiting marriage to two people? After all, polygamy has a long and legal history in some parts of the world.

Nothing prevented my nephew from soliciting the support of twenty-four attendants, but what will happen when some future wedding somewhere features twelve brides and twelve grooms, each married to everybody else?

Then there is the relationship issue.

My nephew and his bride printed in the wedding bulletin the touching story of their meeting, their on-again-off-again romance, and the phone call at midnight one providential day last September.

But the emergence of same-sex marriages throws into doubt the rules that govern who can marry and who can not marry.

Like cousins? If procreation is not the chief end of the marriage, why can't our Kentucky tradition of "kissin' cousins" be adopted by people everywhere?

Consider siblings, in-laws, and even parents—not to mention step-people of every sort. The various kinds of coupling that can and may occur strains the imagination.

As the father of three young adult children of marriageable age, just thinking about these things nurtures deep in my soul a fresh appreciation for tradition. Somebody hand me the rice! ■

Copyright 2003 Dwight A. Moody

Post-Abortion Depression and the Ethics Of Truth-Telling

*By Paul D. Simmons, Clinical Professor
School of Medicine, University of Louisville*

What is the moral significance of the fact that some women experience deep depression following an abortion? Does that prove that no woman should have an abortion since such a powerful and negative experience is sure to follow? Is the negative emotional response both evidence of the immorality of the practice and of the threat to the health of the woman? Or is the truth to be found in some other interpretation of the facts?

The question has generated a great deal of medical research and media attention in recent years. Those opposed to abortion and seeking a legal ban to the practice are convinced that stories of women's depression is evidence of its threat to women's health and/or of its immorality. The question is important and should not be summarily dismissed. After all, the issue is a concern for women's health. Presumably all Americans support those social policies that serve best to assure optimal health and access to healthcare for women facing threats to their personal well-being. If it could be shown that women are nearly certain to be emotionally traumatized to the point of severe depression following an abortion, the case for making abortion illegal could be made on grounds of medical indicators.

The issue was addressed in vastly different ways in two different publications that recently crossed my desk. One was a weekly newspaper from a religious press; the other a news journal from the world of science and medicine. I read them both with regularity (almost religiously). Interestingly, each carried an article dealing with depression as an aftermath of abortion.

The religious journal dealt with the issue under the heading "Abortion providers may face lawsuits for withholding information."¹ The article was from Religious News Service (RNS) reporting that a Virginia anti-abortion organization was planning to sue doctors who perform abortions on behalf of women who have had a pregnancy terminated. Theresa Burke, Executive Director of the American Life League, argued that the suit would make the complaint that the provider had withheld information that a woman might experience depression, alcoholism, and infertility after the abortion. It is a scary thought that a woman who simply wanted to terminate a problem pregnancy might wind up

with such severe personal problems!

The problem, argued Ms. Burke, is that women have a right to information that might affect the decision regarding terminating a pregnancy. That is true. The law requires that women provide “informed consent” before the procedure is done. The requirements of both professional ethics and the law are that all information of “material benefit” be provided a woman contemplating any medical procedure. The problem, according to Ms. Burke, is that physicians do not emphasize the dangers of abortion sufficiently to deter a woman’s choice of that option. Far from being “a safety net,” she says, “[abortion] is a safety hazard.” Thus, she adds “there are millions of potential clients who might seek redress through the courts.”²

Ethics and Medical Indicators

The question of interest to both ethics and medicine is whether abortion carries a predictable risk with regard to severe depression, alcoholism, and infertility. In other words, does having an abortion jeopardize the health and well-being of a woman in these three ways, as Ms. Burke contends? And are physicians morally, if not legally, required to make such a strong case about such negative outcomes that no woman would go through the procedure?

The arguments regarding alcoholism and infertility can be dealt with summarily and succinctly. The truth is that a woman who has an abortion will encounter alcoholism only if she is an alcoholic. The relation between abortion and alcoholism is coincidental not causative. Abortions simply do not make one an alcoholic. Alcoholism is a complex psychological, biological, and personal problem that defies simple explanation. Certainly one cannot settle for the simplistic and misleading notion that women who have an abortion will become an alcoholic. There are no studies that show any direct connection.

As to infertility, it is true that some women will become infertile as a consequence of certain types of abortion. The threat of infertility is especially true when women turn to back-alley practitioners or are forced to seek out an illegal abortion. Even worse, women may die if not given proper medical care.³ One of the advantages of chemical abortifacients, e.g. RU-486, is that they reduce the need for invasive procedures and thus assure greater safety for the woman. The cases of infertility traceable to an abortion procedure is statistically terribly small. Infertility is far more likely to be caused by sexually transmittable diseases (STDs) such as chlamydia and gonorrhea in those who are sexually active with infected partners, than to having an abortion.

Arguments based on the relation of abortion to alcoholism and infertility can be virtually dismissed as major threats to the woman. They belong to the category of scare tactics, not serious moral arguments built upon solid statistical findings. Where abortion providers are competent and the facilities are sterile, the woman can be relatively certain that her health will be preserved and her capacity for child-bearing will remain intact.

The concern for emotional or mental consequences

requires more attention. Those who oppose abortion rely on the fear of mental anguish, depression or mental illness as a way to deter women who are considering abortion. But is that a matter of fear-mongering or accurate assessment of the medical data?

The August, 2000, issue of *Archives of General Psychiatry* carried the results of a clinical study of nearly 1200 women randomly chosen at three abortion clinics in New York. Over one-third obtained a first-trimester abortion and completed psychological assessments 1 hour before, and 1 hour, 1 month, and 2 years afterward. They were, for the most part, unwed teenagers and young adult women. There were few Hispanics in the group and this was a first abortion for most of them; for some, this was a second or third experience.

The significance of the study is what was found regarding the psychological aftermath of having an abortion. The findings provide research data and thus a firmer foundation for ethical argument than the anecdotal stories so often used as to whether an abortion is psychologically harmful. What the study found was that abortion was not psychologically injurious for the vast majority of women. The overall mental health of these women showed no decline after an abortion.

However, about one-fifth of the women experienced “substantial depression” within the two-year follow-up. Interestingly, the report goes on to note that this rate is comparable to what would be expected in the general population among women ages 15-35, even without having an abortion. Post-traumatic stress disorder, which often appears in victims of rape and sexual abuse, was reported in 1 percent of the women, a rate which is actually lower than that for women in the general population.

Another measure dealt with how the woman felt about her decision. Most women expressed satisfaction and reported no regrets. However, the group reporting dissatisfaction increased over time. After a two year interval, between 16 and 19 percent of women indicated some sense of regret and/or mild depression. Again, that is close to the percentage of women in that age group that would be expected to go through some degree of sadness or depression even without an abortion.⁴

Statistics, Ethics and Abortion

Several things seem reasonably obvious based on these two reports. One is that the opponents of abortion have very little, if any, statistical backing for the claim that there are dire emotional consequences to women who have abortion. No physician who provides adequate informed consent procedures to women prior to the procedure need fear a successful legal challenge from Ms. Burke and the American Life League.

The relation of abortion to depression was also confronted during the Reagan administration. U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, a devout evangelical Christian, was charged with preparing a study of the personal impact of abortion on women. His report said that data did not support the argument that abortion should be legally banned to protect the mental health of women.⁵ He had gathered material from the

Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, and elsewhere. Dr. Koop knew that President Reagan wanted evidence against abortion and felt some pressure to find in his favor. Further, Dr. Koop's personal moral position was antagonistic to abortion on demand. But his report maintained the objectivity and concern for truth basic to his medical professionalism and his oath to preserve the integrity of his office. He could not and did not recommend the President attempt to restrict abortion on grounds of its threat to the woman's mental health. His conclusion happened also to correspond to findings by the American Psychological Association.⁶

In spite of Koop's definitive study, the accusations and scare tactics by those opposed to legal abortion never go away. Anti-choice groups think they have found an issue that serves their purposes of attempting to overturn *Roe v. Wade* or to deter women from terminating a problem pregnancy. These are apparently desperate but false arguments by groups who want to dissuade women from abortion no matter what the facts may support.

There are anecdotal stories of women who have had severe depressive reactions to an abortion they experienced, however. I am not inclined to doubt the truth of some of these stories. Even if the stories cannot be verified, however, they are consistent with what we know actually follows a certain percentage of cases as the New York study showed.

Two things should be borne in mind when assessing this information. One is that many women who go through live childbirth have also had a severe time of mental stress, called post-partum depression.⁷ The experience may be so severe as to require medical intervention or clinical treatment for psychosis. The nation was stunned by the tragic story of Andrea Yates who killed her five children whose ages ranged from 6 months to seven years. Each was drowned in the bathtub of their comfortable suburban home. Andrea was suffering from post-partum psychosis, a severe emotional and psychological reaction to physiological and emotional changes from childbirth, the stresses of care for children, and other factors. Andrea had never had an abortion. She accepted motherhood and its responsibilities. But her depression following childbirth was not an experience unknown to medical science.

The fact is that any number of women will experience

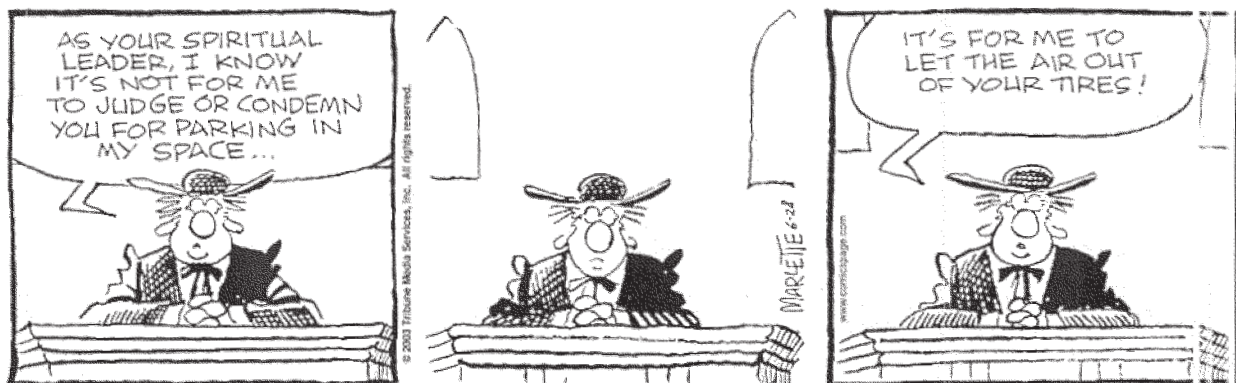
some degree of depression following childbirth, or an abortion. Arguing against abortion because some women have experienced depression ignores the fact that married women also face that possibility when they are happily planning their family. It is hardly accurate to place the blame on abortion.⁸

Second, some of those who experienced sadness, remorse, or depression (only mild cases were experienced by those in the research group) may have a chronic emotional problem. In other words, they have been through episodes of depression prior to ever becoming pregnant or having an abortion. Such stories have nothing to say about the abortion experience as such but indicate a persistent pattern in the woman's life and the status of her mental health.

Third, it is reasonable to expect that women will often have "second thoughts" about their decision. Women facing a problem pregnancy often struggle with the alternatives: to birth or not to birth; to abort or not to abort. People are creatures who do their best to think through significant decisions they must face. But the human capacity to imagine the future and how we will think some time down the road is terribly limited if not impossible. Typically, we second guess ourselves. "What if" I had chosen to have a baby as an unmarried woman? "What if" I had insisted we get married? "What if" we were already settled and ready to start a family? The questions can go on and on. It is a normal and entirely predictable response to common human experiences, including abortion. Life being what it is, we can also be sure that many women who brought unwanted pregnancies to term also wondered at times, "what if I had had an abortion, instead."

Ethics and Pastoral Care

Finally, some assessment is required of the consequences to a woman who faces the harassment and harsh judgmentalism of that outspoken minority who are so adamantly opposed to abortion no matter the reason. A campaign of constant moral badgering can result in or exacerbate feelings of unworthiness and low self esteem on the part of women who are targeted. Insofar as such feelings contribute to the experience of depression, the woman is being victimized by those who claim the moral high ground. Gary Bauer, of the Family Research Council and a candidate for Republican presidential nominee (2000), declared that the objective of



his group was to make women feel so much shame and guilt that they simply would never resort to abortion.

When those around us whose opinions we highly regard and whose approval we deeply desire give only judgmental condemnation, we are far more likely to feel shame, guilt, and remorse. People can be made to feel guilty about even the most innocent of actions, from one's style of dress to the color of their eyes. Church-going women who have had abortions are likely to keep silent about their experience unless they sense an open attitude and supportive environment from the pastor and others at church. Even then they will likely keep the experience private since there is no way to be sure the word will not circulate among unfriendly critics.

Every sermon that condemns abortion absolutely or "in no uncertain terms" drives women further into isolation and the possibility of unwarranted feelings of guilt. Sadly, women are only too much in touch with the moral climate in many churches which strongly condemn abortion no matter the circumstances. That is hardly an environment in which a woman can feel a sense of acceptance and forgiveness. Little wonder that Christian women who have abortions rarely feel free to talk about it in church circles. They felt good about their decision, but do not feel their religious community is a supportive group.

Ministers in their role of pastoral caregivers are a vital link in conveying the grace and forgiveness of God to women having a difficult time following an abortion. A sensitive and understanding counselor can enable her to set the experience in the wider framework of her life and the context of her faith and knowledge of God's love and mercy.⁹ The church has an opportunity to be the church, a community of love, mercy, and support to those whose experience cries out for some insight into the compassion of God. It is not God who condemns but people who do not understand, or who have never gone through the agony of decision making in which one's entire being is on the line.

Christians should not be among those who misrepresent facts in order to pursue their own moral agenda. Rather, they should be among those who filter through the rhetoric to discover the person who has been deprived of love, denounced by the unloving, and condemned by the judgmental. That person should be the object of our love and ministry of supportive compassion. There is no moral victory in holding women who have had an abortion up to ridicule.

The ethics of journalism is also at stake when reports are made about major moral issues in medicine and society. Religious News Service (RNS) carried only the arguments of the anti-choice group that was not only condemning abortion but misrepresenting the statistical data. No group or person that is knowledgeable of the various arguments in the national debate about public policy and abortion was interviewed or asked to comment on the charges being made. Thus the article gave a jaundiced view of an extremely important topic. It might well be that there were women readers who trusted the editors of the journal and the news

service to provide fair and trustworthy information as they confronted a problem pregnancy. We can grant the legitimacy of holding strong opinions against abortion on demand. But those arguments should be presented truthfully. The Christian regard for truth and the integrity of individual decision-making requires nothing less.

The central insights by which Christians live are that God calls us to be ministers of love and mercy and that the church is to be a community of support and forgiveness. The church can choose to be a minister of healing and acceptance or a major barrier to healing and the processes of grace it is called to encourage. ■

¹ "Abortion providers may face lawsuits for withholding information," *The Western Recorder* (Middletown, KY), Sept. 5, 2000, 9.

² Ibid.

³ P. G. Stubblefield and D. A. Grimes, "Septic Abortion," *New England Journal of Medicine*, 1994 (331) 310-314, point out that infection and other medical complications associated with abortion remain the most serious threats to the health of women throughout the world. Such complications occur primarily in places where abortion is illegal or where there is no access to trained providers. By some estimates, more than 100,000 women in developing countries die each year from abortion-related complications. Even where abortion is legal, complications and death may occur if access to trained personnel and appropriate facilities are denied.

⁴ *Science News*, August 10, 2000, p. 117 summarizing the report on the New York study carried in *Archives of General Psychiatry* (August, 2000).

⁵ See "A Setback for 'Pro-Life' Forces," in *Time*, March 27, 1989.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See Laura J. Miller, "Postpartum Depression: Linking Evidence and Experience," *JAMA*, Feb. 13, 2002, Vol. 287: No. 6, 762-765.

⁸ See Sandra Glahn and William Cutrer, "After the 'Choice': For those Facing Post Abortion Syndrome," on-line at www.creeksidebible.org.

⁹ See Karen Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics: Power and Paradox*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 132.

Memories of The Way We Were

Fisher Humphreys (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002).

Reviewed by Jeph Holloway

Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics, East Texas Baptist University

A few years ago a colleague and I were sitting in the faculty lounge of the School of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He made the interesting point that those now in control of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) faced something of a dilemma. How could a campaign that touted itself as restorationist (“the Conservative Resurgence”) call for any significant changes in *The Baptist Faith & Message*? It would be an odd thing for a movement claiming to be the true heir of Baptist heritage and identity to call for any drastic changes in the theological framework of the SBC. Such changes would indicate not restoration, but innovation.

Do changes in *The Baptist Faith & Message* indicate a significant shift in the theological perspective and character of the Southern Baptist Convention? Do changes in how *The Baptist Faith & Message* is used mark a transition in terms of what it means to be Southern Baptist? Has the altered course set by SBC leadership meant a loss or retrieval of historic Baptist principles and beliefs? Fisher Humphreys’ recent book, *The Way We Were: How Southern Baptist Theology Has Changed And What It Means To Us All*, substantively argues that since controversy in the SBC became overt in 1979, significant changes have occurred in the Convention and that Southern Baptists will never again be “exactly the people they were before.”

Humphreys offers a unique approach to interpreting the controversy that has dominated Southern Baptist life for the last twenty-plus years. While appreciative of other efforts at interpreting the controversy, he provides an explicitly theological interpretation that is still sensitive to the complexity of a situation that includes strong personal, sociological, and political dynamics. Certainly the controversy has been “about political power, both inside and outside the Convention, but it was not about political power alone” (6). Humphreys takes at face value the contention of new leadership in the SBC that their concerns have been and are theological in character. He will argue, however, that the theological direction in which the new Convention leadership has steered Southern Baptists leaves significant theological principles basic to Southern Baptist identity and heritage at great risk.

The structure of Humphreys’ work is important to his argument. The first of three parts describes what he calls the “Majority Tradition,” those beliefs Baptists share with all

Christians (e.g., the Triune God, who created the world, has been made known through the Son, who for the sake of redeeming a fallen world suffered, died, and rose again), and those beliefs Baptists share with other Protestants (e.g., *sola Scriptura*, justification by grace alone through faith alone, the priesthood of all believers). There is also, however, a “Majority Tradition” of distinctively Baptist beliefs. Anyone familiar with the origins and history of Baptists will recognize the “Majority” Baptist tradition Humphreys presents: believer’s baptism, baptism by immersion, a believers church ecclesiology, the local autonomy of the church, a congregational form of church governance, the importance of voluntary cooperation among congregations for the sake of common mission efforts, the separation of church and state, and a fierce resistance to creedalism. Humphreys also notes beliefs Baptists share with other “Revivalist” Christians. With many other Christians Baptists emphasize the necessity of personal salvation, the blessing of assurance of salvation, and the priority of evangelism and missions in the church’s ministry.

Someone once described the Christians at Corinth as those who defined themselves *solely* in terms of how they differed from one another, rather than in light of what they held in common. Humphreys provides a more balanced account of what it has meant to be Baptist by reminding us of both what Baptists have uniquely held and of what we share with all Christians. We have believed, though, that those convictions uniquely held by Baptists are vital, faithful, and essential for our witness to the world as well as to other Christians. Some of those convictions, Humphreys says, are in danger of tragic displacement. How so?

The second part of *The Way We Were* analyzes six “Minority Traditions.” Along with the core beliefs held by the majority of Baptists, six clusters of beliefs held by visible minorities in the Convention have been present in different measures and at different times, representing competing agendas in the life and history of Southern Baptists. Anabaptist traditions, Calvinistic teachings, Landmarkism, the Deeper Life movement, Fundamentalism, and Progressivism have all been represented at some level in Southern Baptist life. According to Humphreys’ analysis, of these six minority traditions, Fundamentalism has made a successful move from being one strand among many, to being the controlling force of Southern Baptist life and

thought. With its three central convictions of militant opposition to liberalism, the inerrancy of biblical autographs, and dispensational premillennialism, Fundamentalism has explicitly challenged some of the other minority traditions (e.g., Progressivism's views on women in ministry and the critical study of the Bible).

More problematically, Humphreys argues in the third part of the book, the ascendancy of Fundamentalism in the Convention has occasioned the loss of several Majority traditions that have been basic to Southern Baptist identity. Citing explicit statements from current Convention leadership, significant figures leading the "Conservative Resurgence," and the 2000 *Baptist Faith & Message*, Humphreys indicates that the priesthood of all believers, congregational decision-making, separation of church and state, and resistance to creedalism have been at least radically modified if not completely lost in terms of the power of these beliefs to shape Southern Baptist life. In their place, Humphreys believes, greater emphasis will be given to the central convictions of Fundamentalism along with less room given for competing Minority traditions such as Anabaptist and progressive beliefs.

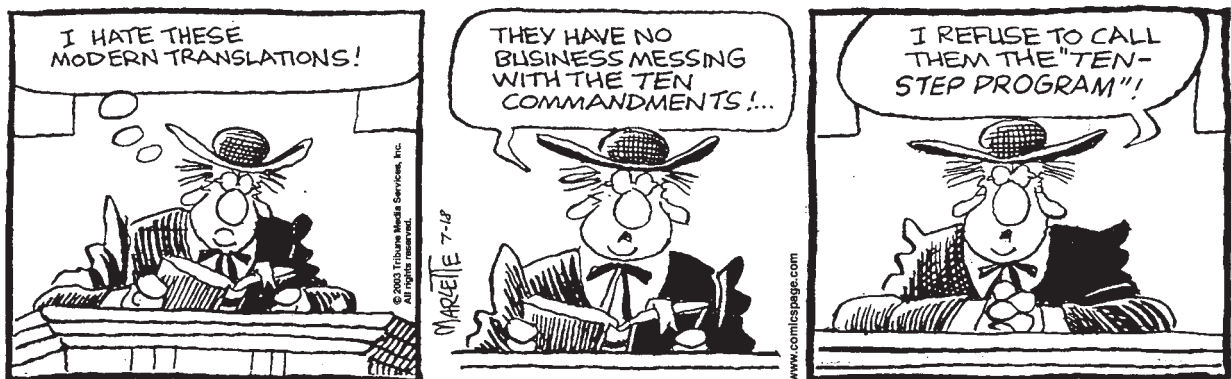
Humphreys says that for him this story of a changed Southern Baptist Convention is "one of profound sadness." Yet, he recognizes that the new leadership of the Convention views the change in course as necessary and proper. Paraphrasing a question from the 1980 Reagan/Carter presidential debate, Humphreys asks Southern Baptists to decide the issue for themselves: "Are you better off now than you were before 1979?"

The recent actions of the International Mission Board of the SBC might help to answer Humphreys's question. Due to a change in policy, the IMB now requires all of its missionaries to affirm the 2000 *Baptist Faith & Message*, even those missionaries who had been previously approved and appointed to the mission field under previous conditions entered into willingly by all parties. To date, approximately

77 missionaries have left the mission field due to issues related to the change in policy, either through termination, resignation, or early retirement. One couple terminated by the IMB explained their refusal to sign the 2000 BF & M in terms that echo Humphreys's account of the changes in the SBC: "Those who hold the power now would say they have returned Southern Baptists to their conservative theological roots and reversed the trend toward secularism. In reality, they have implemented a theologically coercive policy mandating conformity and substituted civil religion for the prophetic role of a Baptist church in society."

The actions of the IMB particularly demonstrate "how Southern Baptist theology has changed and what it means to us all." While the origins of the SBC are complicated and morally ambiguous, one issue related to central Baptist convictions played a considerable role in the formation of the new Convention. Baptist churches in the South were outraged that mission agencies would take their money and yet refuse to appoint missionaries from those same churches. A new Baptist convention of churches was formed that would respect the local autonomy of the church, appreciate a diversity based on the priesthood of all believers, and still cooperate on the vital concern of missions.

The SBC appears to have come full circle: eager for financial support from the local Baptist church, but willing even to rescind the recommendation of a local church of a missionary, if that missionary does not affirm a revised *Baptist Faith & Message*. That the IMB would revoke the appointments of missionaries who had long ago been sent by local churches that sacrificially support missions is one clear example of "how Southern Baptist theology has changed and what it means to us all." In 1845 similar actions led to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention. How ironic that a movement that has presented itself as the true heir to Southern Baptist heritage and identity would violate the very principles that led to the Convention's formation and served



it so well—at least until 1979. Fisher Humphreys' *The Way We Were* is a helpful account of the theological developments in the SBC that drive this irony. All who are concerned about what has happened to a core set of convictions that for so long sustained the common efforts of Southern Baptists can profit from this work. ■

Choosing the Good

Dennis Hollinger (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2002)

Remembering Jesus

Allen Verhay (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002)

Many years ago my family attended a church that was looking for a pastor. The theological integrity of one candidate was considered suspect by some in the fellowship. "After all," said one church member, "his Ph.D. is in Christian Ethics." Well, if ever the discipline of Christian Ethics was considered the province only of Protestant Liberalism, no more. It is amazing what a little cultural disintegration will do. Evangelicals got ethics! Two recent works, while different from one another in many respects, share a common concern to advance Christian ethics as a self-consciously evangelical discipline.

Dennis Hollinger in *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* argues that Christian Ethics "is ultimately rooted in the nature and actions of God and in the worldview derived from the biblical story." God "the creator of the universe and the sovereign over all life" is the foundation for Christian Ethics. As such, "God's character and actions are the standard before us as we live our lives." Further, the Triune God's presence in the life of Christians is the power of God reminding us that the Christian moral life relies on God's grace and presence through the Holy Spirit to enable us to overcome our natural inability to choose righteousness and goodness.

The Christian worldview provides a narrative understanding of God who is both norm and power for Christian Ethics. This worldview is the biblical story of God's good creation gone afoul by human sinfulness, yet a creation that God in grace seeks to redeem. God's redemptive work comes to its apex in the person of Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection is able to reconcile us to God and renew us morally. This renewal, however, will only be complete with the final consummation of God's kingdom "when Christ shall reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

The God revealed in this narrative provides the foundation by which Christians choose the good. But "the application of ethical commitments always occur[s] in . . . a set of contexts." Our present contexts, says Hollinger, are the influences of Modernity and Postmodernity. Modernity, while it has offered much scientific and technological progress, "car-

ried within itself seeds of moral and spiritual destruction" as secularization reduced religion to the realm of the private. Postmodernity's assault on any totalizing narrative has resulted in such social fragmentation that the only virtue left is a flaccid tolerance incapable of challenging evil. Consequently, concern for moral transformation has been replaced by concern for self-actualization, discipline by therapy, and moral constraint by a concern for personal self-esteem.

Features of both Modernity and Postmodernity continue to challenge those who seek to live according to the Christian worldview. Both context and worldview provide the arena for moral decision-making. Hollinger examines and evaluates three motifs for making ethical decisions. The deliberative motif assumes "that reason can be a moral guide because God implanted a natural law within human consciousness that all can comprehend." While there are some things to be said for this approach, its overestimation of human rational capabilities, its capacity for separating natural law from explicit features of Christian faith, and the persistent disagreement between those who look to nature for ethical norms are serious weaknesses of the deliberative motif.

The prescriptive motif, by contrast, "looks to explicit rules, principles, or moral actions that are derived from divine revelation." This approach affirms the authority and relevance of the Bible and is accessible to the average Christian, but it does tend toward a legalism that often accentuates rules and principles over a Christian discipleship rooted in the nature and actions of God. Some eschew appeal to either biblical prescriptions or natural law formulations, insisting "the content and direction of moral decisions flow from an immediate relationship with God and relationships with others."

For the relational motif "the Bible does not offer specific direction but a general orientation for the moral life." This approach, though prone to subjectivism and relativism, rightly affirms that "decisions and character should be shaped by a dynamic encounter with God."

The Bible, of course, carries a unique authority for decision-making in any evangelical ethic. There are, however, questions as to how that authority functions in Christian ethics when Scripture is, for example, silent on many contemporary issues or addresses issues from within contexts different from our own. Still, especially when we appreciate the variety of ways in which Scripture addresses the moral life (commands, principles, paradigms, and narratives), we can find even from these ancient texts "guidance and comfort in the midst of our own moral journey." Also apparent, however, is the fact that empirical judgments concerning the situation that demands ethical decision play an important role. It is possible, says Hollinger, "for Christians to operate from the same ethical principles or theological commitments but still end up with different approaches [for example] to economic justice and poverty." A number of factors (e.g., ideologies, vested interests, personal dispositions) can so color interpretation of a situation that cynicism greets any moral stance claiming an objective assessment of circumstances.

Christian confidence in the truthful reality of the Triune God calls for unbiased integrity in any discernment of the empirical situation. Christian humility in the face of our finite and fallen knowledge demands a willingness to bracket our own biases and allow the Christian worldview to check perspectives otherwise formed by our social milieu.

The last several chapters of Hollinger's book provide helpful overviews of several different approaches to some standard concerns in contemporary Christian ethics. Niebuhr's "Christ and Culture" typology is revisited, qualified, and evaluated in light of Jesus' demand that his followers be in the world but not of it. Biblical teachings on justice are explored in connection with other values (love and freedom) and with various theories of justice (meritorious, egalitarian, and need justice). While Christians and others will continue to debate what exactly are the demands of justice, "What Christians cannot evade is the biblical mandate to 'let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream' (Amos 5:24)."

Neither can Christians evade the challenges of our pluralistic environment—the relativization of truth claims and the obvious fact of sociocultural pluralism. Extreme responses to these challenges would be the privatization of faith or the move to theocracy. Others might affirm a bland civil religion, but Hollinger calls for the hard work of a Christian influence within a pluralistic context that does not seek privilege, but to emulate the early Christians who "by commitment to the truth of the gospel, deep convictions, and consistent living, and by commending to others the 'good life' that flows from God . . . turned the world upside down." What strategies of influence a Christian might use today will differ depending "on context, the nature of the issue, and one's Christ-culture stance." Some strategies are more faithful than others, but Hollinger admits, "The challenge of moving from transcendent realities to the mundane of this world is no easy task." Yet, we must still "seek to think, live, and apply our Christian moral commitments to a complex world . . . with both assurance and humility, with both conviction and love, with both transcendent grounding and with 'worldly' wisdom."

This summary does not do justice to the wide engagement Hollinger displays with issues, ideas, movements, and thinkers. He discusses deontological vs. consequentialist ethics, decisionism vs. virtue ethics, just war theory, and

bioethical concerns. Readers are introduced to the contributions of many voices in both philosophical and theological ethics—from Aristotle to Yoder. At points he details biblical teachings on certain issues. The result is a fine introduction to the discipline of Christian Ethics from a solidly evangelical orientation that seeks to bring the biblical worldview to bear on the moral task of Christians in the world today.

Allen Verhey's *Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life*, is a very different book. I know of no other book that provides as substantive and sustained engagement with Scripture in an attempt to encourage the church to take seriously the task of becoming a community of moral discourse, deliberation, and discernment. Citing Paul (Rom. 15:14), Verhey does not provide specific and final answers to moral quandaries, and instead points to the canon as the necessary resource for moral discourse among those who are "able to instruct one another."

The early church, frequently faced with moral challenges, struggled with temptations of one sort or another—to treat moral concerns as solely private matters or as already decided upon by the larger community (the Empire!). The task, says Verhey, was to bring to bear, in an act of creative memory, the story of Jesus, transforming "questions of conduct and character into questions of the deeds and dispositions fitting to that gospel." Faithful creativity for the early church meant remembering Jesus, not simply as an act of historical recollection, but as an act of owning a past as one's own and "as constitutive of identity and determinative for discernment." Verhey seeks to illustrate how this remembering Jesus was accomplished in the early church (as witnessed in the NT) and argues that the church today bears the same responsibility.

We too face temptation. A distinctively modern one, especially in our pluralistic age, is to ignore our particular Christian convictions and seek the impartial perspective of a moral *Esperanto*, "an artificial moral language invented in the (unrealistic) hope that every one will want to speak it." The moral minimalism achieved by that effort threatens the church's ability "to form moral community, to form moral character, and to be a community of moral discourse, deliberation, and discernment." Another temptation is to allow a moral parochialism to subordinate the gospel to some finite good (e.g., social, economic, or national loyalties). The heterogeneity of the body of Christ provides the greatest safe-



guard against “an abridged perspective” and the diversity of gifts in the body is God’s gift to make possible the joyful yet demanding task of a moral discernment that does not identify our particular but partial good with the reign of God.

Necessary to this task of moral discernment are the Scriptures. Verhey also recognizes that there are “some problems” with turning to Scripture for moral deliberation and discernment. But the church and Scripture have a correlative relationship where one does not exist without the other; so, basic to the identity of the church, and thus its moral deliberation, is the reading of Scripture in community. This reading benefits from the insights of gifted scholars; perhaps more importantly, it requires a community possessed of certain practices and virtues—practices like prayer in humility and gratitude and virtues like fidelity and creativity.

As such a community the church engages in moral deliberation, testing all claims in light of what is fitting and worthy of the story of Christ. Verhey will not be over precise in his description of how the Scripture is useful in this endeavor, for “it is less a puzzle to solve than a mystery to live with.” Yet the church that so reads Scripture will be one that remembers Jesus in creative ways, seeking faithfulness to the gospel by a prayer-formed community in the face of contemporary challenges demanding its moral discernment.

In the bulk of his book Verhey addresses various concerns: sickness and suffering, gender and sexuality, economic justice and generosity, and the theocratic vision of the Bible (politics). Each topic receives similar treatment. An opening chapter engages the reader by highlighting the contemporary significance of the issue discussed. There follows a chapter examining the teachings and ministry of Jesus related to the issue at hand (e.g., Jesus’ healing ministry; his teachings on divorce). Next is a chapter detailing the efforts of the early church to remember Jesus in new and different situations. Here Verhey usually examines redacted material in the Synoptics, passages in the letters of Paul, or significant texts elsewhere in the New Testament. The important thing to note in these chapters is Verhey’s concern to highlight this material as witness, not to an additional set of norms on top of the teaching of Jesus, but to a set of practices in the early church of moral discourse, deliberation, and discernment. The ongoing value of this witness is not that of a final word on the issue of divorce, for example, but a canonical model of fidelity and creativity. A further chapter often illustrates from subsequent church history worthy examples of fidelity and creativity and indicates areas demanding such virtues from today’s church.

It needs to be stressed that Verhey’s examination of Scripture is informed, substantive, and critical yet appreciative of its canonical significance. He offers no cursory appeal to “biblical principles” extracted from this or that verse, but engages in detailed examination of historical, literary, and social dynamics of the biblical materials in an effort to provide a serious engagement with Scripture rather than reliance on conventional readings of it. His reading of Scripture is insightful and repeatedly exposes the reader to the serious-

ness and surprises of the moral demands of following Jesus.

Hollinger and Verhey have offered two very different textbooks that would serve two very different strategies for introducing Christian Ethics. Hollinger’s is the more conventional approach and addresses very ably many of the standard issues historically associated with the discipline. Verhey offers something rarely found in Christian Ethics textbooks—resources by which the Church can responsibly engage in moral dialogue on critical issues informed by serious engagement with Scripture. I wish I had had Hollinger’s book as I prepared for Ph.D. entry exams in Christian Ethics. I wish every pastor had Verhey’s book to help equip God’s people so that we might be better “able to instruct one another.” ■

Street Smart Ethics: Succeeding in Business without Selling Your Soul

Clinton W. McLemore
(Westminster John Knox: Louisville, London).

Reviewed by Douglas Beyer

Pastor Emeritus, First Baptist Church, Temple City, CA

Dr. Clinton McLemore brings to this important subject wisdom drawn from a career as a professional psychologist, seminary professor, and consultant to over twenty-five Fortune 500 companies.

Street-Smart Ethics combines ancient wisdom from the Book of Proverbs with modern thought from everyday life to shed light on the ethical conundrums of contemporary business practices. Clearly organized and free from technical jargon, Clinton McLemore gives very practical guidance to prevent the business disasters that plague our society.

He begins with a no-nonsense “Primer on Ethics,” looking especially at Global Crossing, Enron, and WorldCom. He considers the relationship between Law and Ethics and when not to be a “team player.” He distinguishes between simple and complex conflicts: self versus others, self versus institution, self versus society, organization versus organization, person versus person, and gives specific guidelines for survival.

The second part takes a practical look at the Book of Proverbs where he finds ancient wisdom for modern times. The book concludes with challenging exercises in ethical decision making.

Highly praised by such people as James Thomson, President and CEO of RAND, and Tony Campolo of Eastern University, *Street-Smart Ethics* fills an urgent need in the outrage and confusion following recent legal, moral, and ethical failures of some of America’s leading business executives. ■

When Ladies at the Lattice Lose Their Luster

By Foy Valentine, Founding Editor

Our mortal lot, according to the Psalmist (90:10), is to hope for a life span of some “three score years and ten.” Then “by reason of strength” some may even attain “four score” years.

Strength or no strength, I attained that exalted status on July 3, 2003. It wasn't easy. It's still not.

You can tell you are 80:

- When all your shoes are slow shoes;
- When you've got more money than you have time;
- When you never pass up an empty chair;
- When everybody mumbles, mumbles, mumbles;
- When you never remember a name but you always forget a face;
- When you firmly agree with Thomas Carlyle's observation that you can never trust the heart of a man for whom old clothes are not venerable;
- When you are nearly always ready to welcome “a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep” (See Proverbs 5:10 and 24:33). Ah. Yes. Tolstoy had it right to observe that a nap in the afternoon is silver, but that a nap in the morning is pure gold; and
- When your daughter sends you a birthday card that says, “Dad, I hope you never lose your hair. It's such a nice one.”

Solomon was an astoundingly insightful old man to write about the geriatric facts of life; and no one has rendered Ecclesiastes 12 as sensitively and as beautifully as James Moffatt:

Remember your Creator in the flower of your age, ere evil days come on, and years approach when you shall say, “I have no joy in them;” ere the sun grows dark and the light goes from moon and stars, and the clouds gather after rain; when the guards tremble in the house of Life, when its upholders bow, when the maids that grind are few and fail, and ladies at the lattice lose their luster, when the doors of the street are shut, and the sound of the mill runs low, when the twitter of birds is faint, and dull the daughters of song, when old age fears a height and even a walk has its terrors, when his hair is almond white, and he drags his limbs along, as the spirit flags and fades.

Brother Solomon was singing my song.

Eighty is a sobering milestone. In addition to the grace of God, I have my rather long-lived forebears to thank for this modest achievement. I take precious little credit. A few things come to mind, however, as being possible contributors to the attainment of this mark. Please consider a few of them.

1. **The hand of God.** Deliverance from a lifetime of close calls which unbelievers might callously attribute to blind chance, or dumb luck, or immutable fate. I firmly believe to have been at the hand of the Lord. Near drownings, a copper-head snake-bite, sundry airplane crises such as engine failures over the open ocean and once over the vast expanse of the Amazon jungle, teenage idiocies, fearful food poisonings in primitive third-world preaching places, and two absolutely terrifying 2 a.m. batterings on my isolated, working-class hotel door when I was in St. Petersburg in the USSR teaching Christian social ethics to about forty of the finest and most earnest Christians I have ever encountered. My host, the seminary president, assumed it was KGB terrorists or hostile Russian Orthodox Church hit men or both. As we often sing, “Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come. ‘Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace shall lead me home.”
2. **Family.** Fine parents and a good and faithful big brother, a wonderful wife for 56 years, three splendid daughters, and a gaggle of well-above-average grandchildren all have contributed significantly to my long life.
3. **Friends.** Not only would my life have been infinitely poorer without an extraordinarily wide circle of really good friends, but I am reasonably sure it would have been shorter. I know it would have been of a much poorer quality.
4. **God's calling.** An unwavering, unambiguous, unshakeable sense of God's special calling has kept my frail raft afloat. My feet have been often, if not nearly always, wet; but the raft has not yet sunk.
5. **Sleep.** Sleep has always come easily to me. Indeed, I have a perverse inability to stay awake when I am tired and stretched out. When normal people are

tossing and turning, wide-eyed, stressed out, and weighed down with the cares of this world, I am zonked out in the mindless bliss of deep sleep. I hardly ever require more than about three minutes to drift off into la-la land.

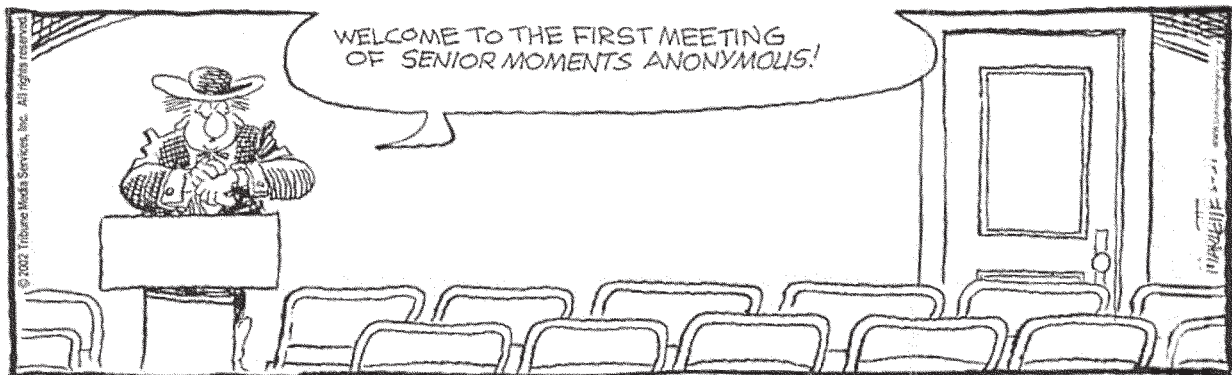
6. **A cabin in the mountains.** When I was about thirty years old, I found a piece of land at Red River, New Mexico, at 9500 feet altitude, some twenty feet from a trout stream, in a beautiful valley of blue spruce and quaking aspen. I borrowed every dollar of the money to buy it and then built a cabin on it in 1958. For 45 years now this marvelous mountain retreat has been a life-renewing, battery-charging, soul-rejuvenating blessing.
7. **Hard work.** My hard work routine is a life pattern that I learned from my parents. One of my father's often-repeated admonitions was, "Hard work never killed anybody." While I had many occasions to think him mistaken about that hard saying, I am now confident that the strong medicine of hard work has significantly contributed to the quality and well as to the length of my life.
8. **Leanness.** For their good, God "sent leanness" to his sometimes rebellious, complaining, idolatrous people (Psalms 106:15). For most, affluence is a heavy burden which tends to bring stresses, anxieties, and unnumbered worries. The Great Depression with its terrible "Leanness" was probably the most defining experience of my life, not just affecting but actually shaping the first two or three decades of my life. Then when I finished my formal education at age 25, not much changed.

Leanness kept hounding my hapless heels. After 7 years as the Director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission (I was making \$10,700 annually), when the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission called me, the trustees strained mightily and matched that salary with not one penny of increase. Not to worry. The "leanness" has kept falling out for my good. I am compelled to salute it.

9. **Banana pudding.** There must be powerful karma in really good banana pudding. In my unscientific opinion, there are life-buoying elements literally teeming in a large bowl of hot banana pudding liberally sprinkled with nutmeg. A couple of scoops of Blue Bell Homemade Vanilla ice cream may be happily permitted but are not required. After all, it is hard to gild the lily.
10. **Laughter.** God gave me an abnormally exuberant and ready sense of humor. Things often strike me as funny. I guess I laugh more than most folks. A new joke mandates a long distance call to my brother and to selected friends. Repartee comes readily, and sometimes detrimentally, to my mind. Through all these years this good medicine has lifted my spirits, cleared my head, regulated my heartbeat, and eased my pains. I think it has prolonged my life.

Well, there you are.

Eighty. I did it. And I'm glad. A little surprised. But glad. Even though along the way the ladies at the lattice lost their luster. Or at least a right smart of it! ■



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

VISIT US ON OUR WEB SITE: 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