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

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Have Baptists Lost Touch . . . ?

By Joe E. Trull, Editor

“I am afraid that Baptists are losing touch with the common man?” Forty years ago I heard T. B. Maston utter these prophetic words to a graduate seminar. He added, “That is what has made us who we are—our churches and institutions primarily have been led by people who are common folk.”

During the last half-century, that has all changed. Baptists have moved up the socio-economic ladder. Not only are we large and numerous, but also affluent and powerful. Among our ranks are notable people—two U. S. Presidents, numerous leaders in Congress, doctors, lawyers, educators, and CEOs of mega-corporations.

Is that necessarily bad? Certainly churches and Baptist institutions have benefited from our new affluence—magnificent buildings, increased budgets, and expanded ministries. But alongside our new affluence are many potential dangers.

As the largest Protestant denomination, Baptists are often in the news. Sometimes that is good, sometimes not so good. In the recent Enron and Worldcom scandals, each had a prominent executive who was a Baptist deacon. As the facts emerge, it is upsetting that their illegal activities were compounded by executive lifestyles that would rival the Rich Man in Jesus’ parable (Lk. 16:19-31).

Was Maston accurate? Are our churches and institutions choosing leaders, trustees, and board members based upon their prestige rather than on spiritual maturity? A prominent pastor of a large Texas First Church told me recently, “If you don’t have a lot of money, Baptist schools are not interested in you.”

If money, power, and influence are all that count, we are in serious trouble.

One of our regular contributors to this Journal informed me he no longer would be sending articles. Why? The main reason, I learned, was due to a piece he wrote two years ago about the Enron debacle. He asked if the prophet Amos might have a word for corporations who squander millions on homes in Aspen and yachts in Florida, while all the time cooking the books. When the corporation went under, he continued, who suffered? The employees not only lost their jobs, they lost their retirement funds and millions in worthless stock their “leader” had urged them to buy.

Our Journal writer was called on the carpet at this “moderate Baptist” institution for daring to criticize “the American free-market” system. He was told to cease and desist from writing any articles, if he wanted to keep his job.

And we criticize the SBC for muzzling critics—what hypocrisy!

Over the last 30 years we have derided the so-called “fundamentalists” for their politicking in taking over the SBC. Yet, I am increasingly alarmed about events in moderate Baptist life that seem to me to be strangely similar. A few concerns:

- *Elitist attitudes.* During my first sabbatical in 1991, I visited one of our new moderate seminaries. The reception was cold, arrogant, and snobbish. (I found greater warmth and openness across the street at the Presbyterian seminary.) Why do so many moderates project an image that says: “I am smarter, wiser, and more cultured than those dumb ‘fundamentalists’, and most everyone else I know”?
 - *Trustees.* Survey the Board members at your favorite institutions. Is there an inordinate amount of elitists whose views are shaped more by their political and economic values than by the ethic of Jesus? Do pastors of big churches and wealthy laymen predominate on these Boards?
 - *Exorbitant salaries.* Recent revelations of pastors and presidents making six-figure salaries with added perks that move the package closer to one-half million is disturbing. We excuse them by saying, “Their pay is in line with secular institutions.” Is that our goal to keep up with the salaries of the secular world?
 - *Program personalities.* Evaluate the persons who speak at our conferences and conventions. The Baptist “good-ole-boy” club, like many country-clubs, has unwritten membership requirements. Some are good speakers; but others are mediocre at best. If our choice of speakers reflected ability, rather than the size and influence of the minister’s church, our denominational programs would read somewhat differently.
 - *CEO pastors.* A former student in Mississippi (working
- (continued on page 10)*

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EthixBytes

A Collection of Quotes Comments, Statistics, and News Items

“Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest.”

Mark Twain.

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“Why should a Christian magazine report bad things about fellow believers? Because such reporting can help keep people honest and can help protect people from those who would take advantage of them.”

David Neff, Christianity Today, to Baptist Editors.

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“Halliburton is gouging the taxpayer, and the Bush administration doesn't seem to care.”

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Cal.), in response to the U. S. Comptroller General's report that Halliburton's contract to feed U.S. soldiers in Kuwait had cost taxpayers an extra \$30 million, and at least \$1 billion in taxpayers' money has been wasted in inefficient spending in Iraq due to the Pentagon's "abysmal" accounting system.

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“Congress and President Bush have so far spent \$119.4 billion for war in Iraq—that amount could buy a median price U.S. home [\$174,100] for 685,813 people (slightly more than the residents of Austin), a four-year Harvard University education (\$39,980 for 4 years) for 748,495 students, a Cadillac Escalade ESV at a list price of \$58,360 for 2,045,922 persons, or a \$4,699 suite on the Queen Mary 2 six-day cruise from New York to England for 25,409,661 people.”

Compiled by Austin-American Statesman, 6/6/04.

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“If I were pastor, I would not be comfortable doing that.”

Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC in response to a Bush campaign email seeking 1600 churches in Pennsylvania "where voters friendly to President Bush might gather on a regular basis."

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“The SBC may vote to boycott Carnival Cruise Lines (as it did Disney Corporation) for hosting a ‘Gay Days Cruise’ prior to June Gay Days 2004 in Orlando. CCL is also hosting a ‘Bible Study Cruise’ January 10-15, 2005, featuring current and past SBC leaders including Jack Graham, Adrian Rogers, and Jerry Vines.”

EthicsDaily.com.

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“Up to 90 percent of Iraqi detainees were arrested ‘by mistake’ . . . [and] abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers was widespread and routine.”

International Committee of the Red Cross 24 page document reporting torture and abuse as far back as February, 2003.

“To his credit [Pres. Reagan] followed his huge 1981 tax cut with two large tax increases. In fact, no peacetime president has raised taxes so much on so many people. . . . The tale of those increases tells you a lot about what was right with Reagan's leadership . . . confronted with evidence his tax cuts were fiscally irresponsible, [Reagan] changed course.”

Paul Krugman, The N.Y. Times.

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“The United States ranks third, behind only China and Iran, in reported executions. Four countries accounted for 84 percent of the 1146 government-reported executions worldwide in 2003—the U.S. (65), China (726), Iran (108), and Vietnam (64).”

Amnesty International Annual Report.

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“We have no credible evidence that Iraq and al Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States” . . . In fact, bin Laden “at one time sponsored anti-Saddam Islamists in Iraqi Kurdistan.”

June 16, 2004 Report of the 9/11 Commission that disputed V.P. Cheney's assertion that the evidence of a link is "overwhelming" and "pretty well confirmed."

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“Who gets a tax break? Middle 20% income bracket—\$647. Top 1% income bracket—\$34,992. People with over \$1 million income—\$123,592.

Urban Brookings Tax Policy Center.

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“In 1966 in South Vietnam, with a population of 16,543,000, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, with 535,000 U.S. Troops was still asking for more. In Iraq with a population of 24,683,000, Gen. John Abizaid with only 135,000 troops can barely secure the troops much less the country. . . . To secure Iraq we need more troops—at least 100,000 more.”

U.S. Senator Ernest F. Hollings (SC), Charleston Post-Courier, 6/6/04.

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“For us to get bogged down in the quagmire of an Iraqi civil war would be the height of foolishness.”

Dick Cheney in 1991 when he was Secretary of Defense.

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“The Defense Department for six years spent an estimated \$100 million for airline tickets that were not used and failed to seek refunds even though the tickets were reimbursable.”

General Accounting Office Report, Associated Press, 6/10/04.

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“The President of Southwestern Seminary has confused ethics with etiquette—and its bad etiquette at that. SBC

leaders are retreating into irrelevancy faster than anyone could have imagined.”

Response of the Editor of CET to the seminary's new employee dress code that requires "gender-specific clothing" (men to wear coats and ties and women to wear dresses or skirts and blouses) to resist "post-Christian androgeny."

“You’ve got thousands of people running around on taxpayer dollars that the Pentagon can’t account for in any way. Contractors are invisible, even at the highest level of the Pentagon.”

Dan Guttman, John Hopkins Univ. expert on government contractors in Iraq.

“The President and his staff have engaged in deceit and deception worse than Watergate in using secrecy to take a nation to war and causing people to die—this is an impeachable offense. I’m not against these people, I’m just deeply disappointed in their bunker-mentality which started long before 9/11.”

John Dean, author of Worse Than Watergate on NOW With Bill Moyers, 4/4/04.

“Democracy dies behind closed doors.”

Bill Moyers on NOW, PBS.

“Why would the NRA [convention] display assault weapons which are federally banned in the U.S. from manufacture, import, and sale since 1994? Why . . . invite V.P. Dick Cheney to be its keynote speaker, when President Bush ‘promised’ to support a renewal of the ban? Easy answer: Bush has no intention of supporting the ban’s renewal [which is] fiercely supported by all law enforcement organizations.”

Mike McAnally, Pres. Million Moms March-Central Texas Chapter.

“This is the time to take advantage of the position I’m in, along with Sen. Stevens (R-Alaska).”

Rep. Don Young, (R) Alaska's lone member of the House in response to critics of two "pork-barrel" bridges approved under the highway bill, one linking a town of 7845 people to an island of 50 people with an airport (\$200 million) and another spanning an inlet to tie Anchorage to a port that has a single tenant and almost no homes (\$2 billion).

“Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe supported the expansion of settlements in the West Bank by citing Genesis and calling the debate on the issue ‘not a political battle at all. It is a contest over whether or not the word of God is true.’”

Jason Byassee in The Christian Century.

“The McDonaldization of sex [means] that sex, like so much else, has come to be seen as accessible, convenient, and immediate. Why wait? ‘You deserve a break today!’ McDonald’s tells us. ‘Just do it!’ says Nike.”

Anthony B. Robinson, The Christian Century.

“God said, ‘Earth is yours. Take it. Rape it. It’s yours.’”

Conservative pundit Ann Coulter quoted in The Christian Century, April 20, 2004.

“Well, in every war, you have collateral damage.”

Southwestern Seminary President Paige Patterson's answer to the question, 'Do you know or understand how much pain and hurt the [takeover] movement you have led has brought to people's lives?'

“I realized that the pendulum was not going to swing because the fundamentalists had nailed it to the wall.”

Dr. Charles Wade, Exec. Dir. of the Baptist General Convention of Texas noting many moderates thought the SBC takeover was only a temporary shift to the right. ■



Religious Language and Southern Politics

By Charles Wellborn

Professor of Religion Emeritus, Florida State University

"We place confidence in the loving God behind all of life and all of history . . . and we go forward with confidence, because the call of history has come to the right country. May he guide us now."

Those words could easily have been heard over the last two years from hundreds of pulpits across the country and, perhaps especially, from the pulpits of churches in the so-called Bible Belt, the American South. Actually, the quotation is from the 2003 State of the Union address to Congress by President George W. Bush, as some readers will have recognized. Of course, such religious rhetoric in political settings is not unusual, but Bush has turned his personal faith into a highly public matter, more so perhaps than any modern president, as Deborah Caldwell has pointed out in a recent issue of this journal.

President Bush is not a born Southerner, but he is an adopted Texan, and it is significant that he dates his own deep Christian convictions to his conversion in Midland, Texas, when he was 39 years old. Religiously then, the President can be said to be not only a "born-again" Christian, but a "born-again" Southerner. And in American history the southern Bible Belt has the most conspicuous record across the years of the close connection of religion and politics.

I must record that I am not always comfortable with Bush's use of religious language. I am suspicious of any politician who claims a divine mandate for his political actions. In the particular instance of the war on Iraq the events of the past few months have certainly generated some doubt that what Mr. Bush did was the result of divine guidance. Almost without historical exception politicians, kings, emperors, and dictators have laid claims to some sort of divine approval for their political adventures. They seem to forget a basic scriptural teaching—the fallibility of earthly men and the assertion that all persons, without exception, are sinners.

To balance off the quotation from the President I would cite one other minor, and somewhat different, example of the use of biblical language in political rhetoric. Let me go back to 1973. In a public speech Governor Reuben Askew of Florida (later to be, briefly, a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination) declared, "While I believe in separating church and state, I do not believe in separating church and statesmen. While I believe in separating religious doctrine from public policy, I will never believe in separating the religious conscience from those who make such policy As Christians, I'm sure that [we] realize that the conscience of the Lord is a good and merciful conscience, one that would lead us to a just and compassionate society, were we to follow it as faithfully as did Christ himself. I think it is the

duty of every Christian who holds public office to try to be true to that concept."

I would suggest that Governor Askew's statement is a reasoned and sensitive one that avoids the peril of identifying one's political platform with God's mandate. There is a distinctive and important difference in tone and meaning between that statement and the previous quotation from President Bush.

Any study of Southern political rhetoric could multiply endlessly these types of quotations, as office-seekers—some relatively good, some relatively evil, some sincere, some manipulative—have incorporated biblical concepts, ideals, and authority into their partisan political campaigns. The trail of a particular brand of religious certification for office is pervasive and unmistakable. Even today most Bible Belt candidates will list their church membership among their credentials, and it behooves a candidate to give some evidence of church attendance, especially in the weeks leading up to the election.

I am a Southerner by birth, nurtured in the predominant Southern religious tradition. As long as I can remember (and my memory in this case stretches across seventy years), I have been fascinated by the drama, sometimes epic but more often low-comedy, of Southern politics. As a youngster in deep East Texas, where our radios (no television in those days) exposed us to the flamboyant politics of nearby Louisiana, I remember hearing "Old Uncle Earl"—Earl K. Long, brother and heir apparent of Huey Long—profanely blasting his opponents one moment and quoting scripture the next. As an adult, I heard the passionate keynote address delivered to the 1956 Democratic national convention by then Governor Frank Clement of Tennessee. A Methodist lay preacher, Clement drew repeatedly on scriptural images and concluded with the words of a popular gospel song, "Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on."

My most striking memory in this area is of the 1938 gubernatorial campaign in Texas. That year a new personality emerged on the Texas political stage. A flour salesman who led a hillbilly band, W. Lee O'Daniel had become a popular radio entertainer, and his daily program, in which he advertised his own brand of "Hillbilly Flour," was a familiar listening experience for many Texans. "Pappy" O'Daniel sang country songs, introduced his children, Pat and Molly as part

of his band, read from the Bible, quoted sentimental poetry (“The Boy Who Never Grew Too Old to Comb His Mother’s Hair”), and sold flour.

In the 1938 governor’s campaign a number of seasoned politicians and office holders were ranged against each other. One Sunday on his radio program O’Daniel mentioned that someone had suggested that he become a candidate for governor. He hadn’t thought about it much himself, he reflected, but he wondered what his listeners thought.

According to O’Daniel, in the next few days more than 30,000 people wrote, urging him to run. So he announced his candidacy. Taking his hillbilly band, his Bible, and his children with him, he stumped the state, collecting money in ice cream cartons to pay the cost of the campaign. Soon, to the surprise and chagrin of veteran political observers and other candidates, his campaign rallies were attracting thousands.

I went with my parents to hear O’Daniel in the City Park in Kilgore, a town of about 15,000 people. We could not get within a hundred yards of the speaker, so large was the crowd. O’Daniel’s platform was concise: the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. He appealed to “old-fashioned biblical common sense,” and his speech was frequently interrupted by hearty “amens” from his listeners. I was reminded of some religious revival services that I had attended. The candidate asked Texas voters to throw out the “professional politicians” and put a “God-fearing, Bible-believing, born-again Christian man” in the governor’s mansion.

The people responded. O’Daniel was elected in the first primary, polling more votes than all his opponents combined. Later he was re-elected to the governorship and then served one term in the United States Senate.

My purpose here is not to evaluate O’Daniel’s political career, which was decidedly a spotty one, but rather to reflect on the nature of the phenomenon. O’Daniel’s appeals to the Bible and to the virtues of conservative, simplistic religious faith resonated with thousands of voters, including many who were not themselves actively involved in any formal religious organization. A similar pattern of response has repeated itself again and again in Southern political history, though often in less dramatic form. That kind of appeal still has

power, but for a variety of social and cultural reasons its effectiveness is eroding and may eventually disappear. Many will applaud that disappearance with unmixed joy. I must confess to somewhat mixed feelings.

I am deeply disturbed by many of the current manifestations of the indiscriminate mingling of religious and political rhetoric. I deplore, for instance, the tactics of some extreme religious conservatives—often designated the “radical religious right”—who move into partisan political struggles with a rhetoric which implies—and sometimes specifically avers—that their particular political policies have some sort of divine mandate. They seek to harness churches and other organized religious groups to their political bandwagons. Their approach suggests that anyone who opposes them is, by definition, ungodly and irreligious.

I distrust on first hearing any politician who seems to be saying that his or her policies have a sacred imprimatur. And in foreign policy I am wary of political leaders in the United States, or anywhere else, who succumb to the temptation to enlist God in their armies or navies, making the Deity a kind of warlord in some armed struggle.

What I am principally concerned with here, however, is not a critique of this type of politico-religious aberration, but a more profound matter. What is the deeper meaning of the intricate mixture of religion and politics in traditional Southern political rhetoric? What is its value, if any, to the structures of community? More importantly, what does the phenomenon indicate about the self-understanding of Southern voters?

Professor Eric Voegelin, a distinguished political theorist, has argued persuasively that any political society tends to express itself in symbols which are indicative of its self-understanding, together with its understanding of the self’s relation to transcendent truth and reality. “Man does not wait for science to have his life explained to him, and when the theorist approaches social reality, he finds the field preempted by what may be called the self-interpretation of society.”¹

To put it another way, a community articulates itself in terms of structures of social and political order which have underlying transcendental meaning. The symbols associated with these earthly orders are, to a significant extent, mirrors of the way in which the “real world” is perceived. This means



that a political structure obtains part of its validation or authentication from the fact that order or structure is seen by the people, often in a somewhat inchoate way, as a legitimate and consistent expression of ultimate reality.

The truth of this observation emerges clearly, for instance, in the medieval identification of the king as absolute monarch—God as king of the universe and a sovereign ruler with absolute power. The king on earth was thus God's anointed one, a mirror image, so to speak, on a human level. The structural and hierarchical development of the Roman Catholic Church, with the Pope as its earthly ruler, reflects this same concept of God. The shift from monarchical political concepts to more democratic ones was historically accompanied by, and interacted with, more populist understandings of the nature of God and man's relationship to him.

If this analysis of political order is correct, then the traditional characterization of the American South as the Bible Belt takes on new significance and meaning. Whatever else the Bible Belt label may mean, it accurately reflects the fact that the predominant religious traditions in the South have been "populist" movements. The great people's churches of the South—the Baptists, the Methodists, in some areas the Disciples of Christ, and the Pentecostal groups—all have their roots in a nonurbanized, individualistic atmosphere in which the importance of the individual believer before God is magnified and the ability of the individual to deal directly with God (the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer) is emphasized. The idea that each person makes free decisions in relation to God and religious faith is a major contributing factor to the development of the democratic political order in which individuals make free choices in political governance.

Southern evangelical Protestantism put its emphasis by and large on the redemption of individual souls, not on the salvation of culture. Thus, the social gospel never really found a home in the South. In politics one effect of this religious individualism was to influence people, not toward a radical restructuring of political and social institutions, but toward the demand for pious political leaders who publicly proclaimed their loyalty to the popular conception of biblical faith. If the politician did not himself take his religious commitment seriously, he still had to give public allegiance to it, for the sake of political expedience if nothing else. The sincerity of the political leader is less important than the larger meaning of the phenomenon.

In the last several decades influential studies have been made of what has come to be called the "American civil religion." Beginning with a seminal article by Robert Bellah in the winter, 1967, issue of *Daedalus*, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the civil religion has come in for close scrutiny. In brief, Bellah argues that there is in the country a discernible phenomenon existing alongside of but separate from organized churches and other religious groups. It is not identical with Christianity, Judaism, or any other standard faith group; rather, it incorporates a complex of values, ritual patterns, and commit-

ments that involve insights from the whole religious history of the nation. In it, Catholics, Jews, Protestants, as well as many secularists and humanists, can participate without a sense of general tension with their own faith commitments. One of many examples is the use of non-sectarian formal prayers in presidential inaugurations and the opening of Congressional sessions. It constitutes an important social and political cohesive force, but, like other religious phenomenon, it has features and effects that are both positive and negative.

Many criticisms have been made of Bellah's original analysis, but his basic thesis has held up remarkably well. For our purposes, it may be helpful to narrow his concept to a subspecies: the Southern civil religion. In the American South the civil religion is, or has been, much more specific and cohesive. It has drawn as has been pointed out, on a dominant tradition that is Protestant, evangelical, individualistic, and Bible-centered. It can be argued that the more unitive coherence the civil religion possesses, the more effective it is in sanctifying and shaping the community's value patterns. In this sense Southern civil religion has probably had a proportionately greater influence and effect, both positive and negative, on political patterns and actions than has the national one.

The political effects of the Southern civil religion have come under vigorous attack across the years. Much of the criticism is legitimate and well grounded. Like all religious phenomena, the civil religion is subject to perversion, idolatry, and warping. At its worst, historically, the Southern civil religion has been used cheaply to support institutions like slavery and racial discrimination. But it must also be said that the critics, while highlighting the negative aspects, have often ignored any positive side to the issue. They have, as Bellah has remarked about the national scene, taken "as criteria the best in their own religious tradition and as typical the worst in the tradition of the civil religion."² Bellah argues that the civil religion, at its best, does contain genuine apprehensions of universal and transcendent religious reality. These apprehensions arise from and are interpreted in the light of distinctive historical experience.

This kind of appreciation runs counter to much opinion today. It is popular to scorn and ridicule the frequent references to the Bible in Southern politics, for instance. It is easy to dismiss the phenomenon as an indication that religion has only a ceremonial and expedient significance in regard to politics, constituting mere lip service to the deity and solely designed to impress the more naïve voters. But religious rhetoric in political speeches is quite obviously a kind of ritual, and surely the study of ritual and symbol warns us to beware of dismissing something as unimportant because it is "only a ritual." Which brings us back to the real point. The question is not the motive of the politician: it is an inquiry into the felt necessity of the practice. The cynical response that the politician uses the rhetoric in order to gain votes only deepens the question. The words are effective in many cases because they represent a response to a deep-felt need of

the political community. People want from their depths to believe that the political structures in which they participate are somehow “under God” and that the person who holds office is a God-fearing man. “What people say on solemn occasions need not be taken at face value, but it is often indicative of deep-seated commitments that are not usually made explicit in the course of everyday life.”³

What are some of the more important values that the Bible-centered, individualistic Southern civil religion, at its best, has endorsed and celebrated? One such value would seem to be that the politician or statesman is not only responsible to the people who elect him or her but also and ultimately to the God of the Bible and to the objective moral order associated with that God. Governor Askew’s statement at the beginning of this article clearly sets out that conviction. In American constitutional theory sovereignty is vested in the people, but that theory also contains a notion, consistent with the Bible, that there is a higher sovereignty, as least in popular understanding. The will of the people is not the final criterion. The ultimate standard of judgment is the will of God. And for the great majority of Southerners across the years, the will of God has been identified in one way or another with the teachings of the scriptures.

A second value-shaping emphasis in Southern civil religion is the almost always implicit and often explicit recognition that there is some kind of transcendent goal for the political process. In a practical, hard-nosed way the politician is expected to deal with immediate, pressing problems, but there is also a larger frame of reference which is assumed. Society ought to be a “good society,” and for the Southerner the content of the good society has drawn heavily on a kind of amorphous understanding of the kingdom of God as a model.

One other value manifesting itself in the civil religion needs to be considered, especially because its manifestation has often been so paradoxical. The Bible is generally understood to teach the final sanctity of each individual and that person’s ultimate value in the sight of the Creator. No human being is worthless if God created him or her and if Christ died for that individual—a fundamental declaration of traditional Southern religion. In some contemporary political thought this idea has translated itself into a secular egalitarian

theory, asserting that all men are somehow empirically equal. Such an idea has never been a dynamic part of the Southern civil religion. In Southern history, at least two factors mitigated strongly against the development of egalitarianism. First, the functioning class structure of the historic South; which demonstrated its reliance on its European background by its tendency to stress aristocratic birth and breeding over money as a class distinctive, assumed a kind of inborn difference among human beings. Second, the economic and political realities of the institution of slavery seemed to contradict any notion of empirical equality. Nevertheless, the pressure of the religion conviction of *ultimate* human value was always there, and the Southern attempt to come to grips with the tension was and still is, for some people, an agonizing one.

The use of religious language in political rhetoric is one among several clear manifestations of the functioning of the civil religion. Obviously, situational tensions have often produced deformations in the interpretation of the values of the civil religion, but it is also clear that the pressure of the values has always been there, and that it is partially in the light of this pressure that the shape of the deformations must be understood. To this perspective one may add an analysis of the mixed performance of Southern civil religion which draws on the familiar scholarly model: the priest and the prophet. One can chart a kind of dialectical interaction between the priestly and prophetic strains in virtually every religious phenomenon, and certainly in the Judeo-Christian tradition. On the one hand, the priestly elements seek to preserve and protect all that is conceived to be worthwhile in the faith and in the society which is infused with that faith. On the other hand, the prophets attack and criticize the *status quo* as failing to exemplify the ideals of the faith.

The priestly stance is a conservative one by definition. The priests fear change because it endangers what they value. Priests have often made mistakes, and they have always operated, like the rest of us, with mixed motives. They often work to preserve not only what is objectively good in the system but also what is mediocre and even perverse, especially when these elements serve to bolster their own privileged positions. But this is not the whole story. In almost all social and religious systems there are elements worth preserving. Without



DA MAE WOMBAT, FORMER UNDERSECRETARY OF FEELINGS, FOR SELF-RECRIMINATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CONTRITION DURING THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION, HAS JOINED THE BUSH WHITE HOUSE TO HANDLE APOLOGIES ARISING FROM THE MISTAKES MADE DURING THE IRAQ WAR...

6-30



the work of the priestly forces in religion and society, these things are likely to go down the drain with the garbage.

The Southern civil religion has obviously fulfilled a priestly function. It has worked to preserve something which can roughly be designated as a Southern way of life. No one can quite define what that means, but all of us who experience it know what is being talked about. Some of that way of life has been perverse and destructive, but much of it has positive value. The gradual disappearance of religious language from political rhetoric is only one of many signs that this Southern way of life is changing. The American South is rapidly becoming a carbon copy of every other part of the nation. In that process the entire ethos and moral structure of the region is being altered, producing both positive and negative consequences.

Historically, the priestly elements become static and oppressive, blocking necessary change, unless they are balanced and restrained by the prophets. While there are always more priests than prophets, the prophetic strain has not been entirely absent from the Southern religious experience. One ironic paradox of Southern history, to use only one example, was the constraint upon Southern slaveowners, in the light of their religious commitments, to allow the Christian gospel to be preached to slaves. For a long time it has been received wisdom that the only effect of that preaching was to placate the blacks, rendering them passive and apathetic with vague promises of "pie in the sky by and by." A more detailed exposition of the black experience has uncovered new layers to the story. As Richard Wentz has pointed out, "It has recently become a matter of record that the slaves probably received more than they were meant to receive from the evangelical character of the dominant religion. . . . The white man agitated and wrestled with the effects of both law and Gospel in his own life—trying to adjust those effects with the economic and political need to deny them to humans of black skin. But they heard greater depths of the law than the white man intended, and they also heard words like freedom, love, salvation, judgment, mercy."⁴ The gospel story offered the blacks hope, and in many cases that hope was revolutionary. There was a prophetic character to the symbols of the Christian faith that promised more than just a reward in a future life. The visions of a kingdom to come helped to produce more black activists, social unrest, and consequent social change. At the same time that vision of the kingdom made Southerners uneasy of conscience.

In a more contemporary vein one must remember that a prophet like Martin Luther King, Jr., was a product of the Southern religious experience. Of course, it was the *black* experience, infused with a heavy dose of Boston personalism, King constantly used in his public utterances the time-honored Biblical rhetoric of southern politics. It is ironic that the success of King in the South (a success he was not able to equal in other parts of the nation) was partly due to the fact that the same religious ethos which shaped King likewise informed the development of the blacks to whom he appealed for support and the whites whom he confronted

with demands for racial justice. Many Southerners, offended, angered, and frightened by King's activities, were at the same time emotionally troubled and morally disturbed by his demands. The evidence of the Southerner's struggle with such sore spots is abundant in his literature, in his tortured interpretations of scripture, in his often flamboyant paternalism, and in his exaggerated responses to the racial demagogues who have so often been a part of Southern politics. Rationalization has often been accomplished, but rarely without pain and never without scar. A prophet like King could not have been so effective had he not been appealing to a people of two minds religiously, people who was often employing in priestly fashion the same religious values which King was using in prophetic style.

If the Southern civil religion, often articulated in politico-religious rhetoric, has functioned in both priestly and prophetic style in the past, what is the prognosis for the future? Here any comments must necessarily be tentative. The South is changing; of that, there is no doubt. The grip of the Southern civil religion, for good or for bad, is weakening. Many years ago, a thinker like Walter Lippmann foresaw this same phenomenon for the nation as a whole. In a probing volume, *The Public Philosophy*, he wrote of the erosion of a moral value consensus and the disappearance of a sense of objective, overarching national morality. The process which he analyzed has continued in the nation as a whole and, I think, in the South in particular.

I confess a sense of foreboding when I view the possible and probably further erosion of the Southern civil religion. An old way of life is disappearing. With it go many of the contradictions, inconsistencies, the actual evils which were a part of it. I would not want to call back any of those things. But with the disappearance of that way of life there is also the evident crumbling of a structure of generally acknowledged moral values which has exercised both priestly and prophetic functions in the public arena. Perhaps the time will soon come when Southern politicians will no longer find it politically profitable to appeal to the Bible in support of racial prejudice, class hatred, or economic selfishness. That is all to the good. But it may also happen that the sort of statement quoted from Governor Askew at the beginning of this study will no longer be made. If our analysis of the phenomenon is correct in the assertion that Southern political rhetoric contains religious quotes and references partially as a response to the people's deep-felt desire for "God-fearing" leaders who have a sense of responsibility to higher moral values and purposes, then will not the disappearance of that rhetoric reflect to some extent the disappearance of that popular desire?

Whenever there is drastic modification of a society's way of life and system of moral values, change almost certainly affects not only that which is undesirable but also that which is worthwhile, not only that which ought to be transitory but also that which sustains healthy community, not only the perversions of hypocrisy but also the traditions of civility. The current modification of the Southern civil religion is not exception to that rule. It is generally agreed that the

American president who employed religious language in his public utterances with the highest degree of discernment and understanding was Abraham Lincoln, but it has been pointed out also that Lincoln's use of Biblical language was effective only because he was speaking to an audience that was biblically literate. Religious language addressed to people who are, as is increasingly true in our secularized society, multi-cultural, multi-religious and biblically illiterate largely loses its resonance and power.

What kinds of public ritual and symbolism will replace those of the civil religion? What type of public moral value structures, if any, will supercede those of our Biblical, individualistic past? These are provocative questions which are as yet unanswered. ■

- ¹ Eric Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), ix.
- ² Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus*, (Winter, 1967), 14.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ⁴ Richard Wentz, "The Saga of the American Soul," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (December, 1974), 65.

Have Baptists Lost Touch . . . ?

(continued from page 2)

for their convention), bragged about his church—"We have no deacons, only elders. They and the pastor decide everything. Our church never votes." A growing trend among larger churches is to model the corporation and make the pastor the CEO, who with his "Board" (whatever their name) run the church. This is neither Baptist nor biblical.

T. B. Maston was always slow to criticize, particularly the institution he loved and gave his life to serving. However, when the president of the seminary built a new student center, highlighted by an elaborate chandelier from Europe, Maston protested. (In today's dollars, it would have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.) To the ethics teacher, it mattered not that "cooperative program funds" did not pay for it—it was the image. This picture of extravagance and influence was not an appropriate icon for a Baptist seminary.

The God revealed in the Scriptures has a "preferential option" for the poor, the weak, the voiceless, and "the stranger in the land." And so should we. Isn't that what Maston meant—that as long as we are in touch with average folks, we can continue to be God's remnant in the world?

Now the rest of the story. Maston was forced to retire at age 65, even though he wanted to continue teaching. But God redeemed the time, and for the next twenty-three years his fluent pen authored some of his greatest books! ■

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Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders

Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter
Baker Academic, 2004.

A core text for ministers and church leaders to understand and apply Christian ethical obligations in the performance of ministry and the work of the church. Author Lewis Smedes deems it "required reading for every minister."

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- The Minister's Community: Threat or Opportunity?
- A Major Ethical Issue: Clergy Sexual Abuse
- A Ministerial Code of Ethics: Help or Hindrance?
- Appendices: Codes of Ethics

a rhythm for my life

Kenneth L. Chafin
Greystone Press, 2003 greystonepr@att.net

After a highly visible profile as a Baptist pastor, Director of Evangelism (SBC), professor at two seminaries, and Dean of the Billy Graham Schools of Evangelism, skilled communicator Ken Chafin spent the last ten years of his life writing poetry. Named for his signature poem, the anthology offers a collection of the poetry of a husband and father who loved the country, nature, and the porch swing on the family farm (his picture on the swing concludes the book). Primarily written through the decade of the 1990s, the poems reveal the priorities and values Chafin embraced. Poems reflect his rural childhood, his frustrations with denominational conflicts, observations on his colleagues, and most poignant—those written in response to the death of a fellow professor. His most famous poem, "Ode to an Alzheimer Patient," was first published in *Christian Ethics Today* (July, 1997) and has been reprinted and quoted widely.

Write to the address on the back cover to request your copy, which will be sent postage paid. Both are great gift books for your friends or your pastor.

Fathers Who Have Blessed Me

By Pierre Hjartberg, Writer and Consultant
New Orleans, LA

Seems to me that I have been blessed with many fathers. As I have grown in both mind and stature—aged really—a father to me has become a male who has had a great influence on my life. There have been many of them. Here, quickly, are just four of them.

First, my real father: he was a fun fellow. As I grew up in my native Sweden I often heard him say, “The first thing I do when I get home in the evening is to whip the boys. I don’t know what it’s for, but they do.” Well, during my youth in Scandinavia, when you sinned you paid for it. But I survived.

He had a fine tenor voice. To this day I can hear his clear voice echo across the lake at our summer home. “Oh, Store Gud,” literally translated “Oh, Great God.” We know the hymn as “How Great Thou Art.”

When I was 16, my father, then 49, fell unconscious over the steering wheel in his car as we were driving in my hometown of Eksjo, Sweden. I was able to bring the car to a stop, shove him over and drive to a local hospital. It was 6 PM. At 10 PM I felt him squeeze my hand and he went over to the other side. I have missed him ever since.

About two years later I came to the United States. After my freshman year at Northeastern University in Boston, I met some Baylor kids working with me as counselors in a camp on Cape Cod. The girls were cute. The guys were fun. They talked me into coming to Baylor. Said I would get a scholarship. That the Marshall Plan was still in effect! It was.

The man who really looked after me at Baylor was Vice President Guy Newman. He was responsible for my getting substantial financial relief at the Purser’s Office. Without it I could not have survived. He also got me a job at the Union Building’s Cafeteria. A 6-9 A.M. shift provided me with three

meals a day. And Dr. Newman constantly checked on me. Cornered me about bad grades. Encouraged me about my writings in the *Lariat*. And every time I left him, whether it was his car or his office, we would shake hands. Warmly. And left in the palm of my hand was always a 5, 10, or 20-dollar bill. That was big money in those days. And it came out of his pocket, of that I am certain. He was a father to me.

I grew up in a devout Christian environment in Sweden. In fact I was confirmed in both a Lutheran as well as a Mission Covenant Church. OK, so it was not only a devout exercise. The girls were also an influence on a young teenager. It’s tough to grow up. In any event I was told from the day I could comprehend that Christ wanted us to love everyone. That this was the Christian thing to do.

Later, as I grew and developed both in Sweden and the United States I found that there were people I just did not care for. People who frankly irritated me. I found this feeling to be a terrible conflict with the Christian beliefs I had been instructed to follow. It became a burden which was sometimes difficult to bear. One day at Baylor I got a note from Dr. Charles Wellborn, then Pastor at Seventh & James Baptist. He complimented me on a column I had written for the *Lariat*. I had never met Charles but decided to go and see him. My column, aptly titled “Much About Nothing,” had by chance had something in it which interested him. A lifelong friendship ensued.

It was Charles Wellborn, now retired and living in London, who convinced me that you could love someone and still not like them. That the world was big enough for that. Wish them God’s love and speed. But away from you. This took a big load off my shoulders and changed my life. I was free, at last.



Through that and many other pieces of sage advice, Charles Wellborn has indeed been a loving father for the last forty-something years.

Then there is Matthew. He is but 9 years old. The first of four grandchildren. He still looks me in the eye and seldom blinks. It's been said that it is in the spring and autumn of a man's life that the world seems clearer and there is more time to enjoy it. So it has been with Matthew and me. While the 58 years between us will never shrink away, there have been times when we have been in the same time zone, the same wave length, communicating as equals. It has been a rare experience.

I am convinced that he did not just appear in September of 1993, but that his soul had been out there, somewhere, for some time. He was just waiting for his name to be called. For the curtains to part so he could enter the stage. As I have tried to teach, I have really been the one to receive. Not too long ago as I sought to share some wisdom with him he said, "Pappa, why do you always tell me things I already know?"

And I thought about Robert Frost and his poem, "What Fifty Said":

*When I was young the teachers were the old,
I gave up fire for form till I was cold.
I suffered like a metal being cast.
I went to school to age, to learn the past.
Now I am old my teachers are the young.
What can't be molded must be cracked and sprung.
I strain at lessons fit to start a suture.
I go to school to youth, to learn the future.*

Once again Frost proved to be right. Not only do "good fences make good neighbors," but in my case, too—"I went to school to age, to learn the past" and now, some sixty years later, "I go to school to youth, to learn the future."

You are a good teacher, Matthew, and I love it in your class. And I am still learning. Just like I did from my own father, Guy Newman, and Charles Wellborn. I loved and love them all. Also, thank you, Lord, like them. But one has to keep on going because, like Frost wrote, "I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep." ■

MOVING?



If you've moved or are planning to move, please let us know.

To the President from a Father: Shame on Us

By David F. D'Alessandro, Chairman and CEO

John Hancock Financial Services

For two guys about the same age, George W. Bush and I do not have much in common. There are, however, two realities we do share: His daughter Barbara and my son Michael both attend Yale. And neither one is about to join the United States armed forces in Iraq. Why not?

Because they don't have to, they don't want to, and George W. and I won't let them.

One of those "flaming liberals" for which Massachusetts is famous asked me, "Why are people not taking to the streets every day protesting the Iraq war like we did in the '60s?" As I thought about it, the answer is simple. The Iraq war is not being fought, for the most part, by the children of the affluent or even affluent-hopefuls. And that is because it's not being fought by the conscripted.

Vietnam-era protest rules do not apply. There are no chants outside 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue of "Hell, no, we won't go." There are no draft classifications like 1-A or 4-F or student deferments. There is no threat that after next week's Yale graduation, the baby boom generation's kids will involuntarily be sent to places like Fort Dix, Parris Island, or Camp Pendleton.

This is a war of volunteer U.S. combatants and National Guard "weekend warriors" who are trying to figure out how a monthly training exercise turned into a living hell. Patriots, one and all, and they should be lauded for their courage. But they shouldn't be there any more than Michael and Barbara should be.

When Barbara's grandfather, George Bush senior, decided in 1991 not to continue the Gulf War into Baghdad, he was roundly criticized for being a "coward."

In the end, he was right. He knew that there was a reason not to occupy a country for a prolonged period in an attempt to simultaneously toss out a dictator, find weapons of mass destruction, police the country, establish a new democratic government, and stabilize the entire region. He knew that it could not all be accomplished and that the endeavor would soon become quicksand in the desert.

While I have not discussed it with either of them, I suspect that deep down, Barbara and Michael agree with Bush senior. This might explain why we will not see either one rushing down to the local Army recruiter in the coming weeks, hoping to be patrolling a war-torn, insurgent-infested Baghdad neighborhood as soon as possible. I bet their answer to the question of "Why not?" would be a Muhammad Ali-like, "I got no quarrel with them Iraqis."

Now comes the hard part: why George W. and I wouldn't let them go even if they did want to. Of course, they are both over 21 and able to make their own decisions, but in both cases, their dads would surely fight any eagerness to join up. No parent wants to bury a child—let alone endorse a course that could well make that a grisly reality.

This war is a mistake—a big mistake. The rest of the world knows it, and in our hearts, so do we. In World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, rich kids, poor kids, college kids, and dropouts all went. They all fought, and hundreds of thousands died. This time it is mainly the poor kids leaving on those planes and coming home in boxes. Most parents whose children have other options will not allow them to go.

That's why the president is able to press on. All he has at risk personally is his presidency, not his children. That's why I am not organizing protests and why the rest of us are not outraged at every turn. This war has no personal consequences for most of us who as '60s peaceniks changed the world. Shame on us, both of us—all of us.

John Kerry was right when he said it in 1971, and he would be wise to take a stand now and say it again: "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" Mr. President, as this semester ends at Yale, I won't ask Michael to die for a mistake. Are you going to ask that of Barbara? ■

Note: This article appeared in the Boston Globe on May 19, 2004.

There's No Such Thing...

(continued from page 29)

when it comes to ethics. The first is a standard to follow. The second is the will to follow it" (23).

Doing philosophy by the numbers, Maxwell seems obsessed with the number one where "rule following" is concerned, even though Jesus Christ himself subsumed all Ten Commandments under *two* commandments (Mt. 22:36-40). However, later in the book Maxwell gets readers to think about another rule, "the Platinum Rule" or treating others *better* than they treat us (112-114). Does this mean that Maxwell is tacitly admitting that one rule is *not* enough for pursuing a moral life? This seems to undermine his earlier assertion that one rule will suffice, an obvious inconsistency.

Another problem in his book relates to his ambitious effort to keep ethics from getting mired in the messiness of situations. Maxwell may contend that there is no such thing as business ethics, but this does not remove him from the complexities of bounded practices and problems that define professions and various fields of work in society. Furthermore, by *applying* the Golden Rule as he examines specific cases and violations of it, he seems to be caught in the crucible of applied ethics. Yes, for the most part, he is sticking with one rule, but this does not prevent him from discussing how business leaders, coaches or specific politicians have applied this rule to their fields of endeavor. Discussion of ethics still involves an application to concrete instances and situations, even if one wants to avoid the abuses of a short-sided version of "situation ethics." Thus, there is a self-refuting quality to his work, as it denies an approach

that it tries to employ.

Maxwell's premise and argument against business ethics is logically flawed. Business ethics is simply the application of ethical principles or values to business situations. Medical ethics is the application of ethical principles or values to medical situations. Likewise, legal ethics is the application of ethical principles or values to legal cases or situations. If there can be no such thing as business ethics, then there can be no such thing as medical ethics or legal ethics, or ultimately any form of applied ethics. But, if there can be no such thing as applied ethics, there would be no point to ethics in general, since the value of ethical principles is to provide a guide for human behavior.

Maxwell's argument against business ethics consists mainly in the assertion that all we need is the Golden Rule. Maxwell then proceeds to apply the Golden Rule in any business situation. Since this is a form of applied ethics, he is in fact practicing business ethics himself. All Maxwell is really proposing (whether he realizes it or not) is limiting the scope of ethical principles for application to business or other situations to only the Golden Rule, rather than some broader group of ethical principles. He is, in fact, practicing business ethics. This fact brings to mind another old expression: "What you do speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you say."

In addition, Maxwell's presumption that everyone *desires* to be "treated well" (24) presumes an unfounded knowledge of human desire, and it seems to presume some character traits that may not be present in all individuals. At various points in his book, Maxwell claims to *know* the desires of others. For example, he says, "Even people who pursue unhealthy relationships or who engage in destructive behavior don't *desire* or consciously seek bad treatment from others" (24-25). How does he *know* this?

A final word is in order about the author's ambivalence about how success should be defined. Maxwell invokes success as a goal, but seems to leave readers with a "fill-in-the-blank" version of this ideal. In the Preface he states, "*If you are reading these words, I believe you possess the desire to live and work ethically. This book's goal is to help you find the way to do just that and also achieve greater success.*" Maxwell also makes it clear to readers that "paying a high price for success is inconvenient" (20), and he encourages the kind of character that builds "lasting success with people" (57).

Later, he concludes, "One of my definitions of success is for those closest to me to love and respect me the most" (76). Does this imply that there are multiple definitions of success in the life of a single individual? Why must we live by one ethical guideline if it is okay to allow success to be defined in an open-ended way? Isn't it fair to say that the many world religions that share some version of the Golden Rule would have very different definitions of success?

In conclusion, it can be said that *There's No Such Thing as Business Ethics* provides readers with a valuable starting point for the discussion of some very important issues that will continue to affect their lives on a daily basis. There is definitely a need today for a book like this that introduces readers to a critical subject that is often left to the academics and specialists. However, those who want more depth and content beyond this rudimentary primer will need to go to other sources for more guidance than this cursory treatment provides. ■

Churches and the Defense of Marriage

By Tony Campolo, Author, Sociologist, Minister
St. Davids, Pennsylvania

The Defense of Marriage Amendment being proposed by the Bush administration is going to be a hot issue in this year's election.

Democrats already are contending that President Bush is introducing this proposal for political purposes and, by so doing, is polarizing the country. Republicans are quick to point out that they are not the ones who raised the issue of gay marriage, but are simply defending the nation from the onslaught of liberals and their "gay agenda."

Churches are further inflaming the controversy through their own infighting. The argument over gay marriage has put every major denomination in danger of schism. Church leaders have weighed in on both sides of debate with many contending that nothing less is a stake than the future of the family.

What is being ignored, however, is that it is not gay people who have put the family in jeopardy. The traditional family is in danger, not because so many gays want to get married, but because so many heterosexuals have chosen to get divorced.

In fact, nearly half of new heterosexual marriages now end in divorce. In addition, more than 30 percent of today's young couples choose to live together without even bothering to get married.

Churches, however, have made no headlines around these issues lately. On the contrary, when it comes to divorce, lately we Christians have had little to say.

As I listen to fundamentalist church leaders declare that the Bible requires them to condemn gay marriage, I wonder how they reconcile their claims of full obedience to Scripture with their willingness to welcome those who are divorced and remarried into their congregations.

Doesn't Mark 10:11-12 describe Jesus specifically declaring that divorced people who remarry are living in adultery? If such leaders insist on "doing the Bible thing," then they ought to at least be consistent.

It isn't fair to use the Bible to clobber gays who want to

get married without also using it to exclude divorced people who want to get remarried. If they must call their members' gay sons and daughters an abomination to God, should not those preachers also start condemning the children of their congregants who are living together out of wedlock?

When I ask my fellow evangelicals to explain this obvious double standard, I am often told that when it comes to divorce and remarriage we must communicate grace above all else. To this I can only respond, "When will we start communicating the same grace to our gay brothers and sisters?"

Don't get me wrong: I am no advocate of gay marriage. All I am saying here is that evangelical churches will have no credibility if they go on condemning gay marriages without revisiting the question of what the Bible has to say about marriage itself, and divorce, and the nature of all sexual activity.

Unless they are simply homophobic, these churches will soon discover that they cannot get tough with gay people and just let everybody else off the hook.

I am not in favor of The Defense of the Marriage Amendment, but if there must be one I think it should also deal with divorce, instead of just picking on gays. After all, it's high time we made getting out of a marriage more difficult than getting out of a traffic ticket.

Again, don't misunderstand me: Divorces must remain available to those who must escape destructive situations like spousal abuse. Nevertheless, both church and state have condoned easy divorces for too many people, and these divorces have left millions of children emotionally shattered for the rest of their lives.

Am I suggesting that unhappy couples ought to remain together for the sake of their kids? Absolutely.

As far as I am concerned, innocent boys and girls are the best reason to really defend marriage. ■

Note: This article was published in *Baptists Today* (May, 2004) and is reprinted by permission.

Framing the Debate Over Same-Sex Marriage

By Jeff Jacoby, *Op-Ed Columnist*
The Boston Globe

This is the week that same-sex marriage came to Massachusetts, and thus to the United States. The fundamental building block of civilization has undergone a radical change—a change opposed by a majority of American adults. How did this happen? The joining of gay and lesbian couples in marriage may turn out to be the most consequential development of our lifetimes. How did we get here?

The answer has several parts.

At the most obvious level, the legalization of same-sex marriage is the doing of four justices of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Chief Justice Margaret Marshall and three of her colleagues ruled in the Goodridge case last November that limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples infringes on the freedom and equality protected by the Massachusetts Constitution. The job of the judiciary is to interpret the law, but this was no mere interpretation. It was a wholesale rewriting of the law.

In effect, Goodridge was a constitutional amendment dictated from the bench. So brazen an encroachment should have set off alarm bells. Massachusetts judges are unelected and unaccountable and therefore, a potential antidemocratic threat. When they overstep their bounds, they should be strenuously opposed.

But far from resisting the court's order, much of the political establishment and virtually all the media embraced it. And that, too, is part of the reason why the timeless meaning of marriage—the union of a man and a woman—is now to be discarded in Massachusetts.

The Goodridge judges knew they would have the support of the cultural elites, for whom individual autonomy and the pursuit of happiness often seem to be the highest social values. In the allegedly “progressive” mind-set, which dominates what you read in the paper and see on TV, social traditions exist to be challenged, family structure is highly flexible, and the mainstreaming of homosexuality is something only haters or fanatics could oppose.

No surprise, then, that the media depiction of the same-sex marriage controversy has been one-sided. The views of those who favor it are often and prominently featured; their appeals to justice and compassion are repeatedly quoted and expanded on. There has been a shower of celebratory coverage centered on the wedding plans of gays and lesbians, and upbeat descriptions of related matters, from the marketing of wedding dresses for lesbians to the first Bride's magazine

article on same-sex ceremonies.

But there is rarely an admiring story about those who take a stand against throwing out the ancient definition of marriage. Rarely does the coverage suggest that they might have an argument worth listening to or an insight worth considering. Rarely do the feared negative consequences of same-sex marriage get more than a fraction of the attention paid to its anticipated benefits. Hard to miss is the attitude that those who favor same-sex marriage are enlightened, while those who don't are bigots.

But still another part of the answer to “How did we get here?” is that those who defend the traditional definition of marriage have been woefully ineffective in making their case.

Preaching to the converted has its uses, but gay and lesbian advocates didn't move the cause of homosexual marriage from the fringe to the liberal mainstream by speaking only to those who already agreed with them. They made their case in terms that the unconvinced could understand too, and framed their radical proposal as an issue of civil rights and family love. With so few leaders on the other side making an equally articulate case, it's not surprising that same-sex marriage advanced so far, so fast.

Those of us who think this week's revolution is a terrible mistake need to do a much better job of explaining that the core question is not “Why shouldn't any couple in love be able to marry?” but something more essential: “What is marriage for?” We need to convey that the fundamental purpose of marriage is to unite men and women so that any children they may create or adopt will have a mom and a dad.

Marriage expresses a public judgment that every child *deserves* a mom and a dad. Same-sex marriage says that the sexual and emotional desires of adults count more than the needs of children. Which message do we want the next generation to receive?

The marriage debate doesn't end this week. Indeed, it may only now be starting in earnest. As Massachusetts goes, so goes the nation? That may depend on whether those who understand what marriage is for, and why its central meaning has endured for millennia, can finally find the words to explain themselves to their countrymen. ■

Note: This article first appeared in *The Boston Globe* and is reprinted by permission from the author.

The President's Jihad?

By Robert L. Maddox

Note: Since 1992, Robert Maddox has served as pastor of Briggs Memorial Baptist Church, Bethesda, MD. From 1984 to 1992, he was Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Prior to 1984, he was a speechwriter and religious liaison at the White House during the Carter Administration. He also authors a regular email column, "Toward Millennium Faith," available at robtjr11@comcast.net.

In his latest book *Plan of Attack*, reporter Bob Woodward says he asked President Bush during their three hour interview if he had he talked with his father (President Bush I) about going to war with Iraq? The President replied, "He's not the father to talk with about this war." Then, Woodward reports, the President made it plain he was talking to God about the war, and, according to Woodward, hardly anyone else.

In a nationally televised press conference this past spring dealing with the Iraqi war, the President described the (holy) mission to which he feels called to bring freedom to the world.

Most Americans would find little discomfort at the superficial level of the President's saying he looks to God for help on the war and his sense of calling to bring freedom to the world. Certainly Mr. Bush feels no discomfort. Indeed, from all indications he is completely comfortable with what he is doing about the war in Iraq. If you will recall, when a reporter at the April press conference asked the President to list any mistakes he had made so far in this war effort, Mr. Bush paused, looked surprised and said, "I cannot think of any I have made." If Americans want a leader who, while looking up, does not look back, we have surely found it in President Bush.

But when I push these presidential manifestations even a little bit, my anxieties just about go out the roof.

When Mr. Bush and God talked about the war, what did God tell him? Does the President want to tell the American people and the world that this is some sort of holy war? Is the President leading the American people of the 21st century into our own version of Jihad? Are we on a mission from Yahweh in Iraq? In Afghanistan?

The imams and their minions of Iraq feel the same divine sense of call from Allah as they blow up our civilians and troops and their own people. I hope there is a difference.

Some of the bloodiest wars in human history have been fought because one leader or another declared a call from God to obliterate the other side. We Americans have always run away from those who told us God was telling them to go to war, who looked to God for strategic battle planning.

Nothing that I know about God or Allah persuades me that the Holy One directs us to war. Sometimes our human

need to defend against a takeover by a force inimical to our own way of life prompts us to take up arms. But to say this impulse is from God, from heaven, from paradise, flies in the face of everything I understand about the Divine. War is a survival tactic. There is nothing divine about war.

Maybe, in agony, with a profound sense of diplomatic failure, having earnestly tried every other known way to under gird the security of the American nation, Mr. Bush could say to himself and God and us, "I, George Bush, Commander in Chief, have determined that it is in our best national interest to take up arms up against the repressive Iraqi regime. To that end, I am praying for guidance, for a minimal loss of life on both sides, for a quick end to this terrible, human tragedy we call war."

I do not feel any of that introspection, any soul searching, even a modicum of "let this cup pass from me" from the President. Woodward's book, by all accounts backed up by hours of taped interviews with the principals of American policy, indicates that the President and Vice-president decided on the war and, only then, got some folks involved to help work out the gritty details. If Woodward is only half right in his reporting, I am terribly uneasy.

And freedom to the world? Of course I cherish our freedoms. And of course, I would like for everyone on the planet to enjoy our measure of freedom. But is war the primary instrument for bringing about that grand and noble end? Is this war what we need to be about at this point in world history? It is apparent something has gone unbelievably wrong with our effort to bring freedom to Iraq. Instead of meeting us with flowers and candy, our troops have been met with hails of bullets from the very ones we have come to liberate. More Americans have died "since we won the war" than while we were still fighting the war. I know that some observers and politicians are saying the majority of the Iraqi people are glad we are in their country. I hope that is the case. But so far, we have not seen much indication of that welcoming by the Iraqi people from the *world* press—not just the "liberal" American press but the world press. And multiplied billions to build stuff in Iraq when we cannot find enough money to provide health care for working Americans?

And no mistakes? That has to be one of the most breath taking statements ever to come from the mouth of any mor-

tal, much less an American President who is forced to make dozens of highly complicated, often morally competing decisions every day of his life in the White House.

It occurs to me that *if* God has told you to impose freedom on the world by force, then maybe you have made no mistakes. Who dares accuse God and God's instrument of mistakes!

As you know, I am not the President. Still, I have made an earnest effort to walk in the ways of God for most of my life and my mistakes, sins, missteps, deliberate detours even in following that path, are legion. Maybe when one works out of the Oval Office rather than out of my cluttered church office, mistakes are a thing of the past.

Caveats:

In my many years of voting, I have voted for Democrats and Republicans.

I have had the good fortune to enjoy fairly extensive conversations with three Presidents for whom I have enormous respect—Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. I never sensed in these men, all gifted and monumentally fallible, President Bush's towering insensitivity, his seeming inability to get his arms and mind around these incredibly complex issues that are unsettling the entire world.

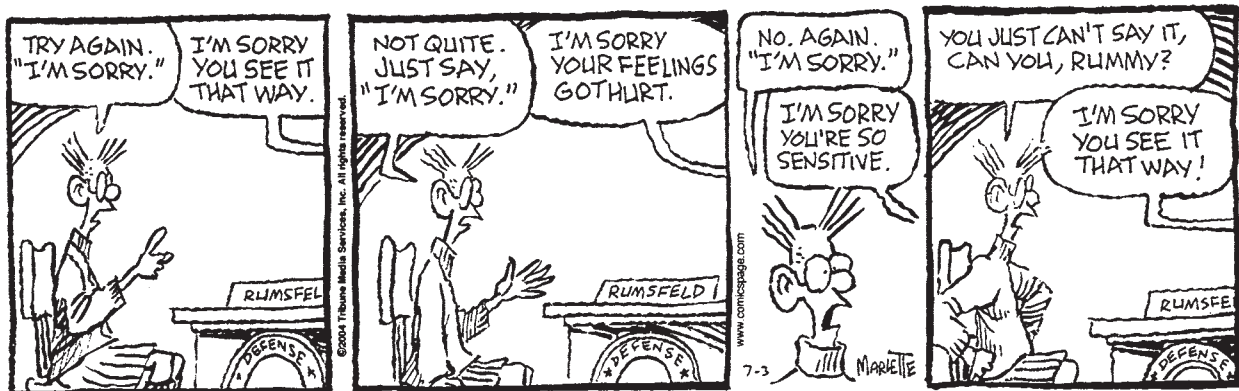
Don't anyone accuse me of not supporting our troops in Iraq and around the world.

Don't suggest because I have grave misgivings about our present policy in Iraq, as well as in many other areas of

national life, that I am not a hopeless patriot. I can get tears in my eyes just looking at our flag whipping in the breeze over the U.S. Capitol. I revel in our greatness as a nation. At that same time, I am profoundly aware of our manifold shortcomings as a nation and as a people. As I love this country, I must do all I can to help it—us—continue to be the very best we can for all the human family. In laboring to be and do the best, we do the work of God in the world.

Millennium Faith for the 21st century must evoke from our leaders and us as individuals an ever more reflective understanding of the ways of the Spirit. We have to be willing to struggle with the conviction that God is not on our side any more than God is on the other side. In fact, we may have to come to see that God does not take sides in these brutal, convoluted messes we make of human relationships.

I can agree that God, Allah, the Source, the Cosmic Energy, the Ground of Being does penetrate human experience in ways I cannot begin to articulate. The "There That Is There" does become involved with bleeding, suffering soldiers, their families, and bleeding, suffering, Iraqi children and their families who get blown to smithereens by insane car bombers. I express grave misgivings when any President, any Nation, decides the Holy One has somehow spoken, calling for the blessing of war. If we believe that God as Creator of us all, loves all the human family, we cannot believe that the Deity condones the wholesale killing of one part of the human race for the benefit of another. That is Jihad. And I am scared. ■



Bring It On

By Jim Wallis, Executive Director
Sojourners Magazine, Washington, DC

In the recently published collection of excerpts from William Sloane Coffin's speeches and sermons—Credo—appears this gem: “When the rich take from the poor, it's called an economic plan. When the poor take from the rich, it's called class warfare. It must be wonderful for President Bush to deplore class warfare while making sure his class wins.”

The administration's 2005 federal budget amply illustrates Bill Coffin's point. As *The Wall Street Journal* put it, “The budget reflects the president's top political priorities—taxes and security—at the expense of other domestic programs.”

Once again, the highest priority is more tax cuts for the wealthy, which have become the centerpiece of the Bush domestic policy. The budget proposes to make permanent the tax cuts from 2001 and 2003 that benefit high-income people, while not extending tax breaks for middle-income families. The second priority is further huge increases for the military and fighting terrorism. The budget proposes a 7 percent increase for military spending and a 10 percent increase for the Department of Homeland Security. And all that's before returning in the fall for what the administration admits will likely be as much as \$50 billion in additional funding for the continuing occupation of Iraq.

And what of domestic priorities—especially the vast array of programs that benefit poor and working families? According to *The New York Times*, the budget calls for the elimination of 65 programs and cuts in 63 more. Those to be eliminated altogether include community development block grants, HOPE VI public housing renovation, rural housing and economic development, and juvenile crime prevention grants. Those cut include a 7 percent reduction for the Environmental Protection Agency, along with programs to deal with dropout prevention, support for local police and firefighters, and funds for guidance counselors in elementary schools.

Many other programs are frozen—which means that when inflation and an increase in those needing services are factored in, in reality they're cut as well. Freezing the maximum Pell Grant level at a time when more students are trying to attend college means smaller grants. Freezing funding for after-school programs means that more than 1 million children won't have access any longer to those programs (I wonder how they will occupy themselves in those critical post-school hours?). Freezing Head Start funding means fewer low-income kids getting the school prepara-

tion that poor children most need.

HEARD ENOUGH? It gets worse. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analyzed thousands of pages of Office of Management and Budget computer runs and discovered that starting in 2006 and continuing over the next five years, the administration proposes to cut overall funding for domestic discretionary programs other than homeland security by \$50 billion—an 11.5 percent cut from today's level. To take one example, cuts in the Child Care and Development Block Grant would mean that the number of children from low-and moderate-income families who receive childcare assistance would be cut by at least 200,000, up to as many as 365,000 children by 2009.

Of course, the budget also reveals a record deficit of \$500 billion dollars, deficits that will guarantee even more radical cuts for poor families in the years ahead. A hard analysis of the federal budget reveals that the primary reason for the astounding deficit and the resultant cuts for the poor is more than just the huge increases for war and security. The biggest cause for greatly reduced federal revenues is the Bush tax cuts, which they now want to make a permanent fixture of U.S. tax policy.

That's why a little story from Alabama this year, only briefly covered by the U.S. media, is so significant to us at *Sojourners*. Susan Pace Hamill is a law professor who went to seminary and decided to apply Judeo-Christian ethics to tax policy. Her conclusions caused a political conversion in her state's conservative, Republican governor, who proposed far-reaching tax reforms in the state that would relieve tax burdens for the working poor while increasing the tax share of its wealthiest citizens and business interests. One woman had stirred a revolutionary tax debate in the Bible Belt. Against a well-financed campaign, the governor's reforms went down to defeat. But Alabama may be only the beginning....

Is helping the rich the best way to benefit the poor? It's time for those who believe so to just come out and say it. Then the rest of us, like Susan Pace Hamill, can apply biblical ethics to the issue. As for a national debate about tax policies and Christian principles in an election year, I say bring it on. ■

Note: This article was first published in *Sojourners*, April 2004, and is reprinted with permission from *Sojourners*. (800) 714-7474, www.sojo.net.

Stealing Jesus?

By James L. Evans, Pastor
First Baptist Church, Auburn, AL

Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ* continues to set box office records. Hyped as one of the most powerful evangelistic tools ever made, a big chunk of Gibson's earnings are the direct result of church activity. Congregations across the country have bought thousands of tickets and literally bussed people to theaters to see the film.

Of course, that is a good bit better than another approach that came my way recently. A gentleman offered to sell me a "bootleg" copy of *The Passion*. With the film still in theaters I knew he could not have pirated the movie from the Internet or from a DVD original. But somehow he had managed to get his hands on a full copy of the film.

"I can make you a copy cheap," he told me.

"Isn't that illegal?" I asked him.

"Oh, don't worry about that," he said. "I won't tell anyone. Besides, just imagine the blessing it will be for your folks to see the story of Jesus right here in church."

I declined his offer without commenting on the irony. I knew it was a lost cause when I told him I preferred the book over the movie.

He just stared at me for a moment as if to say, "There's a book?" I do wonder, however, what he thinks we do here Sunday after Sunday if not celebrate the story of Jesus.

With this incident fresh on my mind I was surprised to read about the results of a survey commissioned recently by the Gospel Music Association. It turns out that Christian teens are as likely to steal songs electronically as any other music fan. According to the survey 77% of born-again Christian teenagers admitted that they had illegally downloaded Christian music.

These things trouble me. Whether in film or song, the idea of stealing Jesus seems awash in contradictions. What sort of moral gymnastics does it take to reach the place where you believe that as a Christian obeying the law is optional?

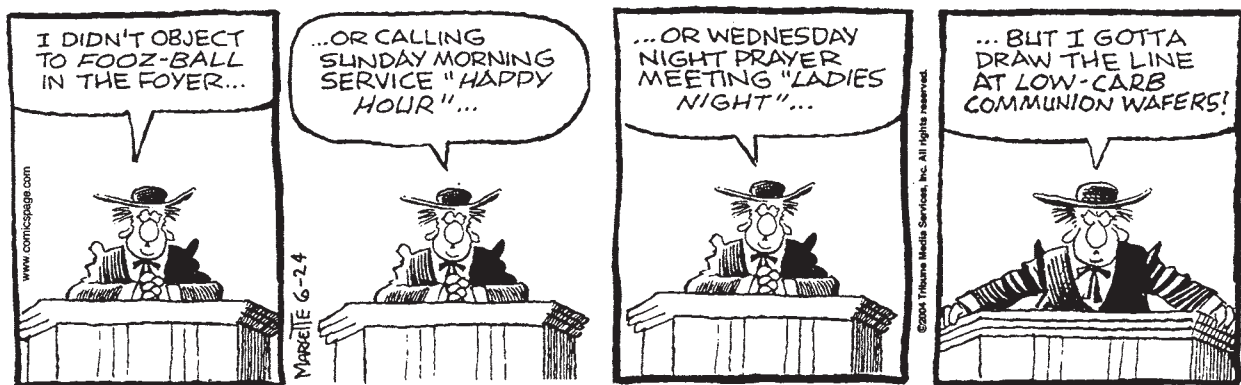
Of course, it may be a case of the apple not falling far from the tree. Next month Alabama Baptists will hold their annual Deacon's Retreat in Talladega. One of the featured speakers is former Chief Justice Roy Moore.

Baptist Deacons are supposed to be cream of the Christian crop. The New Testament insists that deacons be "above reproach." If that is so, why would they invite as a featured speaker a judge who was removed from office for breaking the law? Doesn't this legitimize law-breaking?

Of course we are all familiar with the mind numbing arguments concerning Judge Moore's case. Judge Moore is not a real lawbreaker, we are told, because the law he broke is not a real law. The Federal Court he defied is not a real court. And while we are at it, the panel of judges that removed him from office had no legal authority.

We can play this game if we want to—deciding on our own what laws and which courts will have jurisdiction over us. But don't be surprised when our children and our neighbors decide to ignore the laws they don't like.

First it was Federal courts with their meddling in race and religion. Now it's the pesky property rights of artists, musicians, and filmmakers that get in our way. God help us if some group with a sense of spiritual privilege and holy elitism ever decides the Constitution is in the way. God help us all. ■



What Do I Do Now?

By Hal Haralson, Attorney
Austin, Texas

The first step I took after leaving the ministry was to write the First Baptist Church of Loraine, Texas. This church had licensed me and later ordained me. The small rural church (Loraine, pop. 700) had supported and encouraged me for ten years. Leonard Hartley, the pastor, was my mentor.

They responded to my letter requesting that they revoke my ordination with their own letter stating, "We don't know what to do; we've never done that."

My reply was, "You're Baptist, vote on it."

They did.

I was no longer a preacher and vowed never to preach another sermon. That vow lasted twenty-three years.

The reader needs to know how difficult this decision was.

I had felt God's call to preach at age sixteen and continued in this direction for ten years. My education at Hardin-Simmons University and Southwestern Seminary (1 year) was preparation for being a preacher.

I married Judy Christian in 1956. She had come to Hardin-Simmons feeling that God had called her to marry a preacher. Judy's family and my family spoke with pride of their preacher son/son-in-law.

I pastored two churches during this ten-year period: one in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and one in Brackenridge, Texas. After ten years I wanted out.

How do I turn my back on God's call? How do I support my family when I'd never done anything but preach? What will be the effect on my wife, who had responded to God's call to be a minister's wife? What will others think of me? How do I admit failure?

The difficulty of dealing with these questions brought on deep depression.

After a suicide attempt, I was admitted to San Antonio State Hospital. The stay lasted three months and I was given thirteen shock treatments. I was diagnosed as being bi-polar.

The psychiatrist told me (after several sessions) that it was his opinion that if I did not leave the ministry, I would either take my life or spend most of it in a mental hospital.

Strangely, I felt a great sense of relief. I knew that this was not what God wanted for me. I knew that the right door would open when God was ready. I had God's permission to leave.

I got out of the State Hospital and went to Littlefield, Texas, to get Judy. Brad was born there five days later.

Now I had to find a job. We were deeply in debt and I needed to go to work as quickly as possible.

I told each prospective employer about the mental illness

and suicide attempt. I had to be honest with them. It took two months of interviews to find someone who would give me a chance. My first non-church job was that of personnel director for a corporation with 600 employees.

My time in the business world lasted six years. My last job was that of being the managing partner for two doctors. I ran a 35-bed hospital and clinic, managed their ranching interests, and handled all of their personal business. Eventually, the doctors purchased my portion of the partnership.

One of my former doctor-partners asked me, "What would you do, Hal, if you could do anything you wanted? Money is no problem."

I thought for a while. I had a wife and three children and I was 33 years old. What I needed was a profession where my mental illness would not be a handicap. I decided to become a lawyer. "I'd move to Austin and go to The University of Texas Law School," I replied.

Within two weeks (1968) I had been approved for admission without a prior application and without having taken the LSAT. I graduated three years later.

No one wanted to hire an "old man" (age 37), so I hung out a shingle and went to work. I was a solo practitioner in Austin for 30 years.

I experienced one more bout with depression during my first year of practice, which caused me to close my office for six months. When I started again, it was at a much slower pace. I found the right medication, lithium, which has allowed me to enjoy the past 35 years without an episode of depression.

Judy always felt a sense of personal loss after I left the ministry. Her role as a pastor's wife had been taken from her. But she never gave up on me. She has remained constant in her support during my business and legal careers.

Judy's empathy and wisdom and fortitude did not go unnoticed. Dr. William Denham, a noted minister and counselor, suggested that she go to graduate school (at age 40) and get her degree in educational psychology.

Judy followed his advice. For the past 25 years she has been a most effective professional psychotherapist. Twenty of those years have been in private practice. The void that had been created when I left the ministry was filled.

Let me share one particular incident that began to shape the rest of my life. Through it I realized that I still *am* a minister—we *all* are ministers—just not all *preachers*.

My secretary buzzed me and indicated that Don Anderson was on the phone. Don was a long-time friend

who was pastor of Manor Baptist Church in San Antonio.

“Hal, I’m going to be out of town on May 13, and I’d like for you to preach for me.”

“Don, I left the ministry and had my ordination revoked. I don’t do that anymore.”

“I’d still like to have you speak on Sunday morning. Why don’t you come on and do something?”

I reluctantly agreed and began to regret it as soon as I got off the phone. As the date approached, I was determined not to “preach.”

I really wasn’t sure what I was going to do until the service was turned over to me. I felt more and more as though it was time for me to open up and talk about my experience of leaving the ministry. So that’s what I did. It was the first time that I spoke publicly about my depression and my attempted suicide.

As I spoke at Manor Baptist Church that May morning, I noticed a man on the third row to my left. He was weeping. He cried all the way through the service. But he got up and left before I had an opportunity to speak to him.

That afternoon the phone rang. The voice on the other end of the line identified himself as the man who had cried during the service that morning. “I’ve got to talk to you,” the caller said.

We met at a well-known restaurant in San Antonio at three o’clock that day, and over coffee Eric spilled out his story.

“I’ve been an ordained Baptist minister for ten years. For the last several months I have been plagued by severe depression. Yesterday I told my wife that I was going to the grocery store, but I really went downtown. My plan was to loosen a window on the twentieth floor of a particular building and jump out today. My struggle over whether or not I should leave the ministry had taken all of my strength. Suicide seemed to be the only way out.”

“As I drove toward the building, I saw a sign that said Manor Baptist Church. Something inside me said that I should go to the worship service. I had no idea what I would hear. I had never even seen this church before. But this morning I listened to you. I was overwhelmed. It was as if God said to me, ‘I’ve been here all along.’”

Eric and I met two other times. I have seen him over the years at various meetings. He stayed in the ministry, became a chaplain, and retired last year—thirty years after his planned Sunday morning suicide.

As the result of that day I began to see that by sharing our experiences of life—our pain, our fears, our victories—we voice God’s message to others. Painful and traumatic experiences that are our “valley of the shadow of death” become our gift to those who listen. Through our sharing, God can say to someone else, “I’ve been here all along.” ■

God Is In Control— Do Not Be Afraid

By Dale Haralson, Attorney

Tuscon, AZ

Two thousand years ago on a stormy Galilean sea the disciples were told not to be afraid, God is in control. I tend to forget that God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

I was reminded of this truth a second time last summer. The first time was 20 years ago when I was diagnosed with metastatic throat cancer with less than a 5% chance of survival.

Last summer I was scheduled to begin a jury trial in Phoenix on July 15th against a major corporation for the death of a 15-year-old girl. My 38 years of trial practice told me it would take at least five weeks to try the case. Settlement negotiations had failed three weeks before. My client’s offer was four times that of the corporation offer and neither side would move.

I told the corporate defense counsel that his client had until Thursday afternoon, July 11th to accept the offer after which it would be withdrawn. I would be moving my files and trial staff to Phoenix the next day to prepare for trial and jury selection on Monday.

At about 10 a.m. on Thursday, my secretary told me the defense attorney was on the phone. When I answered he asked what I was doing. I just laughed. He then suggested that I take the rest of the day off. I responded, “Yeah, sure.” He said, “I am serious.” He finally convinced me that my last offer was accepted, no counteroffer and no negotiation. He said that he could not tell me what the reason was, but if I called him in eight months he might tell me why the offer was accepted.

Since I had planned to be in trial until the latter part of August, my wife, Betty, was planning to spend some time in Houston with our youngest daughter Wendy’s family to celebrate our granddaughter’s 1st birthday. I told Betty that I would catch up with my work and fly to Houston to have Jordan’s birthday celebration on Saturday the 3rd.

Friday morning, the 4th, Tim, Wendy, and I went to a nearby health club so I could get in my daily workout. I have had a cardio workout (maintaining a heart rate of 130 to 140 beats per minute) 5 or 6 days a week since I started running in 1975. In 1988 I began working with weights 4 days per week. Usually I did my cardio in the morning as soon as I got up and my weights at noon.

On this Friday morning I decided to do my weight workout and then 45 minutes on an elliptical cardio machine. After about 30 minutes of cardio I felt a little dizzy. I sat

down for a few minutes thinking I had just pushed a little too far by doing the two workouts together. While sitting, I felt slight pressure under the sternum but it cleared after sitting for a few minutes.

Afterwards we returned to my daughter's house where I took a nap in the afternoon. We went to Pappasito's Mexican Food restaurant for dinner and returned home around 9 p.m. As usual, I was in bed by 10:30.

About 3 a.m. I awoke feeling slightly nauseous and sweaty. I then realized that the pressure under the sternum had returned, along with a slight difficulty in breathing.

About 4:30 a.m. I began to think of a malpractice case I tried in Prescott 18 months before. The emergency room physician had failed to diagnose a silent heart attack. He had sent a 74-year old man home with Zantac for indigestion. His symptoms were nausea, epigastric discomfort (upper region of the abdomen) and clamminess. He didn't have chest pain, arm pain, shortness of breath or any of the "classic" symptoms. Neither did I. I thought it was probably just indigestion from that Mexican food.

Besides, 20 months before I had a complete cardiac workup by a cardiologist at Northwest Hospital in Tucson. I had been given a stress ECG (electrocardiogram), a nuclear stress ECG, and an echocardiogram. All interpretations were normal. I was told to come back in five years for another checkup.

As I lay in bed I went through all of the reasons that I could not possibly be having a heart attack. When Betty woke up at 7 a.m. she asked if I had slept well. I told her no and explained my concerns.

It was not a coincidence that Wendy and son-in-law Tim are both paramedics by profession. We called them downstairs and told them of my symptoms and concerns. They said I should be checked out immediately at Wendy's paramedic station, which was only three blocks away.

Her friends arrived within minutes and connected me to a portable 12 lead ECG. The lead paramedic's first comment was, "Sir, you have had a heart attack or you are just having one now." My reaction was a mixture of disbelief and affirmation that my suspicions were correct. According to their combined interpretation, I had already had the heart attack. Tim suggested Memorial Hermann Hospital. Wendy suggested that we hold hands while she led us in prayer.

It was a 45-minute ambulance ride to one of the best heart hospitals in the country. In route I reflected on the fact that 20 years before I had been diagnosed with "terminal" throat cancer and because of God's healing power and prayer chains from coast to coast the doctors had been proven wrong. I prayed that regardless of the severity of the heart attack, God would find it in His will to not only heal me but prevent my heart from being damaged.

As soon as we arrived, the emergency room physician ran a confirming ECG and drew blood for a cardiac enzyme study. The enzymes had already peaked and were on the way down which meant the heart attack had occurred long enough before the tests that certain medications called

thrombolytic agents could not be used.

They rushed me to the cardiology cath lab where an intervention cardiologist was waiting to perform an angiogram. I was in and out under the anesthesia, but I distinctly remember the razor-like incisions made in each groin. I was awake at one point when they showed me where the doctor had placed a double stent, a mesh-like tube to open the artery so blood could reach the heart. Knowing that an artery had been blocked, I could only wonder about the amount of damage to the heart from the lack of blood. I again prayed that the damage would be minimal.

Later I learned that the angiogram showed 100% blockage of the Left Anterior Descending Artery (LAD), the main artery supplying blood to the left ventricle, affectionately known in the medical literature as the "widow maker." If it is blocked for 30 minutes you are usually dead. The doctor told Betty that if I survived, I would probably be totally disabled and not be able to return to work.

While they were inserting the stents, my blood pressure dropped so low they had to assist my heart by inserting an Intra Aortic Balloon Pump (IABP). Because they almost lost me, they chose not to stent the circumflex artery which was 70% blocked.

Betty, my two daughters and I celebrated my 65th birthday on August 7th on the cardiology floor with cupcakes provided by a wonderful hospital staff. I stayed in the hospital for one week. I then began cardiac rehab in Houston for five days.

The beginning of the third week I was back in my office 6 to 8 hours per day, as well as rehab at the University of Arizona Medical Center. After one hour per day for six weeks, they told me to continue my normal workout schedule and my cardiologist told me I had no restrictions. Betty and I took Tim, Wendy and Tim's daughters skiing over the Christmas holiday.

Consider these "coincidences": (1) If I had not represented Mrs. Dansky (whose husband died from a "silent" heart attack), I would not have understood a "silent" heart attack; (2) If my trial had not settled unexpectedly, I still would have been in Phoenix working; (3) If I had not been in Houston with my paramedic daughter and son-in-law, I would have just drunk Maalox for indigestion; and (4) If I had not been near one of the best heart hospitals in the country, I would have been far from help.

Eight months after my heart attack, I called the corporate defense lawyer and asked him why the case settled. He said that as his staff was on the way to the courthouse to mark the exhibits for trial he received a phone call from one of his superiors. He was told that the in-house lawyer in charge of the supervision of my case had been promoted unexpectedly and needed the next three months to prepare for his new position. He could not spend five weeks supervising my case, so he told defense counsel to accept the offer.

God is in control. As my older brother, Hal, told me, "God isn't through with you yet." ■

The Reagan Mantle

By Martin E. Marty

Friday at 4:44, four papers on our porch sometimes provide editorial-opinion texts for Sightings on deadline day. This past Friday (June 11), President Reagan's funeral gave a theme to several, but not all. In the *Chicago Tribune*, Richard Norton Smith, former director of the Reagan Presidential Library, attributes Reagan's outlook on life to childhood. He "imbibed from his mother, Nelle, a fundamentalist [better: "conservative Protestant"] belief that everything happened according to God's plan... and a sense of personal destiny that, unleavened by humor, might easily be confused with messianism."

William P. Clark, a member of the Reagan cabinet, editorializes in the *New York Times*, contra Mrs. Reagan, against using stem cell research to fight Alzheimer's disease. When opposing abortion in 1983, the then President spoke of "the truth of human dignity under God" and "respect for the sacred value of human life." Clark believes that Reagan "would also have questioned picking the people's pocket to support commercial research." God was not quoted.

In *The Wall Street Journal*, Paul Kengor, author of *God and Ronald Reagan*, first explains why as President he almost never went to church in Washington: security reasons. "Reagan decided to quit going. A lack of faith had nothing to do with it." Religiously, he spoke of a "crusade" against the Soviet Union for its "official atheism." March, 1983: "There is sin and evil in the world, and we're enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might." Reagan "was a devout Christian, a Protestant who felt a keen fellowship with Catholics and Jews." Bottom line, thanks to the Disciples of Christ preachers in his childhood, he would like

"to have been eulogized as a man of God who exercised a form of practical Christianity."

Friendliness to the late President does not always extend to the current one who claims his mantle. In the *Chicago Sun-Times*, contrarian Bonnie Erbe watches the Bush campaign "recruiting people in 'friendly congregations'" to engage in politicking which, says a former IRS official, finds the president "encouraging churches to break federal tax laws" (which specifically prohibit nonprofit organizations from engaging in partisan political activity).

Finally, in the same paper, Father Andrew Greeley, an outspoken critic of the administration, tries to account for its dark side. "I would suggest that it is the mix of Calvinist religious righteousness and 'my-country-right-or-wrong' patriotism that dominated our treatment of blacks and American Indians," and, against Mexico and Spain, promoted "manifest destiny" for America "to do whatever it wanted to do, because it was strong and virtuous and chosen by God."

"Today many Americans celebrate a 'strong' leader . . . who claims an infallibility that exceeds that of the pope . . . a leader with a firm 'Christian' faith in his own righteousness." The people who surround him—Greeley names names—"are practitioners of the Big Lie." Together they promote "an America-worshipping religion." So "it is time to return to [earlier American] generosity and grace."

And the American past remains up for grabs. ■

Note: Reprinted by permission from *Sightings*, the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago Divinity School.



Blame Women

By Robert Parham, Executive Director

Baptist Center for Ethics, Nashville, TN

Always blame women when things go badly. That's the first rule of thumb for Southern Baptist fundamentalists.

Who caused the horrendous sex abuse scandal at the Abu Ghraib prison?

The implicit answer is women in the military, according to a Baptist Press column, which picked up the emerging theme among right-wing columnists that argues against women in the military.

The BP column highlighted the role of Pfc. Lynndie England, who has been seen in pictures around the world smiling, giving the thumbs-up sign, pointing at a naked man's genitals, and holding a dog leash around the neck of an Iraqi prisoner.

England's actions, the columnist suggested, are the result of accomplishments of the aggressive feminists of the 1970s and 1980s—along with the Clinton administration, which institutionalized the feminist agenda.

"The presence of women in combat forces degrades humanity" and sends "all the wrong messages about family, gender and moral honor," wrote columnist Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

As a proof-text to justify his opposition to women in the military, he cited Joshua 1:14, which said that both wives and cattle were to remain behind while men went to war.

"The inclusion of women in combat military units is a challenge to the moral character of the American people," he wrote.

While Mohler implicitly blames women for America's humiliation in Iraq, one wonders if women are the indirect target of a resolution likely to be debated at this month's Southern Baptist Convention on the alleged "godless" nature of public schools.

T. C. Pinckney, a former SBC vice-president, and Bruce

Shortt, a Texas lawyer, have submitted a resolution that calls Christians to abandon the public school system.

If public schools are "dark and decaying" and teach "the homosexual lifestyle," as Pinckney and Shortt claim, then who is to blame? It must be women. After all, they are at the heart of the public school system. Since women make up most of the teachers, administrators, and school board members, women must be responsible for the situation in "government schools."

Pinckney and Shortt contend that "it is foolish for Christians to give their children to be trained in the schools run by the enemies of God."

Opposition to their resolution comes from those whose wives are public school teachers, suggesting that they discern the embedded anti-women mentality in the anti-public school message.

Blaming women for problems is a recurring theme with fundamentalists.

As early as 1984, when fundamentalists were seeking control of the SBC, the convention adopted a resolution against the ordination of women. The resolution noted that "the man was first in creation and woman was first in the Edenic fall."

Translation: sin entered the world through women.

Twenty years later, fundamentalists own the SBC. Their new faith statement assigns women to one role—managing the home, not professions like the military and education.

Apparently, when women get outside their God-ordained roles, then bad things happen.

Hmmmm. ■

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Bring the Soldiers Home

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

“Lay all your cards on the table,” I once exhorted my hearers, seeking to enhance their sense of dedication to Jesus.

I was a student preacher at the time and my mentor later suggested I avoid sermonic images and illustrations drawn from questionable practices. Card-playing fell into that category of “questionable practices” as did dancing and drinking during my adolescent years.

He was right, I suppose, and I now relate that story to my own preaching students.

But the lyrics of a Kenny Rogers song keep running through my head as I think about the cacophony of questionable practices now occupying the time and attention of American soldiers on the far side of the world.

“You’ve got to know when to hold them, know when to fold them, know when to walk away, know when to run.”

What works at the card table can also work on the battlefield.

It is time to fold our tents, pack our guns, and hand to somebody else the task of reforming Arab society in the deserts of Iraq.

What the President proclaimed last year is doubly true today: mission accomplished.

The only reasonable mission justifying our incursion into Iraq has been accomplished. Saddam has been toppled and no weapons of mass destruction have been found. We have supported our troops. We have prayed for their safety and success as they followed the commander in chief. However, it is time to bring the soldiers home.

The longer we stay, the worse it will be.

Already, the war has disrupted more lives, killed more people, demanded more money, and misdirected more energy than ever imagined.

The recent revelations of mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners demonstrate that American soldiers, instead of resisting the evils we pledged to eliminate, have been drawn into the very vortex of violence that we once vigorously denounced. We are justly shocked.

On top of all of this, the American invasion of Iraq has damaged what little credibility we once enjoyed in the region. The longer this Western army occupies that Eastern land the more deeply ingrained in imaginations of the people will be a deep dislike for all things American.

This includes our religion.

It is time for Muslim soldiers and statesmen from all across the globe to take up the task of building a civil society in Iraq. It is time for Christian soldiers and statesmen to return to their families and their employers all across these United States.

If the wider Muslim community, from England to Indonesia, feels no obligation to assist in the rebuilding of Iraq, none of the ideas, activities, or investments of Americans will succeed in bringing to Iraq the ideals and institutions we hold so dear.

It is time for Muslim people to address Muslim situations. It is time for Middle Eastern countries to solve Middle Eastern problems.

It is time for what the psychologists call differentiation—clarifying our role as an outsider to the core conflict, removing ourselves from the center of action, and leaving the primary parties to work through their differences.

In spite of our good intentions and our great resources, there is only so much Americans can do. Leaders of the United Nations might fare better.

Regardless, it is time to bring our soldiers home.

Other empires might succeed where we cannot, because other empires engage in the type of massive brutality unacceptable to us.

When Jerusalem rebelled against Rome in the year 66 of this era, the Roman legions simply leveled the city and killed its inhabitants—men, women, and children. When the Jews rebelled again fifty years later, the Romans engaged in even more severe destruction and devastation.

Empires of the past offer many illustrations of this type of problem-solving: Hebrew, Babylonian, Mongol, European, and Chinese—not to mention both Christian and Muslim.

But the current public outcry at the military mismanagement of Iraq prisoners demonstrates that American people would not tolerate the type of brutality other regimes have used to quell resistance.

Such tactics are not acceptable to American people. Neither are they acceptable to the Iraqi people.

Neither are they acceptable to the Christian and Muslim communities today.

It is time to bring the soldiers home. ■

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What Fox Does Can't Be Called News

By John Young, Editorial Writer

By Permission of the Waco Tribune-Herald

Geneva Overholser is a new hero for journalists everywhere.

She has made a resounding statement on one of the signature issues of the information age: the bastardization of the word “news.”

Woodward and Bernstein were heroes of another age in journalism. They changed history with their guileful pursuit of the truth. We need new heroes who are more interested in truth than in polishing the shoes of the powerful and playing to the audience's urges.

Overholser, now a University of Missouri professor, is former ombudsman of the *Washington Post* and editor of the *Des Moines Register*. She is a true newswoman, unlike some of the characters we'll discuss in a moment.

Recently Overholser resigned from the board of the National Press Foundation when it decided to honor Fox News' Brit Hume at its annual dinner.

“Fox wants to do news from a certain viewpoint, but it wants to claim that it is ‘fair and balanced,’” she said.

Clearly, Overholser's protest was aimed more at Fox than at Hume, who served for a real news organization, ABC, before bringing credibility's veneer to Fox.

Hume's qualifications are close to irrelevant, anyway. What's most relevant is that the man who runs Fox News, Roger Ailes, was a political hack in his previous life.

As campaign director for George H.W. Bush in the 1988 race against Michael Dukakis, Ailes set new standards for low blows. He is to attack ads what Edison was to electrocutions. Now here he is, shilling for fairness and objectivity, and Bill O'Reilly.

“The O'Reilly Factor” is touted by Fox News as “the No. 1 prime-time program on cable news.” That says it all about the state of what passes as “news” in 2004. O'Reilly is not a newsman but a drummer.

Drumbeaters have their place in history, like beside the fife and flag. In the elective war against Iraq, Fox and O'Reilly assumed the position. Last year before the invasion, O'Reilly said that if American forces didn't find weapons of

mass destruction, “I will apologize to the nation, and I will not trust the Bush administration again.”

Only recently, challenged on-air by ABC's Charles Gibson, did O'Reilly do that, of a sort, saying, “I am much more skeptical of the Bush administration now.”

The next day O'Reilly was back to his normal self, essentially portraying the WMD matter as secondary to ousting bad man Saddam. If George Bush had made WMD secondary, we would not have 100,000 troops in Iraq today.

It is extremely unfortunate that the Charles Gibsons of the world do not hold, say, Colin Powell, to account for drumbeating that leads a nation to war on false pretenses. We certainly don't expect Bill O'Reilly to ask those questions.

Then there's Sean Hannity, who gives rosy cheeks to “ugly American.” Using Fox face time, and expanding on it ad nauseam on his syndicated radio show, he pumped a rumor about a John Kerry affair, based in part on a bogus quotation by the alleged lover's father.

That may pose as news where Hannity lives and works, but not where Geneva Overholser has lived and worked.

The problem, of course, is that any organization can call what it presents “news” and sufficient numbers will accept it. The proof that Fox is “fair and balanced” is that it says it is. And Bush and Powell were using the “best intelligence available” because they say it was.

They, like Fox owner Rupert Murdoch, command a massive propaganda machine. They'll call it what they want. Call it news.

The National Rifle Association recently said that it would seek to purchase a TV or radio station and declare itself a news organization to exempt itself from limits in the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law. Outrageous—except when you consider that Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network has a “news bureau” and a nightly “news report.”

Ideological spin portrayed as “news” always finds willing ears. It's good to hear of a true newswoman who honors the difference. ■

Book Reviews

a rhythm for my life

Kenneth L. Chafin. Edmond, Oklahoma: Greystone Press, 2003.

Reviewed by James E. Carter, Ret.

Director, Church-Minister Relations Division, Louisiana Baptist Convention

Those who knew Kenneth Chafin knew him variously as a pastor, a professor of both evangelism and preaching at the two largest Southern Baptist seminaries, a director of evangelism for Southern Baptists, a dean of the Billy Graham Schools of Evangelism, an author, and a friend. Or they may have known him as all of these.

Now they can know him as a poet.

Kenneth Chafin wrote poetry in the last decade of his life. Some of the poems were published. Most of his poems were not previously published. Some were shared in poetry readings. Many of them were not shared publicly.

This book is arranged in two parts. The poems included in Part I are in the order that Chafin himself arranged the poems for public readings in both Louisville, Kentucky, and Houston, Texas. The poems in Part II are grouped under four headings: Friends, Family, Nature, and Introspection (although the Preface indicates five headings, poems on Places apparently are included in other sections, a minor editing glitch).

The signature poem, and the poem from which the book gets its title, "a rhythm for my life," introduces the book. In the form of a prayer, the poem commences with the words: "Help me to find a rhythm for my life/ in keeping with my strength, my gifts,/ my opportunities, my commitments,/ and thy larger purpose."

Chafin always had the ability to focus on the central issue in any discussion and to express his thoughts in simple but profound language. Never at a loss for words, these words are expressed simply, eloquently, and honestly in his poetry.

That he loved and cherished his family is evident in the poems devoted to family. The poems entitled "Barbara" written for his wife on Mother's Day, 1996, "Random Thoughts on our Anniversary," "A Gift for Nancy's Birthday," and "Beach Vacation" express this love.

Chafin especially enjoyed his farm, Windy Hill, in central Texas. Not only were many of the poems written there, the subject of the farm, farming, the creatures, and nature figure prominently in his poems. He wrote of "Haying in North Austin County," "Consider the Birds," and "View from My Window," for instance, on those subjects.

Kenneth Chafin was an early, and often strident, voice in the controversy that consumed Southern Baptists for over twenty years. That this controversy was very personal, as well as very disturbing, to him is reflected in some of his poetry. "Rage!" is one of the longer poems in the work, and it opens with the words "Doctor Laman Gray sawed open my chest,/ Found three arteries clogged with rage,/ Not cholesterol from too much animal fat/ But the residue from stay-

ing mad for a decade."

This is followed by "Baptists in Babylon." Both of these poems were chosen by Chafin for public readings. Beginning with a citation of the firing of Russell Dilday as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, each of the five stanzas of the poem ends with the refrain, "Welcome to Babylon and the captivity!" The poem is marked with both the theological insight and the political awareness that Chafin displayed in those years.

Further observations on his ministerial brethren are in the poems, "The Street Preacher" and "Today's Prophets."

Some of the most poignant pieces center around the illness and subsequent death from lung cancer of Ernie White, a professorial colleague at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. These poems assume additional meaning when you realize that Chafin himself died from leukemia.

Poems like "Letting the Silence Tell It All," "Today We Took a Holiday from Talk of Death," and "Prayer to a Dying Friend" are representative of this group. "Ode to an Alzheimer's Patient" was written in Barbara's voice concerning her care for her mother with Alzheimer's disease. It was reprinted several times and used in other significant ways.

His rural childhood and its importance in shaping his life and values are seen in such poems as "Rain on a Cedar Roof," "The Ballinger Place," and "The Newlyweds-1925."

The book was done in collaboration with Barbara Chafin and the three Chafin children. The Preface of the book characterizes the author and his poetry with these words: "His [Chafin's] poetry shows that he was a loving husband, a father of three exceptional children, and a man who loved the country, nature, and the porch swing at the family farm. He enjoyed singing to the cows, talking to the birds, and fishing and frying up a skillet of bass. In particular, he liked small town diners and getting to know the local people. Favorite foods were Texas barbeque and rural cooking (p. xii)."

The porch swing motif is utilized in a sketch of a porch swing on both the opening and closing pages of the book. On the next to the last page, a picture of Chafin half reclined on a porch swing with his straw hat at a rakish angle and his boots in your face, catches the mood of the moment and the importance of the porch swing for rest and reflection.

Chafin said it: "Poems are often made of/ old memories and feelings/ that try to interpret events/ to get behind the literal/ to the truth."

He does that in these poems. Both those who knew Chafin and those who knew of Chafin will profit from these poems. ■

Note: See the "SPECIAL OFFER" for this book elsewhere in the Journal.

Is the Market Moral?

Rebecca M. Blank and William McGurn,
Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC, 2004.

Reviewed by Darold Morgan

Richardson, TX

Two very capable and articulate authors bring their expertise and personal convictions to a subject which all of us need urgently to put into focus—the new imperatives of a global economy! Like it or not, this subject is on our doorstep and it is here to stay. What we have in this well-written book is a serious examination of morality, productivity, and freedom—globally!

Rebecca Blank is an economist and dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. Additionally, she describes herself as "culturally Protestant in habits of mind and heart." She adds that these are deeply embedded in her behavior and thoughts. William McGurn is the *Wall Street Journal's* chief editorial writer and member of its editorial board. A practicing Catholic, a graduate of Notre Dame, he brings his point of view to these economic issues, convinced that cultural values take precedence over the markets of the world. Both agree that people are most prosperous when they are free and living in a culture where spiritual priorities are given their proper perspective.

Basically, there are two main chapters of the book. First, Blank has an extensive and intensive presentation of the "Market Economy" through what she dubs "the Lens of Faith." The second comes from McGurn who gives us a lengthy essay on "Markets and Morals." The balance of this rather short book is a dialogue of responses to each other. Frankly, this well can be the most interesting part of this unusual approach to the usually dry subject of economics. Both of the authors are committed Christians that earnestly want to see a vast improvement of Christian sensitivities to capitalism in its most fundamental form...the market economy involving not only stocks and bonds, but the wider world of raw products and services as well. It is apparent that both authors are quite knowledgeable about how the World markets function as globalization continues to reshape current thinking. Blank adds a strong conclusion when she states that "economists are more conversant with theology than are theologians with economics." (92). This leads naturally to the evaluation that much of the criticism of the economic markets of our fast-changing world come from well-intentioned theologians whose grasp of these issues is fragmentary and even warped. This has led to some rather unbalanced proposals on wealth distribution and political change which has caused not only a lot of irritation on the part of responsible political leaders but a negative reaction to some serious problems brought on by a global market imbalance.

But the authors strongly agree that the long hoped for virtue in these markets depend upon the individuals whose work and influence shape the economy of multiple countries around the world. McGurn argues more emphatically for personal integrity reflected in honesty, courage, diligence and a balanced unselfishness in these ongoing economic decisions. Blank, while accepting this premise, goes much further into the necessity of accompanying governmental involvement, which would mandate corrective actions.

The deep differences between a Catholic mind-set and the Protestant shaping of thought emerge repeatedly throughout the book. These are not confrontational and are very helpful to see both sides of the issue. McGurn concludes properly and kindly, "I had the feeling we were saying much the same things."

The issue is highly relevant—"Creating a Virtuous Economy." Christians have a unique role in being sensitive to the issues of investments, justice and decency in the markets of the world. Almost daily new stories reveal actions that are anything but Christian. These stories reflect a depth of selfishness, which is sometimes beyond description.

Currently huge wealth is being generated and its acquisition and use demands Christian sensitivity to the limitless needs of the poor and underprivileged worldwide.

These tensions are far from new, but here is an interesting, well-written book, which uses a fascinating format, which encourages all of us to come to a higher ethical standard. One could hope that the shakers and movers in the investment world, nationally and internationally, would read and apply some of these enduring Christian guidelines. ■

There's No Such Thing as Business Ethics: There's Only One Rule for Making Decisions

John C. Maxwell, Warner Books, 2003.

*Reviewed By Dr. Alan G. Phillips, Jr.
and David H. Brownell*

Indiana State University and Lincoln College (Illinois)

In an ambitious effort to address recent corporate scandals, John Maxwell offers his leadership insights to the field of ethics and moral theory. Explaining the impetus behind the title and the content of his book, Maxwell recalls his past conversation with the man who suggested that he tackle the subject of business ethics, Laurence J. Kirshbaum, chairman and CEO of the AOL Time Warner Book Group. After being approached with the prospect of a book on business ethics, Maxwell recalls saying, "There's no such thing." His response to Kirshbaum's request for clarification is recounted in the book's preface. Maxwell said:

There's no such thing as business ethics—there's only ethics.

People try to use one set of ethics for their professional life, another for their spiritual life, and still another at home with their family. That gets them into trouble. Ethics is ethics. If you desire to be ethical, you live by one standard across the board (Preface).

Here, Maxwell challenges the idea that ethics can be applied in one field of activity and separated from another arena of life.

According to the approach developed in this book, the ethical rule that governs business is the same as the one that governs family life or religious thought. There should be one standard of conduct across boundaries of work, leisure, and worship, and adherence to this single rule will serve as a guide for all areas of human concern.

The single, across-the-board standard that Maxwell has in mind is the Golden Rule which he cites as the one standard that people of different religions and cultures embrace in one form or another (22-23). He explains, "It is clear that the Golden Rule cuts across cultural and religious boundaries and is embraced by people from nearly every part of the world. It's the closest thing to a universal guideline for ethics a person can find" (23).

Maxwell also points out that in addition to being embraced across the cultural divide the Golden Rule is accepted as a matter of "common sense" in the lives of individuals. He points out that "everyone wants to be treated well. Even people who pursue unhealthy relationships or who engage in destructive behavior don't *desire* or consciously seek bad treatment from others. It is not unreasonable for any person to desire good treatment from others. Nor is it asking too much to expect people to treat others well" (24-25). For Maxwell, asking the question, "How would I like to be treated in this situation?" is a firm foundation for an ethical approach uncluttered by the complicated musings of theologians, lawyers, and philosophers who have left people in other fields bewildered and confused (20).

In the process of explaining and illustrating how the Golden Rule can lead to a successful life, Maxwell identifies the barriers that can deter an individual from adopting this single standard as "the integrity guideline" for their lives (58). The temptations of pressure, pleasure, power, pride and misplaced priorities are examined by Maxwell in the fifth chapter of his book. Here, he attempts to guide readers through a tangled forest of factors "that most often come into play when someone compromises his ethics" (73). Using his signature arsenal of real life illustrations from the business world and some personal soul-searching of his own at the end of this chapter, the author allows the reader to see how following this seemingly simple rule can pose a major challenge.

After detailing the obstacles encountered along the path toward morality, Maxwell turns to the constructive task of examining the steps needed for "seizing golden opportunities" in the next chapter. These steps involve the following detailed laundry list:

1. Take responsibility for your actions.
2. Develop personal discipline.
3. Know your weaknesses.
4. Align your priorities with your values.
5. Admit wrongdoing quickly and ask forgiveness.
6. Take extra care with finances.
7. Put your family ahead of work.
8. Place a high value on people. (93-105)

In the following chapter, Maxwell takes readers back to the ancient Greek myth of King Midas who was granted the "golden touch," an ability he had to lose in order to regain what really mattered in his life. In this part of his book, the author contrasts those with a "single-minded fixation on wealth" with others who take their focus off selfish ambition and refocus on "adding value to others" (111). Once again, he gives practical advice to the reader about *how* to develop the right kind of Midas touch in daily life. It involves treating others better than they treat you, what Maxwell calls "the Platinum Rule," an interesting supplement (and contrast) to the Golden Rule he advocates throughout his book (113-114). He tells readers to "try to *be kind* instead of treating people *in kind*" (114). In addition to observing the Platinum Rule, readers are challenged to "walk the second mile," help others who cannot help them, do what's right when "it's natural to do wrong," and keep promises "even when it hurts" (112-123).

His concluding chapter attempts to focus on the contrast between those people who "go for the gold" versus those who are wise enough to "go for the Golden Rule" (129). He briefly examines a list of those "captains of industry" of the 1920s who put monetary wealth first and then lost their fortunes and positions in society (129-130). He contrasts such individuals with a friend of his who lived by the Golden Rule and did succeed both financially and interpersonally. The book ends with Maxwell's concluding sentiment, "People who live by the Golden Rule give themselves a chance to have it all!" (134).

There's No Such Thing as Business Ethics has both strengths and weaknesses to offer those who want to learn more about the role of ethics in business. In terms of strengths, it contributes several things. First, it challenges the assumption that we can compartmentalize our lives and assume multiple value sets. On this front, I think Maxwell exposes a weakness of a particular form of "situation ethics," one that can lean on relevance as a ready-made excuse for short-sighted convenience, inconsistent behavior, or personal gain (8-9).

Secondly, Maxwell's attempt to simplify ethical issues by minimizing philosophical and theological jargon is admirable, given the many works that have never entered serious public discourse because of specialized terminology that intimidates without illuminating the serious issues of our time. His user-friendly style is a breath of fresh air in a field dominated by dense, often inaccessible, work.

Finally, his use of reflective self-quizzes and questions at the end of each chapter gives the book the benefit of being both a text and workbook in one. Maxwell's attentiveness to the need for reflective components in this and other previous works is profitable for those who have teaching and applied leadership training in mind.

Despite its strengths, the book is riddled with some difficulties. To begin with, Maxwell is insistent on the need for only one rule in ethics: the Golden Rule. In the Preface he states, "If you desire to be ethical, you live by one standard across the board." At another point, Maxwell asserts, "I believe you will be able to use one guideline to govern all your ethical decision making. It's based on the Golden Rule" (21). Later, under a heading entitled "One Rule for Everyone," he explains, "There are really only two important points

(continued on page 13)

Summertime

By Foy Valentine, Founding Editor

Dallas, TX

Summertime is the best time of the year.

At least that’s my take on it.

I was born in July, you know. So when the sun is really bearing down, the weather by day and by night is hot as blazes, and even the trees seem ready to lie down and pant, then everything seems to me to be in place just as it ought to be and “God’s in his heaven: All’s right with the world,” as Robert Browning had Pippa, the quintessential Pollyana, to say.

No other season has such a wonderfully high-class song written about it: “That Good Old Summertime.”

No other season is associated so warmly (get it?) with such a kaleidoscope of pleasant memories, particularly from childhood.

And no other season can claim such a wide and varied and exciting menu of lovely things to do, lovely places to go, and lovely fresh things to eat.

Consider ten especially good things about the summertime.

1. *School Is Out.* Whee! This is great for kids. They have been cooped up for nine interminable months and deserve the break. Teachers deserve a breather, too. When one college professor was asked what he liked best about his profession, he answered, “Three things: June, July, and August.” Boys can go barefooted. Girls can spread out their dolls and play to their hearts’ content. I have known one youngster, who later became a top-flight electrical engineer, who, when school was out, regularly climbed up in his favorite tree and read book after book after book through the summer.
2. *Vacations.* In asking friends and family, grandchildren, and neighbors what they liked best about the summertime, I got more votes for vacations than anything else. People like trips. We crave the open road. We relish the prospect of change, of new scenes, of new restaurants, of new places to picnic, and of making new acquaintances who could become new friends. Farmers like to slow down and relax in the knowledge that the crops are laid by. Frenchmen rush headlong like migrating wildebeests to distant watering holes. Urbanites flee from their cities. Country people head for theme parks. Kids who can, go to camps. Church choirs do their annual junkets. Preachers warm over their old sermons for the congregations are mostly gone anyway and won’t be back until after Labor Day.
3. *Family Time.* The other seasons of the year seem so ever-

lastingly filled with things to do that family time easily gets left to the last and then left out. Summer permits better priorities. Families travel together, go to see kin-folks together, go fishing together, watch Fourth of July fireworks together, make ice cream together, do watermelon cuttings together, watch summer sunsets together, search the night skies for falling stars together, and enjoy family cookouts together. This family togetherness is for me one of the very best things about summertime.

4. *Catching Up.* During the other seasons of the year, things get put off. Reasonably important things get postponed so that attention can be focused on the most pressing things. Stuff requiring research, or reflection, or long distance telephone calls, or personal conferences get put in fat folders and pushed to a far side of the desk. Regular maintenance of all the machinery gets neglected and the squeaky wheel gets the grease. But summertime allows us to catch up, tie up the loose ends, and work through those stacks and files, doing those things that have to be done and throwing away those things whose deadlines have already passed. When summer’s longer days and less hectic schedules allow us to clean off our desks, tidy up our garages, make those long delayed visits, and do those necessary runs to the hardware stores, we are rewarded with a warm and fuzzy feeling of achievement and inner peace. Thank the Lord for summer’s provision of the chance to catch up.
5. *Summer Sounds.* Katydids, bullfrogs, hoot owls, whip-poorwills, mockingbirds, and quails with their audaciously bold and emphatically clear bobwhite calls are among the marvelous symphonists of summertime. The softer sounds of summer breezes and hummingbirds, and turtledoves with their gently plaintive cooing are also wonderfully memorable. (By the way, did you know that “turtle” is the very old Old English word for “dove” so that we have the King James Version of the Song of Solomon 2:12 rendered, “the voice of the turtle is heard in our land”?) My own boyhood days on the farm were close to many sounds that seem now to be especially identified with the summertime: roosters crowing, hens clucking, chicks cheeping, guineas pottracking, horses whinnying, cows mooing, and pigs squealing to signal that they knew it was feeding time—grunting contentedly when stretched out in the sun to be benignly scratched in the side with a handy corn cob

in the hand of a kindly human.

6. *Summer Flowers.* Vivid colors, glorious blossoms, and exquisite aromas are all part of the show. There are a couple of marvelously fragrant roses in my own small rose garden now whose heady perfumes are enough to make a body walk sideways. The big magnolia tree's abundance of fantastic blooms that permeated the area around my upstairs bedroom where I slept until I went away to college is still vividly clear in my memory. Honeysuckles, of course, are commonplace but nonetheless appreciated. Trumpet vine blossoms, irises, zinnias, gardenias, lilacs, begonias, the clematis with its extravagant display of big and bold bright purple blossoms, mandevilla, impatiens, and crape myrtle all have unique niches to fill in a salute to summer flowers. One of my all-time favorites is a glorious field of blue gentians growing wild in unfettered profusion in a great open meadow at 9,000 feet altitude in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Red River, New Mexico. Exquisite.
7. *Summer Games.* Baseball, of course, takes the cake. But softball, basketball, volleyball, and now soccer all have their special devotees. Touch football also draws its partisans into happy competition when a few friends have congregated and are physically able to run for a pass and then race, lumber, or lope for the back fence. Hide-and-go-seek is universally embraced and is best done in the summertime at dusk when the daylight is still lingering and the shadows of approaching night offer splendid places to crouch and avoid detection. My beloved wife of 57 years and I are happily content after supper with a rousing game of Scrabble as the summer sun sinks toward a glorious sunset seen from our west-facing picture window fades peacefully into night.
8. *Summer Gardens.* Fresh vegetables and fresh fruits are in. They deserve a ten-gun salute. Oh, I know about modern air-conditioned grocery stores with their produce flown in by refrigerated cargo planes from Chile and Australia and New Zealand and Israel and Costa Rica; and I am not ungrateful for this semi-fresh fare. The truth is, however, that these offerings cannot hold a candle to honestly vine ripened tomatoes, fresh corn pulled this morning, new potatoes, today's cutting of okra, sweet cantaloupes left on the vine until they are a solid sun-blessed yellow, and a ripe watermelon with a nice, green stem proving that this morning it happily nestled on the vine in its own watermelon patch. Furthermore, summer is, as far as I can determine, the God-ordained time to eat homemade fresh peach ice cream. Scraping the dasher is about as close as mortals are likely to get to the Elysian Fields of the Greek gods. Grilling out, moreover, is most happily done in the summertime. Whether the offering is chicken or hamburgers, steaks or wieners, ribs or shrimp, or marinated pork tenderloin. All offer special taste treats. My very best is pork chops slowly grilled to a golden brown with nothing added but a little salt and pepper and then gently enhanced with all beef

wieners also slowly grilled until split open by the heat, right down the middle.

9. *Summer Nights.* A walk outside in the cool of the evening is an unforgettable experience on a summer night. The stars are twinkling, a blazing meteor can be an occasional serendipity, and a distant bank of thunder heads illuminated now and then by sheet lightning are all noteworthy. Summer fireflies work a magic of their own. Then it is nearly heavenly on a summer night to go to bed with the windows open so as to relish a pleasant south breeze coming through a nearby magnolia with its uniquely heady perfume embracing you as you drift off into lala land.
10. *Summer Porching.* (I am indebted to my friend Kyle Childress, pastor of the Austin Heights Baptist Church in Nacogdoches, Texas, for enabling me to name this delicious experience. He credits a friend from Louisville, Kentucky for giving him the name when he presented him with "a copy of a small coffee-table style book" called *Porching: A Humorous Look at America's Favorite Pastime* by John H. Buchino, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics and Pathology at the University of Louisville School of Medicine.") To sit on the front porch and watch the world go by has to be one of summer's finest bequeathments to today's weary pilgrims. Especially after a hard morning's physical work and a hasty midday meal, a spell of porching can be just what the doctor ordered. A quick nap on a porch pallet can put icing on this cake. Another plus for porching is the rocking chair, for a little rocking can be our equivalent of what certain Hindu holy men do when they sit cross-legged on a tow sack and chant, "Om, Om, Om, Om" on and on. Although porching is something that has turned my motor over for as long as I can remember, now that I am in my really mature years, it has taken on a new aura of wondrous attraction. Please join me. I think it is not really necessary but you could ask your doctor if porching is right for you.

Why should these reflections about the good things of summertime have to end with ten? Just because God gave us ten digits on the ends of our arms, I suppose. Actually, there are many more reasons for saluting the summer season. I have written this less than scholarly treatise on the longest day of the year, however, and this is a reminder that all good things come to an end. Tomorrow the days will start getting shorter. Before we can catch our breaths, autumn will have come. Then the frosts will start. Then winter's icy grip will take hold. That will be the time to start looking toward spring. Then, presto, there will come once again "that good old summertime." ■

Editor's Note: On July 3rd Foy turned 81—you may wish to send him a belated birthday card at:

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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 in 1995, 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, 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 bi-monthly.

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