

# CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS    VOLUME 11, NUMBER 3    AGGREGATE ISSUE 55    SUMMER 2005

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

**Lessons From Shadowland** *Joe E. Trull*

**We've Got Mail**

**Why Are We Here?** *William L. Turner*

**The Ten Commandments and Public Piety** *Derek H. Davis*  
**EthixBytes**

**The President At Calvin College** *David Domke and Kevin Coe*

**"Justice" or "Just-Us" Sunday** *J. Brent Walker*

**Life After Shiavo** *Tarris D. Rosell*

**Terrorism, Religion, and War** *Sherman A. Hope*

**Can Terrorism Alerts Make You Ill?** *Charles Luke*

## POETRY

**Feeling A Draft** *Al Staggs*

**Wal-Mart and Human Dignity** *David W. Reid*

**The Two Swords of Pope Benedict XVI** *Ken A. Grant*

**Lost . . . In Tulia, Texas** *Hal Haralson*

**Myth: Baptists Don't Believe In Women Pastors** *Sheri Adams*  
**Adam's Rib** *Wilton H. Bunch*

**Stealth Baptist Church** *Mark W. Clark*

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Kingdom Ethics** *Reviewed by Jeph Holloway*

**Beyond The Age Of Innocence** *Reviewed by Darold H. Morgan*

**Fire In The Bedroll** *Reviewed by Dee Ann Miller*

**A Word on Words** *Foy Valentine*



**KUDZU** *by Doug Marlette*  
[www.dougmarlette.com](http://www.dougmarlette.com)

---

# Lessons From Shadowland

By Joe E. Trull, Editor

The struggles of C. S. Lewis in Shadowland I had read about and viewed in the screen drama. I never expected to visit that land myself. Yet Job-like, it crashed in upon our family without warning. A regular exam. A suspicious shadow. A biopsy. The startling words from the physician—"You have breast cancer."

Neither Audra nor I have ever expected immunity from disease or difficulty. Yet somehow we believed cancer would never visit our home. For most of our adult life we have eaten the right foods, exercised vigorously, avoided all cancer-causing agents, and taken regular exams. None of Audra's four older sisters or her mother had this disease.

But the tests were conclusive: aggressive invasive ductal adenocarcinoma. The months of April and May have been hectic, confusing, and often like a roller-coaster ride.

A wonderful surgeon explained with empathy and clarity Audra's condition. We had discovered the cancer early. A lumpectomy was needed, followed by radiation. We were elated. Our daughters and a son-in-law (a physician also) stood outside the surgeon's office hugging, crying, laughing, and praying—thanking God for the good news.

The surgery went so well—after three hours, Audra was released and she experienced no pain at all. The best news was no cancer found in the margins and none in the four lymph nodes removed. Again we were elated. In the waiting room of the Plano Presbyterian Hospital, we had another Baptist prayer and praise service.

However, a roller-coaster plunge was ahead. The pathology report discovered the tumor was larger than expected—chemotherapy was recommended. Consultation with an oncologist confirmed the need for six treatments, followed by radiation.

Although he noted, "You are cancer free," he also said, "There is a possibility of recurrence. The treatments are insurance—they will reduce the risk by about 15%."

For almost fifty years I have ministered to people experiencing grief, praying with them, consoling them, and sometimes saying, "I understand." But I really didn't. Until Shadowland came to me, I didn't know the depths of real grief.

I had taught and preached about Kubler-Ross's stages of grief, explaining the progression from Denial to Anger to Bargaining to Depression to Acceptance. But it is different on the other side—and that is where I was. I found myself wandering between these different emotions, sometimes in disbelief, often feeling angry—not at God, but angry that my sweet, kind, supportive wife was going through this. I don't believe I ever "bargained" with God for her cure, although one night I slipped out of my bed into another room, and cried my heart out to God asking for mercy and grace.

I know as one who has conducted so many funerals that we all die. And as a believer in Jesus, I know death is just a doorway into the presence of God. As a pastor and a theology teacher, I KNOW the right answers, but Shadowland is not about knowing—it's about feeling and experiencing and not knowing. It is about life.

As strange as this may sound, I've told folks that my experience is much like what I've seen at funerals, as relatives and friends gather to remember a loved one. It is a sad occasion, but it is also a time of joy, unity, shared love, and the lessons of Shadowland, which help us rediscover life. For our family, these lessons blessed us all.

1. *Life is brief.* "A vapor," the apostle James writes, a mist in the morning that is gone by noon. No matter what your age, Shadowland is a reminder that life passes quickly. We must make the most of each day, remembering what is our purpose on this planet.

2. *Night is coming.* Kubler-Ross once asked a college audience, "How many of you are dying?" A few hands rose in the audience. "You fools," she said, "We are all dying." Yet, sometimes it takes an experience of facing death to remind us that we are mortal, that time is precious, and that we must "work while it is day, for night is coming" (Jn. 9:4).

3. *Friends and family count.* Like most of you, we have a close family and good friends. Yet in this experience, our three children and their families have supported us in ways we never knew possible. Friends have ministered in word and deed. Shadowland has reminded us that what

(continued on page 22)

---

Editor: Joe E. Trull

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

CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY is produced in the U.S.A. and is published bi-monthly, mailed from Dallas, Texas, where third-class postage is paid. Articles published in CET express the views of the authors and not necessarily the viewpoint of the Journal or the Editor. Send corrections and change of addresses to P.O. Box 26, Wimberley, Texas, 78676.

---

# We've Got Mail

## *Letters From Our Readers*

"Sometimes I feel so alone in Baptist life, then your magazine comes and I say, 'I'm not the only one out here. There are others like me.' And I keep on believing and praying and hoping that one day we will become Baptists again."

*Quintin Lockwood, Ashland, KY.*

"Thanks a million for the Valentine books! I have given one to David, one to Lan, and two to the church library. I trust they will achieve wide readership."

*Landrum P. Leavell, Wichita Falls, TX.*

"The journal is like manna to my hungry soul—hungry for contact with *real* Baptist Christians—and all bona fide followers of our Lord. It was my joy and privilege for thirty-five years to teach at our "late" seminary—Southwestern—having been displaced by the present enforcers of fundamentalism."

*Charles A. Tidwell, Ft. Worth, TX.*

"I wrote Foy and congratulated him on the publication of his book. Now I want to congratulate you on the super job you do . . . so much food for thought!"

*Judy Brooks, Santa Rosa, CA.*

"Reading O'Brien's *Pilgrim in a Racist Land* brought tears. Such courage and love thus demonstrated is 'love in action.'"

*Ed Atkinson, Tyler, TX.*

"Thanks for CET—I enjoy every issue. And, thanks for *Breakfast at the Elite Café*. I spent more time there than I should have when a student at Baylor. . . . When I came to the *Baptist Message* [as editor], it had not printed photos of blacks 'unless they were in a foreign mission situation that included a white SBC missionary.' I changed that policy [and] I wrote an editorial about race . . . the only time in 27 years I have ever really been afraid for my life."

*Lynn Clayton, Alexandria, LA.*

"I'm greatly appreciative of my copy of Foy's new book . . . Thank you for all the good work you do promoting Christian ethics."

*Paul Vasquez, Chaplain Hendricks Medical Center, Abilene, TX.*

"I read *Breakfast at the Elite Café* and it brought back many memories of my days at Baylor in the early forties. I was not aware that Don was your brother . . . a great foot-

ball player. I also enjoyed the articles on *Fundamentalism* and *Reflections of an SBC Refugee*. I regret that I have been driven out of the denomination I loved and served. SAD!"

*Perry F. Webb, Jr., Kerrville, TX.*

"Every issue, every article enriches my life and challenges me to be a better person."

*Ruth K. Wiles, Buckeye, AZ*

"I am with a group of men who do church construction as a mission project. We share devotions with each other three times a day. I plan to use Foy Valentine's article, "Ich Glaube an Gott." Could I have some copies to share to introduce our men to CET?"

*Doug Cole, McCalla, AL. (We sent 30 books and several Journals for the group.)*

"I find myself saying with Elijah, 'Lord, all have forsaken you and I alone am left' or "Lord, am I wrong?" Then comes the current issue of CET holding fast, faithful to our Lord and my hope and faith are renewed and strengthened. Praise God!"

*Truett Ott, Osyka, MS, Baptist lay-leader and personal friend who went to be with his Lord in May.*

"I commend you for maintaining the Maston-Valentine et. al. tradition by emphasizing the integral role of ethics in the Christian faith. Its absence is sadly needed in the SBC leadership."

*Cecil Thompson, Knoxville, TN.*

"Now that I am 84 years of age this 2004 book is even more delightful reading! Foy and Brooks Hays, along with Roselyn and Jimmy Carter have kept my faith in humanity alive and well!"

*Margaret Kolb, Little Rock, AR.*

"I would love to give each of my Reba Class members at South Main BC one of Foy's books—we have 48 on roll. I am hoping to get them to subscribe to CET."

*Sarah Cole, Houston, TX.*

"I should like this gift marked in memory of my old friend, Howard Bramlette, for many years a valued staff member of the Student Dept. of the SBC and one of many who were 'purged' after the fundamentalist takeover."

*Charles Wellborn, Georgetown, KY. ■*

---

# Why Are We Here?

*By William L. Turner, Adjunct Professor  
Baptist Seminary of Kentucky, Lexington, KY*

**Note:** This keynote address was delivered at the Inaugural Convocation of the Baptist Seminary of Kentucky on March 9, 2003. In January 2005, Dr. Turner was named Nunnally Distinguished Minister-in-Residence for the Practice of Ministry and Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Lexington Theological Seminary.

A certain divinity school dean made it his practice to welcome new students to the campus by urging them to give themselves seriously and with discipline to their studies while in school. He told them it was likely to be their last chance for an extended period to read, think, and try to puzzle out the nature of the faith they would seek to communicate in their vocations. "You need to know," he said, "that when you get out of here and take up your vocations, no matter what you say, some people will believe you!"

Those of us who've been around divinity schools and seminaries very much would concur in that assessment. The call of God to vocational ministry can be daunting if not a terrifying thing. That call needs a period to "puzzle out the nature of the faith" which we are called on to articulate.

The Baptist Seminary of Kentucky exists to provide such a period, and we're here today to celebrate this new educational dream and the reality which it is now becoming.

We're here because of the faithfulness of Baptist leaders who pointed the way . . . because of Baptist prayers which have sought the Spirit's guidance . . . because of grassroots support from men and women across our state (and elsewhere) who believe in this dream . . . and because of the empowering grace of a God who goes on calling people forward into the knowing and doing of God's purposes in our time.

And I would urge us, even at this early hour in our journey together, to remember often that confession of faith found in a wonderful African-American song:

I don't feel no ways tired.

I've come too far from where I started from.

Nobody told me the road would be easy.

I don't believe God brought me this far to leave me.

But I would also urge us to recall some other things which brought us this far—two or three convolutional incentives which helped to birth this dream and now help to sustain it.

For example, we're here **Because Of A History Worth Remembering.** Bill Moyers calls the digital clock one of

the signs of our time—no view of any past or future hours or minutes, just the present moment. But someone has wisely noted that we ought to learn from the past and from other people . . . since life's too short to make all the mistakes ourselves!

As spotty and uneven as it may be, Baptist history at its best contains a bedrock conviction about the priesthood of all believers. It grows directly out of New Testament teaching and practice. All believers in Christ are included in the salvation and service of the Gospel. And when, in some of the latest New Testament writings, some distinctions between clergy and laity begin to emerge, they are clearly distinctions of function and not of status. All of God's people are called to be servant-priests.

The Protestant reformers and other voices of dissent in the sixteenth century recovered that concept of an all-inclusive faith and practice. Clergy? Yes—as preachers and teachers of the Word, set aside for specific pastoral ministry within the Body of Christ. But all believers are to serve the cause of Christ, and no vocation is less or more important than another.

The Anabaptists (in many ways, our spiritual forebears) went even further. Theirs was a "people's church" movement with the basic assumption that the members themselves were indeed the major carriers, teachers, and preachers of the Christian faith. Some historians have said that it wasn't that the Anabaptists had no clergy; actually, they had no laity. Every believer a minister!

My Phoenix friend, Dan Yeary, told me about a high school which needed a new basketball gym. They raised some money, got started, but soon realized that they didn't have sufficient funding for a building as large as their original plan. They couldn't shorten the court itself, nor did they want to reduce the number of seats and bleachers. So they shortened the building behind each of the goals. Thus, when you walked into the gym through one of those end-zone doors, you were in the game—or felt like it! Folks, that's pretty good Anabaptist theology . . . when you join the church, you're in the game!

So, when we Baptists got to America, most of our

churches were lay-led. Our preachers were farmers, tailors, weavers, soap-makers, tinkers, and leather smiths. But as Rufus Jones, the Quaker scholar, said, these early Baptist preachers did in their time what “herdsmen and vinedressers did in the early days of Hebrew prophecy, what tax collectors and fishermen did in the primitive days of the Church.” They put the power and responsibility for being God’s people into the hands of those very people.

Sometimes that’s been messy and unsatisfying. Our preachers weren’t as well educated as others in those early days. Pastors and lay leaders got crossed up with each other in church fights and splits (you may recall the saying that Baptists get along best in small groups—preferably of one person each!). But freedom has been worth the risk. And today, even with quality theological education for our clergy, in a church full of priests and ministers, it is still servant leadership to which we are called (Texas native James Dunn calls a “ruling pastor” an oxymoron, and says that any pastor who thinks otherwise is an ordinary moron.). Our history ought to warn us against any authoritarian models of leadership. It was, after all, the authoritarian churches and governments in our past which trampled conscience and brought Baptists into being.

The autocratic, CEO, lord-and-master-pastor model which would now clergify our churches and place power in the hands of a pastoral elite may well be a quicker way to build a statistically and financially successful organization than by the slower, uneven path of participatory democracy. But the Church is not called to make the Fortune 500 list. We are called to be the body of a Servant Lord at work in the world. And we cannot greatly value those to whom we witness and minister on the outside of our churches at the same time that we belittle the role of lay believers on the inside.

The Baptist Seminary of Kentucky knows about inclusive priesthood and servant ministry. It’s a convictional incentive which springs from our history—a history worth remembering.

We are here also **Because Of A Heritage Worth Preserving**. We now live in what most pundits are calling a “post-denominational” age. The brand-name loyalties of earlier days don’t seem to matter as much. It’s a spiritual smorgasbord these days, and people are shopping in more places than ever. Nearly 7% of our national population is into some form of New Age experience. Islam is the world’s fastest growing religion. I saw a cartoon where one guy asks his buddy, “Have you explored the mysteries of an Eastern religions?” His friend replied, “Yes, I was a Methodist once in Philadelphia.” I recently heard a United Church of Christ professor talk about teaching at Pittsburgh Seminary where he was surrounded by Presbyterians. He concluded that Presbyterians were more dense in Pittsburgh than any place else.

Baptist triumphalism (“God’s Last and Only Hope”)

was never a good thing, and it now seems more arrogant and irrelevant than ever . . . especially when you recall recent Southern Baptist history. So when one denominational leader asked a few years back, “Where would God be without Baptists?” I’m ready to laugh and say, “In many cases, probably a lot better off!”

Still, we do all right at times. On a Sunday afternoon down in Houston, several of us from South Main attended the ordination service for Robert Moore, new pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church. Robert is an ex-South Main, Midwestern Seminary graduate, and PhD. Graduate of Rice University. Cathy, his wife, had been Ken Chafin’s secretary, and Robert had served on the pulpit committee which helped call me to South Main. Given the Southern Baptist climate for prospective pastors and teachers at the time, we’d “lost” Robert to the Lutherans. We rejoiced, however, in his new pastorate, and we looked forward to this special worship experience. We stood up, sat down, kneeled, sang hymns we didn’t know very well, and bowed our heads—on cue and nearly at the proper times. Later, some of us went to the communion rail to receive from Robert’s freshly-blessed hands the bread of communion. Still, we Baptists were somewhat tentative. But when I walked through the fellowship hall after the service, and the cake was cut, there wasn’t a Baptist there who didn’t know what to do! We do all right at times!

Down in Chillicothe, Texas, they like to say that the Baptist church is where you can always hang your hat . . . and somebody will take it down and pass it! We do all right at times!

The kingdom of God, however, extends far beyond all of our denominational borders. Hopefully, we Baptists understand how to be people of integrity without becoming people of isolation. I love Helen Harrington’s poem about persons who are different, yet:

Sometimes they meet,  
And face each other over grief  
Or hope or charity or belief  
And know that they are kindred who  
By different trails sought something true.

So when the Baptist World Alliance met in its first congress in 1906, Alexander Maclaren insisted that the first official action be for those present to stand and recite the Apostles’ Creed—affirming Baptist ties to the great, historic faith of the larger Church.

I’m affirming here that our contribution to the larger Body of Christ is not insignificant. Though not unique to us in every particular, we do have a heritage worthy of preservation—precisely because of its ongoing relevance in a post-denominational time.

It is a heritage of soul competency and the freedom to make spiritual choices like a personal profession of faith, intercessory prayer, and personal accountability in spiritual gifts for ministry in the church and to the world. We believe in no coerced conscience; faith must be freely cho-

sen and expressed, or it cannot be faith.

Ours is a heritage that affirms the authority of scripture, alongside the obligation to be responsible interpreters.

Our heritage includes local church autonomy and the mandate to do mission and ministry in the immediate context as well as to the “uttermost part of the earth.” And every Baptist congregation is free to ordain any and all of those it deems called by God to provide leadership in such work.

Ours is a heritage of religious freedom and church-state separation. Since we were birthed in dissent from state churches and compulsory religion, we Baptists know well the necessity for freedom of or from religion in a pluralistic society. We fully understand that words like “faith” and “forced” don’t belong in the same sentence.

Our pastoral secretary at South Main for several years was Linda Gardner. She recounted to me and others some of the stories of religious intolerance from her Czechoslovakian grandparents. They were evangelicals who loved the Bible, and when the state authorities would come unannounced to search their home and seize their Bible, they would often hide the precious book inside large, round loaves of bread. Needless to say, her family still owns and cherishes one of those “baked Bibles.”

Maeyken Wens, an Anabaptist woman of the sixteenth century, was arrested for preaching the Gospel as she understood it from her own study of scripture. She was imprisoned and tortured and, refusing to recant, was sentenced to death by burning. Part of her sentence by the court was that her tongue be screwed to the roof of her mouth so that she might not preach on the way to her execution. Her teenage son took his younger brother to the execution and, when it was over, they searched the ashes to find the screw with which their mother’s tongue had been silenced. It was a precious symbol of an unfettered conscience!

And in the middle of the next century, British Baptist John Bunyan was put in Bedford jail for his refusal to attend state church worship . . . as well as for preaching without a license. He stayed there for twelve long years, preaching through prison bars and declaring that he would remain in jail for the rest of his life before he would submit to the butchery of his conscience.

We’re here today, then, because of a heritage which is worth preserving. Roger Williams of Rhode Island was right: “Having bought truth so dear, we must not sell it cheap.”

Still, there’s another convictional incentive which brings us here, namely, *A Task Worth Doing*. Hear this from our mission statement: *The Baptist Seminary of Kentucky will provide Christian theological education committed to spiritual depth, intellectual honesty and moral integrity*. This has never been more urgent.

We’re at this historic moment in Baptist theological education because of denominational leaders who, nearly

twenty-five years ago, spoke of wanting parity. Their focus, however, turned quickly to talk of purity . . . and to the tasks of purging and control. When Southern Baptists wrote their first confession of faith in 1925, historian W. W. Barnes warned us that there might come a time when such confessions could become weapons to be used in the name of orthodoxy. What a prophet he turned out to be! We have watched a cadre of “godly men” strive to turn theological education into indoctrination . . . to make robots and shibboleth-sayers of our brightest young women and men . . . to turn wonderful teachers and scholars into intellectual handmaidens or eunuchs (or to force them from our faculties and out of our schools).

Thank God for a place like the Baptist Seminary of Kentucky where academic freedom lives, so that intellectual curiosity and spiritual integrity might thrive as well!

This new educational dream, simply put, is to foster and maintain such a climate in which to train those whom God is calling to do the work of vocational ministry. A look at our curriculum will tell you that here we have scholarship balanced with spirituality. Here is introspection balanced with witness. Here is the quest both to understand and to apply the meaning of holy scripture to daily life. Ours is a faculty committed to learning Christ, sharing Christ, and doing the ministry of Christ in a spiritually-hungry cultural context.

And it is a time of spiritual hunger in our culture.

The ravages of the human journey alone will create a search for faith. What was it that Joseph Parker said? Preach to hurting people and you will always have a congregation. But these days I hear other voices as well:

- “Can you show me a faith that’s able to connect the dots of life and death and meaning?”
- “Now that the scientific and technological saviors of modernism have come up short, is there a way to tap into something deeper?”
- “All the food and drink I can consume, all the dollars I can make, all the influence I can wield, all of it together forces me to ask if there’s not something I haven’t found. Is there something more . . . something of spirit . . . of God?”

Such yearnings recall Thomas Merton’s comment that every now and then the Church ought to ask itself, “What do we have to offer the world that the world doesn’t have too much of already?”

Our educational dream here is to train women and men to keep asking and answering that question, so that believers in Christ may become *disciples* and not just converts. Because scattered across the landscape of institutional Christianity are a lot of people with do-it-yourself religion, a collage of god-scrap gathered from all over—about “a mile wide and an inch deep.”

There are yet others, very religious folks, who are so narrow they can look through a keyhole with both eyes at the same time. Their take on Christian truth is “my way or the highway.” And there are many who gush with ener-

gy and enthusiasm for everything but hard questions and serious thought. They're spiritually brain-dead, except for the sounds of pious clichés and breezy god-talk.

Surely we can love the Lord our God with all our hearts and minds better than this! It will help if we have trained and committed leaders, taught in places like the Baptist Seminary of Kentucky.

Years ago, when he was teaching homiletics at Princeton, Tom Long would often take Sunday morning pulpit supply assignments. I heard him tell about a morning when he was standing at the church's back door, greeting members at the end of the worship service. A woman approached, gripped his hand firmly, and said, "You teach preaching, don't you?" Tom flinched and thought, "I'm about to get clobbered." She held on, however, and he gamely said, "Yes, I do." "Then *please*," she said earnestly, "*please take me seriously.*"

Ours is a task worth doing, and we will take that task seriously . . . along with those persons and churches which it encompasses.

One other thing, please. This dream will be realized best in **A Community Worth Gathering**. As a brand new school, our start-up numbers are modest . . . but we do have numbers! A community is gathering to learn and worship and grow together. That fact is not to be overlooked or under-valued. Here's what I mean. That fact is not to be overlooked or under-valued. Here's what I mean.

Long before there was a canonized Bible, there were churches, faith communities. In fact, the New Testament was written largely to provide those early congregations with documentation and instruction. So the Church is the bridge over which the Bible has come to us. Thus, today, it is in a gathered faith community that our conversations with scripture and all of Christian theology will be most useful. Hear me, I do not mean to minimize person-

al understanding, but what a help it is to have believers who will give feedback . . . provide fresh information . . . think different thoughts . . . ask different questions . . . and bring diverse ideas to the table. In an earlier time (and before the use of inclusive language) it was cogently said that "a wise person makes up his mind for himself, but only a fool makes up his mind by himself." The learning of faith and faithful leadership is too important for us to be victims of our own untested assumptions, superstitions, or ignorance. We need each other for clarity and focus.

Already in these early months of this fresh, new dream we have a gathering community of faculty and students where Christian commitment and intellectual ferment hold exciting promise for the kingdom of God . . . and especially for the Baptist manifestation of that kingdom.

One of the friendships I made in Texas was with Winfred Moore, now on the Baylor University staff. Winfred spent half a lifetime in the Texas panhandle at First Baptist Church, Amarillo. He speaks fondly of the people with whom he's shared so much of his life. He describes them as hardy stock, pioneer types who braved the chilly, windswept plains. A favorite saying was that there was nothing between them and the North Pole but a barbed-wire fence! Winfred says that these are also people of resilient faith, and he recalls two main qualities of these determined survivors. They had a will to leave behind . . . and a will to go on.

Today, I've talked about a few things not to be left behind as we pursue this new educational dram. I would urge us, however, to turn loose and leave behind other things—like our grief, our anger, and (most of all) our despair and hopelessness. Let them go! God is obviously doing new things in our time, and God welcomes partners. Let us go on—with deep, deep trust and great, great joy! ■



---

# The Ten Commandments and Public Piety: The Contrasting Styles of Jesus and Judge Roy Moore

By Derek H. Davis, J. M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies  
Baylor University, Waco, TX

Judge Roy Moore has emerged as one of America's most visible and popular Christians in the twenty-first century. Well known for his unsuccessful fight to keep a 5,200 pound monument of the Ten Commandments in the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court building, Judge Moore has rapidly become a leading symbol of conservative Christians' battle to fight off encroaching secularism and preserve a solid moral foundation for "Christian America."

Recent polls indicate that as many as two-thirds of Americans sided with Judge Moore in his quest to have the massive display of the Ten Commandments serve as a permanent symbol of the reality of God in American life. Judge Moore maintains that it is his right, even his duty, as a public servant to "acknowledge God" as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and the foundation of all American law, and that this was best achieved during his tenure as a judge by displaying the Ten Commandments monument prominently in the state's chief courthouse of which he served as chief justice.

Even after a federal district court and a federal appeals court held that the Ten Commandments monument constituted an "establishment" of religion in violation of the First Amendment and the monument was removed, Judge Moore insisted that he was right and the courts were wrong. Then, after the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the case and a State of Alabama Judicial Ethics Commission stripped him of his office as chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, Judge Moore began championing his cause around the nation in television interviews, public speeches, and internet sites set up to educate the world about his mission. Moore became the darling of millions of American Christians, a modern hero for his courage and commitment to help restore the nation's Christian moorings.

How should we evaluate Judge Moore's stance? Is he indeed a hero or just a defiant, misguided and defrocked judge? How should Christians regard his behavior? Most importantly, can we look at what Jesus said and did for some measure of guidance? And what about the separation of church and state principle that was the basis for the courts' rulings that Judge Moore's monument was a violation of the Constitution? Is there really a biblical basis for adhering to the separation of church and state?

## Is Separation of Church and State Really in the Bible?

The Bible is not a blueprint for political ordering—unless of course, one wishes to restore the theocratic system that was central to the Old Testament Hebrew order. In the New Testament, however, the Mosaic Law is expressly repudiated; the people covered by a "New" Covenant—Christians are saved by grace, not by strict adherence to the law. The end of theocracy means the end of the fusion of religious and state authority. By teaching that Christians should "render unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar and unto God that which belongs to God," Jesus was recognizing the distinctively different roles of church and state. Christians owe secular duties to the state and spiritual duties to God. The New Testament does not teach a "pure" separation of church and state, however, since Christians are encouraged to pray for state authorities and to submit to their authority.

But while submission to secular rulers is encouraged, nowhere in the New Testament is it taught that secular governments should themselves take on a religious character. Jesus modeled this quite well. He required submission to the Roman authorities, even though that government was often hostile toward Jews and celebrated the divinity of the emperor. Emperor worship was technically blasphemy under Jewish law, but Jesus never encouraged overthrowing the emperor or starting a movement to reform the Roman government to acknowledge God in a more appropriate way. Jesus never tried to make a corrupt and pagan government a "Christian nation." He was modeling what today we call the "separation of church and state."

## What is Biblical Piety?

Contrast this with the repeated assertion of Judge Moore that America is a "Christian nation" and that it is his right to "acknowledge" God in his courtroom. In American law, every citizen has the right to acknowledge God, but not public officials who must respect the right to religious freedom of Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and others who find Judge Moore's trumpeting of his Christian faith offensive. This is why the Constitution prevents "establishments" of religion; the government must treat all citizens equally with respect to matters of faith. If our constitutional framework countenances a

preference for the Judeo-Christian tradition over other religions, then we have a framework that will permit any of the growing minority religions in America to someday replace this tradition as the preferred religion. How can all religions remain free if some are legally sanctioned over others?

Jesus' behavior can be contrasted with Judge Moore's in other ways as well. Jesus never suggested to public officials that they pray in public settings. His advice to everyone was: "When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Mt. 6:6). Jesus modeled this by always retiring to quiet, remote places to pray. Yet when Judge Moore was a district judge in Alabama, he regularly brought in Protestant ministers to lead prayer before gatherings of jurors, parties, and witnesses who were required to be in Moore's courtroom. Many of these visitors were "put off" by the prayers, but that apparently did not faze him; Judge Moore never relented in defending the propriety of the prayers.

Jesus spent no time crafting large monuments of the Ten Commandments and erecting them in places where everyone could see them. He did not wear a Ten Commandments T-shirt or carry a copy of the Ten Commandments with him, stopping here and there to make sure they were posted in public places for all to be reminded that the law of God was the foundation of society. Jesus' mission was not a political one, but rather a spiritual one, laboring to offer himself as the means of personal salvation to all who would hear. Jesus' goal was to make Christians, not to Christianize the Roman government. I suspect Judge Moore wants to make Christians too, but unlike Jesus, he abuses political institutions by using them as a means to achieve his goal.

Jesus certainly did not go on the speaking circuit to convince all Romans that the Roman Empire was in moral decline and that the empire should display the Ten Commandments to remind all Romans of their duties to God. Jesus quietly went about healing the sick, feeding the hungry, helping the poor, and offering a relationship to God to all who would listen. He and his disciples collected only enough money to meet their daily essential needs. In stark contrast, Judge Moore today is not only cashing in on the speaking circuit, but he has recently written a book, *So Help Me God*, which he promotes at book-signing celebrations in bookstores around the country. Judge Moore also sent his 2-ton monument on a 2005 tour around the United States—after it was banished from the Alabama State Court Building. A large truck carried the monument, and rallies were prearranged at a number of stops around the country where the monument was displayed before Moore's burgeoning multitude of friends and admirers.

Somehow I cannot get a picture in my mind of Jesus promoting the Ten Commandments in these rather self-

indulgent ways. Moreover, Jesus never sought political office to convey his message, yet Judge Moore is now contemplating running either for Governor of Alabama or President of the United States to gain a bigger platform for his message.

### Is America Officially Godless?

Judge Moore and his supporters claim that posting the Ten Commandments will help fill what is increasingly becoming a "naked public square." But our nation already affirms in many ways the belief that God's sovereignty extends to our national life. The national motto, "In God We Trust," is imprinted on our currency. Congress and most of our state legislatures open with prayer each day led by state-paid chaplains. We observe an annual national day of prayer. We invoke the name of God in the Pledge of Allegiance. We observe numerous national holidays that are religious in nature. We even affirm the right of government bodies to display religious symbols such as crosses and menorahs, provided they are clearly muted with secular symbols. These are generic symbols that validate the religious character of America, but are less coercive than sectarian-specific practices such as posting the Ten Commandments on government property (property that is owned by all citizens, not just those from the Judeo-Christian tradition).

### Is There a Better Way?

There is actually a very simple solution to the Ten Commandments controversy. For those who think the Ten Commandments are important, they should memorize them—and have their children memorize them. In this way, they carry the truths of the Ten Commandments in their hearts, and have no need to resort to public displays. Moreover, refusing to decorate government property with the Ten Commandments respects the religious values of members of religious traditions who are offended by the displays.

In the end, opposition to state-sponsored displays of the Ten Commandments does not arise out of hostility to the values set forth in the commandments. Rather, it proceeds from a deep respect for the diversity of religions that enjoy the freedom to practice their faith on American soil—those that embrace the Ten Commandments and those that do not. By adhering to the principle of separation of church and state we best fulfill the Constitution's mandate of religious liberty for all Americans and the human mandate to treat each other with respect and dignity. This is not Roy Moore's way, but I believe that this is Jesus' way. ■

**Note:** Judge Moore was probably given a boost in his undeclared race for governor of Alabama by the SBC Pastor's Conference, who invited him to speak at their June 20 gathering.

---

# EthixBytes

## A Collection of Quotes Comments, Statistics, and News Items

"I have been fed from fields I did not till. I have crossed bridges I did not build. I have sat in the shade of trees I did not plant. I have received knowledge I did not research."      *Baptist ethicist Henlee Hulix Barnette.*

◆◆◆

"An unconscious people, an indoctrinated people, a people fed only partisan information and opinion that confirm their own bias, a people made morbidly obese in mind and spirit by the junk food of propaganda is less inclined to put up a fight, ask questions, and be skeptical."

◆◆◆

*Veteran PBS newsman Bill Moyers, saying the public bears some of the blame for problems in the media at a conference on media reform in St. Louis.*

◆◆◆

"Today, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld warned Iraq's new leaders against hiring their friends and family members for government jobs . . . then Majority Leader Tom DeLay gave the rebuttal."

◆◆◆

*Jay Leno, The Tonight Show.*

◆◆◆

"Don't send your kids to Baylor. And don't send your kids to A & M."

◆◆◆

*House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Tx), at a Worldview Weekend meeting at the FBC of Pearland, TX, April 12, urging parents to send their children where they will get a "godly" education. DeLay himself was kicked out of Baylor because of his fondness of drinking and carousing as a student.*

◆◆◆

"We know that when we look to Representative DeLay, we see not only a man of God but a man who is willing to sacrifice, whatever the cost, simply to do what is right."

◆◆◆

*Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Houston, at the Tom DeLay Gala event.*

◆◆◆

"Activist courts, aided by liberal interest groups . . . have been quietly working under the veil of the judiciary, like thieves in the night, to rob us of our Christian heritage and our religious freedoms."

◆◆◆

*Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council on the "Justice Sunday" telecast from Highland BC in Louisville, KY, on May 1, which Colbert I. King, editor at the Washington Post termed "an unmitigated lie that should not be allowed to stand."*

◆◆◆

"A casino-rich tribe [Coushatta Indians in Louisiana] wrote checks for at least \$55,000 to House Majority

Leader Tom Delay's political groups, but the donations were never publicly disclosed." The tribe was directed to divert the money to "more obscure groups [including] Christian voter outreach."

*Adam Nossiter, Associated Press June 22, 2005.*

◆◆◆

"People try to make a sharp distinction between interpreting the law and legislating from the bench. But which one that is, is often in the eye of the beholder."

*Brent Walker, Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee.*

◆◆◆

"The separation of church and state became a concept in the law in 1947. Until then, it never existed. It's not in the constitution. It came out of a letter that Jefferson wrote. . . . I think it was an effort to keep the church from using its influence in the arena of politics and public policy."

*James Dobson, child psychologist and leader of Focus on the Family.*

◆◆◆

"I first thought we were fighting for God, but then I learned we were fighting for wealth and land."

*Tiberius in the epic Crusades movie Kingdom of Heaven.*

◆◆◆

"I met Saddam Hussein exactly the same number of times as Donald Rumsfeld met him. The difference is that Donald Rumsfeld met him to sell him guns, and to give him maps the better to target those guns."

*George Galloway, Respect MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, before a U. S. Senate Hearing May 2005.*

◆◆◆

"The ethics of war—when we go to war, how we go to war, and whether we tell the truth about going to war—are central to religious ethics."

*Jim Wallace, Sojourners, May 2005.*

◆◆◆

"Religious groups who want to erect religious symbols in public places must only keep their mouths shut about the religious reasons for doing this, pretend they're all secular, and they have a good chance of getting away with it."

◆◆◆

*Douglas Aycock, University of Texas constitutional law professor commenting on the Supreme Court June 27 decision.*

◆◆◆

"Should any political party attempt to abolish social security, unemployment insurance and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history."

*Dwight D. Eisenhower, Letter to his brother, 1954. ■*

---

# The President At Calvin College

*By David Domke and Kevin Coe*

President Bush delivered his first 2005 commencement address on May 21 at Calvin College, a small evangelical Christian school in western Michigan. This address marked the latest attempt by the Republican Party to use talk about God for political gain.

In the past two months alone, GOP leaders have suggested God is on their side in public discussions about the medical care of Terri Schiavo, judicial-nominee votes in the U.S. Senate, and the treatment of House Majority Leader Tom DeLay over charges of unethical conduct. This follows an election in which the president regularly spoke of the need for government to support “faith-based” initiatives, a religiously grounded “culture of life,” and traditional marriage.

For some time now there has been heated debate about whether President Bush is different from other presidents in his wielding of religious rhetoric. He is. What sets Bush apart is both how much he talks about God and what he says when he does so.

In his Inaugural and State of the Union addresses earlier this year, Bush referenced God eleven times. This came on the heels of twenty-four invocations of God in his first-term Inaugural and State of the Union addresses. No president since Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1933 has mentioned God so often in these high-state settings.

The president nearest Bush's average of 5.8 references per each of these addresses was Ronald Reagan, who averaged 5.3 references in his comparable speeches. No one else has come close. Jimmy Carter, widely considered to be as pious as they come among U.S. presidents, only mentioned God twice in four addresses. Other also-rans in total God talk were wartime presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson at 1.8 and 1.5 references per address, respectively.

Bush also talks about God differently than have most other modern presidents. Presidents since Roosevelt have commonly spoken as petitioners to God, seeking blessing, favor, and guidance. The current president has adopted a position approaching that of a prophet, issuing declarations of divine desires for the nation and world. Among modern presidents, only Reagan has spoken in a similar manner—and he did so far less frequently than has Bush. This change in rhetoric from the White House is made all the more apparent by considering how presidents have historically spoken about God and the values of freedom and liberty, two ideas central to American identity.

For example, in 1941, Roosevelt, in a famous address delineating four essential freedoms threatened by fascism,

said: “This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women; and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God.” Similarly, John F. Kennedy, in 1962, during the height of the Cold War, said: “[N]o nation has ever been so ready to seize the burden and the glory of freedom. And in this high endeavor, may God watch over the United States of America.”

Contrast these statements, in which presidents requested divine guidance, with Bush’s claim in 2003 that “Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America’s gift to the world, it is God’s gift to humanity.” He has made similar statements a number of times, across differing contexts of national addresses, presidential campaign debates, and press conferences. These are not requests for divine favor; they are declarations of divine wishes.

Such certainty about God’s will is troubling when found in a president and administration not known for kindly brooking dissent. This makes it particularly noteworthy that Bush encountered something in his visit to Calvin College that he has rarely faced as president: vocal and public criticism from other Christians, many of them evangelicals.

More than 800 faculty, alumni, students, and friends of the college signed a letter published by the Grand Rapids Press, decrying Bush administration policies. The letter included these words: “By their deeds ye shall know them, says the Bible. Your deeds, Mr. President—neglecting the needy to coddle the rich, desecrating the environment, and misleading the country into war—do not exemplify the faith we live by.” Another letter expressing similar sentiments was signed by one-third of Calvin’s faculty, while dozens of graduating seniors wore stickers on their caps and gowns that read, “God is not a Democrat or a Republican.”

Such courageous words prompt the hope that, in these challenging times, politicians who are quick to speak about God might also learn to listen.

**Note:** David Domke is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Washington, and Kevin Coe is a doctoral student in the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois. Their article originally appeared in *Sightings* (5/26/05), a publication of the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago Divinity School. ■

---

# “Justice” Or “Just-Us” Sunday

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

Much was written and said during the run up to and aftermath of the so-called “Justice Sunday: Stop the Filibuster Against People of Faith”—or as Bob Edgar, of the National Council of Churches, called it, “Just-Us” Sunday—pointing out the arrogant presumption that the organizers of the event are right and godly and those who disagree are not only wrong but hostile to people of faith.

The Baptist Joint Committee weighed in full force with an early media statement and helped organize a counter press conference the Friday before. Many thanks to our friends Joe Phelps, pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, and Reba Cobb, a Baptist Joint Committee board member, for leading that effort. Along with pastors from 17 Louisville-area churches, Joe and Reba stood and delivered, telling the assembled press corps that the organizers of Justice Sunday do not speak for all Christians or even all Baptists.

One of the most cogent op-eds about what was objectionable about Justice Sunday was penned by Cary Clack writing for the *San Antonio Express-News*. I think Mr. Clack hit the nail right on the head.

His basic point was this: what was wrong about the Justice Sunday extravaganza was not its *purpose* but its *premise*.

The purpose of the rally was fine: to allow people of faith to speak out on the important issue of whether the filibuster should be used in the U.S. Senate to oppose judicial nominations. Although the event was shrouded in unmistakable *partisan* wrapping, reinforced through a video pitch by the Senate’s majority leader, it was entirely appropriate for those with strong views to speak out in the public square.

No, the problem with Justice Sunday, as Clack points out, was the *premise* that those who oppose judicial nominees are carrying out a vendetta against people of faith or are motivated by some kind of religious bigotry.

This premise is hopelessly flawed. It was a shameful abuse of religion to suggest that God has taken up sides in this debate. Whatever our differences on the filibuster and on judicial nominees, there are people of faith on both sides, and neither has God in their hip pocket. An unintended consequence of Justice Sunday was to highlight

the vast number of people of faith in this country who are willing to stand up and publicly oppose the narrow self-righteousness that was revealed at the rally on Sunday night. It is clearly as wrong to sacralize secular policy issues as it is to try to banish religious voices from the debate in the first place.

As Clack aptly points out, “In the political realm, people of faith can be opposed to other people of faith on given issues without either side being condemned to the fires of hell. Being a Christian isn’t synonymous with being a political conservative. That there is a Christian right and Christian left is a testament to how people find different interpretations and inspirations in the same sacred text. But there is something wrong with never having spoken to a person, not even knowing their middle name but purporting to know the condition of their soul. Who, not even knowing the contents of the other person’s prayers, has the right to judge their relationship with God?”

Moreover, I see no concerted effort to deny anyone a judgeship based on his or her religion. Debate about whether a nominee is fit to serve as a judge is not only legitimate but goes to the heart of the confirmation process. No one should be denied the right to serve based on some religious litmus test, but policy positions and legal philosophy are fair game for public scrutiny—however motivated by religious conviction they may be. Religious belief does not give anyone a free pass to the bench or any public office.

Yes, the Baptist Joint Committee defends the right of people of faith and religious organizations to advocate with their religious voices in the public square and to serve our country as public officials. But, at the same time, we must discourage claiming divine authority on behalf of public policy issues, characterizing political opponents as anti-God and lying about their motives. ■

**Note:** Reprinted with permission from *Report from the Capital* (May, 2005), the newsletter of the Baptist Joint Committee, 200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, D.C. 20002 or [www.BJConline.org](http://www.BJConline.org).

---

# Life After Schiavo

*By Tarris D. Rosell, Associate Professor*

Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, KS

Terri Schiavo has died, her cremains interred. The news media has long since focused attention elsewhere. And now—after fifteen years of having lived in a severely brain-damaged state, sustained by daily enteral tube-feedings, unknowingly enmeshed in a twelve-year family feud over her treatment plan—it finally is all over for Terri.

But it is not all over for others. Indeed, the repercussions of her dying will remain with the Schiavo and Schindler families, and all of us, for years yet to come.

There is of course the lingering sense of loss and sadness experienced now and forever by those who loved their wife, daughter, sister, patient, and friend. Life after Terri's death surely involves grief along with some relief.

Most of us, including those who claimed to advocate on her behalf, did not personally know Ms. Schiavo. Yet, we too are affected by her dying and death. Deep political and ideological divisions remain among us. People of good will remain at odds regarding what happened, what should have happened, what ought now to happen or in the future with regard to similar patient situations.

I have yet to find anyone willing to request similar medical treatment in her own future case, however. On that matter alone there is near unanimity. No one of my acquaintance says they wish to be tube-fed and hydrated for fifteen years after entering into anything like persistent vegetative state or especially a minimally conscious state.

Beyond that agreement, perspectives differ widely on the Schiavo case. Within our own families and social circles we continue to disagree about what "really" happened to Terri's brain and body, within the Schiavos' marriage and their extended family. We see differently the various court proceedings, state and federal legislative interventions garnering executive signatures. Speculations vary on what was in the hearts and minds of protesters and supporters on both sides, or in the nonprofit coffers of those who seemed to profit at Terri's expense. We understand differently the biases of media or religious spokespersons. We are a people divided.

Even the autopsy report\* is not expected to settle the issue of Terri's disputed diagnosis. Many are disinclined to base their judgments on medical findings, scientific evidence or jurisprudence. The physiological facts about Terri Schiavo may not impact at all the ideological beliefs at play here. So one could anticipate the autopsy itself will forever be disputed, the examiners will be seen as biased or bought. Some will claim a pending miracle was thwarted by Terri's death or that she did not receive therapies that could have made a difference in outcomes.

For years to come, we will live in the wake of socio-political process gone awry. "Separation of powers" became a murky concept in the Schiavo case. There was evidence of one branch of government encroaching upon that of another, the federal upon state's jurisdiction, Church upon State, and the public upon the private sphere. It will take some time even for the world's greatest democracy to work through this national moral morass.

Misinformed and uncivil discourse propounded of late impacts unfairly physicians, patients and proxies who face decisions about foregoing artificial nutrition and hydration. How will references to "starvation", "murder", or "torture" affect those who have made or will need to make these already wrenchingly hard treatment decisions? Will some hesitate to utilize tube-feeding at all for fear that it cannot be stopped? Will life-sustaining, death-prolonging treatments continue for other patients long after the medically and ethically appropriate thing to do is to withhold and/or withdraw? Will reactive legislation soon reverse a decades long societal consensus that patients or their legal surrogates may refuse any and all treatments as a matter of constitutionally protected right to privacy?

Will a living will matter in the days just ahead? Will we honor a properly executed healthcare directive, a designated healthcare proxy, or even prior family conversations about end of life care? What will life be like, and dying, after the Schiavo fiasco?

If there is a good to come of this tragedy, it may be in the partial breaking of a death-denying taboo. Families are talking together about dying and death, about what would constitute a good death or not. We are conversing about when a feeding tube would be desirable, and when our family surrogates had better stop such treatments "if you don't want me to come back and haunt you!"

Thousands are requesting and executing advance directives for the first time. One can hardly do so without acknowledging mortality. When we accept the inevitability of our own demise, we may think more clearly, less fearfully, about acceptable and refusible medical treatment options for ourselves and for those we love. It could result in respectfulness for those who choose differently. End of life care may be enhanced instead of impeded. If so, one dimension of life for us, after Terri Schiavo's tragic death, could actually improve. In her memory and for our own sakes, let us hope for this end. ■

\*On June 16, 2005 (after this article), a 38-page autopsy report backed her husband's contention that she was in a persistent vegetative state, severely and irreversibly brain-damaged and blind.

---

# Terrorism, Religion, and War

*By Sherman A. Hope, M.D.*

Brownfield, TX

The tragedy of 9-11 focused the thinking of most Americans on terrorism. We have been led to believe that the tragedy was caused by an evil enemy, who suddenly appeared out of the Middle East, and who, for no reason apparent to us, undertook to do harm to the United States and her people. We have been taught that this enemy is of a different race and religion and is shrouded in evil. Unfortunately, our nation and her leaders have failed to look at the real cause of the hatred of these people called terrorists and their supporters. However, the cause, at least in part, can be traced to the policies of our nation in dealing with the unrest in the Middle East, specifically the plight of the Palestinians. For the past century there has been an uneven and unjust American policy in dealing with Palestine and Israel.

Christianity throughout the centuries has persecuted Jews. With the enlightenment and reformation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Jews hoped to be accepted in the world, especially in Western society. But repeatedly governmental and church policy gave them only limited opportunity and protection; therefore, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century a movement arose by some Jews to return to the "promised land" (Palestine), and form a nation called Israel. With the exception of a few Jews, Palestine had been inhabited by Arabic people for the past 1800 years. This Jewish movement to return to Palestine is known as the Zionist movement, and was relatively peaceful until the end of World War II.

However, after World War II, the Western world, and especially the United States, gave full support to the migration of Jews (most of which were from the results of the maltreatment of the Jews in Europe) to Palestine. This migration was accentuated by the political support of America's "religious right-wing Christians" working hand in hand with American Jews. Most of the Christians in this movement believed that it was necessary (i.e., prophesied) for the Jews to return to Palestine in order for the Second Coming of Christ to occur. This means that these Christians believed it was God's will to expel the local inhabitants (Arabic Palestinians) and establish a nation of Jews. This was culminated in 1947, when the United States pressured the United Nations to establish the nation of Israel. This resulted in expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes in Israel and forced these displaced people into refugee camps in Israel, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt.

The Palestinians, as well as Syria, Egypt, and Jordan, resisted, but Israel was financed and armed by the West, especially the United States. Israel prevailed in two decisive wars. She conquered even more land than was allotted by the United Nations and expelled more Palestinians, who to this day are still a displaced people. Israel continues to confiscate land from Palestinians for Jewish settlements, displacing even more Palestinians.

Now, after over 50 years of being deprived of their homes, their political freedom, and their heritage, the third generation of these deposed people have resorted to the kind of desperate resistance that people with little hope use. Small groups or individuals resort to acts of resistance, i.e., terrorism. Their life situation has led many of these refugees to adopt an attitude of despair. After all, life seems to have no future because an enemy has taken their homes, killed, imprisoned, and tortured members of their family, and sought to destroy their culture and religion. With the attitude of desperation and despair, many of these displaced persons are susceptible to following any religious fanatic or a radical political leader that encourages them to be a martyr for their homeland and religion. If the person becomes a "holy warrior," not only has he or she become a patriot for the freedom of Palestinians, but also they have become a religious martyr and are thus guaranteed a place in paradise. And if one is going to fight, especially if he expects to die in the struggle, certainly he would want to strike out against the correct enemy. This has resulted in not only terrorism in Israel, but it also set the stage for lashing out at the main military and financial supporter of Israel—which for over 50 years has been the United States. Therefore, it follows that it is both a religious duty as well as a patriotic duty to do harm to America, either on the battlefields in the Middle East or in the American homeland.

Anti-American feelings have grown in the Arab and Moslem countries because of the United States' support for Israel. Currently, the support comes not only from the Jewish community, but even more so from political right-wing Christians, as well as from some of the more zealous evangelical Christian groups. In my opinion, they have a mistaken interpretation of the Bible. These sincere but misguided religious persons think that everything in society is getting worse and therefore the end of the world is near. They think that the world's condition is now ready for Jesus Christ to return, but he cannot do so until Israel

is established. In their minds, then, it is the "will of God" for the United States to help this prophecy come to pass. Of course Israel does not see herself as a tool to facilitate the return of Jesus, but naturally she goes along with this popular mindset to enlist the support, both financial and political, of the United States.

In the past several years, the effort to maintain separation of church and state has been eroded. Now we see the political activities of the religious right, as well as of the Jewish community, promoting their religious outlook by supporting and pressuring the federal government for more military support and financial aid for Israel. This includes going to war against Israel's potential enemies – such as Iraq.

As the Iraq war has progressed, we see that the stated reason for the war never really existed (even though our political leaders seem to have thought so initially). Yet we continue to fight on. We paint those whom we are fighting, that is, those who opposed our invasion and now oppose the occupation of their country, as insurgents, terrorists, and members of the "Axis of Evil." We use multiple other demeaning labels as if these people were subhuman. Yet they are people who were both created by and loved by God. Most of them were not interested in international politics and only want to be left alone to raise their family and practice their religion. Perhaps imposing a western style democracy (at the point of a bayonet) sounds like a good cause, but as we maim and kill people each day, we also create more and more people that will always hate the USA, and many will seek revenge—yes, by terrorism both in their homeland and abroad.

Our nation's idea of creating this democracy has resulted in further violence in Iraq, with Sunni's fighting Shiites and Kurds. Violence continues daily with the murder and maiming of innocent civilians, combatants, leaders of all groups, and American soldiers. Billions of dollars are spent monthly to occupy this country. The elections thus far do not seem to have stopped the internal conflict, and as various nations around the world withdraw their troops and support from a policy of military occupation of Iraq, one must question why are we there. Do we really think we are stopping terrorism in the United States by continuing the war, or is the reason to support the policy

of those with a religious agenda for the Middle East. In the meantime as we try to rebuild and "enforce peace" in Iraq, we threaten other Middle East countries that are potential enemies of Israel—Syria, Lebanon, and Iran, some of which have Palestinian refugees.

So what is the answer to international terrorism? At least in part, it is to treat all persons with respect and equality. The United States must see that fairness and justice come to the Palestinians, as well as to the people of Israel. In addition, we must not think that we can impose our life style, our religion, or our method of government by military force. For every "enemy" we kill, a hundred more are created among his family and friends; for every home we search, a thousand more become bases for our opponents.

Perhaps now is the time to say we have accomplished our mission and did what we planned—destroyed any potential for weapons of mass destruction and brought down Hussein. We should declare that our job is completed and leave their country. Training them to have a military force before we pull out has the great potential of making their internal conflicts even more bloody. Let them put their country back together in a manner compatible with their culture and religion. Our trying to make Iraq conform to our Western culture and religion only creates more enemies, and yes, more terrorists—not only in Iraq, but throughout the Moslem world. The longer we stay in Iraq and the longer we are unjust in our policies toward the Palestinians, the more danger our homeland is a target for terrorist attacks.

Let each person in our nation embrace the love of God as each individual perceives God in his heart, but let our nation not try to force by law or military conquest the beliefs of any religious group of our country onto another people. We should not use religion as a tool or excuse for national policy. Separation of church and state was fundamental in making us a great nation, so let's keep religious dogma out of national policy. If a particular religious group wishes to restore or support Israel, let us give them the freedom to do so with their own money and influence, but not use the power and money of our great nation to promote any particular religious dogma. ■



---

# Can Terrorism Alerts Make You Ill?

By Charles Luke, Superintendent of Schools  
Buffalo, Texas

Experts writing in the British Medical Journal in recent years have identified an ancillary threat of terrorism to the average population of a country. According to Simon Wessely and other researchers a psychological response to the threat of terrorism in the form of mass sociogenic illness may be a primary threat of terrorism. Their findings have very real implications for countries that continually magnify the threat of terrorism against their own populace in order to achieve a political agenda.

Examples of mass sociogenic illness remind us of the dangers of inadvertently amplifying psychological responses to chemical and biological weapons and thus adding to their impact. One example is the routine use of investigators clad in space suits to assess possible terrorist attacks. Another is that the United States government is considering placing detectors to identify chemical warfare agents on the Washington DC subway system. It is possible that these alarms will in practice cause greater disruptions to transport systems than the attack itself, given the high probability that such detectors may give false alarms. There were 4500 such alerts in the Gulf war and none was associated with a confirmed attack.<sup>1</sup>

These findings raise the question of how much responsibility the U.S. government under the Bush administration has toward its citizenry regarding continued elevations of threat levels through the current Homeland Security Advisory System. A review of the use of the system since it was introduced in the months following 9-11 show that levels have often been raised during times when the administration was attempting to achieve some political purpose. For example, during the critical time of the passage of the Patriot Act levels rose with little rationale to justify the rise. In fact, critics argue that the threat levels don't seem to be tied to any procedural guidelines at all, but merely change at the whim of the Homeland Security Administration. The net effect of this is to negate any real value of the warning system but still attempt to keep the country engaged in political decision-making and co-optation of their collective will through irrational fear.

The use of fear of an unknown enemy who could strike at any time to gain political advantage over a people is no new technique. History is rife with examples of leadership that has unethically manipulated the thought processes of whole nations of peoples through irrational and often unrealized fear. Of course, the German nationalism of the mid-twentieth century driven by xenophobia and anti-Semitism stand out but the ethnic cleansing that has occurred throughout the world at various periods of history have all been used by governing bodies to address "threats" to their countries and manage the populations.

So why should this practice be so egregious to citizens of the United States? Simply because the U.S. has been developed on principles of free thought and personal civil liberties. The strength of the nation is the very freedom of diversity that heightened anxiety over suspected terrorists threatens to jeopardize. After real or imagined episodes of fear of attack, citizens tend to yield personal liberties in return for promised security. The biggest danger of prolonged and U.S. exacerbated terroristic threat to the citizenry is the psychological erosion of the belief that liberty must be preserved primarily.

Finally, sociogenic illness may manifest itself in prolonged and profound psychological trauma, rendering the country unable to recover from any real attacks by terrorists. Imagining a toxic chemical attack on a country after a prolonged heightening of unrealized terroristic threat, Wessely states:

The general level of malaise, fear, and anxiety may remain high for years, exacerbating pre-existing psychiatric disorders and further heightening the risk of mass sociogenic illness. The ... uncertainty over the chronic health effects of low level exposure to toxic agents will further increase anxiety in the affected communities.

Because health officials cannot provide blanket assurances that no harm will result from brief or non-symptom producing exposure to toxic agents, frustration and then a growing distrust of medical experts and government officials may result, robbing state institutions of the trust they need to manage recovery. Lastly, unconfirmed or controversial hypotheses about the health effects of exposure to chemical and biological weapons will probably become contentious scientific and media issues in the years ahead, as has occurred after numerous chemical and radiological incidents, the Gulf war, and the Balkans deployment.<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately a government has a primary responsibility to protect its citizens from the threats of harm. To use those threats to gain political advantage or advance agendas that erode the freedoms and liberties of the citizenry is unethical and antithetical to the founding principles of the United States. The only legitimate approach is to provide accurate and timely information to U.S. citizens regarding threats to their security, while safeguarding the liberties and diversity that make their country great. Anything less than this is unconscionable. ■

---

<sup>1</sup> Simon Wessely, *British Medical Journal* (October, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

---

## Feeling A Draft

*By Al Staggs, Chaplain and Performing Artist  
Sante Fe, NM*

SOMEONE MUST HAVE LEFT A WINDOW OPEN  
FOR I FEEL A SLIGHT DRAFT COMIN ON.

WAR HAS BECOME OUR NATIONAL PASTIME  
BUT WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF SOLDIERS  
TO TAKE CARE OF ALL THE HOT SPOTS.

TOO MANY CELLS OF INSURGENTS ON THE LOOSE  
WE SMASH EM HERE AND THEY POP UP THERE.

WE'VE GOT THE BIGGEST AND BEST GUNS IN THE WORLD  
BUT THEY'RE JUST NOT DOING THE JOB  
WE'RE GONNA NEED MORE SOLDIERS  
TO HOLD DOWN OUR TENOUS POSITIONS.

IT WASN'T SUPPOSE TO BE THIS WAY  
IT WAS SUPPOSE TO BE A CAKE WALK.

NOW AFTER TWO YEARS WE STILL CAN'T CLAIM VICTORY  
AND THAT AGAINST A VERY WEAK NATION  
WITH NO WMD'S

LET'S OPEN UP THE WINDOW REAL WIDE  
AND LET THE DRAFT ON IN  
SO THAT EVERYBODY,  
EVERY YOUNG MAN AND EVERY YOUNG WOMAN  
CAN FEEL THE BREEZE.

WAR IS HELL  
AND IT'S TIME FOR EVERYONE TO KNOW THE PRICE  
OF GOING TO BATTLE ON A FLIMSY EXCUSE.

LET'S NOT JUST LEAVE IT TO THOSE FROM THE HOOD  
AND WHITE KIDS FROM APPALACHIA  
LET'S SPREAD OUR EMPLOYMENT AND OUR LOVE OF WAR  
TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD.

MAYBE THEN,  
MAYBE THEN, AND ONLY THEN  
WILL WE CEASE VIEWING WAR AS THE LATEST FLIK  
OUT OF HOLLYWOOD. ■

## Wal-Mart and Human Dignity: Labor Practices Come Under Fire

*By David W. Reid, Publisher and Editor  
Vital Theology, Fort Collins, CO*

The public relations campaign rolled out early this year by Wal-Mart to "set the record straight" regarding its labor practices has done little to quell the open warfare between the company and its critics.

The back-and-forth charges highlight a stark contrast in viewpoints.

- The company proclaims that efforts to unionize the tire and lube units of stores in New Castle, Penn., and Loveland, Colo., were soundly defeated in democratic elections. Union organizers fire back that the union had no chance of winning. Wal-Mart delayed the Pennsylvania election by five years and stalled so long in Colorado that only a few of the employees who called for the vote were still on the payroll by the time an election was held.
- A study by the state of Alabama concludes that Wal-Mart tops the list of companies in that state whose employees have children on Medicaid rolls, draining between \$5.8 million and \$8.2 million from state coffers each year. A company spokesman responds that Wal-Mart will almost always lead such lists by default because it is the nation's largest employer.
- U. S. Rep. George Miller (D-Cal.) complains that Wal-Mart received special treatment when the U. S. Department of Labor agreed to give the company 15 days notice before investigating any complaints of child labor violations. Wal-Mart announces that it welcomes a review of the agreement but that the investigation will distract from the company's focus on compliance.

Sorting out the whole truth from half-truths is no easy task. But does any of this matter to the rest of us?

It does because human dignity is involved, said Todd David Whitmore, who directs the Program in Catholic Social Tradition at the University of Notre Dame.

Catholic social teaching has long held out for the dignity of all persons under the belief that all persons are born in the image of God.

"The flourishing of human beings depends upon our interconnectedness," said Whitmore. Catholic social teaching describes that interconnectedness as "solidarity."

"Where there is a lack of solidarity between persons, then there is a lack of recognition of human dignity and therefore, a lack of recognition of the way we all image God," said Whitmore, associate professor of theology.

Work is an important part of human dignity, he said. "Not only do we need a living wage to make ends meet, but it is part of human dignity to be paid for the work that we do."

An outspoken critic of Wal-Mart's labor practices, Whitmore believes that the giant retailer bears watching, if only because of its size.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. is the world's largest retailer, with \$256.3 billion in annual sales. It employs 1.6 million people worldwide and has more than 3600 facilities in the U.S. and more than 1570 in the rest of the world. According to the company, more than 138 million customers visit a Wal-Mart store each week.

Officials of the company contend that many of the attacks on the company occur precisely because it is the biggest kid on the block.

"You could almost go down the list of Catholic social teaching's articulation of the ways in which the dignity of workers must be recognized because they are created in the image of the Triune God. Wal-Mart violates virtually every one of those," said Whitmore.

Wal-Mart not only violates the standards of Catholic social teaching, but it does so in a way that does not meet the Department of Labor's code of conduct, said Whitmore. According to Whitmore, any factory that violates more than one of the fundamental U.S. labor laws can be classified as a "sweatshop" under federal law.

The fundamental code of conduct set out by the Labor Department includes paying minimum wage, keeping a time card, paying overtime, paying on time, and maintaining safe working conditions.

The battle over the public's perceptions of the company has been heating up in recent weeks.

The company launched its public relations offensive in mid-January by placing a full-page ad in more than 100 newspapers across the country. The ad took the form of a letter from CEO H. Lee Scott.

"There are a lot of 'urban legends' going around these days about Wal-Mart, but facts are facts," said Scott.

"Wal-Mart is good for consumers, good for communities, and good for the U.S. economy."

In February, the secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO said that the "entire labor movement" will be involved in a campaign to drive some business away from the company by exploiting Wal-Mart's image problems. The unions are talking of spending \$25 million a year on the effort, more than has ever been spent in a union campaign against a single company.

*The New York Times* has been particularly vigilant in covering labor issues involving Wal-Mart. Here are some of the controversies covered by the *Times* and other media:

**Child labor.** The Child Labor Coalition says Wal-Mart has a history of child labor violations. In one incident in 2000, Maine fined Wal-Mart \$205,650 for 1436 such violations. *The New York Times* obtained a copy of an internal audit of employee records in 128 stores. A Times story of Jan. 18, 2004, said the audit of one week's time-clock records for about 25,000 employees found 1371 instances in which minors apparently worked too late at night, worked during school hours, or worked too many hours in a day. It also found 60,767 apparent instances of workers not taking breaks, and 15,705 apparent instances of employees working through meal times. Wal-Mart said its audit was flawed.

**Employee health care.** The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* noted in a Feb. 27, 2004, article that more than 10,000 children of Wal-Mart employees were in the state's health program for children at an annual cost of nearly \$10 million to taxpayers. With 42,000 workers in the state, Wal-Mart had about one child in the program for every four employees. A Nov. 1, 2004, article in *The New York Times* said that a North Carolina hospital found that 31% of 1900 patients who described themselves as Wal-Mart employees were on Medicaid, and an additional 16% had no insurance at all. A study by the University of California Berkeley found that Wal-Mart employees on a public assistance programs cost California \$86 million annually, including \$32 million a year for health care. The company said it provides health benefits for 56% of its hourly workers in the U.S. at monthly rates as low as \$38 for a single person and \$153 for a family.



**Employee lock-ins.** Wal-Mart came under fire several years ago for its practice of locking employees inside stores in the middle of the night. Wal-Mart argues that this is to protect employees in high-crime areas and to guard against employee theft. Several cases have been documented of employees being denied medical attention because they did not have access to keys to the doors and one employee died when an ambulance could not reach him, according to a *Times* story published Jan. 18, 2004. Officials at Kmart, Sears, Toys "R" Us, Home Depot and Costco have said they do not lock in workers.

**Labor unions.** The Associated Press has covered recent unionizing activities at Wal-Mart in detail. In February, Wal-Mart said it would close a store in Quebec, Canada, because of what company officials called "unreasonable demands" by workers trying to negotiate the first-ever union contract with the retailer. In 2000, meat cutters at a Texas store voted in favor of a union and shortly afterward Wal-Mart eliminated positions company wide. The *Globe and Mail* of Toronto reported on Feb. 26 that Wal-Mart had been ordered to stop harassing and intimidating workers trying to organize a store in Quebec City.

For the most part, Wal-Mart has opposed the freedom of association of workers, said Whitmore. Freedom of association is a key point in Catholic social teaching, he said, because part of who we are is our ability to relate to other persons in a free way. "Wal-Mart is now big enough to just close the store outright and not suffer while sending the message to other stores: you unionize, you lose your job," said Whitmore.

**Wages.** The company faces about 40 wage and hour cases seeking class certification, according to its Website. Whitmore said one suit in Minnesota is seeking compensation for 65,000 workers. Workers have said that managers instructed them to go off the time clock just as they approached 40 hours for the week or when they were about to take a break, said Whitmore. The company last year initiated a new wage structure to increase pay to some hourly workers and created a 40-person compliance team to ensure that labor laws are followed.

**Gender discrimination.** Six current and former Wal-Mart associates are pursuing legal action against the company. The suit was certified as a class action behalf of 1.6 million women. Wal-Mart is appealing the decision and notes that more than 40 percent of its managers are women.

**Illegal workers.** In October 2003, federal agents raided 60 Wal-Mart stores across 21 states and arrested 250 illegal immigrants who worked as janitors for outside contractors. According to the *The Wall Street Journal*, Wal-Mart has been in talks to settle the probe that is focused on whether it knew that the janitorial firms hired illegal workers. ■

**Note:** Reprinted by permission from *Vital Theology*, March 15, 2002.

---

## The Two Swords of Pope Benedict XVI

*By Ken A. Grant, Doctoral Candidate  
in Church History*

Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, IL

**W**ading into the turbulent waters of the relationship between church and state is always a treacherous affair, whether entering from the church or state side. With the installation of Pope Benedict XVI, we might be reminded of this fact.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger entered into these deeps during the last presidential election cycle, as Martin Marty has noted with "grumbles" to which I would add my own ["Considering Pope Benedict XVI," April 25]. Cardinal Ratzinger raised the specter of excommunication for those Catholic politicians who did not steer clear of a pro-choice position. This brought to my mind the actions of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), who dove headfirst into church-state relations with the express intent of ensuring a church completely free of any secular entanglements.

Gregory VII rendered much subsequent tinkering with the church-state line to be just that—mere tinkering by comparison. He not only excommunicated King Henry IV at the Lenten Synod of 1076 (the result of a long-brewing confrontation between the two), but [Gregory VII] took the additional step of deposing him. He obliterated the line between church and state, and was soundly and widely criticized for his glaring innovation and revolutionary use of papal authority.

Previously, Pope Gelasius I (492-496) had commented on the relationship between the church and the empire: "[T]here are two powers by which chiefly this world is ruled: the sacred authority of the priesthood and the authority of kings. And of these the authority of the priests is so much the weightier, as they must render before the tribunal of an account even for the kings of men." While this might at first seem to support the position of Gregory VII, it was widely believed that the Gelasian "two swords" theory maintained that these two powers—political and religious—should not be held by the same person.

This battle culminated in the eleventh century, as the papacy attempted to wrest control away from the king and other secular rulers who were practicing Lay Investiture. That is, they had begun to name bishops, who were thereby invested with secular and sacred authority. The Investiture Controversy—the title often given to the

hub bub surrounding the late eleventh-century reform movement that sought to rectify this practice, and which reached its peak during the pontificate of Gregory VII—was settled in 1122 with the Concordat of Worms.

The Concordat stated that the king had the right to invest bishops with authority in the secular realm, while the church would endow bishops with the signs of sacred authority. The separation of the two swords was regarded as the most palatable compromise, as each side realized that the chaos following Gregory's political use of papal authority was detrimental to all.

Pope Benedict XVI ascends to the papal see amid a set of public attitudes that differs dramatically from Gregory's day, most notably in that a great many people outside the church seem to be quite sanguine about the former cardinal's foray into the political calculus of the United States. Inserting himself into the campaign, Cardinal Ratzinger did not only attempt to sway, through intimations of excommunication, Catholics whose beliefs regarding abortion he found to be completely out of line with Catholic teaching (wholly and rightfully within his purview). He also attempted to affect the outcome of the presidential election, knowing that the threat alone would change the way certain parts of the electorate would look at the candidates in question.

The most significant problem with such action on the state side of the church-state line is straightforward. When the popes of the thirteenth century acted on the precedent set by popes such as Gregory VII and Innocent III, secular powers began to treat them as just one more common prince to combat, bargain with, or vanquish. Similarly, today the church might come to be viewed as simply one more group which both politicians and the general populous either pander to, co-opt, or, perhaps worst of all, ignore.

A complementary effect is produced on the church side. When so involved in the secular fray, the church loses its voice; the Gospel itself is simply tuned out, as cynics regard the church's preaching to be one more way to produce a victor aligned with a particular political perspective.

The church, I think, cannot afford this kind of diminishment. So we might hope, then, that Pope Benedict XVI will relinquish the political sword he is poised to use. His hands will be full enough without it. ■

**Note:** This article first appeared in *Sightings* (5/5/05), a publication of the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago Divinity School.



---

# Lost . . . in Tulia, Texas

By Hal Haralson, Attorney (ret.)

6608 Distant View, Austin, TX 78736

I left Austin at about 5:00 a. m. on July 12. I was headed for Santa Fe, New Mexico. I like taking long drives in my pickup and this was to be one of those trips. The day ended with me camping in Las Vegas, New Mexico, only one hour from Santa Fe.

At about 2:00 p.m. I had stopped in a small town called Tulia to stretch my legs and send some flowers to my wife. The flowers would be my way of telling her that I missed her already. (That's how you stay married for 48 years.)

While looking at my map I realized that I was lost. Tulia was not on my route to Santa Fe! I had obviously taken a wrong turn and gotten on the wrong highway. No big deal. I could drive west to Dimmit and go north from there.

The courthouse square in Tulia is one of its major tourist attractions. As I explored it and the surrounding area I spotted an antique shop across the street. I headed for it. I'm always looking for some reminder of my rural life in west Texas, and I never know what I might find in one of these out-of-the-way places.

I stopped in Paint Rock one time and came away with a pair of old leather "knee pads" like the ones I wore as a boy on our farm north of Loraine, Texas. Those pads had kept many a grass burr out of my knees. Best five dollars I ever spent for a good ol' memory-jogger.

The antique shop had free coffee. While I enjoyed a cup I struck up a conversation with the shop owner, Jeannette Herring. She is a former English teacher who is a member of the First Baptist Church in Tulia.

She asked where I was from.

"Austin," I replied.

"What do you do there?"

"I have practiced law for over 30 years . . . and I'm a writer."

The "writer" part of my answer brought an immediate response, "What kind of writing?"

"Stories mostly about everyday people that I have met in the law practice and their conversation about the part God plays in their lives. They are what I call stories of faith in faded blue jeans. Hold on a minute and I'll give you a copy of my book."

I went to my pickup and returned with a copy of *Gentle Mercies, Stories of Faith in Faded Blue Jeans*. We talked about the book and how I had begun writing ten

years ago for the journal *Christian Ethics Today* when Dr. Foy Valentine invited me to submit an article. I told her that since that first article I have had an article in over forty consecutive issues.

"Do you know about *our* local artist?" she asked.

"No," I replied.

"Kenneth Wyatt. He paints the kinds of things that you write stories about."

Debra Barnes, a local resident who had come into the shop, volunteered to take me to Wyatt's studio.

I'm really glad that I accepted Debra's offer. Wyatt's painting of Jesus, the Apostles, and *cowboys* are incredible! I don't know how I have lived in Texas all these years and missed knowing of him. Debra told me that he has a gallery in Red River and has had exhibits in 91 countries around the world.

Wyatt, a retired Methodist minister, was out of town. I determined then to return to Tulia to talk to him. I have a book I want him to illustrate.

I should have an agent like Debra Barnes. I spent \$140 on Wyatt's books and paintings.

I left Tulia thinking that if one is going to get lost in Texas, Tulia is as good a place as any to do it.

Little did I know what still lay ahead!

Read on . . .

On September 3 a letter arrived from Jeannette Herring:

"Dear Mr. Haralson: I don't know what prompted you to come to Tulia that day in July when you were on your way to the writing workshop, but I wanted to tell you that your stories and your book have had quite an impact. My husband writes a farm article for the weekly Tulia newspaper. He is an avid reader of farm articles and keeps up with the world news, but he hardly ever has the time or takes the time to sit down and read a book. I related to him that you had been in the store and had left your book. He sat down that same evening and read over half of the book without stopping. As he was reading, he kept remarking that he knows several friends of ours who could benefit from the book and that we should order some to have on hand to hand out to people when we felt they needed something to brighten their day. My husband told me to order at least 10 more than I had names down to hand them to, so I am hoping that I am ordering enough to accommodate the people who

we have in mind to give them to."

"As I said, I don't know what prompted your coming into Tulia or why you happened into my store. My business had been so slow during June and July that I was little discouraged. However, on that day, I had sales totaling more than for any week for those two months. I know that God takes care of His children, and I trust Him to do just that. I also believe that He allows us to see miracles in little ways. Thank you for giving me a little 'miracle' that day. I teach a Junior-Senior girls' class at church, and I couldn't wait to tell them on Sunday about meeting you. I have shared some of your stories with them."

"I recently went to a committee meeting at my church, and my pastor handed me a copy of *Christian Ethics Today*, Summer 2004. In it was an article by you and one by your brother. He knew that I would be interested because my husband had told him about your book, and had related to him that you had been in my store. I told him that I would like to have you in our church at some point, and he said that perhaps that could be arranged."

"I am enclosing \$300 for 30 of *Gentle Mercies*. I finished reading the one that you left at my store, and I realized how many of the people with whom I come into contact could benefit from or relate to the stories in the book.

Sincerely,  
Jeannette Herring"

It wasn't long afterward that I got a call from Charles Davenport, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Tulia (Jeannette's church). He was inviting me to "come back to Tulia" to speak. "Back to Tulia" sort of sounds like a country-western tune. I like it.

I returned to Tulia and spoke on a Sunday night. After our story time together, I spent over an hour signing my books. My newfound friends who had come to listen ended up buying over \$850 worth of my books.

Tulia is a great place to get lost, thanks to folks like Jeannette and John Herring.

Lost? Was I truly lost? Those of us who are on this journey called life know that God puts us where he intends for us to be. There are *no accidents*. ■

## CET RECEIVES FIRST GRANT

The Christ Is Our Salvation Foundation of Waco, Texas, a part of the Piper Family Foundations, recently announced a four-year grant of \$25,000 annually to provide funding for the expansion of *Christian Ethics Today* to include:

1. Annual conferences and seminars on relevant ethical topics such as Ministerial Ethics, Clergy Sexual Abuse, The Baptist Debate Over Gender, etc.
2. Visits to Christian college campuses for classroom, chapel, and workshop presentations on ethical issues to educate students and encourage faculty.
3. A bi-weekly ethics column distributed to religious and secular media outlets and available on an additional website link for access to the public.

We are deeply grateful to the Piper Family and to several who aided us in acquiring this significant grant for the growing ministry of CET. Visits to university campuses have already begun. Plans are now developing for our first conference in 2006.

## Lessons From Shadowland

(continued from page 2)

really counts in life are not possessions, or nice homes, or financial security—what counts are family and friends and God.

4. *God is always near.* Audra and I both know God in very real ways. In Shadowland, like Job (42:5), we have experienced God intimately, face to face. And that is good.

5. *Heaven is hope.* We read about heaven, sing about heaven, and all plan to go there, but often our focus is on earth. Shadowland makes the promises and purposes of heaven more real—it gives us tremendous hope in a world filled with sin, suffering, and death.

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, the hero Christian journeyed from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. At the end, John Bunyan recounts: "Now I further saw that betwixt them and the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over; and the river was very deep. At the sight, therefore, of this river the pilgrims were very much stunned. Then they addressed themselves to the water, and entering, Christian began to sink, and cried out to his good friend Hopeful, 'I sink in the deep waters.' Hopeful replied: 'Be of good cheer, my brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good.' ■

JET.

---

# Myth: Baptists Don't Believe In Women Pastors

*By Sheri Adams, Professor of Church History and Theology*

School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University, NC

Without a guiding principle, the Bible's teachings on women may appear to be confusing to some people. Only husbands of one wife should be deacons (1 Tim. 3:12), yet Phoebe is a deaconess (Rom. 16:1). Women are not to speak in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 15:34), yet they are given instructions about praying and prophesying in worship (1 Cor. 11:5ff.). Women are told not to teach or be in authority over men (1 Tim. 2:12), yet women did teach, and at least one woman Priscilla, along with her husband, Aquila, taught a man (Acts 18:26).

## Egalitarian or Submissive

Baptists, as most other denominations, are divided in their approach to the Bible on the role of women in the church. Some follow a literal interpretation of certain biblical passages and make a case for the submission of women to men in the church. While these Baptists usually insist that women are equal in the sight of God, they believe that God has given men and women different roles in the home and in the church. They interpret Genesis 2 to mean that Eve was created to be Adam's helper and that ancient cultural pattern is applied universally to the present. For these Baptists, Jesus was not overly radical in his treatment of women (notably that he did not select a woman to be an apostle), and Paul taught a clear division of roles that is an inherent part of nature.

Other Baptists follow an egalitarian perspective. In Galatians 3:27-28, Paul wrote, "As many of you as are baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (NRSV).<sup>1</sup> The "Address to the Public," adopted on May 9, 1991, by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, asserted:

We take Galatians as a clue to the way the Church should be ordered. We interpret the reference to women the same way we interpret the reference to slaves. If we have submissive roles for women, we must also have a place for slaves in the Church. In Galatians Paul follows the spirit of Jesus who courageously challenged the conventional wisdom of his day. It was a wisdom with rigid boundaries between men and women in religion and in public life. Jesus deliberately broke those barriers. He called women to follow him; he treated women as equally capable of dealing with sacred issues. Our model for the role of women in matters of faith is the Lord Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

## Women in Early Baptist Life

Rosemary Radford Ruether suggests that the acceptance of women in non-traditional roles is often determined by need. For example, in the old West, every pair of hands was needed and valued. Women in that setting had more freedom than their counterparts in the old South. A similar pattern is evident in the New Testament. In Acts, women were disciples of Jesus and active in positions of leadership.<sup>3</sup> While doors began to close before the end of the New Testament era, women still were active in public ministry. The subsequent history of the church, however, is a history of women becoming more and more powerless within the developing official hierarchy.

Baptist beginnings in early seventeenth-century England also illustrate the truth of Ruether's thesis. Baptists drew many of their members from the lower classes. General Baptists especially allowed women deacons. One particularly influential woman was Dorothy Hazzard, who helped form the Broadmead Baptist Church and occasionally preached. Another preacher was a Mrs. Attaway. Richer, established religious groups ridiculed General Baptists for giving women positions of authority. Still, women were actively involved in ministries of all kinds and suffered persecution, imprisonment, and death, just like the men.<sup>4</sup>

Particular Baptists were never as open as the General Baptists to the role of women in ministry. As the Baptist faith institutionalized in the late seventeenth century, the views of leaders like John Bunyan prevailed. Because men were made in the image of God, he said, women should not lead worship.

## Baptist Women in America

In colonial America, Baptists gave no appearance that they were going to take the New World by storm until the First Great Awakening proved to be the catalyst they needed. American Congregationalism divided over the benefits of revival. Some New Light Congregationalists, supporters of revival methods, embraced believer's baptism and entered into Baptist life. Some of these new Baptists, called Separate Baptists, were open to the ministry of women, even women preachers.

The most famous of these women was Martha Stearns Marshall, sister of Shubal Stearns and wife of Daniel Marshall. Stearns and Marshall were the leaders of the Separate Baptist movement that brought significant

growth to Baptists in the South during the late eighteenth century. Martha Stearns was regarded as a powerful preacher. Another Separate Baptist woman, Margaret Clay, was sentenced, but spared the whip, for preaching without a license. Unfortunately, history has forgotten the names of most other women exhorters.<sup>5</sup>

Once again, as Baptist work became more official, women's roles diminished. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, women found their greatest avenue for ministry in foreign missions. At first, mission agencies felt that a single woman could manage on a foreign field only with a male counterpart; but once that hurdle was cleared, single women poured out of America to live and work all over the world. For most Baptists, it was a case of "out of sight, out of mind," and they were largely unaware that women performed ministries of all kinds abroad, even planting churches and preaching. According to a popular story, Lottie Moon was once criticized for preaching the gospel to the Chinese. Her retort was that if the mission board wanted to send men to preach, they were welcome to do so, and if the men came, she would stop preaching.

### Ordination

Northern Baptist records contain evidence of the ordination of women by the late 1880s. Since that time, American Baptist women have served as pastors of churches. A 1985 study revealed that 3 percent of American Baptist pastors and 16 percent of the associate and assistant pastors were women. By 2002, the numbers had continued to increase. American Baptists had 1,049 ordained women (14 percent of the total number of ordained ministers) with 923 serving in local church ministries. Eight percent of American Baptist pastors (373) were women. The role of associate pastor was especially open to women, with 33 percent (207) serving in that capacity.<sup>6</sup>

Southern Baptists were much slower to ordain a woman. On August 9, 1964, at Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham, North Carolina, Addie Davis was the first Southern Baptist woman ordained to the pastoral ministry. Throughout the twentieth century, Southern Baptist women were involved in ministries of all kinds, often unpaid and unnoticed. They did, however, run a major mission entity, the Woman's Missionary Union, and discovered there was not a great deal of difference in speaking before hundreds of people and preaching before the same people.

Close to 2,000 Southern Baptist women (or women with Southern Baptist roots) have been ordained. The majority of these women serve in chaplaincy roles, but many are also associate pastors and even senior pastors. Others are missionaries, teachers, denominational workers, campus ministers, or associational workers.

Some of these women have found a home with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF). This is especially true since the Southern Baptist Convention defines ministry for women in increasingly narrow terms and rejects women for pastoral ministry. In 2002, the CBF had 40

women on staff. The CBF also had 85 women field personnel, both single and married. Some CBF women are involved in church planting and/or pastoring.<sup>7</sup> Other Baptist groups have encouraged women who feel called to the pastorate, including the Alliance of Baptists, Baptist General Conference, and Progressive National Baptists.

### The Future

The Baptist heritage gives evidence to the call of God upon women for pastoral ministry. While some women saw little or no way to act upon their call, others channeled their pastoral gifts into missions or other kinds of service. A precious few have found churches willing to accept them as pastors.

The Baptist past reveals that pastoral ministry is often determined more by need than by theology. Churches hesitant to acknowledge the validity of women pastors, but in need of ministerial leadership, have let women speak, but not preach; they have let them deliver a message, but not a sermon; and they have let them plant churches, but not pastor churches. But churches that have experienced the pastoral leadership of dedicated Christian women can attest the truth of the declaration, "in Christ there is neither male nor female."

Is it true that Baptists do not support women in pastoral ministry? Of course, some Baptists do not, but the Baptist tradition of freedom dispels the myth. Denying and stifling a strong sense of call is as difficult for a woman as it is for a man. Women have preached and served as Baptist pastors, and they will persevere in spite of the opposition as they are called. ■

**Note:** Published with permission of the Baptist History and Heritage Society, the William H. Whitsitt Baptist Heritage Society, and the Center for Baptist Studies at Mercer University, one of eleven pamphlets in the "Baptist Myths" series available at P. O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024, (800) 966-2278.

<sup>1</sup> Used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> "An Address to the Public" from the Interim Steering Committee of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, adopted on May 9, 1991" in Walter B. Shurden, ed., *Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Movement* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1993), 312.

<sup>3</sup> See Acts 1:14; 2:44-47; 4:32-35; 8:3; 9:2; 9:36; 12:12; 16:14; 17:12; 17:34; 18:2-3; 18:26.

<sup>4</sup> See Leon, McBeth, *Women in Baptist Life* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979) for a historical overview of the role of women in Baptist life.

<sup>5</sup> Karen O'Dell Bullock, *Word and Way* (May 23, 1995): 13.

<sup>6</sup> "Leadership, Diversity, Global Concern Celebrating Fifty Years of American Baptist Women's Ministry," *American Baptist Quarterly*, 20 (September 2001): 282. See also American Baptist Women in Ministry Report as of June 18, 2002: <http://www.abwim.org/statistics.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Telephone interview with Sarah Frances Anders, July 18, 2002.

---

# Adam's Rib

*By Wilton H. Bunch, MD, PhD*

Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, AL

I was quietly reading one evening when I encountered a statement claiming that many evangelicals believed that men had one fewer rib than women because of the story of Eve's beginnings (Gen 2:18-23). I laughed until I thought I would cry. My wife looked up from her book and said, "What's so funny?" I read the passage to her and she responded, "Your niece arrived at nursing school believing that!" I stopped laughing.

The next day I promptly inquired of all the students I could find. I posed the question to each of my classes at the beginning of the semester. I have queried about 75 students. Those students who had grown up in the so-called mainline denominations, or were from other countries had never heard of gender differences in the number of ribs. Almost every other student or staff member queried had heard it, been taught it, or still believed it. Growing up in the south was not the issue, it was the religious tradition.

What does this have to do with ethics? Among the virtues taught by philosophers and prophets in pagan documents and Holy Scripture is honesty. The virtuous person is honest. Among the duties enumerated in Scripture is honesty; "you shall not bear false witness" (Exod. 20:16). No matter what ethical system a Christian chooses to use, one cannot be dishonest and moral.

One is always under obligation to learn the truth. Both philosophical and scriptural based ethics affirm that the virtuous person is expected to search for wisdom and truth with the expectation they will find it. Merely saying, "Well, someone told me, so I can pass it on," is not good enough for the virtuous, honest person.

Many Christians worry that there is a conflict between science and religion. In this case, there is no conflict. The problem is that persons misunderstand basic biology and then go on to construct beliefs that Scripture does not teach. Believing that there is a gender difference in the number of ribs is not necessary for a literal, inerrant understanding of the Genesis story.

The first error is to believe that acquired characteristics

are inherited. This theory was first advanced by Lamarck, about sixty years before the time of Darwin and rapidly forgotten everywhere except in Russia, where it was held as communist party dogma into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The definitive experiment was simple. The tails were cut off rats and they were allowed to mate. All their offspring had tails! No matter how many generations were observed, every rat had a tail. Acquired characteristics are not inherited.

The second error is to fail to understand the body's ability to regenerate. As a pediatric spine surgeon I have removed ribs from many children and teenagers in order to reach the front of the spine. If the bed of the rib is protected and closed carefully, and the person is under the age of twelve, the rib will regenerate. Within a year the child has the same number of ribs as they started with, despite my surgical interference.

Assuming that Adam was still a young person, despite the fact he appears on the scene as an adult, it is perfectly consistent to conclude that he grew back his rib and so went though life with the normal number of ribs as well as having the companionship of Eve. Even the person who reads Genesis as literal and inerrant does not need to imagine that Adam was handicapped in any way by the origin of Eve.

Is my small survey representative of the larger evangelical community? I don't know, and I sincerely hope not. But every evangelical I questioned had been exposed to the idea. To whatever extent it is suggestive, some church educational programs need to be changed.

In one respect, the widespread exposure of evangelical students to this foolish misunderstanding of science is harmless and even amusing. But it is not an isolated event. At the present time there is great turmoil concerning the topics of conception and contraception. There may be moral issues present, but having a false understanding of the physiology and pharmacology and then building moral dogma on this misconception is neither ethical nor helpful to the evangelical mission. ■

# Stealth Baptist Church

By Mark W. Clark, Freelance Writer  
Irving, TX

During the Gulf War, the B-2 Stealth Bomber frequently made the front page. We marveled at this wonder-plane that could deliver all manner of destruction to an unsuspecting target without being detected by enemy radar. The advantages of operating in stealth mode in battle go back to the U-2 spy plane and even to the Revolutionary War, where militias hid in the bushes rather than fight in the open dressed in colorful military finery.

In war, camouflage is king. This tactic has not gone unnoticed by churches seeking not to change their fundamentalist strategy, but to increase the number of backsides in pews.

Many Southern Baptist churches have grown tired not so much of the fundamentalist theology of their convention, but the liability that comes with the "B" word. More than a handful of churches in our area have dropped "Baptist" from their title, or even changed their name altogether. A friend of mine introduced me to a new moniker—the "Stealth Baptist Church."

Pastors and church leaders make similar comments of justification: "The name 'Baptist' does not convey a positive meaning to people;" "I'm not ashamed to be a Baptist, but a brand name can be a hindrance;" or "People now don't have the product loyalty, or the denominational loyalty, they once had."

Mind you the churches, by and large, have stayed pretty much the same. Oh, they offer modern "ministries" like divorce recovery, singles clubs, and community activism, along with contemporary music and the latest in audio-visual production. Many even list themselves as non-denominational.

If you find the war analogy somewhat of a stretch, then you haven't followed the SBC controversy over the last 25

years. When strong-arm military might fails to reach and reign-in the masses, simply go undercover to conquer an unsuspecting target.

Stealth churches thrive on the spiritually ignorant and denominationally misinformed. This is not a put-down, but rather a description of the people flocking to these churches. They simply don't care about what they don't know, at least until they grow as Christians and attempt to move into leadership roles.

Signs of a Stealth Baptist Church may be revealed by asking the following:

Where was the pastor and staff educated?

Do you have easy access to church history?

Can you freely access the church bylaws?

What type of church government is in place (CEO-style leadership, board of elders, etc.)? Are there any women in leadership positions?

Has the church recently acquired a new focus?

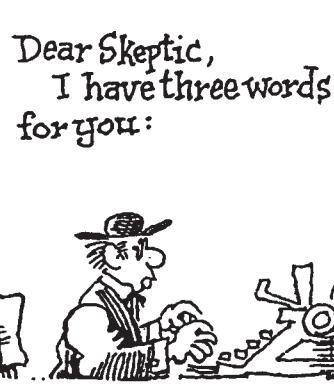
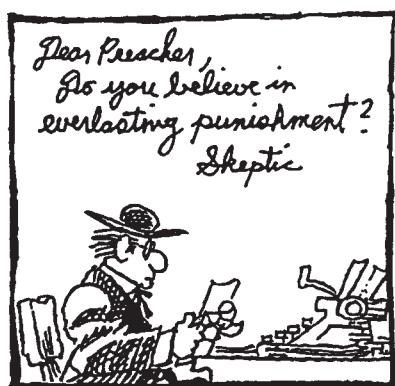
Has the church recently undergone a name change?

Did the leadership change along with the name?

(If yours is a new church start, ask the above of the parent church.)

Attending a Stealth Baptist Church will feel like your first date—sleek, new, fresh and innovative. It's an old marketing ploy to make you feel good about buying the same old soap—new and improved! After joining and being a member for a year or two, many find themselves saying, "tastes great, less filling."

This change has nothing to do with contemporary music, high-tech visuals, or gifted speakers using talk-show techniques. These methods are matters of style of worship and can be used to reach the Gen-XYZ crowd. Because a church is



"traditional" doesn't automatically align it with the fundamentalists. In fact, such a church might be right on target with matters of soul competency, priesthood of the believer, servant leadership, and evangelism.

However, a post-modern façade may camouflage a very fundamentalist power structure. Because it doesn't show up on your radar screen, doesn't mean it's not there.

The Stealth Baptist Church may also have a history of high turnover. Once people get involved in positions of ministry and leadership at the non-staff level, the cloak is slowly removed. You discover a church with a glass ceiling of its own. A layperson's attempt to promote a Christlike leadership style will be "taken under advisement." If pressed, the powers that be will inform you that ours is a "staff-led" church.

My home church hid its fundamentalism quite well from this writer for at least two of the past three years. I marveled at the contemporary, casual setting. I was liberated by the music and even played in the praise band. At the member level, there was great community with budding ministries and small groups. On the surface there was nary a hint of fundamentalism. We even voted last January to sever what little denominational affiliation we had retained. Free at last, thank God almighty!

But, all great honeymoons come to an end, and a series of recent events have lifted the veil of secrecy. More than 80 % of the staff have resigned over the past year alone. Longtime church pioneers who had embraced the contemporary seeker-focus from the church's inception have abruptly departed sighting irreconcilable "philosophical differences" with senior leadership. More than 50 families have left during our tenure at a church that now is lucky to get 200 people on Sunday. Fewer than a dozen families remain who were members the first day we walked through the door. The all-to-familiar mantra of the departing: "I'm tired of beating my head against a wall."

The final straw was the theological strong-arming from senior leadership. "I know the will of God and the direction for this church" is the polite way for a pastor to say, "sit down in your pew, shut up, and write out your tithe check. Don't worry your pretty little head about things you're too spiritually immature to process. After all, I've been to seminary!" A closer review of the church bylaws confirms a lock on all decisions by the senior pastor, save for a few financial areas.

#### SHOCK AND AWE . . . I BELONGED TO A STEALTH BAPTIST CHURCH!

Needless to say, I'm smack in the middle of planning an exit strategy from my church. My family and I are connected neck deep. Leaving is messy, and staying is a dead-end street. In the process, I'm quickly trying to develop new anti-stealth detection techniques. I'm sure the insidious nature of fundamentalism, like other forms of terror, will drive insurgents to new disguises and slight-of-hand. My own department of homeland security is in the making. Hopefully, I can return to ministering to the lost, connecting the disconnected, and following God's call as a free believer in Christ. ■

---

## Book Reviews

*"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed."*

*Francis Bacon (d. 1626).*

### Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus In Contemporary Context

Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, Downers Grove, IVP, 2003, \$30.

*Reviewed by Jeph Holloway, Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics*

East Texas Baptist University, Marshall, TX

Glen Stassen and David Gushee are concerned that Christian Ethics as an academic discipline is often guilty of evading Jesus, the cornerstone and center of the Christian faith. They believe specifically that the teachings of Jesus concentrated in the Sermon on the Mount are routinely ignored or misinterpreted in the preaching and teaching of the Church and in Christian scholarship in ethics. The result of such evasion and distortion is "seriously malformed Christian moral practices, moral beliefs, and moral witness" (xi).

To give central place to Jesus' teachings will mean to give priority to the kingdom or reign of God (chapter 1). Stassen and Gushee understand the reign of God as God's performative act enabling our participation in a way of life characterized by a reversal of worldly values and by a new lifestyle of service, servanthood, and humility. More specifically, Jesus' teaching on the kingdom reflects reliance on themes from the Book of Isaiah such as those of salvation, God's presence, justice, peace, and joy. While this kingdom will one day come in dramatic fullness, Stassen and Gushee argue that God's reign has been inaugurated in some way in the first coming of Christ. The present reality of the kingdom makes possible a way of life among those who respond in faith to its presence in Jesus Christ, a way of life most explicitly taught in the Sermon on the Mount, what Stassen and Gushee call a "primer for kingdom ethics" (30).

The Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount give our writers the opportunity to explore and dialogue with the contemporary concern for virtue in recent Christian ethics and moral philosophy (chapters 2 and 3). In fact, focusing on the Beatitudes can give specific content to what is often an overly general appreciation for virtue without adequate consideration as to which virtues Christians should nurture. The Beatitudes, though, do not need to be understood as noble ideals that Jesus urges us to live up to so as to merit entry into God's kingdom,

but rather as expressions of God's "participative grace" that gives "Christomorphic" shape to lives that have known God's gift of deliverance through faith in Jesus Christ.

Because the Beatitudes reflect God's gracious gift of deliverance they will each testify in some way to the character of God and to the "already"/"not yet" character of God's deliverance. The poor in spirit, for example, are blessed because it is in God's character to care for those who know their desperate condition. This care will find its perfect expression in the coming kingdom, but even now, "because God is actively delivering the humble and the poor, Jesus' followers can rejoice—because as a community we participate in this deliverance" (39). The Beatitudes highlight virtues that are deeply rooted in the entire biblical witness and not only picture what it means to be a follower of Jesus, but picture the virtues of Jesus himself whose life and teaching provide these virtues with concrete embodiment.

Stassen and Gushee emphasize, however, that a focus on virtue is no escape from the necessity of concrete obedience to the teachings of Jesus. To focus "on being rather than doing" is a "fundamental error" (73). *Kingdom Ethics* argues for a holistic approach to Christian ethics: "No aspect of moral existence is left out—decisions, practices, convictions, principles, goals and virtues are all included in the effort to 'live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel'" (122).

Stassen and Gushee will argue, though, that there is a significant relationship between virtue and concrete obedience to the teachings of Jesus found in the Sermon on the Mount in terms of what they call Jesus' "transforming initiatives." Stassen and Gushee argue that interpreters have generally missed a vital aspect of Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and in so doing have either rendered Jesus a dualist (Luther's "Two Kingdoms" ethic) or an idealist, both strategies licensing evasion of Jesus' teaching. Stassen and Gushee detect a three-fold structure in the teachings of the Sermon (rather than the familiar two-fold "antitheses") that first cites a traditional teaching on righteousness ("you shall not kill") that is then followed by a diagnosis of those vicious cycles that lead to unjust outcomes ("being angry, or saying, 'you fool!'"). The third feature of Jesus' teachings is, however, where the emphasis must be given, on "transforming initiatives that give real, practical, grace-based guidance for Christian ethics" ("Go, be reconciled"). Rather than unrealizable ideals or a merely privatized ethic, Jesus offers in the Sermon on the Mount transforming initiatives that enable participation in "the way of God's grace that God took in Jesus" (135). Such transforming initiatives (for a summary see the chart on 142) are neither high ideals "to be admired from a distance" nor "mere attitudes, vague intentions, or moral convictions only, but regular practices to be engaged in" (136). Most importantly, they are ways of "participation in God's active presence and God's grace" (140).

The bulk of *Kingdom Ethics* is a journey through the

Sermon on the Mount in an attempt to explore how Jesus' "transforming initiatives" make possible "the practices of deliverance in the midst of a world of sinful bondage to vicious cycles of despair and destruction" (144). Stassen and Gushee address a wide variety of concerns in an effort to provide specific and concrete expressions of Christian discipleship. The range of issues runs from matters related to the value of life (peacemaking, the death penalty, bioethical issues), to matters of human relationships and sexuality (marriage and divorce, homosexuality, gender roles), to matters of love and justice (truth telling, race, economics, care for creation).

No review can do justice to the involved and careful discussion Stassen and Gushee provide on these matters. They often give detailed treatment of significant interpretive issues of the biblical text and are mindful of the history of interpretation and of significant schools of thought in Christian ethics. They demonstrate the value of solid social scientific research in their use of statistics to track societal trends and to explore and expose flagrant breaches of justice. They illustrate the current relevance of Jesus' teachings with appeal to life stories of their own and of others who have sought to embody faithfulness to the Kingdom of God. The book can be recommended for any pastor's library as a resource, not just for the Sermon on the Mount, but also for the many areas of ethical challenge that confront congregational ministry today. The book will also serve well as a text for upper-level courses in Christian ethics. Students will engage not simply with extensive treatment of biblical materials on key ethical concerns, but also with a wide range of voices and perspectives in the discipline of Christian ethics.

I do have one reservation about the book, a reservation that reflects a key concern in the field of Christian ethics today. On the one hand, Stassen and Gushee emphasize that the way of life depicted in the Sermon on the Mount is indeed *kingdom ethics*, and that the virtues and practices Jesus calls for presuppose "participative grace," God's gracious deliverance through Christ and our participation in it. Such participation necessarily entails immersion in the social context of the church that as salt and light serves as both an alternative, counter-cultural community and as a community expressing God's care for the entire human family (473-483). For Stassen and Gushee the latter task includes expressions of "political activism." Such activism, while situated within the broader context of the church's public witness and social ministry, would include, for example, calls for state regulation of abortion (235-236), handgun availability (189-191), and perhaps even automobile fuel economy standards (445-456).

The basic question is how the church can both serve as an alternative, counter-cultural community whose moral life is formed by the participative grace of God and "shepherd" the moral life of a wider society not so formed? Is the Christian moral life that set of virtues and practices that demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God made

present in Jesus Christ or can it be reduced to a set of positions on this or that issue that can be made into policies defensible in “a respectful public language that communicates its values in a way that a wide variety of people can understand and embrace” (481)? This contrast is a little overstated and the great thrust of *Kingdom Ethics* is toward the formation of the moral witness of the Christian community, but Stassen and Gushee themselves raise the issue when they seek to pair language of the kingdom with “respectful public language” as tools of moral discourse. What that “public language” sounds like is hard to say. Many who have sought to learn it now admit that it sounds much like the confusion at Babel. ■

## Beyond The Age Of Innocence: Rebuilding Trust Between America And The World

Kishore Mahbubani, New York, Public Affairs, 2005, \$26.

*Reviewed by Darold H. Morgan*

Richardson, TX

**O**n first glance many Americans will dismiss a book like this because they automatically conclude here is another “bashing America” book. But hold on! This is a rare and unusual volume, which all Americans should read because it touches on subjects of great significance. A foreigner who is a committed friend to America writes this critique, and he writes it well. The book is excellently researched, balanced, timely, and ultimately hopeful as it pursues its goal of making Americans understand how they are perceived in this post 9/11 world. Enriched with numerous remembrances of his life and experiences, the author blends an absorbing and disturbing approach to the unique position of American power in this post cold-war period, which is anything but safe.

This is not a diatribe about American foreign policy. Compliments about American education, generosity, and intentions abound, but Paul Kennedy’s assessment about the book is insightful: “This is a plea for cultural understanding, for reasoned leadership and above all, for intelligence.” Facing Americans today are overwhelming and major challenges. The author points to three in particular: (1) the resurgence of a militant Islam (the source of terrorism), (2) the radical growth and influence of China and India, and (3) the impact of globalization. It is obvious that the American response to these issues sometimes has been less than adequate. If you are a thinking American who is deeply disturbed by the question, “Why do they hate us,” here is a book which wisely and analytically answers that question.

The setting of the book is concentrated on that time frame dated from the demise of the old Soviet Empire and the harsh and perhaps necessary response of American reaction to worldwide Islamic militancy.

America’s goals of expanding democracy and freedom worldwide are undeniable and meritorious, yet sometimes these ideals conflict with America’s own national interests. The author treats this sensitive area with a balanced reportorial instinct, confirming repeatedly that the world is a very dangerous place. These rising levels of anti-Americanism sadly are worldwide, despite the repetitious sounds of an American commitment to democracy, liberty and freedom.

The obvious truth is that American military power is the strongest in the history of the world. Related to this is the rising number of Americans who do not care much about international legitimacy. So, the ethical impasse seems to boil down to the right use of power in this dangerous world where all forms of a frightening terrorism exists. This staggeringly serious debate will be an on-going challenge for years to come. Serious minded Christians who earnestly desire a balanced world view of these multiple challenges should read and debate the pros and cons of this book.

The author’s final chapter, “The Way Ahead,” merits serious reflection on America’s true potential and capacity to serve conceptually as a guide to a stable world order. It is a genuine wake-up call to American leaders to realize the balanced and proper use of power—economic, military, and moral! His discussion of “The Law of Intended International Consequences” is timely and worthy of serious reflection. Recent moves by the current administration and others to address the financial morass of some African nations speak positively to this subject.

The book closes with an ardent appeal for shared and mutual prosperity for all people and nations, an appeal that requires sacrifice and understanding far beyond short-term interests. ■

## Fire In The Bedroll

Susannah Anderson, [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com), 2004, \$12.

*Reviewed by Dee Miller, Dee Moines, IA  
[www.takecourage.org](http://www.takecourage.org)*

**W**hat happens when parents brainwashed in fundamentalism raise their children the same way? A lot of dysfunction. That’s what *Fire In The Bedroll* is all about. Make no mistake—not all ministers, not all missionaries raise their children the way the author was raised. Not all ministers are abusive or engage in sexual misconduct either, though the percentage of perpetrators in the profession is far too high. While plenty of naivety abounds in the faith community, there are plenty of families that manage to impart a great deal of health to their children while doing God’s work. Yet few do so while embracing strict adherence to the literal meaning of “wives submit.” The author of this story was set up from the very start to be a long-term victim.

*Fire In The Bedroll* clearly illustrates what happens

when children, isolated and "sheltered" from reality, grow up. A person with low self-esteem often finds a mate with equally low self-esteem. Yet the children are unable to live except by the script that has been so rigidly written for them. The result is often decade after decade of remaining under the spell (while calling it normal), all the while bringing up another generation of children who have difficulty writing their own script.

In this case, it involved marrying a guy who had been kicked out of seminary, couldn't keep a job, never managed to stay in one place for long, yet someone whom the wife author saw as a clergyman for many years before her husband ever found a vulnerable congregation! Oh, how she needed to believe in that fantasy!

The book is often dramatic, especially the final chapters. It reads like a *Lifetime TV* movie, with the reader on the edge, hoping and praying that the victimized wife and children are able to escape. What relief when it finally happens! The most shocking event to me, even as a seasoned listener to such stories, was the collusion of the author's father, who aided the perpetrator after the wife and children had managed to escape!

It is impossible to describe the eerie feeling that came over me personally when I read the town name "Duncan." That was the name of the small city where my husband and I chose to take our family for furloughs from our own mission service, beginning only four years after Susannah's terror ended. Yet, Duncan, Oklahoma was also the location of the final chapters of this book, a place where collusion from at least one person was so evident! The place where Susannah's family ended up before their final escape was only a few years before my husband and I arrived, ourselves devastated from collusion, sexual harassment, and abuse on the mission field.

This is a story that provides considerable insight into life within a dysfunctional, abusive clergy marriage, as well as clergy sexual misconduct, as witnessed by the spouse of the perpetrator. It does so regardless of the fact that much of the story transpires in Mexico, in a cross-cultural marriage. The problem and the dynamics are the same, no matter the setting and no matter the culture.

Although this couple conveniently and easily moved from one denomination to another, it is important for readers of *Christian Ethics Today* to know that the perpetrator eventually conned his way through the wide gates of the Baptist ordination process, where accountability issues are not consistently built into the system.

A good deal of story-tightening in the middle of the book (leaving out some of the superficial scenery), would have made the narrative considerably more readable as a case study. I also longed to have more dates for the various parts of the story. Yet, the story is a precious gift, worth the read for anyone who needs to understand just how difficult it is to break the cycle of intergenerational abuse and victimization, in clergy homes or in any family.

As a writer who has studied and written about the

problems of clergy sexual misconduct and domestic violence, hearing frequently from readers with horrific stories to tell, I was especially impressed with this one. It should be in every church and seminary library! ■

**Note:** Dee Miller is the author of *How Little We Knew* (Prescott, 1993), a first-person story of collusion with sexual assault and abuse of minors on the mission field, and *The Truth About Malarkey* (1<sup>st</sup> books.com, 2000), a novel about clergy sexual misconduct in an autonomous congregation.

## A Word On Words

(continued from page 31)

tum are full of vinegar and red pepper sauce, if you know what I mean.

Diddlysquat is a marvelous word. Its connotations are mildly pejorative, negative, ascerbic. If a body just doesn't know diddlysquat about a subject, you can just put it in your pipe and smoke it that he is plumb ignorant of the matter.

A thingamajig is some contraption that may have a name that you just can't think of at the moment, or it may actually not even have a name. It is generally a jury-rigged device considerably more like the old Rube Goldberg inventions of the funny papers than a simple pair of pliers or a three-cornered file or a ball peen hammer. Just ask for it by name when you go to the hardware store. Good luck.

Persnickety is a nice word. It has a rather precise meaning. For instance, the IRS people can be quite persnickety if they feel you have shortchanged them a tad with a mistake in your addition or subtraction in your annual submission of the forms related to the affirmation of your citizenship in our great country. And your spouse can be downright persnickety when company is coming and you still haven't cleaned off your desk. Need I go on?

Suffice it to say that without words humans would be the most pitiful creatures in all of God's creation.

But with them we can exult with Shakespeare's Hamlet:

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason!  
How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how  
express and admirable!  
In action how like an angel!  
In apprehension how like a god! ■

---

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

## A Word On Words

*By Foy Valentine, Founding Editor*

12527 Matisse Lane, Dallas, TX 75230

"A raid on the inarticulate."

This is what the word merchant T. S. Eliot called each new writing venture—a raid on the inarticulate.

Articulation is defined in the dictionary as what modern humans, in the broad genus of primate mammals, do in giving utterance or expression to meaningfully arranged ideas. To articulate is to put into words. A word is reason or sense articulated in such a way as to communicate with others.

Human beings are nothing if not word makers. We have been called *Homo sapiens*—man, the knower, *Homo erectus*—man, the upright, and *Homo faber*—man, the fabricator. A not inappropriate designation might be *Homo verbum*—the word maker or man, the talker.

Words are immeasurably fascinating to me.

Some people are charmed by music, some by colors, some by antiques, some by clocks, some by stars, some by numbers, some by gravity, some by pi, some by cars. Then some of us are charmed by words. Among my heroes are those wordsmiths like Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, Cervantes, and Malcolm Muggeridge. All of them played words like Johann Sebastian Bach played the organ, to send cold chills up and down your back and leave you trembling like an aspen leaf.

There are "good words" by which we communicate our take on the current state of affairs in general, reporting on recent developments that we deem to be of some interest to the friend who has asked, "What's the good word?"

There are nonsensical words like *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* and *Rumpelstiltskin* that come along now and then, catching our attention and lodging a while in our collective consciousness; but they hardly ever carry any permanent meaning.

Many a concerned parent has admonished a beloved son or daughter going off to work, to college, or to war, "Remember who you are." Knowing that they can't be expected to come home again, the parents bid them farewell with the hope that long years of teaching and training, of guidance and discipline, of worry and love may have been so instilled in the offspring that they will not mess up their lives by foolishly forgetting who they really are.

I especially like the Hispanic words, *vaya con Dios*, sometimes seen on roadside signs. Go with God. Vaya con Dios. A happy thought, amigo.

Then there are final words, benedictions, which are literally good (*bene*) words (*dictiones*) with which to conclude a prayer, a meeting, or a farewell, so that a group can be uniquely united in spirit as they take leave of present company and go their separate ways. Remembering that the early Christians, after the Lord's Supper had been instituted, sang a hymn and went out, we used to do likewise, always singing, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain;

But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

What really sets me to thinking along these lines, however, was not quite as sober as some of these matters just touched on.

A couple of days ago, for no good reason, I started jotting down some strange, even bizarre, words which came to mind, which words have found lodgment in our vocabularies even though they are not necessarily Webster-approved: *lickety-split*, *spizzarinktum*, *diddlysquat*, *persnickety*, and a lot more with which I need not try your patience. (I am astounded at how often my little mind turns to such inconsequential things.)

*Lickety-split* has special connotations for me because a smart man I once knew chose that name for his car repair establishment. An aesthetically challenged place if you ever saw one, on a back road in Questa some ten to twelve miles down the mountain from Red River, New Mexico. The *Lickety-split* became a sort of second home for my old 1946 army Jeep. It seemed to be drawn to the place like a moth to a flame. As I suppose everybody knows, *lickety-split* means plenty pronto. For this particular place, this was a world-class misnomer. It might more accurately have been named *Manana Motor Messups*—but that is another story.

*Spizzarinktum*, is a splendid word I never once heard used by Dr. A.J. Armstrong, the head of the English Department at Baylor University when I was in school there. Still, it is a word with a lot of character. *Spizzarinktum* is the substance inside a kid that makes him sass his daddy, jump fences, play hooky, or get sent to the principal's office. Those who are full of *spizzarink-*

(continued on page 30)

# 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 five times each year.

From the beginning *Christian Ethics Today* has been sent without charge to anyone requesting it, "as money and energy permit." More than ever before, your financial support is "greatly needed, urgently solicited, and genuinely appreciated."

The Christian Ethics Today Foundation is a non-profit organization and has received a 501 (c) (3) status from the Internal Revenue Service.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Fisher Humphreys, Chair

Pat Anderson

Aubrey H. Ducker, Jr.

Tony Campolo

Darold Morgan

Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler

David Sapp

Carolyn Dipboye

Philip Wise

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

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

Phone: (512) 847-8721  
Line 2 (512) 847-8171  
email jtrull@wimberley-tx.com

**NOTE: THE ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS MAY BE CHANGING SOON.**

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

CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY

Post Office Box 26  
Wimberley, Texas 78676

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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