

# Christian Ethics Today

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

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# One Thing Thou Lackest!

By Joe E. Trull, Editor

Truett Seminary at Baylor University is a great theological school—in many ways a flagship institution among Baptists. Truett's leadership is dynamic, its professors are well trained and skilled (several are renowned in theological circles), and its students are top-notch and totally committed to doing God's will.

Since its beginning, Truett has grown from 50 students in 1994 to 520 enrolled today, a total of 485 graduates, and a goal of 1000 on-campus students enrolled within ten years. Endowment has reached \$36 million. In a *Truett Update* about a year ago, Dean Paul Powell outlined six challenging goals, noting numerous achievements of the school, and shared his vision to make Truett seminary "Texas Baptists' gift to the world."

I applaud his vision and commend his leadership, without which Truett Seminary would not be where it is today. Truett offers excellent training in biblical studies, theology, church history, homiletics, and various practical studies.

My love and admiration of Truett Seminary is evidenced in the fact that CET held its First Annual Conference at Truett on February 13-14, 2006. The response of both students and faculty was exceptional and gracious in every way.

Yet, with a heavy heart I must say, "One Thing Thou Lackest!"

*Truett Seminary does not have a Professor of Christian Ethics on its fac-*

*ulty or a course in Christian ethics in its curriculum.* This need has become a magnificent obsession for me, one I have discussed more than once with the administration.

In 1999, I served on the Seminary Study Committee appointed by the Baptist General Convention of Texas. We visited and interviewed all SBC seminaries, as well as our two new seminaries in Texas. How well I remember our session with the former President of Baylor, the Chair of Baylor Trustees, and the Interim Dean of Truett—they presented a list of ten priorities for the seminary if Texas Baptists increased their funding. Would you believe the NUMBER ONE PRIORITY presented to our study committee was a full-time Professor of Christian Ethics! How pleased I was. And, Texas Baptists did increase their funding of Truett, but now eight years later I am still waiting for that priority.

Yes, I have heard the explanations—a lack of funds and a full curriculum. And yes, I realize other seminary disciplines do discuss ethical concerns. But as James McClendon noted in his first volume of systematic theology, *Ethics* (in which he claims ethics comes first), "Ethics is often left until last, and then it is left out altogether."<sup>1</sup>

I also am aware that many other disciplines at Truett have second and third teachers. I have no qualms about that fact. But, before Truett endows a second Chair of Missions (a recent goal) or add other second and third teachers, doesn't Truett need to focus on getting their first ethics professor and adding at least an Introduction to Christian Ethics course to the curriculum?

The six SBC seminaries have from one to three ethics professors each, and Logsdon Seminary at Hardin Simmons has the T. B. Maston Chair of Christian Ethics ably occupied by

Bill Tillman. Isn't it logical for Truett to do likewise?

As a Texas Baptist pastor from 1962 to 1984 in small rural churches, exploding suburban churches, and a large downtown First Baptist Church, I understand why ministers need training in Christian ethics. Ministers need to improve their decision making skills, develop moral leadership, protect themselves from common errors in ethical deliberation, and understand the priority of ethics in the Christian life.<sup>2</sup>

During 15 years of teaching Christian ethics at the SBC seminary in New Orleans (at which every student was required to take the Introduction course and one additional course in ethics), I knew firsthand the need for church leaders to be equipped in moral decision making, biblical ethics, ministerial ethics, and the difficult task of addressing contemporary moral issues in the complex areas of church and state, war and peace, biomedical ethics, human sexuality, marriage and family, and the role of women in church and home—to name just a few.

So, that's my plea, that's my case, and that's my magnificent obsession! If you agree, drop a line or share a word with Dean Paul Powell or Assistant Dean David Garland.<sup>3</sup>

And, above all, make it happen through your personal and financial support. ■

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1 See "Why Ethics Comes First," in James McClendon, Jr., *Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 41-45.

2 See Joe E. Trull, *Walking in the Way: An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (Nashville: B&H, 1997), 8-12.

3 Write to Truett Seminary at P. O. Box 97126, Waco, TX 76798, or call (254) 710-3755.

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Editor: Joe E. Trull

Publisher: Christian Ethics Today Foundation,  
9608 Parkview Court, Denton, TX 76207  
(940) 262-0450; Cell: (940) 230-6931

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# EthixBytes

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

"Those friends thou hast and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

*William Shakespeare, in Hamlet.*

"There's class warfare all right—but it's my class, the rich class, that's making war, and we're winning."

*Warren Buffett, the billionaire investor on tax fairness in the NY Times.*

"The wealthiest 1% of Americans control 50% of the world's wealth, while the bottom 50% of the world's people, control 1% of the world's wealth."

*CNN Readerboard.*

"Halliburton hired Pakistanis and Indians for kitchen work, but no Iraqis. Why? They could poison the food! Before being hired, applicants were also asked if they supported Roe vs. Wade."

*George Will quoting Rajiv Chandrasekaran's Imperial Life in the Emerald City.*

"The test of a government's commitment to human rights is measured by the way it treats its worst offenders. History will judge these actions harshly."

*Richard Dicker, director of Human Rights Watch's International Justice Program upon Saddam Hussein's execution.*

"I have been called a liar . . . an anti-Semite . . . a bigot . . . a plagiarist . . . a coward. Those accusations concern me, but they don't detract from the fact the book is accurate and needed."

*Former President Jimmy Carter in response to criticism of his recent book, Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid at a symposium on his presidency at the University of Georgia.*

"The watchword of this new religion is 'My country right or wrong . . . In

Germany, it was preached by Hitler. In Italy it was preached by Mussolini. And in America it is being preached by . . . the advocates of white supremacy, and the America-First movements."

*Martin Luther King, Jr. in a 1953 sermon, "The False God of Nationalism."*

"We need to ask Americans to be patriotic about something other than the war."

*Sen. John Edwards on ABC This Morning.*

"A realist is an idealist who has gone through the fire and been purified. A skeptic is an idealist who has gone through the fire and been burned."

*Warren Wiersbe in Leadership.*

"The American people won the cold war—no one president, no one party. It was the work of many years and many administrations. The credit belongs to the people."

*Former President Gerald Ford, to Newsweek Editor Jon Meacham about the assertion that Ronald Reagan deserved credit for the fall of the Soviet Union.*

"Exxon Mobil Corp. gave \$16 million to 43 ideological groups between 1998 and 2005 in an effort to mislead the public by discrediting the science behind global warming."

*Union of Concerned Scientists Report (1/3/07).*

"An estimated 5-7 million people in South Africa are infected with HIV/AIDS . . . by 2015 there will be about 2.2 million orphans there as a result of AIDS."

*Report from missionaries Ann Marie and Scott Houser at [www.thefellowship.info](http://www.thefellowship.info).*

"If God himself did not compel obe-

dience, than no man should try. Faith coerced is not faith, it is tyranny."

*Jon Meacham, explaining the theological basis for Religious Freedom on Meet the Press (1/7/07).*

"If every American switched five light bulbs in his or her home to energy saving light bulbs, it would be like taking one million cars off the road!"

*Al Gore on the Oprah Winfrey Show.*

"One in three high school students in this republic says that the First Amendment to the Constitution of the U.S. goes too far in the right that it guarantees you as a citizen [and] one-half of students thought newspapers should not be allowed to print whatever they want without first gaining governmental approval."

*Baptist historian Walter Shurden addressing supporters of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.*

"His popularity is a testimony of the spiritual infantilism of the American culture."

*Ole Anthony, President of the Trinity Foundation, on Houston megachurch pastor Joel Osteen.*

"A majority of cohabiting couples are unlikely to wed; 90% of couples break up within five years of moving in together."

*The Christian Science Monitor.*

"Don't raise your voice, improve your arguments."

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu. ■*

# We've Got Mail

## Letters From Our Readers

"When I read CET, familiar emotions rise up in me reminding me that I am not alone on the journey that seems to be inexorably on a darker and drearier path. My denomination has left me, my country has left me, and at times I feel like God has left us all. Then I get a copy of your magazine that speaks such assurance and comfort to my heart. . . . I feel there is a larger flock out there that we are still a part of it; thank you.

**Ragan Courtney**, *the Sanctuary, Austin, TX.*

"What a great ache is left in my heart at Foy's departure. He was our steadfast flame for half a century."

**Bill Moyers**, *New York City, NY.*

"I was one of those 'little' Baptists that was privileged to claim Foy as a friend. . . . Foy and Mary Louise shared meals with us at our Glorieta home and we often visited them at Red River in that famous Jeep! It was a blow to lose him."

**Virginia Harris Hendricks**, *Blacksburg, VA.*

"Foy was more than a leading ethicist to me and my family—he was a family friend. Our friendship goes back to the 1940s when [my brother] Dwight and Foy were in seminary together. Foy and two other students would come to our house for dinner on Fridays and then sing until late at night—as a 12-year old, I went to bed hearing *I'll Fly Away* in four-part harmony. My Dad (who was the first superintendent of city missions in Ft. Worth) often reminisced about those wonderful times and vacationing together at Red River."

**Truett Baker**, *Branson, MO.*

"Your article on T. B. Maston [Summer, 2006] brought back memories. I was at Southwestern from

1970-1973. I worked upstairs near Dr. Maston's office. . . he and I talked a lot. I cherish those conversations. Thanks for a wonderful article and an exciting journal."

**Jim Kerr**, *Wakefield, VA.*

"Most of us at SWBTS in 1963 knew black students could attend classes, but few of us knew they could not reside in the men's dorm, except in special rooms in the basement. After an emotional discussion in class about this policy, one student asked, 'What would it take to get this changed?' In his calm easy-going way, Maston replied: 'A few timely deaths.' Amazingly, the main person behind this policy (a generous benefactor) died the very next week. . . We also got to hear [fellow student] Bill Moyers explain his decision to leave doctoral studies at SWBTS to go to Washington."

**Charles Lott**, *Hendersonville, TN.*

"Besides the laudable content [Dr. Wade McCoy's *Today I Saw A Man*], it struck me as so poetic I wanted to contact the author. . . . we shared our life walks and the human fertility of the sterile western Oklahoma soil [and discovered common friends] my pastor David Flick and Doug Manning. You do attract a mighty band of merry men (and women)."

**Dr. Richard Kahoe**, *Woodward, OK.*

"Not only am I in enthusiastic agreement with all I read in CET, but I discover I am among old friends. Our friendship with Martin Marty goes back half a century and the brother of John Richard Neuhaus was a member of St. Paul [Lutheran] while a student here [UNT, Denton]."

**Roberta Donsback**, *Denton, TX.*

"Just wanted to let you know how

receptive our S. S. class has been to [the study of] *Putting Women In Their Place*. Thanks to all of you who have dug beneath the surface to give us valuable information."

**Sheila Rose**, *Midwest City, OK.*

"I have loved reading CET issues at my mother's home [Katherine Gorham, a good friend of Foy Valentine] . . . Although I often seem to be in a minority, I very firmly hold to the principals of separation of church and state, priesthood of the believer, and autonomy of the local church."

**Dan Gorham**, *San Antonio, TX.*

**"Foyisms" Recalled by Ross Coggins**, *Annapolis, MD:*

To secretary *Joyce Tory* when she announced there was no travel money left, "Well, aren't you a little ray of sunstroke!" She loved it and wore the title joyously.

To *Bill Dyal* and *Ross Coggins* who were trying to fix a mess-up: "Just remember, when you cage an eagle, you have to put down a lot of paper!"

On his clever use of words, after a convention speech: "I rose to new platitudes." After listening to a convention official: "The truth is beginning to submerge." About the official's speech: "Even the grave yawns for him." When the SBC refused to take a stand against segregation: "We compromised 100%." ■



# The Meaning of Freedom

By Bill Moyers, Broadcast Journalist New York, NY

**Note:** This article is adapted from the Sol Feinstone Lecture delivered at the United States Military Academy at West Point on November 15, 2006.

Many of you will be heading for Iraq. I have never been a soldier myself, never been tested under fire, never faced hard choices between duty and feeling, or duty and conscience, under deadly circumstances. I will never know if I have the courage to be shot at, or to shoot back, or the discipline to do my duty knowing the people who dispatched me to kill—or be killed—had no idea of the moral abyss into which they were plunging me.

I have tried to learn about war from those who know it best: veterans, the real experts. But they have been such reluctant reporters of the experience. My father-in-law, Joe Davidson, was 37 years old with two young daughters when war came in 1941; he enlisted and served in the Pacific, but I never succeeded in getting him to describe what it was like to be in harm's way. My uncle came home from the Pacific after his ship had been sunk, taking many friends down with it, and he would look away and change the subject when I asked him about it. One of my dearest friends, who died this year at 90, returned from combat in Europe as if he had taken a vow of silence about the dark and terrifying things that came home with him, uninvited.

Curious about this, some years ago I produced for PBS a documentary called "D-Day to the Rhine." With a camera crew I accompanied several veterans of World War II who for the first time were returning together to the path of combat that carried them from the landing at Normandy in 1944 into the heart of Germany. Members of their families were along this time—wives, grown sons and daughters—and they told me that

until now, on this trip—45 years after D-Day—their husbands and fathers rarely talked about their combat experiences. They had come home, locked their memories in their mind's attic, and hung a "no trespassing" sign on it. Even as they retraced their steps almost half a century later, I would find these aging GIs, standing alone and silent on the very spot where a buddy had been killed, or they themselves had killed, or where they had been taken prisoner, a German soldier standing over them with a Mauser pointed right between their eyes, saying: "For you, the war is over." As they tried to tell the story, the words choked in their throats. The stench, the vomit, the blood, the fear: What outsider—journalist or kin—could imagine the demons still at war in their heads?

What I remember most vividly from that trip is the opening scene of the film: Jose Lopez—the father of two, who had lied about his age to get into the Army (he was too old), went ashore at Normandy, fought his way across France and Belgium with a water-cooled machine gun, rose to the rank of sergeant, and received the Congressional Medal of Honor after single-handedly killing 100 German troops in the Battle of the Bulge. Jose Lopez, back on Omaha Beach at age 79, quietly saying to me: "I was really very, very afraid . . . I want to scream . . . I want to cry. . . and we see other people was laying wounded and screaming and everything and it's nothing you could do. We could see them groaning in the water and we keep walking"—and then, moving away from the camera, dropping to his knees, his hands clasped, his eyes wet, as it all came back, memories so excruciating there were no words for them.

## The Poetry Of War

Over the year I turned to the poets for help in understanding the realities of war; it is from the poets

we outsiders most often learn what you soldiers experience. I admired your former superintendent, General William Lennox, who held a doctorate in literature and taught poetry classes here because, he said, "poetry is a great vehicle to teach cadets as much as anyone can what combat is like." So it is. From the opening lines of the Iliad:

*Rage, Goddess, sing the rage of  
Peleus' Son Achilles . . . hurling  
down to the House of Death so  
many souls, great fighters' souls, but  
made their bodies carrion for the  
dogs and birds. . . .*

To Wilfred Owen's pained cry from the trenches of France:

*I am the enemy you killed, my  
friend. . . .*

To W. D. Ehrhart's staccat recitation of the

*Barely tolerable conglomeration  
of mud, heat, sweat, dirt, rain,  
pain, fear . . . we march grinding  
under the weight of heavy packs,  
feet dialed to the ground . . . we  
wonder. . . .*

Poets with their empathy and evocation open to bystanders what lies buried in the soldier's soul. Those of you soon to be leading others in combat may wish to take a metaphorical detour to the Hindenburg Line of World War I, where the officer and poet Wilfred Owen, a man of extraordinary courage who was killed a week before the Armistice, wrote: "I came out in order to help these boys—directly by leading them as well as an officer can; indirectly, by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a pleader can."

People in power should be required to take classes in the poetry of war. As a presidential assistant during the early escalation of the war in Vietnam, I remember how the President blanched when the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said it would take one million fighting men and 10 years really

to win in Vietnam, but even then the talk of war was about policy, strategy, numbers and budgets, not severed limbs and eviscerated bodies.

That experience, and the experience forty years later of watching another White House go to war, also relying on inadequate intelligence, exaggerated claims and premature judgments, keeping Congress in the dark while wooing a gullible press, cheered on by partisans, pundits, and editorial writers safely divorced from realities on the ground, ended any tolerance I might have had for those who advocate war from the loftiness of the pulpit, the safety of a laptop, the comfort of a think tank, or the glamour of a television studio. Watching one day on C-Span as one member of Congress after another took to the floor to praise our troops in Iraq, I was reminded that I could only name three members of Congress who have a son or daughter in the military. How often we hear the most vigorous argument for war from those who count on others of valor to fight it. As General William Tecumseh Sherman said after the Civil War: "It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation."

### Remembering Emily Perez

Rupert Murdoch comes to mind—only because he was in the news last week talking about Iraq. In the months leading up to the invasion Murdoch turned the dogs of war loose in the corridors of his media empire, and they howled for blood, although not their own. Murdoch himself said, just weeks before the invasion, that: "The greatest thing to come of this to the world economy, if you could put it that way [as you can, if you are a media mogul], would be \$20 a barrel for oil." Once the war is behind us, Rupert Murdoch said, "The whole world will benefit from cheaper oil which will be a bigger stimulus than anything else."

Today Murdoch says he has no regrets, that he still believes it was right "to go in there," and that "from a

historical perspective" the U.S. death toll in Iraq was "minute."

*"Minute!"*

The word richoted in my head when I heard it. I had just been reading about Emily Perez. Your Emily Perez, Second Lieutenant Perez, the first woman of color to become a command sergeant major in the history of the Academy, and the first woman graduate to die in Iraq. I had been in Washington when word of her death made the news, and because she had lived there before coming to West Point, the Washington press told us a lot about her. People remembered her as "a little superwoman"—straight A's, choir member, charismatic, optimistic, a friend to so many; she had joined the medical service because she wanted to help people. The obituary in the *Washington Post* said she had been a ball of fire at the Peace Baptist Church, where she helped start an HIV-AIDS ministry after some of her own family members contracted the virus. Now accounts of her funeral here at West Point were reporting that some of you wept as you contemplated the loss of so vibrant an officer.

*"Minute?"* I don't think so. Historical perspective or no. So when I arrived today I asked the Academy's historian, Steve Grove, to take me where Emily Perez is buried, in Section 36 of your cemetery, below Storm King Mountain, overlooking the Hudson River. Standing there, on sacred American soil hallowed all the more by the likes of Lieutenant Perez so recently returned, I thought that to describe their loss as "minute"—even from a historical perspective—is to underscore the great divide that has opened in America between those who advocate war while avoiding it and those who have the courage to fight it without ever knowing what it's all about.

We were warned of this by our founders. They had put themselves in jeopardy by signing the Declaration of Independence; if they had lost, that parchment could have been their death warrant, for they were traitors to the Crown and likely to be hanged.

In the fight for freedom they had put themselves on the line—not just their fortunes and sacred honor but their very persons, their lives. After the war, forming a government and understanding both the nature of war and human nature, they determined to make it hard to go to war except to defend freedom; war for reasons save preserving the lives and liberty of your citizens should be made difficult to achieve, they argued. Here is John Jay's passage in *Federalist No. 4*:

*It is too true, however disgraceful it may be to human nature, that nations in general will make war whenever they have a prospect of getting anything by it; nay, absolute monarchs will often make war when their nations are to get nothing by it, but for the purposes and objects merely personal, such as thirst for military glory, revenge for personal affronts, ambition, or private compacts to aggrandize or support their particular families or partisans. These and a variety of other motives, which affect only the mind of the sovereign, often lead him to engage in wars not sanctified by justice or the voice and interests of his people.*

And here, a few years later, is James Madison, perhaps the most deliberative mind of that generation in assaying the dangers of an unfettered executive prone to war:

*In war, a physical force is to be created, and it is the executive will which is to direct it. In war, the public treasures are to be unlocked, and it is the executive hand which is to dispense them. In war, the honors and emoluments of office are to be multiplied; and it is the executive patronage under which they are to be enjoyed. It is in war, finally, that laurels are to be gathered; and it is the executive brow they are to encircle. The strongest passions and most dangerous weaknesses of the human breast; ambition, avarice, vanity, the honorable or venial love of fame, are all in conspiracy against the desire and duty of peace.*

I want to be clear on this: Vietnam did not make me a dove. Nor has Iraq;

I am no pacifist. But they have made me study the Constitution more rigorously, both as journalist and citizen. Again, James Madison:

*In no part of the Constitution is more wisdom to be found, than in the clause which confides the question of war and peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department. Beside the objection to such a mixture to heterogeneous powers, the trust and the temptation would be too great for any one man.*

Twice in forty years we have now gone to war paying only lip service to those warnings; the first war we lost, the second is a bloody debacle, and both rank among the great blunders in our history. It is impossible for soldiers to sustain in the field what cannot be justified in the Constitution; asking them to do so puts America at war with itself. So when the Vice President of the United States says it doesn't matter what the people think, he and the President intend to prosecute the war anyway, he is committing heresy against the fundamental tenets of the American political order.

### **An Army Born In Revolution**

**T**his is a tough subject to address when so many of you may be heading for Iraq. I would prefer to speak of sweeter things. But I also know that 20 or 30 years from now any one of you may be the Chief of Staff or the National Security Adviser or even the President—after all, two of your boys, Grant and Eisenhower, did make it from West Point to the White House. And that being the case, it's more important than ever that citizens and soldiers—and citizen-soldiers—honestly discuss and frankly consider the kind of country you are serving and the kind of organization to which you are dedicating your lives. You are, after all, the heirs of an army born in the American Revolution, whose radicalism we consistently underestimate.

No one understood this radicalism—no one in uniform did more to help us define freedom in a profoundly American way—than the man whose monument here at West Point I also asked to visit today—Thaddeus

Kosciuszko. I first became intrigued by him over forty years ago when I arrived in Washington. Lafayette Park, on Pennsylvania Avenue, across from the White House, hosts several statues of military heroes who came to fight for our independence in the American Revolution. For seven years, either looking down on these figures from my office at the Peace Corps, or walking across Lafayette Park to my office in the White House, I was reminded of these men who came voluntarily to fight for American independence from the monarchy. The most compelling, for me, was the depiction of Kosciuszko. On one side of the statue he is directing a soldier back to the battlefield, and on the other side, wearing an American uniform, he is freeing a bound soldier, representing America's revolutionaries.

Kosciuszko had been born in Lithuania-Poland, where he was trained as an engineer and artillery officer. Arriving in the 13 colonies in 1776, he broke down in tears when he read the Declaration of Independence. The next year, he helped engineer the Battle of Saratoga, organizing the river and land fortifications that put Americans in the stronger position. George Washington then commissioned him to build the original fortifications for West Point. Since his monument dominates the point here at the Academy, this part of the story you must know well.

But what many don't realize about Kosciuszko is the depth of his commitment to republican ideals and human equality. One historian called him "a mystical visionary of human rights." Thomas Jefferson wrote that Kosciuszko was "as pure a son of liberty as I have ever known." That phrase of Jefferson's is often quoted, but if you read the actual letter, Jefferson goes on to say: "And of that liberty which is to go to all, and not to the few and the rich alone."

There is the clue to the meaning of freedom as Thaddeus Kosciuszko saw it.

After the American Revolution, he returned to his homeland, what

was then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In 1791 the Poles adopted their celebrated May Constitution—Europe's first codified national constitution (and the second oldest in the world, after our own.) The May Constitution established political equality between the middle class and the nobility and also partially abolished serfdom by giving civil rights to the peasants, including the right to state protection from landlord abuses. The autocrats and nobles of Russia feared such reforms, and in 1794, when the Russians sought to prevent their spread by partitioning the Commonwealth, Kosciuszko led an insurrection. His untrained peasant forces were armed mostly with single-blade sickles, but they won several early battles in fierce hand-to-hand fighting, until they were finally overwhelmed. Badly injured, Kosciuszko was taken prisoner and held for two years in St. Petersburg, and that was the end of the Polish Commonwealth, which had stood, by the way, as one of Europe's leading centers of religious liberty.

Upon his release from prison, Kosciuszko came back to the United States and began a lasting friendship with Jefferson, who called him his "most intimate and beloved friend." In 1798, he wrote a will leaving his American estate to Jefferson, urging him to use it to purchase the freedom and education of his [Jefferson's] own slaves, or, as Jefferson interpreted it, of "as many of the children as bondage in this country as it should be adequate to." For this émigré, as for so many who would come later, the meaning of freedom included a passion for universal justice. In his Act of Insurrection at the outset of the 1794 uprising, Kosciuszko wrote of the people's "sacred rights to liberty, personal security and property." Note the term property here. For Jefferson's "pursuit of happiness" Kosciuszko substituted Locke's notion of property rights. But it's not what you think: The goal was not simply to protect "private property" from public interference (as it is taught today), but rather to secure *productive* property for all as a right to citizenship. It's easy



to forget the difference when huge agglomerations of personal wealth are defended as a sacred right of liberty, as they are today with the gap between the rich and poor in America greater than it's been in almost one hundred years. Kosciuszko—*General* Kosciuszko, from tip to toe a military man—was talking about investing the people with productive resources. Yes, freedom had to be won on the battlefield, but if freedom did not lead to political, social and economic opportunity for all citizens, freedom's meaning could not be truly realized.

Think about it: A Polish general from the old world, infusing the new nation with what would become the marrow of the American Dream. Small wonder that Kosciuszko was often called a “hero of two worlds” or that just 25 years ago, in 1981, when Polish farmers, supported by the Roman Catholic Church, won the right to form an independent union, sending shockwaves across the Communist empire, Kosciuszko’s name was heard in the victory speeches—his egalitarian soul present at yet another revolution for human freedom and equal rights.

After Jefferson won the presidency in 1800, Kosciuszko wrote him a touching letter advising him to be true to his principles: “do not forget in your post be always a virtuous Republican with justice and probity, without pomp and ambition—in a word be Jefferson and my friend.” Two years later, Jefferson signed into being this professional officers school, on the site first laid out as a fortress by his

friend, the general from Poland.

### A Paradox Of Liberty

Every turn in American history confronts us with paradox, and this one is no exception. Here was Jefferson, known for his vigorous and eloquent opposition to professional armies, presiding over the establishment of West Point. It’s a paradox that suits you cadets to a T, because you yourselves represent a paradox of liberty. You are free men and women who of your own free choice have joined an institution dedicated to protecting a free nation, but in the process you have voluntarily agreed to give up, for a specific time, a part of your own liberty. An army is not a debating society and neither in the field or in headquarters does it ask for a show of hands on whether orders should be obeyed. That is undoubtedly a necessary idea, but for you it complicates the already tricky question of “the meaning of freedom.”

I said earlier that our founders did not want the power of war to reside in a single man. Many were also dubious about having any kind of regular, or as they called it, “standing” army at all. Standing armies were hired supporters of absolute monarchs and imperial tyrants. The men drafting the Constitution were steeped in classical and historical learning. They recalled how Caesar in ancient times and Oliver Cromwell in more recent times had used the conquering armies they had led to make themselves dictators. They knew how the Roman legions had made and unmade emperors, and how Ottoman rulers of the Turkish

Empire had supported their tyrannies on the shoulders of formidable elite warriors. Wherever they looked in history, they saw an alliance between enemies of freedom in palaces and in officer corps drawn from the ranks of nobility, bound by a warrior code that stressed honor and bravery—but also dedication to the sovereign and the sovereign’s god, and distrust amounting to contempt for the ordinary run of the sovereign’s subjects.

The colonial experience with British regulars, first as allies in the French and Indian Wars, and then as enemies, did not increase American respect for the old system of military leadership. Officers were chosen and promoted on the basis of aristocratic connections, commissions were bought, and ineptitude was too often tolerated. The lower ranks were often rootless alumni of jails and workhouses, lured or coerced into service by the paltry pay and chance of adventure—brutally hard types, kept in line by brutally harsh discipline.

Not exactly your model for the army of a republic of free citizens.

What the framers came up with was another novelty. The first battles of the Revolution were fought mainly by volunteer militia from the states, such as Vermont’s Green Mountain Boys, the most famous militia then. They were gung-ho for revolution and flushed with a fighting spirit. But in the end they were no substitute for the better-trained regiments of the Continental line and the French regulars sent over by France’s king after the alliance of 1778. The view nonethe-





less persisted that in times of peace, only a small permanent army would be needed to repel invasions—unlikely except from Canada—and deal with the frontier Indians. When and if a real crisis came, it was believed, volunteers would flock to the colors like the armed men of Greek mythology who sprang from dragon's teeth planted in the ground by a divinely approved hero. The real safety of the nation in any hour of crisis would rest with men who spent most of their working lives behind the plow or in the workshop. And this was long before the huge conscript armies of the 19th and 20th centuries made that a commonplace fact.

And who would be in the top command of both that regular force and of volunteer forces when actually called into federal service? None other than the top elected *civil* official of the government, *the President*. Think about that for a moment. The professional army fought hard and long to create a system of selecting and keeping officers on the basis of proven competence, not popularity. But the highest commander of all served strictly at the pleasure of the people and had to submit his contract for renewal every four years.

And what of the need for trained and expert leadership at all the levels of command which quickly became apparent as the tools and tactics of warfare grew more sophisticated in a modernizing world? That's where West Point came in, filling a need that could no longer be ignored. But what a special military academy it was! We tend to forget that the West Point curriculum was heavily tilted toward engineering; in fact, it was one of the nation's first engineering colleges and it was publicly supported and free. That's what made it attractive to young men like Hiram Ulysses Grant, familiarly known as "Sam," who wasn't anxious to be a soldier but wanted to get somewhere more promising than his father's Ohio farm. Hundreds like Grant came to West Point and left to use their civil engineering skills in a country badly needing them, some in civil life after

serving out an enlistment, but many right there in uniform. It was the army that explored, mapped and surveyed the wagon and railroad routes to the west, starting with the Corps of Exploration under Lewis and Clark sent out by the protean Mr. Jefferson. It was the army that had a hand in clearing rivers of snags and brush and building dams that allowed steamboats to avoid rapids. It was the army that put up lighthouses in the harbors and whose exhaustive geologic and topographic surveys were important contributions to publicly supported scientific research—AND to economic development—in the young republic.

All of this would surely have pleased General Kosciuszko, who believed in a society that leaves no one out. Indeed, add all these facts together and what you come up with is a portrait of something new under the sun—a *peacetime* army working directly with and for the civil society in improving the nation so as to guarantee the greater opportunities for individual success inherent in the promise of democracy. And a *wartime* army in which temporary citizen-soldiers were and still are led by long-term professional citizen-soldiers who were molded out of the same clay as those they command. And all of them led from the top by the one political figure chosen by the entire national electorate. This arrangement—this bargain between the men with the guns and the citizens who provide the guns—is the heritage passed on to you by the revolutionaries who fought and won America's independence and then swore fidelity to a civil compact that survives today, despite tumultuous moments and perilous passages.

#### West Point's Importance

Once again we encounter a paradox: Not all our wars were on the side of freedom. The first that seriously engaged the alumni of West Point was the Mexican War, which was not a war to protect our freedoms but to grab land—facts are facts—and was not only bitterly criticized by part of the civilian population, but even looked on with skepticism by some graduates

like Grant himself. Still, he not only fought well in it, but it was for him, as well as for most of the generals on both sides in the impending Civil War, an unequalled training school and rehearsal stage.

When the Civil War itself came, it offered an illustration of how the meaning of freedom isn't always easy to pin down. From the point of view of the North, the hundreds of southern West Pointers who resigned to fight for the Confederacy—Robert E. Lee included—were turning against the people's government that had educated and supported them. They were traitors. But from the southern point of view, they were fighting for the freedom of their local governments to leave the Union when, as they saw it, it threatened their way of life. Their way of life tragically included the right to hold other men in slavery.

The Civil War, nonetheless, confirmed the importance of West Point training. European military observers were amazed at the skill with which the better generals on both sides, meaning for the most part West Pointers and not political appointees, maneuvered huge armies of men over vast areas of difficult terrain, used modern technologies like the railroad and the telegraph to coordinate movements and accumulate supplies, and made the best use of newly developed weapons. The North had more of these advantages, and when the final victory came, adulation and admiration were showered on Grant and Sherman, who had come to a realistic and unromantic understanding of modern war, precisely because they had not been steeped in the mythologies of a warrior caste. Their triumph was seen as vindication of how well the army of a democracy could work. Just as Lincoln, the self-educated rail-splitter, had provided a civilian leadership that also proved him the equal of any potentate on the globe.

After 1865 the army shrank as its chief engagement was now in wiping out the last vestiges of Indian resistance to their dispossession and subjugation: One people's advance became

another's annihilation and one of the most shameful episodes of our history. In 1898 the army was briefly used for the first effort in exporting democracy—an idea that does not travel well in military transports—when it warred with Spain to help the Cubans complete a war for independence that had been in progress for three years. The Cubans found their liberation somewhat illusory, however, when the United States made the island a virtual protectorate and allowed it to be ruled by a corrupt dictator.

Americans also lifted the yoke of Spain from the Filipinos, only to learn that they did not want to exchange it for one stamped 'Made in the USA.' It took a three-year war, during which the army killed several thousand so-called "insurgents" before their leader was captured and the Filipinos were cured of the illusion that independence meant . . . well, independence. I bring up these reminders not to defame the troops. Their actions were supported by a majority of the American people even in a progressive phase of our political history (though there was some principled and stiff opposition.) Nonetheless, we have to remind ourselves that the armed forces can't be expected to be morally much better than the people who send them into action, and that when honorable behavior comes into conflict with racism, honor is usually the loser unless people such as yourself fight to maintain it.

Our brief participation in the First World War temporarily expanded the army, helped by a draft that had also

proven necessary in the Civil War. But rapid demobilization was followed by a long period of ever-shrinking military budgets, especially for the land forces.

Not until World War II did the Army again take part in such a long, bloody, and fateful conflict as the Civil War had been, and like the Civil War it opened an entirely new period in American history. The incredibly gigantic mobilization of the entire nation, the victory it produced, and the ensuing 60 years of wars, quasi-wars, mini-wars, secret wars, and a virtually permanent crisis created a superpower and forever changed the nation's relationship to its armed forces, confronting us with problems we have to address, no matter how unsettling it may be to do so in the midst of yet another war.

### The Bargain

The Armed Services are no longer stepchildren in budgetary terms. Appropriations for defense and defense-related activities (like veterans' care, pensions, and debt service) remind us that the costs of war continue long after the fighting ends. Objections to ever-swelling defensive expenditures are, except in rare cases, a greased slide to political suicide. It should be troublesome to you as professional soldiers that elevation to the pantheon of untouchable icons—right there alongside motherhood, apple pie and the flag—permits a great deal of political lip service to replace genuine efforts to improve the lives and working conditions—in combat and out—of those who serve.

Let me cut closer to the bone. The "chickenhawks" in Washington, who at this very moment are busily defending you against supposed "insults" or betrayals by the opponents of the war in Iraq, are likewise those who have cut budgets for medical and psychiatric care; who have been so skimpy and late with pay and with provision of necessities that military families in the United States have had to apply for food stamps; who sent the men and women whom you may soon be commanding into Iraq under strength, under equipped, and unprepared for dealing with a kind of war fought in streets and homes full of civilians against enemies undistinguishable from non-combatants; who have time and again broken promises to the civilian National Guardsmen bearing much of the burden by canceling their redeployment orders and extending their tours.

You may or may not agree on the justice and necessity of the war itself, but I hope that you will agree that flattery and adulation are no substitute for genuine support. Much of the money that could be directed to that support has gone into high-tech weapons systems that were supposed to produce a new, mobile, compact "professional" army that could easily defeat the armies of any other two nations combined, but is useless in a war against nationalist or religious guerrilla uprisings that, like it or not, have some support, coerced or otherwise, among the local population. We learned this lesson in Vietnam, only to see it forgotten or ignored by the time



this administration invaded Iraq, creating the conditions for a savage sectarian and civil war with our soldiers trapped in the middle, unable to discern civilian from combatant, where it is impossible to kill your enemy faster than rage makes new ones.

And who has been the real beneficiary of creating this high-tech army called to fight a war conceived and commissioned and cheered on by politicians and pundits not one of whom ever entered a combat zone? One of your boys answered that: Dwight Eisenhower, class of 1915, told us that the real winners of the “anything at any price” philosophy would be “the military-industrial complex.”

I want to contend that the American military systems that evolved in the early days of this republic rested on a bargain between the civilian authorities and the armed services, and that the army has, for the most part, kept its part of the bargain and that, at this moment, the civilian authorities whom you loyally obey, are shirking theirs. And before you assume that I am calling for an insurrection against the civilian deciders of your destinies, hear me out, for that is the last thing on my mind.

You have kept your end of the bargain by fighting well when called upon, by refusing to become a praetorian guard for a reigning administration at any time, and for respecting civil control at all times. For the most part, our military leaders have made no serious efforts to meddle in politics. The two most notable cases were General George McClellan, who endorsed a pro-Southern and pro-slavery policy in the first year of the war and was openly contemptuous of Lincoln. But Lincoln fired him in 1862, and when McClellan ran for President two years later, the voting public handed him his hat. Douglas MacArthur’s attempt to dictate his own China policy in 1951 ran head-on into the resolve of Harry Truman, who, surviving a firestorm of hostility, happily watched a MacArthur boomlet for the Republican nomination for the Presidency fizzle out in 1952.

On the other side of the ledger, however, I believe that the bargain has not been kept. The last time Congress declared war was in 1941. Since then presidents of the United States, including the one I served, have gotten Congress, occasionally under demonstrably false pretenses, to suspend Constitutional provisions that required them to get the consent of the people’s representatives in order to conduct a war. They have been handed a blank check to send the armed forces into action at their personal discretion and on dubious Constitutional grounds.

Furthermore, the current President has made extra-Constitutional claims of authority by repeatedly acting as if he were Commander-in-Chief of the entire nation and not merely of the armed forces. Most dangerously to our moral honor and to your own welfare in the event of capture, he has likewise ordered the armed forces to violate clear mandates of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Geneva Conventions by claiming a right to interpret them at his pleasure, so as to allow indefinite and secret detentions and torture. These claims contravene a basic principle usually made clear to recruits from their first day in service—that they may not obey an unlawful order. The President is attempting to have them violate that longstanding rule by personal definitions of what the law says and means.

There is yet another way the “chickenhawks” are failing you. In the October issue of the magazine of the California Nurses Association, you can read a long report on “The Battle at Home.” In veterans’ hospitals across the country—and in a growing number of ill-prepared, under-funded psych and primary care clinics as well—the report says that nurses “have witnessed the guilt, rage, emotional numbness, and tormented flashbacks of GIs just back from Iraq.” Yet “a returning vet must wait an average of 165 days for a VA decision on initial disability benefits,” and an appeal can take up to three years. Just in the first quarter of this year, the VA treated 20,638 Iraq veterans for post-traumatic stress dis-

order, and faces a backlog of 400,000 cases. This is reprehensible.

I repeat: These are not palatable topics for soldiers about to go to war; I would like to speak of sweeter things. But freedom means we must face reality: “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.” Free enough, surely, to think for yourselves about these breaches of contract that crudely undercut the traditions of an army of free men and women who have bound themselves voluntarily to serve the nation even unto death.

### The Voice Of Conscience

What, then, can you do about it if disobedience to the chain of command is ruled out?

**For one, you didn’t give up your freedom to vote, nor did you totally quit your membership in civil society, when you put on the uniform,** even though, as Eisenhower said, you did accept “certain inhibitions” at the time. He said that when questioned about MacArthur’s dismissal, and he made sure his own uniform was back in the trunk before his campaign in 1952. It has been most encouraging, by the way, to see veterans of Iraq on the campaign trail in our recent elections.

**Second, remember that there are limitations to what military power can do.** Despite the valor and skills of our fighting forces, some objectives are not obtainable at a human, diplomatic, and financial cost that is acceptable. Our casualties in Iraq are not “minute” and the cost of the war has been projected by some sources to reach \$2 trillion dollars. Sometimes, in the real world, a truce is the most honorable solution to conflict. Dwight Eisenhower—who is a candidate for my favorite West Point graduate of the 20th century—knew that when, in 1953, he went to Korea and accepted a stalemate rather than carrying out his bluff of using nuclear weapons. That was the best that could be done and it saved more years of stalemate and casualties. Douglas MacArthur announced in 1951 that “there was no substitute for victory.” But in the wars of the 21st century there are alternative meanings to victory and alternative



ways to achieve them. Especially in tracking down and eliminating terrorists, we need to change our metaphor from a “war on terror”—what, pray tell, exactly is that?—to the mindset of Interpol tracking down master criminals through intense global cooperation among nations, or the FBI stalking the Mafia, or local police determined to quell street gangs without leveling the entire neighborhood in the process. Help us to think beyond a “war on terror”—which politicians could wage without end, with no measurable way to judge its effectiveness, against stateless enemies who hope we will destroy the neighborhood, creating recruits for their side—to counter-terrorism modeled on extraordinary police work.

**Third, don't let your natural and commendable loyalty to comrades-in-arms lead you into thinking that criticism of the mission you are on spells lack of patriotism.** Not every politician who flatters you is your ally. Not every one who believes that war is the wrong choice to some problems is your enemy. Blind faith in bad leadership is not patriotism. In the words of G.K. Chesterton: “To say my country right or wrong is something no patriot would utter except in dire circumstance; it is like saying my mother drunk or sober.” Patriotism means insisting on our political leaders being sober, strong, and certain about what they are doing when they put you in harm's way.

**Fourth, be more prepared to accept the credibility and integrity of**

**those who disagree about the war even if you do not agree with their positions.** I say this as a journalist, knowing it is tempting in the field to denounce or despise reporters who ask nosy questions or file critical reports. But their first duty as reporters is to get as close as possible to the verifiable truth and report it to the American people—for your sake. If there is mismanagement and incompetence, exposing it is more helpful to you than paeans to candy given to the locals. I trust you are familiar with the study done for the Army in 1989 by the historian, William Hammond. He examined press coverage in Korea and Vietnam and found that it was not the cause of disaffection at home; what disturbed people at home was the death toll; when casualties jumped, public support dropped. Over time, he said, the reporting was vindicated. In fact, “the press reports were often more accurate than the public statements of the administration in portraying the situation in Vietnam.” Take note: The American people want the truth about how their sons and daughters are doing in Iraq and what they're up against, and that is a good thing.

Finally, and this above all—a lesson I wish I had learned earlier. **If you rise in the ranks to important positions—or even if you don't—speak the truth as you see it, even if the questioner is a higher authority with a clear preference for one and only one answer.** It may not be the way to promote your career; it can in fact

harm it. Among my military heroes of this war are the generals who frankly told the President and his advisers that their information and their plans were both incomplete and misleading—and who paid the price of being ignored and bypassed and possibly frozen forever in their existing ranks: men like General Eric K. Shinseki, another son of West Point. It is not easy to be honest—and fair—in a bureaucratic system. But it is what free men and women have to do. *Be true to your principles*, General Kosciuszko reminded Thomas Jefferson. If doing so exposes the ignorance and arrogance of power, you may be doing more to save the nation than exploits in combat can achieve.

I know the final rule of the military Code of Conduct is already written in your hearts: “I am an American, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. . . .” The meaning of freedom begins with the still, small voice of conscience, when each of us decides what we will live or die for.

I salute your dedication to America and I wish all of you good luck. ■

*Bill Moyers is deeply grateful to his colleagues Bernard A. Weisberger, Professor Emeritus of History at The University of Chicago, and Lew Daly, Senior Fellow of the Schumann Center for Media and Democracy, for their contributions to this speech.*





# A Christian Warrior's Code?

By Chaplain (Major) Scott A. Sterling, U.S. Army<sup>1</sup>

**Note:** Chaplain Sterling is presently serving as a Brigade Chaplain in Iraq. A graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv) and Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary (STM), he did his Master's thesis on Just War issues.

In the midst of the ongoing Global War on Terrorism, my fellow chaplains and I often talk with service men and women who are trying to make moral sense of their military service. This is an important quest on the part of these volunteer warriors who are fighting a different kind of enemy than did armies of the past. They must find their moral way through new applications of the laws of war, Geneva Conventions, and rules of engagement. Most chaplains are wise enough to not offer easy answers, and many join with their soldiers in an ongoing search for moral and ethical clarity in this controversial war. Some Christians, however, have found a biblical “smoking gun,” a passage of Scripture that seems on the surface to clearly give soldiers a “moral code” of warfare. This text of choice is Romans 13:3-4. Without presenting an in-depth biblical analysis, in this article I will argue that the use of Romans 13:4 to forge such a moral code for soldiers is at best a misapplication of Scripture, and it can actually be ethically dangerous.

Romans 13:4 states, “For he [the governing authority] is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.”

To be fair to this verse it is important that it be seen in its context. Romans 13 is part of the “therefore” discourse in Romans (chapters 12-15), which describes how believers are to conduct themselves in the world. The early believers were cautioned by Paul

to live their everyday lives in such a way as to always bring honor to God; this included not flaunting civil law just because they were “free in Christ.” Chapter 13 in particular addresses the Christian's relationship with the State, and specifically calls individual Christians not to rebel against the law of the land, but to submit to it. Paul explicitly declares that the structures and institutions of government “have been established by God” (13:1). To rebel against the institutions of government, therefore, has severe consequences, including finding ourselves on the painful end of the government's “sword.” But Christians are to obey the law, Paul says, not only because of the legal consequences, but also because of “conscience” (13:5), i.e., simply because it is the right thing to do.

Most commentators see the sword in 13:4 as a reference to capital punishment, or at least to civil police actions, and this appears to be the obvious meaning. Yet I have heard a number of Christians extrapolate from this verse that the government is also God's agent to bring punishment on *international* wrongdoers (KJV: “those that do evil”); that is, on national enemies. Those who would use this passage as a framework to derive a moral code for warriors also consider the sword to be the *military* arm of the government. The military, then, is “God's servant” to punish those that do evil in the world. By extension, therefore, *the individual soldier* is also God's servant to punish evil. Here is where the use of Romans 13 becomes ethically problematic.

Stephen Mansfield, in his book, *The Faith of the American Soldier*, calls on chaplains to assist soldiers in creating a warrior code. He states, “A true warrior code assesses the enemy in moral, even religious terms.”<sup>2</sup> He further asserts that we need a *Christian* warrior code to counter the Muslim

warrior code that our current enemy professes. He desires chaplains to clearly proclaim that we are fighting against a “system of evil” (quoting Theodore Roosevelt).<sup>3</sup> Romans 13:4 is an attractive proof-text when appealed to from this perspective. But it doesn't work; it's not faithful to the context – and it's ethically very troublesome for the following reasons.

First, to be consistent in our application we would have to claim that Paul is asserting that the military arm of *every* government is God's servant to punish international opponents (so-called evildoers) with the sword, and this can get confusing. Thus the Roman military of Paul's time was God's servant, as are the massive armies of North Korea and Iran today, and of course, America's military forces. Some leaders in Iran still consider America to be the “Great Satan.” All this begs the question: if Iran wages war on America are they God's servants against American evil, or is America God's servant against Iranian evil? Neither? Both? Those who would use Romans 13 as a blueprint for a Christian Warrior's Code will have trouble coming to a logically consistent application of the passage.<sup>4</sup>

Second, Paul is writing to *Christians* in Rome, not Roman citizens in general. If Paul is indeed declaring that soldiers, as extensions of the government's sword, are God's servants of wrath, he must be referring to all soldiers, not just the Christian ones. While there are certainly times that God has used unbelievers to carry out his purposes in the world, still the letter to the Roman church is without a doubt addressed only to the disciples of Jesus in Rome, and only addresses their relationship with the state as part of his greater discourse on living as disciples of Messiah.

Leadership within the military (including chaplains) indeed has a responsibility to instill a moral frame-

work for serving in the military and killing the enemy. But if the moral code comes from a Christian understanding of God, based on Christian Scripture, and this source is rejected by a non-Christian, can that non-Christian soldier fight ethically? (The answer is most certainly, yes.) Certainly soldiers must grapple with the moral and ethical ramifications of serving in the military and potentially taking human life, and chaplains are in an ideal position to walk with them through this journey.<sup>5</sup> But our answers need to be more than parochial applications of particular proof-texts.

Finally, the question must be asked: Who is really the wrongdoer, the evil one? Jesus teaches us to look at the log in our own eyes before we address the specks in others'. This is not to deny that evil has been perpetrated against our nation in the form of terrorist attacks, nor that evil is ever present on the streets of Baghdad and elsewhere where women, children and other innocents are blown up in markets, cafes, or on their way to school.<sup>6</sup> Evil exists also in governments that starve their citizens for the sake of huge militaries, and in societies that accept (or commit) genocide or ethnic cleansing. Sometimes our nation will necessarily be aroused to fight those forces of evil where they exist, even if they do not immediately or directly threaten our own security. And Christians within America can support such a war against evil as an expression of our mandate to love our neighbor, and to come to the aid of those who cannot help themselves, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

However, we must not read Romans 13 through the lens of American superiority, either moral or political. Paul did not write the letter to Americans stating that *our* government is God's moral agent to bring wrath upon those in the world who oppose our form of government or our way of life. Romans 13 does not say that because America is a democracy with a history of deep faith and lofty principles, therefore Christians who serve in its military are God's servants of wrath

against those who oppose that faith and those principles.

Service men and women who are people of faith have tremendous resources to help them walk through the valleys of the shadow of death, which is daily life in a combat zone. Prayers bring comfort and peace; the Holy Spirit sustains and guides; Christian fellowship encourages and cares. There may still be some atheists in foxholes, but many warriors find their faith deepened and matured by their combat experience. God is real and powerful in their prayers, and truly present in their loneliness.

At the same time, these warriors are confronted with the reality of evil that hates and kills and destroys, often indiscriminately. There is anger and grief when a comrade is killed, and with it, a desire to strike back. A Christian warrior's code, taken from two thousand years of Christian teaching and the Just War Tradition, can serve to restrain these feelings and help the soldier make an appropriate and ethical response; but a warrior's code taken from this misapplication of Romans 13:4 can easily create Holy Warriors, "Agents of God's Wrath" against evil.

Imagine, for example, the soldier, numb with grief, seething with anger, hearing that he is God's agent to punish the evil doer. If we're doing this *for God*, why apply any restraints at all? This, I believe, is the most ethically dangerous consequence of giving a political application to this passage; that is, creating holy warriors out of soldiers – Christian or not – by giving them a biblical mandate to punish the evil their nation names. Perhaps Christian soldiers may be able to call upon the Spirit of God to temper their actions against their enemies. But can those without God's Spirit, and so without any spiritual means of tempering? I fear that if we drift into such a Holy War mentality, fighting in the service of our God, enemy warriors and civilians alike will lose their humanity in the eyes of our soldiers – Christian and not – and will become nothing more than God's enemies to

be destroyed by his righteous army.

While the Bible does not explicitly recommend nor discourage military service as a vocation for Christians, there are nonetheless several examples in the Bible of righteous men and women who are soldiers and who are not condemned as such. Christian teaching, especially as detailed in the precepts of the Just War Tradition, calls upon soldiers who are Christians to live a just lifestyle, especially when having to go to war against other human beings. It is crucial that our service men and women, Christian or not, not be motivated by any misapplication of Scripture which could lead to a dangerous holy warrior attitude. ■

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- 1 This article reflects the views of the author and is not necessarily the official position of the United States Army or the Department of Defense.
  - 2 Mansfield, Stephen, *The Faith of the American Soldier* (NY: Tarcher, 2005), 151.
  - 3 Ibid., 113.
  - 4 I am not implying a moral equivalence among the leaders or acts of nations, but merely calling for a logical interpretation and application of the Scripture passage in question.
  - 5 In fact, all pastors and teachers should be prepared in this era of global war to help their people (especially the youth) navigate these ethically challenging waters.
  - 6 One day while in the process of writing this article, I was startled by a large explosion in the city a few miles away, outside the walls of our camp. I learned that the explosion was a roadside bomb that exploded near a primary school where three children were killed and eight others wounded.

# If We're Rick Warren's Friends, I'd Hate To Meet His Enemies

By Benjamin Cole, Pastor Parkview Baptist Church, Arlington, TX

Rick Warren is an evangelical anomaly, and some people think that's a good thing.

In seminary, I heard countless slams on his preaching style. I was lectured in cheap, pithy platitudes that "seeker services" were an oxymoron, if not "Satan-friendly." Saddleback Sam, the name Dr. Warren gives to the "target audience" to whom he ministers, was a joke, a marketing ploy to reach a certain kind of person who could bankroll a certain kind of ministry.

In my home church, there is a lady who is convinced Rick Warren is the antichrist. He's compromising the Gospel. He's a wolf in sheep's clothes.

And then there are those who think he's sold out on the abortion issue by hosting U.S. Sen. Barak Obama, D-Ill., at an AIDS conference, or that he's compromised U.S. foreign policy by visiting Syria and North Korea. Some Southern Baptists have their briefs in a bunch because he still supports the Baptist World Alliance, which the Southern Baptist Convention stopped funding a few years ago. I have good friends who refuse to read his books, and I have former professors who

take regular potshots at his publishing prowess.

But Rick Warren presses on. Perhaps more than any minister today, he takes the high road.

When his critics are slopping up a third helping of pot roast and potatoes at the Golden Corral, he's serving up a truckload of grain to an African village. When they're ranting and foaming about his preaching style, Rick Warren is uploading his sermons to the Web for them to plagiarize. When they're hammering the church growth movement, Rick Warren is growing a church.

I may not do everything the way Rick Warren would, but I know that I couldn't do a fraction of what he does. People in my church read his books and find his insight helpful. My taxes are lower because he took a case to the highest levels of justice, not to protect his own income—which he gives away at a Bill Gates pace—but to protect the housing allowance exemption of pastors in hamlets like Whitesboro and Wolf City. My sermon illustrations are more diverse because his ministry team sends out helpful tools for finding fresh and creative ways to explain

the principles of Holy Writ.

While Baptists bicker about booze, or whine about worship style, or cry over Calvinism, or tilt over tongues, Rick Warren is doing what he can to make a difference in his lifetime.

Dr. Warren doesn't need the platform of the Southern Baptist Convention to be heard. He doesn't need our committees, seminaries, or publishing house. He doesn't need political activists to get him on the White House guest list. He doesn't need a mission board to plant churches, and he certainly doesn't need a room half-full of ballot-waving messengers to hear him preach when he has entire continents clamoring to hear him talk about Jesus pure and simple.

Rick Warren doesn't need us. I wonder why he sticks with us.

His harshest critics, it seems are those who dwell in the house of his friends. It's not hard to understand why he's busy building his own house and not ours. ■

*This article is reprinted by the author's permission from his blog, found at [baptistblog.wordpress.com](http://baptistblog.wordpress.com), and it was also printed in the Dallas Morning News.*



# Our Son Defected: A Mother's Plea

By Helen Barnette, DeLand, FL (1972)

**Note:** *Recently, as I was sifting through some of my father's files, I came across this unpublished piece by my mother. Written in 1972, it offers an eloquent depiction of the call to respect the views of others regarding critical issues—be it war, amnesty, or other matters. My own children have read it, and it has magnified their appreciation for their "brave uncles," John and Wayne. With the blessing of my siblings, I submit this to a broader readership, and we dedicate it to all of the brave brothers and sisters who, like John and Wayne, made the hard choices and lived out their convictions during the turbulent days of the Vietnam conflict.*—James Barnette, Samford University, November 2006.

*"A warrant has been issued for your son's arrest . . ."*

We had known of Wayne's plans for months prior to his leaving in 1969. Following his junior year abroad at the University of Munich, he had returned to complete his studies at Centre, a small Presbyterian college in Danville, Kentucky.

Because our modest brick house in Louisville was within one hundred miles of the school, Wayne came home almost every weekend during that full semester. Sometimes he brought friends with him "to meet my folks and get into a real home," and to allow them to engage in intellectual and philosophical discussions with Wayne's dad, Henlee, a theological seminary professor.

On other occasions, Wayne would come alone. Henlee and I often sat with him at the small kitchen table, eating Gouda cheese and drinking hot tea, talking late into the night about many things that mattered to Wayne: his love of linguistics (he's fluent in German, Swedish, and Russian); the many cultural opportunities he'd had in Europe to indulge his love of classical music; the beauty of the European

and Scandinavian countries he had toured before returning to the United States; his desire to return to study and, later, to live in Europe; his deep concern for friends he knew who were having to interrupt their education because of the draft; his anxiety for his elder brother, John, who had forfeited four graduate school scholarships to volunteer for the Air Force; and his complete disillusionment with our involvement in Vietnam, which he felt was a colossal mistake.

Regardless of how late our Saturday night talkfests would last, Wayne was eager to attend the next morning the neighborhood Southern Baptist church of which he had been a member since he was nine years old. The young pastor there was greatly admired by Wayne as well as by many of his college friends. On weekends when they were unable to make it to Louisville, Wayne and his crew would gather to utilize the former's short wave radio to pick up the weekly service on Sunday from our church.

Wayne is a deeply religious young man.

*"He has openly defied the law of the land in failure to comply with the selective service law . . ."*

At eighteen Wayne had registered with the local draft board as a conscientious objector. He assured us that his deeply-felt pacifism stemmed from taking seriously the precepts he'd been taught at home and in Sunday School: "Thou shalt not kill" . . . period. No qualifying escape clause there. "Love thy neighbor" . . . "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Had we neglected a patriotic duty when we failed to insist that these biblical injunctions were applicable *only as they were in accord with the national policy?*

John, three years older than Wayne, has always seemed to be the more serious of the two. Quiet,

steady, orderly, and precise, he is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Tennessee with a major in political science. He too has been a member of the same church since childhood. Both boys went to the same schools through high school, had many of the same teachers, played on the same baseball and basketball teams, shared the same room in their teens, had the same parents and the same two younger siblings. Both worked to help pay for their college education. Both were employed during one summer by rival soft drink companies (Coca Cola and Royal Crown), hoisting crates of filled bottles. So many of their experiences were parallel; but their courses of action regarding military service were quite different.

No overwhelmingly "hawkish" motivation prompted John to enlist in 1967. He simply felt duty-bound to follow without much questioning the "letter of the law." More of a homebody than his brother, John at that time had never been west of the Mississippi.

Wayne, on the other hand, had been to Europe twice, and reveled in immersing himself in the culture of the various European and Scandinavian countries. His was a freer spirit that was not bound by national perimeters. Due to his impeccable German (thanks to a masterful "Herr Professor" at Centre), he was often mistaken for a "native" in Munich. There was so much to do, see, absorb, and appreciate in other cultures—so much that was valid. To him, the U. S. was not the ultimate example, especially in matters of foreign policy.

His decision to leave this country for good, therefore, was not a surprising one.

*"He can never cross the U. S. border again nor go into a NATO country . . ."*

There were, of course, other alternatives which we had discussed



with Wayne: (1) the application for Conscientious-Objector Status (the granting of which seemed a remote prospect indeed judging by that particular draft board's record of C-O rejections, including that of Muhammed Ali).

"But if I plan to live in Europe anyway, why take out two or three years for C-O service, thus giving a semblance of support to a policy I am in total disagreement with," Wayne queried?

Or (2): there was the possibility of seeking a "high sensitivity" job as a translator or similar position in a governmental agency, securing a high priority deferment. Or (3): he could capitalize on some old allergies and seek a medical deferment. (This latter idea he rejected contemptuously upon its suggestion!)

Feeling keenly that a disproportionate number of this country's poor and black were bearing the brunt of the "ill-advised and illegal" war in Vietnam, Wayne decided that, in order to be truly consistent in following his pacifistic convictions, his own action must express his thorough disagreement with every aspect of warfare, and, in particular, the Vietnam "undeclared" war.

*"But must remain in exile from this country . . ."*

I believe Wayne was more aware than most of the young men who have followed this course, as to the consequences and ensuing difficulties he would face. As he had traveled in Sweden, he could handle the foreign language. He was aware, too, of the finality of the physical separation from his family.

"The hardest part," he confided, "will be not being able to see Martha (then twelve) and Jim (then eight) grow up."

*"If he should attempt to return . . ."*

He had decided. I knew that Sunday afternoon when, as I washed the dinner dishes, I heard Wayne and his dad conversing in low tones in our first-floor bedroom. Then Wayne came into the kitchen and, moist-eyed, embraced me without a word. I buried my head on his shoulder.

"Can he already be this tall?" I recall thinking. "Oh God, John is in Vietnam—now Wayne will leave us for good? What can I do? What can I say?" But there were no words—in any language.

A few weeks later, his passport was renewed.

*"at any time or in any manner whatsoever . . ."*

In the spring of 1969, Wayne brought Anne home to "meet the family." A lovely brunette from Tennessee, she was a straight-A fellow student at Centre who shared his delight in languages and the arts. They were obviously in love:

"She's the ONE!" he announced delightedly.

"Does she know of your plans?" I couldn't help but ask.

"Yes. And she'll be right with me!"

I felt profound relief that he would not be totally alone in his exile; yet I was concerned that it might prove terribly difficult for Anne. My suggestion was that it might be easier if Wayne left alone after graduation, sending for Anne when he was settled. Neither agreed. Anne was adamant in her determination to share with him every step of his exile. I marveled at her strength and fierce loyalty.

*"he will be arrested . . ."*

A quiet wedding ceremony preceded graduation in early June. That night Anne and Wayne drove back to Louisville with us. My "good-night" to them was also "good-bye," for I would be at my regular junior high school teaching job when they departed. They had already secured air line reservations for the following afternoon.

Next morning Anne packed a trunk to be shipped to them later, while Wayne went to the bank, withdrew the savings he had earned over several years. They did not ask us for money. This was their independent affair.

The final preparations were completed by mid-afternoon. There was little conversation as Henlee drove the young newlyweds to the airport. Nearing the terminal, he attempted some banter about their "pioneer spirit . . . facing the unknown." Then

more seriously, he asked, "You're sure you don't want to reconsider?" Anne and Wayne exchanged glances; his hand covered hers and he managed a soft, "No." Their simple gold wedding bands reflected the late afternoon sun. "Godspeed, my children. . . ."

I rushed upstairs to Wayne's room as soon as I got home from school, half-hoping, half-expecting them to still be there. "Maybe they didn't finish packing in time . . . maybe the plane was late . . . maybe he changed his mind. . . ." Some college textbooks were stacked beside his old desk. On the desk was a record player we'd given him when he graduated with honors from high school. Beside the neatly-made bed remained an extra pair of shoes which he couldn't fit into the luggage they carried with them, some dresser drawers were left half-open, and in the corner lay Wayne's beloved *balalaika* with a note attached: "Fur Martha—meine keine schwester." Instinctively I reached over and picked up the familiar instrument that Wayne had so often lovingly strummed, but the three strings responded discordantly to my touch. As the sound echoed in the strangely lonely room, I remembered an expression our minister used often in bidding farewell, "Brave journey . . . and Godspeed, my children."

There was little time for nostalgia or tears. Young Jim bounded indoors with a casual "They gone? When's supper?"

At bedtime, however, Jim requested, "Now tell me again about Anne and Wayne. Where have they gone? Why? And *who* will be mad at Wayne? Is he wrong or is he right? Will he ever be back? Does he still love us?" (Jim never asked the other side of that one, *"Do we still love him?"*)

I tried to answer honestly and fairly these earnest questions. Jim asked them many other times in the days that followed.

Together our family prayed for Anne and Wayne on their journey to Sweden and for John in Vietnam.

Actually we knew only a minimum of details of Wayne's carefully planned departure. We knew they were flying to

Detroit, going from there to Canada. They wrote to us from Toronto where they spent several weeks before flying via Icelandic Airlines to Luxembourg, going from there to Stockholm. We knew only the general outline of his plans, for Wayne wanted to “protect us” insofar as possible against the time we would be questioned by federal authorities. And questioned we were. “Where is your son? . . .”

Our initial FBI interrogation occurred in mid-August. A well-dressed, clean-cut young agent rang our doorbell, flashed his identification for my inspection, and asked to come in. (I’ve since decided to talk to these agents at the door. There is no need to invite them inside.) Another agent remained in the waiting car, blocking our driveway. (In case Wayne were hiding out in the basement and made a dash for freedom, I wondered?) The first agent, holding a dossier, glanced around the room, sat down on the sofa, then asked politely, “Where is your son, Wayne?”

“In Sweden,” I replied.

His eyebrows arched and he inquired, “Has he received his draft notice?” (Wayne’s notice had come in July indicating an early August draft call date.)

“It has been forwarded to him. Whether or not he has received it, I cannot say.”

There were more questions directed to my husband and me for about half an hour. The matter of the warrant for arrest, penalties for attempted return and such were explained to us. As the agent rose to leave, he looked at me and said, “Don’t you expect him to come back at Christmas . . . or in case of a family crisis or something?”

“No,” I replied, “we had the understanding when Wayne left that in the event of *any* sort of family crisis—including the death of any of us—there was no need for him to attempt to return. Our knowing the depth of Wayne’s feeling for us is not dependent upon his physical presence here. He won’t be back.”

“I just can’t understand it,” the agent muttered as he headed for the door.

“No,” I observed, “you wouldn’t.”

We have had similar periodic visits from the FBI throughout these intervening three years, the most recent interview taking place January 7, 1972, in Florida, where we have been on sabbatical leave.

“*Louisville Man Defects to Sweden*. . . .”

We knew it would be only a matter of time before news of Wayne’s “defection” would become public knowledge. To friends who had inquired about him during the summer months, we had replied truthfully that he and Anne were “honeymooning in the north.” We just didn’t bother to say how *far* north!

Then in September, the young couple was granted residency permits by the Swedish government. Lists of those granted such permits are published there and, of course, are of interest to the Associated Press and other wire services. On the afternoon of September 11, 1969, a representative of the AP called from New York to confirm the news release from Sweden.

My initial reaction was a defensive “What business is it of theirs? Let’s don’t tell them anything!” But Henlee calmly reassured me, “We have nothing to hide.”

His guilelessness was evident in the article which was front page news in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* the next morning:

*Wayne Barnette, 22, a graduate of Louisville’s Atherton High School and Centre College at Danville, Ky., was listed yesterday among 13 new U.S. ‘defectors’ who have taken up residence in Sweden. He went there in June after being classified 1-A in the draft.*

*His brother John, 25, is a first lieutenant in the U. S. Air Force, who has served a stint in Vietnam and is up for promotion to captain. Their father . . . said yesterday, “We wholly approve of what both have done. . . . You can’t plan your children’s lives for them,” the father said. “They’re fine boys, strong men, intellectuals, and excellent athletes. . . . His father said he noticed the other day underlined in Wayne’s old Bible, ‘Do unto others as you would have them do*

*unto you.’ That’s his guiding principle.”*

The *Louisville Times* added other quotes from Henlee: “Both boys have the courage of their convictions . . . Wayne considers himself more a ‘draft resister’ rather than a ‘defector’ and is radically opposed to killing and to the Vietnam war. But the younger son would have gone to Europe regardless of his draft situation. . . . He loves Europe and has always planned to live and teach there.”

“This is a real human interest story,” exclaimed one fast-talking reporter who called. “It’s the ‘One-Wore-Blue-The-Other-Wore-Gray’ bit all over again!”

Another editor was more pensive. “Your family situation here seems to typify the deep division within our country regarding the entire Vietnam War.”

“Which one are you really for? . . .”

We had tried to prepare Martha and Jim for the onslaught of public reaction. But we had underestimated the amount of interest the news media would evince due to the seeming “hawk-dove” angle here.

“Hey, I heard about your brothers on TV!” exclaimed one of Jim’s friends.

“Yeah, neat!” chimed another. “It was in the paper, too. *Your* name wasn’t in there, though, Jimmy. I looked for it.”

“No, but they said he had a ‘brother, 8.’ *That* was me!” Young children have an effective way of insulating themselves and accepting without recrimination what could be hurtful.

Junior high age is sometimes less kind. One boy in the school hallway pointed an accusing finger at Martha and hissed, “DEFECTOR!” A female fellow-classmate asked pointedly in front of several others, “Well, Martha, which one are you really for—John or Wayne?”

“I’m for *both* of them,” replied Martha firmly.

“Well, *I* think you should be for *John*!” sniffed the friend.

“*Your son is yellow!* . . . (signed) *A Mother*”

There was, of course, an outpour-

ing of reaction to the news story. We received many letters decrying the “cowardly” action of our son. I found wryly amusing the one from a woman who said she was a fellow Kentuckian, fellow Southern Baptist, and the mother of a soldier; but she had one word for our son and that was that he was “yellow.” Then, lacking the courage to sign her own name, she closed the letter with, “A Mother.”

But in greater numbers came letter and phone calls of supportive understanding from friends as well as strangers. My own teaching colleagues were wonderfully kind.

Upon my arrival at school the bleak morning on which the news hit the papers, I went directly to my home-room. As I flicked the light switch to illumine the dark classroom I saw on my desk a vase of exquisite roses with the early dew still clinging to their leaves and petals. Beneath the vase was a card inscribed: “(My wife) and I agree with Dr. Barnette. They are four wonderful children.” The card was signed by a fellow teacher, himself a World War II veteran, who had taught both John and Wayne in the ninth grade. This perceptive gentleman, upon reading the news account that morning, had taken time to go into his rose garden before coming to school in order to offer a gesture of immeasurable kindness.

The silent eloquence of those tender roses shook my composure; and, for the first time since the wire service phone call had shattered our privacy the evening before, I was able to weep.

“Oh, I can’t let my students see me this way!”

One of the older teachers came quietly into my room, slipped her arms around me and said simply, “I just *had* to come see you!” While I knew she couldn’t agree less with the political implications of Wayne’s action, and although she had no children of her own, she was sensitive to the fact that we were experiencing a difficult time and she “just had to come.”

By the time the bell rang to admit the students, I had somehow regained a serenity which carried me through

the day. Only a few of my students were aware of the connection between the local news item and their teacher—I could tell by the way some watched me—curious—that day. We stuck mainly to “bookish” lessons that Friday, instead of including our usual segment of spirited current events discussions.

Some of my husband’s colleagues were equally supportive, especially those who had sons who had served or were serving in Vietnam. The seminary switchboard buzzed with calls from irate persons who insisted that Henlee should be fired, that he was not “fit” to teach in a denominational institution. The switchboard operator and secretarial personnel were gracious to such callers, at the same time shielding Henlee from receiving these calls personally.

Perhaps because military involvement either had loomed largely or threatened to in the experience of the seminary students themselves, it was among this group that Henlee found the most heartwarming affirmation of his stand of being solidly behind *both* sons.

We were most grateful for those who reached out to us in expressions of reassurance during this period. It was interesting to note the hesitancy of many well-intentioned friends and the immobilized silence of many who would be the “first to respond” in some other sort of family crisis such as death. But there is no formula set forth in etiquette manuals or established social practice as to how one responds in a situation which involves “stigma” or public rejection.

No doubt the negative reaction would have been much more pronounced had the fact of son John’s service in Vietnam not also been a part of the story. In his own quiet way, John served as a “shock absorber” for his family. We were profoundly grateful when he returned safely from his second tour of duty at Ton San Nhut Air Base.

*“With malice toward none . . .”*

On the national scene during the intervening three years, our country

has been shocked and repulsed by the revelations of My Lai and similar massacres. The disclosures contained in the Pentagon Papers have shaken our confidence in the decision-making processes relative to our involvement in Vietnam. Our casualty rates continue to bring grief, and the ranks of POWs and MIAs have swollen to at least 400, perhaps more.

Reversals of national policy have, within recent months, occurred at dizzying rates. Our President journeyed to Peking and Moscow. Men such as Joseph Davies and John Service, whose statements regarding our “China Policy” capitulated them into disfavor and disgrace during the McCarthy era, are now sought out as men of astute wisdom. Some even maintain that the suggestions of such men could possibly have averted both the Korean and Vietnam undeclared wars.

Many of our young exiles were taught in high school and college by teachers who remember well the McCarthy “Red Herring” tactics of the 1950s. Those who perceived the folly of narrow stereotyping and “guilt by association” were able to instruct well their students to analyze various facets of given situations, to be evaluative rather than hastily judgmental, to try to utilize historical perspective and total world view rather than succumbing to political expediency with an eye to election or re-election.

Their students listened and learned well. *Evidently the real crime of which our national exiles are guilty is that of arriving too soon at the conclusions to which our national policymakers now find themselves adhering!*

It is for this reason I wish to raise a plea for amnesty for the 75,000 exiles. To maintain that refusing to support a *policy*, now in essence refuted by our national position, is a criminal act, seems to me to be unjustifiable and wrong.

But what of the over 50,000 who died in defense of that policy? I cannot and would not detract from the nobility of being willing to fight unto death for one’s ideals and what he (or she) believes is right. The ennobling factor



was these men's dedication—not the questionable cause or purpose of the fighting; for even the once-dominant "containment policy" is now being viewed by respected government officials as an exercise in futility.

Nor would I in any way undermine or demean the tremendous suffering, anxiety and sacrifice experienced by our fighting men in Vietnam and by their families. Our family likewise experienced a great deal of the gnawing anxiety when our eldest was in the Saigon area around the time of the Tet offensive.

Having spent this past year in Florida where many retired military personnel reside, I have often heard vehement objections to the granting of amnesty as being "unfair to those who obeyed the law," and "breaking faith with those who fought." And I can understand the deep resentment felt by these veterans of World Wars I and II and the Korean conflict, for surely they were brave, steadfast people who fought nobly and well. But please note that those were wars *declared* (with the exception of the Korean "police action") in accordance with our constitutional provisions; and the entire nation was mobilized for the purpose of defeating a monolithic enemy believed to be a threat to world peace.

Our Vietnam involvement has been quite different; thus ideas and courses of action regarding it have also been quite different.

I am not so naïve as to maintain that every exile or deserter was prompted by the highest motives of morality. If indeed some or any of these individuals have committed some other crime here or in the country where they sought refuge, let the respective civil courts deal with those cases. But to write them all off as "cowards" or "animals in a zoo" (Vice President Agnew's phrase) smacks of the same sort of closed-minded stereotyping which characterized the McCarthy hearings. Too, it ignores the fact that leaving family and familiar surroundings, going to a totally new locale to become established "on

one's own" requires a special courage and independence long extolled and cherished throughout American history, until tainted recently with the stigma of resistance to a new-defunct policy. How interesting it would be to discover how many of our leading citizens are descendants of families who immigrated to this country while seeking to avoid military service in their homeland!

Some of our brightest, most creative young men (and women) were among those who left the U.S. in defiance of the draft. Among our casualties in Vietnam were thousands of similar caliber. We cannot afford this sort of squandering of our most important resources.

Our family is very much aware that our son Wayne and his family (they now have an eighteen month old daughter) would never choose to return and live here. But there are many other exiles who would welcome the opportunity to become re-established in the U. S. Instead of denouncing them *en masse*, let us remember that these young people too have been tempered by time and experience, and can be valuable contributing members of our society.

Restoring full civil rights to those who chose to resist the draft in prison here should be a concomitant part of amnesty. These imprisoned resisters can mark "paid in full" to those who insist on retribution for refusal to fight.

How often is the statement made, "they knew the penalty—they must pay the price." Granting amnesty would be one way of saying to our exiles, "you have begun the paying of the price. But we realize that part of the responsibility for the debt is ours. So we as a nation will help you pick up the tab."

Amnesty should not be regarded as granting a "hero's welcome" to those who left the country at a difficult time. And to those who insist on reprisals and tribunals, enough of that! Let the granting of amnesty be a quiet, dignified, simple action, unheralded by fanfare, which implies, "Take your

place among us when you please and help us to build, not to tear down."

Surely the Vietnam War has divided our country in a way unparalleled since the Civil War. Our society is still "paying the price" of the failure of our ancestors to deal realistically and unselfishly with many of the problems of reunification following that conflict. Retribution, fear, suspicion, racial hatred, and self-justification poisoned much of the "reconstruction," and left monumental problems and tensions to be dealt with by succeeding generations.

This again will be the legacy of our future generations unless we can recapture the true essence of "malice towards none," and reach out to our fellow citizens—our children—in at least as much earnest "mutual understanding" as we offer to those who formerly denounced as vicious enemies of world peace!

As a mother, I can attest to the fact that on occasions it is possible to over-react in punishing children. This results in a residue of hurt feelings and corrosive resentments. The most effective ways, we are told by the "experts," of dealing with children are the promulgation of "we-ness" and a sense of shared purpose, assuring the little ones they are worthy members of the family.

No parent is infallible; no government is infallible. Can we afford *not* to apply the principles of love, acceptance, forgiveness, and shared purpose to the unifying of our national family?

I am convinced that if President Nixon granted unconditional amnesty, which he has the constitutional power to do, this would be a positive factor in the achievement of his 1968 campaign promise to "bring us all together." ■

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**Editor's Note:** Helen Barnette taught eighth grade English for her entire career. She died of cancer in 1992 at the age of 60. Henlee Barnette, renowned Christian ethics professor, died in October, 2004 (see *Henlee Barnette: Practical Practitioner* by Larry McSwain, CET, Fall, 2006, 6).



# Pretending We're Iraqis

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

When I was a child growing up in Arkansas, I enjoyed playing games of “pretend.” I’d pretend I was Hopalong Cassidy or John Wayne fighting marauding outlaws. I’d often trade in my cowboy hat for a football helmet to make the winning touchdown in what, in my mind, was the game of the century.

Many of us still occasionally daydream that we’re someone else, someone we admire who has accomplished something we’ve always wanted to do. If you are an occasional daydreamer or pretender, I challenge you to pretend, to put yourself in the place of an Iraqi mother or father.

Jassim and his wife Amira, along with their daughter, Farah, and two boys, Mohammed and Ali, have lived in the capital city of Baghdad all of their lives. Amira, Farah and Ali were all killed in initial raids on their city in March of 2003. Mohammed lost a leg in that bombing. The family’s home was razed by the bombings.

Those of us who live in the United States will find it virtually impossible to comprehend the kind of grief and anger that Jassim feels daily because of

what was done to his family. As impossible as it must seem to enter the world of Jassim, let us attempt to immerse ourselves in the life of this Iraqi who has lost virtually everything. Can we imagine the level of grief Jassim must feel daily? The only means of escape from this ongoing agony is to fall into an occasional deep sleep, but the inevitable waking up from that sleep is a severe punishment.

And what of his anger? Is it possible to understand that as a husband and parent who has lost his spouse, two of his children, and his home, how he might feel toward the occupying American forces? Is it possible to understand that this man might want, more than anything, to exact a costly revenge on the American forces? Jassim was not in any way shielded from the horror of seeing his loved ones mangled. There was no funeral home to quickly pick up his family members’ bodies and whisk them off to an expert mortician who might be able to disguise some of the ghastly effects that the bombings had on the bodies of his wife and two dead children. How do you put yourself in the

place of a person such as Jassim, a person who asks himself what he has done to deserve such an awful fate?

It is an extremely difficult exercise to attempt to understand the viewpoint of someone who is so completely different from ourselves in nationality, religion, and social status. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was able to make this transition, learning to look at life from the perspective of what he called “the view from below.” His ability to see life from the other side would ultimately lead to his becoming involved in the conspiracy against Adolf Hitler. In his view, what was happening to Jews and other victims of the concentration camps was unconscionable.

Bertolt Brecht has a magnificent statement from his *Beggars Opera* that explains our limited understanding of how the other half lives until we are there, when he writes “even saintly folk will act like sinners, when they haven’t had their customary dinners.”

In the movie, *A Time to Kill*, Carl Lee Hailey (a black man) is brought to trial for the deaths of three men who brutally raped his young daughter. In the closing argument of the trial,



Carl's attorney, Jake Tyler Brigrance, asked the jury to imagine the circumstances surrounding the brutal rape of a young woman. At the end of his detailed description of the raping of a young girl, the attorney says, "now imagine that she is white."

This exercise of viewing life from the vantage point of the other is akin to the old Native American axiom that to truly understand others "we must walk a mile in their moccasins." To not attempt to see life from the perspective of Iraqis is to stand in danger of viewing all of life from the vantage point of "entitlement." The spirit of entitlement means that I deserve my place in life just for being an American, or a male, or a Christian, and that I consider the fate of those less fortunate is their deserved lot in life.

If we cannot view life from the perspective of the Iraqis, we should at least attempt to imagine how God views the plight of the Iraqis and our relationship to their heightened suffering. Does God view the Iraqi and

Muslim as being any less deserving of Grace than each of us who live as Christians in the United States?

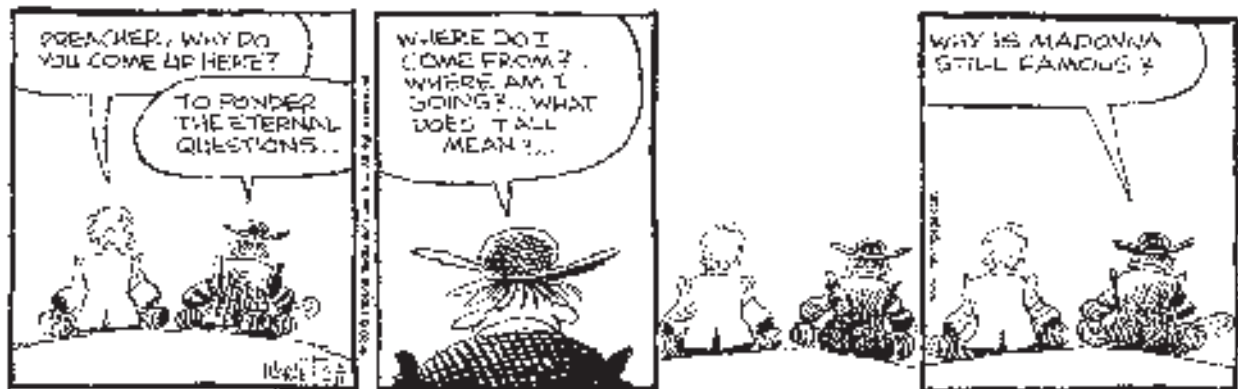
Clarence Jordan once said that when he was a small child he wondered if God had favorite children. He had sung many times the words of the children's song, "Jesus Loves the Little Children." The song states that Jesus loves all the children of the world, whatever color they are. To young Clarence, it appeared that God loved the little white children more than God loved the black children, because the white children were better fed, better clothed, and had much better homes than the black children. Clarence realized later in life that this disparity was not because God didn't love the black children as much as the white children; this gulf existed because the white people didn't love black children in the same way that God loved them.

In order to understand the feelings of people such as Jassim, we must confess that many of us in the United States make many assumptions about

our place as God's chosen and special people. We assume that we can do pretty much anything that we want to do in order to ward off potential dangers no matter what kind of damage we do to other people God created.

Another assumption that many of us make is that because we are American Christians, we are particularly favored by God and what we do is far less onerous or potentially harmful than the acts of terrorists or Muslims. We can wrongfully assume that God does not hold us accountable for violent acts that our nation commits against innocent people, such as Iraqi civilians.

This world is too small and too interconnected to pretend that we are uniquely different from or better than the citizens of Iraq. They, like us, are equal citizens of this earth. They, like us, are children of God. We most certainly have no special right or calling to inflict death and destruction on their society and their citizens. May God help all of us to see this. ■



# My History With The Rope

By Abraham Verghese, Forland Distinguished Professor in Medical Ethics UT Health Science Center, San Antonio, TX.

I have now watched both the official and the infamous unofficial cell phone video of Saddam's Hussein's execution. Both were on the Web soon after the event. I had the choice of watching them or not. I watched, with the same horrid fascination that I felt seeing ultimate fighting on television—disbelieving that gladiators are legal when cockfighting is outlawed in just about every state save for New Mexico (where I saw my first and last cockfight).

When pollsters knock on my door, they will find that as a physician I am against capital punishment, ultimate fighting, and cockfighting because they run counter to our sense of being a civilized society. But the disconnect between what I will watch and what I claim I am for is more common than most of us care to admit; I blame the camera.

The lens now peers into every nook and cranny of human existence, and it is now in the hands of every man. A digital image of interest spreads on the Internet like a drop of India ink in water. Police brutality, a bully on a school bus, an abusive nanny—we see them all. It isn't surprising that there is a cell phone video of Saddam's hanging; it is surprising there is only one. While on rounds in my hospital (where I work as an infectious disease specialist), I caught sequential bits of the television show, "Dr. 90210" in the course of going from one patient to the next. I had no idea!

We (my patients, their visitors and I) saw an actual breast augmentation; even more edifying was the opportunity to peek into the personal lives and the marital struggles of the brave practitioners of this craft who eke out an existence in that zip code. My vicarious presence in Beverly Hills and Baghdad in the same week was not because of prurient tastes; it was because these ubiquitous images are all but unavoid-

able if you have eyes and any curiosity about your fellow human beings.

The uproar over the Saddam video—both its existence and its content—is particularly hypocritical. Given all the ways and all the weaponry that could be used to execute someone, hanging is a most inhumane choice. The condemned person will be terrified and anxious, not about death as much as the manner of death. Hanging of the 'short drop' version practiced in Iran is really a slow choking to death; in the standard or long drop method that was used in Iraq, unconsciousness is supposedly instant when the spinal cord is severed, but a misplaced knot could rip skin and muscle and cause an agonizing death. Instant or not, let's not kid ourselves; hanging is a vengeful, brutalizing, psychologically terrifying act with which we humans have a long history; in the past it was carried out publicly (and still is in countries like Iran) with the aim of serving as a deterrent. If we condone hanging a mass murderer, is it not hypocritical to want it to be conducted with "decency" when hanging is by its very nature indecent?

Saddam's hanging disturbs us because it was perverse, vengeful, furtive, hasty, carried out under cover of darkness and in front of a hoarse, excitable male audience who acted as if they were at a carnival, or, to be more precise, as if they were at a lynching. Part of the discomfort the video generates here may lie in these echoes of our own short history with the rope.

As an expatriate child growing up in Ethiopia, I saw my first hanging when the military leaders of an abortive coup were put to death in a public square. We happened to be driving by. Or perhaps, in those pre-Internet days, my parents wanted to witness the spectacle; I don't remember. I do remember the chanting, ululating crowd, dancing under the swaying corpse, the choked,

congested faces and the oddly angulated heads, but most of all I remember how the dead men's shoes were filched. The bare feet seemed inconsistent with the rest of the image. That element of violation, of savagery, stayed with me. I saw a few more hangings in that country as I grew up, and the fresh bodies of people who met violent deaths in the aftermath of Emperor Haile Selassie's fall and the advent of Mengistu, the Stalin of Africa.

The Saddam video recalled these memories of witnessing violence and savagery. With the video I felt just as I did as a child witnessing an actual hanging: That the condemned man gets perverse revenge because there is a shame that accompanies such a spectacle; it spreads and stains all who are there, all who drive by, all who watch it on television, or who, like me, download it with a click of the mouse; the killer being executed has suddenly become noble, and turned us into killers.

This cell phone video will be the most viewed hanging video in history. We as a nation should watch it before washing our hands of it, and certainly before pontificating about our brand of justice versus other brands. Only by watching can the debate about capital punishment move from an abstract discussion to what is real, to what is palpable, to what is shameful, to what is actually happening whether you watch it or not. ■

*This article first appeared in the January 8, 2007, Wall Street Journal and is reprinted by permission of the author.*

# Death By Hanging Is Way Too Easy!

By Tripp York, Visiting Assistant Professor, Elon University, Elon, NC

Recently a student in one of my religious studies classes asked what I thought should be the appropriate Christian response to Saddam Hussein's sentencing of death by hanging. I said, "That's way too easy! Torture is what he deserves!" Some students smiled happily while others, thankfully, found my answer to be very problematic. Before I could finish my response many students (well, a few anyway) quickly suggested that capital punishment was wicked enough, but how could one suggest torture?

So I immediately sent them down a less direct road and asked them to give me a definition of justice. Replies varied, but we finally agreed that, at least within the body politic of our culture, the Latin account of justice which is *sum cuique*—that is, "to each what is due"—was adequate in terms of fairness and, in terms of punishment, or retributive justice. People should get what they deserve (though this distinction may or may not contain problems, let the reader be aware that this in an *introductory* course in religion).

Of course, attempting to discern what each person is due or "deserves" tends to beg a lot of questions: What is due to Native Americans for being all but annihilated in the name of manifest destiny? What is due to African-Americans for building our wealthy nation for free? What is due to women for their centuries upon centuries of patriarchal oppression? Plus, *who* gets to decide what is due to these groups and how do we (whoever this "we" is) negotiate what the culprits of such injustices deserve? I am guessing that what a Native American, African-American, or a woman thinks is justice will differ from not just one another, but from the power of a white male-dominated culture that made such injustice possible.

It seems that appeals to justice are always rooted in particularity and it is very difficult to assume some sort of monolithic account of justice that will suffice for all people. For whoever is privileged enough to decide what constitutes justice, the giving and receiving of what one deserves or is due to another, will bear an account

that favors a way of seeing the world that will be at odds with various other people's comprehension of justice. So how is one to respond to injustice in light of "relativized" justice?

These problems aside, the class wanted to know what this had to do with the sentencing of Hussein (they were, unsurprisingly, not interested in issues of distributive justice for the crimes committed by our ancestors as well as us in the present). Do we just concede that there is no universal account of justice and let him go unpunished? I attempted to divert the question back on the class by asking them what they thought we deserved as a people whose way of life had been made possible by the genocide and subjugation of various people of differing racial, ethnic, and gendered bodies.

Silence was the primary response (I teach in a primarily white affluent Christian university). So I attempted to convince them that as Christians we should first note that this description of justice, specifically in terms of what one deserves, fails. We must first





ask the theological question: What do Christians (or any human being for that matter) deserve? The answer is, and has always been throughout the history of Christianity, death. God created the world good, but we are “evil from youth” and rebel against the Creator. Nevertheless, God is good, just, loving, and holy and, therefore, responds to us with an account of justice that does not give us what we deserve but undoes the entire logic of both retributive and distributive justice altogether.

God’s love is not predicated on either punishment or fairness, but on perpetual gratuitous charity. God sends God’s only Son to save us (this is God’s justice) and we respond by killing him. Nevertheless, because God’s justice is also God’s charity (justice and charity do not occupy separate spheres within God—God’s justice *is* God’s charity) God exercises patience with us and grants us far more than what is due or what we deserve.

Christians, therefore, are called to imitate the character of God and to embody this kind of justice that is charitable justice. We do not simply think about what is due someone, though, at bare minimum we must think this through (that in and of itself would be enough to turn the world upside down); rather, we must attempt to think about the injustices that we have committed and continue to commit and how to repent of these and respond to those we have wronged in a way that reveals how we are redeemed.

In terms of fairness and doing penance for crimes we commit we humble ourselves to the victims of the crime and ask them for help in showing us how to make amends. In terms of punishing those that commit crimes against us subvert this world’s understanding of justice by going beyond it by *not* giving them what they deserve. Rather, we reflect the very grace and forgiveness that God bestows upon us in order that the world may know God.

Back to the case of the recently sentenced to die Saddam Hussein. I said

in class that death was too easy. I said that it was too easy because in the first place, in the eyes of his followers, it makes him a martyr, and secondly, it lets us off the hook from doing what God demands of us. I, therefore, concluded that Hussein should be tortured.

However, the class did not initially allow me to finish my sentence on *how* he should be tortured. I told them that as Christians we never assume that anyone is outside the transforming love of God and that we not only live by the hope that someone like Hussein could undergo a radical conversion (aren’t all conversions radical?), but that we must attempt to show God’s love to him so that he can have the opportunity to be converted.

So I suggested that we become missionaries and that every day one of us should go to his prison and witness to him. To be honest, I can’t think of anything that would probably torture him more than a daily visit of Christians attempting to convert him, but, then again . . . doesn’t he deserve it? ■

**Editor’s Note:** It is ironic, that after the writing of this article, Saddam Hussein endured some forms of torture on the gallows just before he was hanged, adding a footnote to this article.

## CD Finally Available

We apologize to all of you who ordered the Compact Disc of Issues 1-59, 1995-2006, indexed by subject and author, for their delay. The CD had a “gliche” and had to be re-produced in December, and we just learned they were mis-sent to our old address in January, but have been promised at our door by February 1, and to you soon thereafter.

The CD is still available for a donation of \$50 or more, along with all other offers.

## SNAPSHOT

### Tax relief for whom?

In May, Congress passed \$70 billion in tax cuts over the next five years. Guess who benefits?

Income	Average Tax Savings
\$10,000-20,000.....	\$2
\$20,000-30,000.....	\$9
\$30,000-40,000.....	\$16
\$40,000-50,000.....	\$46
\$50,000-75,000.....	\$110
\$75,000-100,000.....	\$403
\$100,000-200,000.....	\$1,388
\$200,000-500,000.....	\$4,499
\$500,000-1 million.....	\$5,562
More than \$1 million.....	\$41,977

Source: Senate Finance Committee

# CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND THE MOVIES

Reviewed By David A. Thomas, Assoc. Prof. of Rhetoric, Emeritus, University of Richmond<sup>1</sup>

## Biomedical Ethics: *The Constant Gardener* (2005)

Adapted from the novel by John LeCarre, *The Constant Gardener* refers to the title character, Justin Quayle (Ralph Fiennes), a modest, self-effacing minor British diplomat in Kenya whose hobby is gardening. Both Fiennes and his co-star, Rachel Weisz received Academy Award nominations. Weisz won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress. The movie was named on several "Top Ten" lists of the year. It has been described as a triple play: a romance, a thriller, and a political intrigue. The latter element calls forth some of the major ethical issues that concern us.

The story concerns Quayle's dogged pursuit of the truth behind the mysterious death of his wife, Tessa (Rachel Weisz), who might have been involved in an affair with another man. The circumstances of her death were suspicious. On the surface, she was apparently killed by a band of robbers on an isolated road where she should not have been. She and her purported lover, a black doctor with whom she collaborated in health ser-

vices for the poor, had often traveled together, and on this occasion they were checked into the same hotel. Justin cannot believe the innuendoes his embassy colleagues were spreading about her.

As he probes into her story more deeply, the movie evolves into more of a political intrigue with layers of dark meaning below the surface. The movie is structured as a series of alternating scenes from the present together with flashbacks to the past. The movie begins with a flashback to Justin and Tessa's first meeting. He's the speaker at a seminar, and she's a pesky heckler. Then he surprises her: he remains behind afterwards to continue a dialog with her. Their interaction is a textbook case of opposites attracting. The scene holds twofold importance. First, it launches their beautiful romance; and second, it introduces her as a high-energy political activist. Her passion for justice and reform drives the rest of the story.

Tessa fills a hole in Justin's life. He invites her to accompany him back to Kenya, as girl friend or as wife. Since that is exactly where she wants to go, and she has instantly fallen in love with him, she accepts that as a propos-

al, and they marry. There, she directs her energies into the egregious social ills she sees in the Western African regions. Until her untimely sudden death, Justin remains passively oblivious of exactly what she does. When she became pregnant, he remains happy tending his garden, looking forward to having her at home more.

Her charity work takes her into remote areas where AIDS is decimating the population, and Western pharmaceutical companies have become highly visible benefactors of local care agencies by providing medicines and education. Here is where the plot thickens. With Big Pharma, nothing comes free. Tessa is digging into the ongoing a particular company's drug testing being done among Africa's castoff peoples, without accountability for human research guidelines. She discovers appalling side effects of one of the research projects, unacknowledged and unremedied by the major pharmaceutical company. Moreover, the company that is involved in the most outrageous consequences to the victims just happens to have connections within the highest official levels of the British diplomatic hierarchy, including Justin's supervisors.



Justin's grief-driven unauthorized investigation uncovers the actual circumstances surrounding her death. Early on, he determines the truth of his wife's relationship with the other man. The black doctor, too, is a committed activist trying to expose corruption in high places. However, for a heretofore-untold reason, he and Tessa could not have been sexually involved. Therefore, the rumors to undermine her reputation were proved both false and deliberate, in order to undermine any information she might have gathered in her activist missions.

Therefore, Justin shifts his suspicions from his wife back to the motivations of those who were spreading falsehoods about her. Also, Justin learned that, when the fatal accident occurred, her trip's aim was to make an unannounced visit to a secret research project in a remote African community, which would not have been in Big Pharma's interest for her to make. When Justin undertakes to retrace her steps and make that trip, the story becomes a traditional thriller.

Justin's redemptive character arc was of a certain type. Recall that following his hasty marriage in pursuit of a hot romance, Tessa's quick acceptance made him a happy man. He lets her carry all the weight of social responsibility for both of them, while he putters in his garden. With her death, he assumes more and more of her commitment and civic awareness.

By the end of the movie, Justin has almost become Tessa reincarnate. Like her, he becomes deeply involved in the same causes. But like Tessa, Justin pays the ultimate price for his choice.

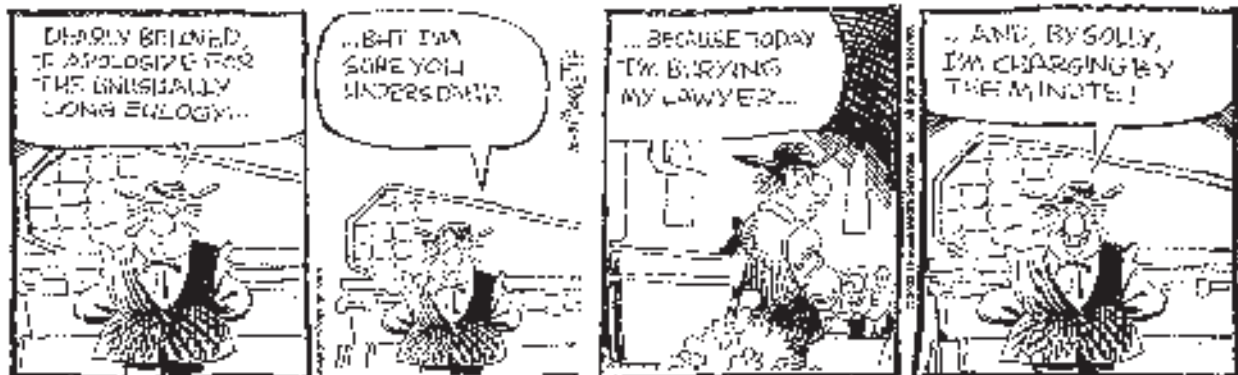
Almost all major pharmaceutical companies are public corporations whose stock values depend on earning new patents for major drugs each year. Their profitable quarterly reports depend on having massive successful R&D constantly going on to assure ever more new drugs in the pipeline. Human drug testing is a major piece of the puzzle. The United States closely regulates drug testing for both safety and efficacy. If a company can offshore its human testing to Third World countries, with large pools of subjects but without strict research controls, as depicted in *The Constant Gardner*, it could conceivably reap billions of dollars in cost savings and, thus, extra profits.

**Christian Ethical Issues.** Scientific advances in biotechnology are outstripping all existing ethical guidelines. Bioethics is still in the nascent exploratory stage. What is permissible? What ought to be controlled? Routine constraints that set rigid boundaries for the health field do not apply to many new frontiers, including but not limited to new reproductive technologies, cloning, designer babies, gene patenting, stem cell research, nanotechnology, molecular medicine, longevity extension, identification of at-risk indi-

viduals (for such future conditions as Alzheimer's) in the womb, and many more. On one side, there are scientific voices who argue that anything goes. On the other extreme, there are shrill fears of inevitable "mad-scientist" scenarios.

*The Constant Gardner* is based on pure fiction, though it is said to be inspired by actual events. The movie's unethical experimentation on massive numbers of impoverished Africans cannot be specifically linked to any company you can name. Yet the story is plausible because the vulnerable circumstances still remain in that part of the world. It could easily happen tomorrow. The pharmaceutical piece of the rapid growth of bioscience is fraught with numerous opportunities for illegal and unethical practices at the margins. Responsible research methods, properly monitored for safety, can be circumvented merely by outsourcing them to unregulated regions of the world. *The Constant Gardner* opens a window that looks upon an imagined on-site laboratory with potentially monstrous effects. ■

1 David A. Thomas retired from the University of Richmond in 2004 and now resides in Sarasota, Florida. He invites your comments at davidthomas1572@comcast.net.



# Book Reviews

*"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed."* Francis Bacon (d. 1626)

## Faith and Politics

John Danforth, Viking, New York, 2006.

\$24.95.

*Reviewed by Darold Morgan,*

Richardson, TX

John Danforth is well-known in America both as a retired U.S. senator from Missouri and an ordained Episcopal priest. He is also recognized as a conservative Republican, coming from one of Missouri's foremost families, the Danforths of Ralston-Purina fame. He has written an exceptionally timely book which blends biblical foundations with a common sense approach, specifically directed to the "moral values" debate which has savagely and passionately divided American life today.

Frankly, this well-written book deserves a wide audience both from the radical Christian Right which currently dominates the Republican Party (Danforth's conclusion), and also from the so-called Christian Left which almost automatically challenges any position the other side may present. Both groups in this debate will profit from Danforth's rational and reasonable approach. There is a strong hint that the Christian Right, probably more than anyone else, needs this advice. His basic appeal boils down to the ultimate values of debate and dialogue in an interesting atmosphere of restraint and respect—something that has rarely occurred in this cauldron of deeply held convictions.

Alongside this welcomed and rare position of balance and reason in the current debate is a refreshingly honest autobiographical collage of a Republican leader whose priest/politician mantle has earned Danforth widespread respect. One senses a gifted intellect, deeply influenced by a solid educational background, a wonderfully supportive and bluntly honest family, combined with a strong biblical perspective which results in

insights rarely found today in political or church councils.

The book is worth its price alone for his chapter "Paul's Primer for Politics," a solid exposition of the twelfth chapter of Romans. His unique approach to "the debate" results in a defense of a "Moderate Christian" outlook. He quickly expands the values of moderation, usually a denigrated outlook in the wrangles of the day.

Danforth's conservative moorings are apparent—a defender of the pro-life stance in the abortion issue. One swallows hard when he explains his support of Clarence Thomas in the controversial nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. These are facts which serve to strengthen his historic conservatism posture. Then comes his chapters of the "wedge issues." He does not dodge the current divisiveness of these flammable issues: abortion, stem-cell research, gay marriage, the Terry Schiavo incident, and family values. Believe it or not, moderation and common sense comes through in each of these provocative chapters. Students of every ilk would do well to study his words. These wedge issues will be around for many years to come.

Danforth's book is valuable and timely for a number of reasons. He brings substantial biblical approaches to the table. Coming from a prominent politician, this is somewhat of a shock, but it adds weight to the debate. His appeal for mutual respect is long overdue in all political and religious circles. He subtly reminds his own political party to avoid the capture of its councils and policies by the extreme Religious Right. His emphasis to the entire country, as diverse as it is, is the absolute necessity of "Moving Forward Together." American history is replete with this goal realized in the past. It is imperative in these times of national and international crises to

come together again for the ultimate goal of American security and well-being.

While Danforth spells it out forcefully that all Christians should speak out clearly, he also focuses on the absolute necessity of reconciliation which he mandates as a biblical prerequisite. "What Christianity brings to the arena of political conflict is a duty to act with mutual affection, a duty to show honor, even when we don't feel like doing so. It is a duty which extends to our most disagreeable foes." (p 228) ■

## Everyman

Philip Roth, Houghton Mifflin Co.,

Boston, 2006, \$24.

*Reviewed by Darold Morgan,*

Richardson, TX.

It is quite rare for us in *Christian Ethics Today* to review a novel, but the theme Philip Roth pursues in this book has some strong ethical overtones which he deftly handles, particularly for those older adults whose health is shaky and unpredictable. Roth is recognized far and wide as one of America's premier novelists. Roth usually inserts some profound and often subtle Jewish overtones in his writings. One of his recognized skills is in his powerful, and often unforgettable, character developments. The chief character in this short novel is no exception.

The unnamed man, referred to as "he" is aging very poorly. With three failed marriages behind him, he is moving into old age with some well-deserved and bitter memories stemming from his selfish misbehavior. Now he is faced with an inevitable sequence of medical travails, the anger of his sons still unresolved because of the shabby treatment of their mother, and the recurring memories of good parents whose return to an orthodox Judaism came too late in life to influence him. He exhibits the tragic



emptiness of a spiritually-devoid finality. There is no redeeming light to be found in this sad, well-told tale.

The title *Everyman*, borrowed from medieval times, hints that some of the issues in this novel comes to all who age. That all of us will sooner or later confront death is a given. In this we discover the underlying motif of the book. Prefaced by a long list of medical and personal crises, “he” is aging awkwardly because of peculiar self-centeredness. Some of the finest pages in this brief novel are found in his descriptions of the relationship with a hero-like brother and his unexpected confrontation with a wise grave-digger in the old, run-down Jewish cemetery where his parents were buried with the Old-World Orthodox rites. His abstract indifferences toward this final challenge of life somehow moves toward a concrete reality through the shared wisdom that emerges in that fascinating exchange.

It is apparent that Roth, now seventy-three, is increasingly aware of death. His novel, though intriguing, is strangely depressing because there are no emerging solutions. Here children are far from being sensitive to the mood swings of an aging parent. There is nothing about the old adage of reaping what you have sown, particularly as it relates to the moral and spiritual themes of old age. The missing note is the total lack of spiritual certainty. “He” has none of this, and the closing paragraphs are totally bereft of encouragement. With Roth’s writings in mind, one never expects any religious certitude, save for a few hints from that really amazing reservoir of Eastern European Judaism that he knows so well. Even that is missing as the novel bluntly ends in the hospital’s operating room. ■

## Exiled

Carl L. Kell, Editor, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 2006. \$25.95.

*Reviewed by Carolyn W. Crumpler, Cincinnati, OH.*

After a quarter of a century, it seemed that we had heard all

there was to hear about the “Southern Baptist Convention Controversy.” Then there appeared *Exiled: Voices of the Southern Baptist Convention Holy War* edited by Carl Kell, who several years ago gave us *In The Name of the Father, The Rhetoric of the New SBC*. This new book is a must-read, for it is different from other writings about the past twenty-five years.

Most of what we have heard has been written or spoken by agency men and women, people employed at the national level by Southern Baptists. Only two of these appear in *Exiled*—James Dunn and myself. The two of us wrote forewords. The other 31 contributors are laity, pastors, seminary professors, associational leaders—a mixture of people who have been “exiled.” These stories are personal. They are must-reads for all of us who are still learning there is life after the SBC.

Former President Jimmy Carter (another former Southern Baptist) was asked by the publisher, University of Tennessee Press, to write a statement to be used in advertising. Here is what he said, “These personal narratives of distinguished Baptists illustrate the adverse consequences of exclusive fundamentalism, and the need for unity among traditional Baptists.”

Buy it. Read it. Pass it along. ■

## Who Really Cares: America’s Charity Divide—Who Gives, Who Doesn’t, and Why It Matters

Arthur C. Brooks, New York: Basic Books, 2006.

*Reviewed by John Scott, Adjunct Professor on Servant Leadership*

Dallas Baptist University, TX

This book crushes, with hard data, some popular assumptions about who is, and is not, charitable. It is “the best study of charity that I have read,” says James Q. Wilson, a preeminent scholar who advised five U. S. presidents of both parties and received the

Presidential Medal of Freedom. In the Foreword, Wilson describes the author, Arthur C. Brooks, as “a rigorously trained scholar” who has combined “careful studies of charity with a direct and compelling way of explaining what he has learned.”

The book is getting a lot of media attention. Brooks has been featured on television’s “20/20” and interviewed on numerous radio talk shows.

However, most of that attention has focused on some secondary correlations. But it’s easy to understand why. Those correlations surprised almost everyone, including the author, who is a lifelong liberal when it comes to politics. The data shows that the term “compassionate conservative” may not be an oxymoron after all.

- Conservatives give 30 percent more to charity than liberals. This is an average figure, so it’s not a result of the fact that conservatives outnumber liberals. Individual households headed by conservatives, on average, give 30 percent more money to charity than households headed by liberals. And this isn’t because conservatives have higher incomes, as they actually make six percent *less* than liberals. Moreover, conservatives give more than liberals at every income level: poor, middle, and rich.

- Even when donations to churches and other religious charities are excluded, conservatives give ten percent more than liberals.

- Conservatives also volunteer many more hours than liberals, to both religious and secular charities.

- Conservatives donate so much blood the author says: “If liberals and moderates gave blood at the same rate as conservatives, the blood supply of the United States would jump about 45 percent.”

- When measured by party affiliation instead of ideology, the results are the same: registered Republicans give much more time and money to charity than registered Democrats.

Regarding his initial findings, Brooks said, “I assumed I had made some sort of technical error. I re-ran analyses. I got new data. Nothing

worked. In the end, I had no option but to change my views."

However, it's misleading to focus solely on the correlations related to political views. The data shows, and Brooks emphasizes, that the most common motive behind most charitable giving and volunteering is not political. It's religious. Ninety-one percent of religious conservatives contribute to charity, but nearly as high a percentage of *religious* liberals do too. *Religion trumps politics*. Of course the statistical correlations showing that liberals are less charitable include non-religious people as well. So the total figures reflect the fact that there are more secularists among liberals than among conservatives. But on both sides of the political divide, religious people are much more generous than secularists.

"The evidence leaves no room for doubt," says Brooks, "Religious people are far more charitable than non-religious people. In years of research, I have never found a measurable way in which secularists are more charitable than religious people."

Religious people are significantly more likely than secularists to give food or money to a homeless person, give up their seats to older people on crowded buses, return change mistakenly given to them by cashiers, and help out a relative or friend in need. Moreover, the more religious people are, the more generous they tend to be. For example, people who usually

attend worship services once a week give three and a half times more than those who only go once or twice a year. But even the latter give more than secularists. Religious people give more to *secular* charities than secularists.

"America's Great Charity Divide," referred to by the book's subtitle, is not so much between liberals and conservatives as it is between secularists and people of faith. Of course there are other variables. For example, those who come from strong, intact families are more charitable than those who don't. But even that can usually be traced to religious faith.

The book also counters the common criticism that "most" Americans don't care enough to be charitable. The data says otherwise. Three-fourths of American households donate money to charities. They give an average of 3.5 percent of each household's income per year. A majority of American families also volunteer time to charities.

Americans give *many times* more to charity than the citizens of every country in Europe—whether measured as a percentage of gross domestic product or in absolute dollars. This can largely be traced to the decline of religious influence in Europe.

Brooks also points out disturbing ways both the federal and state governments in the U.S. suppress and discourage charity. This should be required reading for anyone who really cares, and can influence public policy.

As a real-life example Brooks tells how difficult and expensive it was for him and his wife to adopt a little girl from a Chinese orphanage. Redundant red tape *in the U. S.* caused the child to languish in the orphanage an additional six months.

Arguably the most important finding reported in the book confirms something already known from previous research done by many others: Giving and volunteering improve one's own physical health and happiness. We need to give for our own good.

Brooks effectively calls upon his fellow liberals to put more of their own time and money where their mouths are. On the other hand, he could just as well have urged conservatives to do more about certain needs that will never be met by charity. To cite just one example (not from the book): from 40 to 50 million Americans have no medical insurance, and millions more have grossly inadequate coverage.

The book gives surprising answers to many other questions, too many to list here. But at the end of the day, indeed at the end of all days, the most important question for each of us is not what others are doing for charity. A more important question is this: "Am I doing enough to avoid the risk of having to hear myself asking, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'" (Mt. 25:44). ■



# FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2006

In 1995, Foy Valentine had a dream—a Journal that would “inspire, inform, and unify” readers to work for personal morality and public righteousness. From its inception, *Christian Ethics Today* has been sent without charge to anyone requesting it. The cost of publishing five issues last year was about \$84,000, or about \$18 for each subscription. Over 5000 subscribers now receive the Journal, an increase of 800 readers during 2005.

Due to the dedicated assistance of Randy Shebek (graphic design) in Des Moines, Ray Waugh (website and mailing list) in Beeville, Suzanne Verret (Etheridge Printing) in Dallas, James Kim (Postel Tech) in Carrollton, and Audra Trull (Bookkeeping/Secretary), the annual budget remains frugal, even with a 15% increase in subscriptions each year.

Our financial support has continued to grow. In 2006, 751 contributors (562 gave in 2005) gave \$88,685 (in 2005 \$86,000 was given), and that came in a year when many supporters also gave to the FFV Memorial Fund! Most gifts ranged from \$10 to \$500.

Our sincere and heartfelt gratitude to each person and church that supported the ministry of *Christian Ethics Today* in 2006. Without you the Journal could not continue. Because of your support we are able to provide the Journal to thousands of students, teachers, ministers, churches, colleges, and seminaries, free of charge.

## Special Thanks To Our Major Supporters

Special gratitude is due these supporters who have honored the dream of our founding editor Foy Valentine through major contributions of \$1000 or more in 2006:  
Northminster Baptist Church,  
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## CIOs/Piper Fund Grant

The Journal is deeply grateful for a second year of funding from the CIOs/Piper Foundation of Waco, Texas, of \$25,000. This grant allowed *Christian Ethics Today* to sponsor conferences on Ministerial Ethics at Truett Seminary in February and at McAfee-Mercer School of Theology, Atlanta. The grant also funded a September visit to the campus of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas to promote the Journal and speak in three religion classes, as well as represent the Journal at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Christian Life Commission, and the Society of Christian Ethics. A major conference is being planned for the CBF Assembly in Atlanta, June 27, 2007, on “The Minister and Politics” featuring Jim Wallis, Greg Boyd, Melissa Rogers, and Tony Campolo—watch for more details.

## Friends of Foy Valentine Memorial Fund

Contributions to the FFV Memorial Fund, initiated in 2006 in honor of our founding editor, continue to grow. Initiated by many of Foy’s closest friends, the fund will provide a financial base (interest only to be used when absolutely necessary) for the Journal.

As of February 1, 2007, 108 persons have given \$165,950, including these friends who contributed since our last report: Mary Rickenbaker, C. T. Sparky Beckham, Dr. Marvin Harris, Neal and Jane Knighton, Meta Ukena, Dr. David Sapp, M. D. Samples, Ruth Bradley, James Ellis, Van Luen Foundation, Maurice Brantley, M/M John G. Ragsdale, Robert and Ann Fowler, Dr. Kevin and Angie Heifner, Flynn Harrell, Lawanna McIver Fields, and Dr. Hardy and Ardelle Clemons.

If you desire to contribute, the FFV Memorial Fund will continue to receive gifts. Of course, *all gifts are tax deductible and deeply appreciated.*

## SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2006

\*Balance on Hand 12/31/05  
\$27,238

\*\*Expenditures 2006:  
\$83,994

\*\*\*Gifts/Income 2006:  
\$88,685

\*\*\*BALANCE: 12/31/2006:  
\$31,929

\*This amount does not include unused funds from the CIOs/Piper Grant.

\*\*Expenditures 2006 do not include \$22,500 expended from the CIOs/Piper Grant.

\*\*\*These amounts do not include the CIOs/Piper Fund Grant of \$25,000.

# 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 annually.

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. Gifts are tax deductible.

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Joe E. Trull, Editor  
9608 Parkview Court  
Denton, TX 76207-6658

**Phone:** (940) 262-0450  
**Cell** (940) 230-6931  
**New email:** jetrull@grandecom.net

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

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Post Office Box 1165  
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