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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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My Grandfather was Undocumented

By Patrick Anderson, editor

Patrick Christopher Malone, my maternal grandfather whom I always called “Pop,” was born in Dublin sometime in the second half of the 1800s. He forgot, or perhaps never knew, his birthdate, so the exact date is not clear. His listed age on the marriage license in 1909 was 32, but that was just an educated guess.

Whatever the date, he was born into a very difficult time in Ireland. When both of his parents died he was sent across the channel to Liverpool to live with an uncle, perhaps around the age of five or six. That uncle was cruel and abusive. Pop ran away and began to live on the docks along the port of Liverpool, making his way by singing, dancing, and reciting limericks and poems for whomever he could get to listen and smile and give him a coin. He was part of a group of young boys living unattended on the docks who were considered vagrants and urchins. I can only imagine what that life must have been like. He never learned to read or write, but he did learn to fight.

The active ship traffic in and out of Liverpool offered him a glimpse of life beyond the port. He must have heard stories about the land of opportunity called America, and observed the heavy flow of people toward that place. Somehow, he and a friend sneaked aboard a schooner bound for the United States and hid as stowaways. A few days out to sea, he was discovered hiding in the ship’s hold, and was brought before the captain who told him he would work for his passage and then be promptly sent back to Liverpool.

He must have been a charmer. I remember him as an old man telling stories, quoting poems and limericks, and occasionally shuffling into a tap dance. A man and his wife from Florida were on the same ship and took a liking to the young Pat, and

made a deal with the captain to keep him upon arrival in America. They took him to their ranch in Central Florida, treating him a bit like an indentured servant, where he spent the rest of his childhood and young adulthood until he married my grandmother, Ruby, from Cedar Key.

He labored hard as a skilled craftsman, working on ships in the port of Jacksonville. As an overseer, he had to calculate the wages of his workers and, since he was illiterate, he would memorize and calculate the work product of his men and recite that data to his wife (“Granny” to me), on Thursdays so she could write it down for him to give to the paymaster on Fridays. He built a house, raised two daughters (my mother and her older sister); the older sister (my aunt) earned a degree from Columbia University in New York City. He had a wonderful reputation.

When World War I broke out, the shipyards became very active. He took the opportunity to go to Cuba to work on shipbuilding, and all-in-all provided a very good livelihood for his family. The house he built still stands. The flagpole he installed beside the back steps is still there. He was very patriotic. My mother said he was incredibly happy when he became a US citizen. Granny helped him study for the citizenship exam, and he relished memorizing documents of our history. I have the picture of him at the swearing-in ceremony, standing straight, looking at the camera with a proud smile. He must have erected the flagpole during that time, and I remember him running the flag up in the mornings and down in the evenings.

I think of my Pop when I see the pictures of the children intercepted on the southern border of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California who have fled hardship and danger

and oppression back home. The travails they suffer while traveling from Central America, through Mexico, and into the arms of the representatives of this Land of Opportunity sound as dangerous and uncertain as my grandfather’s voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. I cannot help but imagine a frightened little boy on a ship, stealing food when he could, keeping out of sight, snatched up from his hidey hole, and brought before the captain. I see him hungry, smelly, dirty, terrified, and hopeless.

I also see a very brave boy, inspiring in his audacity. I cannot imagine that he cried or begged. He probably took swings at the crewman who found him. His advantages were that he spoke English, had a great smile and personality, and knew how to make people laugh. His good fortune was that a family took him in. It is my good fortune to have some of his genes, to be part of his lineage, sometimes to feel his spirit and to bear his name, Patrick.

I hear some heartless politicians pontificate about how we need to seal our borders, ship those kids at our Southern border back to where they came from no matter what future awaits them, and to protect America from the expense and trouble they bring with them. I see the pictures of the young, dirty, frightened children, unable to speak English or to make people laugh. I feel the little boy in myself being found in a hidey hole, and brought before scary authorities.

My grandfather’s fellow stowaway – his young friend -- was sent back to Liverpool. We never learned what happened to him. I wonder if young Patrick had also been sent back, whether he would have survived either on the voyage or on the docks of Liverpool. ■

A Small Step Towards Peace from Red Letter Christians

By Tony Campolo

Jesus once said that if we are faithful in little things, He would make us the ruler over great things (Matthew 25:21). To that end, we Red Letter Christians want to offer a proposal of one small step towards resolving the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in the Holy Land. It's a little thing that could have great consequences.

This small step toward peace which I am suggesting has to do with a way of overcoming the dire effects of the blockade of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli government and its army. I suggest it is a way people of good will on all sides of this conflict might see as something they can do together.

Presently, we know that any attempts to break the blockade have been stopped by the Israelis because they fear that shipments going into the Gaza Strip from the outside, which they could not control, might provide a means for militant Palestinians and those who sympathize with them to carry war materials into the Gaza Strip. The Israelis are afraid that rockets from countries such as Egypt and Iran could easily be smuggled into the Gaza Strip and lobbed over the wall that separates Gaza from Israel. An end of the blockade might well mean a greater propensity for guns to end up in the hands of terrorists.

There is little question in anyone's mind that there have been concerted efforts by the pro-Palestinian nations that surround Israel to make weapons available to such terrorist organizations as Hamas. This would encourage and support attacks on the Israelis, whom they have sworn to drive out of the Holy Land.

The blockade, however, has prevented essential medicines, food, and fuel for motor vehicles from getting to the Palestinians who live in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli govern-

ment argues that it is not devoid of humanitarian impulses and would be more than willing to sell such essentials and use Israeli vehicles to carry them in to the people in the Gaza Strip. The problem is that the Palestinians living there are extremely poor, and the cost of buying these essentials is so high that they cannot afford to purchase what they need from the State of Israel.

The proposal I am offering here is that Christians, Jews, and Muslims here in the United States raise funds to purchase the food, medicines, and other

This proposal would create a win-win situation for almost all parties involved in this difficult impasse.

essentials that those who live in the Gaza Strip require for survival. This joint organization would then buy the desperately needed things from the Israelis and have the Israeli government utilize its own trucks to ship them into the blockaded area. This proposal would create a win-win situation for almost all parties involved in this difficult impasse.

First of all, the Israeli government would be free from the accusation that it is inhumane in keeping essential food and medicine out of the hands of needy Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. The blockade of Gaza has earned the Israelis a very negative image among the rest of the peoples of the world, most of whom view the blockade as an instrument of the Israeli government that makes the Palestinians suffer. This bad image would be somewhat overcome if Israel cooperated in the implementation of this proposal.

Secondly, Christians, Jews, and Muslims working together in such a humanitarian cause would do much to improve the image that many secularists have of religion. With all the evil that has been done in the name of God, a joint effort by the three major world religions could do the reputation of religion in general a lot of good.

Recently, hostility has been growing between Jewish and Christian Zionists and certain Protestant denominations that have condemned the blockade and have called for an embargo on any goods produced by Israeli companies based in Jewish settlements in the West Bank. There even has been a call for divestiture of investments in all Israeli companies as long as the blockade continues.

The Pope, speaking for the Roman Catholic Church, has made pronouncements condemning both the blockade and the illegal settlements in the West Bank. Too often such condemnation ends up being defined as being anti-Semitic. This has harmed interfaith relations. Christian critics of Israel, working along with other Christians, and joined by Jews and Muslims, working to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, would send a strong message about the altruism inherent in each of these groups. Working together, they would actualize the spirit of reconciliation. Zionist groups, both Jewish and Christian, that have been unfairly vilified as being opposed to humanitarian efforts that would benefit the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip would, with these efforts, do much to overcome the negative image they have in some quarters.

Muslims here in the United States would have an opportunity to reach out to their Islamic brothers and sisters who are suffering because of the

blockade. Such an effort might even be joined by Muslims of good will in the Arab countries that surround Israel, and contribute to the wellbeing of those presently being victimized by the blockade.

Finally, the people in the Gaza Strip would be blessed by this effort, which might have a very positive effect on the ways in which they relate to all the groups cited above. The most important thing is that these desperately needy people would

experience some deliverance from their present suffering.

We all know that the privation suffered by the Palestinians as a result of the Israeli blockade has encouraged terrorists to respond with violence, and made it easy for them to recruit young people for their radical organizations. This proposal might help counteract all of that. Here's a chance, in the words of Jesus, "To overcome evil with good!"

For those of us who want peace,

I suggest that this is one way to put our money where our mouths are. ■

Tony Campolo is professor emeritus at Eastern University in Philadelphia, and is a member of the Board of Christian Ethics Today. He is founder of the website, Red Letter Christians, which is a forum for persons who take the words of Jesus seriously, and try to relate them to contemporary personal and social problems.

Ethics Bytes:

Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Views of the War in Gaza

Most Israelis blame the war in Gaza squarely on Hamas, though there are plenty who fault the Israeli government for not pursuing peace more aggressively. In the haredi Orthodox community, however, where practically everything is ascribed to the omnipresent hand of God in one form or another, the true cause of Israel's troubles is seen as something else: sin, with the troubles Israel's punishment. Which sin? Take your pick.

One haredi rabbi thinks a gay pride parade in Tel Aviv is to blame for the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teens in the West Bank. Rabbi Amnon Yitzhak, a Sephardic rabbinic leader, said "God brought Hamas because 'the world has filled with hamas' now," according to the haredi blog Vos Iz Neias. The Hebrew word "hamas" means evil or corruption.

Rabbi Aron Teitelbaum, one of the Satmar rebbes and a vocal anti-Zionist, blamed the kidnapped boys' parents and the "desire for Jews to inhabit the entire State of Israel." He told his yeshiva in Kiryas Joel, a Satmar community north of New York City, "(It) is incumbent upon us to say that these parents are guilty... They caused the deaths of their sons and they must do t'shuva [repent] for their actions."

Rabbi Shalom Cohen of the Sephardic Orthodox Shas party said Israel doesn't need an army because "It is God almighty who fights for Israel."

While many haredim avoid guessing at the Divine reasons for catastrophe in Israel (at least publicly), there is universal consensus that prayer and the performance of mitzvot (fulfilling the Torah's commandments) constitute the best ways to ward off further disasters.

In a statement issued by Agudath Israel, Rabbi Avi Shafran wrote: "We must remember that... it is therefore to Hashem that we must focus our entreaties with special intensity at this critical time. Our prayers should include entreaties for the wellbeing of our fellow Jews under attack, as well as for those who are risking their lives to defend them and defeat those who wish us harm."

One of the more unusual initiatives to bring peace to Israel through the performance of mitzvot is Chabad's Project EDEN (Eat ice cream Defend Eretz Yisroel Now), which rewards modestly attired female Chabad campers with ice cream. Organizers believe that having women dress modestly will bring Israel Divine protection.

Source: Miriam Moster at <http://www.jta.org/2014/07/23/news-opinion/the-telegraph/the-israel-hamas-war-through-haredi-orthodox-eyes#ixzz39dl62ppW>

Randall Balmer: Politicians and the Bible Have Conflicting Message on Immigrants *Randall Balmer*

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The images are searing, the stories nothing short of tragic. Thousands of women and children have been detained at the border between Texas and Mexico.

They tell harrowing stories of harassment by gangs, of family members killed or simply “missing.” Assault. Grinding poverty. The conditions in such places as El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are so unbearable that these immigrants, including unaccompanied children, many of them orphans, have left everything behind for a perilous journey north across Mexico to the United States. Some have acted on a rumor that the American government has offered a brief window for asylum. They were apprehended at the border and are now confined in facilities across the Southwest, from Texas to California. Some are living in dog kennels, waiting. Waiting for what? Provisions. Rest. Safety. Reuniting with family. A glimmer of hope. The dread of deportation.

The Obama administration has asked Congress for several billion dollars to deal with the problem, which apparently means little more than accelerating the deportation process. The governor of Texas has deployed National Guard troops to the border and surveyed the area from a helicopter.

This humanitarian crisis has brought out the best in many Americans. Various religious and relief organizations have provided food and medical supplies. Glenn Beck has dispatched truckloads of teddy bears and soccer balls to detention centers.

But the crisis has also provided

politicians ample opportunity for demagoguery. When Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader, asked Americans to recognize “the spark of divinity” in these displaced children, reminding us that “we are all God’s children,” Sarah Palin, the former governor of Alaska, mocked Pelosi. Palin later expressed compassion for immigrants in “horrendous conditions,” although her solution was to ramp up deportation; she suggested that President Obama had orchestrated the crisis and used the issue once

But the crisis has also provided politicians ample opportunity for demagoguery.

again to call for impeachment.

Texas Congressman Louis Gohmert compared the influx of immigrant children to D-Day at Normandy and demanded that the administration “use whatever means,” including troops and military hardware, to stanch the invasion. “Our continued existence is at risk with what’s going on at the southern border,” Gohmert declared in a speech on the House floor. He pegged this “vast invasion” of immigrants at “hundreds of thousands.”

Like Palin, Gohmert is a darling of both the Tea Party and the Religious Right. In 2011, Gohmert introduced a resolution that would designate the first weekend in May as “Ten Commandments Weekend.” The measure would encourage “citizens of all faiths and religious persuasions to reflect on the important impact that the Ten Commandments have had on the people and national character of

the United States.” Last November, Gohmert declared that American foreign policy should be based on the Bible.

Similarly, in an appearance on Fox News, Palin said: “Go back to what our founders and our founding documents meant — they’re quite clear — that we would create law based on the God of the Bible and the Ten Commandments.”

I wonder what the “God of the Bible” would have to say about the immigration crisis at our border. Let’s start with the Hebrew Bible. “Do not oppress a foreigner,” we read in Exodus 23. “You yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.” The Hebrew Bible often instructs the Israelites to treat strangers with kindness and compassion precisely because they were once aliens themselves. The corollary here is that United States has often been described as a nation of immigrants, which suggests that all of us (Native Americans excepted) once were foreigners.

Leviticus (one of the Religious Right’s favorite sources because of its apparent condemnation of homosexuality) contains plenty of advice for dealing with aliens. “And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him,” Leviticus 19 reads: “The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” Further along, we find guidance for feeding strangers in our midst: “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest,” we read in Leviticus 23. “Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you.” Still later, Leviticus

suggests that aliens should be treated equally: "You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born."

In the New Testament, Jesus beckoned his followers to care for "the least of these," a description that I suspect would apply to the refugees at detention centers on the border. Jesus later described those who would be admitted into the kingdom of heaven as those who demonstrated acts of kindness toward people in need. Those gestures would be reckoned as though they were directed to Jesus himself: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

The masses huddled at our southern border represent a humanitarian crisis as well as a formidable political conundrum, especially during a time

of partisan rancor, a hobbled president and a dysfunctional Congress. Should these youthful immigrants be considered intruders or refugees? Will massive deportation solve the crisis and discourage others from attempting such a hazardous and uncertain journey? Is a return to violence and gang-infested nations akin to turning away Jewish refugees from the horrors of Nazi Germany? Finally, and most fundamentally, are Americans

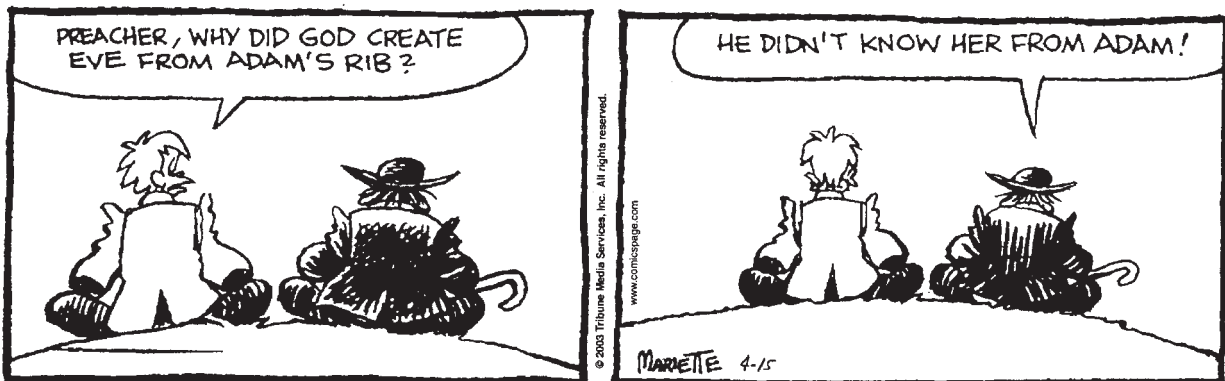
Are Americans prepared to welcome foreigners at our southern borders as the Israelites were enjoined to welcome strangers and as Jesus called on his followers to show hospitality to "the least of these"?

prepared to welcome foreigners at our southern borders as the Israelites were enjoined to welcome strangers and as Jesus called on his followers to show hospitality to "the least of these"? We hear a lot of talk these days about the United States as a "Christian nation," a time when politicians rant about placing the Bible at the center of our public life, even to the point of explicitly guiding our policies. As Palin said, we should "create law based on the God of the Bible."

Maybe, just maybe, before politicians make such declarations, they should take a moment to consider just what the God of the Bible has to say. ■

Randall Balmer, chair of the Religion Department at Dartmouth College, is working on a documentary about Orthodoxy in Alaska. His most recent book is Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter.

A stranger you shall not do harm, neither shall you violently oppress, for you are no strangers to oppression. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Mitzrayim. Lev. 19:33-34; Ex. 22:20



Evangelicals and Immigration—1940s Style

by Miles Mullin, II

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming
shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to
me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

These words, ascribed on a bronze plaque affixed to the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, were penned by American poet Emma Lazarus. Originally written to help raise money to fund pedestal construction, “The New Colossus” portrays the statue as the “Mother of Exiles” whose “beacon-hand glows world-wide welcome,” encapsulating a vision of America as a land of opportunity for immigrants. Lazarus understood the promise that America held for those wishing to emigrate. A part of the migration of Sephardic Jews to America, her own family succeeded in the United States, rising into the upper class.

Like the “Mother of Exiles,” in the mid-twentieth century neo-evangelicals welcomed immigrants traveling from some “teeming shore” across the Atlantic. Like Emma Lazarus, they recognized the promise that America held for those wishing to emigrate from Europe. Embracing the “activism” characteristic of evangelicalism, after World War II, they helped settle such persons in the United States.

Recent books like historian Molly Worthen’s *Apostles of Reason* (2013) and theologian Greg Thornbury’s *Recovering Classic Evangelicalism* (2013) emphasize the intellectual aspects of the mid-twentieth-century evangelical renaissance. However, just as intellectuals and elites fueled a more socially and culturally engaged American evangelicalism, so did the evangelical practi-

tioners and laypeople associated with the movement.

While neo-evangelical intellectuals worked to engage the scholarly currents prevalent in Western culture, pastors, missionaries, ecclesiastical leaders, and laypeople were confronted by a world thrown into turmoil by World War II and its aftershocks. As the world grew smaller due to technological developments and media advances, these laypeople and ecclesiastical leaders regularly encountered suffering on the “other side of the world” right in their

Seeing those in need, the words of a Jesus concerning the “least of these” spurred them to address the spiritual and physical needs of the world

homes and churches. Seeing those in need, the words of a Jesus concerning the “least of these” in Matthew 25 spurred them to address the spiritual and physical needs of the world just as their heady coreligionists attempted to address the scholars in Cambridge, New Haven, Chicago, and Berkeley. To wit, they founded several evangelical global relief agencies, an evangelical child welfare agency, and several other ministries focused on meeting the needs of the less fortunate “for whom Jesus died.” As might be expected, when opportunity came, they assisted those who wanted to immigrate to the United States in order to escape deplorable conditions and persecution in their home countries.

World War II displaced millions of Europeans. After the war, most of these displaced persons (DPs)

returned to their home countries. Others, who anticipated maltreatment in their countries of origin, refused to do so. Many of these had opposed the Nazis, were Jewish, or were escaping from the communist governments taking control in Eastern Europe. Each DP that refused to return to his/her home country violated numerous legal strictures. Even so—and regardless of the fact that he could not verify their stories—General Dwight Eisenhower declined to forcibly repatriate them. As a result, three years after VE Day, the United States passed the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, temporarily enlarging immigration quotas in order to welcome such people. The Act made provision for just over 200,000 of these people to immigrate to the United States. Barely four years old at the time, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) unhesitatingly agreed to the State Department’s request that it sponsor 3,000 such displaced persons (DPs). Leaders hustled into action, raising monies and educating their constituency regarding the whys and hows of sponsorship. Even the aged grandfather of neo-evangelicalism, J. Elwin Wright, got in on the action, pressing for support in “Shall DP’s Have a Chance to Live Again?” published in the February 15, 1949 edition of *United Evangelical Action*, the NAE’s official organ. By autumn 1949, NAE-affiliated evangelicals had sponsored nearly 500 DP’s. In that era, evangelical leaders welcomed those who could not return to their home countries for fear of some sort of persecution or retribution.

Although consistency wavered, evangelicals intermittently demonstrated that same attitude throughout the rest of the twentieth-century when similar humanitarian crises

arose. Especially supportive of those emigrating from Eastern Bloc countries during the Cold War, many evangelicals also embraced the “boat people” of Vietnam, helping them settle in the United States. In part due to the compassion they were shown in the name of Jesus, many of the “boat people” became Christians.

Granted, there were some disappointing features of the 1948 DP Act, such as attempts to exclude Catholics and Jews in favor of admitting DPs that helped maintain the WASP-y character of the United States, but the evangelical response to the State Department’s overtures was not one of them. Rather, the actions of the leaders and constituency of the NAE in the late 1940s demonstrate something about the ethos of mid-century American evangelicalism: it possessed an attitude of expansive welcome towards those who were displaced. In our current context, let us *at least* demonstrate the same attitude as our compassionate evangelical forebears. From the comments and actions I have seen, many of us are falling well short of that rather mundane goal.

Miles S. Mullin II (PhD, Vanderbilt) is Associate Professor of Church History at the Houston Campus of Southwestern Seminary. An earlier version of this article appeared on The Anxious Bench (Patheos Evangelical Channel) on July 30, 2014. ■

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Especially supportive of those emigrating from Eastern Bloc countries during the Cold War, many evangelicals also embraced the “boat people” of Vietnam, helping them settle in the United States. In part due to the compassion they were shown in the name of Jesus, many of the “boat people” became Christians.

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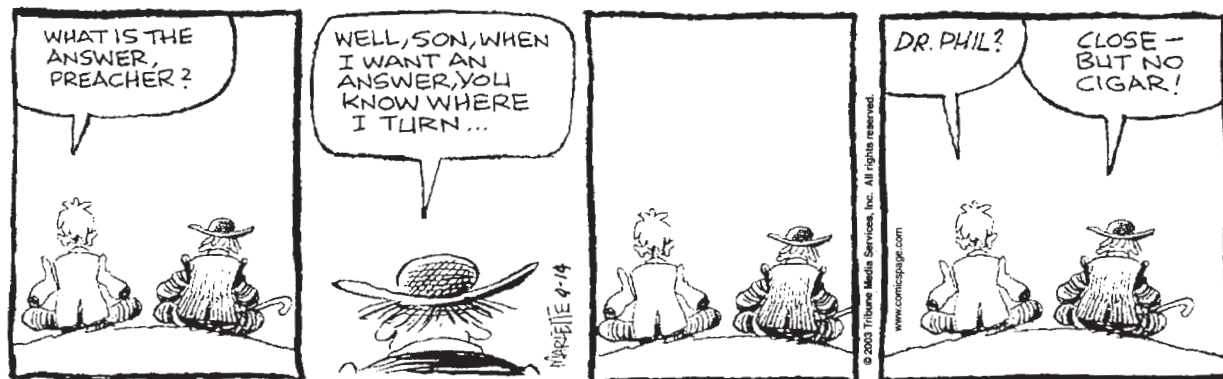
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Illegal Immigration of Children: The Underlying Problem Nobody Seems to Talk About

by Roger E. Olson

According to news reports, about 60,000 unaccompanied children have arrived in the U.S. from Central America via Mexico in the last one to two years. Some have died in the desert attempting to cross the border alone. Many are being smuggled to the border by “mules” who charge their families large amounts of money. (Why this is not being labeled a form of human trafficking by anyone is curious.) Once the children arrive and are caught, they are warehoused in cramped, crowded facilities indefinitely.

These children have become the ping-pong balls in a partisan battle of words between Democrats and Republicans. Instead of banding together to find viable, compassionate, humane solutions, both sides are digging in and arguing ferociously over who is at fault and what to do with the children. Pundits and writers of letters to editors (especially in Texas) have vented their spleens—even at the children as if they are vicious felons. One columnist suggested sending them all to the U.S. compound in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba to be held there indefinitely. Obviously he meant that as a sign to other Central American children of what faces them if they come here illegally. (They will be stored in a concentration camp previously reserved for accused terrorists.)

I’ve read all kinds of proposals for what to do with these children and how to stop others from flocking into the U.S. “Close the border!” people cry. I would like to ask them how exactly anyone can possibly “close” a border that runs more than 1,000 miles through deserts. And what would they have border officials do when they see an eight-year-old boy or girls walking through the desert toward them? Shoot them? Simply

turn them back—to walk many miles through scorching heat to...where? They were probably dropped off a mile or two from the border, given a crude map, and told they are now on their own. If turned away at the border, they (and remember we’re talking about eight to 12-year olds in many

And what would they have border officials do when they see an eight-year-old boy or girls walking through the desert toward them? Shoot them? Simply turn them back—to walk many miles through scorching heat to... where?

cases) will have no one waiting for them where they were dropped off. They’ll simply die in the desert.

Many letters to the editors of newspapers in Texas and other Southwestern states express the most cruel, hard-hearted opinions about these children—as if they are all gangsters and criminals. Most are not. The most common “solution” proposed is “Return them to their home countries immediately—without any due process.” The problems with that are so obvious these writers must be either stupid or cruel or both.

First, many of the children would not be able to tell anyone exactly where their home is. They might be able to say what country they’re from, but returning them to their home countries would require permission from those countries—unless we drop them from airplanes with parachutes (something I think many Texans and others wouldn’t mind). Second, many

of the children would be returning to locales where they would be snapped up by drug gangs to be used as slaves and eventually turned into gang members—probably to be killed at some point. Third, many of the children left their home countries because they were faced with utter hopelessness—for a decent human life. They were snared in endless hunger, lack of medical care, no education and violence all around them.

A famous poem on a plaque inside the base of the Statue of Liberty says “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door.” Perhaps this plaque should be removed or replaced with one that says “The golden door is now closed—especially to poor Central American children.”

The underlying problem that (so far) I have heard no one talking about is *our American affluence, including conspicuous consumption and luxury, promoted to the world via movies and television as the result of “the American dream,” combined with our boast to be a “nation of immigrants.”* While we do have our own poor in the U.S., most of them are living in the lap of luxury compared with many people in Latin America. And we love to show off our prosperity and affluence, even our luxurious possessions and lifestyles, to the rest of the world—including our neighbors. Then we expect them to stay away. But we are like a magnet to the poor next door. Who can blame them for being drawn almost inexorably to us?

My wife and I often watch a television show called “House Hunters International” on the Home and Garden channel. But my stomach turns when I see U.S. rich people

south of our border spend hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions, of dollars on mansions on beaches in Latin American countries where just a few miles away thousands of children are suffering malnutrition, infant mortality (that could be alleviated), lack of education, and are living like animals in hovels.

You question that? A few years ago my wife and I took our one and only vacation to Mexico. We stayed in a very simple, inexpensive “eco-resort” on a beach south of Cancun. In the nearby town and surrounding jungles we saw with our own eyes two shocking things. Lining the beaches near our extremely modest “resort” (not even electricity in the cabanas) were enormous, luxurious gated resorts inhabited almost exclusively by Americans. In the nearby town we saw one neighborhood made up of what looked like animal barns surrounded by mud with pigs and chickens. These hovels were inhabited by women and children. The children were obviously malnourished (hugely extended, bloated stomachs typical of that disorder) and “playing” in mud among the pigs and chickens.

These people “know” that within reach is a paradise of affluence and luxury, free universal education, health care, food and...hope. And yet we who live in the lap of luxury expect them to stay away.

The problem is often framed as “those bad Latin Americans who want to come and take what we have” rather than as “we rich Americans who show off our luxury and want to keep it all to ourselves.”

As a Christian, I ask my fellow Texans and others (many of whom consider themselves Christians) to consider Jesus’ parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Who are we, America, in the parable? Who are the Central

American children standing or sitting on one side of our border or the other?

Recently a Christian man in my town, very well known, a “pillar of the community,” purchased a partially built mansion on the edge of town with 23,000 square feet of living space. He is finishing it. By all accounts he’s a very good man, a respected family man, church member and philanthropist. But 23,000 square feet -- when not far away is a camp now inhabited by hun-

These people “know” that within reach is a paradise of affluence and luxury, free universal education, health care, food and...hope. And yet we who live in the lap of luxury expect them to stay away.

dreds, perhaps thousands, of Central American children being held indefinitely because they crossed our border without permission looking for a tiny bit of that affluence—just enough to live a human life?

But the solution is not just individual charity; the only real, long-term solution can be only a massive rededication of our American ingenuity and productivity to solve Central America’s economic problems. Over the last century and a half we, the United States of America, have directly or indirectly invaded Central American countries numerous times (Look it up using Google or any internet search engine!) to protect our economic interests. What if we instead

“invaded” them to enhance *their* economic interests? What if we cut back our extremely bloated defense budget and devoted the savings to creating a corps of young men and women to go to Central America for only one purpose—to build schools, housing, medical facilities, etc.? Sure, we’ve made feeble attempts at that; but in the past our investments in such projects have been miniscule compared to the need. And our government would need to tell those governments that if they interfere by skimming the financial investments in their countries intended for the poor to fill their own budgets we, the United States of America, will invade them with armed troops to overthrow them and replace them with humane and honest governments—just as we have invaded them many times in the past to shore up dishonest, cruel and dictatorial regimes that would be our puppets—not to help their poor, but to protect the economic interests of American corporations there. It is just as we invaded Panama just a few years ago to overthrow a corrupt dictator.

But, ultimately, we need to “downsize” our affluence in order to help our neighbors to the South that we have throughout our history and theirs regarded as our special “sphere of influence.” To a very large extent, our affluence is supported by their poverty. In many place in Central America, historically, we have treated their people virtually as slaves of our corporations and backed that up with military might and with CIA plots. We must begin to see ourselves as the “rich man” in Jesus’ parable and them as Lazarus. Or else we will be judged. ■

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Living in a Changing World

By Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler

[Editor's note: Carolyn Crumpler is a member of the board of Christian Ethics Today and is one of the dearest friends I have. Her experiences in Baptist life have spanned the seismic shifts in American society and in the Southern Baptist Convention, first in the area of Race Relations and then regarding the Role of Women in the church. Finally, she confronted the shift within the SBC toward rigid, authoritarian, male-dominated rule and became an early leader of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Her grace and courage are inspirations to many of us. The following was written just before she was hospitalized in June, 2013. Although she currently resides in The Seasons, a nursing facility in Cincinnati, Ohio, she and her husband, Joe, celebrated their 25th Anniversary on August 16, 2014.]

"Hope is the ability to hear the music of tomorrow; faith is the courage to dance to it today." That quote has been very helpful to me in my life.

I was raised in a small citrus and cattle farming community in Central Florida named Frostproof. When I graduated from the high school, I took what for me was a courageous step when I got on a bus and traveled the long distance to Tallahassee to attend Florida State University. Soon after making this major move, I faced another challenge when the Baptist campus minister and the state WMU youth worker asked me and other students to sponsor a meeting with students at the all-black Florida A&M University on the other side of Tallahassee. At that time in the 1940s, such an inter-racial event was unheard of in North Florida, and there was considerable opposition. But, we did it! At that time Florida was perhaps the most racially violent state in the South, with a great amount of lynching, bombings, and other KKK activ-

ity. Where I came from in the late 1940s, integration was definitely a "no-no."

I had a life-long dream of becoming a missionary, but it seemed an unobtainable goal. I took my college degree in Library Science and became a school librarian in Eustis, Florida and followed that by becoming high school librarian in Tampa. But I still felt called to be a missionary and enrolled at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, choosing that seminary over Southern because I had heard a missionary from there speak

I tried to enroll in the School of Theology, but at that time women could not enroll in theology.

and wanted to work with her during my "off hours."

I tried to enroll in the School of Theology, but at that time women could not enroll in theology. I was not a musician and did not want to enroll in church music, so religious education was the only option left for me, although I did not feel that was what I needed. I took all of my electives in theology, everything except homiletics which I really would have helped me a great deal since as it turned out I spent most of the rest of my life preaching.

Upon graduation I accepted a position with the Alabama WMU as their first Young Woman's Association director. After three years, I accepted the challenge to move to Florida as the Girl's Auxiliary director with responsibility for directing the summer camp programs. It was during that time I discovered I had a physical problem, hypertension, which would limit my dream of becoming a

missionary. So, for me, the Woman's **Missionary** Union (WMU) was my way to be involved in missions. I later became director of the Alabama WMU, and then director of the Florida WMU.

I did not receive much opposition during the 1950s and 1960s in all of those WMU positions because I was a woman doing women's work. My challenges related mostly to inter-racial relations. I led "mixed women's meetings" with WMU and black women's organizations, and faced gigantic opposition each time I participated in a mixed-race meeting.

As statewide director of Florida Baptist WMU, I first began to face challenges regarding women's rights and feminism. Young women were beginning to react against the limitations placed on them in Baptist life, especially in ministry. Ordination was denied to them. I had not really confronted that barrier before, but during a coffee break one day in the Florida Baptist Building in Jacksonville, several younger women discussed this with me. I said, "I am not too concerned about all of this. I do not need ordination since I have no fear of a man wanting to take my job!" One of the young women looked me in the eye and said, "But we are deeply concerned, Miss Weatherford, and you are our leader. You have to care!"

In 1974 I was elected to succeed Alma Hunt as executive director of the national WMU. When I was introduced to the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, the questions from the press were largely related to my stand on the issue of women in ministry. In an effort to emphasize that I was for all individuals, male and female, I blurted out, "Oh, I'm not a feminist; I'm a humanist!"

Later, in a warm and friendly meeting with home missions personnel, someone again questioned

me about job security for women in church-related and missions jobs. As in any Baptist gathering in those days, the audience was mostly men, so I replied "I'm not worried about my job as WMU director. No man wants my job!" The audience laughed and applauded, but that answer was not satisfactory and would not satisfy opponents of women's ministry for long.

Not long after becoming head of WMU, I was invited to speak in South Carolina to an interdenominational conference on the role of women in the church. At that time a book by Marabel Morgan, *The Total Woman*, was very popular and much discussed. Morgan's book was evangelical Christians' response to women's liberation. Morgan encouraged women to surrender to, worship, and revere their husbands, and among other things, to wrap their naked bodies in saran-wrap and greet their husbands that way at the door when they returned home from work. During my speech I made a brief but disparaging comment about the book. A few days later I received a call from a friend of mine at the news organization, Baptist Press, and was asked, "Carolyn, did you really say that?" My response was, "Oh yes! But let me tell you about all the other things I said. I made a really good speech!" But he replied, "But Carolyn, that is not newsworthy....this is!" So the article was published in all the state Baptist papers, "WMU Leader Smacks *Total Woman*."

The negative responses really hurt. I had never been the subject of such a barrage of anger. I sought counsel from my pastor, but what I learned was that I would be criticized if I continued to speak boldly. And I knew that I would continue to speak boldly. I would continue to be a target. As national WMU director, I was a member of the Inter-Agency Council of the SBC which consisted of the chief executive of each SBC institution. Of course, I was the only woman in the group. I loved being with the men in planning sessions

and visioning conversations. In 1978 that group decided to sponsor a "Consultation on Women in Church-Related Vocations." I recommended the event be called a "Consultation on Women in Ministry," but only one or two of the men agreed, and we were outvoted. But the event turned out to be a great success, with the staff of WMU taking major responsibilities.

In 1982, the year of the 75th anniversary of the WMU Training School

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at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, two of the speakers were Anne Davis and Sarah Frances Anders. Davis was a professor of social work at the school, which had become known as the Carver School of Missions and Social Work. Anders was a professor of a Baptist college, Louisiana College, and had just completed research on Southern Baptist women in ministry. During that meeting, it was evident that something needed to be done to

*Unmarried women leaders of
WMU were falsely labeled as
lesbians.*

provide support for women. Several women gave their testimonies and inspired the people in attendance. The next year a group of women met in Louisville to discuss what kind of organization needed to be created, and the result was the birth of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry. "Southern" was removed from the name in 1993, and the organization became Baptist Women in Ministry, or BWIM.

Another important development for women in Baptist life occurred when

the officers of the Baptist Medical/Dental Fellowship asked WMU to set up an organization for nurses.

But throughout the 1980s the role of women became more and more contentious in the SBC. Resolutions on the role of women became a regular component at the annual meeting of the SBC, and criticism of vocal women more strident. Unmarried women leaders of WMU were falsely labeled as lesbians. On two occasions, I was contacted by wives of big church pastors who later became presidents of the SBC. The first call came following the *Total Woman* speech. The wife told me, "I have no problem bowing to my husband. I've loved him since high school and I have no problem being submissive to him." I responded, "But I have no husband. Must I be submissive to yours?"

The second pastor's wife visited me at the WMU office in Birmingham, Alabama and offered to host a meeting of other pastors' wives during which they could personally discuss my stance on women with me. I assured her that I would be happy to host such a meeting in the WMU building so that the pastors' wives could see what WMU was all about. That meeting never happened. But during that conversation the wife told me that during Bible study she had come to realize that it was alright for me to head the WMU, since I did not have a husband. The pastor's wife said that scripturally she herself could not be in such a job because it would place her in a position higher than her husband's.

I was a frequent guest in church pulpits throughout my 22 years as WMU executive, first in Florida for seven years and then in the national post for 15. The church bulletin or order of worship often listed me as "speaker," sometimes my topic would be stated as "message," but seldom was I referred to as "preacher" or my presentation as "sermon." My motto became, "Call it anything you want to; just let me do it!"

I often encountered opposition and criticism. On one such occasion, I

was approached by a young man after I had preached in a church service. With his Bible open he stated his objection to me being in the pulpit, “usurping the place of the pastor.” I just kindly assured him that I had been invited by the pastor and was not taking his place.

I was once the keynote speaker at a Baptist state evangelism meeting. The presiding pastor introduced me to the crowd that included many women by saying, “Brethren, my Bible says ‘Let the women keep silent in church. If they have questions, let them ask their husbands.’ Our next speaker is Carolyn Weatherford.” I stood and went to the podium, looked at him and said, “Brother, my Bible says the same thing, but I don’t have a husband!” The congregation laughed and applauded, and I preached!

On another occasion at a Baptist state convention where I was the final speaker, the state executive whispered to me, “Carolyn, I hate to tell you this, but a lot of folks don’t like it that I’ve invited you to speak to the Convention.” I assured him that I understood. The speaker/preacher before me read from Matthew 28:1, “*After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*” His entire message focused on

“those foolish women” who only went to look at the tomb. When my time came I referred to the rest of the chapter and told how Jesus spoke first to the women, that they were among the first witnesses to the Resurrection and were alone among the followers of Jesus at the tomb early that morning.

It is difficult to say which actions I took in Southern Baptist life brought

“But we are deeply concerned, Miss Weatherford, and you are our leader. You have to care!”

I heard lots of women preaching, everywhere except in Southern Baptist churches in America.

the greatest negative response. Perhaps it was when the Pope visited the United States and I, along with one other SBC leader as well as many

other leaders of various denominations, was invited to meet with him in South Carolina. I accepted the invitation while the other Southern Baptist leader who was invited was forbidden by his board to accept the invitation. Among the letters written and public statements made against me was one from a pastor who said, “What does she think she can do, convert him? There are a lot of men who could do a better job of that.”

Ironically, I discovered that women throughout the world were performing pastoral duties of preaching, baptizing, and otherwise leading churches. I discovered both women missionaries and national Christian women serving in my travels to visit missionaries throughout America and in almost 100 countries. I heard lots of women preaching, everywhere except in Southern Baptist churches in America.

In 1989, I received invitations from two very important men in my life. The first was from Joe Crumpler who asked me to be his wife. The second was from Daniel Vestal who asked me to run for the position of First Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention. I said “yes” to both invitations, and my life took a new turn in both roles. But those stories will have to wait for another telling. ■

Ethics Bytes:

“We ought to say to these children, ‘Welcome to America, you’re going to go to school and get a job and become Americans! We have 3,141 counties in this country. That would be 20 (children) per county. The idea that we can’t assimilate these 8-year-old ‘criminals’ with their teddy bears is preposterous.”

Fox News Contributor, George Will, on Fox News Sunday.

Apocalyptic sex: Lest we forget:

By Bill Leonard

“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they stitched fig-leaves together and made themselves loincloths” (Gen. 3:7).

In the beginning: sex. These days we might remember that when so many religio-ethical-theological-judicial debates seem focused thereon. The Hobby Lobby and the same-sex marriage folks didn't introduce the controversy. Christian history suggests that, try as it might, the Church can't resolve the flesh/spirit dilemma, past or present.

If I knew enough about Scripture or sex, I might offer a course in Bible Earthiness, just to flesh out (forgive me) the way the writers approached sexual implications/complications from the start. The briefest survey illustrates:

“At my time of life I am past bearing children, and my husband is old,” says post-menopausal Sarah, laughing her head off at pre-Viagra Abraham when a “stranger” predicts her pending pregnancy (Gen. 18:12).

- “When morning came, it was Leah!” And Jacob learned that even after seven years of premarital labor, you still can't trust your father-in-law (Gen. 29:25).

- “It is better to marry than to burn” (1 Cor. 7:9), St. Paul wrote, touting his own celibate prowess, reluctantly acceding to the smoldering saints around him.

- “In the kingdom of heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage” (Lk. 20:35), Jesus told the religious leaders taunting him about the apocalyptic status of the woman who married seven brothers, all of whom died. (Why they kept marrying her after the third brother croaked still mystifies me.)

Jesus' effort to clarify marriage and the kingdom intensified Christians' speculation on faith and sex as evi-

dent in two indigenous American movements, the Shaker and Oneida communities. Both offered new revelations regarding Christ's return, post-conversion holiness, male/female egalitarianism and the community of goods (Acts 2:44). Anticipating American exceptionalism, they insisted that the U.S. was the apocalyptic epicenter, an impending spiritual realm with biological implications informed by multiple miscarriages borne by their early female-founders.

Gospel perfectionism convinced Noyes that while Jesus said there was no marriage in the kingdom, he did not say that there was no sex.

Their approaches to such apocalyptic sexuality, however, were radically dissimilar.

The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing (Shakers) arose from the supernatural revelations of Englishwoman Ann Lee to a small band of “Shaking Quakers” united around her belief — after multiple miscarriages — that sexual intercourse triggered the fall of Adam and Eve, the source of original sin. Lee led the group to New York in 1774 and by 1820 Shaker communities spread from Maine to Kentucky.

Shakers proclaimed that God's nature encompassed both maleness and femaleness, traits revealed first in Jesus and a “second appearing” in “Mother Ann.” Their communities were thus the avant garde of the kingdom, anticipating humanity's eschatological future. Membership required confession of sin to male and female elders, renunciation of private

property and acceptance of “the cross” of celibacy. (No “marrying” in the kingdom.) Ecstatic worship produced continuing revelations from God, angels and spirits of the departed (spiritualism).

With celibacy as norm, Shaker devotees came from revival converts, sheltered slaves, abused women and orphaned children, some of whom joined the order. Ultimately, nature took its course and membership declined. In 1974 I spent a day with the three remaining Shaker women at Canterbury, N.H. They assured me that the kingdom was still at hand even if the Shakers themselves disappeared.

Converted in the Second Great Awakening, John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Oneida community, became convinced Jesus had returned in A.D. 70, empowering the truly sanctified to live in this world without sin. Noyes claimed that the kingdom, long unheeded, was established by his communitarian movement in 1847 at Putney, Vt.

Gospel perfectionism convinced Noyes that while Jesus said there was no marriage in the kingdom, he did not say that there was no sex. Noyes' doctrine of “complex marriage” rejected “exclusive love” of traditional marriage for the freedom of kingdom citizens to engage in sexual relations with other sanctified members. Noyes' spouse, Harriet, sustained numerous miscarriages, a reality that led him to promote “male continence,” man-accountable birth control that enabled women to enjoy sex without fear of unwanted pregnancy. Childbearing required communal approval, with childrearing facilitated by the most nurturing members.

Forced out of Putney because of these controversial practices, the group moved to Oneida, N.Y., gaining economic security through their

metallurgy, particularly manufacturing animal traps. Although sexual encounters were regulated by community policy, Noyes was ultimately charged with varying sexual improprieties, forcing exile to Canada. The members abandoned perfectionist practices and incorporated as Oneida Community, Ltd., in 1879, known today for its stainless dinnerware. Noyes summed up his eschatology and sexuality in the classic line: "At the marriage supper of the Lamb, no

dish is exclusive."

Are the Shakers and Oneidaites bizarre exceptions or intriguing illustrations of the inescapable tensions between flesh and spirit, justification and sanctification, love and desire in the world, the church, and perhaps even the kingdom of God? Amid our own fumbling and fussing over sex and gospel we'd do well to admit that others got there before us — even blessed St. Augustine, whose pre-conversion, post-pubescent, fourth-

century confession captured the challenge then and now: "Lord, give me chastity, but not yet." World without end. Amen. ■

Bill Leonard is James and Marilyn Dunn Professor of Church History and Baptist Studies at the School of Divinity, Wake Forest University. His "Can I Get a Witness?" column appears biweekly at ABPnews.com. This article first appeared in that column on July 17, 2014 and is reprinted with permission.

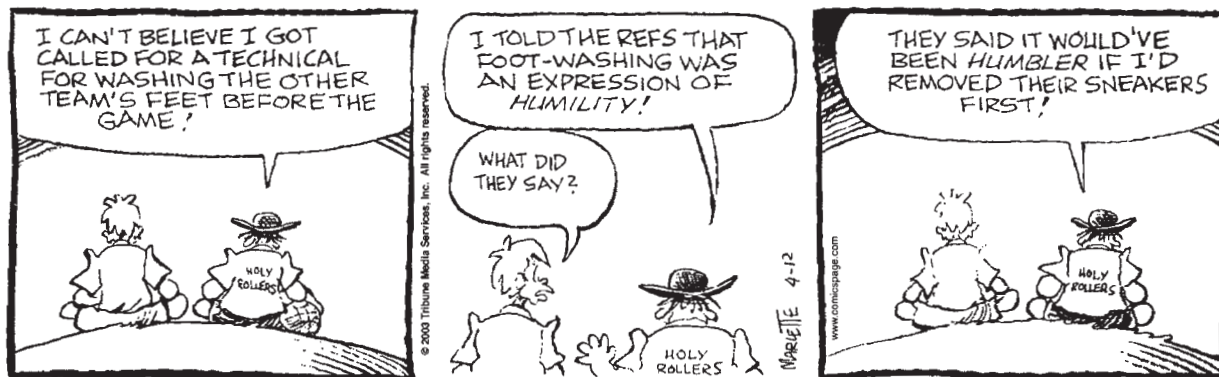
Ethics Bytes:

Who are the Yazidis?

40,000 Yazidis were trapped on a mountain top in Iraq after a militant army of Sunnis called ISIS, seeking to establish an Islamic State, destroyed their village. President Obama ordered bombs from planes and drones to stop the ISIS from further genocide. But who are the Yazidis?

Yazidis are a small monotheistic religious minority, living primarily in northern Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Iran, Armenia...right where much of the world's ethnic trouble is today. They speak Kurdish but consider themselves separate from Kurds ethnically. Their religion is considered pre-Islamic and contains parts of Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. They reject the idea of sin, the devil, and hell but worship one God and honor seven angels. Many Muslims consider them devil-worshippers and Yazidis have been targets of persecution throughout history, and now, along with Christians.

Source: Joshua Berlinger, CNN, 8/8/14



Sexuality, Health, Faith and Healing

By Devon Dick

Recently, the Ministry of Education in my home country, Jamaica, published *The National Policy Reintegration of School-Aged Mothers into the Formal School System* which mandated that after pregnancy school girls should be re-integrated into the public school system. Pregnancy remains the primary cause for the drop-out rate of female students. Some estimates claim that 84% of teen mothers do not return to school to complete their education. Therefore, this policy framework calls for interagency involvement to ensure the reintegration of teenage mothers to complete their secondary school education.

This directive to re-integrate teenage mothers into the school system is irrespective of how the girls used their sexuality to lead to pregnancy. The pregnancy might have been the result of sexual experimentation, it might be due to esteem problems and trying to find and experience love, it might be a result of being sexually explicit and illicit behaviour. It might be a result of using sexual enhancers and energy drinks such as P---y Drink, which remove all sexual inhibitions without a companion sexual enjoyment or fulfilment. The *Gleaner* newspaper reported Viagra parties for teenage boys and it is possible that a teenage girl attended one and a pregnancy resulted. The pregnancy might be a result of sexual deviancy-seduction, incest, rape-but the call is for re-integration of school aged mothers into the public educational system. We do not know and seem not to care.

I would like to use this recent decree from the Ministry of Education that school aged mothers should be reintegrated into the public educational system as a case study and model for my discussion of sexuality, health, faith and healing because reintegration is one facet of healing, and combining

the four elements is worth reflection.

Healing is firmly related to God's will and purpose. Jesus the Messiah offers healing which includes and involves the physical cure of individuals afflicted by disease, disablement and mental disorder. However, in the ministry of Jesus, healing was clearly more all-embracing in effect and reality. While the understanding of healing as physical cure must be retained and embraced, it would be very much less than what it ought to be if this is how it is seen and no more. Christians believe that the gift of medicine is God's provision and a form of healing. However, healing has other dimensions which are deeper and wider than physical cure. This has been the witness of Jesus, the greatest of all healers.

From Jesus we learn that healing has to do with wholeness. This wholeness is absolutely comprehensive. Persons went to Jesus or were taken to Jesus for healing of a physical nature but heard that their sins were forgiven. Physical wellness or restoration was not the exclusive thing that the healing offered. In Mark. 2:5 we see *When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

The forgiveness of sins is a dimension of human wellness. Theologian and psychiatrist, Tony Allen, states that forgiveness heals the spirit which is demonstrated by healing of psychosomatic, stress related, lifestyle disorders. In John 5:14, we see *Afterward Jesus findeth him (invalid and impotent man of Bethsaida) in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Healing is more than physical cure. It is also wholeness- spiritual well-being.

When a person has been healed and is assured that he or she has been made well or whole means that he/she

has been saved. This salvation goes beyond physical healing – Matthew 9:20- 22 states,

And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.

Salvation is a sign that the powers of domination no longer have the capacity to hold people bound and have things their own way.

Luke 17: 12-14 states,

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

Jesus sent the ten lepers to go and show themselves to the religious authorities. This was for their reintegration into society from which they were alienated, their own sense of belonging and assurance that healing meant more than leprosy gone. Healing has socio-religious implications for the sufferer as well as the whole community.

Gillian Paterson, theologian, said if individual sickness is seen as the product of a sick or sinful environment, then the primary locus of healing must lie in the factors that prevent human beings from living 'life in its fulness'. Those factors may be poverty, or oppression, or fear, or homelessness. They may be loneliness, social rejection or lack of love Gillian Paterson. Healing confronts social ills.

Healing involves restoration, wellness of the whole being, reconciliation

with God, self, others and the whole creation. Healing brings together the spiritual, moral, social, political, economic and environmental factors. Burchell Taylor, Biblical Scholar, said "Healing brings wholeness and soundness in terms of well-being even if there is impaired physical functioning still in evidence." Healing power exceeds the power of those who create disorder, dislocations and fractured and fragmented human relationships. Christ Jesus took upon himself the infirmities of human life and brought about salvation which is wholeness of life – healing. It represents liberation from sin. This is open to all who are willing to receive it by faith.

The people of faith, the members of faith community are called upon to experience healing as well be facilitators of healing. In all of this the presence and role of the Faith Community, that is the collective presence of disciples who ascribed to certain doctrines and lifestyle, are pivotal. The Faith Community is the community of the healed as well as a healing community.

The Faith Community's response is therefore to be a mirror of the wholeness of the healed life as well as ministering agent of it in the broken, wounded, hurting community. How will this work out in practice?

The quality of wholeness displayed by the Faith Community becomes the pattern of wholeness to which it witnesses in word and deed. Four years ago, Caster Semenya of South Africa, the world champion 800 metres runner, had her private and personal medical history public by the IAAF. She was the eighth gender case target of the IAAF in four years. Semenya is a hermaphrodite with internal testes and no ovary nor womb. [This month Germany recognized inter sex gender when a person's reproductive or sexual anatomy does not fall into the male or female biological categories.]

After Semenya won gold at the 2009 Berlin World Championships, she was humiliated and made butt of jokes. Garnet Roper of the Faith Community wrote that the IAAF was

"at best colossally insensitive and at worst outright racism." Semenya was treated as an outcast. She was alienated from the athletic circuit. Semenya should not have been prevented from running with other athletes. We should never allow any woman to suffer like this again.

The Faith Community becomes the place where barriers and divisions that exclude, marginalize, define persons in terms of inferior and superior. Therefore, we ought to affirm the humanity of persons rather than defining them based on their sexual practices or propensities. Therefore, it would not be 'gay', but rather persons who are in a homosexual relationship or persons who practise homosexuality. A person is more that what he or she does sexually. Everybody is somebody, first and foremost. The commitment is to take blessings into the world, embodied and expressed as members of the healed and healing community. The people of Faith must be committed to serve for the benefit of all.

Health is more than physical and mental well-being. It has also to do with how we deal with the environment. The World Health Organization's definition of health is: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

Wholeness and health are inter-related. Allen argues that there are three dimensions to health namely the physical which deals with the person as matter or as a biological aspect, the mental or psychological dimension which deals with the person as a thinking and feeling being and finally there is the spiritual which gives the person meaning and purpose and addresses the ultimate questions of life-who am I and how do I get here and what am I doing here.

Sexuality describes the whole way a person goes about expressing himself or herself as a sexual being. Sexuality is not just about SEX, although people often define sexuality in terms of genitals, what we do with them, and

who we do it with.

The Church has had an uncomfortable relationship with sex. According to dub poet Mutabaruka, the Church believed that sex was evil so they devised the story about Virgin Birth. Jerome (347-420), early church Father, saw women as the gateway to the Devil, the way to evil and hence clergy did not marry and the ascetic life was favoured. Then in the Middle Ages (5th to 15th century) the attitude toward sex in marriage was restraint. Messer said Christians would not have sex on Thursday as a mark of respect that the first Lord's Supper was held on a Thursday, Christians could not have sex on a Friday because Jesus was crucified on a Friday, No sex on Saturday out of respect for Mary who was mourning on Saturday, no sex on Sunday because Jesus was raised on a Sunday and none on Monday out of respect of persons who are poor. Hence the term "Thank God it is Tuesday". How things have changed with a *Flair Magazine* stating that "based on a survey, pastors make the best lovers in the sack". The day that story came out there was a cricket match at Sabina Park. So Rev. Karl Johnson, General Secretary of Jamaica Baptist Union, asked a lady he did not know who was sitting beside us what she thought of the *Flair* article which said pastors scored high as best in bed. The quick retort from this lady was pastors are the best at sex because they get so much practice with the church sisters. Later we found out that her father was a pastor. Obviously, the attitude toward sex by the clergy has changed over the years.

Elaine Storkey, philosopher, sociologist and theologian, argues that the obsession with sex is part of a bigger search "for personal identity, meaning and spiritual integration...Sexuality is a creature of God. Sex is not God . . . Sex, then, is something which God has breathed into creation; something God has placed close to our identity as humans". It does not mean we are not human if we do not have sex. Sexuality is . . .The total of

who you are, what you feel, and how you respond. Sexuality is expressed in the way you speak, smile, stand, sit, snicker, sob, dress, dance, etc . . .

Storkley claims that sexuality is about us as sexual beings in all our relationships that make us human. We express our sexuality in friendships, marriage, parenting, neighbourhood and work relationships. There are boundaries and different ways to express that sexuality depending on who and the context. We say yes to hugs, warmth, and closeness with family, friends, neighbours and co-workers but no to incest in family or sexual harassment at workplace, or sex with neighbour's wife.

After sexual expressions have been corrupted and sexual exploitation there needs to be forgiveness, salvation and wholeness and healing.

Men, generally, are treated differently after committing offences against sexual norms and experience healing quicker and reintegration into society perhaps because it is felt that men cannot help themselves. Forty-four year old Mayor of Toronto, Rob Ford, who admitted to buying and using cocaine in the last two years, said crudely that he enjoyed enough oral sex at home with wife, Renata, so that consorting with prostitutes was not a temptation for him. Police documents quoted Ford's associates as saying that the mayor consorted with a woman suspected of being a prostitute and made a sexual proposition to a female staff member. A couple days ago, Silvio Berlusconi, Italian Prime Minister, was found guilty of having sexual relations with an underage prostitute. This and other sexual allegations has not affected his political power or economic influence in Italy.

Similarly, American President Bill Clinton was impeached subsequent to having oral sex with Monica Lewinsky. Lewinsky engaged in oral sex with Clinton several times in 1997. Clinton is still seen as an outstanding person and is not an outcast

of society. US President Thomas Jefferson fathered children with his enslaved lady Sally Hemings and he is revered in US history.

However, it is alleged that Winnie Mandela committed sexual indiscretions while Nelson was in prison and she is generally treated as an outcast. Olivia Pope character in "Scandal," the hit TV show, is about a powerful political operative of African descent in a relationship with a Caucasian president. She loses her powerful job while the president is in place. Men after sexual indiscretions are integrated in society fully while women are usually not so well treated by society.

School-aged mothers not only should experience healing through reintegration into the school system but during pregnancy should be allowed to continue their education in the public school system just like the male student who got her pregnant. They should be accepted, affirmed and appreciated in the community. They should be allowed to experience forgiveness, salvation and physical cure. They should be helped to be in harmony with the natural environment. This healing means that the offspring will be equal to all members of the community of faith and humanity.

Part of the reintegration of teen mothers in the education system is to inform them that sexual instincts are not wrong in and of itself. Sex urge is one of the strongest of all desires of the human body and has to be controlled based on their values and channeled towards healthy purposes. Part of the healing of our young mothers is for them to realize that sexual instincts are God-given for their good, for the continuance of human race, giving and receiving love, affirmation and appreciation. An important lesson for school aged mothers is that sex has been given in order that they could procreate safely, express intimacy, experience excitement and engage in mutual pleasure.

Sex should be mutual, respectful, honouring and loving.

There are 17 agencies in Jamaica cooperating on the reintegration of School-Aged Mothers into the Formal School System, but unfortunately the Church and Medical Council are absent from this formal discussion. May I encourage both the Church and Medical Council to get involved in the reintegration of School-Aged Mothers into the Formal School System as part of the healing and health of the sexuality of school aged mothers. ■

Devon Dick is a Jamaican pastor, evangelist, writer, and journalist. This essay was adapted from a lecture given at the 40th Annual Dr. Ena Thomas Memorial Lecture and Symposium on November 24, 2013.

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Deafen the Silence: How Vocal Christian Opposition to Child Sexual Abuse Will Change the World

Robert J. Peters

Consider this scene: Religious leaders are in the courtroom to support a father accused of sexually abusing his 12-year-old daughter. When the girl sees her mother, siblings, and church leaders, all seated behind her father, she pulls on the prosecutor's arm and whispers, "Does this mean God is against me too?"

It is not uncommon for a defendant who is active and popular in a congregation to receive overwhelming support from religious people when accused of behavior which seems out of character. Typically, church members and leaders side with the defendant against the victim. Defendants and their family members, as well as defense attorneys, make every effort to exonerate the accused church leader and rally support, while victims are so traumatized that they avoid public discourse. This trend is especially sinister in light of the spiritual rhetoric abusers often use to manipulate children into victimization. For instance, Father Lawrence Murphy, who abused around 200 deaf or hearing-impaired young boys, told one victim that "God wanted him to teach the boy about sex but that he had to keep it quiet because it was under the sacrament of confession."

One survivor described similar abuse by a Baptist youth minister: "Eddie always said that God had chosen me for something special. I guess I really wanted to believe that. Doesn't every kid want to think they're special? Besides, who was I to question a man of God?"

Many church leaders believe that such misuse of religious authority in sexual predation are isolated instances, but in recent years the evidence has been developed to show that these tragedies are widespread. A study of 3,952 sex offenders found that 93%

described themselves as religious. Sex offenders involved with religious institutions "had more sexual offense convictions, more victims, and younger victims" than offenders from other settings. Clergy manipulation is spiritually damaging to victims, decreases church attendance and trust in God, and in many cases permanently harms people's relationship with Christ.

The fact that sexual abuse among Protestants and other non-Catholic congregations is endemic, is masked by denial, underreporting, misplaced loyalty to abusers, gross misuse of Scripture, and sometimes a callous disregard for the wellbeing of the victim in favor of protections for the abuser.

The Church's silence on the issue of child abuse is deafening. Even many who acknowledge child abuse as a significant problem do not comprehend its scope. In a CDC study of 17,337 adults, 27% of women and 16% of men report that they were sexually abused as children. In 2009, at least 1,676 children died from extreme abuse or neglect. "The average child molester victimizes between 50 and 150 children before he is ever arrested (and many more after he is arrested)." The Abel study of 561 confirmed sexual offenders revealed 195,000 victims; if the victims met together,

they would fill two and one-half Superdomes.

Child abuse affects everyone. It fuels suffering on a global scale. Abused persons have high rates of alcoholism and suicide. They are far more vulnerable to cross-border traffickers of children. The evidence is overwhelming. A Center for Disease Control study defined "adverse childhood experiences" (ACE) as childhood abuse, neglect, and exposure to other trauma. The study found that adults suffering one or more ACE were at a substantially higher risk for a variety of health problems, including illicit drug use, adolescent pregnancies, intimate partner violence, suicide attempts, and several others. ACE-related research has been duplicated "more than 25 times and with more than 450,000 patients," leading one scholar to remark, "It is perhaps the most well-documented fact in the history of medical science that childhood trauma dramatically increases your chance for just about anything."

These health and behavioral struggles are not without their costs. Healthcare spending in the United States exceeds \$2.6 trillion every year, and one study calculated the aggregate burden of crime as exceeding \$1 trillion annually. Ignoring the role of childhood trauma in these issues is dealing with "the smoke and... ignoring the underlying fire." According to former National Child Protection Training Center Director Victor Vieth, "Every single social ill would go down if child abuse would go down. Everything changes."

But alarming social costs aside, when the abuse occurs in religious settings, and the abuser is a religious leader, a representative of Jesus Christ, how much more tragic is the harm. The fact that sexual abuse

among Protestants and other non-Catholic congregations is endemic, is masked by denial, underreporting, misplaced loyalty to abusers, gross misuse of Scripture, and sometimes a callous disregard for the wellbeing of the victim in favor of protections for the abuser.

Imagine a different reality. What if Christian leaders immediately reported abuse to authorities, educated their congregations, and developed support systems for the survivors who undoubtedly sit in their pews?

Survivors of abuse are capable of incredible resilience, and the Church can and must be a part of develop-

ing that potential. In fact, a survey of childhood sexual abuse literature identified “being part of a religious group,” and the social support that this can provide, as developing the resilience and healing for the survivors. In church congregations, among friends and fellow believers, survivors can discuss problems and develop confiding relationships, thereby increasing resilience. Spirituality and “the ability to find emotional support outside the family” have been identified elsewhere as important factors in restoration.

In the face of tragedy crying out for love and support from the faith com-

munity, it is no accident that Christ’s two greatest commandments to the Church were to love God and love others. What if the prestige of individuals and institutions was laid at the foot of the cross, and Christian leaders manifested a love for God through a love for survivors?

When this happens, everything changes. May Aslan roar, and deafen the silence. ■

Robert Peters is a law clerk with the United States Attorney’s Office and a third year law student at Liberty University School of Law. He lives in Lynchburg, VA with his wife Kristin.

Looking Forward....

The Fall Issue of *Christian Ethics Today* will be a **special issue.**

The subject will be **“peace-making in global settings”** written from a variety of international perspectives by former students of **Glen Stassen.** Stassen passed away earlier this year. His influence has reached far and wide, and the essays which will be published are written as a tribute to his significant contribution to peacemaking through a long and distinguished career.

Look forward to these special articles written from the Mideast, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe.

“What Is Your Occupation?”

By Joe E. Trull

A pagan sailor’s question to the runaway prophet Jonah came when he was fleeing from the call of God (Jonah 1:8). The question brought him back to his mission and his ministry.

Two current trends in pastoral ministry seem to indicate modern-day pastors may need to hear this same question. One development is an increasing shortage of ministers. Every survey indicates the number retiring far exceeds the number entering the ministerial profession.

The second trend is the one I wish to address—the plethora of new titles that church pastors prefer to identify their role: Senior Minister, Chief Administrator, Executive Pastor, and even C.E.O. (Chief Executive Officer)—ad infinitum, ad nauseum! The two trends may be related.

Ministers and ministry have been my life. After three decades of pastoral ministry in churches ranging from small student pastorates to fast-growing suburban and large downtown congregations, I then taught hundreds of ministers for 15 years in an SBC seminary. (Also I have served as interim pastor in numerous churches).

One of my special interests is ministerial ethics. At teaching at the seminary, I developed a class (and a textbook) in which the role of the minister was explored and the writing of a Code of Ethics was a final task. I am convinced that a clear understand-

ing of the ministerial vocation and the ethical demands of ministry are absolutely essential. Otherwise the overseer of the congregation of Christ will lead his or her flock astray.

To current ministers who prefer titles that focus on rank, authority, and chain of command, I ask, “What is *your* occupation?” Or, what is *your* vocation? Exactly how do *you* interpret your call from God?

Is your calling to be the “Chief Executive Officer” (CEO) of the

How often Jesus had to remind his disciples that seeking places of preeminence had no place in the kingdom of God (Mt 20:20-27).

church? Or to be the “Senior Administrator?” Do you prefer the title, “Executive Pastor?” Why?

Now please, don’t argue that in the modern world, the church organization has to have structure. That has always been true. My question to ministers who desire a title that emphasizes their authority is this: Is your calling to be a servant or to be the ultimate authority in the church? Must you always have the last word?

I know, as one former student told

me, that it is so much easier to pastor a church that does not have business meetings, budget hearings, or a vote to call a minister. Yes, dictatorships are very efficient. But over time, people tire of being puppets! And, by the way, the priesthood of believers is still a biblical teaching.

Jesus’ call to discipleship is clear—it is exemplified in foot washing (John 13:5), self-denial, and cross bearing (Lk 9:23). How often Jesus had to remind his disciples that seeking places of preeminence had no place in the kingdom of God (Mt 20:20-27).

The apostle Paul echoes Jesus’ words. “We have this ministry . . . for we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus sake” (2 Cor 4:1, 5).

So my plea and my charge to fellow ministers is simple—stop your flight to Tarshish (Jonah 1:3). Forget about titles and authority that give you power, prestige, or preeminence. Remember that the only time Paul referred to himself as “chief” was when he called himself the “chief of sinners” (1 Tim 1:15). So are we all! ■

Joe Trull retired after 11 years as editor of Christian Ethics Today. He was also Professor of Christian Ethics at New Orleans Baptist Seminary and pastor of churches in Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia.

When Jesus disarmed Peter in the Garden, he disarmed all Christians. Tertullian (c. 160-225)

Oh God, Please Let My Team Win. Please. Amen.

By Joseph L. Price

More than half of Americans believe that divine forces play a role in the outcome of sporting events (according to a survey by the Public Religion Research Institute conducted prior to this year's Super Bowl).

American sports fans are not alone in seeking God's help. Shortly before the World Cup soccer competition began in Brazil, the Church of England issued a news release authorizing several prayers related to the games. For this year's World Cup, the Bishop of Leeds, the Right Reverend Nick Baines, who is described as a "die-hard Liverpool fan," revised the set of prayers ecclesiastically embraced four years earlier for the World Cup events in South Africa.

The first of Bishop of Leeds' prayers implore the Lord "who played the cosmos into being" to guard and guide the games' participants so that they might enjoy "an experience of common humanity" and "generous sportsmanship." One prayer requests support for the tournament's 32 nations—especially for Brazil as the host nation; and another, intended for use by Anglicans immune to World Cup fever, petitions the Lord for patience with those who are possessed with futbol passion.

Two other prayers manifest national partisanship, beseeching blessings on the British team. While most of the prayers are brief, the shortest is specific to English fans and players. The two-word prayer, "Oh God..." initially intended as a plea for England's advance, effectively served (with different intonation) as a lament following England's early exit from the competition.

In a manner akin to the Anglican news release, the Catholic News Agency reported on Pope Francis's World Cup message. In a brief address telecast throughout Brazil on the eve of the games, the Pope

While most of the prayers are brief, the shortest is specific to English fans and players. The two-word prayer, "Oh God..."

focused on the value of sports, especially their challenge to overcome individuality, work as a team, and promote peace based on the experience of camaraderie. The Pope concluded with a prayer asking that the games "take place with complete serenity and tranquility, always with mutual respect, solidarity and brotherhood among men and women who recognize themselves as members of the same family."

More spontaneous than either the Anglicans' crafted prayers or the

What kind of ecumenical dilemma might God face if Notre Dame and Baylor should meet in a championship game?

Pope's telecast message are prayerful gestures by players, and petitions by futbol's global fans. One American professor writing for The New Republic's World Cup blog reflected on his agnostic friends who implored God to support their favorite team, and he noted Neymar's prayerful display—crossing himself—moments before scoring Brazil's go-ahead goal on a penalty kick in the opening game. Identifying how prayer can even bring out the best in some fans, the blog also reported that one skeptical fan had gone to church specifically

to pray for the safety of referees in World Cup cities filled with passionate Brazilians.

Prayerful petitions are not limited to futbol. Organizations, churches, players, and fans offered public prayers for their teams during the NBA season, the Stanley Cup playoffs, and the NCAA World Series.

Whereas some of the Church of England's World Cup prayers exposed national pride, prayers can also betray sectarian partisanship. On the eve of the NBA playoffs, the New York Times featured a story about the Oklahoma City Thunder who preface all home games with an invocation, the only professional basketball team that maintains this practice. Seventy percent of Oklahoma residents, according to a Gallup Poll, identify themselves as Protestant Christians. Not surprisingly, although the team asks prayer leaders (including priests and rabbis) to deliver non-sectarian invocations, the prayers frequently resound with a Protestant tone.

Ministerial leaders, devout practitioners, and even agnostic fans often beseech God to intervene on behalf of their favorite teams, especially for championship events. During the Stanley Cup playoffs, the Catholic diocese in Montreal encouraged the faithful to support the Canadiens by lighting a virtual votive. And before the final game of the NCAA World Series, ESPN began its telecast with a shot of the Vanderbilt team huddled together with heads bowed. They then confidently took their places on the field, beating Virginia for the championship.

As a passionate sports fan, I have often wished that prayers for my favorite teams or players might influence their performance; yet I do not believe that the Lord of heaven and earth really cares about the outcome of games on the field. What kind of

ecumenical dilemma might God face if Notre Dame and Baylor should meet in a championship game?

Even so, it is possible that when participants experience the freedom and joy of genuine play in sports, their efforts can be understood as a kinesthetic form of prayer to the One who “played the cosmos into being.” ■

Joseph L. Price, (Ph.D. University of Chicago) is the Genevieve Shaul Connick Professor of Religious Studies at Whittier College. He also serves as the series editor for the “Sports and Religion Series” published by Mercer University Press. This article first appeared on July 17, 2014 at The Martin Marty Center for The Advanced Study of Religion and is reprinted with permission.

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Ethics Bytes:

NPR’s Fresh Air, host Terry Gross asked how Stephen Colbert explained complicated issues like God and hell to his own children.

“I think the answer, ‘God is love’ is pretty good for a child. Because children understand love ... My son asked me one day, ‘Dad, what’s hell?’ ... So, I said, ‘Well, if God is love, then hell is the absence of God’s love. And, can you imagine how great it is to be loved? Can you imagine how great it is to be loved fully? To be loved totally? To be loved, you know, beyond your ability to imagine? And imagine if you knew that was a possibility, and then that was taken from you, and you knew that you would never be loved. Well that’s hell—to be alone, and know what you’ve lost.’”

Source: www.relevantmagazine.com/culture/6-times-stephen-colbert-got-serious-about-faith#TvOfBDTmqK954Qge.99

Ferguson Letter from Black Clergy Becomes Interracial Call for Justice

by Adelle M. Banks

As the Rev. Barbara Williams-Skinner collected signatures for a statement by leaders of African-American church groups about the Ferguson, Missouri, police shooting of Michael Brown, she found more people wanted to join in.

The general secretary of the National Council of Churches wanted to add his name; an Asian-American evangelical leader, too.

What started out as a “Joint Statement of Heads of Historic African American Church Denominations” has become an interracial cry for justice.

It’s touching hearts of people who have sons and who know that their sons would not be treated this way,” said Williams-Skinner, co-chair of the National African-American Clergy Network, on Thursday. “They know it’s wrong. They know it’s wrong before God. And they are responding on a human level.”

The statement, also spearheaded by

the Rev. Otis Moss Jr. and the Rev. T. DeWitt Smith, veteran civil rights activists, calls on African-American churches to memorialize Michael Brown, the unarmed African-American teen who was shot and killed by a white police officer on August 9. It also urges contributions to a national fund to assist his family with pending legal expenses.

“In light of the long and bloody trail of lynchings, deaths, and killings of African American youth from Emmett Till, to Trayvon Martin, to Michael Brown, and scores of others throughout our nation, we call for action, justice, and the transformation of our society,” the letter reads.

The statement calls for greater voter participation and replacing elected officials with others who “represent the preservation of life in ethnic communities where a disproportionate amount of killings, unsubstantiated sentences, and jail time, are unwar-

ranted means for perpetuating racism and bias against ethnic minorities.”

Other faith groups have weighed in with statements, from the North American leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the World Council of Churches.

Thousands of people signed onto a statement from Sojourners, saying they stood with Brown’s family and friends. More than 300 leaders signed a Faith in Public Life open letter to the community of Ferguson, saying they were praying for the family of Brown as well as the police officer who ended his life and the armed officers who responded to the protesters: “We love you, mourn with you, and pray for you all.” ■

Adelle M. Banks writes for Religion News Service. This post appeared 8-22-2014 on God’s Politics, A Blog of Jim Wallis and Friends and is used with permission.

Ethics Bytes:

At the end of the day, the President mused, the biggest threat to America—the only force that can really weaken us—is us... we will never realize our full potential unless our two parties adopt the same outlook that we’re asking of Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds or Israelis and Palestinians: No victor, no vanquished and work together... “societies don’t work if political factions take maximalist positions. And the more diverse the country is, the less it can afford to take maximalist positions.”

Interview with President Obama by NYT columnist, Thomas Friedman, 8/8/14.

Euphemisms for Death

by Marion D. Aldridge

Last week I was speaking at a conference of Retirement Community Chaplains. My thesis was that *people who deal with the vicissitudes of life best tend to deal best with the reality of death*. There are seventy-year-old men and women who seem to be surprised when their ninety-year-old parent dies. Death happens. Living beings have a 100% mortality rate.

One of the sidebar conversations initiated by the chaplains concerned the euphemisms people use to distance themselves from the certainty of death. I think I would prefer to *kick the bucket* or *croak* rather than merely to *pass on* or *cross over*. My list is not exhaustive, but long enough to demonstrate our resistance to acknowledging that human life has a termination point. Interestingly, medical and religious people may be the worst at avoiding the obvious.

Asleep in Jesus
Breathed his/her last
Came to his end
Communing with the angels
Crossed over
Departed this life
Didn't make it
Entered eternal rest
Entered into his reward
Expired
God called him home
His hour had come
In Abraham's bosom
Laid to rest
Lost her life
Made her last curtain call
Met his Maker
Negative patient care outcome
No longer with us
Out of her misery
Passed
Passed away
Passed on
Resting in peace
Slipped away
Stopped breathing
Succumbed
Transitioned
Went to the Happy Hunting Grounds
With God now

[Editor's Note: Randall Lolley tells of a group of friends who discussed writing their own obituaries and shared their own self-written obits. Some had glowing language about their deaths for the headline, but one simply stated "John Doe....Dead"]

Marion D. Aldridge is a popular public speaker, workshop leader and an award-winning writer. His blog is found at <http://marionaldridge.wordpress.com>

“Of making many books there is no end. . .” Ecclesiastes 12:12 NRSV

Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter

by Randall Balmer (New York: Basic Books, 2014)

Reviewed by Darold Morgan

Published almost simultaneously with President Carter’s book, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power*, is an excellent new biography by Dartmouth Professor Randall Balmer, which brings a unique approach to Carter’s life and values. Not only is this biography exceptionally well-researched and written, it succeeds in the difficult assignment of writing about a person still very much alive and active.

The two books should be read one after the other. This will provide a solid adventure in reading and will give the reader a fuller and deeper understanding of Jimmy Carter and his continuing contributions both as a former president and as an individual with deep religious convictions and determination far beyond that of the average person in solving some of the problems of this confused and pluralistic world.

Balmer helps us to understand far more graphically the religious dynamics of the 1970s when Carter was president. This is the timeframe when American evangelicals moved into the political arena, sadly impacting in a negative way both the religious and political structures of America. There is the hint that this move may be a contributing factor in the gradual diminishing of American church life today. The author handles this area with objectivity and a keen analysis, resulting in some fresh material to consider about Carter’s political career and the directions he and Mrs. Carter have taken in the ensuing years.

Redeemer is perhaps a strange title, but the book brings us a

fresh perspective, warts and all, of Jimmy Carter. It is a brilliantly written account of a recent period of American life that needs understanding and correcting. This book gives us a fresh appreciation of a tough-minded, compassionate, and involved Baptist from Georgia.

A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power

by Jimmy Carter (New York: Simon &

Shuster, 2014)

Reviewed by Darold Morgan

Jimmy Carter, the nation’s 39th president and one of Baptists’ most articulate spokespersons, has done it again. He has written another book of exceptional value about some subjects deserving our attention and action. The reader is made to be distinctly uncomfortable by the verve, vitality, and brutal honesty of Mr. Carter. He takes us to the heart of one of the most important ethical dilemmas in the world—the mistreatment of women and girls.

That mistreatment, Mr. Carter demonstrates, is bred in and results from prejudice, discrimination, war, violence, distorted interpretations of religious texts, physical and mental abuse, poverty, and disease. Every ill confronting the world disproportionately hurts women and girls.

President Carter provides a fascinating, heart-breaking sequence of chapters which demonstrate beyond debate how serious and widespread the unethical treatment of women is. Sadly, many will disagree with some of his positions. But when one completes reading the book, the inescapable truth is that Mr. Carter and his wife, Rosalyn, have made significant contributions to alleviating this evil

as they have toured the globe and left in their wake remarkable and deep accomplishments. Through the Carter Center in Atlanta, they can point to their efforts and contributions with real people.

Carter adroitly weaves vignettes from his life and experiences which demonstrate his values-based understanding of women’s mistreatment. He tells stories from his childhood, his time at the Naval Academy and on the peanut farm as well as in local, state and national political arenas. Those values are based in his basic biblical and Baptist roots. But he was also deeply supportive of the United Nations’ “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” which was ratified in 1948. That declaration advocates in part, “The equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family (i.e. the equal rights of men and women . . . without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion.”)

Mr. Carter shows his strong biblical knowledge about Jesus, referring to him as “...the great liberator of women in a society where they had been considered throughout biblical history as inferior.” (p. 22) Again, Carter reflects wisely and knowingly on Islam’s Koran regarding the sensitive subject. He connects both Christianity and Islam to the long list of problems facing women and girls today: world-wide violence and abuse, sexual assault and rape, genocide, abortion, slavery and prostitution, spousal abuse, child marriage and dowry deaths, maternal health related to child birth.

Carter focuses attention on the distressing use of several verses in the Bible which are used to justify some of these indefensible abuses. Catholic, evangelical fundamentalists, Islamic militants and Hindu extremists all

come to Carter's attention in his telling of how their interpretations of holy texts lead to behaviors which are exactly opposite to the declaration of the United Nations. This is not pleasant reading, but Carter gives us essential perspective on the immensities and complexities of these problems in cultural and religious contexts.

Two chapters are alone worth the price of the book. One is Chapter Nine, "Learning from Human Rights

Heroes." What an amazing litany of lessons the Carters have gleaned from their firsthand encounters with major world figures who have crossed their paths during and after their White House years.

Second, the final chapter, "The Road to Progress," gives us the promise of encouragement. All across the globe there are positive developments regarding the rights of women and men. The progress is slow, but it is in

the air. The gap between the sexes is seen nowhere more distinctly than in wage disparities, says Carter.

But even with tragedies reported daily, Carter sees light at the end of the tunnel of darkness and evil, coming slowly and inexorably. Simply stated, this is a book that is essential reading for concerned Christians, and for Islamists and secularists and all others, young and old, male and female.

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)



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 four 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."

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