

Tuesday, May 2, 2017

## **LABOR LAWS FROM THE BIBLE**

### Selected Biblical Labor Laws

1Tim 5:18 "The laborer deserves his wages."

James 5:1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; 4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

Lev 19:13 "Do not defraud or rob your neighbor. "Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker..

Deut 24:14 Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. 15 Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

Deut 25:4 Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain. cf 1 Cor.9:9

Jer 22:13 "Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.

Mal 3:5 "So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty.SUMMARY of all Biblical Labor Laws

Workers must be treated well and fairly ...and must be paid fully and promptly [i.e.- as per contract]

Workers must fulfill employers expectations

No harsh or unsafe working condition; rest periods: one day a week and holidays

Workers may decide to change employers

All commands re personal morality apply

Productivity is expected--profit-making is expected, BUT

Not at expense of the workers- no exploitation

No jeopardizing resources

Private property rights/ownership must be honored

No peonage or slavery

No usury

Profits and products must be made available to the destitute

The Government and Courts are to enforce these Laws: Justice

[Note: there is nothing here about Government Welfare or State Socialism]

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:10

## **THE LIMITS AND PROPER FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT**

The State should have minimal but essential involvement in our marriages, families, education, churches and commerce and culture. The Biblical basis for this is "Sphere Sovereignty".

The following material outlines the basic God-given structures, or systems of influence, of Society. They are grounded in the creational ordinances found in the Book of Genesis. This is an important theoretical and idealistic concept basic to Neo-Calvinism. Each of these Spheres has specific functions and norms or boundaries. They are permanent forms even though the actual members of them at any specific time and place may vary.

### Marriage and Family

Individual men and women are meant to live together as husband and wife, as "one flesh", i.e.- in a committed, covenant relationship. Ideally, they are to be "fruitful", i.e.- have children (if possible) and live together as an inter-generational family, i.e.- as the basic "Covenant Community". It is absolutely integral to God's Plan for Society. When a son marries, he and his wife begin another family, but these new family units together are intended to be an extended part of the original family, always responsible for each other. That includes the responsibilities of worship, work and providing an education for the children and practical welfare for members of the Family going through tough times.

In practice, the family that most closely follows this Biblical Model is the rural farm family. The challenge now, of course, is how to follow this Model in our modern urban, non-agricultural Society. It can be done, as demonstrated in cities with ethnic enclaves where "the old ways" are still practiced.

#### Church

Ideally, Christian Families in a local area are to assemble, worship and share their lives with other Families (and minister to even others) as a wider Community of Faith (aka "a church").

#### Civic Associations

The primary function of the basic Sphere of Marriage and Family is to act as God's agent in His world, obeying God's command to our original Parents to reproduce and go forth to care for the Natural Environment (Creation) and continue God's work of cultivating it for the common good of all. This is called the Cultural Mandate, another important neo-Calvinist concept. To this end, other Spheres will naturally arise. To cultivate is to develop culture. As culture and the necessary organization and technology that it requires develops, the result is a Civilization. There will be voluntary Associations for research & development, work, production and distribution of goods and services (Business and Commerce). Associations will also arise for Education, Communication, the Arts and Recreation. These are all extensions of the Creational Ordinances. None of these Spheres are the responsibility of Civil Government nor are they autonomous. They must cooperate with each other and function according to the laws of God, accountable to Him. The essential preface to this entire discussion is knowledge of the Torah. The Law of God is the absolute Foundation upon which to build social policy and the benchmark or yard stick by which to measure all the options that necessarily arise on these Topics.

Civil Government is also a Creational ordinance.

Each Creational social system has its own authority known as "Sphere Sovereignty", but none of them are absolute or autonomous. Marriage-Family (including Education), Church and Community Civic Associations (including Commerce) are meant to cooperate but must not interfere with each other's responsibilities.

Because all the individuals involved in the Spheres are sinners, there will be injustice. As systems, the Spheres will malfunction or fail in their respective responsibilities. The main function of Civil Government is to respect the Sphere Sovereignty, but control or stop transgressions within or between Spheres, wherever they may occur under established Law and Constitutional Order. In this regard Civil Government is good and to be supported. However, Civil Government is not to usurp or curtail the responsibilities of the other Spheres. It has a tendency to do exactly that and so it too must be restrained. The concern is not with the size of Government, but with Civil Government becoming abusive with its authority or becoming intrusive in the affairs of the Spheres.

An additional related concept applies here: "Subsidiarity". Government should not do for people what they can or ought to do for themselves. And larger organizations must not replace or override what can be done by smaller or subsidiary organizations. Local is best. Less is more.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:08

Friday, October 21. 2016

## **The End of white Protestant America**

New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice July 12, 2016

"Robert P. Jones, CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), challenges us to grasp the profound political and cultural consequences of a new reality that America is no longer a majority white Christian nation.

For most of our nation's history, White Christian America (WCA) the cultural and political edifice built primarily by white Protestant Christians set the tone for our national policy and shaped American ideals. But especially since the 1990s, WCA has steadily lost influence, following declines within both its mainline and evangelical branches. Today, America is no longer demographically or culturally a majority white Christian nation.

Drawing on more than four decades of polling data, *The End of White Christian America* explains and analyzes the waning vitality of WCA. Jones argues that the visceral nature of today's most heated issues the vociferous arguments around same-sex marriage and religious liberty, the rise of the Tea Party following the election of our first black president, and stark disagreements between black and white Americans over the fairness of the criminal justice system can only be understood against the backdrop of white Christians anxieties as America's racial and religious topography shifts around them.

In 2016 and beyond, the descendants of WCA will lack the political power they once had to set the terms of the nation's debate over values and morals and to determine election outcomes. Looking ahead, Jones forecasts the ways that they might adjust to find their place in the new America and the consequences for us all if they don't."

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:28

Friday, July 29. 2016

## **WHO ARE THE EVANGELICALS FOR TRUMP?**

"Much has changed since the 1700s, and the change seems to have accelerated since the 1980s. I would point to three key factors in the corruption of the term 'evangelical.'"

READ THE REST OF THIS INSIGHTFUL ARTICLE HERE-

<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/evangelical-history/2016/07/15/how-politics-and-polls-killed-the-term-evangelical/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:56

## **ASIAN IMMIGRANTS**

Racial and ethnic minorities have a steep uphill battle in America &#151;this the conclusion of many studies and polls. Well, most minorities. It appears that Asian Americans, both men and women, outpace all other ethnic and racial groups&#151; including whites &#151;in terms of income and education.

"A century ago, most Asian Americans were low-skilled, low-wage laborers crowded into ethnic enclaves and targets of official discrimination. Today, they are the highest-income, best-educated and fastest-growing racial group in the United States. And they are the most likely of any major racial or ethnic group in America to live in mixed neighborhoods and to marry across racial lines".

So says a Pew Research Center study from three years ago I just ran across. This despite vicious prejudice and laws against them (from the Chinese Exclusionary Act of 1875 to Japanese internment camps of the 1940s, among others). According to a previous Pew study, their success seems to have something to do with their emphasis on education, stable family life, and strong work ethic. [emphasis added]

Source: The Galli Report CT 7-29-16

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:38

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

### **IMPORTANT BUT OVERLOOKED FACTORS IN THE "RACE DEBATE"**

Much of the debate over "Racism in America" is influenced by two factors often overlooked or ignored:

1. The use of stories and personal or hearsay/third party experiences versus a data and factual evidentiary approach to an event or subject. For all the value in "having a conversation", people on each of these sides of the discussion talk pass each other.
2. In my opinion, "Race", ie- ethnicity or "color" is not the major root of the divide. The debate should really be about social and economic status and the reasons for that.
3. A third major factor is the changing demographics in this Country which are very well explained in this article- [http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/the-eclipse-of-white-christian-america/490724/?utm\\_source=nl-atlant](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/the-eclipse-of-white-christian-america/490724/?utm_source=nl-atlant) ic-daily-071216

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:22

Sunday, July 3, 2016

## **DEFINING DISCRIMINATION**

In other posts tried to explain the sometimes necessity for "rational discrimination" based on behavior (empirical evidence) of the group in question. My concern here is the application of rational discrimination to area such employment or college admissions. When must people, any people, be treated as a group and when must they be treated as individuals?

As a general principle (James 3:9-10), Scripture teaches us to accept and respect and treat fairly each person as a person, when it is at all possible to do so. [There are times when transactions are impersonal or when crowds are involved.] Gender, age and "race" are included in who a person is. However, behavior of the group to which a person belongs is another matter. It is not essential to a being a person.

Discrimination, in the sense of rejecting or ostracizing any person solely on the basis of something essential to that person being a person, is unscriptural: to refuse to hire or promote someone because they are White males or Asian women is wrong.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:32

## **DISCRIMINATION**

Discrimination based on Group Behavior is another matter. Many times we are treated according to how the group we are in is treated. If the group is known for making trouble and, therefore, are not welcome in a restaurant, we must distance ourselves from that group. If we do not, we will be discriminated against, not for who we are as a person, but because of the behavior of the group. If there is empirical evidence that White males, as a group, have been oppressive to women, it would be reasonable if a White male applicant for a job in a woman-led business with female employees were to be discriminated against and preference were given to others, because of his membership in a group. He obviously could feel that this was very unfair to him. He wants to be considered on his own merits alone. It would be absolutely wrong for the female management to reject him because of his gender and "race". Doubly wrong, if he personally was not guilty of oppressing women.

If a particular African-American were rejected for a mortgage because, statistically, African-Americans as a group or from a certain geographic area, over a period of time, had a record of defaulting on mortgage loans, that would be rational [not racial] discrimination- but nevertheless unfair. The applicant must be given a chance based on his own credit history alone.

This logic leads to the rejection of all types of discrimination based on "race", gender and age- including "affirmative action".

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:56

Thursday, May 26, 2016

## **BIBLICAL GUIDELINES FOR CHOSING POLITICAL CANDIDATES**

In our contemporary, pluralistic Society, no longer secure and united in its core values, Biblical Christians must vote for those candidates at every level of Government that most closely agree with and support Biblical Standards. This means we should support candidates that advocate Government that will promote Freedom of Religion, Pro-Life laws (from conception to death), Traditional Marriage and Family, locally controlled public schools, Legislation that encourages and facilitates Work and Business, Private Property rights and a fair and just judicial system for all citizens.

In addition, acceptable Candidates should support Biblical Principles of Money Management, which means good stewardship of natural resources, limited and balanced budgets, controlled spending and affordable debt. In Foreign Policy, desirable candidates will not pursue unjust wars or support unjust and oppressive Regimes. It is also a given that a potential President be a man of sterling character and trustworthy (a righteous and godly man, although not necessarily a Christian).

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:36

Thursday, May 19, 2016

## **THE TRANSGENDER DEBATE**

Good advice and wisdom from James White for the Transgender Debate  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=10375>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:33

Sunday, May 15. 2016

## **CLONING HUMAN BEINGS**

This is a very wrong-headed idea

<http://www.missopen.com/science/harvard-university-scientists-reportedly-meet-at-school-privately-to-discuss-human-genome-synthesis/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:14

Tuesday, April 12. 2016

## **VIRAL VIDEO VIOLENCE**

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/eric-frazier/article69539952.html>  
WHY?

Also read The Age of Rage

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=mm#inbox/15404ccd2c5b0704>

Again: WHY?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:31

Thursday, April 7, 2016

### **IS TED CRUZ A DOMINIONIST OR A THEONOMIST?**

This is a very good article explaining the faith of Ted Cruz and the role it plays in his politics  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/april-web-only/stop-calling-ted-cruz-dominionist.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:15

Tuesday, March 22. 2016

**IT IS NOT ZENOPHOBIA OR RACISM OR BIGOTRY, IT IS BEING REALISTIC**

Maybe now, with the attacks in Brussels, more people in this Country will accept the reality of Islamic terrorism. Most mainline Muslims in the US may well be peaceful. They are, after all, a Minority who want to prosper and do well here. We should value them and appreciate their contributions to America. But nevertheless, many Muslims in the world believe in Sharia and are committed to Jihad and hate the US [the government and/or the culture if not the people. They are determined to terrorize, even destroy, us and as well as many other peoples in the Middle East and Africa. And yes, if possible, this kind of Muslim should be denied entrance into this Country.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:21

Wednesday, November 25, 2015

### **Why the Violence in Baltimore?**

I live a few miles outside of Baltimore, Md. It is a major but troubled City of some 600,000 people. Every day there are stories in the newspaper(the Sun) about local crime, violence and corruption. Last Summer there were racial riots in the streets that made national news. A recent Poll revealed divided opinions about this rioting of mostly young adults that saw many businesses looted or burned down.

City residents most often blamed the rioters' action upon joblessness and racism. People polled outside of the City more often put the cause of all the violent behavior upon a "lack of personal responsibility" in the rioters. Baltimore also has had more than 300 homicides this year- mostly "Black on black" crimes. Apparently many Blacks do not believe "Black Lives Matter" A lot of these killings (mostly by shootings) are blamed on the influence of Gangs. An elephant standing in the middle of these studies is the breakdown of the urban Black family, especially the lack of fathers and good fathering.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:24

Thursday, October 15, 2015

### **THE TROUBLING DEMISE OF PLAYBOY**

This is an excellent article outlining the sad and bad effects of Pornography  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=9708>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:58

Saturday, October 3, 2015

## **ARE EMBRYOS "PERSONS"?**

Definition of a Person- adapted from Peter Kreeft

First, the pro-choicers are correct to claim that the "person" and "human being" are not identical, but wrong to claim that the "human being" is the broader category and "person" the narrower subset. It is the other way round. There are persons who are not human persons: the three Persons of the Trinity, angels, and any rational and moral extraterrestrials who may exist, such as the E.T., Martians, and someone who has never heard of the Boston Red Sox. But though not all persons are human, all humans are persons. Old humans are persons, very young humans are persons, and preborn humans, fetal humans, are persons too.

How is a person to be defined? The crucial point for our argument is not which acts are to count as defining a person (is it speaking, or reasoning, or loving) but the relation of these personal acts to the person-actor. [not by what one does, but as one who is able to do them]

One who is consciously performing personal acts? If so, people who are asleep are not people, and we may kill them.

One with a present capacity to perform personal acts? That would include sleepers, but not people in coma.

One with a history of performing personal acts? That would mean that a 17-year-old who was born in a coma 17 years ago and is just now coming out of it is not a person. Also, by this definition there can be no first personal act, no personal acts without a history of past personal acts.

One with a future capacity for performing personal acts? That would mean that dying persons are not persons. Surely the correct answer is that a person is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts. Why is one able to perform personal acts under proper conditions? Only because one is a person. One grows into the ability to perform personal acts only because one already is the kind of thing that grows into the ability to perform personal acts, i.e., a person.

To say that some human beings are not persons is to say that only achievers, only successful functioners, only sufficiently intelligent performers, qualify as persons and have a right to life. And who is to say what "sufficient" is? The line can be drawn at will - the will of the stronger. Nature, reason, and justice are then replaced by artifice, prejudice, and power. When it is in the self interest of certain people to kill certain other people, whether fetuses, or the dying, or enemies of the state, or Jews, or Armenians, or Cambodians, or heretics, or prophets, the killers will simply define their victims as non-persons by pointing out that they do not meet certain criteria. Who determines the criteria? Those in power, of course. Whenever personhood is defined functionally, the dividing line between persons and non-persons will be based on a decision by those in power, a decision of will. Such a decision, given the fallenness of human nature, will inevitably be based on self-interest. Where there is an interest in killing persons, they will be defined as non-persons.

To the second argument, it must be said that "human being" is not a merely biological term because the reality it designates is not a merely biological reality, though it is a biological reality. To identify human beings and persons is not biologism; in fact, it is just the opposite: it is the implicit claim that persons, i.e., human beings, have a human biological body and a human spiritual soul; that human souls inhabit human bodies.

The reason we should love, respect, and not kill human beings is because they are persons, i.e., subjects, souls, "I's", made in the image of God Who is I AM. We revere the person, not the functioning; the doer, not the doing. If robots could do all that persons can do behaviorally, they would still not be persons. Mere machines cannot be persons. They may function as persons, but they do not understand that they do not have freedom, or free will to choose what they do. They obey their programming without free choice. They are artifacts, and artifacts are not persons. Persons are natural, not artificial. They develop from within (like fetuses!); artifacts are made from without.

The connection between the two errors of (1) reducing persons to functions and (2) reducing "human being" to a merely biological category is obvious: the first is the root cause of the second. Once a person is defined in terms of functioning, then zygotes, fetuses and even normal newborns are no longer fully persons. What are they, then? Only members of a biological species, "human being." This justifies abortion, of course, and infanticide. The camel is a one-piece camel. I know no argument justifying abortion that does not also justify infanticide.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:09

Saturday, July 18. 2015

### **CHILDREN HOOKED ON PORN**

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/1-3-of-10-year-olds-access-internet-porn-the-new-crack-cocaine-health-experts-warn-141549/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:26

### **PLANNED PARENTHOOD CEO APOLOGIZES**

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2015/07/16/planned-parenthood-head-apologizes-for-officials-fetal-organ-comments-as/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:18

### **SELLING BABY PARTS**

Planned Parenthood, With Blessing of CEO, Caught Selling Baby Parts on the Black MarketRead more at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/planned-parenthood-with-blessing-of-ceo-caught-selling-baby-parts-on-the-black-market-141508/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:11

### **BACK TO THE BASICS**

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

"That to secure [preserve] these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,

"That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation upon such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect [make possible and secure] their Safety and Happiness."

-----from the Declaration of Independence

Is the form of our current Government "destructive of these ends"? If we were to lay the foundation for a new Government, what would it be?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:28

Friday, July 10, 2015

### **100 EVANGELICAL LEADERS RESPONSE TO "GAY MARRIAGE"**

[http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/june-web-only/here-we-stand-evangelical-declaration-on-marriage.html?utm\\_source=ctdirect-html&utm\\_medium=Newsletter&utm\\_term=11430839&utm\\_content=365303075&utm\\_campaign=2013](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/june-web-only/here-we-stand-evangelical-declaration-on-marriage.html?utm_source=ctdirect-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=11430839&utm_content=365303075&utm_campaign=2013)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:11

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

## **THE END OF JUDEO-CHRISTIAN AMERICA?**

Disturbing article that contains much that is true and alarming about changes in American culture  
<http://worldtribune.com/life/june-26-2015-marked-formal-end-to-judeo-christian-america/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:15

Monday, June 29, 2015

## **THE PACE OF CHANGE IN USA ON MAJOR CULTURAL ISSUES**

Major Cultural Changes in America

interracial marriage prohibition and its repeal women's suffrage abortion same sex "marriage" acceptance of non-medical marijuana

All of these issues [and others such as racial integration] met strong public resistance and then that changed with major social consequences for the Country. Lessons to be learned? This is article is helpful in answering that question <http://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-pace-of-social-change/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:09

Saturday, June 27, 2015

## **PERSECUTION COMING?**

One of the nation's most prominent evangelical leaders issued a dire warning for the nation in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's ruling on homosexual marriage.

"I believe God could bring judgment upon America," said Franklin Graham in an exclusive interview. Graham told me that Christians should be prepared for persecution in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's ruling on homosexual marriage.

"You better be ready and you better be prepared because it's coming," Graham said just moments after the court handed down its ruling. "There will be persecution of Christians for our stand."

<http://nation.foxnews.com/2015/06/26/exclusive-franklin-graham-warns-gay-marriage-ruling-will-lead-christian-persecution>

<http://www.robagnon.net/HomosexualAgenda.htm>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:21

Monday, May 11. 2015

### **THE RISE OF SINGLE-PARENTING**

Some researchers and marriage advocates say the prevalence of single-parent families could have long-term negative effects. These families are more likely than two-parent ones to live in poverty. And children in low-income, single-parent households achieve lower levels of education and income over all, particularly boys.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/09/upshot/out-of-wedlock-births-are-falling-except-among-older-women.html?\\_r=2&abt=0002&abg=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/09/upshot/out-of-wedlock-births-are-falling-except-among-older-women.html?_r=2&abt=0002&abg=1)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:55

### **THE INTOLERANT LEFT**

Andrew Sullivan, a commentator who is gay and among the first to publicly defend same-sex marriage, summed up the decision poignantly: "When people's lives and careers are subject to litmus tests, and fired if they do not publicly renounce what may well be their sincere conviction, we have crossed a line. This is McCarthyism applied by civil actors. This is the definition of intolerance." His quote appears among many that draw attention to an intolerant tolerance that Kirsten Powers believes is on the rise. *The Silencing: How the Left Is Killing Free Speech* (Regnery)" <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/may-web-only/kirsten-powers-rise-of-intolerant-left.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:43

Friday, May 1. 2015

## **ATTITUDES ON SAME SEX MARRIAGE**

More than six in ten (62 percent) white mainline Protestants support same-sex marriage. Among white mainline Protestant denominations, support ranges from 69 percent support among white mainline Presbyterians and 68 percent among both white Episcopalians and white Congregationalists/United Church of Christ members, to lower support among white mainline Baptists (53 percent) and white mainline Church of Christ/Disciples (50 percent). And while the Catholic Church officially opposes the legalization of same-sex marriage, about six in ten white (61 percent), Hispanic (60 percent), and other non-white Catholics (60 percent) support allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally. A majority of orthodox Christians (56 percent) also support same-sex marriage. On the other side of the debate, majorities of Jehovah's Witnesses (75 percent), Mormons (68 percent), white evangelical Protestants (66 percent), Hispanic Protestants (58 percent), and black Protestants (54 percent) oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally. Among white evangelical Protestant denominations, white evangelical Baptists are the most opposed (72 percent), while white evangelical Lutherans are nearly evenly divided (45 percent favor, 48 percent opposed).  
<http://publicreligion.org/2015/04/attitudes-on-same-sex-marriage-by-religious-affiliation-and-denominational-family/#.VUP5eJOM4gS>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:14

Tuesday, March 31, 2015

## **SOLVING THE IMPASSE Re FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND GAY RIGHTS**

Discrimination: Treatment or consideration based on class or category, such as race or gender, rather than individual merit; partiality or prejudice.- American Heritage Dictionary

Examples: Profiling [Police], Red Lining [Realtors], Sub-prime lending [Banks], Denying Employment to People with Disabilities, Hiring Quotas, Affirmative Action [colleges], refusing insurance or employment because of Age

Yes, there are laws [pro and con] that attempt to address these types of discrimination. A problem is that this definition is very broad. The following definitions of Discrimination are more narrow:

The practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people - Merriam-Websters

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex: -Oxford

But now the problem is defining "unfairly" and "unjust". Who is to say when this happens and on what basis? It is better to stick with the first definition: Treatment or consideration based on class or category rather than individual merit. And there is both the problem and the solution.

We must not cheat, steal from or otherwise abuse or hurt any person regardless of whatever group that individual belongs to. We must respect and value each person based simply on the fact that they are human beings. Period!

That is the key. Hiring, renting to, selling to, socializing with, caring for/helping, giving medical treatment to (etc) must be based on individual needs, not on group membership. Period! All discrimination as defined above must be rejected if we are to go forward.

However, the right for people to discriminate against behavior or activities by other specific individuals must be respected and allowed. That is, we may not discriminate against them as persons, but we must have the freedom to chose not to participate in or support a specific behavior or activity by such individuals. No one must be coerced by public opinion, extortion, or someone else's culture, custom or by Law to do anything contrary to their own moral values (or Religion) as persons.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:40

## **THERE IS A "GAY AGENDA"**

Although it is often denied, activists in the LGBT Community do have an agenda beyond legalization (and normalization) of Gay Marriage. Here are two articles that spell out what is on that agenda:

- \*Laws that shall eliminate employment discrimination in small businesses and in the workplace in general
- \*Laws that shall remove all anti-gay discrimination in the Military, especially pertaining to equal rights and benefits
- \*Laws preventing anti-gay discrimination in Religious organizations of all types
- \*Laws prohibiting anti-gay discrimination on the grounds of Religious or Moral beliefs
- \*Laws giving LGBT individuals and couples the right to adopt and raise children

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/01/28/non-marriage-lgbt-rights><http://www.takepart.com/article/2013/11/08/kinds-discrimination-enda-will-not-end>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:35

Monday, March 30, 2015

## **BULLYING? EXTORTION? THREATS AGAINST INDIANA ARE WRONG**

Forty percent of U.S. states have something similar to Indiana, as does the federal government. Indiana is actually soon to be just one of 20 states with a version of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA

A federal RFRA signed by President Clinton in 1993 shares language with Indiana and other states' bills, prohibiting the government from "substantially burdening" individuals' exercise of religion unless it is for a "compelling government interest" and is doing so in the least restrictive means.

So why are so many businesses and organizations threatening to boycott Indiana? Why is so much abusive, venomous language being used to express blame or censure or bitter deep-seated ill will against its conservative Republican Governor [and the Act itself was passed into Law by the Legislature of men and women elected by the citizens of Indiana]

Such bullying tactics repulses me and makes me sympathetic to the Governor. But what disturbs me most is that the Act itself is not anti-gay nor discriminatory. It is, as the Governor rightly insists, about the constitutional right to the free exercise of Religion. Christians beware!

The root of this matter is that those who do not agree that the issue is freedom of Religion do so because they define Religion as private, not social; personal, not public and a matter of feelings, not morality.

Christian Faith does have social, public and moral consequences! This is also true of the Muslim and Jewish Faith] And Believers have the right to practice their Faith and act on those consequences and they must have the freedom to do so.

The vitriol must end. The bullying threats must stop. It is interesting that the "bully stick" used by the people who wrongly think this Act is discriminatory against the small group of people in the LGBT community is the threat to steal money/business from all the businesses and citizens of Indiana. That is what would be discriminatory!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:55

Thursday, March 26, 2015

### **DISTURBING THINGS ABOUT COMMON CORE**

The more I learn about the Common Core tests the more I do not like Common Core tests. For example- [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2015/03/24/teacher-the-disturbing-things-ive-learned-about-our-new-common-core-tests/?tid=pm\\_local\\_pop](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2015/03/24/teacher-the-disturbing-things-ive-learned-about-our-new-common-core-tests/?tid=pm_local_pop)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:21

Tuesday, March 24. 2015

## **CLIMATE CHANGERS GOAL IS REALLY ECONOMIC CHANGE**

The primary objective behind environmental activism related to anthropogenic global warming (AGW), aka “climate change,” is apparently not climatological, but rather is economic. The revelation came not from “global-warming deniers,” but from the United Nations’ own Christiana Figueres, who serves as the Executive Secretary of the UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change.

At a press conference in Brussels last month, the UN climate chief delineated the objectives of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations. She revealed: “This is the first time in the history of mankind that we are setting ourselves the task of intentionally, within a defined period of time, to change the economic development model that has been reigning for at least 150 years, since the Industrial Revolution.”

Naomi Klein, a self-defined “feminist-socialist,” environmental activist, and author of the book “This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate,” is explicit in her denunciation of capitalism as the source of global warming. Her interview this week with Germany’s Der Spiegel underscored her denunciation of capitalism as the source of all evil in the world, including global warming. “The economic system that we have created has also created global warming. We can’t change the physical reality, so we must change the political reality.”

Ottmar Edenhofer, a German economist and co-chair of the IPCC Working Group III, explicitly affirmed the economic objective. He said a few years ago: “Climate policy has almost nothing to do anymore with environmental protection...One must say clearly that we redistribute the world's wealth by climate policy...The next world climate summit in Cancun is actually an economy summit during which the distribution of the world’s resources will be negotiated.”

Read more at <http://www.westernjournalism.com/objective-behind-climate-change-economic->

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:40

Tuesday, March 17. 2015

### **A WONDERFUL MINISTRY**

Having worked daily with many men and women with developmental disabilities for 19 years, I greatly appreciate what this man and his organization have been doing.  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2015/march/17-million-templeton-prize-awarded-to-larche-disability-min.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:57

Friday, March 13. 2015

### **CLIMATE CHANGE: A LEFT-WING AGENDA?**

Climate change propaganda is simply a ruse for a socialist agenda. Consider the statements of some environmentalist leaders. Christiana Figueres, the U.N.'s chief climate change official, said that her unelected bureaucrats are undertaking "probably the most difficult task" they have ever given themselves, "which is to intentionally transform the (global) economic development model." In 2010, German economist and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change official Ottmar Edenhofer said, "One must say clearly that we redistribute de facto the world's wealth by climate policy." The article in which that interview appeared summarized Edenhofer's views this way: "Climate policy has almost nothing to do anymore with environmental protection. ... The next world climate summit in Cancun is actually an economy summit during which the distribution of the world's resources will be negotiated."

<http://townhall.com/columnists/walterewilliams/2015/03/11/global-warming-n1967847/page/2>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:46

Sunday, March 8, 2015

## **WHITE CHRISTIANS ARE NOW IN MINORITY**

The notion of America as a mostly white, mostly Christian country is rapidly becoming a fact for the history books. Last week, PRRI released the American Values Atlas (AVA), an interactive online tool that compiles data about Americans' opinions, identities, and values. One of the biggest takeaways of this year's study was that, for the first time ever, America is not a majority Protestant nation. Part of this shift is due to the growing number of religiously unaffiliated Americans, now at 22 percent nationally and 34 percent of young people.

The study also revealed that in 19 states, "white Christians" are now a minority group  
<http://jonathanmerritt.religionnews.com/2015/03/03/white-christians-now-minority-19-states/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:57

Saturday, March 7, 2015

## **COMMON CORE TEACHES THERE ARE NO MORAL FACTS OR TRUTHS**

What would you say if you found out that our public schools were teaching children that it is not true that it's wrong to kill people for fun or cheat on tests? Would you be surprised? I was.

So where is the view coming from? When I went to visit my son's second grade open house, I found a troubling pair of signs hanging over the bulletin board. They read: Fact: Something that is true about a subject and can be tested or proven. Opinion: What someone thinks, feels, or believes.

I went home and Googled "fact vs. opinion." The definitions I found online were substantially the same as the one in my son's classroom. As it turns out, the Common Core standards used by a majority of K-12 programs in the country require that students be able to "distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text." And the Common Core institute provides a helpful page full of links to definitions, lesson plans and quizzes to ensure that students can tell the difference between facts and opinions.

So what's wrong with this distinction and how does it undermine the view that there are objective moral facts?

Our public schools teach students that all claims are either facts or opinions and that all value and moral claims fall into the latter camp. The punchline: there are no moral facts. And if there are no moral facts, then there are no moral truths.

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/02/why-our-children-dont-think-there-are-moral-facts/#more-156061>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:10

## **MAJORITY OF AMERICANS NOW SUPPORT GAY MARRIAGE**

WASHINGTON – In the late 1980s, support for gay marriage was essentially unheard of in America. Just a quarter century later, it's now favored by clear majority of Americans.

<http://www.freep.com/story/news/nation/2015/03/05/poll-gay-marriage/24456947/>

What the poll also shows is that the majority of Americans reject what the Bible teaches about Marriage

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:40

Saturday, February 14. 2015

## **FIFTY SHADES OF GREY ABUSE**

"Millions will mark this Valentine's Day weekend by taking in the new release of Fifty Shades of Grey, a modern-day publishing phenomenon that became the basis for the highly anticipated movie adaptation.

Written by E.L. James, Fifty Shades of Grey tells the story of literature student Anastasia Steele and her sexual encounters with the young entrepreneur Christian Grey. Dubbed by many as "mommy porn" because of its escapist appeal to working mothers and suburban housewives, sexual practices such as bondage, domination, sadism and masochism are featured throughout. It's even listed as erotic literature on the book cover. The movie will, no doubt, follow suit." This is from a review by James White

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=8943>

Here is an account of 50 examples of despicable abuse inflicted on the young woman in the film by her horrible predator. That this book and movie is so popular among millions of women is incredible and very troubling to me- and to the woman who wrote this review-

[theramblingcurl.blogspot.com/2014/02/fifty-abusive-moments-in-fifty-shades.html](http://theramblingcurl.blogspot.com/2014/02/fifty-abusive-moments-in-fifty-shades.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:00

Tuesday, February 3. 2015

## **ONE NATION UNDER GOD? HOW ABOUT ELEVEN**

Here is historical and cultural evidence that America is actually 11 different Nations  
[www.tufts.edu/alumni/magazine/fall2013/features/up-in-arms.html](http://www.tufts.edu/alumni/magazine/fall2013/features/up-in-arms.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:03

Thursday, January 29, 2015

## **RELIGIOUS LEADERS ISSUE MANIFESTO AGAINST GAY MARRIAGE**

A high-profile alliance of conservative Catholics and evangelical Protestants is set to issue a sweeping manifesto against gay marriage that calls same-sex unions "a graver threat" than divorce or cohabitation, one that will lead to a moral dystopia in America and the persecution of traditional believers.

"If the truth about marriage can be displaced by social and political pressure operating through the law, other truths can be set aside as well," say the nearly 50 signers of the statement, which is to be published in the March edition of the conservative journal *First Things*.

"And that displacement can lead, in due course, to the coercion and persecution of those who refuse to acknowledge the state's redefinition of marriage, which is beyond the state's competence," they say.

The declaration adds that some people "are already being censured and others have lost their jobs because of their public commitment to marriage as the union of a man and a woman."

[www.religionnews.com/2015/01/28/top-catholics-evangelicals-gay-marriage-worse-divorce-cohabitation/](http://www.religionnews.com/2015/01/28/top-catholics-evangelicals-gay-marriage-worse-divorce-cohabitation/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:57

## **THERE IS A "GAY AGENDA"**

Although it is often denied, members of the LGBT Community do have an agenda beyond legalization (and normalization) of Gay Marriage. Here are two articles that spell out what is on that agenda:

Laws that shall eliminate employment discrimination in small businesses and in the workplace in general

Laws that shall remove all anti-gay discrimination in the Military, especially pertaining to equal rights and benefits

Laws preventing anti-gay discrimination in Religious organizations of all types

Laws prohibiting anti-gay discrimination on the grounds of Religious or Moral beliefs

Laws giving LGBT individuals and couples the right to adopt and raise children

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/01/28/non-marriage-lgbt-rights>

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2013/11/08/kinds-discrimination-enda-will-not-end>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:38

## **BEING REALISTIC ABOUT WAR AND ITS NECESSITY**

The American Sniper has become a powerful catalyst for a discussion about War. Jim White has presented the pros and cons about war very well in his blog. Well worth careful reading

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=8913>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:11

Sunday, January 18, 2015

## **SUPREME COURT RULED MANY TIMES THAT MARRIAGE IS A CIVIL RIGHT**

Fourteen times since 1888, the United States Supreme Court has stated that marriage is a fundamental right of all individuals. In these cases, the Court has reaffirmed that “freedom of personal choice in matters of marriage” is “one of the liberties protected by the Due Process Clause,” “essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men,” and “sheltered by the Fourteenth Amendment against the State’s unwarranted usurpation, disregard, or disrespect.”

Here is a list of the fourteen cases, with links to the opinions and citations to the Court’s discussion of the right to marry.

Source:

<http://www.afer.org/blog/14-supreme-court-cases-marriage-is-a-fundamental-right/>

Maynard v. Hill, 125 U.S. 190, 205, 211 (1888): Marriage is “the most important relation in life” and “the foundation of the family and society, without which there would be neither civilization nor progress.”

Meyer v. Nebraska, 262 U.S. 390, 399 (1923): The right “to marry, establish a home and bring up children” is a central part of liberty protected by the Due Process Clause.

Skinner v. Oklahoma ex rel. Williamson, 316 U.S. 535, 541 (1942): Marriage “one of the basic civil rights of man,” “fundamental to the very existence and survival of the race.”

Griswold v. Connecticut, 381 U.S. 479, 486 (1965): “We deal with a right of privacy older than the Bill of Rights—older than our political parties, older than our school system. Marriage is a coming together for better or for worse, hopefully enduring, and intimate to the degree of being sacred. It is an association that promotes a way of life, not causes; a harmony in living, not political faiths; a bilateral loyalty, not commercial or social projects. Yet it is an association for as noble a purpose as any involved in our prior decisions.”

Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1, 12 (1967): “The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men.”

Boddie v. Connecticut, 401 U.S. 371, 376, 383 (1971): “[M]arriage involves interests of basic importance to our society” and is “a fundamental human relationship.”

Cleveland Board of Education v. LaFleur, 414 U.S. 632, 639-40 (1974): “This Court has long recognized that freedom of personal choice in matters of marriage and family life is one of the liberties protected by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.”

Moore v. City of East Cleveland, 431 U.S. 494, 499 (1977) (plurality): “[W]hen the government intrudes on choices concerning family living arrangements, this Court must examine carefully the importance of the governmental interests advanced and the extent to which they are served by the challenged regulation.”

Carey v. Population Services International, 431 U.S. 678, 684-85 (1977): “[I]t is clear that among the decisions that an individual may make without unjustified government interference are personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, and child rearing and education.”

Zablocki v. Redhail, 434 U.S. 374, 384 (1978): “[T]he right to marry is of fundamental importance for all individuals.”

Turner v. Safley, 482 U.S. 78, 95 (1987): “[T]he decision to marry is a fundamental right” and an “expression[ ] of emotional support and public commitment.”

Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, 505 U.S. 833, 851 (1992): “These matters, involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.”

M.L.B. v. S.L.J., 519 U.S. 102, 116 (1996): “Choices about marriage, family life, and the upbringing of children are among associational rights this Court has ranked as ‘of basic importance in our society,’ rights sheltered by the Fourteenth Amendment against the State’s unwarranted usurpation, disregard, or disrespect.”

Lawrence v. Texas, 539 U.S. 558, 574 (2003): “[O]ur laws and tradition afford constitutional protection to personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, and education. ... Persons in a homosexual relationship may seek autonomy for these purposes, just as heterosexual persons do.

Advocates of Biblical, Traditional Heterosexual Marriage must make a cogent argument for it on other grounds

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:12

Saturday, January 17, 2015

## **IS GAY MARRIAGE CONSTITUTIONAL?**

The Argument that Gay Marriage is Constitutional is based on these Amendments-  
14th Amendment -The Equal Protection Clause

The Equal Protection Clause of the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution prohibits states from denying any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. See U.S. Const. amend. XIV. In other words, the laws of a state must treat an individual in the same manner as others in similar conditions and circumstances. A violation would occur, for example, if a state prohibited an individual from entering into an employment contract because he or she was a member of a particular race. The equal protection clause is not intended to provide "equality" among individuals or classes but only "equal application" of the laws. The result, therefore, of a law is not relevant so long as there is no discrimination in its application. By denying states the ability to discriminate, the equal protection clause of the Constitution is crucial to the protection of civil rights.

Generally, the question of whether the equal protection clause has been violated arises when a state grants a particular class of individuals the right to engage in an activity yet denies other individuals the same right.

The Supreme Court has dictated the application of different tests depending on the type of classification and its effect on fundamental rights. Traditionally, the Court finds a state classification constitutional if it has "a rational basis" to a "legitimate state purpose." The Supreme Court, however, has applied more stringent analysis in certain cases. It will "strictly scrutinize" a distinction when it embodies a "suspect classification." In order for a classification to be subject to strict scrutiny, it must be shown that the state law or its administration is meant to discriminate. Usually, if a purpose to discriminate is found the classification will be strictly scrutinized if it is based on race, national origin, or, in some situations, non U.S. citizenship (the suspect classes). In order for a classification to be found permissible under this test it must be proven, by the state, that there is a compelling interest to the law and that the classification is necessary to further that interest. The Court will also apply a strict scrutiny test if the classification interferes with fundamental rights such as first amendment rights, the right to privacy, or the right to travel.

The 14th amendment is not by its terms applicable to the federal government. Actions by the federal government, however, that classify individuals in a discriminatory manner will, under similar circumstances, violate the due process of the fifth amendment.

5th Amendment -Due process

No person shall be ... deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

The Constitution states only one command twice. The Fifth Amendment says to the federal government that no one shall be "deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law." The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, uses the same eleven words, called the Due Process Clause, to describe a legal obligation of all states.

Equal Protection of the Laws.

If the courts stretched Fourteenth Amendment "due process" to apply the Bill of Rights to the states, they stretched Fifth Amendment "due process" to require the federal government to afford equal protection of the laws. The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment forbids the states from establishing segregated schools or otherwise discriminating invidiously against some of their citizens.

Source: [http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/Equal\\_protection](http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/Equal_protection)

If the Supreme Court interprets the Constitution in the above fashion, those who oppose legalization of the "marriage" of homosexuals [or other non-heterosexual couples] must do so on grounds and reasons other than the Constitution. I think the constitutional case can be made for Civil Unions [as contracts], but advocates of "Gay Marriage" want the same cultural acceptance, respect and benefits for their marital union as is normally given to "Marriage" in our Society.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:52

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

## **SPEECH IS NOT FREE**

"Freedom of Speech" is the major mantra of the moment. But what does it mean? We do not really believe in, nor do we practice or want, total freedom of speech. We all agree that there are and should be restraints on some speech. We simply do not agree what the restraints are. Think about it.

People employed in the Government and military services are sworn to keep their mouths shut and their "pens" silent on many issues of national security. We can not shout "Fire" in a full theater, or chant "Kill the cops". We are not free to use the social media to savage or slander someone to the point that they commit suicide. Spoken or written lies do hurt and destroy innocent people.

It seems that people who protest the most about freedom of speech these days are Social Liberals who use their speech to denounce and defame those with whom they disagree. But worse, these critics insist on censoring Social Conservatives and work to oppose and deny them the same right to free speech they, the critics, claim. I am thinking here of conservatives who have been denied the right to give commencement speeches or civil servants who are ousted from their jobs or retailers who have been forced out of business - all for putting into words speaking their religious beliefs or social values. (I realize this can work the other way, too.) The fact is the right to "free speech" is often denied to others or abused by those who claim to defend it.

The Bible does not teach or allow "free speech". It has a lot to say about this subject. For example, no one has the right to lie or bare false witness. That is the 9th Commandment (Exo 20:16) We must never slander anyone. (Titus 3:2, James 4:11)

Why? God never lies and what He says is totally trustworthy (1 Sam 15:29, Num 23:19, Heb 6:18, Titus 1:2) He expects no less from people created in His Image, Christian or not. The first lie was spoken by Satan in the Garden and he has been the father of all lies ever since. (John 8:44) We are to speak only what is true and edifying (Eph 4:25, Col 3:9)

In others words, the right to free speech is limited. There are legal, ethical and moral guidelines that limit it. Of course, we are to be undaunted in speaking the truth, absolutely- and fight for the right to do so; but before writing or printing anything, the message and the medium must pass muster!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:29

Sunday, January 11. 2015

## **CHRISTIAN SATIRE?**

The use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues -Oxford

A literary work in which human foolishness or vice is attacked through irony, derision, or wit.

Irony, sarcasm, or caustic wit used to attack or expose human foolishness or vice. - American Heritage

A way of using humor to show that someone or something is foolish, weak, bad, etc. : humor that shows the weaknesses or bad qualities of a person, government, society, etc. - Merriam-Webster

"Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own--Johathan Swift"

Should Christians engage in satire? Here are samples from what was once the premier magazine of Christian satire and the one that, apparently, is that now.

<http://www.wittenburgdoor.com/when-evangelicals-dream.html>

<http://www.larknews.com/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:57

Saturday, January 10, 2015

## **FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

The major news story this week was the slaughter of satirists in Paris by Islamic Terrorists. This is widely seen as an assault on the freedom of speech and expression. Many cartoons in response are drawings of pens versus guns, yelling that the former is stronger than the latter.

But pens can do great harm. Art, in all its forms, has often been used to assault human dignity and to incite violence against innocent people. What the world needs most is not freedom of all speech [After all, the Islamist Terrorists use their freedom of speech to spew their hate and to radicalize and recruit new followers] The only words that ultimately shall conquer Evil are God's words. Christ rules, judges and conquers Satan, Evil and rebellious Nations with the sword of His mouth- Rev 1:16 in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.2:12 [Christ] has the sharp two-edged sword. [This is Christ, speaking to the churches]6:2 ...there was a white horse, Its rider [Christ]... rode out as a conquer bent on conquest19:15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.19:21 [evil was] slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, What is this Sword? 2:16 Christ says, "I will soon come to you and fight against [false teachers] with the sword of my mouth" Eph 6:17 the sword... is the word of GodHeb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

**THIS IS THE WEAPON WE MUST USE IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM IN ALL ITS FORMS**

The most important freedom of speech we must seek, guard and use above all is the freedom to speak and spread the Words of God

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:33

Friday, December 12. 2014

## **DEFINING "TORTURE"**

The most widely accepted definition of torture internationally is that set out by Article 1 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT):

"... 'torture' means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions."

From this definition, it can be said that torture is the intentional infliction of severe mental or physical pain or suffering by or with the consent of the state authorities for a specific purpose.

<http://www.irct.org/what-is-torture/defining-torture.aspx>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:14

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

## **AMERICA, VIOLENT AMERICA**

"[B]oth Michael Brown and Darren Wilson are the products of our society—American society. Our country was birthed out of armed and violent rebellion. We used brutality to subjugate slaves and drive Native Americans from the lands that they had lived upon for millennia. Now, over two centuries later, we suffer more violent deaths than any other wealthy nation in the world. We have experienced more school shootings than 36 other countries combined. We have been continuously at war for 14 years. We glorify violence in nearly every form of media that we consume, from video games to movies, from television to music. Violence has so permeated our culture that there is not a single young American who has not been taught to believe that most any problem can and should be solved by throwing a punch, or else pulling a piece.

"Yes, Ferguson is about racism and inequality and crime. But these conditions and sins exist in every person and every nation in the world. What sets our nation apart from others is how frequently we resort to violence in response to racism and inequality and crime. We use violence to perpetrate crime and to protest inequality, and violence to police crime and to end protest. So our problem is not just racism. It is that racism and violence continuously reinforce and exacerbate one another, making healing and progress an impossibility."

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/peter-chin/2014/november/america-beautiful-america-violent.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:33

## **IS RELIGION THE MAJOR CAUSE OF CONFLICT IN THE WORLD?**

"There are many other socio-economic characteristics that have more significant explanatory power in understanding why conflict and peace occurs than religion does. ... there is a consistent relationship between factors such as corruption, political terror, gender and economic inequality and political instability which determine peace ... these factors are globally more significant determinants in driving violence and conflict in society than the presence of religious belief."

There is much data to substantiate this claim in this very helpful Report

<http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Peace-and-Religion-Report.pdf>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:24

Wednesday, November 26, 2014

### **BLACK PASTOR SPEAKS TO BLACK MEN**

For an excellent message addressing the issues Black Men face in America and what to do about it, I highly recommend this Pastor's post  
<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/thoughts-on-ferguson>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:02

Friday, November 21. 2014

## **WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY SAYS ABOUT IMMIGRANTS**

Biblical Light on the subject of Aliens in the Land- it is not what you have heard Many Christians (and others) favor five arguments to support an open door immigration policy, and particularly a Federal Government Policy that will facilitate welcoming "undocumented workers" or illegal immigrants into full inclusion in American life with all of its rights and privileges. These arguments are "Hospitality", "Humanity", "Image of God", "we are all immigrants" and especially the argument using what the Bible teaches about Aliens in Israel. These Christians claim the four arguments are Biblical and Christian. They are not.

See my Bible study on this topic at <http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:34

## **A ILLEGAL ALIENS IS ILLEGAL**

The article I linked to below this one lays out all the laws involved in the Immigration process in the US. There are lots of them and many are very out-dated and inadequate. Nevertheless, they remain the Laws. We are and must be a people who obey the Laws of the Land whatever they may be. Aliens who enter this Country illegally are, by that very fact, illegal. They may become valued workers who are undocumented. That does not change the fact that they are illegal. My grandparents were Immigrants who obeyed the laws of their day and came into this Country legally. They are not in the same category as the people Mr Obama was talking about in his speech last night. The comparison is inappropriate as well as offensive.

The solution is not a Presidential Order. The Solution is Congress (representing all Citizens) changing the relevant laws!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:38

## **WHAT THE IMMIGRATION POLICY INVOLVES**

Fix Immigration? Exactly what does that involve? Many, many laws and policies. Here is a very helpful overview of what is involved. It explains why, "Just let them get in line" is no solution to the illegal aliens problem.

<http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/why-don%E2%80%99t-they-just-get-line>

The System is very outdated and inadequate. There is a lot that Washington can do. But the necessary changes in Policies also requires changes in our Culture.

One of those changes involves the paradox about low-income jobs. Many American citizens who are unemployed will not take them. Many illegal aliens are very glad to become undocumented workers, filling the need and many Americans are glad to employ them.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:18

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

## **VATICAN DISCUSSES POLICY CHANGES ON SOCIAL ISSUES**

An assembly of Roman Catholic bishops convened by Pope Francis at the Vatican released a preliminary document on Monday calling for the church to welcome and accept gay people, unmarried couples and those who have divorced, as well as the children of these less traditional families.

The 12-page report ...says that without abandoning church teaching on the sacrament of marriage, pastors should recognize that there are "positive aspects of civil unions and cohabitation."

The report also says that gay people have "gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community ..." [Some] bishops ...insist that the church is at risk of betraying its definitive doctrines on marriage and homosexuality. [But] Archbishop Bruno Forte said "... while the church does not condone gay unions or gay marriage, it must "respect the dignity of every person." "... the person independently of sexual orientation."

The bishops' report... does not change church doctrine or teaching ...

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/14/world/europe/vatican-signals-more-tolerance-toward-gays-and-remarriage.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:51

Sunday, November 9, 2014

## **DEATH WITH DIGNITY OR MURDER?**

Christians are called to be Pro-Life. There has been a growing movement that supports Euthanasia or Assisted Suicide "...but the taking of a life, for the sake of the quality of life, is against the sanctity of life."  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=8623>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:39

Saturday, November 8, 2014

## **NEW COURT RULING ON GAY MARRIAGE**

The same-sex marriage movement lost its first major case in a federal appeals court Thursday after a lengthy string of victories, creating a split among the nation's circuit courts that virtually guarantees Supreme Court review. Circuit Judge Jeffrey Sutton, one of the Republican Party's most esteemed legal thinkers and writers, issued the 42-page decision precisely three months after hearing oral arguments in the cases, with fellow GOP nominee Deborah Cook concurring. He delivered a rare defeat for proponents of same-sex marriage, who had won nearly all the cases decided from Florida to Alaska since the Supreme Court ruled against the federal Defense of Marriage Act in June 2013.

Sutton argued that appellate judges' hands are tied by a one-sentence Supreme Court ruling from 1972, which "upheld the right of the people of a state to define marriage as they see it."

"When the courts do not let the people resolve new social issues like this one, they perpetuate the idea that the heroes in these change events are judges and lawyers," Sutton said. "Better in this instance, we think, to allow change through the customary political processes, in which the people, gay and straight alike, become the heroes of their own stories by meeting each other not as adversaries in a court system but as fellow citizens seeking to resolve a new social issue in a fair-minded way."

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/11/06/gay-marriage-appeals-court-ohio-michigan-kentucky-tennessee/15712319/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:06

Monday, November 3, 2014

## **MARRIAGE AND POVERTY**

"All the latest evidence confirms the ancient wisdom: the institution of marriage is a key to productive adulthood, the cornerstone of a stable family, and the basic unit of a healthy community," says American Enterprise Institute president Arthur Brooks of the new study.

"If you care about the poor, you need to start caring much more about marriage culture. The growing marriage divide is a major source of social and economic inequality, and is one largely unnoticed force eroding the American Dream. That's the sobering message of a new report on economic success and marriage decline.

"Americans with college degrees are doing pretty well on the marriage front. They get married and stay married. But the picture is very different for Americans with lower education levels. Lower income Americans are being hit hardest by changing social norms, the rise of the post-industrial economy and the retreat from civil society and its institutions.

That's creating a marriage divide among Americans that is leading to serious inequalities ..."

<http://thefederalist.com/2014/10/28/if-you-care-about-the-poor-care-about-marriage/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:27

Wednesday, October 29, 2014

## **SWITCHING SCANDALS**

"You can tell a lot about a society by its taboos. Several weeks ago, America reeled when Adrian Peterson—the great NFL running back of his generation—was indicted on charges of “reckless or negligent injury to a child.” Peterson is alleged to have disciplined his son by “whooping” him—these are Peterson’s words, not mine—with a “switch.” The child, a 4-year-old boy, suffered cuts on his backside and thighs. For this act, which 50 years ago was commonplace, Peterson was arrested, suspended by his employer (the Minnesota Vikings), and publicly castigated by all and sundry. Unremarked upon was the fact that the 29-year-old Peterson does not live with this boy and reportedly has seven children—that we currently know about—with five different women. Which illustrates nicely the changing mores in America: Corporal punishment is a scandal, or even a crime, but there is no judgment about men who father children out of wedlock and then abandon the vulnerable mothers and children. Yet only one of these pathologies poses an existential threat to our society."

[http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/our-endangered-species\\_816382.html](http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/our-endangered-species_816382.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:13

## **WITCHES, VAMPIRES AND ZOMBIES, TOO**

Halloween is second only to Christmas in popularity and money spent. What does that and the choice of costume tell us about Americans?

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2014/10/27/359324848/witches-vampires-and-pirates-5-years-of-americas-most-popular-costumes>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:40

Wednesday, October 22, 2014

## **VIRULENT MULTICULTURALISM**

“Multiculturalism” is not only appreciating and preserving cultural diversity on both essential and non-essential levels. It is also the perspective that each Culture is to be respected as of equal value, none “better” than the other. However, many advocates of Multiculturalism seem determined to denigrate in the most severe terms the essential Christian Culture of which I am writing.

Whereas Multiculturalism is so highly valued by many in America and this virulent form of it is increasing daily and whereas Christians in America are becoming a cultural minority, it is very important that we understand exactly what core Biblical Culture is and unashamedly commit to develop and maintain its essentials. The admonition of Romans 12:2 is that Christians not conform to the majority cultures of the world

The commands of 1 Peter 2:11-12 remain needed more than ever: 9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light... 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, ... 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. [NIV]

And also the commands of 3:13-21

15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. 16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. 17 Show proper respect to everyone ... 20 But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

Rather than assimilate pagan culture, we should walk in the Light and stand firm in the essential Values of our Christian and Biblical Culture.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:29

Tuesday, October 21. 2014

### **37% OF AMERICANS ARE "POST-CHRISTIAN"**

"Based on Barna's aggregate metric, nearly two-fifths of the nation's adult population (37%) qualifies as post-Christian. This includes 9% of Americans who are highly post-Christian—lacking engagement in 80% or more of the measures of belief, practice or commitment. And another one-quarter is moderately post-Christian (28%), without engaging at least 60% of the factors.

Barna's study includes a ranking of the nation's largest 96 markets, from most to least post-Christian. The big picture is that the leading post-Christian markets are in the Northeast and in the West. The gap between the most post-Christian city (Albany, NY) and least (Shreveport, LA) is 63% to 12%, respectively. These city-by-city rankings can be found at the company's new website [www.cities.barna.org](http://www.cities.barna.org)."

<https://www.barna.org/barna-update/culture/608-hpca#.VEaL6BY4KHG>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:41

Monday, October 13, 2014

## **DOES YOUR CHURCH MINISTER TO THESE AMERICANS?**

Americans are far more likely to kill themselves than each other. Homicides have fallen by half since 1991, but the U.S. suicide rate keeps climbing. The nearly 40,000 American lives lost each year make suicide the nation's 10th-leading cause of death, and the second-leading killer for those ages 15-34. Each suicide costs society about \$1 million in medical and lost-work expenses and emotionally victimizes an average of 10 other people.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/10/09/suicide-mental-health-prevention-research/15276353/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:11

Saturday, October 11, 2014

## **GOD CREATED "GENDER"**

The uni-sex society is not a good idea. Neither is the idea that "gender" is a social construct. In creating us, God created sexual gender and that is an essential part of what makes us human beings. We shall still be sexual beings when we are in Heaven. The following is an excerpt from an extensive Essay I wrote and posted on my website [HERE]

"There shall be sex (ie- gender) in heaven, but not physical intercourse. There is no need for physical sex in Heaven, no need for the physical union of a man and woman and no need for procreation. (Luke 20:27-36) These physical activities are not what we shall be about in Heaven.

[However] Gender and Sexuality is spiritual, mental and emotional, as well physical. It is these spiritual, mental and emotional qualities, derived from being male or female, that are essential to being a person, as well as to being individuals. And this is the definition I have in mind here for "Sexuality". This understanding of sexuality is known and demonstrated by everyone's experience. The resurrection involves the glorification of all that we are as individual persons, including these spiritual, mental and emotional aspects or dimensions of sexuality. In this sense, the Risen Jesus remains sexual (a male) and this explains how we, too, shall enjoy "sex" (gender and gender traits) in Heaven after our "bodily" resurrection.

[After his resurrection, Jesus said] "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have," (Luke 24:39).

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:15

Friday, October 10, 2014

## **NO MORE BOYS AND GIRLS IN SCHOOL**

'Gender inclusive' school district says drop 'boys and girls,' call kids 'purple penguins'  
gender-inclusive-school-district-says-drop-boys-and-girls-call-kids-purple/?Gen.1:27 So God created man ... male and female he created them. Gen. 2:7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. 21 [T]he LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs ... 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said "... she shall be called Woman"

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:42

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

## **ANSWERING THE PRO-CHOICE CANDIDATES**

"Not long ago, it would have been unusual for a Democratic senatorial candidate in Iowa to run a powerful abortion-rights television ad like the one recently broadcast by Representative Bruce Braley. The ad lists in detail the anti-abortion positions taken by Mr. Braley's Republican opponent, Joni Ernst. In the State Senate, the ad says, she sponsored a "personhood" amendment (declaring a fertilized egg to be a person) that would have the effect of outlawing abortion even in cases of rape or incest, and would also ban many common forms of birth control. Ms. Ernst is even shown saying at a debate that she favors criminal punishment for doctors who perform abortions; the ad describes her position as "radical."

"Ms. Ernst's personhood ideas, shared by at least five other Republican candidates for United States Senate this year, have been radical for years. What's new is that Democrats are increasingly willing to say so. For years they were cowed by the religious right into changing the subject when abortion or birth control or same-sex marriage came up. But now, increasingly assured that public opinion supports their positions, Democrats have become more aggressive in challenging Republicans about their beliefs."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/29/opinion/the-tide-of-the-culture-war-shifts.html?>

These "personhood ideas" may be ridiculed by Liberal Democrats, but should the alleged public support describing the ideas as radical make any difference to a Bible Believing Christian? Can you cogently answer the Liberal challenge?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:12

Sunday, September 28. 2014

## **WHERE ARE THE CULTURE WARRIORS?**

...rather than culture looking to Christians to speak out and lead, it is more of an opportunity for Christians to do so in a way that contends for the Christian faith in the spiritual marketplace of ideas. "We may talk of 'conquering' the world for Christ. But what sort of 'conquest' do we mean?" wrote John Stott. "Not a victory by force of arms...This is a battle of ideas."

Yet there are surprisingly few warriors. Those who follow Christ have too often retreated into personal piety and good works, or as one BBC commentator I heard over the radio while jogging one morning in Oxford, Christians have too often offered mere "feelings" and "philanthropy." Speaking specifically to the challenge from Islam, he added that what is needed is more "hard thinking" applied to the issues of the day.

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=6471>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:14

Tuesday, September 23. 2014

## **CLIMATE CHANGE OR AIR POLLUTION?**

It's tempting to dismiss the United Nations climate summit that starts Tuesday in New York as nothing but an occasion for meetings, marching and platitudes. There'll be plenty of each, no doubt -- to say nothing of Leonardo DiCaprio's speech as UN messenger for peace on climate change, a treat for cynics of all nationalities. Despite all that, the gathering of 125 world leaders isn't a waste of time.

A main purpose is to highlight efforts under way to cut greenhouse-gas emissions -- and to demonstrate that progress is feasible, affordable and happening. Resistance to stronger measures on climate change is driven partly by the fear that they'd be prohibitively expensive and set back economic growth. Intelligent action, on the contrary, is affordable and isn't anti-growth. In due course, a formally coordinated international program is likely to be necessary, and the UN hopes to reach agreement on that larger ambition during talks next year in Paris. For now, building support for action by seeking out best practices and demonstrating their practicality is all to the good.

<http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2014-09-21/just-another-climate-summit>

I share skeptical suspicion about "Climate Change" and this Conference; but this Bloomberg article is interesting. I find it helpful to change the name of the subject to the Problem of World-wide Air and Water Pollution.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:59

## **TRAFFICKING INTO FORCED LABOR**

For many, including myself, "trafficking" is synonymous with sexual exploitation and modern-day slavery. Denise Brennan, writing specifically about trafficking into forced labor (which thrives in the garment and agriculture industries in America), is striving to change that perception. Her book *Life Interrupted: Trafficking into Forced Labor in the United States* details the mounting reasons why individuals find themselves in situations where they are forced to work with little to no pay, in dismal conditions, without knowledge of their rights. As I ticked through the usual feelings that come when faced with horror in my own proverbial backyard—surprise, righteous anger, slow-ebbing guilt—I wondered why this was perhaps the first time I had thought long and hard about labor trafficking in the United States. Brennan herself would categorize my ignorance as a byproduct of a larger trend in public consumption: "women working in brothels fit the public imagery of trafficked victims—men picking fruits and vegetables simply [do] not spur the same call-to-arms." from *Books & Culture*

How can this happen in a Christian America?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:39

Saturday, September 20, 2014

## **ECONOMIC EQUALITY- IS IT A CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE?**

We hear a lot about "the Poor" in America. We need a far more careful, judicious use of this catch-all label! But let us not define or rationalize away the plight of the truly Poor. Let us, indeed, consider what the New Testament says about them.

Consider Paul's own example and command: "... remember the poor. I [have] made every effort to do [so]" And there is Paul's command to rich people- "As for the rich in this present age, charge them ...to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share [with the poor]" And he says Christians are "to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need" (1 Tim 6:18, Titus 3 3:14) Then there is always 1 John 3:17-18, "if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed". and James 1:27 "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction" and 2:14 "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

Scripture is clear! Christians are to consider the cause, and find solutions, for Poverty. We are to get involved with people who are poor, not just give money, but become truly, personally involved. We are to be people of "com-*passion*". BUT-

Consider 2 Cor 8:9, "... Christ: although He was rich ... became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich" This text is misused. The poverty of Jesus mentioned here refers to his leaving Glory to become a human on earth. Being rich, in the verse, is the opposite of being poor.. If the poverty mentioned here is not the lack of the necessities of life. And "becoming rich" does not refer to gaining literal wealth. The text is about Salvation. Salvation is not about literal poverty or wealth. Jesus left Glory so we could go there and be spiritually rich. However, this truth is used by Paul, in the larger context of 2 Cor 8 and 9. Those of us who have money are indeed to give some of it to those who do not. What Jesus did for us and what we are to do for others, based on his example, is to demonstrate Grace (generous, unconditional, unmerited love)

Paul does not advocate Government programs to take wealth from citizens who have it and give it to citizens who do not. He is talking about Christians voluntarily giving, according to their financial means, to the poor (vs 11-12). Paul is not advocating the pursuit of economic equality. In this instance, he was raising a collection of money from one church to be given to another, many miles away. Involuntary redistribution of wealth and economic equality for all are not in this text!

1 Cor 8:13 Paul continues, "It is not that there may be relief for others and hardship for you". Paul is not advocating that the rich and poor switch places! He is advocating a kind of equality- (Grk: *isotes*). v.14 "at the present time your surplus is [available] for their need, so that their abundance may also become [available] for your need, that there may be equality." What is Biblical is generous giving based on the principal of equity (fairness) and the equality of reciprocity. The principle is, "I share my wealth with you now in your need and likewise, you share yours with me in my need down the road.

Social and economic inequalities are a fact of life and not inherently wrong. Matt 26:11, cf 1 Sam 2:7. [What is essential is equal opportunity for social and economic mobility] Masters are to treat their slaves, employers their employees, with equality of compassion, as Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We all are to extend to others compassion equal to that which we want for ourselves (The Golden Rule) That is not an argument against unequal social and legal status. The church was full of social and economic inequality and that was not challenged in the New Testament eg- see the letter to Philemon and the admonitions in Ephesians 6:5-9, Col 3:22-4:1, 1 Cor 7:21-24 Paul simply was saying, in this matter of care for the Poor, Christians as individuals are to give freely and generously of their surplus to others in need. The latter, in turn, should reciprocate in like manner, as need arises. This is the "equality"- the equality of compassion and care- Paul advocated. He did not mandate legal or social equality, nor equality of status, power or authority. And of course, there is no mandate here (or anywhere in the Bible) for any Government involvement or a progressive income tax to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor in the search for economic equality of all.

There is much more about in the Bible on this Topic and I have written much more about Poverty on my website, [www.reformedliving.org](http://www.reformedliving.org), under the Category of Re/formation Institute.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:45

Friday, September 19, 2014

## **HOW GANGS RUN PRISONS AND STREET CRIME, TOO**

"Understanding how prison gangs work is difficult: they conceal their activities and kill defectors who reveal their practices. This past summer, however, a 32-year-old academic named David Skarbek published *The Social Order of the Underworld*, his first book, which is the best attempt in a long while to explain the intricate organizational systems that make the gangs so formidable. His focus is the California prison system, which houses the second-largest inmate population in the country—about 135,600 people ..."

<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/09/how-gangs-took-over-prisons/379330/>

How can this situation exist in "Christian" America?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:06

Tuesday, September 16. 2014

## **REASONS WHY AMERICANS DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

"If Cruz felt that he couldn't in good conscience address an audience of persecuted Arab Christians without including a florid, "no greater ally" preamble about Israel, he could have withdrawn from the event. The fact that he preferred to do it this way instead says a lot — none of it good — about his priorities and instincts."

"The fact that he was widely lauded says a lot about why, if 2,000 years of Christian history in the Middle East ends in blood and ash and exile, the American right no less than the left and center will deserve a share of responsibility for that fate."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/14/opinion/sunday/ross-douthat-the-middle-east-s-friendless-christians.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:25

Tuesday, September 9, 2014

**TECHNOLOGY WILL NEVER REPLACE LOVE**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=Oe80MGeFgps#t=3](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Oe80MGeFgps#t=3)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:33

Friday, September 5, 2014

## **FUNNY, CLEVER AND IT APPLIES TO ALL BOOKS**

Apple is announcing the iPhone 6 and probably the iWatch (or something of the sort) next Tuesday. Ikea mocks them, and it's awesome.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=MOXQo7nURs0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=MOXQo7nURs0)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:21

Thursday, August 28, 2014

## **MEDICAL RESEARCH ON MARIJUANA**

<http://www.healthline.com/health/marijuana-abuse-and-addiction#Overview1>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:56

## **COMMUNICATING WITH TODAY'S TEENAGERS. REALLY?!**

1. Talk in images: emojis, symbols, pictures, videos.
  2. Communicate more frequently in shorter bursts of "snackable content."
  3. Don't talk down...talk to them as adults, even about global topics.
  4. Make stuff – or help Gen Z make stuff (they're industrious).
  5. Tap into their entrepreneurial spirit.
  6. Collaborate with them – and help them collaborate with others.
  7. Tell your story across multiple screens.
  8. Live-stream with them – or give them live-streaming access.
  9. Optimize your search results (they do their internet research).
  10. Include a social cause that they can fight for.
- <http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=6368>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:41

Tuesday, August 12. 2014

### **WHAT MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY?**

The Beatitudes described "blessed" [happy] people according to Jesus. Do they describe you? A Survey of millions of people world-wide reveals what makes them happy.

<http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/>

Where does God and Church fit in this survey?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:18

Sunday, August 10, 2014

## **CasiNO**

Liberal churches are speaking out the most on this issue and they are right. Casinos are not. Here is a good article explaining why-  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/08/a-good-way-to-wreck-a-local-economy-build-casinos/375691/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:54

Thursday, May 8, 2014

## **SEXTING**

"Hey parents, guess what? That naked picture your daughter just "sexted" to her classmate isn't worrisome after all. It's just the new way kids flirt these days. Like when you would send a note in elementary school that said, "Do you like me? Check one: 'Yes,' or 'No.'" Sure, they're naked. Or talking to each other in sexually explicit ways. But relax. Everyone's doing it."

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=5906>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:13

Wednesday, May 7, 2014

### **AGREEING WITH STEPHEN HAWKING?**

"The world's most famous physicist is warning about the risks posed by machine superintelligence, saying that it could be the most significant thing to ever happen in human history — and possibly the last. As we've discussed extensively here at io9, artificial superintelligence represents a potential existential threat to humanity, so it's good to see such a high profile scientist both understand the issue and do his part to get the word out."

<http://io9.com/stephen-hawking-says-a-i-could-be-our-worst-mistake-in-1570963874/+georgedvorsky>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:45

### **PRIDE PARADES**

Many cities are having LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) Pride Parades. I do not understand why. I am not proud of my sexual identity. I am thankful for it, but it is nothing I have achieved. It was given to me. (The same could be said of my racial and ethnic identities and my nationality- gifts all.)

The word "pride" can mean a sense of one's own proper dignity or value; self-respect. My dignity and value come from being a human, a child of God. My "self-respect" is respect for the faculties and responsibilities and privileges that are mine, being created in His Image, especially as being redeemed by His Grace in Christ.

And the word "pride" can mean pleasure or satisfaction that comes from achievement. I do indeed take pleasure and satisfaction in my achievements as a human being and as a Christian, again, by God's Grace.

I have never marched in a parade to celebrate either of these meanings of "pride".

Of course, the word can have the meaning of conceit, egotism and vanity. I hope no one parades to display "in-your-face" arrogance.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:46

Wednesday, April 23, 2014

### **VILE VITRIOL IN THE NAME OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND SCIENCE**

In the post linked below there is an extensive list of Evangelicals who are engaged with the subject of Climate Change, including many academically and professionally credentialed Climatologists, Atmospheric Scientists and Meteorologists. I highly recommend going through the List and checking out the work of these people.

I admire their work and their courage facing the barrage of vile vitriol thrown their way by the PC crowd.

This applies also to all who endorse the possibilities of Intelligent Design like Phillip Johnson; likewise with scholars like Thomas Sowell who take on the subject of Racism and Discrimination in America or those such as Daniel Pipes and Ayaan Hirsi Ali who warn us of the very real danger (and evil) of Islamists (radical Islam)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:38

Monday, April 21. 2014

## **A POSITION PAPER ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE**

"As governments consider policies to fight alleged man-made global warming, evangelical leaders have a responsibility to be well informed, and then to speak out. A Renewed Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Examination of the Theology, Science, and Economics of Global Warming demonstrates that many of these proposed policies would destroy jobs and impose trillions of dollars in costs to achieve no net benefits. They could be implemented only by enormous and dangerous expansion of government control over private life. Worst of all, by raising energy prices and hindering economic development, they would slow or stop the rise of the world's poor out of poverty and so condemn millions to premature death."

<http://www.cornwallalliance.org/articles/read/an-evangelical-declaration-on-global-warming/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:51

Friday, April 18. 2014

## **CHANGING THE CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE**

A balanced, intelligent article offering reasonable approaches to this Discussion  
<http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2014-04-14/how-to-reset-the-climate-change-debate>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:26

Monday, April 14. 2014

### **WRESTLING DOWN DEFIANCE IN THE CLASSROOM**

Student attacks teacher in classroom- teacher gets in trouble for wrestling him down  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=5807>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:10

Friday, March 28, 2014

### **THE MAIN ISSUE BEFORE THE COURT IN THE HOBBY LOBBY CASE**

The most important issue in the Hobby Lobby case being debated before the Supreme Court is not really Religious Freedom or Women's Rights. As this article explains it is about the nature and rights of a business, a corporation. We must be careful here. If a corporation is a legal "person", what are its rights? If H-L wins its case, will all other businesses have the right to do things we do not like or agree with because of their (different set of) "Religious beliefs"? <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2014/03/a-dangerous-technical-argument-against-hobby-lobby.php>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:34

Wednesday, March 19, 2014

## **WAR ON WOMEN**

I am a Christian. I am also a conservative Republican. From what I hear or read every day in the media, the latter means I am at war against women, have no compassion for the Poor and am homophobic, among other nefarious things. How can I be so evil and immoral, as well as be a practicing Christian?

"The 'War on Women' describes the legislative and rhetorical attacks on women and women's rights taking place across the nation. It includes a wide-range of policy efforts designed to place restrictions on women's health care and erode protections for women and their families. Examples at the state and federal level have included restricting contraception; cutting off funding for Planned Parenthood; state-mandated, medically unnecessary ultrasounds; abortion taxes; abortion waiting periods; forcing women to tell their employers why they want birth control, and prohibiting insurance companies from including abortion coverage in their policies."

<https://www.aclu.org/blog/tag/war-women>

The very phrase, "War against Women", means men consider women (as a group) as an enemy to be defeated, overcome, eliminated -as in War Against Drunk Drivers or War against Poverty or War against Pollution. Of course, this is not true. And since many conservatives, including Democrats,

Independents as well as Republicans, are women, this very phrase itself is absurd. From the above ACLU quote, the "War" is centered on the core issue of Abortion or a woman's reproductive rights and ancillary, related topics (insurance coverage, use and availability of contraceptives and female health care) as well as other issues which are part of the larger subject of Welfare and Poverty). In addition, there are accusations in the media that promoting the roles of being a wife and mother and homemaker can also be considered attacks on the rights of women to have other roles.

I believe in the sanctity of all human life. I believe that from the moment of conception, there is a human life in the uterus. Therefore, I believe that intentionally terminating that life, an abortion, is by definition infanticide. This logic extends to the use of abortifacients (such as RU486 and Cytotec). In the event of deciding between the two, saving the life of a baby takes precedence over a woman's claim to the right of reproductive freedom for herself [notice, I did not say, "her own life"]. Hopefully, she will use that freedom to save her child.

The only way this position can be considered part of a "war on women" is either by simply denying the fetus is a human being ("just tissue") or, if it is a baby, a woman's claim to the right of reproductive freedom for herself takes precedence over the well-being of that person and to deny her that freedom would make her, not the baby, a "victim".

The other topics and issues stand or fall on the beliefs one has about Abortion or they are decided on the basis of honest differences of beliefs about womanhood, marriage and family as well as about the role of Government in all of this. The differences are obviously diverse and divisive, but do not warrant shrill speech or hate-full accusations.

This is all mind-boggling to me, as are the accusations that, as a Christian and Republican I am homophobic and have no compassion for the Poor. To me this is flat-out untrue and makes no sense. All my life, as a Pastor, Social Worker and care-giver to people with "disabilities", I have served men and women in need and I absolutely do not hate or fear homosexuals. So where do such contrary and hurtful, offensive allegations come from? Arbitrary definitions.

I believe that Marriage is the legal bond of a man and a woman. How does that make me "homophobic"? It doesn't. But those who define Marriage in a different way arbitrarily insist I am. How did they get to make that judgment?

I believe true poverty is defined as destitution due to no cause of one's own. I do not consider someone who is not destitute to be poor. Loving a destitute person is done by giving them the care and support they need to get back on their feet, beginning with help from their family and then from the local community. I have done that all my life. If someone is destitute because of their own behavior, the way to love them is to hold them accountable to change that behavior to get themselves back on their feet. Those who have chosen a different definition of poverty and what it means to love the poor, arbitrarily insist I have no compassion for them. How did they get to make that judgment?

Where do definitions come from? Why do people choose one over another? What "dictionary" authorizes our definitions? There are three basic possibilities: the Bible, the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Founding Documents or values constructed by contemporary Culture. But then, what motivates people to choose which of these "dictionaries" they will go by? As a conservative, evangelical Christian I chose the Bible.

Conservative Christians and Republicans like me must not allow others to define us nor must we be cowed by their definitions and be pressured to change our principles (definitions) and agree with them.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:34

## **MARRIAGE AND INCOME INEQUALITY**

If we are to address Income Inequality, we must address the state of Marriage in America. There is an essential connection often overlooked in the discussion. This article offers positive ways to help-  
<http://www.aei.org/article/society-and-culture/obama-should-have-talked-about-marriage/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:59

## **MISLEADING USE OF STATS ABOUT WHAT WOMEN ARE PAID**

The facts about what women earn compared to men. There are many variables that must be taken into account  
<http://www.factcheck.org/2012/06/obamas-77-cent-exaggeration/>  
<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2014/jan/29/barack-obama/barack-obama-state-union-says-women-make-77-cents-/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:47

## **TECHNITES**

"Do you recall the tower of Babel? Of course you do. It's become a cultural touchstone, but not one that I think is clearly understood. Because we're rebuilding it, only this time we are not using bricks and mortar, but silicon chips and genetic engineering.

We live in a technological age, and have embraced technological advance with abandon, creating what Neil Postman termed a "technopoly" where technology of every kind is cheerfully granted sovereignty. Or, as Jacques Ellul has written, at least the process of technique designed to serve our ends."

Read all of James White's article here-

<http://www.churchandculture.org/Blog.asp?ID=5646>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:33

## **NEIL POSTMAN: FIVE THINGS WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE**

First, that we always pay a price for technology; the greater the technology, the greater the price

Second, that there are always winners and losers, and that the winners always try to persuade the losers that they are really winners

Third, that there is embedded in every great technology an epistemological, political or social prejudice. Sometimes that bias is greatly to our advantage. Sometimes it is not. The printing press annihilated the oral tradition; telegraphy annihilated space; television has humiliated the word; the computer, perhaps, will degrade community life. And so on.

Fourth, technological change is not additive; it is ecological, which means, it changes everything and is, therefore, too important to be left entirely in the hands of Bill Gates.

And fifth, technology tends to become mythic; that is, perceived as part of the natural order of things, and therefore tends to control more of our lives than is good for us. .... When a technology become mythic, it is always dangerous because it is then accepted as it is, and is therefore not easily susceptible to modification or control.

[http://www.personal.psu.edu/sye5039/blogs/steven\\_a\\_ehrlich\\_e-portfolio/2011/11/post.html](http://www.personal.psu.edu/sye5039/blogs/steven_a_ehrlich_e-portfolio/2011/11/post.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:30

Monday, March 3, 2014

## **ETHNIC DIVISIONS IN UKRAINE AND AMERICA**

The situation today in Crimea and Ukraine and Russia is well illustrated by these maps. Besides Politics, they are seriously divided by languages and ethnic identities and have been for centuries.

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/02/27/world/europe/ukraine-divisions-crimea.html?>

This map is shows the amazing numbers of language and ethnic groups in America

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php?rog3=US>

Rev.5:9-10 There shall be people from every tribe, language, people and nation in Heaven.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:59

Monday, February 17, 2014

## **SOME DOCTORS CAN LEGALLY KILL CHILDREN**

Euthanasia has been legal for adults in Belgium for some 10 years. Now it is legal there to euthanize children.  
<http://townhall.com/tipsheet/christinerousselle/2014/02/17/belgium-approves-measure-to-allow-doctors-to-euthanize-sick-children-n1796237>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:45

Saturday, February 15, 2014

## **BAD ARGUMENTS**

Many people arguing on talk shows [and elsewhere] use very poor logic. It is maddening- usually lots of heat but very little light. Here are examples of 15 "Bad" [using logical fallacies] Arguments.  
<http://listverse.com/2012/11/08/15-bad-arguments-we-all-abuse/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:39

Friday, February 7, 2014

## **DETAILS TO REMEMBER WHEN READING OR LISTENING TO THE NEWS**

ADJECTIVES AND MODIFIERS ARE VERY IMPORTANT: a few common examples

embryonic stem-cell research is not the same as stem-cell research

women's college basketball is not the same as college basketball

same-sex marriage is not the same as marriage

illegal immigrants are not the same as immigrants

Fundamentalist Christian is not the same as Christian

Roman Catholic is not the same as Catholic

Pit bull dog is not the same as Dog

Theistic Evolution is not the same as Evolution

DEFINITIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT: a few random examples

jobs lost is not the same as workers lost

deficit is not the same as debt

church is not the same as Religion

Terrorist is not the same as Muslim

Jihadist is not the same as Muslim

Arab is not the same as Muslim

Islamism is not the same as Islam

Tea Party is not the same as Republican

MSNBC is not the same as The Media

Fox Network is not the same as The Media

the Weather is not the same as the Climate

Health Insurance is not the same as Health Care

Intelligent Design is not the same as Creationism

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:27

Monday, January 27, 2014

## **THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT**

Reasons why the pro-Life Movement is making progress

<http://www.worldtribune.com/2014/01/25/how-the-pro-life-movement-is-winning-american-hearts-and-minds/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:44

Thursday, January 23, 2014

## **TEENS AND POT**

Here are facts that you must know about Teens using marijuana  
[http://www.denverpost.com/marijuana/ci\\_24825184/teens-and-pot-use-parents-heres-what-you](http://www.denverpost.com/marijuana/ci_24825184/teens-and-pot-use-parents-heres-what-you)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:53

## **MINDLESS PARENTING**

I'm not sure which part of the article disturbed me the most. First, after ensuring that his six-year-old daughter was on the family iPad, his eight and eleven-year-old sons were on the PlayStation, and his two-year-old was watching something on his iPhone...

...the writer said, "For me, this was a good morning's parenting. There had been no arguments and I had been able to read the papers in peace." That was bad enough.

But then came the justification. Namely, that any other way of parenting "just isn't realistic." Why? The "world has moved on." Since it's not always safe to let children venture outside where they might run or play or use their imagination, children simply have to "spend more time in front of a screen."

Granted, the author continues, they could go outside, or engage in reading, but such an endeavor "invariably involves parental supervision, and that is a limited resource." So technology comes to the rescue, offering parents a way to occupy their children in ways that do not involve direct parental supervision.

Hardly know where to begin. Actually, I do. Let's begin with the supposedly innocuous nature of media, because it's not.

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=5454>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:49

Friday, January 17, 2014

### **A PLEA FOR YOUNG EVANGELICALS TO BE PRO-LIFE**

Christians and non-Christians can and should partner together around such initiatives as clean water and poverty relief, but if man is indeed God's unique creation, if the blood of the innocents cry out to him from the ground, then surely abortion is as much a moral evil as anything else that motivates our generation to activism. In fact, the denial of human life is arguably what triggers all other forms of activism. If we don't get our witness right on life, how can our witness on any other issue seem anything other than pyrrhic?

Misguided opponents on the other side of this issue would have the public believe that being pro-life is a right-wing political cause drawn up by Machiavellian political strategists to elect Republicans or worse—a conspiratorial effort motivated by patriarchy and a repressive conservative agenda to roll back the rights of women. This couldn't be further from the truth. Being pro-life is about justice. And justice is blind—blind to color, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status. Justice is standing up for what is true, good, and beautiful; and on the issue of life, we insist that every child is a uniquely good and beautiful creation of God, and therefore deserving of life.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/january-web-only/abortion-meets-new-generation.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:08

### **"SAME SEX MARRIAGE" ENDANGERING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

With federal judges in two highly conservative states striking down "defense of marriage" laws as unconstitutional this January, more church-state experts are advising same-sex marriage opponents that the marriage battleground should shift to religious freedom.

With same-sex marriage now legal in 17 states and the District of Columbia, more religious liberty advocates like Wilson are helping same-sex marriage laws include sufficient religious exemptions.

"Too many folks see this as an all-or-nothing matter," says University of St. Thomas law professor Thomas Berg. "If religious liberty is tied to defeating same-sex marriage altogether, religious liberty is going to lose." In other words: If you can't beat them, amend them.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/january-web-only/evangelicals-favorite-same-sex-marriage-law-oklahoma-utah.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:49

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

### **WHEN LEGAL IS NOT RIGHT: SLAVERY AFTER "EMANCIPATION"**

For nearly eighty years, between the end of the Civil War and World War II, across a belt of the South that includes Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, Texas, North Carolina, and South Carolina, more than a hundred thousand black Southerners were arrested and forced into labor against their will for years at a time.

Even before Reconstruction ended in 1877, many Southern states began enacting a series of laws intended to re-enslave newly freed blacks and provide cheap labor sources. Vagrancy, loitering, riding or walking near the rails, unemployment, even talking too loudly in public, carried heavy penalties or stiff jail sentences. The laws, or "Black Codes," resulted in a large influx of blacks into the criminal justice system and the forced labor pool.

But some of their stories have been brought to life in *Slavery by Another Name*, which premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and had its national broadcast last year and was rebroadcast on PBS in February. The book and film directly challenge the notion that slavery ended with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. They highlight a clause in the Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which was ratified in December 1865: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

<http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/special-edition/feature/re-enslaved>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:34

### **HOW "TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE" WAS PRESENTED THE FIRST TIME**

Fascinating illustration of how different Movie Directors seeking to reach a different audience at a different period of time tell the same story in very different ways. This teaches us about how we write and read History (including the Bible), tell stories and are influenced by our times.

<http://www.neh.gov/humanities/2014/januaryfebruary/feature/solomon-northups-odyssey>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:07

Saturday, January 11. 2014

## **HEROIN CRISIS IN VERMONT AND NEW ENGLAND**

MONTPELIER, Vt. — In a sign of how drastic the epidemic of drug addiction here has become, Gov. Peter Shumlin on Wednesday devoted his entire State of the State Message to what he said was “a full-blown heroin crisis” gripping Vermont. “In every corner of our state, heroin and opiate drug addiction threatens us,” he said. He said he wanted to reframe the public debate to encourage officials to respond to addiction as a chronic disease, with treatment and support, rather than with only punishment and incarceration.

Last year, he said, nearly twice as many people here died from heroin overdoses as the year before. Since 2000, Vermont has seen an increase of more than 770 percent in treatment for opiate addictions, up to 4,300 people in 2012. While it may be acute in Vermont, it is not isolated. In the past few years, officials have reported a surge in the use of heroin in New England, with a sharp rise in overdoses and deaths, as well as robberies and other crimes common among addicts. Those same statistics are being replicated across the country. Lawmakers in virtually every state are introducing legislation in response to what is rapidly being perceived as a public health crisis.

“The Centers for Disease Control and most national experts agree there’s an epidemic of drug overdose deaths in America,” Dr. Harry L. Chen, Vermont’s health commissioner, said in an interview. He said the rate of overdose deaths across the country had tripled since 1990. “Nationwide, more people die of drug overdoses than from motor vehicle crashes,” he said. Dr. Chen said the highest rates of substance abuse were found in New England and the Northeast. [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/09/us/in-annual-speech-vermont-governor-shifts-focus-to-drug-abuse.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/09/us/in-annual-speech-vermont-governor-shifts-focus-to-drug-abuse.html?_r=0)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:14

Friday, January 10, 2014

## **HOW TO BE A GREAT HISTORY TEACHER**

"I respect what high-school teachers do enormously. ... I'm strongly in favor of students knowing the facts of history, not just memorizing or having it drilled into their heads. I'm certainly against this testing mania that's going on now where you can judge whether someone really understands history by their performance on a multiple-choice test. My experience as a teacher and as a student long ago, is that there is no substitute for a good teacher. I don't care what bells and whistles that you're using, it's the teacher in the classroom. That's why I'm a little skeptical about MOOCs, online education. I'm old-fashioned enough to believe that the presence of a teacher is actually critical to learning. I'm less interested in pedagogical approaches than the training of the teacher, the ability of the teacher, the knowledge of the teacher, and the teacher's ability to inspire students by conveying his or her own enthusiasm for the subject. The number-one thing is, you have to know history to actually teach it ... the key thing is really to love the subject, to be able to convey that to your students, and if you can do that, I think you'll be a great teacher." These are excerpts from an interview-  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/01/you-have-to-know-history-to-actually-teach-it/282957/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:33

## **WAR ON POVERTY: HOW TO WIN IT?**

Here is a 124 page book brimming with statistics about Poverty and Income Equality in America, especially among woman and children, particularly women and children "of color". It is an extensive argument for far more Federal Government involvement and assistance to "win the war". The response of Conservatives must not be to dismiss the facts or the proposals. If we do not agree with the authors of this Paper, we must deal with what they say and come up with realistic solutions to the issues and problems that are better. What does the Bible say?  
[http://halfinten.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/HalfInTen\\_2013\\_CAP-FINAL.pdf](http://halfinten.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/HalfInTen_2013_CAP-FINAL.pdf)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:55

## **WAR ON POVERTY: Definitions and Contributing Factors**

Many surveys [see the posts below] list these Predictors of Poverty and economic mobility:

economic and racial segregation,  
community density,  
the size of a community's middle class,  
quality of schools,  
community religiosity  
family structure, - the "single strongest correlate of upward mobility."

The Federal Government's official measure of "Poverty" counts pre-tax income only. It excludes non-cash benefits and government transfers, like food stamps and the Earned Income Tax Credit, which increase the resources poor people have at their disposal.

The Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) is different. The SPM includes a higher income threshold for poverty and it counts non-cash benefits like food stamps [SNAP]. Today, 15 percent of Americans receive food stamps, housing subsidies and the EITC as income. But it also accounts for higher expenses extracted from that income. And it adjusts those expenses for geography.

The War on Poverty included the creation of Medicare and Medicaid, the expansion of minimum wage coverage, an effort to increase access and federal support for elementary and secondary education and many other initiatives to boost skills and employment, eg- Pell Grants and Head Start. Additional programs include Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which provides basic income support to the elderly and people with disabilities.

When all this is taken into account. the net effect is a 16 percent poverty rate (or 50 million poor Americans). Which is not much different that the official estimate of 15%. Many blame the Economy, but we are talking here of a 50 year span of Welfare, which includes much better economic times.

The statistics, among many, that alarm me the most are the ones about the increasing number of single-parent families

## Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>

(who thus have difficulty holding anything other than part-time jobs), absentee fathers and high school drop out rates (which means minimal skills for finding and keeping jobs). Addressing these factors in particular is extremely essential in the war on poverty, but also in helping millions of people live meaningful, healthy lives.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:34

Thursday, January 9, 2014

## **REASONS FOR INEQUALITY AND POVERTY**

So what factors, at the community level, do predict if poor children will move up the economic ladder as adults? What explains, for instance, why the Salt Lake City metro area is one of the 100 largest metropolitan areas most likely to lift the fortunes of the poor and the Atlanta metro area is one of the least likely?

Harvard economist Raj Chetty, a principal investigator at the Equality of Opportunity Project, has pointed to economic and racial segregation, community density, the size of a community's middle class, the quality of schools, community religiosity, and family structure, which he calls the "single strongest correlate of upward mobility." Chetty finds that communities like Salt Like City, with high levels of two-parent families and religiosity, are much more likely to see poor children get ahead than communities like Atlanta, with high levels of racial and economic segregation.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/01/if-you-really-care-about-ending-poverty-stop-talking-about-inequality/282906/>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/01/the-war-on-poverty-turns-50-why-arent-we-winning/282832/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:50

Monday, December 23, 2013

### **THE REALLY DARK SIDE OF DICKEN'S CHRISTMAS STORY**

"... when I first read the novel itself, after viewing various editions of the movie, I was shocked. Scrooge was not the buffoonish, almost cartoon-like character some of the movies made him out to be. He was genuinely evil. Cruel. Malicious. He was a dark and sinister man. The story actually reads more like a Stephen King novel."  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=5331>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:49

Monday, November 25. 2013

## **THE N-WORD**

Is it ok for African-Americans to use the N-word? Here is a sports columnist who explains why it is not!  
[http://www.masslive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2013/11/the\\_n-word\\_is\\_never\\_acceptable.html](http://www.masslive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2013/11/the_n-word_is_never_acceptable.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:11

Monday, November 18. 2013

## **IS GOOGLE GOD?**

Perceptive piece by James White  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/Blog.asp?ID=5068>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:30

Thursday, November 7, 2013

## **UNPLUGGING THE FAMILY**

Do your children tune in and drop out of family times?  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=5136>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:05

Tuesday, November 5, 2013

## **BEING HUMAN:THE MEANING OF PERSONHOOD, SEXUALITY AND GENDER**

I have just posted a Major Position Paper on the subject in the title above on my website. It includes a discussion of these Topics:

Human Nature and the Image of God  
Human Nature and Personhood  
God and Sexuality  
Human Sexuality  
Gender Roles  
Sex in Heaven  
Are some people born as homosexuals?  
Transgender Sexuality

<http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:53

Friday, October 18. 2013

### **SLAVERY TODAY- 30 million people**

Nearly 30 million people live in slavery worldwide, with most of them in Asia and Africa, according to a report released Thursday. The report incorporates factors that include the traditional definition of slavery — owning another person — as well as things such as child marriage and human trafficking.

Here are the highlights of the report:

India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Russia, Thailand, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar and Bangladesh together account for more than three-quarters of the total estimate.

The West African nation of Mauritania tops the list. It has the highest estimated proportion of enslaved people in the world. The report says there are between 140,000 and 160,000 people enslaved in Mauritania. That's out of a population of just 3.8 million.

India has the most slaves (between 13.3 million and 14.7 million people), followed by China (2.8 million to 3.1 million) and Pakistan (2 million to 2.2 million).

Iceland, Ireland and the U.K. have the fewest slaves. (They rank 160 on the index.) The U.S. is ranked 134 (with between 57,000 and 63,000 people considered enslaved).

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2013/10/17/236212198/india-china-top-list-of-nations-with-most-slaves>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:13

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

## **THE "NEW AMERICAN CENTER"**

"At the center of national sentiment there's no longer a chasm but a common ground where a diverse and growing majority - 51 percent [!] - is bound by a surprising set of shared ideas."

"Just because Washington is polarized doesn't mean America is," says Robert Blizzard, a partner at Public Opinion Strategies, the lead pollster for Mitt Romney in 2012. His firm co-created the survey with the Benenson Strategy Group, pollsters for President Obama, and the result is a nation in eight distinct segments: two on the far right ("The Righteous Right" and "The Talk Radio Heads"), two on the far left ("The Bleeding Hearts" and "The Gospel Left"), and four in the middle that represent nothing less than a new American center ("Minivan Moderates," "The MBA Middle," "The Pick-up Populists, and "The #WhateverMan.").

<http://www.nbcnews.com/id/53277240#introl> knew when I wrote recently about the causes of our divided Nation that I was over simplifying; but the conclusion drawn by the above Poll reveals (to the pollsters) that Americans are divided into "eight distinct segments" does not change what I wrote. I still believe the main divide between Americans is fundamentally between two major ideologies and the persistent pursuit of self-interest by individuals and groups.

The Segments were determined by demographic factors and positions taken by those who participated in the poll on specific social, religious, economic and political issues. Of course, the data gathered (and the labels given) were subject to the interpretations (and values) of the Pollsters and especially their major conclusion that the Country is actually not divided, but has a "new American Center". For the record, the pollsters put me into what they call, "The Righteous Right" segment. I am not in the Center.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:16

Friday, October 4, 2013

## **FOUR TYPES OF CONSERVATIVES**

In the post below this one, I mention Conservatives and Libertarians. This article identifies 4 major divisions among "Conservatives" and postulates that we are all held together only by a common, strong dislike of Liberalism and if it were to disappear, Conservatives would break apart and fight each other!  
<http://www.libertylawsite.org/2012/08/04/four-heads-and-one-heart/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:38

Friday, September 27, 2013

## **BIBLICAL ALTERNATIVE TO OBAMACARE**

I have just posted my 5-Part Series on Developing a Health Care Program from Biblical Principles.  
[http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1](http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1)

One of my conclusions is that there is no Biblical or Constitutional Mandate whatsoever for Federal Health Insurance for all (or for any) citizens, let alone for single payer or public option insurance coverage.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:32

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

### **SHOULD AI CYBORGS BE BAPTIZED?**

A Google engineer predicted, "We'll be uploading our entire minds to computers by 2045, and our bodies will be replaced by machines within 90 years." In response, some Christians warned that offloading our minds to computers and bolstering our own bodies with technology presents us with a high-tech sense of Gnosticism. At the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in June, Russell Moore briefly mentioned, in a list of future challenges for the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, the question of whether artificially intelligent cyborgs should be baptized. Given a trajectory that seems straight out of sci-fi, I'm worried about the future—specifically what technological advancements mean for our embodied, thinking, knowing, feeling human minds.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2013/september/this-is-your-brain-on-google.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:29

Sunday, September 15, 2013

## **THE NEW NORMAL FAMILY**

In the last 50 years, the percentage of US children raised by a single parent increased from 9 percent to 26 percent. According to Jason DeParle of The New York Times, for women aged 30 and below, out-of-wedlock childbearing has become "the new normal." While in 1960 almost 70 percent of Americans aged 20 to 29 were married, today only 25 percent are married — and for those who do marry, the divorce rate remains high. How will these changes affect America's workplaces, faith communities, and economy in the coming decades?  
<http://www.aei.org/events/2013/10/10/the-american-family-how-a-new-normal-is-reshaping-religion-work-and-todays-economy/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:50

## **FACTORS FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY**

Scranton, Pa., may not be anybody's idea of a boom town. A year ago, with the industrial city in northeastern Pennsylvania on the verge of bankruptcy, the mayor cut city workers' pay to the minimum wage. But Scranton still stands out as one of the American cities where poor people have among the best odds of climbing into the middle class, according to a large new study. A poor person from Scranton is almost twice as likely to rise into a higher income bracket than a poor person from Toledo, Ohio, or South Bend, Ind. By the measurements of the professors who did the research — four economists, at Harvard and the University of California, Berkeley — rates of upward mobility in Scranton are similar to those in Seattle, Boston and New York.

The authors of the new study found four factors that areas with more upward mobility tend to have in common:

- a large and geographically dispersed middle class;
  - better than average schools;
  - a high share of two-parent households; and
  - populations engaged with religious and community organizations.
- <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/07/22/snapshots-of-upwardly-mobile-areas/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:39

## **WHICH IS BETTER TO LIVE IN: A CITY, THE SUBURBS OR SMALL TOWN**

Here is an excellent article discussing whether "suburb-hating" is anti-child. It is followed by many cogent, well-written posts, discussing pros and cons of the best kind of place to live in, particularly the best places to raise children. Very thought-provoking discussion.

<http://www.newgeography.com/content/003916-suburb-hating-anti-child?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:22

Saturday, September 14, 2013

## **MEASURING HOW WELL-OFF ALL AMERICANS ARE**

### **SUMMARY MEASURES OF WELL-BEING (2011)**

Extended measures of well-being include a variety of indicators of how households fare. Table 1 provides summary measures of each of the five broad domains of well-being in 2011.<sup>2</sup> Among all householders, just 64 percent had all six of the following appliances and electronic goods: clothes washer, clothes dryer, refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, and a land line or cellular phone.<sup>3</sup> Nearly 85 percent reported having no problems with housing repairs.<sup>4</sup> Many fewer households (72 percent) had no neighborhood problems with street conditions, traffic, trash or litter, abandoned buildings, industries or businesses, or smoke or odors. Just under 9 in 10 householders were able to meet all but one or fewer of their basic needs. Regardless of whether or not householders had difficulty with meeting these needs, 86 percent of them expected to obtain help from friends, family, or community agencies if the need arose.

Survey by US Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-136.pdf>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:37

Wednesday, August 28, 2013

## **I HAVE A DREAM**

In Martin Luther King's famous "I have a Dream" speech given 50 years ago today, he declared the Founding Fathers/Document promised, yea, guaranteed "Freedom" for everyone; but "America" had failed to keep that promise for "Negroes" and it was time to make it happen- he had a dream that it would, a dream that the Millennial Kingdom of God would soon come

I recently posted 3 new Essays about "Freedom", how it has been defined and what it actually is and what it requires to work out in practice. <http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:55

Tuesday, August 27. 2013

### **CAN MILLENNIALS BE SAVED?**

Millennials are said to be the Generation that has dropped out of church. Here is how one article describes them as a group. Obviously they are not all this way, thankfully; how could anyone with these characteristics be a Christian at the same time? Pinning the "me, me, me" label on Gen Y, millennials, or whatever you want to call them, has become so ubiquitous, Time magazine actually blasted it across their cover a few months ago: "The ME ME ME Generation." But guess what? Twentysomethings aren't apologizing. They say it's a good thing.

"It's viewed as an extremely self-centered thing—and that's kind of the point!" said Tim Tieu, who has his own consulting firm just two years after graduating from college. "If you're not self-centered in this way ... if you don't create a LinkedIn profile to show off your skills or if you don't have that personal website talking about your side projects ... then you're at a disadvantage." One of the biggest criticisms [of twentysomethings] is that they give off a sense of entitlement.  
<http://www.cnbc.com/id/100966127>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:36

Tuesday, August 20, 2013

## **TWO "WORDS" FROM THE LORD FOR THIS WEEK**

This week many will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington, the highlight of which was the "I have a Dream" Speech of Martin Luther King Jr

Acts 2:17 And in the last days it shall be, God declares, 18 that I will pour out my Spirit 19 on all flesh, and your sons and 20 your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; BUT God has also declared-

JEREMIAH 23:23 Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? 24 Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. 25 I have heard what the prophets ... saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' 28 Let the prophet who has a dream 10 tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. 11 What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. 29 Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:48

Monday, July 22. 2013

### **MEANWHILE. IN CHICAGO**

"Broadly speaking, the shootings are up the most in cities that are most distressed economically. Again, I have no data to confirm it, but my suspicion is that there is a fairly direct correlation between increased economic distress and increased murder rates. But I believe a couple of other factors play into this as well – the cities most impacted by white flight over the last generation have increased murder rates, and the cities that have witnessed recent substantial black middle class flight are the ones whose murder rates have recently spiked."-- from a very interesting website <http://cornersideyard.blogspot.com/2013/07/more-chicago-crime-isolation-and-rust.html>

Did God call His People, through Nehemiah, to work for the redemption of the City? There is a series of articles in CT about current, on-going efforts to do this in various Cities across the Nation

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:12

Saturday, July 20, 2013

## **POVERTY IN PLAIN SIGHT**

"A recent NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll revealed that given a list of eight factors and asked to choose the one most responsible for the continuing problem of poverty, 24 percent of respondents in the poll chose "too much government welfare that prevents initiative."

"Lack of job opportunities" was the second most popular answer, at 18 percent, followed by "lack of good educational opportunities" and "breakdown of families," with 13 percent apiece.

The other four options in the poll, in descending order, were "lack of work ethic," "lack of government funding," "drugs" and "racial discrimination." Eight percent of respondents said that all eight factors were equally responsible." Check out this informative Series: Poverty in Plain Sight

[http://inplainsight.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2013/06/06/18802216-many-americans-blame-government-welfare-for-persistent-poverty-poll-finds](http://inplainsight.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/06/06/18802216-many-americans-blame-government-welfare-for-persistent-poverty-poll-finds)Isn't there a necessary connection between the first four factors? A solution to Poverty would require improving on all of them. For an overview of what the Bible says the definition, causes and solutions of Poverty really are, see my website-

[http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com\\_sectionex&view=category&id=7&Itemid=57#catid64](http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com_sectionex&view=category&id=7&Itemid=57#catid64)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:29

## **WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MLK Jr VISION OF A COLOR-BLIND SOCIETY?**

Black History Month. I'm all in favor of learning and appreciating the contributions of various ethnic groups to the American Experience. We should learn about, and honor, "Black" Americans who have been important change makers in the history of our Country... and the Chinese, Cubans, Italians, Irish and Polish- to name only a few. We would need more than 12 months to do it.

On the other hand, Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream of a color blind society. Me, too. Our City has many special interest groups noisily vying for a bigger piece of the political pie based on skin color or language. As Christians, of course, we are opposed to judging groups of people based on genetics (skin pigmentation), country of origin or language. So why don't we agree with MLK Jr. and support his vision? We know that discrimination against groups by such criteria is morally and Biblically wrong. We know that according to the Bible and Science, there is only one Race- the Human Race. So why do we continue to tolerate or advocate making political, social, economic decisions based on so-called "Racism" and Discrimination?

This weekend, a man who would be our President, officially begins his campaign. On one hand, he is all about "the people", appealing to everyone, advocating color-blindness like MLK Jr. On the other hand, he is promoted as an African American who would be our first Black President. Which is it? Ironically, the man's mother is white and he grew up in a white, middle class family.

"Barack Obama was born in Honolulu, Hawaii to Barack Hussein Obama, Sr. (born in Alego, a village in Nyanza Province, Kenya) and Ann Dunham (born in Wichita, Kansas). His parents met while both were attending the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii at Manoa. When Obama was two years old, his parents separated and later divorced; his father went to Harvard University to pursue Ph.D. studies, eventually returning to Kenya. His mother married ... an Indonesian foreign student, with whom she had one daughter. The family moved to Jakarta where Obama attended local schools from ages 6 to 10. He then returned to Honolulu to live with his maternal grandparents, attending Punahou School from 5th through 12th grade and graduating from there in 1979."

"In Dreams from My Father, Obama describes his experiences growing up in his mother's white, middle class family. His knowledge about his absent black Kenyan father came mainly through family stories and photographs. Of his early childhood, Obama wrote: "That my father looked nothing like the people around me — that he was black as pitch, my mother white as milk — barely registered in my mind." [13] As a young adult, he struggled to reconcile social perceptions of his multiracial heritage." -material from Wikipedia

He could be seen, ideally, as an example of the union of black and white- an example of a man who combines the best of both "races". "Seen" is the operative word. This candidate is seen (perceived) to be "Black" by the public and chooses to identify himself as African American. I want to judge the man, pro or con, on his character and qualifications for the Office. Period. Why doesn't every Christian?

I wrote this piece and posted it on this Blog 6 years ago. You can use the search function in the right hand column to find several other articles I wrote about Discrimination

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:54

## **RATIONAL DISCRIMINATION**

The letters to the editor of our local paper continue to contain cries of unfair play. [I wrote this post several years ago- it still applies] The new ordinance banning teens from a local Mall on weekends after 4 pm, unless they are accompanied by an adult, is being condemned by some because, they it penalizes individual kids who behave well because of groups of teens who do not. It does seem that Mall Security could deal with rowdy teens without coming down on all teens. In an earlier post tried to explain the sometimes necessity for "rational discrimination" based on behavior (empirical evidence) of the group in question. My concern here is the application of rational discrimination to area such employment or college admissions. When must people, any people, be treated as a group and when must they be treated as individuals? As a general principle, Scripture teaches us to accept and respect and treat fairly each person as a person, when it is at all possible to do so. [There are times when transactions are impersonal or when crowds are involved.] Gender, age and "race" are included in who a person is. Behavior of the group to which a person belongs, however, is another matter. It is not essential to a being a person.

Discrimination, in the sense of rejecting or ostracizing any person solely on the basis of something essential to that person being a person, is unscriptural: to refuse to hire or promote someone because they are White males or Asian women is wrong.

Behavior is another matter. Many times we are treated according to how the group we are in is treated. If the group is known for making trouble and, therefore, are not welcome in a restaurant, we must distance ourselves from that group. If we do not, we will be discriminated against, not for who we are as a person, but because of the behavior of the group. If there is empirical evidence that White males, as a group, have been oppressive to women, it would be reasonable if a White male applicant for a job in a woman-led business with female employees were to be discriminated against and preference were given to others, because of his membership in a group. He obviously could feel that this was very unfair to him. He wants to be considered on his own merits alone. It would be absolutely wrong for the female management to reject him because of his gender and "race". Doubly wrong, if he personally was not guilty of oppressing women. If a particular African-American were rejected for a mortgage because, statistically, African-Americans as a group, over a period of time, had a record of defaulting on mortgage loans, that would be rational [not racial] discrimination- but nevertheless unfair. The applicant must be given a chance based on his own credit history alone.

This logic leads to the rejection of all types of discrimination based on "race", gender and age- including "affirmative action".

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:41

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF POVERTY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

We are hearing a lot, again, about the Problem of Race in America or what is perceived as Racism by African Americans. This is connected with the the Problem of Poverty. Here is a good survey of key characteristics of the Culture of Poverty that must be be faced. I see a connection between the two "Problems". The last sentence is crucial in dealing with both. And it is related to my post below this one-"Teachers in low-income school districts often get specialized training about the culture of poverty in order to better understand their students' lives and take those challenges into account in the classroom. As a high school teacher, I was trained in Ruby K. Payne's "A Framework for Understanding Poverty." Payne has a 20-item list of the characteristics of generational poverty, which includes constant high levels of background noise, the overvaluation of entertainment as a respite from the exertions of survival, a strong belief in destiny or fate because choices are in low supply, and polarized thinking in which options are hardly ever examined (again, because so few tend to be available). Also pervasive in the culture of poverty is the sense that time isn't for measuring, that it occurs only in the present, and that the future exists only as a word. Living in the moment is the rule: "Being proactive, setting goals and planning ahead are not a part of generational poverty," Payne writes. "Most of what occurs is reactive and in the moment. Future implications of present actions are seldom considered." This also explains poverty's lack of organization and order. "Devices for organization (files, planners, etc.) don't exist." If this sounds like the perfect environment for producing students with few prospects for academic achievement, you're right." <http://www.600words.com/2013/07/the-challenges-of-overcoming-generational-poverty.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:22

Friday, July 19. 2013

## **BREAD-WINNER MOTHERS**

"A record 40% of all households with children under the age of 18 include mothers who are either the sole or primary source of income for the family, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The share was just 11% in 1960." "These "breadwinner moms" are made up of two very different groups: 5.1 million (37%) are married mothers who have a higher income than their husbands, and 8.6 million (63%) are single mothers."

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/05/29/breadwinner-moms/> What does this tell us about the state of Biblical Marriage and Family?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:27

## **DECLINE IN ABORTIONS? OR IN PRO-CHOICE MOVEMENT?**

Waiting in our ophthalmologist's office yesterday, I read the issue of January issue of Time Magazine whose cover story about the "Pro-Choice" Movement. Here are articles from Pro-Life websites commenting on the Time's article- According to LifeNews.com, Time is running a cover story about the long defeat for pro-abortion advocates. They even include an article by pro-life advocate Emily Buchanan of the Susan B. Anthony List. I haven't read the issue, but it is interesting that Time is acknowledging the decline in support for unrestricted abortion. I also wonder, though, ... whether America is becoming robustly pro-life. Also, many abortions today are accomplished using pills, rather than surgical instruments. Many Americans who are squeamish about clinics may not have the same squeamishness about abortifacient morning-after pills, esp. in the "hard" cases.

<http://www.lifenews.com/2013/01/03/shocking-time-magazine-cover-after-40-years-abortion-activists-losing/>

The mainstream media will get around to covering abortion this month as the nation marks 40 years of legalized abortion for any reason throughout pregnancy via Roe v Wade. Time magazine has released its issue, which comes to a shocking conclusion. The cover article makes the case that the pro-abortion side is losing the abortion debate, saying, "40 Years Ago, Abortion Rights Activists Won an Epic Victory With Roe v. Wade. They've been losing ever since."

<http://www.uffl.org/blog/2013/01/03/time-magazine-and-abortion/>

Read the article mentioned above by pro-life advocate Emily Buchanan

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:42

Tuesday, July 9, 2013

## **MAJORITY OF AMERICANS APPROVE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE; EVANGELICALS DO NOT**

### **NEW BARNA POLL REVEALS SHIFTS**

As Americans who believe in a "one man, one woman" definition of marriage become a minority for the first time ever, evangelical Christians actually have become more opposed to same-sex marriage, a recent Barna Group survey found.

Barna's June poll results revealed that as Americans have become more aware of the LGBTQ community's agenda, a majority of Americans have likewise become more accepting of legal recognition of same-sex unions and granting these unions equal rights. Catholics, other religious groups, and religious nones have shown large increases in support for legal recognition of gay rights, but churchgoing Protestants—and evangelicals in particular—have maintained firm opposition to the legal measures on social and moral grounds.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2013/july/evangelicals-increasingly-counter-cultural-on-gay-marriage-.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:19

Wednesday, June 26, 2013

### **ARE THOSE WHO ADVOCATE TOLERANCE THEMSELVES TOLERANT?**

In the new "Tolerant Society", shall people who believe Homosexuality (or being LGBT) is wrong be tolerated? or shall they be forced out of the Public Square?

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2013/january/louie-giglio-moment-are-evangelicals-and-about-4-of-10.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:07

Thursday, June 20, 2013

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LEADS TO INEQUALITY**

If America is to be equitable, with careers open to all talents and competent citizens capable of making their way in an increasingly demanding world, Americans must heed the warnings implicit in observations from two heroes of modern conservatism. In “The Constitution of Liberty” (1960), Friedrich Hayek noted that families are the primary transmitters of human capital — habits, mores, education. Hence families, much more than other social institutions or programs, are determinative of academic and vocational success. In “The Unheavenly City” (1970), Edward C. Banfield wrote: “All education favors the middle- and upper-class child, because to be middle or upper class is to have qualities that make one particularly educable.”

Debatable? read the rest of the column-

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/george-will-upward-mobility-has-become-tougher-to-achieve>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:55

### **PREGNANCY AND PRENATAL TESTING**

Four million American women are expecting a child this year, and many of them will encounter something entirely new in human pregnancy. Based on a simple blood draw at an initial prenatal visit, they'll be able to learn key genetic information about the fetus they're carrying—and face potentially wrenching decisions about what to do.

These noninvasive prenatal tests, called NIPTs, work by using a sample of cell-free fetal DNA circulating in the mother's blood to detect chromosomal conditions. The tests' most frequent target is trisomy 21, the genetic variation that causes Down syndrome in approximately one in every 700 births in the U.S.

Bioethicists, genetic counselors and advocates for disability rights have nervously anticipated the commercial rollout of these tests. Even—or perhaps especially—those who firmly support reproductive rights know that NIPTs have profound implications.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323844804578533334085530690.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:25

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

## **KEEPING THE HUMAN IN HUMAN BEING**

[Al Gore, in his latest book, *The Reinvention of Life and Death*] calls for protocols to guide decisions about human genetic modification. "[He writes] we should place priority on the development of safeguards against unwise permanent alterations in the human gene pool. Now that we have become the principal agents of evolution, it is crucially important to recognize that the pursuit of short-term goals through human modification can be dangerously inconsistent with the long-term best interests of the human species. As yet, however, we have not developed adequate criteria – much less decision-making protocols – for use in guiding such decisions. We must do so quickly."

Gore has promoted the book on the David Letterman and Jon Stewart shows, and at numerous appearances. The reviews have been mixed, but telling. The Wall Street Journal warns, "Readers of the former vice president's book might be excused for thinking that all of the evils in the world come from corporations." The New York Times ends on an equivocal note: "Whether the forces of enlightened public opinion will prevail over clashing values and conflicting interests remains to be seen."

Let's hope *The Future* sparks wider and deeper appreciation of human biotechnologies as one of the key forces we need to harness for the common good, and that it nourishes the sense of urgency and big-picture thinking it exemplifies. [Again, as with Technology of all kinds, I agree the crucial issue is who controls the data and how it is used. What principles shall guide them? In this case, who shall use the biotechnology and for what purposes. Much evil has been done by (e.g.- Third Reich) Scientists, as well as much good.-CF

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/genetic-crossroads/201302/al-gore-human-biotech-is-driver-global-change>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:50

## **FRANKENFISH- Part 2**

"Designer animals are here! GloFish, for instance—a variety of zebrafish native to South Asia—are a highly marketable commodity in pet stores around the country. What makes them glow so brilliantly is not a result of millions of years of evolution or even selective breeding by enthusiastic collectors. Instead, GloFish are genetically engineered by adding a bit of sea anemone DNA, causing them to radiate under black lights. Electric Green, Sunburst Orange, Cosmic Blue, and Galactic Purple are a few of the possible color choices. Although GloFish may be America's first genetically engineered pets, they are far from the first animals to be manipulated biologically." [Are designer people next?] <http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2013/june/frankensteins-cat-part-2.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:23

Tuesday, June 11. 2013

## **FRANKENFISH**

Helping animals to "transcend their biological limits" with biotechnology. What does this mean for humans. Clue: look at the title of the writer's latest book at the end of her article  
<http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2013/june/frankensteins-cat-part-1.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:50

Saturday, June 8, 2013

## **ETHICS OF CYBER WARFARE**

<http://www.dvidshub.net/news/108110/cyber-security-hall-famer-dorothy-denning-discusses-ethics-cyber-warfare#.UbOrC4bkbTp>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:10

Friday, May 24, 2013

## **A LOVER OF CITIES**

This Blog is fascinating. Its writer is a Christian and this is the beginning of his explanation of what he is all about- They will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations. – Isaiah 61:4 Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell. – Isaiah 58:12

"I love cities. I've always been fascinated with cities and finding out what makes them tick. Why do some cities succeed while others fail? What works and what doesn't? When faced with a moment of challenge, why do some cities rise to the occasion and others fall by the wayside?

"I'm most engaged by America's "everyday" cities—the large, medium, and small metropoli in the heartland and beyond that most Americans call home. America's cities are the the bedrock of the nation's social, cultural, and economic well-being. They're also the places most Americans call home. For the good of their regions and the nation as a whole, they must, and can, learn to be sustainable. That means demographically and economically as well as environmentally." MORE-

<http://www.urbanophile.com/what-i-believe/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:51

## **POVERTY IN THE SUBURBS**

[O]ver the last decade, suburbs have increasingly become home to America's poor. Between 2000 and 2011, the population living in American cities below the poverty line increased by 29 percent. During that same time, across the country in the suburbs of metropolitan areas as diverse as Atlanta and Detroit and Salt Lake City, the ranks of the poor grew by 64 percent. Today, more poor people live in the suburbs (16.4 million of them) than in U.S. cities (13.4 million), despite the perception that poverty remains a uniquely urban problem.

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/jobs-and-economy/2013/05/suburbanization-poverty/5633/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:25

Friday, May 17. 2013

## **THE END OF POVERTY?**

"[D]espite the recent tragedies in Bangladesh, the garment industry has arguably had positive effects on the country, said Fazle Hasan Abed in the New York Times. In the past, for example, a poor family's vision for a newborn daughter's future was often to marry her off as young as possible, since the dowry paid to a husband's family grows as a daughter gets older. Even after the dowry was outlawed in 1980, the practice continued. A girl would often be married off as young as 13, and would never leave her village, never know a brighter future for herself or her children.

Partly because many women and their daughters now take garment industry jobs — even in factories where workers' rights are virtually nonexistent — families living in poverty have changed their vision of the future. More have acquired long-term goals, like educating their sons and daughters, saving and taking microloans to start new businesses, and building and maintaining more sanitary living spaces. [New York Times]

This is the sort of philosophy that Jeffrey Sachs advocated in his 2005 book *The End of Poverty*. "My concern is not that there are too many sweatshops, but that there are too few," he wrote, arguing that these sorts of factories help lift populations out of poverty over time.

Read the whole article here-

<http://theweek.com/article/index/244016/the-bangladesh-factory-tragedies-is-this-the-end-of-cheap-labor>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:35

Monday, May 13, 2013

### **ABORTIONIST GUILTY OF 3 MURDERS**

[http://www.worldmag.com/2013/05/gosnell\\_jury\\_hung\\_on\\_two\\_counts](http://www.worldmag.com/2013/05/gosnell_jury_hung_on_two_counts)

In addition to the first-degree murder charges, the jury found Kermit Gosnell guilty of aborting 21 babies older than Pennsylvania's 24-week limit. It also found him guilty of corruption and conspiracy. Jurors will return May 21 to start the sentencing phase of the trial. Several others involved in the case also await their sentencing. Four of Gosnell's former employees pleaded guilty to murder and testified against him during the trial. Four more, including his wife, Pearl, pleaded guilty to lesser charges.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:59

Friday, May 10. 2013

## **CHRAPITALISM**

Astringent article denouncing the collusion of Christianity and Capitalism (Chrapitalism) and my reply  
<http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:39

Saturday, April 27, 2013

### **TRIAL OF ALLEDGED ABORTIONIST CONCLUDES: GRUESOME DETAILS**

"After five weeks of testimony detailing Gosnell's gruesome practice of slicing through babies' spinal cords following late-term abortion procedures, the case will be handed over to the jury next week. Gosnell, 72, faces five counts of murder—four for babies allegedly killed after being born alive and one for a patient who died after receiving too much anesthesia. Common Pleas Court Judge Jeffrey Minehart dismissed three other charges Tuesday, saying state prosecutors had failed to make a case in the deaths of those babies.

"State prosecutors relied heavily on testimony from Gosnell's former staff members, who said they believed many of the babies born during late-term procedures were alive. They recounted seeing babies move, take breaths, and cry. Gosnell told them the movements were involuntary and that the babies were already dead, a claim reiterated in court by defense attorney Jack McMahon. But just in case, Gosnell routinely sliced the back of the babies' necks "to ensure fetal demise." One of Gosnell's staffers already pleaded guilty to killing a baby that stayed alive for about 20 minutes after a "botched" abortion procedure."

[http://www.worldmag.com/2013/04/gosnell\\_defense\\_rests\\_calls\\_no\\_witnesses](http://www.worldmag.com/2013/04/gosnell_defense_rests_calls_no_witnesses)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:11

### **MR OBAMA AFFIRMS HIS SUPPORT FOR THE WORK OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD**

"So every day, in every state, in ever center that Planned Parenthood operates, there are stories like those -- lives you've saved, women you've empowered, families that you've strengthened. That's why, no matter how great the challenge, no matter how fierce the opposition, if there's one thing the past few years have shown, it's that Planned Parenthood is not going anywhere. It's not going anywhere today. It's not going anywhere tomorrow.

"As long as we've got to fight to make sure women have access to quality, affordable health care, and as long as we've got to fight to protect a woman's right to make her own choices about her own health, I want you to know that you've also got a President who's going to be right there with you fighting every step of the way. Thank you, Planned Parenthood. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you." - -President Obama

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/26/remarks-president-planned-parenthood-conference>

[http://www.worldmag.com/2013/04/obama\\_vows\\_to\\_keep\\_fighting\\_for\\_planned\\_parenthood](http://www.worldmag.com/2013/04/obama_vows_to_keep_fighting_for_planned_parenthood)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:58

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

### **EVANGELICAL DAY OF PRAYER AND ACTION**

The Evangelical Immigration Table (EIT) declared April 17 to be the Evangelical Day of Prayer and Action for Immigration Reform, offering a “unified evangelical voice [to] echo through the halls of Congress proclaiming a biblical vision for immigration reform that respects the rule of law, reunites families and upholds human dignity.”

The Evangelical Immigration Table marks the nation's largest-ever immigration reform effort by evangelicals.

[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2013/04/evangelicals\\_lobby\\_congress\\_for\\_immigration\\_reform.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2013/04/evangelicals_lobby_congress_for_immigration_reform.html)  
?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:49

### **A GOOD BUT UNFAIR DEAL FOR THE ILLEGALS**

Reasons to be concerned about the proposed Bills being debated concerning illegal Immigrants

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/apr/17/a-good-deal-for-the-illegals/?page=1>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:33

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

## **THE SOCIAL NEED ZOMBIES FEED ON**

The Lessons of Zombie-Mania

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323611604578398952000653448.html?mod=WSJ>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:52

Saturday, March 16, 2013

## **POVERTY? THE WORLD IS BECOMING MIDDLE CLASS**

The middle class in the developing world is rising. The only question is how high it will go and how fast it will get there. About 85 percent of the world's people live in developing countries, yet they accounted for only 18 percent of global consumer spending just a decade ago; today, they account for nearly 30 percent. Consumer spending in developing countries has been increasing at about three times the rate in advanced countries, and we're not just seeing a growing demand for necessities, but also for middle-class staples such as meat, toothpaste, cell phones, and air-conditioners. Measuring the global middle class isn't just an academic exercise -- its growth carries real-world implications. Political scientists are interested in the topic because a large middle class is associated with greater political awareness, desire for more accountable and representative government, and even demand for free markets.

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/05/16/the\\_global\\_middle\\_class\\_is\\_bigger\\_than\\_we\\_thought](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/05/16/the_global_middle_class_is_bigger_than_we_thought)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:04

Thursday, March 7, 2013

## **GOVERNMENT TROOPS PUT DOWN ARMED REVOLT BY CITIZENS**

In the 1780s, the Massachusetts government didn't respond to the economic crisis by passing pro-debtor laws (like forgiving debt and printing more paper money). As a result local sheriffs seized many farms and some farmers who couldn't pay their debts were put in prison.

These conditions led to the first major armed rebellion in the post-Revolutionary United States. Once again, Americans resisted high taxes and unresponsive government that was far away. But this time it was Massachusetts's settlers who were angry with a republican government in Boston,

James Bowdoin, the governor of Massachusetts,... organized a military force ... to confront the rebels. This armed force crushed the movement in the winter of 1786-1787 as the Shaysites quickly fell apart when faced with a strong army organized by the state.

<http://www.ushistory.org/us/15a.asp>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:22

## **THE DAY THE U.S. ARMY WAS CALLED IN TO FIGHT AMERICAN COAL MINERS**

The Battle on Blair Mountain

The National Park Service observed that the fight for control of the southern West Virginia coalfields "centered less on economics than on civil liberties - freedom of speech and assembly, freedom from the industrial feudalism of company towns, and freedom from the terrorism inflicted by the operators hired gunmen. The struggle that began in 1912 and culminated in the 1921 armed miners' march to liberate Logan County, West Virginia, from the company rule shows that labor history is part of a larger historical theme, the struggle for liberties promised in the Bill of Rights."

<http://www.pawv.org/news/blairhist.htm>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:13

## **UPGRADE OR DIE**

My unprovable hypothesis is that obsessive upgrading and chronic stagnation are intimately related, in the same way that erotic fantasies are related to sexual repression. The fetish that surrounds Google Glass or the Dow average grows ever more hysterical as the economic status of the majority of Americans remains flat. When things don't work in the realm of stuff, people turn to the realm of bits. If the physical world becomes intransigent, you can take refuge in the virtual world, where you can solve problems—how do I make a video of my skydiving adventure while keeping my hands free?

<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/comment/2013/03/technological-perfectionism-and-income-inequality.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:44

## **IS HUMANITY A PLAGUE ON EARTH?**

Americans haven't gotten the memo, either. A Center for Biological Diversity poll released last week reports that a majority of Americans worry about population growth sparking global warming, killing off endangered species or causing other environmental mayhem. And, they say, we have a "moral responsibility" to do something about it. Nevertheless, the notion that humanity is a blight upon the planet is a long discredited idea, long nurtured by a vocal cadre of fearful prophets.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2013/03/05/humanity-is-not-a-plague-on-earth-column/1965485/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:37

Thursday, February 28, 2013

## **WHAT IS THE AMERICAN FAMILY TODAY**

The Family I grew up in is very rare. The family my children grew up in is even more rare. This article from a fascinating website has interesting stats that have practical implications for everything from urban planning to church growth. Last week the Census Bureau released some fascinating graphs and data about the current state of American households. "People are marrying later than they used to, for example, if they marry at all. Among other relevant statistics, the number and portion of people living alone has risen steadily and significantly for decades. So has the number of unmarried couples living together, nearly eight million today compared with only around three million as recently as 1996. Even the number of unmarried couples with children has doubled in less than 20 years.

"The portion of children living with two parents has dropped dramatically from 1960, from just under 90 percent of all children in 1960 to around 70 percent in 2012. Statistically, almost all of the change can be explained by a dramatic increase in the portion of children living with single moms. But it's not for the old reasons: the percentage of kids living with widowed, separated, and divorced mothers has actually gone down in recent decades. There has been a sharp increase, however, in the portion living with never-married mothers."

[http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kbenfield/meet\\_the\\_modern\\_american\\_famil.html](http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kbenfield/meet_the_modern_american_famil.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:27

## **DIVERSITY IN AMERICA**

This site has fascinating, detailed data and maps re the diversity of our Nation's population. It is surprising.

<http://trends.truliablog.com/2012/11/finding-diversity-in-america/>

The US population as a whole is 63.7 percent White, 16.3 percent Hispanic or Latino (counted as one group in the Trulia analysis), 12.2 percent Black or African American, 4.7 percent Asian, 0.7 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.2 percent Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 0.2 percent "some other race," and 1.9 percent "two or more races." Many of America's most diverse neighborhoods are in the suburbs. Diverse neighborhoods have higher population growth and faster-rising prices than other neighborhoods do.

Among the 100 largest metros, San Jose is the most diverse. San Jose is 35% White (the largest group), 31% Asian, 28% Hispanic, 3% two-or-more races, and 2% Black. In no other metro does the largest group have a share smaller than 35%. New York ranks second, with a population that is 39% White, 28% Hispanic, 19% Black, and 12% Asian. Four of the ten most diverse large metros in the U.S. are in California: San Jose, Oakland, Orange County, and San Francisco. Only one – New York – is in the Northeast, and not one is in the Midwest.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:59

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

### **OPPOSITION TO DOMA INCREASING**

"DOMA, [The Defense of Marriage Act] a federal law withholding marital benefits from some lawful marriages but not others, requires that employers treat one employee differently from another," the brief argues. That's especially true for employers who operate in any of the 12 states that now permit gay marriage, the brief says, because the states recognize marriages but the federal government does not.

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-mo-employers-amicus-doma-20130227,0,2596227.story>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:54

Tuesday, February 26, 2013

### **NBC WAR ON CHRISTIANITY?**

Examples of NBC bias against Christians and Christ

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2013/02/19/nbc-declares-war-on-christians/?intcmp=trending>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 22:13

### **SHALL TEBOW FUMBLE?**

Chick fil A is opening a new store, the first in New England, in our area. I wonder how it shall do. This area was outraged by the owner of the Restaurant chain for his negative views about Homosexuality. The latter is more than acceptable here and being anti-Gay is a grievous sin to many who live here. The pressure not to speak against Gay marriage or homosexuality is enormous. What shall Tim Tebow and the rest of us who take the Biblical position do with this ball that has been thrown to us. Here is a good article about that by Al Mohler

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/february-web-only/tebows-big-fumble.html?start=1>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:35

Friday, February 22. 2013

### **U.S. FOREIGN AID EXPLAINED**

Discussing Federal budget cuts some people question the amount our Government gives in Foreign Aid. Critics usually greatly exaggerate the amount. Here are some facts and figures-  
<http://www.oxfamamerica.org/publications/foreign-aid-101?gclid=C1bDreCYyrUCFQ3znAod0VMAWg>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:24

Thursday, February 21, 2013

### **ONE NATION: ONE LANGUAGE?**

Is America becoming a Nation of two Languages: English and Spanish? What about Mandarin and Arabic and the other Languages of Immigrants and Ethnic groups? Should America be officially English only? Here is a good article reviewing pro and con arguments on this topic.

<http://www.city-journal.org/2013/eon0220hm.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:52

Monday, February 18. 2013

## **MEDIA AND VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN**

This is a very good article connecting data from extensive research with good analysis and cultural commentary about the influence of media, esp. TV and Video games, on children re violence.

[http://www.masslive.com/living/index.ssf/2013/02/psychologist\\_patricia\\_peters\\_martin.html](http://www.masslive.com/living/index.ssf/2013/02/psychologist_patricia_peters_martin.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:51

Tuesday, February 12. 2013

## **POVERTY AND THE REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH**

Today I have posted short articles on my website about the redistribution of wealth by Government and about causes and solutions of Poverty

<http://www.reformedliving.org/>

And Studies about God and Justice

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:07

Friday, February 1, 2013

## **ZOMBIE MOVIES**

A Defense for Zombie Movies- what they mean and what they can do for us. Really!  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/january-february/zombie-apocalypse.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:54

## **TRANSFER WEALTH OR EARNED WEALTH? IT MAKES BIG DIFFERENCE**

There is a huge amount of research showing that money, when earned, has a generally positive association with happiness. The problem is when it is unearned, when raw purchasing power is untethered from hard work and merit. Above basic subsistence, happiness comes not from money per se, but from the value creation it is rewarding. The University of Chicago's General Social Survey reveals that people are twice as likely to feel "very happy" about their lives if they feel "very successful" or "completely successful" at work, rather than "somewhat successful." The differences persist whether they earn more or less income

While earned success facilitates the pursuit of happiness, unearned transfers generally impede it.

All this data relates to our policy debates because every year, fewer and fewer people earn their way in America without a government subsidy. As my colleague Nicholas Eberstadt has written, entitlements have doubled as a percentage of the ballooning federal budget since 1960. Today, more than half of American households receive government transfer benefits.

It is a simple fact that the United States is becoming an entitlement state. The problem with this is not just that it is bankrupting the country. It is that the entitlement state is impoverishing the lives of the growing millions dependent on unearned resources [excerpts from the following article-]

<http://www.aei.org/article/society-and-culture/free-enterprise/americas-dangerous-powerball-economy/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:27

## **FAMILY CULTURES**

Comprehensive research on the four major types of American Families. Which one is yours? Apparently, 80% of Americans are different than my wife and I and our immediate family! Read James White's blog post and check-out the links.

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=3914>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:12

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

## **ANNUAL SURVEY ABOUT THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ABORTION**

Being Pro-Life means saving Lives  
[http://www.worldmag.com/2013/01/40\\_years\\_and\\_millions\\_of\\_lives](http://www.worldmag.com/2013/01/40_years_and_millions_of_lives)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:11

Monday, January 28, 2013

## **WOMEN IN COMBAT?**

Should women be allowed to have direct combat roles in war? This CT article covers the basic pro and con arguments. Simply put the pro arguments are the same as those used to support egalitarian marriage (and the ordination of women (and even Gay Marriage). Those who say "No" use the arguments that support hierarchical marriage (and are against the ordination of women and Gay Marriage).

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/january-february/women-in-combat-bible.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:50

Wednesday, January 2, 2013

### **BLAME THE "FISCAL CLIFF" ON VOTERS NOT POLITICIANS**

Ultimately, politicians are defined and driven by what their constituents want. And what many want are tax cuts but no cuts to tax rebates, financial incentives, stock dividends and all kinds of stimulus monies that lead to business advantages (and jobs), community programs, development and services. They also want (demand) their share of so-called Entitlements, including Health Care and Unemployment Benefits. Of course they also expect Education and National Security. Ultimately, all these choices and demands of t political Leaders reflect the personal values of voters. Politicians respond accordingly. Do the values of Christian voters reflect Biblical values?

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/opinion/brooks-another-fiscal-flop.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/opinion/brooks-another-fiscal-flop.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&_r=1&)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 22:56

### **THE UPS OF HAVING A CHILD WITH DOWNS**

Very touching, true story of a mother and her daughter who has Downs Syndrome.

[http://www.slate.com/articles/double\\_x/doublex/2012/11/andrew\\_solomon\\_s\\_far\\_from\\_the\\_tree\\_parents\\_children\\_and\\_the\\_search\\_for\\_identity.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2012/11/andrew_solomon_s_far_from_the_tree_parents_children_and_the_search_for_identity.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 22:34

Monday, December 31, 2012

## **LIMITING LIBERTY AFTER NEWTOWN**

If we're serious about curtailing future Columbines and Newtowns, everything — guns, commitment, culture — must be on the table. It's not hard for President Obama to call out the NRA. But will he call out the ACLU? And will he call out his Hollywood friends?

The irony is that over the last 30 years, the U.S. homicide rate has declined by 50 percent. Gun murders as well. We're living not through an epidemic of gun violence but through a historic decline. Except for these unfathomable mass murders. But these are infinitely more difficult to prevent. While law deters the rational, it has far less effect on the psychotic. The best we can do is to try to detain them, disarm them, and discourage "entertainment" that can intensify already murderous impulses.

But there's a cost. Gun control impinges upon the Second Amendment; involuntary commitment impinges upon the liberty clause of the Fifth Amendment; curbing "entertainment" violence impinges upon First Amendment-protected free speech. That's a lot of impingement, a lot of amendments. But there's no free lunch. Increasing public safety almost always means restricting liberties.

Source: Charles Krauthammer <http://www.nationalreview.com/author/200446/latest>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:17

Friday, December 28, 2012

## **GENDER GENOCIDE**

"On his first night of rotation at a Delhi hospital, Puneet Bedi was assigned to the obstetrics ward. A wide-eyed 20-year-old medical student, he was excited by the prospect of becoming a doctor responsible for human life. He hoped to witness a birth that night. Minutes after catching a glimpse of the labor room, Bedi was intercepted by a cat with something bloody dangling from its mouth. It wasn't until he saw a five-month-old fetus discarded on an uncovered tray, lying in a pool of blood, that he realized what the cat had eaten.

"As the night wore on, Bedi witnessed more abortions than births. All of them were performed on women who were at least four months pregnant. When he worked up the nerve to ask why so many fetuses were being discarded, and why he had seen a cat eat one, a staff member explained tersely: "Because they are girls."

"Three decades later, Bedi, an ob-gyn consultant at a New Delhi hospital, recounted this experience to Mara Hvistendahl, who last year persuasively demonstrated a chilling reality in her Pulitzer-nominated book, *Unnatural Selection*: There's a gender-based genocide afoot the world over, and it's having profound implications—none of them good."

[http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/december/genocide-in-shades-of-pink.html?utm\\_source=ctdirect-html&utm\\_medium=Newsletter&utm\\_term=11430839&utm\\_content=147463482&utm\\_campaign=2012](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/december/genocide-in-shades-of-pink.html?utm_source=ctdirect-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=11430839&utm_content=147463482&utm_campaign=2012)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:57

## **JUSTICE SCALIA ON SODOMY AND THE CONSTITUTION**

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, speaking at Princeton University, said some of the most controversial questions in today's culture are among the easiest to solve according to the Constitution. At Princeton Dec. 10, a freshman from San Francisco identified himself as homosexual and asked Scalia why he equates banning sodomy with banning bestiality and murder. The student was referring to Scalia's dissent in *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down an anti-sodomy law, according to *The Daily Princetonian*.

<http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=39370>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:48

Friday, December 21, 2012

## **THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF THE SECOND AMENDMENT**

Here is an irony. People who argue that the Constitution should be interpreted and applied according to the Original Understanding of the Founders or of those who ratified the Document need to reread the Second Amendment when they use it to support the right of all to own guns with a minimum of regulations, if any. The Second Amendment as written allows for private gun ownership within the context of a "well-regulated" militia.

And those who argue that the right of citizens to own arms exists to resist a tyrannical government if the need arises, need to know that it was the Shays Rebellion here in Western Mass by armed farmers against the Government that pushed the latter to adopt the Amendment in the first place.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/12/18/gun-rights-advocates-should-fear-history-of-second-amendment.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:24

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

## **THE ACLU AND SEXUAL LICENSE IN AMERICA**

How the American Civil Liberties Union changed the way Americans think about sexual freedom.  
<http://reason.com/archives/2012/12/01/finding-sex-in-the-bill-of-rights>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:52

## **DIABETES (IN CHINA), DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE**

"If comfort is our chief purpose, we should be the happiest people in history. Yet we are far from it. According to the World Health Organization, depression was the third-largest cause of the global disease burden in 2004—and it's expected to be number one in 2030. Since the late 1960s, worldwide suicide rates have increased by 60 percent. And at least one study found that worldwide—among prosperous nations, developing countries, and those in transition—there is no long-term relationship between happiness and economic growth.

Wealth and education can change the world, but they can't save it. Our appetite for self-destruction is predictable. Our corruption is unavoidable. As material needs are met and economic growth gives us physical security, our sin problem is even more apparent in relief. And we have no one to blame but ourselves.

The idea of sin has never been fashionable, but in the 20th century, it became an object of ridicule. In the light of great demonstrations of human strength and achievement, we became certain we could save ourselves. Our philosophies and plans may have differed, but we were all sure the solution belonged to us.

In this new century, as the world wakes up to the impotence of prosperity in the face of meaninglessness, self-destruction, and despair..."

[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2012/12/why-helping-the-poor-is-not-en.html?utm\\_source=ctdirect-html&utm\\_medium=Newsletter&utm\\_term=11430839&utm\\_content=146431871&utm\\_campaign=2012](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2012/12/why-helping-the-poor-is-not-en.html?utm_source=ctdirect-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=11430839&utm_content=146431871&utm_campaign=2012)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:38

## **THREATS TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM- GOOD RESOURCE**

<http://blog.freedomhouse.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:03

## **TEN FOLLIES OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

Those who believe in or support Same Sex Marriage need to answer these 10 Objections to it.

<http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/>

There is an 11th Objection. The Bible defines Marriage as a Covenant between a Man and a Woman (Gen 2:18-25)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:49

Saturday, December 15, 2012

### **WHY? THE ANSWER IS "EVIL"**

James White tries to answer the Question we all have after Newtown  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=3719>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:40

Wednesday, December 5, 2012

## **THE HORRIBLE EVIL OF GENDERCIDE**

"In 2009, New York Times journalist Nicholas Kristof and his wife Sheryl WuDunn published *Half the Sky*, a heartbreaking overview of the many horrific ways women are devalued and discriminated against in the world today. This fall their documentary by the same title aired on Public Broadcasting Service. Bill Hybels, senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, invited Kristof to share the stage with him in lieu of a sermon during weekend services earlier this year. For 40 minutes, Willow churchgoers sat rapt in astonishment as Kristof recounted stories of women from his book. When he told about a woman suffering with a fistula [SEE POST BELOW THIS ONE] who had been shunned by her village and left to die alone outside the camp where she had to fend off hyenas and drag herself across the desert to find medical care, the congregation collectively gasped. He went on to describe the Cambodian brothel where he bought two prostitutes in an attempt to rescue them from a life of sex slavery. Few people made it through the interview with dry eyes.

I met with Kristof in between services to discuss sex-selective abortions, one of the basest forms of "gendercide"—a term used to describe the deliberate extermination of girls and women—and what the church's role should be in ending this particular form of oppression."

Read the rest of the Article here-

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/december/waking-up-church-to-gender-injustice.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:46

## **OBSTETRIC FESTULAS**

"Obstetric fistula is the most devastating and serious of all childbirth injuries. It happens because most mothers in poor countries give birth without any medical help. So many are young girls. Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of death and disability for women of reproductive age in these places. Obstetric fistula was largely eliminated in the United States in the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century with improved obstetric care in general and the use of c-sections in particular to relieve obstructed labor.

After enduring days of agonizing, obstructed labor a woman's body is literally broken by childbirth. During labor contractions, the baby's head is constantly pushing against the mother's pelvic bone — causing tissue to die due to lack of blood flow to this area. All of that pushing creates a hole, or in medical terms a "fistula", between the birth passage and an internal organ such as the bladder or rectum. A woman cannot hold her urine, and sometimes bowel content as well.

Her baby is unlikely to survive. If she survives, a woman with fistula is likely to be rejected by her husband because of her inability to bear more children and her foul smell. She will be shunned by her community and forced to live an isolated existence. These women suffer profound psychological trauma resulting from their utter loss of status and dignity, in addition to suffering constantly from their physical internal injury.

The numbers are staggering. Right now, hundreds of thousands of women are suffering from this heartbreaking, treatable childbirth injury because they are too poor to afford surgery that costs about \$450. This number keeps growing bigger. Each year approximately 30,000 - 50,000 women develop this childbirth injury."

<http://www.fistulafoundation.org>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:43

Thursday, November 29, 2012

## **DOES RELIGION GET SPECIAL PRIVILEGES IN AMERICA? SHOULD IT?**

"What's so special about religion, that it should be granted such deferential attention? Many people deem religion's "special privileges" needless, embarrassing, or downright illegitimate. Can we offer them any arguments they'll find compelling, or at least persuade them to see things in a different light? To the skeptics, let me offer five such arguments in what follows."

[http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/november/honoring-faith-in-public-square.html?utm\\_source=ctdirect-html&utm\\_medium=Newsletter&utm\\_term=11430839&utm\\_content=144154715&utm\\_campaign=2012](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/november/honoring-faith-in-public-square.html?utm_source=ctdirect-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=11430839&utm_content=144154715&utm_campaign=2012)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:25

Tuesday, November 27. 2012

## **ABORTION RATE DECLINES**

<http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2012/11/cdc-abortion-rate-ratio-lowest-since-2000.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:17

Friday, November 9, 2012

## **EVIL MEN AND INTELLECTUALS WHO LOVE THEM**

[www.forbes.com/sites/currentevents/2012/11/01/men-blinded-by-their-brains/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/currentevents/2012/11/01/men-blinded-by-their-brains/)

For more documentation of men blinded by their brains read

Intellectuals and Society by Thomas Sowell

Intellectuals by Paul Johnson

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:15

Wednesday, November 7, 2012

## **PRINCIPLES OF CONSERVATISM**

The Sharon Statement is the founding statement of principles of the Young Americans for Freedom. Its reference to Communism is dated, but this continues to be a good summary of Conservative Principles. "Written by M. Stanton Evans and adopted on September 11, 1960, the statement is named for the location of the inaugural meeting of Young Americans for Freedom, held at William F. Buckley, Jr.'s estate in Sharon, Connecticut."

"IN THIS TIME of moral and political crisis, it is the responsibility of the youth of America to affirm certain eternal truths. WE, as young conservatives, believe:

THAT foremost among the transcendent values is the individual's use of his God-given free will, whence derives his right to be free from the restrictions of arbitrary force;

THAT liberty is indivisible, and that political freedom cannot long exist without economic freedom;

THAT the purpose of government is to protect those freedoms through the preservation of internal order, the provision of national defense, and the administration of justice;

THAT when government ventures beyond these rightful functions, it accumulates power, which tends to diminish order and liberty;

THAT the Constitution of the United States is the best arrangement yet devised for empowering government to fulfill its proper role, while restraining it from the concentration and abuse of power;

THAT the genius of the Constitution - the division of powers - is summed up in the clause that reserves primacy to the several states, or to the people in those spheres not specifically delegated to the Federal government;

THAT the market economy, allocating resources by the free play of supply and demand, is the single economic system compatible with the requirements of personal freedom and constitutional government, and that it is at the same time the most productive supplier of human needs;

THAT when government interferes with the work of the market economy, it tends to reduce the moral and physical strength of the nation, that when it takes from one to bestow on another, it diminishes the incentive of the first, the integrity of the second, and the moral autonomy of both;

THAT we will be free only so long as the national sovereignty of the United States is secure; that history shows periods of freedom are rare, and can exist only when free citizens concertedly defend their rights against all enemies...

THAT the forces of international Communism are, at present, the greatest single threat to these liberties;

THAT the United States should stress victory over, rather than coexistence with this menace; and

THAT American foreign policy must be judged by this criterion: 'does it serve the just interests of the United States?' "

Source: Wikipedia

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:34

## **VALUE and SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS**

OK, what can I do? Apparently, the Presidential voting was heavily influenced by young, non-white, low income, less educated women [granted a statistical abstraction with lots of exceptions]. None of these descriptors identify me. So what can an old white educated man like me do to reach, educate, change such a demographic group? [Yes, I believe they need "changing".]

The strategy is to focus on the mid-terms Elections and the next Presidential Election [Paul Ryan?]. Who is in the best position to educate the young (school age) women and men- and to prepare them to vote next time? School Teachers! The work they do (the ministry they have) is The Key to transforming the Nation politically. [Do not fool yourself in thinking that what happens in every class room is not political or, for that matter, objective or neutral when it comes to beliefs and values, especially in English, Social Studies, Humanities and the Arts]

When I say Teachers I include home and private schoolers -all important, but lets face it, most children attend Public School. This makes the key to The Key to changing young minds, Public School Teachers. We must value them, treat them with much greater respect (including pay) and pray for them regularly and work to improve public education itself, the System (mostly by community involvement and legislation).

What can I do at my age and stage? Mostly, encourage those who have the vocation of Teaching!

PS- I have not forgotten the importance also of parents nor of the important influence of Pastors and Sunday School teachers. That is another Essay!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:33

Wednesday, October 24, 2012

### **PAUL RYAN ON SOLUTIONS TO POVERTY IN AMERICA**

[http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/ryan-poverty-america-we-deserve-better\\_657612.html](http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/ryan-poverty-america-we-deserve-better_657612.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:41

### **WHAT KIND OF COUNTRY DO YOU WANT?**

<http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2012/10/campaign-2012-what-kind-of-country-do-you-want>  
NEW: highlight with cursor and then right click to open link

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:37

### **A NATION OF TAKERS**

Is this what the Constitution means by ART I Sec 8 by the words, "Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes ...to provide for general Welfare of the United States"

America's Entitlement Epidemic" In "A Nation of Takers," author Nicholas Eberstadt draws on an impressive array of data to detail the exponential growth in entitlement spending over the past fifty years. As he notes, in 1960, entitlement payments accounted for well under a third of the federal government's total outlays. Today, entitlement spending — everything from Medicare to disability payments — accounts for a full two-thirds of the federal budget. While these economic developments are indeed astonishing, the cultural costs of this epidemic are equally troubling, and Eberstadt shows in unflinching detail how this run-away spending is making a very real, long-lasting, negative impact on the character of our citizens."

<http://www.aei.org/book/society-and-culture/a-nation-of-takers-americas-entitlement-epidemic/>

NOTE: NEW Highlight the URL and right click to open the link.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:19

Sunday, October 14, 2012

## **RISE OF THE "NONES"**

New Survey: The Majority of nominal Christians in America are no longer Protestants and the number of people with no religious affiliation at all [those who check "None"] is increasing dramatically each year  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/october-web-only/dramatic-increase-in-religiously-unaffiliated->

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:35

Friday, October 12. 2012

### **MALARKY ABOUT OBAMACARE**

"[In the VP "Debate"] Biden told a flat out lie when he claimed he opposed the Iraq War and the add-on of the prescription drug plan to Medicare. He voted for both of the wars and the free drugs for seniors. But as bad as that was, far more offensive was the lie about the administration's attack on religious freedom via ObamaCare.

"There is a lively debate going on about the future of health care, but there may be no more insidious aspect to the ObamaCare issue than this threat to religious liberty. Both Biden and his party support the HHS Mandate, something that was made abundantly clear at the Democratic Convention at which Ms. Fluke was unveiled as a prime time liberal star. But the vice president's willingness to lie about that support tells us that he understands just how unpopular this stand is outside of the precincts of the left. He should have had the guts and the honesty to say so.

"Democrats repeating their "liar, liar" mantra about Romney and Ryan (and claiming that this justified Biden's boorishness) need to own up to the barefaced lies Biden told at the debate."

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2012/10/12/bidens-lie-about-religious-freedom>

ALSO SEE <http://www.washingtontimes.com/blog/inside-politics/2012/oct/12/bishops-blast-biden-his-debate-claims/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:18

### **VP BIDEN ON ABORTION AND BEING A CATHOLIC**

"Vice President Joe Biden said in Thursday night's vice presidential debate that life begins at conception, that he accepts the Catholic Church's position on abortion, and that he believes abortion must be legal. The Catholic Church's teaching is not only that abortion is always wrong, but also that Catholics in public office have a grave duty to oppose legalizing it while speaking out clearly against it.

"The position Biden took on abortion before an audience of many millions in this nationally televised debate was in direct defiance of an ancient moral teaching of the church that has been emphatically restated by the current pope and his immediate predecessor."

<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/biden-my-religion-defines-my-life->

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:39

Tuesday, October 2, 2012

## **LACK OF KNOWLEDGE: A WARNING TO AMERICA**

Hosea 4:1-11a (NRSV)

Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel; for the LORD has an indictment against the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or loyalty and no knowledge of God in the land. 2 Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed. 3 Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing. 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge [of God- v.1]; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you .... And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget (you). [Hosea goes on to say God puts much of the responsibility for this sorry state upon the Prophets and Priests (the Clergy) of the day for not doing their job.]

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:18

Monday, October 1, 2012

## **THE NAKED PUBLIC SQUARE**

The First Amendment is not about Freedom from Religion

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=3378>

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/09/30/colorado-city-council-drops-prayer-from-public-meetings-following-complaint/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:37

Sunday, September 30, 2012

## **LEARNING HOW GOVERNMENT WORKS**

Interesting website for Students, parents and teachers to learn or teach how Government works (Civics) started by former S C Justice Sandra Day O'Connor for middle schoolers  
<http://www.icivics.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:41

## **GOVERNMENT DEPENDENCY**

"How many Americans depend on a government program for a basic (or not so basic) need? According to recently released Census Bureau data and Heritage Foundation calculations, the number is 128.8 million. That is the number of individuals directly receiving aid that they depend on for their daily consumption of things such as rent, prescription drugs, and higher education. That is 41.3 percent of the U.S. population as of July 2011.

"The Wall Street Journal puts the number of people living in a household where at least one member receives help at an even higher 49.1 percent. The 41.3 percent number is surely undercounting. It is based on survey responses to the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) of March 2011. These responses are well known to undercount the number of people receiving Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, State Children's Health Insurance, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Heritage research shows that the undercount in higher education subsidies may be the most dramatic."

<http://blog.heritage.org/2012/06/05/more-than-40-percent-of-americans>-In addition, millions of Americans depend on Government subsidies of all kinds for roads and transportation and construction projects and their businesses. And millions benefit from stimulus money for their education, housing and jobs, including the Military and those in Nation Defense industries.

Yes, self-reliance and hard work is important. But like it or not, to some degree, merited or not, Americans are all dependent on their Government in one way or another to survive. The challenge is to keep it within its God-given and constitutional limits and not let it take over our lives or become a Leviathan.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:32

Saturday, September 29, 2012

## **SUPREME COURT TO MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS**

Same-sex marriage, voting rights, affirmative action in higher ed on the docket.

The Supreme Court returns to the bench on Monday to confront not only a docket studded with momentous issues. The coming term will probably include major decisions on affirmative action in higher education admissions, same-sex marriage and a challenge to the heart of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Those rulings could easily rival the last term's as the most consequential in recent memory.

The theme this term is the nature of equality, and it will play out over issues that have bedeviled the nation for decades.

[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/49224738/ns/us\\_news-the\\_new\\_york\\_times/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/49224738/ns/us_news-the_new_york_times/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:29

Friday, September 28, 2012

## **SEX SLAVERY**

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/may/5.17.html>

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/september-web-only/religious-groups-efforts-to-fight-sex-trafficking-draws-pre.html>

[http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/civilrights/human\\_trafficking](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/civilrights/human_trafficking)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:32

Saturday, September 15, 2012

## **SCHOOL VOUCHERS: PROS AND CONS**

This past week Esther Cepeda, columnist for the Washington Post and a former public school teacher, wrote in support of the Teachers on strike in Chicago. She said, more than anything else, the strike was an effort of the Teachers and School Workers in the inner-city schools to get respect for the very demanding, sometimes dangerous, and essential work they do. She makes a good case for them deserving that. Next to her column was one by Cal Thomas. He does not support the strike but writes how it is more evidence of a failed school system and reason to support parental choice and School Vouchers (to private, usually Christian schools) to help parents get the best education for their children. The subject has many dimensions- social, economic, political as well as pedagogical and is not black and white. What should a Christian believe and do on this subject?

Here are some helpful resources to help get a handle on the Pros and Con about Vouchers.

<http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/index.php?lid=185&type=educator>

[http://www.nelrc.org/publications/pdf/ca\\_voucher.pdf](http://www.nelrc.org/publications/pdf/ca_voucher.pdf)

[http://debatepedia.idebate.org/en/index.php/Debate:\\_Education\\_vouchers](http://debatepedia.idebate.org/en/index.php/Debate:_Education_vouchers)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:12

## **VERY DISTURBING STATS ABOUT DISENGAGED YOUTH**

"An astonishing one in every seven Americans ages 16 to 24 is neither working nor in school—5.8 million young people in all. As their peers lay the foundation for a productive, fulfilling adulthood, these disconnected youth find themselves adrift at society's margins, unmoored from the structures that confer knowledge, skills, identity, and purpose.

"The cost is high for affected individuals—and for society as a whole. Lack of attachment to the anchor institutions of school or work at this stage of life can leave scars that last a lifetime, affecting everything from earnings and financial independence to physical and mental health and even marital prospects. And last year alone, youth disconnection cost taxpayers \$93.7 billion in government support and lost tax revenue."

<http://www.measureofamerica.org/one-in-seven>

Should Christians care? What can we do about this problem?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:44

## **ANALYSIS OF THE MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASSES**

1/3 of Americans, according to a recent study, think of themselves as Middle Class. But statistically, 49% of Americans are Middle Class. Statistically, the Lower Class is 32% which agrees with the fact that one third of Americans see themselves as Lower Class. Statistically, 17% are in the Upper Class.

It turns out there are really 4 groups within the Middle Class: Top, Satisfied, Anxious and Struggling. The 32% of the Top Middle Class have a maximum income of \$100,000, 60% of the self-identified Satisfied have income from \$50-99,000, while 60% of the anxious group have income of \$30-49,000 and 58% of the bottom Struggling Group make \$20,000

The Middle Class is predominantly White, college educated, middle-aged and married. The Lower Class is predominantly young, equally Black and White, single with High School or less in education and Democrats. There has been significant mobility up and down within the groups, but life is definitely seen as stacked against the Lowest Group. Study Overview is found here- a very extensive analysis of the Middle and Lower Classes (Follow the links, too.)

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/09/10/>

What difference does Christ make in determining Class and is Class important to Christians?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:35

Thursday, September 13, 2012

## **MORAL SLIPPERY SLOPES**

"One of the more common phrases in relation to culture is the "slippery slope." The idea is a simple one: if you take one step on to a slippery slope, you may find yourself sliding all the way down the hill. Culturally, it means that if you rationalize doing something from a particular philosophy or set of values, you may want to consider how that same rationale might apply to other, less popular, concerns.

"In other words, you may find that you have opened a Pandora's Box of applications that will usher in things you never dreamed of, but can't denounce. Why? Because the basis of its acceptance is the same as that which you used to argue for what you have introduced. For example, many would contend that the arguments for late-term abortion lead to similar arguments for infanticide, and arguments for infanticide lead to similar arguments for euthanasia, and arguments for euthanasia lead to...well, you get the point. The moral, of course, is to not start down a slippery slope. Which bring us to the public musings of Nick Cassavetes, director of such films as "The Notebook." His latest film, "Yellow," debuted at the Toronto Film Festival. Spoiler: It's about an incestuous relationship between a brother and a sister.

Quote from James White from his article here- <http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=3300>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:24

Saturday, September 1, 2012

## **IS AMERICA CHRISTIAN?**

Here are 22 Articles about Government and the US Constitution I have posted on my Website.

[http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com\\_](http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com_)

1 Reasons God judges Nations throughout History2 Federalism Defended3 6 Ways to Interpret the US Constitution and the Bible4 Biblical Guidelines in choosing a Candidate for President5 Is violent Civil Disobedience ever justified?6 Summary of Study re Government7 America's Civil Religion Today8 18th Century Civil Religion and the Declaration9 Who really wrote the Declaration of Independence?10 Sources of Democracy and Freedom11 Principles in the United States Constitution12 More Principles in Founding Documents13 Secular & Sacred Sources of Constitutional Principles14 Sources of Constitutional Principles15 Limited Government & Freedom16 Finding the answer to the Question: Is America a Christian Nation?17 Is America a Christian or a Biblical Nation- Part 218 Is America a Christian or a Biblical Nation? --Part I of Series19 God and the Nations -Part 120 God and the Nations -Part 221 Just War Doctrine (first posted on my Blog 2007)22 Introduction to Civil Government: Biblical Principles (REVISED)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:01

Wednesday, August 29, 2012

## **WHY I AM VOTING FOR MITT ROMNEY**

I want to vote against Barak Obama. And I want to do that because of his expansive use of Executive Orders, circumventing the will of The People by circumventing the Congress on many Issues. (In fairness, all the Presidents used Executive orders and Directives and they can be stopped by Congress but rarely are for political and practical reasons. If not stopped the EOs become Law). The key word above is "expansive" plus the content of his specific EOs.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/303037/>

<http://townhall.com/columnists/thomassowell/2012/08/21/>

The President used his Executive powers to push through an Agenda with which I strongly disagree or have strong reservations; such matters as matters as his Health Care Program (on many points), Economic Policies (especially Bank and Automotive) Bailouts and massive national debt accumulating Stimulus Programs, Fiscal and Budgetary Issues, refusal to enforce DOMA and his support of Gay Marriage, Policies about Illegal Immigration, Education Policies, Oil and Environmental Policies, various Foreign Policies and his actions as Commander in Chief in National Security and Military matters. Need I really add more?

All this is why I shall vote Republican- to defeat Mr Obama and the Democrats. Of course, these are complicated matters and there is room for discussion and honest differences on them all. But some thing far more fundamental faces us underneath these matters and from which they grow. Extremely important Principles are at stake. It is repeatedly said that voters in November have a very clear choice between Two Visions of America and its government. This is very true. Evangelical Christian must be aware of this and look beyond the immediate, secondary Issues. The Visions and Values at stake are not just about what is best for America, but what is Biblical. Here are the Major Issues (Fault Lines) The 5 Major Fault Lines dividing Americans and between which voters must decide:

The Authority of the Constitution: Living or Static?

Judicial Review: activist Judges vs active Judges?

America: Democracy or Republic?

World View: Socialism or Capitalism?

Human Rights: Foundationalism or Post Modernism?

I have written and posted an extensive Article on this Blog. We must take these Issues seriously. Many people think the Election is about "Jobs". It is really about choosing between these major Principles. We ignore them to our peril! The original Constitution is the highest Law of the Nation, higher than the Declaration of Independence, all later Amendments and the Gettysburg Address. I believe the Principles embodied in that Constitution are Biblical and historical, tracing back through Medieval England, Western Europe and to Ancient Israel. Judges, particularly Supreme Court Justices, have the responsibility to review all Congressional Acts and legal cases brought before it in light of the Constitution. And they must interpret that Document in light of the Original Understanding of it as ratified by the States in 1788. We must reject the modern and currently regnant concept of the Constitution as a "Living Document" meaning whatever the Justices want it to mean.

Our Country is most emphatically not a Democracy. It is not of, by and for the "People". It is a Republic under the Law. A Republic is a union of States which have their own sovereignty but submit to those specific powers of the National Government as they are enumerated by the Constitution. That National Government has 3 separate Branches. All citizens have the right and duty to elect some of their number to represent them in the Congress (the second Branch). They also elect a chief Executive, the President, and the Vice President (the first Branch). The President appoints the Justices (the third Branch) with the approval of the Senate. The latter do not represent the people nor do they make the laws of the Land. They are to determine what is Constitutional. No more and no less. Our Country is historically based on Free Market Capitalism. This, too, with the importance it gives to freedom, private property and the responsibility for individual initiative and work to acquire, improve and maintain that property for both personal profit and the common good, is Biblical. Of course, greed and exploitation is not! We reject Socialism or the Government ownership or control of capital and its involuntary redistribution of private wealth and property to all in the name of equality.

The very concept of a Welfare State or that the Civil Government is responsible for all its citizens' welfare from cradle to grave and the necessary totalitarian or Government involvement and control over the citizens that this requires is absolutely alien to the Bible and contrary to its principles.

Finally, the Constitution exists to govern the Government. Neither it nor the Government itself exists to define or secure

Human Rights for all. It is not the responsibility of the President or the Supreme Court or the Government to engineer and guarantee a Great Society of Peace, Prosperity and Happiness for all.

The Rights we support are God-given. We absolutely believe in Justice, that Justice which is based on those God-given Rights. We are committed to sustaining a Government and a Nation which conserve and conform to the Bible-based Principles of our original Constitution.

We reject the dominant philosophy of Post Modernism which rejects all the Principles I have summarized here- the very Foundation Evangelicals must affirm, if they are to be true to the Bibles they carry. We do not believe human beings and our Values and Culture and the Constitution itself are all a Human Construct subject to constant change according to "the Times" or the needs and desires of special interest groups- a human construct in which there is no Truth or Absolutes, a Culture of Self-interest and a Politics of Pragmatism.

I could go on, but I hope enough has been said to make clear why I am voting against the Democrats and Mr Obama and for the Republicans and the Romney-Ryan Ticket. It is not ultimately about "Jobs", but about these Principles, these Fault Lines. The Vote is about a choice between two very different Visions!

For more extensive discussion please read my Articles posted below on this Blog and on my Website

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:14

Saturday, August 25, 2012

## **"SEXUAL ASSAULT"**

Here is a thorough, knowledgeable, helpful, wise and Biblical treatment of the subject of "Sexual Assault"  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/august-web-only/todd-akin-legitimate-rape-and-gospel-healing-for-victims-of>.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:58

Sunday, August 19, 2012

## **RAISING BOYGIRLS: TRANSGENDER PARENTING**

What the Bible teaches about Gender:

After God created Adam, he said [to Himself] that Adam needed a partner and so He created a woman, Eve. Why didn't God make another man [i.e.- a male]? Many commentators say Adam's need was simply for a companion [male or female], period. They interpret this text as God saying it is not good for a person to live apart from community. Community is good-Eccles 4:9 two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: 10 if one falls down, his friend can help him up, but pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! 11 also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? 12 though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. While this is true, more than companionship was involved in the creation of a woman to be Adam's partner. God created a female as His answer to Adam's need as a male. The Cultural Mandate requires Adam to reproduce to carry out his responsibility to cultivate and care for the entire Earth. The latter requires a multitude of helpers. A man needs a woman [and vice versa] to be fruitful and multiply the workers to fill the earth. Gen 2:7-25 cf 1:28 Beyond that, Adam the male needed a female to fulfill or complete himself and vice versa. Adam himself recognizes how fitting, how suitable to him, the female is: v. 23 the man said, "this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." She and he are bone of bone and flesh of flesh---totally in harmony, cut from the same cloth and naturally [biologically] intended to have intercourse (become "one flesh") and propagate. The use of Artificial Insemination or Adoption of someone else's child is not a sufficient substitute. Men and women, husbands and wives, are equals as human beings; but there are gender differences, each sex compliments and needs the other. The two, male and female, are intended and made to become "one flesh". Obviously two men or two women can have meaningful and loving relationships. But that is simply not the same as the relationship of a man and a woman. Thus Jesus said, "from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.' so they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (see Mark 10:6-9) [http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=210:biblical-basics-](http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=210:biblical-basics-) Also see-

"Boygirl" <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/magazine/>

"Transgender advocates seek new diagnostic terms," [http://www.salon.com/writer/lisa\\_leff/](http://www.salon.com/writer/lisa_leff/)

"The End of Gender," <http://www.npr.org/2011/06/27/137342682/the-end-of-gender>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:44

Tuesday, August 7, 2012

## **BUYING INTO A BIG LIE**

One of the first questions asked about the shooter in the latest mass murder, "Was he a member of a Hate Group?" Chick-fil-A's Founder was said by many in last week's flap, that he and his company support Hate Groups. A few that have been mentioned are Traditional Values Coalition, American Family Association, Focus on the Family and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Are these really Hate Groups? Mike Huckabee is accused of being "homophobic, fundamentalist, a hate-monger, and intolerant? The reasons: he supports traditional, Biblical Values. See- <http://thenewcivilrightsmovement.com/huckabee-chick-fil-a-smeared-by-vicious-hate-speech-I-started-to-search-websites-on-this-subject-what-a-cesspool!> Let's just go with Dictionary Definitions:  
Hate = to dislike intensely or passionately; feel extreme aversion for or extreme hostility toward; detest  
Hate Group = an organized group or movement that advocates hate, hostility, or violence towards members of a race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation  
Does any of this describe Chick-fil-A or any one connected with it? Does it describe Mike Huckabee? A well known propaganda technique is to tell a Big Lie and to tell it loud and for a long time. Eventually many people will simply accept it as the truth. The List of examples could fill a page. Very troubling to me is that many young people who are leaving evangelical churches give as a major reason for doing so is their belief that their churches are just like Mike Huckabee is described above, mostly because their pastor or Church supports the Biblical Definition of Marriage as being heterosexual only. They are buying into a Big Lie.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:59

## **SO WHAT?**

For the Record: the following business organizations or their Owners support "Gay Marriage" and Pro Choice causes- Microsoft, Nike, General Mills, Nabisco, the Minnesota Twins, J C Penney, Target, Cargill, Disney, Home Depot and Kraft Foods  
<http://onlineathens.com/national-news/2012-07-27/gay-marriage-fight-some-brands-take-stand>  
Check out-  
<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-05/how-gay-americans-went-from-criminals-to-brides-grooms.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:18

Tuesday, July 24. 2012

## **LET'S GO TO CHICK FIL A FOR LUNCH**

UPDATE: The Campaign against Chick fil A in the Boston area continues unabated with ever increasing, virulent outrage. Protestors want to punish the CEO of this privately owned business for his personal [not company] position in support of "Biblical Marriage". The restaurants themselves do not in any way discriminate between customers and gladly serve anyone who wants to enter the Restaurant. This fact is simply overlooked by Protestors (as well as the CEO's Right to Free Speech] For the Record, I support "Biblical Marriage", too.

Chick Fil A is accused of gay-bashing and discrimination. Boston wants to ban the business and Hanson's Muppets bring on the pressure of a boycott. Notice in this article and others that Campus Crusade, Focus on the Family and many other evangelical organizations are tarred with the same brush. I have long ago stopped being surprised by how illiberal liberals can be! And how free-speech is only "free for me and not thee" according to many groups who hatefully preach love, acceptance and diversity.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/editorials/la-ed-chick-fil-a-20120724,0,5809726.story>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:02

Saturday, July 21. 2012

## **MORE WELFARE ABUSE**

"Taking aim at what they call an abuse of the taxpayers' money, a growing number of states are blocking welfare recipients from spending their benefits on booze, cigarettes, lottery tickets, casino gambling, tattoos and strippers. "If you're not abusing the program, then you should really have no problem with these reforms," said state Rep. Shaunna O'Connell, a Republican pushing for restrictions in Massachusetts.

While the crackdown has strong populist appeal in Democratic and GOP states alike in this era of tight budgets and tea party demands for fiscal discipline, advocates for the poor argue that the restrictions are based on stereotypes about people on welfare, and they say the notion of any widespread abuse is a myth. Most people on public assistance, they contend, are single mothers struggling just to get by."

<http://www.sacbee.com/2012/07/18/4640183/new-welfare-restrictions-target.html>

Aah, "single moms"- the elephant in the room that remains to be dealt with!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:52

Tuesday, July 17. 2012

### **INDISCRIMINATE DISCRIMINATION**

Vanderbilt University has a "all comers" policy re student groups. Whoever wants to join a group shall be free to do so. Many naive Christians think this sounds good. BUT this policy means no discrimination. It is not a good Policy! All shall be allowed to serve as Leaders and Officers. Of course groups that vote for Leaders can still do so- but they can not legally vote against anyone. No one may be disqualified or discriminated against. A group such as IVCF may not have a policy of Christians only for the Exec Committee or vote against someone because they are not Christian. "All comers" literally means no discrimination of any kind. This is a bad Policy. I wonder if it is really meant to discriminate against Christian groups.

Shall it be enforced for all male, all female groups? for Atheist, Jewish and Muslim groups- and Gay groups?  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/july-august/mixed-views-on-vanderbilt->

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:35

### **WANT JUSTICE? PREACH THE LAW**

We often here severe criticism, especially from younger evangelicals, that churches are far too legalistic. There needs to be, they insist, greater emphasis on Grace. Ironically they can become very moralistic themselves about churches being moralistic (they just change one set of morals for another). Well everyday I am appalled by the lack of morals and ethics on every level of society. Antinomianism rules for many. More exactly, everyone does what is moral in his own eyes- cf Judges 21:25. In truth, what is needed is the preaching of Law- God's Law. Only then, as people are held accountable and convicted of their sins by that Holy Standard, should the Gospel of Grace be added to the preaching. And then, after hearts are regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, Christians should be called to obey the Law of God in all their lives- no more hypocritical double standards or dualistic viewpoint or situational ethics. Away with antinomianism!! Bring on the Law of God! Some of the latest evidence of immoral and unethical behavior

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-16/hsbc-aided-money-laundering-by-iran-drug-cartels-probe-shows.html>  
<http://www.foxbusiness.com/news/2012/07/16/al-emporium-few-more-bad-apples/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:17

Tuesday, July 10. 2012

### **MYTHBUSTERS- THE SHOW**

Is Myth Busters, the explosive TV show on the Discovery Channel a good way to get children to become students of the physical Sciences? Here is an interesting article, by a college Physics Professor, which explains why it is not and why and what doing Science really requires to get students interested in it.

[http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2012/july/mythbusters.html?utm\\_](http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2012/july/mythbusters.html?utm_)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:19

Monday, July 9, 2012

## **CALCULATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF KNOWING PRENATAL TEST RESULTS**

New developments in prenatal testing lead to old ethical issues for those who have them. What are the advantages and disadvantages of testing? Will the results lead to abortion? genetic engineering? Can a child born with "disabilities" really have abilities to live fruitful lives and be a blessing to others? What guidance does the Bible give about all this? <http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2012/07/what-you-need-to-know-about-new-prenatal-tests.html>?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:26

Wednesday, July 4, 2012

## **GOALS OF THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

An article in our local paper, "The Sunday Republican" on June 24th laid out what can be called the Agenda for the Gay Rights Movement. Many conservatives believe the goal is simply about "sexual preference". Wrong. It is far more ambitious and many issues are at stake. Here is a summary as copied from the article-

(Joe Kennedy III,) who is facing opposition from three Republicans to represent the 4th Congressional District seat being vacated by openly gay U.S. Rep Barney Frank, said that if elected he would pursue legislation that supports "lived equality." Repealing the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) -- which federally defines marriage as between a man and a woman -- would be the tip of the iceberg in terms of Kennedy's priorities.

"First and foremost we need to repeal DOMA and guarantee same-sex partners the rights afforded all couples. But the fight for equal rights goes beyond marriage equality," Kennedy said in a statement. "As equal-marriage becomes law in more and more states, we need to look beyond legal equality and toward lived equality: from ending discrimination in the workplace to stopping the devastating effects of bullying in our schools. If elected, I will make it a priority to be not just a voice but a leader in the fight for equality." Warren, who is running against incumbent Republican U.S. Sen. Scott Brown, called for full LGBT equality months before Obama completed his "evolution" on the issue of same-sex marriage.

Recently, she renewed her promise that if elected she will draft and support legislation that ends legal restrictions and discrimination for LGBT people. "No one should be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression," Warren said in a statement. "We must remain committed to promoting fairness and equality for all, and work to end the two-tiered system created by the Defense of Marriage Act, pass a fully-inclusive Employee Non-Discrimination Act, and work to create welcoming schools and prevent bullying. If elected to the U.S. Senate, I will be a leader in the fight for full equality for all Americans."

We think that jobs, the economy, healthcare, retirement security and taxes are all 'gay issues,' and on every single one of those issues, Mitt Romney is light years better than President Obama," said Jimmy LaSalvia, GOProud Executive Director.

Read the entire article here-

[http://blog.masslive.com/politics\\_impact/print.html?entry=/2012/06](http://blog.masslive.com/politics_impact/print.html?entry=/2012/06)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:43

## **HEALTH CARE REFORM AND THE FOUNDERS**

<http://www.davidrivkin.com/articles>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:48

Sunday, June 3, 2012

### **DOMA RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL BY MASS COURT**

"A federal appeals court ruled [last week] that the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is unconstitutional. The First Circuit Court of Appeals, whose jurisdiction includes Massachusetts, said that DOMA imposes a burden on both states and couples without a legitimate federal purpose. The decision is expected to be reviewed by the United States Supreme Court.

"According to the court decision, DOMA affects more than 1,000 references to marriage in federal laws. As a result, same-sex couples who are married in U.S. states are denied substantial benefits from the federal government. Same-sex couples cannot file joint federal tax returns. Spouses cannot collect Social Security survivor benefits. Federal employees cannot share their health insurance with their spouses.

"The First Circuit ruled that the burden placed on the more than 100,000 same-sex couples could not be justified. It rejected the argument that the underlying purpose of DOMA was "hostility toward homosexuality." Support for traditional marriage, said the Court, did not mean moral disapproval of same-sex couples.

[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctpolitics/2012/05/doma\\_decision\\_](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctpolitics/2012/05/doma_decision_)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 21:08

### **CASHING IN ON BREAST CANCER**

"A new documentary called Pink Ribbons, Inc., from filmmaker Léa Pool, explores how and why breast cancer awareness (also called "pink ribbon culture") became such big business, and whether heightened "awareness" is really making a difference in the lives of real women. The film's central thesis is that years ago, corporations and philanthropists discovered that fear, carefully cultivated, inspires passion, and that passion can be directed to their own financial gain.

"And so the launch of breast cancer awareness campaigns, and a month-long glut of products decorated with pink ribbons. Through interviews and research, Pink Ribbons, Inc., argues that American women have been told to take ownership of breast cancer, whether or not they have it or know someone who has, and this has created more a drive to purchase endless pink products than to find a cure.

[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2012/06/cashing\\_in\\_on\\_breast\\_cancer\\_](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2012/06/cashing_in_on_breast_cancer_)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 21:01

Friday, May 25. 2012

## **WHY FACEBOOK REFUSED TO SHOW BABY PICTURES**

When Heather Walker posted pictures of her newborn anencephalic son, Grayson, on Facebook, the web site took the photos down and temporarily disabled her account. Grayson James Walker was born in February. Just weeks into the pregnancy, the Walkers had learned that their unborn son had anencephaly,... Anencephalic babies who survive birth usually don't live for more than a few hours.

Last week, three months after Grayson's birth and death, his mother, Heather, posted some of these photos on Facebook. On her blog she explains, "I was tired of trying to hide my son, the way he was, just to make others feel comfortable. I felt like people would be scared or offended because his head didn't look like other babies'. A sudden impulse, in my grieving process, told me to be proud and not worried about the thoughts of others." But Facebook removed the pictures. Heather posted them again. Again, Facebook deleted them. So Heather posted them again. And again. Then Facebook temporarily disabled her account from posting more pictures.

[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2012/05/facebook\\_grayson\\_walker\\_](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2012/05/facebook_grayson_walker_)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:21

Saturday, May 12. 2012

## **THE NOT SO GAY NEWS ABOUT GAY MARRIAGE**

"The latest Gallup poll found that 50% of Americans "believe same-sex marriages should be recognized by law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriages – down slightly from 53% last year, but marking only the second time in Gallup's history of tracking this question that at least half of Americans have supported legal same-sex marriage. Forty-eight percent say such marriages should not be legal." Since Gallup began asking the question in the mid-1990s support for same-sex marriage has risen 27% while opposition has fallen from 68%." James' White has a very good post about the issue of Homosexuality in our Society here <http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=2742>  
One of the best resources for the study of Homosexuality and Sexuality in general from a conservative evangelical, New Testament scholar is Robert Gagnon  
<http://www.robgagnon.net/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:32

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

### **CHRISTIAN ECONOMIST ADDRESSES CAUSES OF WORLD POVERTY**

From a review of a recent Lecture at Stanford (Calif) University- "Making Money, Spending Money: What do we owe to the poor?" "How do we develop macro strategies through political action and through public information?" [The speaker] argues that that kind of engagement really matters, not just individual acts of charity. Nishan's discussion at the Forum centered on dealing with social and political structures and the underlying issues as well as having and developing macro strategies as a sustainable response to poverty and changing people's lives for the better. As for our obligation, Nishan states that as Christians, we value life and thus must value all lives, and as people who are not poor, we are however complicit in others' impoverished lives by living as we do and we must therefore do what we can to change sociopolitical structures so that poverty is addressed and alleviated"

See more here

<http://kudospress.com/serendipity/index.php?/archives/111-Discussing-Poverty->

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:49

### **BILL vs BILLY on GAY MARRIAGE**

Bill Clinton supports Gay Marriage while Billy Graham does not. The former along with VP Biden define marriage as any loving, caring committed couple. The Evangelist knows that Jesus does not, nor does the Bible. The latter defines Marriage as a Covenant between a man and a woman (Matt. 19:4-6) It is significant that many younger "Evangelicals" agree with Bill and not Billy! "Opponents of a constitutional amendment to define marriage in North Carolina say they've faced an uphill battle in getting their message out about the broad impact of the proposed change, with the latest polling showing that the state will likely follow 30 others in approving anti-gay marriage measures." "Voting began early Tuesday on the amendment and candidate races in the 2012 primary, but 512,000 people -- or 8 percent of registered voters -- already have participated through absentee ballot, according to the State Board of Elections. That record turnout surpassed even the 2008 primary, which included Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton on the ballot, according to Democracy North Carolina. The amendment, also known as Amendment One, would make marriage the only domestic legal union that would be valid in the state."

[http://usnews.msnbc.msn.com/\\_news/2012/05/08/](http://usnews.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/05/08/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:21

### **TAX DOLLARS FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD PUSHED**

"Newly empowered Republicans in states across the country are pushing to kill public contracts with Planned Parenthood, only to find their efforts blocked by the Obama administration and federal courts. In New Hampshire, the administration circumvented officials by awarding a \$1 million grant directly to the nation's largest provider of abortion services after state officials blocked a grant to the organization. Every federal district court that has ruled so far has sided with Planned Parenthood. That has helped the administration, which has threatened to cut off states' Medicaid funding if they refuse to work with the organization."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:19

Friday, April 27, 2012

## **REFORM CONSERVATISM**

Here are the basic choices in the coming Election and the best option for America: Reform Conservatism.  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-gops-conservative-reformers-win-out/2012/04/26/gIQAkVMCjT\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-gops-conservative-reformers-win-out/2012/04/26/gIQAkVMCjT_story.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:23

## **RC SOCIAL TEACHING: IS PAUL RYAN FAITHFUL TO IT?**

The basic cause of debate between liberal Roman Catholics and conservative Roman Catholics [such as in the column posted below this one] is the same as between all Liberals and Conservatives: the Function of Government and in this case, it's budgetary responsibilities to the Country as a whole and to the Poor within it. Each side claims it is being faithful to the Teaching of the Church. Catholic Social Teaching includes two Principles (among others): Solidarity. Solidarity is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, not merely vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of others. Solidarity, which flows from faith, is fundamental to the Christian view of social and political organization. Each person is connected to and dependent on all humanity, collectively and individually. "Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue. It seeks to go beyond itself to total gratuity, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It leads to a new vision of the unity of humankind, a reflection of God's triune intimate life...." It is a unity that binds members of a group together. All the peoples of the world belong to one human family. We must be our brother's keeper, though we may be separated by distance, language or culture. Jesus teaches that we must each love our neighbors as ourselves and in the parable of the Good Samaritan we see that our compassion should extend to all people. Solidarity includes the Scriptural call to welcome the stranger among us—including immigrants seeking work, a safe home, education for their children, and a decent life for their families. Subsidiarity. Through our words, prayers and deeds we must show solidarity with, and compassion for, the poor. When instituting public policy we must always keep the "preferential option for the poor" at the forefront of our minds. The moral test of any society is "how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor." Pope Benedict XVI has taught that "love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, is as essential as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel". [41] This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable includes all who are marginalized in our nation and beyond—unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and terminally ill, and victims of injustice and oppression. [BUT] The Church's canon law, which states, "The Christian faithful are also obliged to promote social justice and, mindful of the precept of the Lord, to assist the poor from their own resources." Pope Pius XI said, "It is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable, that one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and/or industry." Under the principle of subsidiarity, state functions should be carried out at the lowest level that is practical. Source: "Catechism of the Catholic Church" and Wikipedia articles on Catholic Social Teaching. A helpful link on the subject- [http://www.uscatholic.org/busy\\_christians\\_guide\\_catholic\\_social\\_teaching](http://www.uscatholic.org/busy_christians_guide_catholic_social_teaching)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:10

**Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>**

Thursday, April 26, 2012

### **RESPECT FOR THE LONG-BORN**

Very good article on the need for respect and care of the Elderly  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=2683>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:01

Tuesday, April 24. 2012

## **READING AND WRITING SKILLS**

Colleges are supposed to produce learning. But, in their landmark study, "Academically Adrift," Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa found that, on average, students experienced a pathetic seven percentile point gain in skills during their first two years in college and a marginal gain in the two years after that. The exact numbers are disputed, but the study suggests that nearly half the students showed no significant gain in critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing skills during their first two years in college."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/20/opinion/>

Mr Brooks primary concern in this column is failure of many students to improve critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing skills during college. I assume many of these students are Christians or from Christian homes. Christians are called to be people who are disciples (students) and study the Bible which is verbal, propositional truth. They are called to love God with all their minds and to be able to give a rational defense of their faith to all who may ask about it. All people should have them, but of all people, Christians should value and develop critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing skills as part of who they are and what they do as Believers. Note that Mr Brooks is not talking about testing knowledge of specific subjects or course material, but rather these particular skills. Apparently the researchers did exactly that. Mr Brooks seems to put a lot of the responsibility for this problem on lack of student motivation, as well as failure of professors to motivate and teach students well. These conclusions are very debatable, but the data in the research, if accurate, is troubling and the reasons for the lack of critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing skills should be researched and resolved and Christians should be very concerned about doing that. To judge by the quality of political discourse these days, all Americans should be very concerned about it. The skills are sorely lacking.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:34

Tuesday, April 17, 2012

## **REALITY CHECK FOR YOUNG IDEALISTS**

"If you attend a certain sort of conference, hang out at a certain sort of coffee shop or visit a certain sort of university, you've probably run into some of these wonderful young people who are doing good. Typically, they've spent a year studying abroad. They've traveled in the poorer regions of the world. Now they have devoted themselves to a purpose larger than self. Often they are bursting with enthusiasm for some social entrepreneurship project: making a cheap water-purification system, starting a company that will empower Rwandan women by selling their crafts in boutiques around the world. These people are refreshingly uncynical. Their hip service ethos is setting the moral tone for the age. Idealistic and uplifting, their worldview is spread by enlightened advertising campaigns, from Benetton years ago to everything Apple has ever done. It's hard not to feel inspired by all these idealists, but their service religion does have some [serious] shortcomings. Many younger Evangelicals are among these "idealists" and need to take Mr Brooks advice seriously. But that is still not enough. They must think and act Biblically about their actions. Many think they are but Mr Brooks and the Bible disagree and offer a better path to follow in "redeeming the world". See the Essays about Theonomy on my website.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/13/opinion/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:02

## **THE STORY OF THE TWO AMERICAN ECONOMIES**

The major issue facing America is not "jobs" and "The Economy", but facing the reality of two types of Economies and working out their relationship. Here is a broad strokes description of the problem. David Brooks refers to evidence that "there are two interrelated American economies. On the one hand, there is the globalized tradable sector — companies that have to compete with everybody everywhere. These companies, with the sword of foreign competition hanging over them, have become relentlessly dynamic and very (sometimes brutally) efficient." "On the other hand, there is a large sector of the economy that does not face this global competition — health care, education and government. Leaders in this economy try to improve productivity and use new technologies, but they are not compelled by do-or-die pressure, and their pace of change is slower." "A rift is opening up. The first, globalized sector is producing a lot of the productivity gains, but it is not producing a lot of the jobs. The second more protected sector is producing more jobs, but not as many productivity gains. The hyper-competitive globalized economy generates enormous profits, while the second, less tradable economy is where more Americans actually live." "In politics, we are beginning to see conflicts between those who live in Economy I and those who live in Economy II." How will this conflict be resolved. What guidance can we get from the Bible?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/10/opinion/brooks-the-two-economies.html?>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:52

Saturday, April 14, 2012

## **CHOSING A PUBLIC SCHOOL**

"I can see that what began as a call to obedience for our family to be a blessing in our neighborhood has evolved into a conviction that public education is truly a place where God's light can and does shine through his people. It is a place where advocates are needed for the "least of these"—a place where Christians can join with other citizens to give a voice to the children whose voices are not represented by the empowered adult interests. And finally, it is a place for the church to testify to God's heart for the marginalized in a world that so often thinks of God's people as defending the status quo. Praise God for his faithfulness and the fact that he calls us to bear fruit—to bloom where we are planted—wherever we are, in such times as these."

[http://www.christianitytoday.com/thisisourcity/7thcity/bloom.html?utm\\_](http://www.christianitytoday.com/thisisourcity/7thcity/bloom.html?utm_)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:48

## **LOVE? WHAT IS LOVE?**

We received a church bulletin in the mail today. The Pastor's Message on the front cover posed the question: "If I know I shall die tomorrow, what should I do today?" The answer he said, is to love. In the words of a popular song, he wrote, life is all about love, sweet love. How did Jesus teach us to live, the Pastor asked. Love, we are to live love, he wrote.

But what does that advice actually mean? To many, the word "love" is a kind of mantra- they value the repetition of the word, just saying it, over and over. It sounds good. But what does "love" mean? It must have content, a definition. Will it be love to vote "yes" on the referendum in our next Election to legalize smoking marijuana? "yes" to the one that would legalize Euthanasia? The State of Connecticut just repealed the Death penalty. Was that an act of love? There is a court appeal being made here to over turn DOMA (the Federal Defense of Marriage Act). Does love require support of this appeal? Our State voted to legalize Gay Marriage. Was that an act of love? Our City has voted that school nurses may give condoms to 12 year olds who request them. Was that vote an act of love? Are 12 years olds who are sexually active showing love? Our Legislature is debating the same law for self defense that was used to justify the shooting of the teenager in Sanford Florida last month. Does love validate or require such a law? Does Love require mandatory universal Health Insurance (Obamacare)? Will it be love to overhaul Social Security or reduce Medicare benefits? Does love require welcoming illegal immigrants into our Country? The list goes on and on. I'm just asking. What is it to love? What does love require? In the Bible, love is not a feeling, but an act. It is a command to be obeyed. But what act? obedience to what? Just saying the word over and over is meaningless. It must be defined! Of course, if we tried answering these questions, we may not become very loving. Maybe that is why we are satisfied with just using the word itself.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:24

## **CHRISTIAN FAMILIES CHOSING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Many Americans, including many Christians, do not consider urban schools like Chimborazo good enough for their children. Despite federal programs such as George Bush's No Child Left Behind and the Obama administration's Race to the Top, American students still struggle to achieve basic academic goals. The nonpartisan Broad Foundation for Education reports that 68 percent of American 8th graders can't read at their grade level, and most will never catch up. Nationally, 70 percent of students graduate from high school, and only 50 percent of African American and Latino students graduate on time. But in recent years, a growing number of Christians across the country have felt called to take up the educational challenge in their own communities. In many of those communities, including Richmond, Virginia, the tide seems to be turning.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/april/school-choice.html?utm>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:16

## **PROTESTING ECONOMICS CLASS AT HARVARD**

Here is an article that can serve as an introduction to my multi-part Essay that follows it about Biblical Economics. What

I posted is a simple outline of what I know is a complicated subject. My concern is to motivate Christians to do the serious intellectual work required to dig deeper and find the Biblical path through the Topic and then to walk on it."CAMBRIDGE – Early last month, a group of students staged a walkout in Harvard's popular introductory economics course, Economics 10, taught by my colleague Greg Mankiw. Their complaint: the course propagates conservative ideology in the guise of economic science and helps perpetuate social inequality. The students were part of a growing chorus of protest against modern economics as it is taught in the world's leading academic institutions. Economics has always had its critics, of course, but the financial crisis and its aftermath have given them fresh ammunition, seeming to validate long-standing charges against the profession's unrealistic assumptions, reification of markets, and disregard for social concerns. Mankiw, for his part, found the protesting students "poorly informed." Economics does not have an ideology, he retorted. Quoting John Maynard Keynes, he pointed out that economics is a method that helps people to think straight and reach the correct answers, with no foreordained policy conclusions. Indeed, though you may be excused for skepticism if you have not immersed yourself in years of advanced study in economics, coursework in a typical economics doctoral program produces a bewildering variety of policy prescriptions depending on the specific context. Some of the frameworks economists use to analyze the world favor free markets, while others don't. In fact, much economic research is devoted to understanding how government intervention can improve economic performance. And non-economic motives and socially cooperative behavior are increasingly part of what economists study."

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/occupy-the-classroom->

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:54

Friday, April 13. 2012

## **CHRISTIANITY HAS BEEN DESTROYED- Really?**

"Christianity has been destroyed by politics, priests, and get-rich evangelists. Ignore them, writes Andrew Sullivan, and embrace Him. "“I am a real Christian,”[Thomas] Jefferson insisted against the fundamentalists and clerics of his time. “That is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus.”“What were those doctrines? Not the supernatural claims that, fused with politics and power, gave successive generations wars, inquisitions, pogroms, reformations, and counter-reformations. Jesus’ doctrines were the practical commandments, the truly radical ideas that immediately leap out in the simple stories he told and which he exemplified in everything he did. Not simply love one another, but love your enemy and forgive those who harm you; give up all material wealth; love the ineffable Being behind all things, and know that this Being is actually your truest Father, in whose image you were made. Above all: give up power over others, because power, if it is to be effective, ultimately requires the threat of violence, and violence is incompatible with the total acceptance and love of all other human beings that is at the sacred heart of Jesus’ teaching. That’s why, in his final apolitical act, Jesus never defended his innocence at trial, never resisted his crucifixion, and even turned to those nailing his hands to the wood on the cross and forgave them, and loved them.”<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/04/01/andrew-sullivan-christianity-in-crisis.html>Many contemporary evangelical young adults we know are seriously and enthusiastically embracing what Sullivan is saying in his article. And I agree with a lot of it myself and changes must be made in how we understand and practice "Christianity". What should those changes be? I am taking up the pen (key board) again, determined to try once more to pursue and promote a "Re/formed" Faith. It is not the one Sullivan or my young friends think it is. It is "Theonomy" as I understand that concept. There are many Essays on the subject on my website; but I will try to present it in more detail in the next few posts here on this Blog.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:54

Friday, March 23, 2012

## **HUNGER GAMES**

This is an excellent, probing, in-depth Review of the movie, "Hunger Games". The best I have read. It raises all the important cultural, ethical, psychological and political issues that the book and the movie do/or don't address.  
<http://www.spu.edu/depts/uc/response/new/2012-winter/exclusives/the-hunger-games.asp>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:53

Monday, February 20, 2012

## **CHARLOTTE'S WEB- GREATEST CHILDREN'S STORY?**

<http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/story/2012-02-14/charlottes-web-100-greatest-kids-books/53097828/1>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:42

## **THE BLAME GAME**

Our public school system here in Springfield, Mass has 26,000 students. It struggles with a high drop out rate - almost 12% this past year. Of those who begin High School, only 52% make it to graduation. Many decry the lack of jobs in the area. The fact is there are many jobs, but few who are qualified to take them [a Job Fair is being held today and that is the complaint of many companies here who are seeking workers]The popular answer is to blame the Superintendent. In fact, the current one has been pushed out, as were the last two. According to an op ed piece by the Superintendent in yesterday's paper, there are many factors or reasons for the school problems and for solutions. There are nine factors that limit students (especially single drop-out parents, poverty and poor English language and reading skills) and several that are from within the schools themselves, especially State performance demands. The Superintendent then lists all many things that he and his staff are doing to remedy the problems of drop out and graduation rates. But he concludes with, guess what?, the need of family and community involvement. "There will have to be a community wide shift on the value placed on education and graduation in every household and in every neighborhood." The latter, he says, is a "moral imperative". Obviously it is not being obeyed. Meanwhile the search is on for his replacement. The most vocal people are pushing for an in-house choice.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:30

## **WORD GAMES**

Definitions, definitions. The President directs Roman Catholic Churches and other organization who are anti-abortion on the basis of religious beliefs to provide insurance for their employees for abortions. The pro-abortion people, Liberals, say the President's directive is all about women's health care and has nothing to do with Religion. So his position on the matter is ok to them. Religion is a private matter and does not belong in the public square. So, no foul here (of course, Obama has had to back away from his position because of opposition from those who did not think it was ok).Rick Santorum criticizes the President's world view which includes an ideology about the role of Government (a book about President Clinton comes out this week which emphasizes how he and his policies were also deep-rooted in his political ideology and political Idealism.) Santorum is severely criticized, in turn, for criticizing President Obama's Faith. The latter is not ok to the same Liberals. Santorum, they say, is way out of bounds here. Santorum should apologize to Obama. This confusion is caused by different definitions of Religion, Faith, Ideology and World Views. Here is what the standard [American Heritage] dictionary definitions are- ReligionBelief in and reverence for a supernatural power regarded as creator and governor of the universe.A personal or institutionalized system grounded in such belief and worship.A set of beliefs, values, and practices based on the teachings of a spiritual leader.A cause, principle, or activity pursued with zeal or conscientious devotion.FaithConfident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing.Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence. See Synonyms at belief, trust.The body of dogma of a religion: the Muslim faith.A set of principles or beliefs.IdeologyBody of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture.A set of doctrines or beliefs that form the basis of a political, economic, or other system.World ViewThe overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world.A collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lots of overlapping here. Exactly who is talking about what and why? Is this flap really about words or the use of words for the political purposes of the speakers or writers, as in "wordplay" or "word games"?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:00

Monday, February 13, 2012

## **PERCENT OF AMERICANS GETTING CHECKS FROM GOV'T**

The Geography of Government Benefits: Smaller Govt anyone? Interactive Map

The share of Americans' income that comes from government benefit programs, like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, more than doubled over the last four decades, rising from 8 percent in 1969 to 18 percent in 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/02/12/us/entitlement-map.html?src=me&ref=general>

This is very revealing map, but also very incomplete or misleading. All Americans ever increasingly benefit financially in some and many ways from Govt largess- actually from our own taxes paid to it, for things like Highways and automobiles and business bail-outs and various stimulus plans. Hundreds of millions of us depend upon it directly or indirectly for our jobs and income, as well as what those jobs provide, like National Defense. All those figures are not included, but should be, on this map.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:19

## **FREEDOM RIDERS- must see video**

We have watched documentaries about the disgraceful, shameful ways America has treated Native Americans and Japanese Americans. Last night I watched this video about the Freedom Riders in the Deep South and the unbelievable blatant, overt, violent hatred and racism visited by White People against the Riders.

Here is the very disturbing video <http://video.pbs.org/video/1925571160/>

All this was happening in the month we were getting married, oblivious to it all. I was a Social Worker in the Black ghetto of Hartford, Connecticut. As newly weds we lived in that section of the City. Everyday I was involved in the lives of the Poor and of African-Americans. But we knew little about the Events in the South and never heard about the subject in our church. Fundamental Baptists in the North had other concerns.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:09

Saturday, February 11. 2012

## **THIS IS CRAZY**

"Millions of healthy people - including shy or defiant children, grieving relatives and people with fetishes - may be wrongly labeled mentally ill by a new international diagnostic manual, specialists said on Thursday. ...an upcoming revision of the influential Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), psychologists, psychiatrists and mental health experts said its new categories and "tick-box" diagnosis systems were at best "silly" and at worst "worrying and dangerous." Some diagnoses - for conditions like "oppositional defiant disorder" and "apathy syndrome" - risk devaluing the seriousness of mental illness and medicalising behaviors most people would consider normal or just mildly eccentric, the experts said."

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46329572/ns/health/t/shyness-illness-experts-blast-new-mental-health-bible/#.TzcLr1Gi3To>

This new Mental Health "Bible" will not only falsely label many people with the label of Mentally Ill, it will qualify them for insurance benefits including meds and assign them to "special needs" classrooms. It is also worth mentioning that loose labeling people this way was common in the USSR and the Third Reich to justify the Government sending certain people to "camps".

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:10

## **TRIVIALIZING FAITH**

The following Statement was written before the President's announcement late yesterday that he had changed his mind about his proposed Mandate forcing Christian organizations which oppose abortion on Biblical grounds to pay for their employees' insurance and medical coverage for it. However, he did this for political reasons and under pressure from those Christian and conservative who objected vociferously. It does not mean the President's mind or personal principles changed or that this will not happen again and again. So this Statement still stands. It is essential to know that the Cultural and Academic Elites in America have long ago trivialized Religion and many Evangelicals have bought into that effort. By trivializing I mean they have succeeded in making our Faith a matter of inner and personal, private and subjective feelings ONLY with no social or civic connection or consequences. The interview on a morning news show yesterday by the "news-anchor" of the RC Archbishop of NY made this clear, again. She could not see what the AB was talking about because, for her, this subject was the right of all women to health care. Period. What does the Church [private Religion] have to do with that? Why is the Church opposing health care for women? They were coming from two very different worldviews. Neither is neutral! Which one will dominate our Country down the road?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:46

## **THREAT TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

This was written by Charles Colson is founder of Prison Fellowship, Breakpoint, and several other ministries. Timothy George is dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University. We would urge you, therefore, to raise your voice against this unjust mandate that violates our first freedom as Americans. First, please sign the petition to President Obama prepared by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which we have posted at the Manhattan Declaration site, demanding that the President extend exemptions from this onerous mandate to all religious employers. Second, write to your representative and your senators in Congress. Third, sign the Manhattan Declaration. Join with 500,000 people who have committed to "fully and ungrudgingly render to Caesar what is Caesar's. But under no circumstances will we render to Caesar what is God's." Fourth, pray. Pray that God would soften the hearts and minds of the president and the leaders within his administration so that they would reverse course. We do not exaggerate when we say that this is the greatest threat to religious freedom in our lifetime. (continued below-)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:27

We cannot help but think of the words attributed to German pastor Martin Niemoeller, reflecting on the Nazi terror: First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for

me.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:25

Friday, February 10, 2012

## **SURPRISING CAUSE OF THE DEMISE OF WORLD POVERTY**

It is not the work of NGOs or Christian Charity- it is economic development!

"When it comes to alleviating poverty, it is the best of times. Never in history have so many people so quickly been taken off the poverty rolls." Poverty in Numbers: The Changing State of Global Poverty from 2005 to 2015, a 2011 Brookings Institution publication, summarizes this stunning development. Researchers Laurence Chandy and Geoffrey Gertz note that as late as the early 1980s, "more than half of all people in developing countries lived in extreme poverty." By 2005, they report, that number was cut in half. By 2010, "less than 16 percent remain in poverty, and fewer than 10 percent will likely be poor by 2015." In other words, the seemingly audacious UN Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty by half between 1990 and 2015 was met three years ago. "What's more, apparently no continent is being left behind. In the 1980s, poverty increased in Africa, and, in the 1990s, in Latin America. But, according to Chandy and Gertz, "poverty reduction is currently taking place in all regions of the world." For the first time, the poverty rate of sub-Saharan Africa is below 50 percent. The authors' model predicts that by 2015, poverty will be reduced in 85 of the 119 countries included in their analysis. The sharpest reduction is seen in Asia; given current trends, they predict 430 million people will be taken off the poverty rolls by 2015—a drop of 30 percentage points. "The developments in Asia, in fact, are the reason they say "the bulk of the fall in global poverty can be attributed to the two developing giants, India and China. They alone are responsible for three-quarters of the [expected] reduction of the world's poor." Not large donations, micro-enterprise programs, or child sponsorship, but rather sheer economic growth, has effected this change." <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/february/best-ways-to-fight-poverty.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:00

Monday, February 6, 2012

## **VENI, VIDI, VICI**

"New Study on Reading in the Digital Age: Parents Say Electronic, Digital Devices Negatively Affects Kids' Reading Time" <http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/kfrr> There is data to show grade school children say they do enjoy "reading", but the definition of "reading" has broadened. Is the reading of text messages, tweets and email a valid replacement for what has been meant by "reading" books? And the source of reading material is changing from actual books to the e-books, posts and essays found on the internet. Of course, children still love good stories and millions read the Harry Potter series. The critique that most interested and concerned me (in this report and others) is the decline in reading non-fiction and reading for the purpose of learning, rather than simply for fun or data. Very troubling is the decline in attention span and in critical, analytical reading skills and logical, linear thinking skills. Post modernism (its theories) and visual media have had these effects on young readers. In related news, in a survey in our newspaper today of local teens, most who were questioned see no value or need for cursive penmanship. Grammar and spelling skills have declined. And who learns Latin today in public schools? I have always believed a study of Latin was essential to good reading, especially helpful in defining new words in English. The ignorance of what XLVI means (as in Super Bowl) reveals even a lack of knowledge of Roman (i.e.-Latin) numerals. The motto and achievement of Modern, so-called Progressive, Education must not be Veni, Vidi, Vici !

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:52

## **VANDERBILT UNIV POLICY ANTI-FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

This just the latest of many such stories this past year-

"In the fall of 2010, Vanderbilt University began investigating the constitutions of every religious organization on its Nashville, Tenn., campus after a discrimination complaint was filed against a Christian fraternity. During the investigation, the university changed the student organization handbook to remove a section protecting religious association. The university eliminated a clause that read, "In affirming its commitment to this principle [of non-discrimination], the University does not limit freedom of religious association and does not require adherence to this principle by government agencies or external organizations that associate with but are not controlled by the University." In a letter to Vanderbilt students and faculty on Jan. 20, Chancellor Nicholas Zeppos insisted that the university "does not seek to limit anyone's freedom to practice his or her religion. We do, however, require all Vanderbilt registered student organizations to observe our nondiscrimination policy. That means membership in registered student organizations is open to everyone and that everyone, if desired, has the opportunity to seek leadership positions." <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/01/31/why-is-vanderbilt-turning-hostile-to-religion-on-its-campus/>

See this related Article-

<http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2012/02/01/hostility-to-religious-freedom-at-vanderbilt-university/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:33

Sunday, February 5, 2012

## **SURPRISING TRENDS IN GLOBAL POVERTY**

"We are living through a period of rapid global poverty reduction. According to recent estimates, high, sustained growth across most of the developing world has helped nearly half a billion people escape \$1.25-a-day poverty between 2005 and 2010. Never before have so many people been lifted out of poverty over such a brief period. "Over the past decade, the number of countries classified as low-income has fallen by two fifths, from 66 to 40, while the number of middle-income countries has ballooned to over 100. This means 26 poor countries have grown sufficiently rich to surpass the middle-income threshold. "Since 2005, nearly all of the 20 countries have seen significant increases in per capita income, reflecting the strong overall economic performance of the developing world. Additionally those that enjoy the highest gains see the most rapid decrease in poverty, affirming the central role of economic growth in poverty reduction."The above paragraphs are excerpts are from a fascinating paper about the progress that has been made against severe Poverty in the world, especially in China and India- primarily the result of Government-led economic policy and development. The article also documents ironies and contradictions about this progress.

[http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/0517\\_global\\_poverty\\_trends\\_chandy.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2011/0517_global_poverty_trends_chandy.aspx)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:01

## **WHAT HAPPENED TO SEPARATION OF STATE AND RELIGION?**

Obama administration, in creating specific rules to implement Obamacare, will require all employers (with a very narrow exemption discussed below) to offer their employees health insurance that provides FDA-approved contraception, female sterilization, and other "reproductive" services free of charge — even if the employer is a religious organization and doing so violates its doctrine. I also recalled the times that President Obama and other members of his administration have supported "freedom of worship." However, as in Pliny's time, "freedom of worship" is not the same thing as "freedom of religion." The former means that one may believe whatever one wants and worship privately without interference, whereas the latter allows one freedom to live in the world at large consistent with one's faith tenets, even if they are not endorsed by the state. Because the administration is knowingly forcing (primarily Catholic) religious organizations to pay for medical services to which they are theologically opposed, the new rules represent a frontal assault on freedom of religion...Read the rest of the article <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/289536/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:35

## **LIBERAL INTOLERANCE**

Modern "liberalism" is strikingly illiberal; the high priests of "tolerance" are increasingly intolerant of even the mildest dissent; and those who profess to "celebrate diversity" coerce ever more ruthlessly a narrow homogeneity. Thus, the Obama administration's insistence that Catholic institutions must be compelled to provide free contraception, sterilization, and abortifacients. The average salary of the top eight executives [of Planned Parenthood] is \$270,000, which makes them officially part of what the Obama administration calls "the 1 percent." In America today, few activities are as profitable as a "non-profit." Planned Parenthood receives almost half a billion dollars — or about 50 percent of its revenues — in taxpayer funding. A billion dollars seems a lot, even for 322,000 abortions a year. But it enables Planned Parenthood to function as a political heavyweight. Ms. Richards's business is an upscale progressives' ideological protection racket, Read the entire article by a rightly outraged Mark Steyn -<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:32

Friday, February 3, 2012

## **THE KEY TO "PLANNED PARENTHOOD" POWER**

"Today the Susan Komen Foundation for the Cure announced that it was caving to pressure from the Planned Parenthood Federation, reversing its decision not to fund Planned Parenthood in the screening of women for breast cancer. This is an important victory for Planned Parenthood and the abortion rights lobby. First of all, the association with Komen is a key piece in Planned Parenthood's effort to present itself as a "women's health provider" rather than simply as an abortion provider. Beyond that, the surrender of the nation's leading breast cancer awareness group to this kind of political pressure proves the clout of Planned Parenthood and their allies." In all of this, though, we can gain an opportunity to see what the abortion culture is all about: cash. Planned Parenthood and their allies use the thoroughly American language of freedom of choice and women's empowerment, but what's at stake, as seen here, are billions of dollars. That's why, despite their talk about adoption as a "choice," Planned Parenthood and others hardly ever lead women through an adoption process relative to how often they promise them the "fix" of a "terminated pregnancy." There's a profit motive involved in every abortion. "The answer for those of us who cherish the lives of women and their children, regardless of stage of development, isn't to long to compete with Planned Parenthood in the influence that comes with massive amounts of wealth. It's instead to see, first of all, how our own captivity to Mammon devolves us in the same way."

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/februaryweb-only/bad-komen-lessons.html>

ALSO -

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/february/planned-parenthood.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:08

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

### **"FAIRNESS" IS NOT THE ISSUE**

I do not care if Mr Romney is very wealthy. To me, Mr Obama and Mr Gingrich are wealthy also. I do not care if Mr Romney is a Mormon. I care about what their views are about Government and the role it will have in our lives. I care about what kind of President and Leader of our Nation that they would be, if elected. All this talk about what is "fair" is meaningless because no one has, or can, define the word. We would do far better if we discussed what is constitutional and legal, as well as what is moral and ethical. I can think of dozens (hundreds) of things in life that are not fair to my mind, but others could disagree for lack of a mutually agreed upon definition of the word. At any rate, it is not the Government's purpose to "make life fair" for everyone. Income inequality is not our most crucial problem as a Nation. If the Government had the will and power to triple everyone's income, would that make the Middle Class happy? Of course it would. But since that would mean the wealthy would also be better off and many in the Lower and Middle Classes would cry foul and think this would not be fair. That would prove that a major problem in our Society, beyond greed and the corruption that comes with it, is envy. I believe envy as well as greed are hurting us as a People far more than income inequality. The Government can not fix the dark side of human nature, but Politicians should not cater to it and exploit it for political purposes. And certainly, Government should not make any Policy based on it.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:14

Monday, January 16, 2012

### **THE MEANING OF MLK DAY**

"I felt the evil of it all. Because it was evil. It was the antithesis of God's call on your life, and mine, which is to enter into community with others. We are called to be a gathering of old and young, black and white, male and female, rich and poor. And most foundationally, to be able to join with those very people and experience life as family that is both holistic and healthy. So I celebrate this day for all that it represents. Because it's less about one man's life, and more about a dream."

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=2238>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:15

Wednesday, January 11, 2012

## **PRESERVING OUR FREEDOMS**

"In order for every person to have a realistic opportunity to actualize their Rights, there must be Freedom (Liberty). All human beings must have religious, political, economic and social freedom, as well as personal safety to enable them to exercise these Rights and Responsibilities. It is the God-given function of Civil Government to make it possible for citizens to do that- to secure and preserve these Freedoms- the freedoms to Live, Worship, Marry, have Families, Work and own Property and to be treated with Respect and fairness."  
excerpt from a new Essay at <http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:32

## **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**

Individuals must enter into a Social Contract with each other, as well as with their Government, for mutual benefit. More than Government, "Community" is essential to maintain and enjoy Human Rights which are essential to fulfill Human Responsibility. But this means all members must willingly accept limits on their individual rights (but not their God-given Responsibilities) and their freedoms for the common good. Living for the "Common Good", in fact, is a very fundamental Biblical concept. Family, Church, Community and State take precedence over the individual. This is important to the Founding Fathers as well. The "Happiness" which people have a Right to pursue as their goal in life is not a personal one, but comes to those who live in right-relation with God and Neighbors in Community.  
Excerpt from a new Essay at <http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:27

Tuesday, January 10. 2012

## **RECOGNIZING TEACHERS WHO LOVE TEACHING AND STUDENTS**

whats-missing-from-education-reform-debate

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:48

Tuesday, January 3, 2012

### **ABOUT RON PAUL'S POSITIONS ON THE ROLE OF GOV'T**

Ron Paul's Libertarian views are a challenge to Biblical Christians. They should motivate us to dig into the Bible to learn what the Word says about the original purpose of Civil Government should be. I find that many Christians either agree or disagree with Mr Paul [and all the other candidates as well] without doing that requisite study. These two articles, from commentators who usually do not agree with each other, both critique Paul's strong positions about Government. It would be a good exercise to list those positions and study them with Bible in hand.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ron-pauls-quest-to-undo-the-party-of-lincoln/2011/12>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/isolationism-redux-via-ron-paul/2011/12/30>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:50

Monday, January 2, 2012

## **ISLAM & THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

"Religious freedom is in global crisis. According to two comprehensive studies by the nonpartisan Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 70 percent of the world's population lives in nations where this precious freedom is subject to severe restriction. Many people suffer "mere discrimination" (some serious form of civil, economic, or political disability) because of their religious beliefs or those of their tormentors. Others—tens of millions, in fact—are victims of violent persecution, such as torture, rape, "disappearance" (kidnapping and murder), unjust imprisonment, and execution." You can be forgiven if you haven't heard much about this crisis from the mainstream press, whether left or right. Neither The New York Times and CNN, nor The Wall Street Journal and Fox News, have much time for religious persecution, beyond spectacular episodes of mass murder. Even then, the coverage is usually brief, thin, and void of analysis. How often, to cite one egregious area of neglect, has the secular press examined the effects of anti-blasphemy laws in the Middle East? In *Silenced: How Apostasy and Blasphemy Codes are Choking Freedom Worldwide* (Oxford University Press), Paul Marshall and Nina Shea go bravely where the media fear to tread. Based on an extensive examination of Muslim-majority countries, they contend that laws and policies punishing blasphemy and apostasy are not only a major source of religious persecution, but also an obstacle to stable democracy and the defeat of Islamist terrorism."

Read full review of the book- <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/december>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:08

## **WHO ARE THE TRUE "PATRIOTS"?**

This analysis of the football team could be used as a helpful metaphor for politics and for churches.  
[http://www.boston.com/sports/football/patriots/articles/2012/01/02/the\\_way\\_i\\_see\\_it\\_the\\_patriots\\_are\\_a\\_mirage/](http://www.boston.com/sports/football/patriots/articles/2012/01/02/the_way_i_see_it_the_patriots_are_a_mirage/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:20

## **NEEDING "THEM" TO IDENTIFY "US"**

Americans typically value the "Individual" while in reality we seek our personal identities, like all other peoples, in a group. But which group and why? This article reveals and explains a lot of what is happening socially in America today—and in your town. We seem to need "them" in order to know "us". We even need enemies to define ourselves. Scary stuff. Lots of applications possible with this concept—good and bad.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/need-to-know/the-daily-need/the-penn-state-riots-the-99-percent-and-the-powerful-psychology-of-group-identity/12336/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:11

Monday, December 26, 2011

## **THE 5 BEST TOYS EVER**

Lots of whimsy and wisdom in this List and photos from a really cool website-  
<http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2011/01/the-5-best-toys-of-all-time/all/1>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:07

Friday, December 23. 2011

**QUIZ: SEE IF YOU ARE A LIBERTARIAN**

"Libertarians support maximum liberty in both personal and economic matters. They advocate a much smaller government; one that is limited to protecting individuals from coercion and violence. Libertarians tend to embrace individual responsibility, oppose government bureaucracy and taxes, promote private charity, tolerate diverse lifestyles, support the free market, and defend civil liberties." "Centrist prefer a "middle ground" regarding government control of the economy and personal behavior. Depending on the issue, they sometimes favor government intervention and sometimes support individual freedom of choice. Centrists pride themselves on keeping an open mind, tend to oppose "political extremes," and emphasize what they describe as "practical" solutions to problems." "For a decent indicator of whether you are a libertarian according to the simple definition, take the World's Shortest Political Quiz."  
<http://www.theadvocates.org/quiz>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:53

Monday, December 19, 2011

## **WHO CONTROLS OUR SCHOOLS AND WHY?**

The Federal Government has no constitutional power over public schools run by the States, BUT it does have great influence in the form of setting national educational standards and money in the form of grants to compel States to meet those standards. If they do not comply, they do not get the Money. Thus Federal control over the Nation's public schools gradually spreads and leads to the achievement of Educational Goals set by the Administration in Office not the State, local School Boards, local Staff and definitely not the Parents. Do Teachers really want this control [not their Union- the teachers themselves] Do Biblical Christians really support this Federal control?

<http://www.masslive.com/newsflash/index.ssf/story/mass-wins-federal-grant-for-early-education>

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/dec/18/schools-race-teaches-states-a-hard-lesson/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:36

Monday, December 12. 2011

**BIG LIES THAT MANY BELIEVE ARE TRUE**

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=2084>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:56

Saturday, December 10, 2011

### **FIGHTING WORLD POVERTY- A GOOD RESOURCE**

There are many organizations dedicated to alleviating extreme poverty around the Globe. Here is one I have recently learned about that seems to have a very good all-inclusive approach, incorporating Biblical Principles. Their website is worth a look-

<http://www.povertycure.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:11

Friday, December 2, 2011

## **NEGATIVE ON AFFIRMATIVE**

In a post below, there is a new article about the current trend in college admissions policies to give preference to cash customers over those seeking admission who require a "Financial Aide Package". (There is an interesting footnote that the students who enroll on an all-paid basis often under perform academically!) Here is an article from last March bemoaning preference being given to white male students over those who are neither white nor male. (regardless of money matters)[http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/quotas-everyone-ignores\\_554831.html](http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/quotas-everyone-ignores_554831.html)

And then there is affirmative action that benefits the children of Alumni

("Legacy")<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/11/13/why-do-top-schools-still-take-legacy-applicants>

Both articles bemoan these types of Affirmative Action as unfair, but the implication is that Affirmative Action for Minorities (usually meaning African Americans) is ethically correct, necessary and to be legally enforced (even there is much evidence that such "Quotas" hurt the "Minorities")

[http://www.mindingthecampus.com/originals/2010/07/how\\_diversity\\_punishes\\_asians.html](http://www.mindingthecampus.com/originals/2010/07/how_diversity_punishes_asians.html)

Personally, I vote for Admissions on merit alone across the board.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:04

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION MESS**

"Stanford University Education Professor Linda Darling-Hammond helped Barack Obama draft his educational plan when he was a presidential candidate, and advised him on education issues during the transition between Obama's 2008 election and 2009 inauguration. Since then, she has opposed the standardized test-based school reform policies of the Obama administration. Her speech at last Saturday's Save Our Schools March in Washington D.C. explains the extent of the trouble public education is in. Here it is."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/darling-hammond-the-mess-we-are-in/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:53

## **AIDS IS STILL HAVING ITS DAY**

"Some 17,000 state residents have been diagnosed with the virus, but the true number of those infected may be closer to 25,000, accounting for those who do not know they're infected and, hence, are not receiving treatment, Cranston said."Nationally, 20 percent of people infected with HIV do not know they are, according to a federal report released this week. It also found that three out of four infected people do not have the virus under control. More than 16,000 Americans die each year from AIDS. There are still 40,000 new infections every year in the United States."Massachusetts encourages health care providers to offer HIV testing during routine physicals, but most eligible patients skip the test or are not offered it. "Unfortunately, we're a victim of our success with HIV treatments being so effective," said Dr. Richard Marlink, executive director of the Harvard School of Public Health AIDS Initiative. "We have a new generation of adults who really haven't known the devastation of people wasting away and dying. It's become a treatment problem, and the complacency is very high; that's what we're battling." [emphasis added]

[http://articles.boston.com/2011-12-01/lifestyle/30463889\\_1\\_offer-hiv-testing-new-infections-world-aids-day](http://articles.boston.com/2011-12-01/lifestyle/30463889_1_offer-hiv-testing-new-infections-world-aids-day)

My understanding is that locally, AIDS is spread mostly by promiscuous heterosexual behavior, typically among women who have sex with men carrying the Virus and often as part of their way to support drug addiction. This problem with AIDS continues to be primarily a matter of behavior, immoral sexual behavior.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:46

## **DOES MONEY OR MERIT MAKE FOR ADMISSION TO COLLEGE?**

Latest Survey indicates that the college admissions policy is increasingly about money and profits

<http://shankerblog.org/?p=3965>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:22

Saturday, November 26. 2011

### **MOBILITY IS THE KEY, NOT EQUALITY**

"What can be done to improve the quality of teachers in failing schools, to confront the high school dropout crisis, to encourage college attendance and completion, to reduce teen pregnancy, to encourage stable marriages, to promote financial literacy, to spark entrepreneurship? Both Democrats and Republicans should have something to contribute to the development of this agenda. Neither party, however, currently has much to say. And this is not likely to change until the discussion turns from equality to mobility."

Read the full article- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/economic-inequality-is-the-wrong-issue>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:32

Friday, November 18. 2011

## **HOLDING OURSELVES MORALLY ACCOUNTABLE**

Biblical Christians are well aware that the Bible teaches the human heart is deceitful and the source of the evils we all are capable of. We humans are marvelously made in the image of God and capable therefore of doing marvelous things, but we have this dark side within. Our Society is loath to admit it. Even the most dastardly deeds are blamed on, well, anything else- usually external influences. Our "Progressive" education system for generations has been based on the idea that children are basically good and simply need education to shape and mold them for wholesome, productive lives. Our Puritan ancestors, knowing their Bibles, knew the truth about the sinful nature of human beings. The drafters of our Federal Constitution knew that truth as well. It is the reason they insisted on a limited Government with checks and balances. When I was a social worker many years ago, I sincerely but naively offered this doctrine as partial explanation for the antisocial behavior of a certain teenager at a Team meeting. I was roundly ridiculed and my suggestion rejected outright by the other members of the Team. This attitude has not changed over the years. So I was glad to read this column by a respected journalist who puts forth the doctrine and its corollary of personal responsibility for one's behavior. He writes in response to public reactions to the current scandal at Penn State.<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/15/opinion/brooks-lets-all-feel-superior.html?ref=dauidbrooks>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:20

Thursday, November 10, 2011

## **PROBLEMS FOR THE PERSONHOOD MOVEMENT**

I posted on Monday about the "Personhood" referendum being voted on in Mississippi on Tuesday. It would have legally, constitutionally defined an embryo, from the moment of conception, as a legal "Person". The referendum was defeated. Here are two articles from Times magazine that cynically and sarcastically criticize the Personhood Movement. But they cover all the issues and arguments the Movement must deal with. I agree about conception being the beginning of a human being and a human being is an incipient "person". It is the consequences (many of which are unfortunate and unintended) of trying to put this into a practical, workable Law that creates the problems. That attempt must be greatly refined.

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2097340-1,00.html>

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2097340-2,00.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:17

Monday, October 24, 2011

## **WHERE THE WEALTHY LIVE IN AMERICA**

In a post below, I asked if you were a pastor in one of the poorest Cities in America what would you lead your church to do there. Hers is a list of some of the wealthiest Cities. If you were a Pastor in one of these places what would you lead your church to do?

<http://www.forbes.com/2005/10/27/richest-cities->

<http://www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:26

Sunday, October 23. 2011

## **CITIES WITH HIGHEST POVERTY RATES IN AMERICA**

If you were a Pastor in any of these Cities what would you lead your church to do?  
[reading-pa-tops-list-poverty-list-census-shows.html?pagewanted=all](#)  
[most-impooverished-cities-business-beltway-poverty-cities\\_slide\\_5.html](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:31

Thursday, October 20, 2011

## **ENGLISH ONLY**

It seems to me that essential for our Nation to be One is that we at least all speak the same language and that would be ENGLISH. In fact, requirements for voting in Federal Elections include citizenship. And the requirements for becoming a naturalized Citizen of the US include "The ability to read, write and speak ordinary English unless they are physically unable to do so due to a disability such as being blind or deaf, or suffer from a developmental disability or mental impairment. Those over 50 years old on the date of filing who have lived here for a total of at least 20 years after admission as a permanent resident and those who are over 55 and have been legal permanent residents for at least 15 years are also exempt from this requirement. AND ALSO A basic understanding the fundamentals of U.S. history and government. AND ... an affinity for the principles of the U.S. Constitution." It seems like all that, too, should require classes in English. So my Question is why "the federal government is ordering that 248 counties and other political jurisdictions provide bilingual ballots to Hispanics and other minorities who speak little or no English. In all, more than 1 in 18 jurisdictions must now provide foreign-language assistance in pre-election publicity, voter registration, early voting and absentee applications as well as Election Day balloting.

[http://www.newsvine.com/\\_news/2011/10/12/8287231-bilingual-voting-ballots-ordered-in-25-states](http://www.newsvine.com/_news/2011/10/12/8287231-bilingual-voting-ballots-ordered-in-25-states)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:41

Tuesday, October 18. 2011

## **SAN FRANCISCO IS GOING TO THE DOGS**

This development is so wrong on a number of levels. -"SAN FRANCISCO -- There are more dogs than kids in the City by the Bay. So it stands to reason dog owners carry a lot of clout - so much so they believe their endorsement can sway the upcoming mayoral race." "We expect the dog vote to be a game-changer," said Bruce Wolfe, president of DogPAC, which held a forum attended by several mayoral hopefuls Saturday. There are an estimated 150,000 dogs in the city, compared with some 108,000 children, according to the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the 2010 U.S. Census. More than 800,000 people are sandwiched into 7-by-7 square miles in the city named for St. Francis, patron saint of animals. As more parents seeking new schools and lower housing costs move out of the city, more straight and gay couples, as well as aging baby boomers, are choosing canines over kids. San Francisco is renowned for its dog parks and, like Paris, many of its restaurants and shops welcome pampered pooches in their leopard-print sweaters and bling-ringed dog collars. "Making San Francisco a family friendly city means recognizing the multitude of ways in which we define families," City Attorney Dennis Herrera says on his site. "And in the city of St. Francis, that includes dogs and companion animals." Read full article here- [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/03/dogpac-san-francisco\\_n\\_992555.html#s385030](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/03/dogpac-san-francisco_n_992555.html#s385030)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:37

Saturday, October 15, 2011

## **FACTS ABOUT WHO PAYS TAXES AND HOW MUCH**

Obama's new strategy: Don't whine, blame. Attack. Indict. Accuse. Who? The rich — and their Republican protectors — for wrecking America. In Obama's telling, it's the refusal of the rich to "pay their fair share" that jeopardizes Medicare. If millionaires don't pony up, schools will crumble. Oil-drilling tax breaks are costing teachers their jobs. Corporate loopholes will gut medical research. It's crude. It's Manichaeian. And the left loves it. As a matter of math and logic, however, it's ridiculous. Obama's most coveted tax hike — an extra 3 to 4.6 percent for millionaires and billionaires (weirdly defined as individuals making more than \$200,000) — would have reduced last year's deficit (at the very most) from \$1.29 trillion to \$1.21 trillion. Nearly a rounding error. The oil-drilling breaks cover less than half a day's federal spending. You could collect Obama's favorite tax loophole — depreciation for corporate jets — for 100 years and it wouldn't cover one month of Medicare, whose insolvency is a function of increased longevity, expensive new technology and wasteful defensive medicine caused by an insane malpractice system. [emphasis added] After three years, Obama's self-proclaimed transformative social policies have yielded a desperately weak economy. What to do? Take the low road: Plutocrats are bleeding the country, and I shall rescue you from them. Problem is, this kind of populist demagoguery is more than intellectually dishonest. It's dangerous. Obama is opening a Pandora's box. Popular resentment, easily stoked, is less easily controlled, especially when the basest of instincts are granted legitimacy by the nation's leader.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-scapegoat-strategy/2011/10> Figures from Factcheck.org The nonpartisan CBO keeps track of such things and published its most recent tables in December 2007. The information to answer this question is in "Summary Table 2: Shares of Federal Tax Liabilities, 2004 and 2005." The top 1 percent in 2005 were those households with income of at least \$307,500, and they got 18.1 percent of all "comprehensive" income, which includes all cash income plus the cash value of such benefits as Medicare and food stamps. CBO calculates that the top 1 percent paid 27.6 percent of all federal taxes, including: 38.8 percent of federal individual income taxes 4.0 percent of federal social insurance taxes (Social Security and Medicare) 58.6 percent of corporate income taxes (indirectly, through stock ownership) 5.5 percent of federal excise taxes (on such things as gasoline, tobacco, alcoholic beverages and telephones.) <http://www.factcheck.org/2008/05/top-1-what-they-make-and-pay/>

Figures from Kiplinger-The latest numbers from the IRS -- based on 2009 tax returns -- show what it takes to be among the top 1% of income earners: adjusted gross income of \$343,927 or more. The 1.4 million Americans with this elite status reported 16.9% of all the country's taxable income. That's right. One percent of taxpayers reported almost 17% of all taxable income. But that same tiny group also kicked in 37% of all the taxes paid. How much do you need to make to be in the top 50% of earners? Just \$32,396. Fall below that level and you are in the bottom half, along with nearly 70 million of your fellow taxpayers. All told, that group earned just 13% of the income reported on 2009 tax returns. And they coughed up 2.25% of all the income taxes paid. (Note that these figures include only federal income taxes. According to one study, more than half of all wage earners pay more in Social Security and Medicare taxes than they do income tax. The percentage of those paying more payroll tax than income tax soars to nearly 90% if you count both the employer and employee share of those levies.) For historical perspective, back in 1986, the top 1% of earners reported 11% of all income and paid 26% of the income taxes; the lower-earning 50% made 17% of the income and paid 6% of the nation's individual income tax bill.

<http://www.kiplinger.com/features/archives/how-your-income-stacks-up.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:40

Friday, October 14. 2011

### **3 UNUSUAL FILMS TELLING STORIES OF INJUSTICE IN AMERICA**

Are you interested in your constitutional legal rights? We recently watched a movie and a documentary about Mary Surratt, the first woman executed for murder in America by the United States Government. She was hanged because she was found guilty of aiding John Wilkes Booth et al in the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. There was only the testimony of two very unreliable "witnesses" and weak circumstantial evidence of her involvement and her conviction was definitely not beyond reasonable doubt. The major issue for debate however, was that she, a private citizen, was railroaded through the trial by a Military Commission to an outcome predetermined by the Administration of the time. They were set on revenge and not justice and to put the War behind them at all costs. Ms Surratt was a Confederate sympathizer, as were most people in Baltimore at the time. Can our Government run roughshod over the civil rights of a citizen in the time of war and for the common good of the Nation if it sees fit to do so?

She was denied her constitutional rights to a writ of habeas corpus, due process and a trial by a jury of her peers. She was also not treated very well as prisoner or as a woman. Even her execution itself was bungled. This disturbing story is portrayed by Robert Redford's movie, *Conspirator* and in the documentary, *The Killing of Mary Surratt* by Chris King.

Also-Do you like baseball stories? War stories? Stories about injustice and the violation of citizens' rights? Stories about Racism, prejudice and just plain ignorance? Then you should check out the movie called, *The American Pastime*. It is about the forced internment in concentration camps during WWII of maybe 10,000 American citizens of Japanese descent. This film is based on the true experience of some of them in one camp and their redemption through baseball and enlistment in the Army to fight the War. The movie is upsetting, enlightening as well as entertaining. The tragedy documented is disgraceful and a black eye on American history. These films have great lessons to be learned by Americans today and certainly could lead to meaningful discussions at home and in school.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:00

Thursday, October 13, 2011

### **IS THIS MODEL OF PUBLIC EDUCATION GOOD FOR U.S.?**

"Finland rightly deserves attention today as a nation that treats its children as a precious resource and that honors the adults who make education their passion and their career. Someday, I hope, we will recognize the failure of the behaviorist approach now in vogue; someday we will see that our current "reforms" are appropriate for the industrial era of the early 20th century, not for the needs of the 21st century. When that day arrives, we will understand the deep wisdom of Finland, with its love for children and its respect for educators, and we will be grateful that there is a successful alternative to our own failed model."

Read the full article -[why-finlands-schools-are-great-by-doing-what-we-dont/](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:09

Tuesday, October 4, 2011

## **DEFENDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

In this article , the writer lists reasons why America must have public schools.  
[why-public-education-must-be-preserved](#)

But if public schools are so important, the question is begged about who controls those schools, how they are administered, what is taught, how it is taught and who does the teaching. And that begs the question about who teaches the Teachers. It also begs the question about the role parents must play, what will be required of students and how the local community will be involved. And like it or not, all the social conditions that hinder public education must be addressed. Finally, how will Bible believing Christians be involved in all this?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:35

Wednesday, September 21, 2011

## **DANCING WITH THE STARS; STEPPING ON PRINCIPLES**

When "Gay Marriage" was made legal in 2004 by the Massachusetts Supreme Court (actually by the vote of one Justice) and the earth continued to rotate on its axis, the proponents said "See the world has not changed", "It has not ended." This was supposed to answer opponents to "Gay Marriage" who said the later would have serious negative consequences on traditional Marriage and Society. Well it was silly to use the "see, no change after one day" argument. Such radical change in Society may well take a full generation or 30 years before it is evident. But the Movement to make "Gay Marriage" acceptable and Homosexuality a non-issue is on track to achieve those goals. And the Movement will not stop. The repeal of "Don't ask, Don't tell" in the military this week is just the latest and inevitable step in that direction. The ordination of Gay Clergy and Bishops no less was another. Conservative Family groups had a problem with a trans-gender person on Dancing with the Stars saying it would confuse children; but apparently they have no problem with the gyrating dance moves and revealing costumes of the other dancers. Millions cheered the Emmy's given to the "Modern [and very mixed and dysfunctional] Family" TV sitcom last week. Remember the once shocking "Will & Grace" characters or the offense once caused by the "Ellen Degeneres Show"? Old news now. Conservatives can fume and protest this Movement and these changes- the repeal of DOMA is next- but it is to no avail. It will succeed. The evidence of that is the success of other "radical" changes from Tradition about which Conservatives also fumed but to no avail. In my life time, going on welfare (on the dole) was a disgrace, living together without being married or any sex outside of Marriage was shameful; getting a divorce or having an abortion were both stigmatized; public racial integration and bi-racial Marriage were strongly disapproved, actually illegal. Now all these changes, good or bad, are stale bread normal for most people. It is part of the reality of our contemporary Society which welcomes and celebrates equality of all, diversity and multiculturalism without limits. Many Christians see these as "Christian" values and the opposite as being hateful, bigoted and unloving. On top of all that, throw out absolute or objective morality in favor of moral pluralism and you have the recipe for all this radical social change. Instead of setting the standards, churches have either been apathetic or supportive. The sermon we heard two weeks ago was an impassioned plea that there be no discrimination of any kind in the church. We are to avoid all judgmentalism like a plague and pursue unity and harmony with all. Last week we heard that we are to place mercy toward all who may be different or wayward above justice and "fairness". Radical social changes, for better or worse, happen. The problem is that some changes are better and some are worse and we have lost the moral standards to determine the difference and the moral backbone to stand for what is the better and against what is the worse. It may well take a generation, but we reap what we sow.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:03

Thursday, September 15, 2011

## **REASONS FOR NOT LIVING TOGETHER BEFORE MARRIAGE**

Couples who shack up before tying the knot are more likely to get divorced than their counterparts who don't move in together until marriage, a new study suggests. Upwards of 70 percent of U.S. couples are cohabiting these days before marrying, the researchers estimate. The study, published in the February issue of the *Journal of Family Psychology*, indicates that such move-ins might not be wise. Those who moved in with a mate before engagement or marriage reported significantly lower quality marriages and a greater potential for split-ups than other couples. While this research suggests cohabitation in itself can result in lousier marriages, the initial reasons for moving in together could impact the relationship quality. In another study led by Rhoades published in the February issue of the *Journal of Family Issues*, cohabiting couples ranked a list of reasons for cohabitation. More than 60 percent of participants ranked spending more time together as the number-one reason for moving in, followed by nearly 19 percent who put "it made most sense financially" at the top of their list, and 14 percent ranking "I wanted to test out our relationship before marriage" highest. Those who listed "testing" as the primary move-in reason were more likely than others to score high on measures of negative communication, such as, "My partner criticizes or belittles my opinions, feelings, or desires." Such testers also had lower confidence in the quality and stability of their relationships. Overall, those who want to test the commitment might want to think again, according to the February study.

<http://www.livescience.com/5561-prenuptial-cohabiting-spoil-marriage.html>

### **RECOMMENDED BIBLE STUDY ON THIS SUBJECT -**

Biblical faith has always held up marriage as the standard for family life and the foundation of society. From Genesis, where God placed Adam and Eve into a permanent relationship, to the New Testament, where marriage is compared to the relationship of Christ and his church, the Scriptures are redolent with marital imagery, instructions, and encouragement. But as Western culture has strayed from its biblical roots, particularly in recent decades, people have wandered from the biblical ideal and attempted to make their own social arrangements. One of these arrangements, cohabitation, known popularly as "shacking up," has received widespread acceptance. But does it work, either sociologically or morally?

<http://biblestudies.stores.yahoo.net/loandcotrabl.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:46

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

## **EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON LIFE EARNINGS**

Education Impacts Work-Life Earnings Five Times More Than Other Demographic Factors, Census Bureau Reports According to a new U.S. Census Bureau study, education levels had more effect on earnings over a 40-year span in the workforce than any other demographic factor, such as gender, race and Hispanic origin. Many factors, such as race and Hispanic origin, gender, citizenship, English-speaking ability and geographic location do influence work-life earnings but none had as much impact as education.

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/education/cb11-153.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:43

Thursday, September 8, 2011

## **COMMON CORE EDUCATION STANDARDS EXPLAINED**

New school year- new buzz about reform and Common Core Standards coming to a school near you. The US Constitution says nothing about public education. It does not list Education among the enumerated powers or (responsibilities ) of the Federal Government. Therefore it is unconstitutional for it to control public education. The latter is a matter for the States to handle. However, the Federal Government does have a Department of Education which allegedly exists to help the States with their mission of education. The D of E is promoting new Common Core Standards to be followed in every State and school across the Land. Participation by the States is voluntary but only those who do so will receive promised Federal Funding. So far 40 States have "volunteered". Do we really need and want this? Do we really want and need the Federal Government to promote this?<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:55

## **SCHOOL REFORM: FAILING GRADE**

"School 'Reform': A Failing Grade" is an article by Diane Ravitch, whom I respect for her studies on the state of Education in America. Ravitch contrasts Steven Brill's "Class Warfare" with Janet Grossbach Mayer's "As Bad As They Say? Three Decades of Teaching in the Bronx" in The New York Review of Books- books on each side of the current movement to reform public school education."In these two books" she writes, "we have two versions of school reform. One is devised by Wall Street financiers and politicians who believe in rigidly defined numerical goals and return on investment; they blame lazy teachers and self-interested unions when test scores are low. The other draws on the deep experience of a compassionate teacher who finds fault not with teachers, unions, or students, but with a society that refuses to take responsibility for the conditions in which its children live and learn—and who has demonstrated through her own efforts how one dedicated teacher has improved the education of poor young people."Read the entire, provocative article here

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:52

## **PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION REFORM IN 1938**

"Twenty years ago Progressive Education was a tiny and, in many eyes, a crackpot movement quarantined in a handful of private schools. Today it covers much more territory. Now predominantly a public-school affair. Progressive Education has strongholds in the suburbs of greater New York. Chicago and Los Angeles, is transforming such major public school systems as those of Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City, Detroit. No U. S. school has completely escaped its influence.' This is the lead paragraph from an article about public education reform written 73 years ago!  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,883101,00.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:45

Tuesday, August 30, 2011

## **THE END OF ALL POVERTY THROUGH MICROFINANCING?**

A very enthusiastic staff member of a Christian micro-finance organization recently wrote of his firm belief that extreme poverty will be eliminated from the entire world in the next 30-40 years. He seemed to say that this would be the result of the spread of micro-financing around the globe. Indeed, micro-financing, faith-based as well as secular, is having marvelous results in lifting many from extreme poverty.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/may/stayingonmission.html>

In this age when involuntary redistribution of wealth or state socialism is being promoted as the solution to poverty by many, the microfinance success helps confirm the view that it is Capitalism that could be a major part of the solution. But, not the entire solution. Certainly, we can not expect the complete eradication of Poverty by any means. See the post below.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:44

## **CAUSES OF POVERTY ACCORDING TO BIBLE**

"[The Bible defines "Poverty" as Destitution.] Evangelicals typically overlook what the Bible teaches is the number one reason for destitution: oppression, rooted in idolatry; yes, oppression rooted in idolatry. Oppression is primarily at the hands of invading enemy armies or at the hands of rich and powerful people. The latter exploit those who can no longer work their land- (widows, fatherless children) and the sick or disabled or farmers who have had bad crops due to disasters of some kind and must borrow to keep going. Loans lead to indentured servanthood and forfeiture of the family farm. In some cases, land is simply stolen by the powerful. All of this is injustice. It violates the law of God and the rights of these poor land owners. This type of oppression is the cause of most Poverty in the Bible. Not all Poor are oppressed, but the oppressed are poor." "The Bible makes it clear that the primary cause of oppression is not greed, but idolatry. As rich and powerful people reject God & His Law to follow idols, they substitute the ungodly values and behavior dictated by those idols. This leads them to oppress the weak into grinding poverty. This is not to say that all people who are rich and powerful do this! Many do not and the Poor are often beneficiaries of very generous help from moral and compassionate people who are rich and powerful and use their wealth and power to accomplish much good in the world." "Poverty which is caused by oppression will not be solved by anything less than removal of that oppression. The oppressive behavior mentioned in Scripture is illegal in America. Justice [an end to oppression] must be found primarily through the Courts. Such action goes to the root of the problem. If the oppression is systemic and institutionalized, those systems and institutions must be confronted. This is particularly true if the oppression is some form of discrimination or racism. This calls for brave action from individuals, churches and the community at large." "Where oppression is a result of idolatry, that idolatry must be confronted. Candidates for major contemporary Idols in America are Statism (worship of the State), Scientism (worship of Science, the scientific method, the Philosophy of Naturalism), Technism (worship of Technology), and Economism (worship of The Market, making money). There are many lesser, but related, idols in popular culture, eg- Celebrity, Consumerism, Status, Power, Success or Sports." Excerpts from my Study at [http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view](http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com_content&view)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:26

Thursday, August 25, 2011

## **IN PRAISE OF GOOD TEACHING**

Matt Damon's blunt speech about public school teaching to a recent Save Our Schools Rally

"I was raised by a teacher. My mother is a professor of early childhood education. And from the time I went to kindergarten through my senior year in high school, I went to public schools. I wouldn't trade that education and experience for anything. I had incredible teachers. As I look at my life today, the things I value most about myself — my imagination, my love of acting, my passion for writing, my love of learning, my curiosity — all come from how I was parented and taught. And none of these qualities that I've just mentioned — none of these qualities that I prize so deeply, that have brought me so much joy, that have brought me so much professional success — none of these qualities that make me who I am ... can be tested. I said before that I had incredible teachers. And that's true. But it's more than that. My teachers were EMPOWERED to teach me. Their time wasn't taken up with a bunch of test prep — this silly drill and kill nonsense that any serious person knows doesn't promote real learning. No, my teachers were free to approach me and every other kid in that classroom like an individual puzzle. They took so much care in figuring out who we were and how to best make the lessons resonate with each of us. They were empowered to unlock our potential. They were allowed to be teachers."

Read the entire speech here - [/matt-damons-clear-headed-speech-to-teachers-rally](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:44

Wednesday, August 24, 2011

### **49% OF ALL BABIES BORN IN USA DEPEND ON WIC FOR FOOD**

Every day, children in every county in the United States wake up hungry. They go to school hungry. They turn out the lights at night hungry. That is one of the stunning key findings of a new study to be released Thursday by Feeding America, a network of 200 food banks and the largest hunger charity in the country. As many as 17 million children nationwide are struggling with what is known as food insecurity. To put it another way, one in four children in the country is living without consistent access to enough nutritious food to live a healthy life, according to the study, "Map the Meal Child Food Insecurity 2011." "The consequences and costs of child hunger make addressing this issue an economic and societal imperative, in addition to an obvious moral obligation," said Vicki Escarra, president and CEO of Feeding America. Feeding America's study, funded by ConAgra Foods, is based on 2009 statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which runs 15 food aid programs, including the nationwide free and subsidized school lunch program and WIC, a supplemental food program that provides tailored food supplements to pregnant women and families with children under age 5 whose household income is less than 185 percent of the gross federal poverty limit. That's an annual gross income of \$41,348 for a family of four. In fact, a shocking 49 percent of all babies born in the U.S. are born to families receiving food supplements from the WIC program, according to Jean Daniel, spokesperson for the USDA.

[US/hunger-home-american-children-malnourished/](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:07

### **USA BECOMES FOOD STAMP NATION**

About 15 percent of Americans now on food stamps. In some places, food stamp use almost the norm. Altogether, there are now almost 46 million people in the United States on food stamps, roughly 15 percent of the population. That's an increase of 74 percent since 2007. At the same time, the cost doubled to reach \$68 billion in 2010 -- more than a third of the amount the U.S. government received in corporate income tax last year. About forty percent of food stamp recipients are in households in which at least one member of the family earns wages. Many more could be eligible: the government estimates one in three who could be on the program are not. "If they're working, they often think they can't get help. But people can't support their families on \$10, \$11, \$12 an hour jobs, especially when you add transport, clothes, rent," said Carolyn McLaughlin, executive director of BronxWorks, a social services organization in New York. The maximum amount a family of four can receive in food stamps is \$668 a month. They can only be used to buy food -- though not hot food -- and for plants and seeds to grow food.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/22/usa-poverty-foodstamps->

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:02

### **CODDLING THE SUPER RICH?**

Billionaire Warren Buffet has often said the Government should increase the income taxes on the super wealthy like himself. Why doesn't he just voluntarily give billions to the Government instead of waiting for the tax hike? In fact, he gives almost all of his income to charity. He explains why and his answer is very revealing. "Buffett is giving billions to the Gates Foundation. Why doesn't he send the money to the U.S. Treasury instead? Here's a typical Buffett response to that question, from a 2007 interview with CNBC's Becky Quick." "If I had to give it to a single individual, or make some young Buffett a multi-billionaire, or give it to the government, I'd absolutely give it to the government. I think that on balance the Gates Foundation, my daughter's foundation, my two sons' foundations, will do a better job with lower administrative costs and better selection of beneficiaries than the government." (emphasis added) [If\\_Warren\\_Buffett\\_Wants\\_a\\_Bigger\\_Tax\\_Bill\\_Why\\_Doesn\\_t\\_He\\_Just\\_Send\\_His\\_Money\\_to\\_Washington](#) [buffetts\\_claim\\_of\\_coddling\\_is\\_super\\_rich/](#) In sum, private charities are a better investment in America's future. Of course, what Buffet says does not resolve the need for reforming our tax code and the issue of how the Government uses the taxes it does collect.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:55

Monday, August 22, 2011

## **PORNIFICATION**

"In what is only the latest in a numbing series of such stories, a new French lingerie line is selling provocative bras and panties for girls ages 4 through 12. The catalog for the line, created by Jours Apres Lunes, features child models in full makeup and Lolita-esque poses. The line of lingerie includes bras, panties and camisoles for toddlers. Why a 4-year-old needs a bra is not explained on the site. Let's coin a term, shall we? You've heard of commercialization, and bureaucratization. How about 'pornification'?"-- from James White  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=1596>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:12

Friday, August 12, 2011

## **WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE**

More change on the verizon. In 1910, 72% of Americans lived in rural areas (defined as non-metro areas of less than 50,000 people). The majority of Americans still lived in rural areas until the 1950s. They have been moving to the cities (urban and overflow suburban areas ever since). Most of us have knwon that but the latest figures are startling. Today, less than 16% live in rural areas, where there are ever fewer jobs for young people. The fastest growing areas are small cities, mostly in California, Arizona and Texas. (Big cities in the Northeast and Midwest are losing people). Source: 2010 Census. What does this mean for churches, ministries and outreach to non-Christians? (And remember much of the recent growth in cities is also of immigrants from countries in the Global South who will be the majority of all Americans by 2050) Cities and metro areas are the strategic places to be for reaching the world for Christ!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:40

Thursday, August 11, 2011

## **WHO IS TYPICAL AMERICAN CHRISTIAN?**

"...by the year 2050 only one Christian in five will be a non-Latino white person, and the center of gravity of the Christian world will have shifted firmly to the Southern Hemisphere. Within a handful of decades, cities such as Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa, and Manila will take the place of Rome, Athens, Paris, London, and New York. Consider Africa, where the number of Christians increased from ten million in 1900 to 360 million in 2000. Soon, the phrase "a White Christian" may sound as mildly surprising as "a Swedish Buddhist." So who is a typical world Christian? Think of a woman living in a village in Nigeria or in a Brazilian favela. With the new Census, perhaps we can bring this home a bit, as in, "Who is a typical American Christian?" If you think the answer is a white, male Baptist living in the South, think again. It will more likely be a Hispanic, female Pentecostal living...well, next door."  
<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=1544>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:16

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

## **GETTING TESTY ABOUT TESTING IN SCHOOLS**

Federal education law most certainly needs a complete overhaul. Ending escalating, test-based sanctions on most schools is a good first step. But, based on his track-record with "Race to the Top" and School Improvement Grants, Duncan probably will replace these sanctions with a requirement to use student test scores to judge teachers. Meanwhile, the lowest scoring schools most likely will be forced to adopt RTTT-style changes, such as firing the staff or privatizing control over the schools, actions for which there is no evidence that they will improve education. The most logical response to the cheating scandals in Atlanta, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., and elsewhere is to dial back the emphasis on testing. Unfortunately, Duncan will almost certainly not do so. "Mass resistance is likely the only course remaining. States should stop imposing additional sanctions on schools, as some states have said they will do. They should simultaneously refuse Duncan's deal." [Read full article why-states-should-refuse-duncans-nclb-waivers](#) Christian parents must be involved with this Issue!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:33

Monday, August 8, 2011

## **FOOD FIGHT**

"Fill it out and turn it in: that's the message thousands of school districts send parents each year when they offer applications for the federal government's National School Lunch Program (NSLP). And each year, millions of parents comply. But new data suggest that the process for verifying eligibility for the program is fundamentally broken and that taxpayers may be picking up the tab for participation by ineligible families. The NSLP, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) at an annual cost of \$8 billion, serves 31 million American children each day. The program's goal is to help low-income students succeed in public and private school classrooms by ensuring they have adequate nutrition, a mission that is compromised if substantial funds are being spent on ineligible families or the program fails to reach the neediest students." "Determining the extent of program fraud and error is important, as the entitlement is associated with other streams of federal, state, and local taxpayer dollars. Eligibility data are widely used as proxies for poverty rates, thereby influencing funding for myriad government programs and informing both school district policies and policy research. For example, NSLP participation rates serve as the main criteria for the allocation of federal Title I funds to schools. Those schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch also receive a larger discount on the federal government's E-Rate program, which facilitates access to telecommunications services for schools and libraries." Read the entire article- Source: <http://educationnext.org/fraud-in-the-lunchroom/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:02

## **SNAP is no snap.**

"The use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, or food stamps, [SNAP] in Massachusetts is exploding, having grown 61 percent over the past three years. Only low-income people can receive food stamps. The average eligible household receives \$238 a month in food stamps in Massachusetts. To qualify for food stamps, a single person living alone must have a gross monthly income of less than \$1,174. A household with one child must have a gross income of less than \$1,815, according to the state Executive Office of Health and human services.

<http://www.massresources.org/snap-financial-eligibility.html>" In Springfield, as of January, 63,604 people, or 41 percent of the city's population, utilize food stamps, up 37 percent in three years, according to an analysis of statistics provided by the state health and human services office. [my emphasis]" The down economy prompted a jump in use of food stamps. As of May, 815,538 individuals, or 449,180 households, received food stamps in Massachusetts, or about one in eight people in the state, said a spokeswoman for health and human services. About 40 percent of food stamp recipients in Massachusetts are either elderly or disabled and 43 percent are households with children, a spokeswoman for health and human services said.

"The aid is expensive. The state currently issues \$107 million per month in food stamp benefits. The federal government pays for the benefits [and] reimburses the state 50 percent of the costs of administering the program, or \$44 million in the fiscal year that ended June 30." [emphases added by me]

[http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2011/08/farmers\\_markets\\_in\\_massachuset.html](http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2011/08/farmers_markets_in_massachuset.html)

Is this Governmental program justified by Scripture? No.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:33

## **WHAT REALLY IS DIVIDING OUR NATION**

"A small, symbolic sideshow occurred while the debt drama was center stage in Washington this week. Central Falls, R.I., filed for bankruptcy. A city of about 19,000, it has an \$80 million unfunded pension liability, and it's looking at a \$5 million structural deficit for several years to come. Central Falls may be an extreme case, but it is a classic example of a local government that couldn't adjust its financial obligations to changing circumstances. It will run out of money to pay its bills by late August. Several other municipal defaults are expected this year, and all will be examples of governments making promises they can't keep."

anguish\_over\_debt What promises should governments make? The really fundamental issue of our time is this subject. Americans are divided on what they believe the purpose of Government is. As simple as that sounds, that issue is what IS really dividing us as a Nation. All the other issues ultimately depend on how we resolve that issue. Does the Constitution help us with this? That depends on how we interpret and apply it. This debate hinges on political philosophy and fundamental religious and moral beliefs. Can we go there? We must!

**Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>**

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:58

Wednesday, August 3, 2011

### **"GLAAD" SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

Apparently, "To see diverse representations of lesbian, gay or bisexual people on TV, tune into ABC Family."  
<http://www.tvguide.com/News/GLAAD-Networks-ABCFamily-1035964.aspx>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:05

### **HOMOSEXUALITY- a 6 part series by James White**

Here is very well done 6 part series on Homosexuality from a Christian, Biblical perspective written in a very calm irenic tone with loving and pastoral concerns. This subject is becoming more pressing all the time and the need to address it will not go away.

<http://www.churchandculture.org/Blog.asp?ID=1463>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:57

Saturday, July 30. 2011

## **CAN YOU PROVE AMERICA IS A CHRISTIAN NATION?**

I read a report about the ongoing case of American Amanda Knox accused of being an accomplice in a murder in Italy. As with the recent Casey Anthony trial, everything hinges on the evidence, or in both these cases, the lack thereof. Without evidence there is only speculation. So it is with the ongoing controversy about whether America is or has been a Christian Country. Many of us were brought up to believe it was and is- no doubt about it. There are many websites and books that propound this point of view (I almost wrote, Dogma). Having read a few of them, the one thing that is missing in most is hard evidence to prove the case. What do you mean, defenders will say. There are many quotes taken from many speeches of famous and important people throughout our Country's History that emphatically insist we are a Christian Nation. And then there is the Motto, "In God we trust" on our money and the common use of the Bible for taking oaths or the reference to God in our Pledge of Allegiance and politicians seem to always end their speeches with "God bless America". And of course there are Christian churches in every town and surveys tell us most people claim to be Christian. Doesn't all of this prove we are a Christian Nation? No, not really. We need hard evidence, not anecdotes or hearsay, certainly not political speeches or cultural customs (really only evidence of "Civil Religion") to prove the case that we are in fact "Christian". What would such irrefutable evidence be? [I'm looking into it and will get back to you.]

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:16

Saturday, July 9, 2011

## **A PRAYER OF GEORGE WASHINGTON**

The Prayer below was written by Washington at Newburgh, New York, at the close of the Revolutionary War on June 14, 1783. It was sent to the thirteen governors of the newly freed states in a "Circular Letter Addressed to the Governors of all the States on the Disbanding of the Army."

... I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for brethren who have served in the field; and finally that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:38

## **THE PRAYER OF THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

At his first inauguration, George Washington took the oath of office for the presidency on April 30, 1789. He was standing on the balcony of Federal Hall in New York City with his hand on an open Bible. After he finished taking the oath, the audience in attendance gave a thunderous ovation and bells of the various churches began ringing in his honor. After his oath of office was completed, he went to deliver his inaugural address to Congress. Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations and whose providential aid can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes; and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success, the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the Great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own; nor those of my fellow-citizens at large, less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency; and in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their United government, the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities, from which the event has resulted can not be compared with the means by which most governments have been established, without some return of pious gratitude, along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which them past seem to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me I trust in thinking, that there are none under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free Government can more auspiciously commence. We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered as deeply, perhaps finally, staked of the experiment...I shall take my present leave; but not without resorting once more to the Benign Parent of the Human Race, in humble supplication that, since He has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities for deliberating in perfect tranquility, and dispositions for deciding with unparalleled unanimity on a form of government for the security of their union and the advancement of their happiness, so His divine blessings may be equally conspicuous in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations and the wise measures on which the success of this Government must depend.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:28

## **THE ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE MISINTERPRETED**

This is a statement that was read over the PA system at the football game at Roane County High School, Kingston, Tennessee by school Principal, Jody McLeod in September, 2000. [The following is a true story according to Snopes.com] "It has always been the custom at Roane County High School football games, to say a prayer and play the

National Anthem, to honor God and Country." Due to a recent ruling by the Supreme Court, I am told that saying a Prayer is a violation of Federal Case Law. [SANTA FE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DIST. V. DOE (99-62) 530 U.S. 290 (2000) - US Supreme Court Ruling]As I understand the law at this time, I can use this public facility to approve of sexual perversion and call it "an alternate life style," and if someone is offended, that's OK. I can use it to condone sexual promiscuity, by dispensing condoms and calling it, "safe sex." If someone is offended, that's OK. I can even use this public facility to present the merits of killing an unborn baby as a "viable! means of birth control." If someone is offended, no problem... I can designate a school day as "Earth Day" and involve students in activities to worship religiously and praise the goddess "Mother Earth" and call it "ecology.." I can use literature, videos and presentations in the classroom that depicts people with strong, traditional Christian convictions as "simple minded" and "ignorant" and call it "enlightenment.." However, if anyone uses this facility to honor GOD and to ask HIM to Bless this event with safety and good sportsmanship, then Federal Case Law is violated. This appears to be inconsistent at best, and at worst, diabolical. Apparently, we are to be tolerant of everything and anyone, except GOD and HIS Commandments. Nevertheless , as a school principal, I frequently ask staff and students to abide by rules with which they do not necessarily agree. For me to do otherwise would be inconsistent at best, and at worst, hypocritical. I suffer from that affliction enough unintentionally. I certainly do not need to add an intentional transgression. For this reason, I shall "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's," and refrain from praying at this time. " However, if you feel inspired to honor, praise and thank GOD and ask HIM, in the name of JESUS, to Bless this event, please feel free to do so.. As far as I know, that's not against the law----yet." One by one, the people in the stands bowed their heads, held hands with one another and began to pray. They prayed in the stands. They prayed in the team huddles. They prayed at the concession stand and they prayed in the Announcer's Box! \_\_\_\_\_Note: Contrary to very popular common opinion, the "Establishment Clause" of the Constitution 's First Amendment guarantees freedom of Religion from Government interference or control, not freedom of Americans from Religion. Specifically, "Establishment" of Religion by the Government meant, to those who ratified the Document, the Government favoring and supporting a particular organized Church or Denomination. The First Amendment was not against prayer itself as evidenced by the fact that the on the very day Congress approved the Bill of Rights, including the First Amendment, it also voted to urge the President to call for a National Day of Public prayer and Thanksgiving. The Supreme Court misinterpreted and misapplied the Constitution in this matter.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:15

Monday, July 4, 2011

## **DOMA IS GOIN' DOWN**

Here is the Obama Administration's (the Federal Government's) latest position on the Rights of Gay couples to "Marry" "SAN FRANCISCO — In a strongly worded legal brief, the Obama administration has said the federal act that defines marriage as being between a man and a woman was motivated by hostility toward gays and lesbians and is unconstitutional."The Justice Department says Karen Golinski's suit should not be dismissed because the law under which her spouse was denied benefits — the Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA — violates the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection."The official legislative record makes plain that DOMA Section 3 was motivated in large part by animus toward gay and lesbian individuals and their intimate relationships, and Congress identified no other interest that is materially advanced by Section 3," the brief reads, referring to the section in the act that defines marriage as being between a man and a woman.The brief is the first court filing in which it urges the court to find the law unconstitutional, said Tobias Barrington Wolff, a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania."This brief represents the concrete manifestation of a complete paradigm shift in the federal government's position on anti-gay discrimination and the constitutional rights of married same-sex couples," Wolff said The brief filed Friday argues that gays and lesbians have been subject to a history of discrimination by federal, state and local governments and private parties. It also lays out the administration's position that sexual orientation is an "immutable characteristic," that gays and lesbians are minorities with limited political power and that sexual orientation has no bearing on someone's ability to contribute to society and advances no legitimate policy interest."

Read the full article here-

[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2015495976\\_gay03.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2015495976_gay03.html)

Please read my Study on Marriage: [marriage-a-family](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:37

## **WHY EPISCOPAL BISHOPS SUPPORT N.Y.'S "GAY MARRIAGE" LAW**

Last month New York became the 6th State to legalize "Gay Marriage". Battles are currently being fought for similar legislative action in Maine, Hew Hampshire, North Carolina and Maryland. This Movement for "Gay Marriage" will not let up or go away. It is winning because the case for acceptance is based on Civil Rights arguments. To my mind there is no correlation between the Movement to equate and legalize as Marriage the sexual union between same sex couples with the sexual union and Marriage between heterosexual couples and the Movement to secure the same and equal civil rights for all African-Americans (male and female) that all "Whites" (male and female) have.That is where the debate is. It is about civil rights- the insistence by some that everyone, regardless of sexual preference or gender, has the civil right to marry whomever they want. To say they can not legally do so is allegedly a denial of that civil right. It is not a debate about sexual behavior or specifically about Homosexuality. Case in point: 5 of the 6 Bishops of the Episcopal Church in New York are happily supporting the new law legalizing "Gay Marriage". Here are some of their statements on the subject. Notice what their position is based on.<http://www.virtueonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=14561>

We may argue against "Gay Marriage" but many are doing that only as an extension of their personal bias (or the "yuck factor") against homosexual intercourse. We may also argue against "Gay Marriage" on the basis of time honored Tradition and that Marriage is a Sacrament between a Man and a Woman and must be preserved because it is the cornerstone of Society. Obviously these arguments are not winning the war. They miss the point.In the above linked article, it is mentioned that one Episcopal Bishop and all of New York's Roman Catholic Bishops oppose the new Law. Notice the reasons for their objection.Christians must wrestle with this issue of Human and Civil Rights. Quoting a few Bible verses against homosexuality does not settle the issue. What are Human and Civil Rights? Who decides? Beyond that is the more fundamental issue: What is "Marriage"? Again, a few verses and a bias against homosexuality does not help here. We must know and make known what the Bible teaches about Marriage and "Human Rights"? This is the only valid basis for an argument against "Gay Marriage". This is also the weakness of that argument. We are appealing to an external authority for support of our position. Of course, our opponents are doing the same thing when they seek the support of the Legislature or the Courts. Those are external authorities, too. So the question becomes

which is the "higher" external authority? Evangelicals will say, "the Bible". Good, but my concern here is that the actual authority of the Bible as God's inerrant and infallible Word is decreasing among younger, contemporary Evangelicals. They are thus, inadvertently but actually, undermining the foundation of their position on this subject of "Gay Marriage", Human Rights and many other subjects, too.

Please read my 3 Essays about the Bible and Human Rights posted on my website  
part-1-inalienable  
part-2-who-defines-them  
part-3-biblical-basis

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:02

## **"FIREWORK"- SONGS ARE NOT JUST SONGS**

"Did your church use Katy Perry's song "Firework" this past weekend? Many did (or already had in earlier weeks). In many ways, it was irresistible. A hit song titled "Firework," a 4th of July weekend, seemingly innocent lyrics about reaching your potential, and the desire of many churches to use music to connect with contemporary culture for the sake of Christ. Was that "okay?" The problem with "Firework" is the video for the song and its purposeful attempt to make the lyrics about the acceptance and promotion of a homosexual lifestyle. A story within the video portrays a young man finally breaking free and kissing another young man to fulfill his sense of identity and become the person he was made to be. Little wonder it has become a gay anthem. "Some will say, "I didn't know about the video!" But that's one of the points; you should have. No church or leader should use a song without a full understanding of its cultural significance. In our day, songs are not just songs. The video that accompanies the song, as well as the artists themselves, provides a narrative context that cannot be ignored or disconnected from the music itself. To say that a video is irrelevant to a song in terms of its message is culturally naïve at best and ignorant at worst."

Read the entire article here- <http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=1372>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:45

Thursday, May 19, 2011

## **TEXAS IS NOT MEXICO, BUT-**

"As one studies Mexico's cartel war, it is not uncommon to hear Mexican politicians — and some people in the United States — claim that Mexico's problems of violence and corruption stem largely from the country's proximity to the United States. "Mexican police simply can't be reformed to solve the problems of violence and corruption. Certainly, the Mexican government has aggressively pursued police reform for many years now, with very little success." Mexico's ills go far deeper than just corrupt institutions. Because of this, revamping the institutions will not result in any meaningful change, and the revamped institutions will soon be corrupted like the ones they replaced. This fact should have been readily apparent; the institutional approach has been tried in the region before and has failed." In other words, over time, an institution will take on the characteristics of, and essentially reflect, the environment surrounding it. Therefore, significant reform in Mexico requires a holistic approach that reaches far beyond the institutions to address the profound economic, sociological and cultural problems that are affecting the country today." The Stratford article from which the above quotes are taken contains an important lesson for America. The most common approach for solving social problems in this Country is social engineering by the Government. The article about Mexico illustrates that changing a Culture, social reform, requires a holistic approach. Simply preaching the Gospel to change people's hearts is not enough. Neither is working to reform our Society without the Gospel enough. This lesson is needed in the City where we live as it wages an ongoing battle with Poverty, the Schools and Street Gangs and traffic accidents (i.e.- high birthrate among young single "women" and consequent single-parent families; poor attendance, high drop-out rate; drugs and youth violence; speeding and reckless driving)

Read more: Corruption: Why Texas is Not Mexico | STRATFOR

<http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110518-corruption-why-texas-not-mexico?utm>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:49

Monday, May 16, 2011

## **LEARNING TO OBEY RULES IS ESSENTIAL**

I posted an article (below) about the High School student who was banned from his High School Prom because he broke some Rules in the School's Code of Conduct. This was not a silly matter. Everyone in the School knew the Rules and the penalty for breaking them, but when the penalty was laid on him, 1000's of people from across the country, thanks to social networking, booed the Principal and insisted on her backing down and giving the student a pass. She caved in to public pressure. I think she should have stood her ground. Authority must be respected and obeyed. Protesting masses and mobs can not be allowed to decide what Rules or Laws to obey. And individuals can not decide which Rules or Laws they shall disobey. Rules must be decided by appropriate, official and authorized persons and not by popular demand and they must be applied equally to all. Not convinced? What about Rules about bringing alcohol into the Prom or about using drugs before, during and after the Prom? And there are the Rules that try to prevent teens from getting killed in car accidents after the Prom. There are Rules against "date-rape" which often happens during or after Proms, just as there are now numerous Rules forbidding the ever popular practice of bullying. Rules exist for the good of all. There must be Rules and they must be enforced. Every School year also sees controversy in many Towns over the Rules about eligibility to play sports and especially about playing on a Team headed for some championship game. Very often there is flagrant nose thumbing at such Rules by players and students and their parents will cry "foul" (which ironically is the violation of a Rule) in protest against Coaches or Principals holding the student Rule-breakers accountable for their actions. Where will parents and students draw the line about enforcing any of these Rules? No one has the right to pick and chose between Rules. Furthermore, showing this attitude toward School Rules leads to disrespect toward State Laws. We see the Rules of the Road disregarded and broken many times every day by many people. Speeding, driving recklessly, disobeying stop signs and traffic signals are not only irresponsible they are dangerous and they are illegal. It could well be that this attitude about Rules of the Road comes from disregarding School Rules and getting away with that? There is a pattern here. Children need to learn from childhood that obedience to Rules is necessary and that blowing off the Laws of the Community and State will not be tolerated. All that said, I agree that a lot of man-made Rules and some Laws are arbitrary or at least out-moded or inappropriate. (The Rules made by God known as the Ten Commandments are not among them!) Bad Rules, as well as poorly thought out, inappropriate or unfair penalties, must be challenged and not allowed to stand. The hue and cry over being denied attendance at the Prom seems mostly directed at the penalty seen to be unfair and not fitting the "crime". Of course that is subject to debate and that debate is the good that will come from this fiasco. The School Administration says they shall evaluate the penalties called for by the Rule Book and how those penalties shall be carried out. The objective in all cases should be redemption (which may well call for restitution) and not condemnation.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:04

Saturday, May 14. 2011

## **RESPECTING RULES**

This morning's Old Testament Reading (from the BCP Lectionary) is from "Daniel". Daniel is always a favorite Bible "Hero". In order to be faithful to God, He knowingly broke a Law and submitted to the punishment. God honored him and delivered him from the expected consequences of the penalty. Daniel was a man of Principle and Courage and great Faith- altogether admirable! The King that sentenced Daniel knew this and regretted what he had to do, but was, himself, bound to the Law and held his ground.

A teenager in a City near here knowingly broke a school law this week. He asked a girl to go the Prom, but he broke School Rules doing it. He trespassed on school property and vandalized the building, i.e.- during the night, he put his invitation on a wall of the building for her to see in the morning. The Rule involved a penalty- anyone getting in trouble within a month before the Prom will not be allowed to attend it. This was a well-known Rule and all agree that the Principal has the duty and right to enforce it. But 1000's of people think she is wrong if she does. The case is national news today, thanks to the media and social networking. Multitudes are saying the Rule is unfair and stupid. What the boy did was romantic and the Principal should back off and let him alone. I hope she does not and holds her ground. Rules must be respected. There has recently been nation- wide concern over the nation-wide practice of "bullying" at school. This, in spite of long time Rules against it. The same argument is made for not enforcing the Rules. Hey, its just kids being kids. it was harmless fun. The Rules are stupid. Administrators should back off and let the rule-breakers alone. This scenario is played out over rules about teen drinking and twittering while driving. The list goes on and the issues escalate into full blown crime- all for a lack of respect for Law. Thankfully, there is a public push-back with renewed concern that Rules be obeyed for the safety and welfare of everyone. We can not pick and chose which ones apply or which ones we like and will obey or will not obey. If a Law or a Rule is wrong (and certainly some are) work to get it changed. Meanwhile, a standing Rule to be obeyed, even if a certain Romeo can not go to the prom. If the Principal or Parents cave on this, which Rule will be disobeyed next and at what price?  
UPDATE 5/15- The Principle of the School caved to huge negative public pressure and will allow the boy to attend the Prom.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:34

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

## **RENEWING THE HEART OF A CITY THROUGH THE ARTS**

Working for the welfare of a City includes working for the end of decadence and decay. It involves renovation and renewal of old buildings and neighborhoods. Every Monday our local newspaper puts out an edition of "Business Weekly" which tells the marvelous and very encouraging stories of what local businesses are doing for the welfare of Springfield. It is very uplifting to read about so much evidence of private businesses making a difference for the better in our City. Yesterday there were similar stories in the Boston Globe of some positive things happening in the City of Worcester, Mass. This one (below) is of the rebirth of an old Theatre downtown and of the consequent renewal of the area around it. I believe this is evidence of Common Grace at work. It is very Biblical and Christians should support such developments.

**WORCESTER** — Stand on one side of tiny, wedge-shaped Federal Square, on the southern edge of this city's downtown, and the perspective is gleaming. What once was a boarded-up multiplex is now the glassy facade of the restored Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts, a venue for touring Broadway shows that draws audiences from all over fast-growing Worcester County. What once was a boarded-up multiplex is now the glassy facade of the restored Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts, a venue for touring Broadway shows that draws audiences from all over fast-growing Worcester County. Stand on another side of the square, and the pawnshop that doubles as a check-cashing emporium is difficult to miss, while empty storefronts are easy to see. Then again, the dive bar is gone now, replaced by an establishment that serves craft beers. Apartments a few doors down from the theater are being rehabbed. A couple of small restaurants have popped up. O'Brien views the theater as emblematic of a community with a rich history, one that has suffered some difficult times and had to remake itself in order to survive. Worcester is home to 10 colleges and universities, a biotech corridor, and art and science museums, he said, but its downtown, like the centers of a lot of midsize cities across the country, has struggled to reinvent itself since its heyday. "The life and death and rebirth of the theater is very symbolic of what's happened to our city," O'Brien said. "The story of the Hanover is the story of Worcester." The elegance of the theater is at odds with the neighborhood, whose poverty made the public-private partnership behind the project eligible for \$8 million in federal tax credits. It also got a combined \$8.6 million in historic preservation tax credits, aimed at community revitalization, from the federal and state governments. The US Census Bureau's estimates for 2005-2009 underscore Worcester's difficulties; about a quarter of its children live below the poverty line, compared with 12.8 percent statewide. "We're poorer than we were a decade ago," O'Brien said by phone, noting that two-thirds of children in Worcester's public schools qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. A couple of blocks from the theater is the Worcester Community Action Council, a nonprofit antipoverty agency. Its executive director, Jill C. Dagilis, said the Hanover's presence has stirred activity in the area, contributing to the creation of "a healthy community."

[http://articles.boston.com/2011-05-10/ae/29528852\\_1\\_hanover-theatre-troy-siebels-theater](http://articles.boston.com/2011-05-10/ae/29528852_1_hanover-theatre-troy-siebels-theater)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:40

Sunday, April 24, 2011

## **COLLEGES WORRY ABOUT ALWAYS PLUGGED IN STUDENTS**

MIT professors are urging college leaders across the country to free students from their tether to technology. Over the past decade, schools raced to connect students to the Internet — in dorms, classrooms, even under the old oak tree. But now, what once would have been considered heresy is an active point of discussion: pulling the virtual plug to encourage students to pay more attention in class and become more adept at real-life social networking. "I have been a bit skeptical about the value of making an entire campus wireless," said Lawrence Bacow, president of Tufts University and former chancellor of MIT, ... "It seems like everyone is always plugged in and always distracted."

<http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2011/04>

Bible vs Cell Phone [adapted] What would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone? What if we always carried it around in our purses or pockets? What if we flipped through it several times a day? What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it? What if we used it when we were always using it to receive messages? And it is always God who is calling. What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it? What if we used it when we traveled? What if we used it in case of emergency? And we wouldn't have to worry about dropped calls or being disconnected. Hmm... where is my Bible?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:17

Wednesday, April 20, 2011

## **IS THERE A CHRISTIAN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION?**

January 2009 I wrote and posted an Essay that is becoming more import and relevant all the time. I answered the Question, "What is Culture?" specifically, what is popular, essential and Christian Culture? I elaborated at length on the latter. And then I wrote, "In this time when Multiculturalism is so highly valued by many, it is very important that Christians understand what a Biblical Core Culture is and unashamedly commit to develop and maintain all its core essentials as outlined above." In many circles today, the ideal is "Globalism". It is more important to be a "Global Citizen" than to practice "Multiculturalism". That concept makes what I have written even more essential. I explained the relationship of Culture and Civilization, saying "Culture and Civilization are not the same, but they are interconnected. Both are essential. No Culture can be sustained without Civilization and vice versa." Then I outlined what is required for Civilization to exist-

All Civilizations require Government; Laws; an educated or skilled, co-operative citizenry and a productive economic system. A good Civilization's Government functions under just Laws and its citizens have a Bill of Rights such as those Americans have, are educated and moral and share in a productive, equitable and free economic system and are committed to the common good. The foundation of a Christian Civilization is Christian Culture (particularly well grounded in Biblical Religion and Morality, as outlined above). The Education System of a Christian Civilization is based on Christian Epistemology and Pedagogy; its Civil Government is based on Biblical Principles and is therefore a Republic under a Constitution and Laws that are in harmony with the Bible. Its Economic System is based on Biblical principles and would therefore be a compassionate, market-based Capitalism without greed or corruption. Christians should not be apologetic about believing that Christian Civilization is "exceptional". How could they believe otherwise? This is not to identify America with Christian Civilization or the Kingdom of God. The latter is an Ideal for which we pray and strive ("Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth"). The Ideal was the Vision of the First Founders of New England and many aspects of it survive and are still strong today, although seriously challenged. There is no other Nation that comes as close as America to the Ideal. Read the entire essay here- [http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view](http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php?option=com_content&view)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:51

Saturday, April 16. 2011

## **DENYING DUE PROCESS**

The current movie, "The Conspirator", about the trial (and execution) of Mary Surratt as a co-conspirator in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln is a case in which the accused was denied her constitutional right of "Due Process". Due process requires that the accused has the right to all fair, honest and legal processes in their case, including a trial by jury of one's peers. Ms Surratt was denied Due Process. <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?> This is Holy Week. Jesus, too, was accused, judged and executed without Due Process. So was Philip (Mt 26:60; Acts 6:13) and Paul had to demand he be given his rights to Due Process as a Roman Citizen (Acts 22:23-29) Due Process- never go to trial without it!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:25

## **MUST WE ALWAYS OBEY THE US CONSITUTION?**

Conservatives are rightly keen on holding Congress and the President to the Constitution. They must obey it, they insist. This argument was heard most recently in the debate about the Government enforcing DOMA. And Defenders of Slavery were keen on doing exactly that before and during the "Civil War". One of the main pro-slavery arguments is based on the Constitution as it was at that time and Conservatives today would have been pro-slavery if they were consistent. Realizing this should be humbling and give reason to pause to Conservatives today who advocate such obedience. (That the Constitution was later amended also should give pause to those who insist on the authority of the "Founding Documents". That authority now extends to those post-Civil War Amendments. They, too, must be obeyed.) "Black African slavery had existed in the North American English colonies for 168 years before the U.S. Constitution was drafted in 1787. It had existed all across colonial America... Whether slavery was to be permitted and continued under the new Constitution was a matter of conflict between the North and South, with several Southern states refusing to join the Union if slavery were disallowed. Thus, the continuance of slavery was clearly sanctioned in the U.S. Constitution, although the words slave and slavery are not found anywhere in the document. Section 2 of Article I states that apart from free persons "all other persons," meaning slaves, are each to be counted as three-fifths of a white person for the purpose of apportioning congressional representatives on the basis of population. Section 9 of Article I states that the importation of "such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit," meaning slaves, would be permitted until 1808. And Section 2 of Article IV directs that persons "held to Service or Labor in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another," meaning fugitive slaves, were to be returned to their owners."

The Bill of Rights, adopted in 1791, says nothing about slavery. But the Fifth Amendment guaranteed that no person could "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." Slaves were property, and slaveholders had an absolute right to take their property with them, even into free states or territories. <http://civilwar.bluegrass.net/secessioncrisis/constitutiononslavery.html>"Slavery is mentioned in two main places in the Constitution; in Article 1, Section 2 Clause 3, and the 13th Amendment. Primary source material [on this subject] include The Origins of American Slavery by Betty Wood (Hill and Wang, New York, 1997), Jim Crow Guide - The Way It Was by Stetson Kennedy (Florida Atlantic University Press, Boca Raton, 1990), and The History of Jim Crow. Population figures from census data were found at The University of Virginia. Quotes from the Founding Fathers concerning slavery were taken from FoundingFathers.info. George Washington's will can be found at The University of Virginia."In the census of 1790, there were slaves counted in nearly every state, with only Massachusetts and the "districts" of Vermont and Maine, being the only exceptions. In the entire country 3.8 million people were counted, 700,000 of them, or 18 percent, were slaves. In South Carolina, 43 percent of the population was slave. In Maryland 32 percent, and in North Carolina 26 percent. Virginia, with the largest slave population of almost 300,000, had 39 percent of its population made up of slaves."In the Articles of Confederation, the nation's first constitution, there is no mention of slavery. The states were represented in Congress by state, with each state picking its own representatives, so population, which became critical in the future House of Representatives, was not relevant. Also, because fugitive slaves, and the abolition movement, were almost unheard of as late as the 1780s, there is no mention of this issue in the Articles. "Slavery is seen in the Constitution in a few key places. The first is in the Enumeration Clause, where representatives are apportioned. Each state is given a number of representatives based on its population - in that population, slaves, called "other persons," are counted as three-fifths of a whole person. This compromise was hard-fought, with Northerners wishing that slaves, legally property, be uncounted, much as mules and horses are uncounted. Southerners, however, well aware of the high proportion of slaves to the total population in their states, wanted them counted as whole persons despite their legal status. The three-fifths number was a ratio used by the Congress in contemporary legislation and was agreed upon with

little debate."In Article 1, Section 9, Congress is limited, expressly, from prohibiting the "Importation" of slaves, before 1808. Congress eventually passed a law outlawing the slave trade that became effective on January 1, 1808."The Fugitive Slave Clause is the last mention. In it, a problem that slave states had with extradition of escaped slaves was resolved. The laws of one state, the clause says, cannot excuse a person from "Service or Labour" in another state. The clause expressly requires that the state in which an escapee is found deliver the slave to the state he escaped from "on Claim of the Party."

[http://www.usconstitution.net/constop\\_slav.html](http://www.usconstitution.net/constop_slav.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:13

Sunday, April 10, 2011

## **JEWS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

Franklin Graham recently said that our Country was founded by Christians and Jews. He was contradicted by someone who wrote to say that this Nation was founded on the Christian Faith, not the Jewish Faith. Graham was talking about Christian and Jewish people, individuals and he was correct.

<http://www.virtueonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=14130>

I do not recall learning how important Jews were in Colonial days and how, in fact, they played a very essential role in the Revolution, e.g- Haym Solomon

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haym\\_Solomon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haym_Solomon)

Check out this article about how Jews may have saved the Revolution itself!

<http://www.jewishmag.com/80mag/usa3/usa3.htm>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 23:36

Thursday, March 24, 2011

### **TOP TEN SONGS IN AMERICA THIS WEEK**

"If music provides a window into our world or, even more, itself influences and shapes culture, have you been listening to the radio lately? Or checked out the top iTunes download? Among the top ten songs in the United States, [see list attached] two have the word "F\*\*k" in the title; four others promote – and I do mean promote – rampant promiscuity, including homosexuality and sadomasochism; the remaining four glorify narcissism, hedonism, dysfunctional relationships and irresponsible parenting." Source: <http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=933>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:50

Saturday, March 12. 2011

## **DEFINING RELIGIOUS PLURALISM**

Editorial in today's Boston Globe decries the official discrimination and the unofficial persecution by Muslims of Coptic Christians in Egypt. It insists that Political and Religious Leaders must promote Religious Pluralism as they build a new post-Mubarak, "democratic" Egypt. The Editorial does not define what such "Pluralism" means.

[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/editorials/articles/2011/03](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2011/03)

There are 4 common definitions of Religious Pluralism: Religious Inclusivism, Religious Tolerance, Religious Ecumenism, Religious Diversity. Yes, everyone must accept the reality that in today's world, most Countries have Religious Diversity. And yes, there are times when members of different Religions must co-operate for the common good of their Country, such as in disaster relief. That would be a kind of Ecumenism. But for every member to agree that they do not have any claim to exclusive Truth and that there is truth, even Salvation, in every other Religion is going too far. That would be irrational as the Doctrines of many Religions contradict those of other Religions. Religious Inclusivism may sound nice, but it actually would undermine each Religion and its reason for existence. Evangelicals reject Religious Inclusivism, but they can agree with Religious Tolerance. But the problem is more fundamental than that. What is needed is for people to learn and practice respect for other people as human beings. Period. Violence and bigotry, hate and oppression are wrong. Period. Religion is no excuse for any such behavior. (Actually, in Arab countries, the most pervasive challenge to this Ideal is not Muslim to Christian but Muslim to Jew) I am personally totally convinced that Christianity is the only Way, Truth and Life and that no one comes to God apart from faith in Jesus as God's one and only Prophet, Priest and King. But in no way does that require or condone treating my fellow human beings in an inhumane manner ever!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:12

Monday, March 7, 2011

## **A TEST TO JUSTIFY ABORTING SOME BABIES**

A new test to enable pregnant women to determine whether the child they are carrying has Down's Syndrome was announced today. It seems to be more accurate than other tests currently being used.

[http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/health/blog/dailydose/2011/01/new\\_blood\\_test.html](http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/health/blog/dailydose/2011/01/new_blood_test.html)

Why have such tests at all? To enable the pregnant woman to better prepare for the birth of her child? Maybe. My guess is that most pregnant women would use the test to justify killing the unborn child. I simply want to say here that I have known and worked closely on a daily basis for 19 years with people who happen to have Down's Syndrome. They all are exactly that: people who happen to have Down's Syndrome. The latter does not diminish the former in any way. Many of them have been more enjoyable to be with, as well as more productive human beings, than many other people I know who do not have Down's. It really would have been a tragedy if any of them had been terminated before they were born.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:54

Sunday, March 6, 2011

## **WHAT WOULD JESUS CUT (from the Federal Budget)?**

The progressive Christian organization, Sojourners, has mounted a massive campaign concerning the proposed National Budget, using email, the social networks and many ads and reports in the media, asking this Question: "WHAT WOULD JESUS CUT?" The following is from Sojourners website and many ads and reports in the media.

"Congress is considering a budget plan that would make a 9 percent cut in discretionary spending while giving a 2 percent increase for military spending. This would be devastating for domestic programs that provide basic nutrition, health, and opportunity to poor children and international aid programs that save lives every day. As a country, we face difficult financial choices, but one thing that should not be on the table is to abandon the poor and vulnerable while allowing more military spending."

<https://secure3.convio.net/sojo/site/Advocacy?>

[The website continues,] Send this email to: Your Senators Your Representative As a person of faith, I believe that the moral test of any society is how it treats its poor and most vulnerable. Our federal budget should reflect our best national values and priorities, so in regard to your upcoming budget vote I ask myself, "What would Jesus cut?" As your constituent, I ask you to oppose any budget proposal that increases military spending while cutting domestic and international programs that benefit the poor, especially children. Programs we need to invest in during these tough economic times include: 1. Critical child health and family nutrition programs 2. Proven work and income supports that lift families out of poverty 3. Support for education, especially in low-income communities 4. International aid that directly and literally save lives

The Programs listed are all worthy subjects for our concern. Looking at the Budget, it has many proposals and the Sojourners campaign is far too simplistic and selective. There is an interesting analysis here- <http://www.nytimes.com/> In addition, Sojourners makes the assumption that it is the Federal Government that should be investing tax monies into the Programs they have arbitrarily selected. And Sojourners assumes that specific Government Programs they selected to be funded are worthy of support. Both these assumptions are very debatable. For example, in the last two years, the Federal Government has poured 100s of millions of dollars into Massachusetts for various Programs to improve "Education" in this State and particularly our local Schools as we are at the bottom of a number of criteria such as the Drop-Out Rate. We have been receiving such Monies for years with no evidence that it has made a real difference. The problems here are social-economic, especially with single parent families who move around often, and offer little parental involvement as well as a major problem of reading and writing English. In addition, much of the money for "Education" does not go to actual classroom education. Much of it goes to improvement of facilities, busing, administrative costs and all kinds of social (non-academic) programs and mandates. This is just one example of Federal Funding that is being wasted. Sojourners advocacy for more of this kind of Federal Funding is high-sounding, but wrong headed. I am not persuaded that more Federal Funding is the answer to the problems of Poverty, including child health care. I think Jesus would cut such Federal Funding and programs. There are other more practical and Biblical approaches to these problems that I think Jesus does support. Jim Wallis and Sojourners are claiming the high moral road in their campaign, but I think they are actually hijacking Biblical concepts and using non-Biblical methods to achieve them. I have written extensively on my website about what I believe the truly Biblical approaches to these matters are.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:01

Thursday, February 24, 2011

### **SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL TEACHERS IN URBAN SCHOOLS**

A study of 31 high-performing teachers in low-performing urban schools found that these teachers had certain traits in common. They were strict; they taught in traditional, explicit ways; there was little time in their classrooms when instruction was not occurring; and they moved around the room helping their students. They used very few constructivist or cooperative activities. And they stressed particular virtues, including respecting self and others, working hard, being responsible, never giving up, doing excellent work, trying one's best, being hopeful, thinking critically, being honest, and considering consequences. They strongly believed in their students' potential and pushed them to achieve  
<http://intl.kaplanmagazine.org/content/92/5/39.abstract>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:13

### **BEWARE: THE TEEN BRAIN ON COMPUTERS**

Watson, the IBM Computer, is neither smart nor intelligent. It only has a repository of data, programmed into it by a human being. A head full of data that can be accessed quickly does not make a person (or computer) educated. It might even hinder or impair true knowledge. The New York Times has been running a series of articles examining how a deluge of data can affect the way people think and behave- a lot of it negatively. Check out all the articles in the series [here](#)-

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/features/timestopics/series/The average young American now spends practically every waking minute — except for the time in school — using a smart phone, computer, television or other electronic device. Those ages 8 to 18 spend more than seven and a half hours a day with such devices, compared with less than six and a half hours five years ago, when the study was last conducted. And that does not count the hour and a half that youths spend texting, or the half-hour they talk on their cellphones. And because so many of them are multitasking — say, surfing the Internet while listening to music — they pack on average nearly 11 hours of media content into that seven and a half hours.](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/features/timestopics/series/The%20average%20young%20American%20now%20spends%20practically%20every%20waking%20minute%20-%20except%20for%20the%20time%20in%20school%20-%20using%20a%20smart%20phone%2C%20computer%2C%20television%20or%20other%20electronic%20device.%20Those%20ages%208%20to%2018%20spend%20more%20than%20seven%20and%20a%20half%20hours%20a%20day%20with%20such%20devices%2C%20compared%20with%20less%20than%20six%20and%20a%20half%20hours%20five%20years%20ago%2C%20when%20the%20study%20was%20last%20conducted.%20And%20that%20does%20not%20count%20the%20hour%20and%20a%20half%20that%20youths%20spend%20texting%2C%20or%20the%20half-hour%20they%20talk%20on%20their%20cellphones.%20And%20because%20so%20many%20of%20them%20are%20multitasking%20-%20say%2C%20surfing%20the%20Internet%20while%20listening%20to%20music%20-%20they%20pack%20on%20average%20nearly%2011%20hours%20of%20media%20content%20into%20that%20seven%20and%20a%20half%20hours.)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/education/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/21/technology/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:44

Tuesday, February 8, 2011

## **REACH STUDENTS- CHANGE THE WORLD**

Every time there is a "revolution" going on in the world, it is almost always being fought by young people, usually University students. Here is information about a wonderful organization (IICS) with a mission to reach such students with the Gospel plus a Christian World View. They are doing this by placing highly qualified evangelical academics, teaching in all Fields, on the staff of schools around the world. Exciting! Read more- "A recent survey by The World-Leaders Almanac found that over ninety percent of the world's current heads of state graduated from a university or institution of higher education. Imagine the difference in the world if these leaders had been exposed to the truth of Jesus Christ in university classrooms taught by evangelicals who presented their disciplines from a Christian worldview. Discipleship with a Christian worldview is necessary for long-term impact. Evangelism without discipleship and development of a Christian worldview will be unfruitful in the long term. Future leaders must recognize and understand the Lordship of Christ over all of living and learning. Individuals, families, businesses and governments benefit when leaders at every level and sector of society are taught how biblical principles impact personal and national development. Scores of universities are asking for professors. In North America, Christian truth is often not welcome in higher education. But scores of universities in other parts of the world are asking for professors who are moral, ethical, hard-working, articulate and committed to truth, even from a Christian perspective. Students around the world are searching for hope and meaning. What an incredible opportunity for Christian professors to influence them by teaching in the classroom and ministering to them outside the classroom as well! Many ministries focus on reaching students through evangelism and discipleship outside the classroom. IICS focuses on teaching students inside the classroom as a part of the university system itself." "The university is a clear-cut fulcrum with which to move the world. Change the university and you change the world." Dr. Charles Malik  
from the website of International Institute for Christian Studies <http://www.iics.com/index.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:59

Monday, January 31. 2011

## **THE AMERICAN CREED**

"The tone of today's politics was anticipated and is vindicated by a book published 30 years ago. The late Samuel Huntington's "American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony" (1981)

"The American Creed's values are liberal, as that term was understood until liberalism succumbed to 20th-century statism. The values, expressing the 18th century's preoccupation with defending liberty against government, are, Huntington said, "individualistic, democratic, egalitarian, and hence basically anti-government and anti-authority." The various values "unite in imposing limits on power and on the institutions of government. The essence of constitutionalism is the restraint of governmental power through fundamental law."

America is an inherently "disharmonic society" because the ideals of its creed are always imperfectly realized and always endangered. Government is necessary but, Huntington says, "the distinctive aspect of the American Creed is its anti-government character. Opposition to power and suspicion of government as the most dangerous embodiment of power are the central themes of American political thought."

After the Founding, there was, Huntington thought, a change in Americans' "dominant conception of human nature." The image of man as inherently sinful, dangerous and in need of control by cleverly contrived political institutions yielded to a much more benign image of man as essentially good and potentially perfectible. But, Huntington wrote, "both views were used to justify limitations on government." If men are bad, government should be weak lest men put it to bad uses. If men are well-intentioned and reasonable, strong government is not necessary to control them, so "government should be weak because men are good." Today, the general conservatism of this center-right country and especially the Tea Party impulse demand renewed seriousness about the creed's core skepticism about government. Modern liberalism's handicap is its unhappiness with this core." - from George Will (emphasis added)  
<http://www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/will012311.php3>Is the American Creed Biblical?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:52

## **"ORIGINAL INTENT" of the U.S. CONSTITUTION and ABORTION**

"When the leadership of the new Republican majority in the House of Representatives decided as their first act to have members read the U.S. Constitution aloud, there were some who wanted to emphasize that part of the original document which, for taxation, enumeration and representation purposes, decreed that slaves had only "three-fifths" the value of whites. That formula between Southern and Northern states, reached during the Philadelphia Convention of 1787, came to be known as the Three-fifths Compromise. In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, rendering the three-fifths clause moot, but some House members wanted to read the original article to counter the argument of "original intent" with their own argument that the Constitution is a "living document," which must be regularly updated and interpreted by modern judges." [Question: Is the Bible to be interpreted and applied according to the original intent of its writers?]

"As horrid as slavery was, at least slaves were seen by some as possessing a percentage of "personhood," which is more than can be said for the unborn. National Right to Life (<http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/facts/abortionstats.html>) calculates that, since 1973, nearly 50 million fetuses have been denied their unalienable right to live, thanks to a single Supreme Court decision that withdrew their protection as persons, subjecting them to the foulest kind of child abuse. It is precisely because the 7-2 Supreme Court majority vote in 1973 read something into the Constitution that isn't there, to wit, that a "right to privacy" means the right to kill an unborn child -- even when it is capable of living outside the womb -- that Congress must restore the original intent of the Framers, which includes the "endowed by their Creator" clause in the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution cannot be separated from the Declaration, its philosophical and moral foundation."--from Cal Thomas.

Read the complete column <http://jewishworldreview.com/>

[Questions: Is Mr. Thomas' last statement true? And is the Declaration Biblical?]

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:41

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

## **HORRIBLE, VERY UPSETTING STORY**

Follow the links in this article-

[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2011/01/26/abortions\\_dangerous\\_euphemisms/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2011/01/26/abortions_dangerous_euphemisms/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:25

Saturday, January 22, 2011

### **GREAT ARTICLE ABOUT THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT**

Here is a well-informed article answering critics of the Pro-Life Movement, documenting how pro-life it really is! This is also a link to a very interesting website-  
<http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2011/01/2380>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:34

Tuesday, January 18. 2011

### **WHY WAS MLK IN MEMPHIS WHEN HE WAS KILLED?**

"During his lifetime, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. knew that the civil rights movement and the labor movement had to remain firmly united. He understood that there can be no real equality without economic security and that government must play a role in protecting our most vulnerable." Dr. King had gone to Memphis, the city of his assassination, to preach that no job holder should live in poverty. Before the bullet struck him, he had joined striking sanitation workers to march for living wage jobs... "The core issue now affecting many workers, and the unemployed who hope to find work, is the issue that animated King in his final hours: too many jobs barely allow people to survive. They go to work each day and still live in poverty. More than forty years later, the need for living wage jobs is as urgent as ever." Dr. King's legacy of standing up for the working poor animates the growing living wage movement in this country. It is the nexus where the labor movement and the civil rights movement must come together."

written by Al Sharpton [http://newsone.com/newsone-original/rev-al-sharpton/What is a "Living Wage"?](http://newsone.com/newsone-original/rev-al-sharpton/What%20is%20a%20Living%20Wage?)

"Though living wage ordinances come in a variety of flavors, they all amount to the same thing: they force employers who receive contracts or tax benefits from the locality to pay their workers a wage rate a few bucks over the minimum. The message and purpose are quite simple: if you as an employer have benefited from some form of incentive, then you ought to give a little something back to your workforce."

This is from an article that is pro-living wage, but includes the basic arguments pro and con

[http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/webfeatures\\_viewpoints\\_lw\\_movement/](http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/webfeatures_viewpoints_lw_movement/)

Is the Living Wage Biblical? MLK was fighting for it because he believed it was.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:47

### **IS THE TIGER MOTHER A WHIMP?**

David Brooks takes on the Tiger Mother. Critics say she is far too strict, Brooks counters, no, she is coddling her children. Either way, this Chinese mother is a challenge. Is her parenting Biblical?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/18/opinion/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:06

Saturday, January 15. 2011

## **TRASH TALK**

In light of the recent repulsion by, and plea to reject, vicious, mean-spirited speech using metaphors threatening violence and harm to opponents in politics, it is interesting how the same type of speech is not only acceptable but encouraged and actually enjoyed when it comes to so-called "Sports". Trash talk is not only popular, it apparently adds excitement and more fun to the games. This not only illustrates a double standard, but fly's in the face of all the protestations and outrage about the same kind of speech made this past week in reference to politics. Note the defense of trash talk by the following sports columnist-

"Bob Glauber of Newsday and Peter King of Sports Illustrated report that the league has issued a warning regarding the recent spate of trash talking, which came in profane quantities from Jets cornerback Antonio Cromartie. King reports that executive V.P. of football operations Ray Anderson contacted all eight remaining teams late in the week with a warning to "respect the game" and to cut down on the trash talk. Still, we agree with Jets center Nick Mangold,... that the trash talk is a source of humor and entertainment, and that none of it matters when the games begin.... Mangold apparently realized ...that some folks don't see the humor and/or they are not entertained. "I make one little joke and Pats fans get their panties so in a bunch that one person told me to kill myself. Stay classy Foxborough!" We still think that the chatter adds to the drama. As do warnings from the league office regarding the potential consequences of too much chatter. Yes, the extraneous talk could cause in the minds of some the letters N, F, and L to be replaced with W, W, and E. But it maintains and increases interest in the on-field product, which nearly all will agree..."

<http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2011/01/15/>

If this is the case in "Sports" why isn't it the same with politics or anywhere else for that matter?

If Americans can accept physical threats against football players as just talk that is trash, how come we take it literally when it comes to politics?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:00

## **WANT JOBS? GET EDUCATION!**

NEWS FLASH: "America's unemployment teaches a stark lesson about the value of education. Almost three-quarters of adults with college degrees have jobs; fewer than 40 percent of high school dropouts work. The unemployment rate is 15 percent for high school dropouts, 10 percent for college-less people with high school degrees and less than 5 percent for college graduates. Educating America may be the best way to reduce future"

[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:37

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

## **THE GOSPEL WITH A HOLE IN IT**

"Twelve million orphans, and no one noticed? But what sickened me most was this question: Where was the Church? Indeed, where were the followers of Jesus Christ in the midst of perhaps the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time? Surely the Church should have been caring for these "orphans and widows in their distress" (James 1:27). Shouldn't the pulpits across America have flamed with exhortations to rush to the front lines of compassion? Shouldn't they be flaming today? Shouldn't churches be reaching out to care for children in such desperate need? How could the great tragedy of these orphans get drowned out by choruses of praise music in hundreds of thousands of churches across our country?" This is the question of Richard Stearns, President of World Vision, US. It is from his new book, "Hole in the Gospel", subtitled, "What does God expect of us? The Answer that changed my life and might just change the world." The book was awarded the 2010 Christian Book of the Year by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association and is endorsed by many national evangelical Christian Leaders. Stearns was an affluent, successful, comfortable white American Christian businessman who had a crisis of faith as he traveled in sub-Saharan Africa and was confronted by starving, sick and orphaned African children. Overwhelmed by compassion and by guilt for his previous non-involvement, he needed to become involved with helping these children. He did and is now appealing for other Christians like him to do likewise. I believe Mr Stearns blanket indictment against the Church for failure to do the work he is talking about is a gross overstatement and very unfair. He can't possibly be ignorant of all the Relief work done by the Church, its Missionaries, Pastors and members from the beginning of its History. His own organization has been doing this kind of work for 60 years. It employs 10's of thousands of workers around the globe and has a multimillion dollar annual budget. Google the WV website for its record and also Google "Christian Relief Organizations" and see the dozens of similar organizations like Samaritans Purse.

The review on the Amazon website from Publishers Weekly, states "Stearns, the CEO of World Vision, says Christians have a huge hole in their lives, an emptiness that comes from ignoring the plight of the poor. He details his own quest to fill this hole by leaving Lenox Inc., where he was CEO, to run a not-for-profit that helps feed, clothe, and educate children worldwide. Unlike many evangelical Christians, Stearns believes poverty is explained by something more than choices, and lifting cultures from the systemic causes of poverty requires a multi-pronged approach. This accessible book will make it into the hands of evangelical Christians who may not pick up one of the many ABA books on issues of hunger, access to clean water, malaria and AIDS. Readers of Rick Warren, Jim Wallis and N.T. Wright will find Stearns synthesizing thoughts from them as well as from economists and missionaries. This is a passionate and motivating magnum opus from the leader of one of the most recognized aid organizations in the world. The book is a surprisingly no-holds-barred prophetic voice in the wilderness crying out to rich Americans, "Repent and help your world neighbors." This book joins many others with the same Theme, arguments, statistics and stories. The Bible tells us hundreds of times, they all say, that God loves the Poor and Christians must love them too. And loving them means getting involved with solving the personal, social and systemic causes of World Poverty- doing far more than simply giving money. Powerful stuff which really stirs the emotions, particularly of affluent white Americans. Mr Stearns means well and he, along with many others, are doing good work. But much of what he and others like him say about the Mission of the Church, the Gospel and about the Teaching of the Bible on the subject of the Poor and Poverty is unbiblical and wrong. I have written about this many times and have posted several articles on my website and blog that are relevant. "The Poor" and "Poverty" are not what these popular books usually say they are. And the ways they chose to help the "Poor" are often not Biblical. That is why so much effort to solve the Poverty Problem falls short. Here I will simply say, there is no hole in the historic, classic Gospel! There may be a hole in Mr Stearn's understanding of the Gospel or maybe in the one he had heard preached in churches he attended. But the Gospel I have preached for some 50 years has no hole! The Gospel consists of the Doctrines of Grace. The Gospel itself is not about purifying polluted water. It is about how sinners may find the Water of Eternal Life. It is about how sinners may find forgiveness and right standing in the eyes of a righteous God (i.e.-"saved"). The Gospel is about justification by faith alone in the saving work of Christ on the cross alone by the grace of God alone to the glory of God alone. There is no hole there, but I have often complained that this Gospel is not explained and applied fully to those who hear it and that is a serious problem and the main reason that that Mr Stearns and many others these days misunderstand it. Many evangelicals do not seem to know that the outcome of Justification is Sanctification or Holiness, a life of righteousness. A righteous life is a life lived according to the Law of God. Such a life is what God expects of all who are justified in Christ. This is what justification makes possible. Saving faith is meant to be followed by public Baptism and obedience to all the commands of God for living life. That sequence is expected of Believers in the Global South, as well as of affluent white Americans. The Law of God teaches a way of life that provides for the truly Poor (e.g.- through Tithing and "Gleaning"). It teaches economic principles that, if practiced, provide the best ways of eliminating Poverty itself. The major problem with much of today's evangelical social action is that it omits the Law of God and does not follow its principles. Instead, it is humanistic, pragmatic and basically secular, albeit done in the Name of Jesus. That is not filling any so-called hole in the Gospel. It

is replacing the Gospel. The popular Gospel heard in many contemporary churches is a redefined Gospel. What is said to be the hole of the Gospel, social action ("failure to feed the Poor") has become the whole Gospel for many. Jesus' life and death are redefined by many today as a model for sacrificial service for marginalized, powerless people. Many Evangelicals seem to believe human beings are children of God (or simply are made in the image of God) but they are not hopelessly lost in sin, totally subject to a fallen ("depraved") human nature. Marginalized people need compassion, but they do not need regeneration. The over-riding concern is that millions face early, unnecessary physical death, but not eternal death. They are not enemies of God that need to make peace with Him. They are not guilty sinners who need forgiveness and reconciliation with their Creator. Millions need food and medicine and clean water. Their bodies are sick and dying. That is what matters most. That is the most pressing issue. No it is not, especially if they are dying! The will of human beings is no longer in bondage to Sin. It is free, therefore people simply need education and help in making wise life style choices. Faith in Jesus is not total trust in the substitutionary atoning, propitiatory work of Jesus on the Cross for Salvation. Saving Faith has been redefined simply as having a spiritual relationship with Jesus which fills personal needs and following his example of service to the marginalized.. If there is a Gospel with a "hole" or serious deficiency, it is this contemporary, redefined one.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:05

Saturday, October 16, 2010

## **THE CONSTITUTION IS NOT ENOUGH**

The recent "Contract from America" states that 82.03% of the people from across America who endorse it named "Protect the Constitution" as the very first priority they expect candidates for elected office to hold. They will support candidates who promise to "Require each bill [that comes up for a vote in Congress] to identify the specific provision of the Constitution that gives Congress the power to do what the bill does." Actually, this is being done now. The problem here is interpretation of what the words of the Constitution mean. This is the same problem with the Bible. Christians of all kinds use the Bible to support their beliefs. Every Evangelical Church has a Statement of Faith that begins with declaring the Bible to be their authority in all matters of faith and practice. Then they go on to use different rules to interpret the Book and end up using it to support different positions on many subjects. The Rules for interpreting the Constitution are not included in the "Contract". People signing the "Contract" endorse "Limited Government". The Contract states, "The purpose of our government is to exercise only those limited powers that have been relinquished to it by the people, chief among these being the protection of our liberties by administering justice and ensuring our safety from threats arising inside or outside our country's sovereign borders." Is this true? Everyone agrees the Constitution enumerates the powers or functions of the Federal Government. There are actually many of them; but Congress and the Courts interpret them widely, especially the "Commerce clause" and the "Elastic Cause" in Article 1, Section 8 (below). The Preamble of the U.S. Constitution: We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. We "the People"-- who were included in "the People"? Women were not. Slaves were not. Years later, after much debate and turmoil, Amendments had to be made to the original Constitution to clarify these words. The Preamble continues with high-minded, noble phrases enumerating the purposes of the Document. The meaning of all of them have been debated and have changed over the years, e.g.- "to establish Justice", "domestic Tranquility", "the general Welfare" and "Liberty". For example, "Welfare" in today's context means organized efforts on the part of public or private organizations to benefit the poor, or simply public assistance. This is not the meaning of the word as used in the Constitution. And "Liberty" is now often taken as "Freedom" and that word means many things to people today that were never thought of by the Framers. The list goes on. There is no agreement about the meaning of the words and phrases used in the first 10 Amendments (the Bill of Rights)- "Freedom of Speech"? Freedom of Religion"? "Right to Privacy"? Stump speeches about obeying the Constitution may sound good, but they are empty rhetoric and simplistic (if not disingenuous) at best without definitions and agreed upon Rules of Interpretation. Such speeches are as empty as Preachers who pound their pulpits and say, "Back to the Bible!". Probably the most debated of the enumerated "powers" of the Federal Government have been those of Article 1, Section 8: the 'Commerce: Clause and the so-called "Elastic Clause". These are huge loopholes through which all kinds of legislation have passed and shall continue to do so and with everyone insisting the same to be "constitutional"! Commerce Cause: "To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes" [emphasis added] The Elastic Cause: "To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof." More than the Constitution, we must have Rules, Values (Ethical and Moral) and a Philosophy of Public Policy that guides us in our interpretation and application of it. I believe the Bible, interpreted from a Calvinist, Neo-Kuyperian perspective, gives us all that (see below and other Articles on my website)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:00

Wednesday, October 6, 2010

### **RECOMMENDED ARTICLES BY NANCY PEARCEY**

Nancy Pearcey used to help Chuck Colson write his books. She is a very intelligent and gifted writer and has published her own books. some of her excellent articles critiquing Culture from a Biblical persepective can be found here (there are 4 of them) They come from her latest book Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, and Meaning.

[http://www.humanevents.com/search.php?author\\_name=Nancy+Pearcey](http://www.humanevents.com/search.php?author_name=Nancy+Pearcey)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:48

Sunday, September 26, 2010

## **WHO ARE "THE POOR" ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE?**

Who are "the Poor" according to the Bible? They are not who many Conservatives, as well as Liberals, think they are. They are not who the Government or many Christians say they are. I have written about this on my website. In the media and according to self-appointed advocates of the poor, Poverty is defined as living below an arbitrary level of income set by the Government. In the Bible, Poverty is defined as destitution. The Book tells us there are more than 20 possible causes of Poverty. The Book of Proverbs says that personal, irresponsible behavior (mostly laziness or immorality) is one cause of poverty. This is the cause that conservative Evangelical Christians emphasize, almost exclusively (if you are poor you must be lazy). But, according to the Bible, people in America today are correctly called "poor" if they had property and means, but have lost their livelihood to no fault of their own or are no longer able to work and maintain their property. Biblically, "the Poor" are those who due too no fault of their own, can't pay their bills because of plant closings, fire, accident, death in the family, debilitating illness, enormous medical bills, etc. and, of course, natural disasters like tornadoes. And Evangelicals typically over look what the Bible teaches is the number one reason for destitution: oppression, rooted in idolatry; yes, oppression rooted in idolatry. Oppression is primarily at the hands of invading enemy armies or at the hands of rich and powerful people. The latter exploit those who can no longer work their land- (widows, fatherless children) and the sick or disabled or farmers who have had bad crops due to disasters of some kind and must borrow to keep going. Loans lead to indentured servanthood and forfeiture of the family farm. In some cases, land is simply stolen by the powerful. All of this is injustice. It violates the law of God and the rights of these poor land owners. This type of oppression is the major cause of most poverty mentioned in the Bible. Not all Poor are oppressed, but the oppressed are poor. Read the rest of my Essay- [biblical-basics-about-poverty-and-the-poor&catid=64:justice&Itemid=57](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:05

Friday, September 24, 2010

## **TEEN PREGNANCIES, POVERTY AND UNDER-PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

Repeatedly, here and in many other columns, blogs and articles, you have read that one of the greatest problems in America is illegitimate births. Here in Springfield our school system has recently been named as the second most segregated in the Country. Our School Department adamantly denies that our schools do not provide quality education for minority children. The problem, they point out, is not racism but poverty. We have neighborhood schooling, but 75% of all children in the public schools here are Latino or African-Americans. The greater issue is poverty. 80% of all our pupils live below the poverty line and a large percentage of them live in single parent homes where they do not get the parental support required to do well in school. The majority of our students do not graduate! Our system receives millions in Federal and State aide; but this major issue is not being effectively addressed. (It is a PC thing) As Mona Charon wrote in her column today. "There is ... no question that unwed childbearing contributes far more to poverty in America than the recession has. [This contributes to making schools ineffective] And ineffective schools affect our economic productivity and competitiveness. We must reverse some of [this] trend if we hope to have sustained prosperity and political and social vitality ...." Italicized words added by me  
*/democrats\_chose\_wrong\_moment\_for\_big\_government*

Ms Charon says "we must reverse this trend". Absolutely, but who and how? Changes in welfare policies would help. Social attitudes and values are essential. Becoming pregnant and an unwed, single parent must no longer be acceptable. Being an absentee father must no longer be acceptable. The even greater issue is that sex outside marriage is acceptable, even popular. That must become totally unacceptable. Sound impossible, I know. There are well-meaning organizations trying to address these issues. but they are missing the biggest need. We are talking about personal morality, Marriage and Family. What teenagers are doing is a sub-topic of these larger concerns, This is where all churches must ramp up their influence. Local churches absolutely must do far more to teach their youth the Biblical basis of personal Morality, Marriage and Family. This is essential and something the secular agencies can not provide.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:14

Wednesday, September 8, 2010

## **WHO IS BEING JUDGMENTAL AND UNFAIR?**

The local cause célèbre du jour is the resignation of a long time Teacher and very popular Dean of Students and Athletic Director at the local Roman Catholic High School because she publicly married her partner. The Diocese knew she was a lesbian, but that did not violate the Rules of Employment. Entering into a "Gay marriage" does. The woman, by all accounts is a very likable and gifted person, doing good work with the students. She also knew the consequences of her decision to "marry" and accepts full responsibility for loss of her job. She is not suing the Diocese and agrees they were within their legal rights. Admirable. But the public protests! wow! Such indignation against the "unchristian", "hypocritical", "bigoted" Church. Even the local newspaper jumped on this band wagon, soundly criticizing, in front page headlines, editorials and columns, the Church for its totally unfair, outdated "Values" (What happened to Freedom of Religion?) The usual liberal protesters demonstrated, but what bothers me most are all the teenagers who have joined in. It is possible that they are simply upset over the loss of a great Teacher and Friend. They do not place any responsibility on her for her resignation or her decisions that led up to it. They blame the terrible Church. These teens are reflecting an increasingly popular perspective among youth today about what it means to be a Christian and what Church is supposed to be about: Love, defined as being open, welcoming, affirming and supportive of all people no matter who they are or what they believe or how they live, Sin, on the other hand, is being the opposite- judgmental and thus unloving. That is it. Well, I pray the Church will not cave in on their Rules (values) and the protesters will learn to practice what they preach- toward the Church.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:05

Monday, August 30, 2010

## **THE CELEBRIFICATION OF AMERICAN CULTURE**

I have written in other places about a cultural trend that is getting, I believe, far too little attention. It's been termed the "celebrification" of culture – an awkward term, perhaps, but like "industrialization" and "bureaucratization," it speaks to a broad and historical trend: the increasing centrality of celebrities to the culture.

Movie and television stars, professional athletes and musicians, business moguls and journalists, have captured our attention as never before. Joseph Epstein writes that "a received opinion about America in the early twenty-first century is that our culture values only two things: money and celebrity." From this, celebrities have become our cultural commentators, charity spokespersons, role models, and political candidates. They have become the arbiters of taste, morality and public opinion. Richard Schickel, who has written for Time magazine since 1972, reflects, "No issue or idea in our culture can gain any traction with the general population unless it has celebrity names attached to it."

Comments by James White on his blog today at <http://www.churchandculture.org>

Could all this be said of today's Church Culture?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:53

Sunday, August 29, 2010

## **WHAT IS IGNORED BUT CRUCIAL TO IMPROVING SCHOOLS**

The Springfield School District (in which I live) has recently been awarded 19 million dollars from our Federal taxes to improve education here. Most of the students of our City do not graduate from High School. Most live below the poverty line. Most of these children are Black or Hispanic. Most of them live in single parent families. Most of them are illegitimate (70% of all Black children) and the males who helped produce them do not live in their homes. The new grant money, which follows millions more that have been given in recent years, will keep Teachers employed a little longer and new programs will be developed to aide "Learning" and buildings will be upgraded. All that, of course, is good. I do not expect it will really change the education of most of the students having problems with "school". Why? The money is not going to deal with the five factors that are crucial- "Two decades, five factors. Two decades have passed since Barton wrote "America's Smallest School: The Family." He has estimated that about 90 percent of the difference in schools' proficiencies can be explained by five factors: the number of days students are absent from school, the number of hours students spend watching television, the number of pages read for homework, the quantity and quality of reading material in the students' homes -- and, much the most important, the presence of two parents in the home. Public policies can have little purchase on these five, and least of all on the fifth."

Please read the entire article by George Will- [content/article/](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:55

Friday, August 27, 2010

## **WHY WE MUST OPPOSE EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH**

We support stem cell research! We oppose embryonic stem cell research! The latter involves the destruction of embryos and that means destroying human beings. Here is the main reason for believing that. Since there is normally a continuum from conception to birth, it can be said that the zygote, blastocyst, fetus and the embryo are a human being at different developmental stages. Every human child and adult began his or her life at conception. The adult is a zygote fully developed. To destroy a zygote (or a blastocyst, fetus and the embryo) is to destroy a specific human being.

Every human being becomes a "Person". A Person is a composite of all those attributes or faculties that Human Beings possess because they are created and conceived to be the Image of God.

The most compelling argument for insisting that an embryo is a human being is that being a "person" involves having a body. This is what makes the redemption and resurrection of the physical body so essential and important. Persons can not exist as disembodied spirits. A Person is not a dualism: body and soul; but rather a person is a unity: one. Body is integral to being a Person. Inasmuch as the body begins with conception, therefore, so does personhood. Soul or NEPHESH [naw fahsh] is used 700 times in the Bible. It never means "soul" as that word is commonly understood today. The root meaning of NEPHESH is "breath". It is used in that basic sense. (Genesis 1:30, 2:7, 7:21) NEPHESH comes to mean anything with breath. This includes all beings, animals- "living creatures" (Genesis 1:20,21,24 also 2:19, 7:21, 9:9-16) NEPHESH then comes to mean a human being, i.e.- Man is a soul. (Genesis 12:5,13;14:21; 17:14) Finally, NEPHESH also can mean the emotional center of human beings (cf English "heart". Hebrew for "heart" is LEB and that normally means the intellectual and volitional center---these are not technical, precise terms) Psalm 6:3 My soul is in anguish. Psalm 107:9 God satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry soul with good things. Psalm 119:20 My soul is consumed with longing.... Psalm 35:9 my soul will rejoice in the LORD. Deuteronomy 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart [LAY VAHV= MIND] and with all your soul.

Thus, conception could be said to be the beginning of a "soul" and thus both abortion and embryonic stem cell research involves the death of a soul. (Abortion happens about 1 million times each year in America!) The meaning and value of being "human", a "person", is extremely important and is under serious assault in many quarters today and the practice of abortion and embryonic stem cell research is a part of that assault.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:57

## **KRAUTHAMMER HITS NAIL ON HEAD**

Liberalism under siege is an ugly sight indeed. Just yesterday it was all hope and change and returning power to the people. But the people have proved so disappointing. Their recalcitrance has, in only 19 months, turned the predicted 40-year liberal ascendancy (James Carville) into a full retreat. Ah, the people, the little people, the small-town people, the "bitter" people, as Barack Obama in an unguarded moment once memorably called them, clinging "to guns or religion or" -- this part is less remembered -- "antipathy toward people who aren't like them." That's a polite way of saying: clinging to bigotry. And promiscuous charges of bigotry are precisely how our current rulers and their vast media auxiliary react to an obstreperous citizenry that insists on incorrect thinking.  
/content/article/

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:08

Tuesday, August 24, 2010

### **EMBRYOS: DISCARDED OR DESTROYED?**

Embryonic stem cell research is in the news again this week [content/article/](#) Conservative Christians oppose such research because it involves destruction of embryos, which we consider to be (at least potential) human beings. However, we must be honest and realistic. There are more than 100,000 embryos frozen and being kept for family planning purposes. Many (most) of them will eventually die and be discarded. Are those who oppose the research being consistent?

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9038/index1.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9038/index1.html)

[http://www.religioustolerance.org/abo\\_inco.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/abo_inco.htm)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:19

Saturday, August 14, 2010

## **WHAT THE US CONSTITUTION REALLY SAYS ABOUT CITIZENSHIP**

14th Amendment- Section. 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside

HERE IS THE PHRASE BEING DEBATED TODAY: "subject to the jurisdiction thereof""Yes, the courts -- so far -- have generally deferred to an interpretation of the provision which holds that it means "The U.S. Constitution grants citizenship to any person born on U.S. soil." But saying the courts have so far interpreted the amendment that way is quite different from pretending that's what the amendment actually says. ...there is no automatic citizenship for a baby born to an illegal alien who willfully evaded the jurisdiction of American immigration laws."

<http://www.reviewjournal.com/> The constitution of the United States does not grant citizenship at birth to just anyone who happens to be born within American borders. It is the allegiance (complete jurisdiction) of the child's birth parents at the time of birth that determines the child's citizenship--not geographical location. If the United States does not have complete jurisdiction, for example, to compel a child's parents to Jury Duty - then the U.S. does not have the total, complete jurisdiction demanded by the Fourteenth Amendment to make their child a citizen of the United States by birth.Sen. Jacob M. Howard (MI) to tell us exactly what it means and its intended scope as he introduced it to the United States Senate in 1866:every person born within the limits of the United States, and subject to their jurisdiction, is by virtue of natural law and national law a citizen of the United States. This will not, of course, include persons born in the United States who are foreigners, aliens, who belong to the families of ambassadors or foreign ministers accredited to the Government of the United States, but will include every other class of persons.Sen. Lyman Trumbull, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, author of the Thirteenth Amendment, and the one who inserted the phrase:[T]he provision is, that 'all persons born in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens.' That means 'subject to the complete jurisdiction thereof.' What do we mean by 'complete jurisdiction thereof?' Not owing allegiance to anybody else. That is what it means. It is only those persons who come completely within our jurisdiction, who are subject to our laws, that we think of making citizens; and there can be no objection to the proposition that such persons should be citizens.[2]Sen. Howard concurs with Trumbull's construction:Mr. HOWARD: I concur entirely with the honorable Senator from Illinois [Trumbull], in holding that the word "jurisdiction," as here employed, ought to be construed so as to imply a full and complete jurisdiction on the part of the United States, whether exercised by Congress, by the executive, or by the judicial department; that is to say, the same jurisdiction in extent and quality as applies to every citizen of the United States now.[http://www.14thamendment.us/articles/anchor\\_babies\\_unconstitutionality.html](http://www.14thamendment.us/articles/anchor_babies_unconstitutionality.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:52

Friday, August 13. 2010

## **SACRILEGE**

Here is another excellent article about the Moslem Center at ground Zero. I agree with the reasoning and, as you will see, it applies to far more than this proposed building.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/12/AR2010081204996.html?wpisrc=nl\\_cuzhead](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/12/AR2010081204996.html?wpisrc=nl_cuzhead)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:43

## **HAVE THEY NO SHAME?**

Money is for ministry. That is what the Bible teaches. Make all you can (legally and ethically, of course) but use it to serve others. Here is an article about some people who are shameless with how they spend their money on themselves in "these tough economic times".

[http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2010/08/13/an\\_embarrassment\\_of\\_riches/](http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2010/08/13/an_embarrassment_of_riches/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:24

Tuesday, August 10, 2010

## **ARGUMENTS AGAINST "TRADITIONAL" MARRIAGE**

The author of this article in Slate magazine slashes and burns, with great animus, all the major arguments made to support "traditional" Marriage, while supporting "Gay Marriage". She makes some valid points, especially as she describes many negative things about "traditional" Marriage as it has been practiced through the centuries.

<http://www.slate.com/id/2263346/>

Christians must stop getting sucked into these arguments. We must advocate for Marriage only as God instituted it in His Law (That is not what most Evangelicals or the world are debating about) And then we must demonstrate in our own lives what such a Marriage is in practice (and most of us do not do that). See my article about Biblical Marriage [biblical-basics-for-marriage-](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:01

Friday, August 6, 2010

## **THE ARGUMENT FOR ACCEPTING "GAY MARRIAGE"**

Here is a fair summary of what happened in California this past week re Prop 8 which is about "Gay marriage". It is written by Dr. Al Mohler, President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I do not know why any of this is news to any Evangelical. These developments have been coming on for a long time. Hello!

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/augustweb-only/41.41.0.html?start=1>

The argument in support of legalizing Gay Marriage There are many positive legal, economic and social benefits derived from Marriage. To forbid gay couples from being married is to deny to them those benefits. Therefore, such denial is discriminatory in the eyes of the Court (one Federal Judge). A Federal Judge does have authority to decide this and what [he] decides can, constitutionally, trump the popular vote. The Pro Gay Marriage (anti Prop 8 ) argument has 6 major foundations: 1. Marriage is defined as a committed loving relationship between two adults. Period 2. Marriage is a fundamental right. (This entire Argument is framed in terms of Civil and Human Rights) 3. The Constitution guarantees equal rights to all. Specifically, the "Equal Protection Clause" of the 14th Amendment, adopted in 1868 (Conservatives forget the so-called "Founding Documents" of the 18th Century have been amended many times. All the Amendments are now part of those Documents. The latter are also notoriously vague and have been subject to many interpretations by the Courts. The word "equal" is a very disputed word.) 4. Homosexuality (sexual nature, the same as is heterosexuality) is not a choice any more than gender or race is a choice. To deny rights to any person or any class of people because of their race or gender (or sexual nature) is discrimination and illegal. Therefore, to deny a license to marry to homosexual couples because they are homosexual is discriminatory and illegal (Race and Gender are combined in the Argument. What applies to the former, applies to the latter) 5. "Due process" (14th Amendment) is a constitutional right for all citizens. Usually this refers to legal procedures. It has been broadened in recent years to prohibit any treatment or legal decisions that are deemed unfair by the Court. The 14th Amendment states- (this is the legal battlefield on which this conflict is being fought) All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. 6. Religion, Tradition (all the usual pro-marriage arguments) and the Will of the Majority are all irrelevant to the argument. Period! The California Court deemed them to be unreasonable and without merit. Period! To win, a case must prove with reason and evidence that it is within the best interest of the State. The California Judge was not convinced that Prop 8 was. In fact, he decided Prop 8 (and the traditional definition and case for Marriage) is exactly the opposite. I am convinced that there is no way to stop the movement to full legal acceptance of "Gay Marriage". It will happen. The only argument Evangelicals have is Biblical. Our case depends on Scripture. But Judges, Courts and multitudes of Americans do not accept this "external" authority. I believe many "Evangelicals" do not really accept it either.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:31

## **IN VITRO FERTILIZATION and "GAY MARRIAGE"**

The first test tube baby in the USA gave birth this week to her own baby, conceived and delivered the "normal" way. And in California there was the Federal Court Judge who ruled that any laws denying homosexual people the right to marry were unconstitutional. Here is an important argument made by the RC Church about in vitro fertilization that applies to both of these subjects.

It is an argument that is Biblical and Protestant Evangelicals must take it seriously.

"The Roman Catholic Church opposes all kinds of in vitro fertilisation because, as with contraception, it separates the procreative purpose of the marriage act from its unitive purpose: This particular doctrine [of "observing the natural law"], often expounded by the magisterium of the Church, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act. The reason is that the fundamental nature of the marriage act, while uniting husband and wife in the closest intimacy, also renders them capable of generating new life—and this as a result of laws written into the actual nature of man and of woman. And if each of these essential qualities, the unitive and the procreative, is preserved, the use of marriage fully retains its sense of true mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called. We believe that our contemporaries are particularly capable of seeing that this teaching is in harmony with human reason."

humanae-vitae

"Techniques involving only the married couple (homologous artificial insemination and fertilization) [...] dissociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that "entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children." [50] The Catholic Church advocates that infertility is a call from God to adopt children because the Gospel shows that physical sterility is not an absolute evil. Spouses who still suffer from infertility after exhausting legitimate medical procedures should unite themselves with the Lord's Cross, the source of all spiritual fecundity. They can give expression to their generosity by adopting abandoned children or performing demanding services for others. [50] Also, embryos are sometimes discarded in the in vitro fertilisation process. Catholics and many people of other faiths see embryos as human lives with the same rights as all others and therefore view the destruction of embryos as the loss of human life."

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:57

Thursday, May 6, 2010

## **TEACHER APPRECIATION**

Earlier in the year, I checked out a website about one of the latest attempts to use computers in public schools. It was said to be the beginning of a revolution in public education. HERE Yesterday's Boston Globe carries an article about an even more radical concept. Our State has given its approval for the first at-home, all computerized grade school. It could have 600 students K-8 but will have no building. HERE There was also another article a few months ago about a high school in this State that has no library- all materials there are now digitalized, no printed books. There have been a number of articles about this trend. What they all have in common is replacement of Teachers and interaction between Teachers, authors and other students. (And this in the age when "social networking" is all the rage- well, virtual social networking) My concern here is with the importance of Teachers. It is after all, National Teacher Appreciation Week. Booting up the PC and booting out the live teacher and class room is a terrible idea!

<http://www.teacher-appreciation.info/Teacher-Appreciation-Week-2010/>We were talking about this with some friends yesterday. The wife seemed to remember a lot of boring Teachers who put her to sleep. Yes, there are many of those pedestrian kind around. (I confess skipping a number of classes). But I remember fondly and gratefully the other kind. The ones who were knowledgeable, personable, skilled and did a great job of making the material interesting, even exciting and who helped to inculcate in me a life time appetite for learning and knowledge. I appreciate them! There was Mrs Gray in Third Grade and then my Latin and German and Ancient History Teachers in High School, as well as my Geometry Teacher. One of my HS English Teachers was always interesting. I enjoyed my History, English and Philosophy teachers in college. And in Graduate School, there was Dr James Strauss who taught Theology (and who held court in a local pizza restaurant) who was brilliant (and very entertaining). We all hung on every word he delivered, never missing a class. Beside delivering the lesson content well, all these Teachers had passion. These teachers all loved their subjects and they loved teaching their subjects and they all really wanted their students to share their knowledge and passion. A digital "class" absolutely can not be a satisfactory substitute for experiencing such teachers and their electric classrooms! There were tests, but the goal of teaching was not to pass National or State requirements. The goal was liberal arts education in both head and heart. There were no computers, but there was genuine education going on. Thank God for gifted Teachers! Nothing can replace them and they are needed more than ever.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:19

Saturday, May 1, 2010

## **STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION**

This is a big weekend for demonstrations provoked by Arizona's new law trying to deal with a major problem that it has with Hispanics coming into that State illegally. The problem is not with immigration or immigrants as such. George Will again offers a good analysis of what is happening and of the inflammatory and untrue rhetoric of many of the protesters. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/30/AR2010043001667.html?wpisrc=nl\\_cuzhead](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/30/AR2010043001667.html?wpisrc=nl_cuzhead)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:27

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

## **LEGAL, BUT IMMORAL**

Lots of hypocrisy in the anger vented against Goldman Sachs. What they did appears to me to be legal, but very immoral. Many many things in life are exactly that. We learn that early on along with the truism: "Life is not fair". The hypocrisy is that every day people of all kinds, rich and poor, have no problem doing immoral things if they can get away with it because they are not illegal.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:00

Monday, April 26. 2010

### **ALL RELIGIONS ARE NOT THE SAME**

"No one argues that different economic systems or political regimes are one and the same. Capitalism and socialism are so self-evidently at odds that their differences hardly bear mentioning. The same goes for democracy and monarchy. Yet scholars continue to claim that religious rivals such as Hinduism and Islam, Judaism and Christianity are, by some miracle of the imagination, both essentially the same and basically good."

[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2010/04/25/separate\\_truths/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2010/04/25/separate_truths/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:15

Sunday, March 28, 2010

## **ENDING BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP FOR CHILDREN OF ILLEGALS**

"Congress has heard testimony estimating that more than two-thirds of all births in Los Angeles public hospitals, and more than half of all births in that city, and nearly 10 percent of all births in the nation in recent years, have been to mothers who are here illegally. [There seems to be] no constitutional impediment to Congress ending the granting of birthright citizenship to those whose presence here is 'not only without the government's consent but in violation of its law.' To end the practice of 'birthright citizenship,' all that is required is to correct the misinterpretation of the 14th Amendment's first sentence: 'All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside.' From these words has flowed the practice of conferring citizenship on children born here to illegal immigrants."  
from George Will [HERE](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:14

Monday, March 22, 2010

## **ECONOMIC JUSTICE THE BIBLE WAY**

### **Biblical Values that Make Economic Justice Possible**

Loyalty to God, His Name and His Day (Sabbath) Society based on Marriage and Children and extended Family Personal Morality Hard Work and education that enables people to do that work Private Property and good stewardship of it, maintaining freedom from debt Profit making from work and development of private property Profits for meeting the needs of family and others, as well as for reinvestment in private property for more profit The Civil Government is not to be involved in any of the above at all. Its sole purpose is keeping Law and Order (Justice), maintaining honest courts and ensuring due process; passing and enforcing laws preserving these Biblical values and maintaining a militia to protect citizens from corruption, exploitation or violence. To these ends it may collect taxes and Christians are to pay them. As to the Poor. The Bible defines the Poor as people who are utterly destitute due to no fault of their own, but due to tragedy, war, sickness and death or due to the oppression of others who steal their land or prevent them from working it (often taking them into exile and captivity). The Poor of the Bible are not, for the most part, what today's Society considers to be the Poor, especially unwed mothers and illegitimate children in "single parent families". The first recourse of the Poor in the Bible is to God and to hard work to get back on their feet. Those unable to do so, especially widows and orphans, are to be cared for by their extended family or their church. The local community is also to help those truly Poor through various charitable programs (such as Gleaning) and Tithing, a third of which was to be collected for distribution to the otherwise destitute. A key to all such charitable work was that it was personal, given by people who have com-*passion*. The Civil Government had nothing to do with the care of the Poor. See more on my website [HERE](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:50

Saturday, March 20, 2010

## **JIM WALLIS AND GLENN BECK, ET AL**

Lot of discussion about Social Justice in the current CT magazine. In this article, Glenn Beck is over the top in his criticism of Jim Wallis, but evangelicals like Al Mohler, are not hearing what Mr Wallis is saying. For him Social Justice includes taking on systemic evil. Addressing such evil, he believes, requires remedial Government involvement and action and thus he functions as a liberal Democrat and tends to support a welfare state. Mr Beck has got a point when he criticizes Wallis for this, but Evangelicals generally simply do not "get" this issue of systemic social, political and economic evil and have nothing much to say about such matters (and they should, the Bible does) They may profess a concern about promoting Social Justice, but their understanding of what that involves is very different than Mr Wallis and what I advocate on my website.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/marchweb-only/21-51.0.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:10

## **IT IS OBAMACARE, NOT HEALTH CARE!!**

Many people are in favor of a slogan: "Health Care Reform" We all believe such reform is necessary. The President and Democrats are say they are offering it. But they are not! They are offering a version of Reform and many of us absolutely do not want that version. There are others. It is far more accurate to call what is being offered Obamacare. His version is wrong on so many levels. Here are just a few resources to check-

<http://www.aei.org/article/101796>

<http://blog.heritage.org/2010/03/17/the-senate-health-bill->

<http://www.nationalreview.com/>

<http://www.heritage.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:06

## **EDUCATION REFORM?**

From an excellent column by George Will about proposed Education Reform-

"Plainly put, the best predictor of a school's performance is family performance -- qualities of the families from which the students come. Subsequent research suggests that about 90 percent of the differences among the proficiency of schools can be explained by five factors: days absent from school, hours spent watching television, pages read for homework, the quantity and quality of reading matter in the home -- and the presence of two parents in the home."

"Government can do next to nothing about family structure, which is why it is pointless for Duncan to suggest that "access" is why "the door to college still does not swing open evenly for everyone." It will not so swing as long as 71.6 percent of African American children and 51.3 percent of Latino children are born to unmarried women. The political class flinches from talking about those numbers, preferring to take refuge behind talk about "rights." But those numbers go far to explain numbers that Duncan does cite: White high school graduates are twice as likely as black or Latino graduates to have taken AP calculus classes. The political system cannot candidly discuss, let alone cope with, the reasons why, for example, there are few if any high-performing inner-city school systems."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:43

Friday, February 26. 2010

## **GLOBAL WARMING RELIGION**

"Last week, Todd Stern, America's special envoy for climate change -- yes, there is one; and people wonder where to begin cutting government -- warned that those interested in 'undermining action on climate change' will seize on 'Whatever tidbit they can find.' Tidbits like specious science, and the absence of warming?" "It is tempting to say, only half in jest, that Stern's portfolio violates the First Amendment, which forbids government from undertaking the establishment of religion. A religion is what the faith in catastrophic man-made global warming has become. It is now a tissue of assertions impervious to evidence, assertions that everything, including a historic blizzard, supposedly confirms and nothing, not even the absence of warming, can falsify."

[article/2010/02/19/](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:26

## **HIJACKING PUBLIC EDUCATION**

"Diane Ravitch, an education historian, now renounces many of the market-oriented policies she promoted as a former federal education official with close ties to Democrats and Republicans. "In choosing his education agenda, President Obama sided with the economists and the corporate-style reformers," Ravitch writes in her book "The Death and Life of the Great American School System," circulating in advance of its general release Tuesday. She stoutly defends teachers unions, questions the value of standardized test data and calls the president's affinity for independently operated charter schools 'puzzling.' "

[READ MORE- story/2010/02/26/](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:14

## **IT'S IN THE GENES**

One of the slogans repeated constantly that annoys me because it is not true is "Just do it" or some other version of the persistent myth, "You can do anything you want in life". One of the reasons this is not true is biological. Family, culture and opportunity all are important. So is desire and the will. And then there is the matter of genes (not the kind you put on, but the ones you have within).

[article/2010/02/22/](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:57

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

## **PUTTING THE "GAY ISSUE" IN ITS MUCH WIDER CONTEXT**

There are many who claim The Episcopal Church has abandoned the orthodox Faith on the basis of its increasingly open and approving stance on homosexuality, "gay Marriage" and the ordination of overt homosexuals to be Priests and Bishops. To outsiders, TEC has a serious preoccupation with sex and is being defined over this issue. Many in and out of the Church can not see why this one issue is so divisive and simply want to push beyond it and get on with the work of the Church. The same is true about this matter in the other mainline Denominations. Ahh, but the problem is not over this one issue. It is the issue du jour, but not the only issue. There is an entire cluster of issues connected with Marriage and Reproduction. They must all be addressed. A very interesting article by Mary Eberstadt in the current First Things magazine, entitled "Christianity Lite", is helpful.

<http://www.firstthings.com/article/2010/01/christianity-lite>

Ms Eberstadt correctly positions what is happening in it historical and theological context. The crisis is not only about Homosexuality. She asks the question: Does the Church have a Moral Theology? In particular, is there such a thing as a Moral Code endorsed by the catholic Church through the ages? Yes, she answers, and the topic of Homosexuality is only one part of it and only the latest effort to overthrow the entire Code. The over-riding subject is the Church's Teaching about Marriage. The process of Divorce and the laws regulating it in the US have gone through many changes from Colonial times. "Prior to the 1970s, divorcing spouses had to allege that the other spouse was guilty of a crime or sin like abandonment or adultery; when spouses simply could not get along, lawyers were forced to manufacture "uncontested" divorces. The no-fault divorce revolution began in 1969 in California; South Dakota was the last state to include no-fault divorce in 1985." -WikipediaThe controversial topics in the Church were about remarriage and the ordination of divorced people. Since the early 1970s, these issues have not been a problem in TEC. Many divorced people are remarried in the Church and many divorced and remarried people have been ordained. (This is a problematic issue with Provinces in the Global South) Other issues followed and the pattern had been repeated with each. At first there is strong resistance, then a few exceptions are made and accepted. Then the practice as a whole is acceptable on a voluntary basis along with the traditional position. The innovation becomes the norm and the traditional view is considered suspect. Finally, the innovation officially replaces the old view and is fully accepted as normal. The original position is now out! The other issues after Divorce and then Remarriage include Birth Control (contraception), Abortion and Euthanasia. Of course, the Bible clearly advocates Chastity and condemns intercourse outside of Marriage (fornication). The Church used to include these values in its Moral Code. It no longer does. Notice that the common theme in all of these developments is the separation of Sex from procreation and the separation of both sex and procreation both from Marriage. What God had intended to be together has long been put asunder. It is after all of these developments that we come to Homosexuality and "Gay Marriage". The latter is an extension of the former. All are parts of one whole and the whole should be addressed, not just the parts. Are those who are taking a strong stand against Homosexual Practice and "Gay Marriage" also taking a stand against Divorce Remarriage, Birth Control (contraception), Abortion and Euthanasia as well as preaching Abstinence and condemning intercourse outside of Marriage (fornication) such as is seen in almost every movie and TV show and commonly engaged in by young adults everywhere? Can anyone imagine TEC splitting up or parishes and Diocese leaving over this cluster of moral issues and the reassertion of Biblical Teaching about Marriage and Procreation? Those who are rightfully disturbed about the Homosexual Issues often end their arguments with the Bible card. The root cause of problems in TEC, they rightfully insist, is authority- the rejection of Biblical Authority. If these critics are to be consistent, they will have to become advocates of a return to all the moral issues involved and taught by the Bible, not just the issue du jour.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:14

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

## **POLITICS and the CLASSIFICATION OF MENTAL DISORDERS**

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is undergoing its sixth revision. It is considered to be the bible that Psychiatrists and Mental Health Professionals use in classifying a problem they think a patient may have. When such Professionals could not find any physical reason for my frequent seizures (they used a process of elimination of possible medical and biological causes and found none) they went to the DSM and came up with "Conversion Disorder" formerly known as "Hysteria" (psychological conflict converted into a bodily disturbance). I have always disputed that diagnosis and believe my seizures are triggered by smelling certain chemicals. These Professionals rejected my theory.

I can be feeling great, contented and happy and if someone walks or sits by me reeking of cologne, I begin to have another episode. A vehicle driving by me while I am walking on the side walk, spewing bad exhaust fumes, will bring on an episode. I can walk into a room freshly painted and instantly be overcome and knocked off my feet into a seizure. My episodes began 15 years ago, only after I started working in a building that had recently been the site of a major chlorine chemical fire. The Psychologists and Psychiatrists who have examined my case refuse to even consider the possibility of chemical sensitivity. They chose to go to the DSM and used it as an arbitrary authority for (quick and easy) diagnosis and treatment. This experience made me suspicious of the DSM and, more specifically, how it is used. The DSM once classified Homosexuality as a Mental Disorder. That classification has been eliminated in later editions. This change has had huge consequences in our Country and for many individuals who have contended and staked their entire lives upon the belief that Homosexuality is genetic or natural. It is not a choice they say, nor a mental illness. The DSM now supports that view. Why was the change made? Because of political and social pressure, not Science. Classifying people with some psychosis or mental disorder requiring special treatment has been a common, well-documented tool in the hands of Governments, as well as in the hands of families, who want to hospitalize or chemically restrain thousands of people through the years (consider what was done in Stalin-era Russia and in Nazi Germany). The DSM or its equivalent can be an instrument justifying cruel treatment and oppression for political purposes. Thus we have more reasons to beware of revisions of the DSM and of how it is used. "There is scientific and political controversy regarding the continued inclusion of sex-related diagnoses such as the paraphilias (sexual fetishes) and hypoactive sexual desire disorder (low sex drive). Critics of these and other controversial diagnoses often cite the DSM's previous inclusion of homosexuality, as well as the APA's eventual decision to remove it, as a precedent for current disputes. ... Any reevaluation of controversial disorders must be viewed as a political as well as scientific decision. Indeed, even Robert Spitzer, a leading proponent of scientific impartiality in the DSM, conceded that a significant reason that certain diagnoses are not removed from the DSM is because "it would be a public relations disaster for psychiatry".

Diagnostic\_and\_Statistical\_Manual\_of\_Mental\_Disorders This makes the current proposed revisions of the DSM very interesting and note that they especially effect children. We are increasingly labeling our children as having some kind of mental health problem and "treating" (or controlling) them with medications. This could easily become a form of child abuse a convenient and counterproductive way to avoid meeting their real needs.  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:36

## **TERRIFIC TIM TEBOW**

Here is an excellent column, written by a "Pro-Choice" woman, about Tim Tebow and his Pro-Life Tebow "ad" during the Super Bowl- very positive of the man and very negative of the women's groups who opposed his spot  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/01/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:58

Saturday, February 6, 2010

## **SQUEEZING THE SAVERS**

Record-low interest rates that have been a boon for borrowers are hurting savers, especially seniors who depend on bank account interest to supplement their incomes. It is the downside of a strategy designed to turn around the lagging economy by making it cheaper to borrow money. Some savers complain they are being penalized for doing precisely what the federal government has long advised Americans to do: save. They did not purchase homes beyond their means, sign up for interest-only adjustable mortgages, or pile extravagant purchases on credit cards. "It takes money out of the pockets of savers and gives it to the borrowers who are up to their eyeballs in debt," said Greg McBride, a senior analyst at Bankrate.com. "You've got Aunt Mildred putting money in [savings] and it goes to a guy with a new house and two new cars." My wife's name is Mildred and, yes, we are among those who feel the squeeze described <http://www.boston.com/business/personalfinance/articles/2010/02/06/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:26

## **ARE THE ELDERLY STEALING FROM THE YOUNG?**

People are most unhappy in middle age and report being happier as they get older. This could be because as people age they pay less attention to negative emotional stimuli, according to a study by the psychologists Mara Mather, Turhan Canli and others. Gender roles begin to merge. Many women get more assertive while many men get more emotionally attuned. Personalities often become more vivid as people become more of what they already are. Norma Haan of the University of California, Berkeley, and others conducted a 50-year follow-up of people who had been studied while young and concluded that the subjects had become more outgoing, self-confident and warm with age. The research paints a comforting picture. And the nicest part is that virtue is rewarded. One of the keys to healthy aging is what George Vaillant of Harvard calls "generativity" — providing for future generations. The odd thing is that when you turn to political life, we are living in an age of reverse-generativity. Far from serving the young, the old are now taking from them. Our personal experience with growing old does not conform to the Research mentioned by Mr Brooks nor do I agree with his conclusions. Oddly, when Christians discuss "family values" they do not usually mention that the model for "family" in the Bible is extended and multi-generational with the younger having responsibility for the older members.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/02/opinion/02brooks.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:22

## **SHOULD WE EUTHANIZE THE ELDERLY TO SAVE MONEY?**

The depressing minutiae of the moment pale next to two large possibilities anticipated by Robert Fogel, a Nobel Prize-winning economist. They concern the rise of American health spending and the even more dramatic rise of China's economy. Writing last September for the online journal the American, published by the American Enterprise Institute, Fogel warned that spending on health care is going to surge, for two reasons: By living longer, Americans will become susceptible to more health problems. By becoming richer they will be able to purchase more biotechnologies that make health interventions more effective. "The financial per capita [health care] burden at age 85 and older," Fogel wrote, "is nearly six times as high as the burden at ages 50-54" and "the financial burden of health care for ages 85 and older is over 75 percent higher per capita than at ages 75-79." While China increasingly invests in its future, America increasingly invests in its past: the elderly. China's ascent to global economic hegemony could be slowed or derailed ... America's destiny is demographic, and therefore is inexorable and predictable, ... What is Mr Will suggesting? Euthanasia? <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:15

Saturday, January 2, 2010

## **GREAT BOOKS Curriculum**

A university or college Great Books Program is a program inspired by the Great Books movement begun in the United States in the 1920s. Great Books started out as a list of 100 essential primary source texts considered to constitute the Western canon. The aim of such programs is a return to the Western Liberal Arts tradition in education, as a corrective to the extreme disciplinary specialisation common within the academy. The essential component of such programs is a high degree of engagement with whole primary texts, called the Great Books. The curricula of Great Books programs often follow a canon of texts considered more or less essential to a student's education, such as Plato's Republic, or Dante's Divine Comedy. Such programs often focus exclusively on Western culture. Their employment of primary texts dictates an interdisciplinary approach, as most of the Great Books do not fall neatly under the prerogative of a single contemporary academic discipline. Great Books programs often include designated discussion groups as well as lectures, and have small class sizes. In general students in such programs receive an abnormally high degree of attention from their professors, as part of the overall aim of fostering a community of learning. Great Books started out as a list of 100 essential primary source texts considered to constitute the Western canon. For more information see [Great\\_Books](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:59

## **"OLD DEAD WHITE MEN" and OTHERS**

We should all greatly value the Languages and Literature, the History and the Intellectual and Cultural Heritage of Western Europe and Great Britain and want to see them preserved and taught and given priority in schools throughout America:

Ancient Greek, Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation Philosophers, Theologians, Artists and assorted "Leaders" and people of influence

European mathematicians, philosophers, scientists, political figures

European and American Literary authors (the traditional Western canon)

European "Classical" music composers and performers

The Founding Fathers of the United States

I definitely do not agree with, or endorse, all that all these (mostly old dead white) men taught or stood for. But there is a very real and fundamental connection between these Thinkers, Writers and Artists and Christian Culture and Christian Civilization. This Heritage and Tradition provides the major roots from which America comes. Much of the greatness and many of our highest achievements may be attributed to them and their influence. We neglect or disparage them and their influence to our peril as a Nation.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:56

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

## **WHY NOT SUPPORT "GAY MARRIAGE?"**

Yesterday, the voters of Maine overturned the year old Law of that State which declared same-sex unions to be valid Marriage. Both sides made the same claim. Those who opposed the Law claimed victory for marriage and family. Those who were in favor of the Law claimed the repeal was a defeat for marriage and family. How can this be? Definitions! Definitions! Those who "won" yesterday claimed that the people had spoken. Where States where "Gay Marriage is legal it was made so by Judges or Politicians, but not by the vote of the people. Critics rightly ask what would have happened to Civil Rights for Women and Blacks if it those issues had been decided by popular vote (the people) instead of by Judges and Politicians. Is the majority always right? Remember the opposition against inter-racial Marriage? and against integration of public schools? Most of the folks against the repeal insist their Cause is also a matter of Civil Rights and that to vote against the Law was blatant discrimination. They insist there is no valid or persuasive reason to deny homosexuals their right to Marry the same as heterosexuals. Most of us know gay couples who do have committed, loving relationships. They make great couples who live productive lives. We all know heterosexual couples who have very dysfunctional, terrible relationships. How can we say the latter is better or more moral than the former? I agree that many who oppose "Gay Marriage" do not have a valid argument beyond the "yuck factor" and Tradition. The strongest argument does have to do with children. It seems obvious that God designed male and females for procreation and that in itself is reason enough to object to same sex unions. However, there are many gay couples who do have children (one way or another) and, therefore, families and many heterosexual couples do not have children (for one reason or another). So that argument is not so strong. Evangelical young people severely criticize their churches, which oppose homosexuality and Gay Marriage, as being unchristian, unloving, judgmental and legalistic in this matter. Those are serious charges. Are they valid? I would agree many individual Christians are all of these negative things and deserve the criticism. The main reason why we can not accept "Gay Marriage" is because of the Bible Teaching about what "Marriage" is all about and hopefully Churches are promoting that Teaching and doing so in a positive way. "Marriage" is not simply the loving committed relationship of any two consenting adults. There is the issue of "Definition" again. Of course, this argument does not carry weight with non Christians. But Christians say they believe the Bible is their primary authority for faith and practice. This issue of gay Marriage is a test as to whether they (including the younger ones) really mean it. To understand what the Biblical teaching about "Marriage" is please read my Essay posted on my website [HERE](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:53

Friday, October 30, 2009

### **KILLING PEOPLE WITH DOWNS ON THE INCREASE**

Here is an interesting website, especially for women. Note the lead story about the increase in the killing of babies discovered to have Down's Syndrome. I have known, worked with and enjoyed the company of many persons who have Down's and they are all persons of value like every other person.

[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2009/10/in\\_the\\_loop\\_1.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/women/2009/10/in_the_loop_1.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:34

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

## **THE SORRY STATE OF SOME SCHOOLS IN SPRINGFIELD**

The State of Massachusetts provides \$270 million a year in funding to Springfield public schools, yet they have the second lowest scores on State tests. (The neighboring City of Holyoke has the lowest). Last year, 46% of students did not graduate from High School. The latest proposal is a bill to allow for more Charter Schools, but that is opposed by Administrators and the teachers' Union. Another proposal before the Legislature is for the State itself to take over and run the lowest performing schools itself.

All agree the main problems include an attitude of hopelessness in the young people. There are no jobs, why stay in school? (That logic is what is hopeless and self-fulfilling. There are no jobs for those who drop out of school!) There are deeper reasons. The majority of the students in trouble ("at risk") come from single parent "families" and live below the poverty level and move often between schools. Most of the 25,360 students are Minorities (55% Hispanic and 23% Black 16% White) and English is not the first language for 23%. Education itself is not a high value in many homes and there is minimal parental support and involvement for many students and there are many students with "special needs" (23%). Of course, some schools and many families are exceptions to all of this. Many students thrive and do well. A recent poll revealed that most students and staff give the system of 46 schools a B grade overall, while agreeing that discipline in the classrooms was the biggest problem.

Thank God for the Christian Teachers and Staff serving the Lord in public schools and for all who are committed to serving these children (including hundreds of volunteers). Pray for them! But there will be no major changes in the schools until and unless the problem of poverty itself and the sub-culture of poverty with its values and attitudes is changed.

I struggle with writing that, as I know there are some disadvantaged children who have overcome many obstacles to do well in school. Poverty and dysfunctional family life did not prevent them from high achievement- maybe it even made them more determined to do better. Nevertheless, the problems remain for many and together those problems can be overwhelming and are real barriers to an education and a full-filled life for thousands of young people and remain to be addressed. How can the church help them?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:59

## **THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE CITY**

There are dozens of organizations in our City and this area with many sincere and committed workers and millions of dollars from both private and government sources working with and for the homeless and unemployed (the Poor", including many children) who live here. There are hundreds of organizations with a multitude of workers with all kinds of public and private resources which provide services of many kinds to multitudes, as well as employment for thousands. The City itself provides all kinds of services to make this a good and increasingly better place to live. Of course, the grade schools and colleges here make vital contributions. All of this is admirable and a "good thing". Where do the local churches fit in? Our buildings are here, even if most of us do not live near them. Most of us are middle class and white and live comfortable lives in the surrounding suburbs. We drive into the City where our church buildings are and use the City for work, entertainment and worship and then drive back to the suburbs. Does Jeremiah 29:4-7 have a message for us? See the answer on my website [here](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:36

Wednesday, October 7, 2009

## **BASICS ABOUT POVERTY AND THE POOR**

In the media and according to self-appointed advocates of the poor, Poverty is living below an arbitrary level of income set by the Government. In the Bible, Poverty is defined as destitution. The Book tells us there are more than 20 causes of Poverty altogether. The Book of Proverbs says that personal, irresponsible behavior (mostly laziness) is a cause of poverty. This is the cause that conservative Evangelical Christians emphasize, almost exclusively (if you are poor you must be lazy). But people in America today are correctly called "poor" if they had property and means, but have lost their livelihood to no fault of their own or are no longer able to work and maintain their property. The Poor today are those who due too no fault of their own, can't pay their bills because of plant closings, fire, accident, death in the family, debilitating illness, enormous medical bills, etc. and, of course, natural disasters like tornadoes. Evangelicals typically over look what the Bible teaches is the number one reason for destitution: oppression, rooted in idolatry; yes, oppression rooted in idolatry.

READ THE ENTIRE ESSAY AT <http://www.reformedliving.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 21:46

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

## **THE BIBLE AND HEALTH CARE**

Developing a Biblical Basis for Health Care is overwhelming! There are more than a 1000 pages in the Government's proposed Health Care Plan and details are being changed in Committee daily. Much of the content is very complicated and technical and we must end up trusting "the experts" to work it all out (never a comforting idea). There are some basic issues and concerns that are being debated and about which equally sincere and knowledgeable people, often using the same statistics, strongly disagree. These issues are argued on the basis of conflicting ideologies or philosophies about Government, from very Conservative to very Liberal. As a Christian, I am concerned with what God says about all of this. Specifically, what principles are taught in the Bible that should govern our Country's Health Care Policy? If Christ and His Word are sovereign over all, He must have a word for us on all of this. What is it? Find the answer in my extended study now posted at <http://www.reformedliving.org/index.php>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:27

Saturday, September 12, 2009

## **HELPFUL ARTICLE ABOUT HEALTH CARE REFORM**

"Many promoters of health-care reform believe that people have an intrinsic ethical right to health care—to equal access to doctors, medicines and hospitals. While all of us empathize with those who are sick, how can we say that all people have more of an intrinsic right to health care than they have to food or shelter?"Health care is a service that we all need, but just like food and shelter it is best provided through voluntary and mutually beneficial market exchanges. A careful reading of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution will not reveal any intrinsic right to health care, food or shelter. That's because there isn't any. This "right" has never existed in America"Health-care reform is very important. Whatever reforms are enacted it is essential that they be financially responsible, and that we have the freedom to choose doctors and the health-care services that best suit our own unique set of lifestyle choices. We are all responsible for our own lives and our own health. We should take that responsibility very seriously and use our freedom to make wise lifestyle choices that will protect our health. Doing so will enrich our lives and will help create a vibrant and sustainable American society."

These are excerpts from an article in Wall Street Journal. The author is John Mackey who is the co-founder and CEO of Whole Earth Foods Market Inc. He is receiving very harsh criticism, even boycotts, for his views. I recommend his entire article. Lots of common sense about Health Care Reform

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204251404574342170072865070.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:25

Wednesday, August 26, 2009

## **AGE DISCRIMINATION IS WRONG!**

Why, oh why, are the Elderly as a group being profiled and discriminated against? The media continues the drumbeat marshalling legal action against older drivers only because they are, well, older. In this morning's paper, there was a brief article buried on page A7 about a fatal accident in which a 52 year old driver was killed by another car which had crossed the center line into her lane. The driver that killed the innocent woman was 22 and not seriously injured. For several days a lead story in our State news media outlets was the killing of a Police Officer doing traffic duty by a 76 year old who was cited for speeding and not stopping at a stop sign. The latter story was the latest fuel for the "blame the older driver" movement. The first story, and many others like it every week, went unnoticed. Why? The Boston Herald newspaper recently reported that it had reviewed RMV data for 2008 and found that teens and young adults up to age 25 caused 53,762 crashes. Drivers 70 and up caused 11,663 accidents during the same period. Every time I go out driving, I see dozens of other drivers of every age violating the rules of the road, laws of the State and driving recklessly and irresponsibly. In almost all cases, physical limitations due to age have absolutely nothing to do with such behavior. It is simple, old-fashioned foolishness, selfishness, "me first-ism" and the "H... with everyone else-ism" stupidity. All the laws in the world about "safe-driving" can not change such attitudes. Certainly blaming a group of drivers as a group because of their age alone and targeting their licenses is not going to change anything. All individuals must be held responsible and accountable as individuals for their behavior. If a 76 year old speeds and runs a stop sign and causes a fatality, throw the book at him for that, not for his age. If a 22 year old is driving recklessly and causes a fatality, throw the book at her for that, not for her age. Most accidents are caused by drivers becoming distracted, especially by "rubber necking" or talking on a phone while operating the car. And then there are those who operated dangerously because they are driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Throw the book at those drivers, too, whether they are young or old. Ageism, sexism, racism are all wrong. Judging and discriminating against anyone because of membership in any ethnic, economic or social class is always wrong. Individual responsibility is always right. See the related post (below)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:08

## **"THE GREAT ESCAPE"**

According to Thomas Sowell, "The great escape of our times is escape from personal responsibility for the consequences of one's own behavior." He goes on in this column to decry the way our Society rationalizes all kinds of unacceptable behavior as being caused by, hmmm, Society and that therefore, it is Society's responsibility to prevent it. (Here in Springfield we have a large school drop out rate preceded by a large absentee rate. A group of parents recently sued the City and the Board of Education for allowing this to happen and for not preventing it. Thankfully, the Court threw out the case.)  
<http://jewishworldreview.com/cols/sowell082509.php3>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:04

Friday, August 21, 2009

### **SATAN WINS A BIG ONE IN THE "EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH"**

One of the major ways that Satan works is through promoting deception about moral issues. A major moral deception is the approval of so-called "Gay Marriage". Another that follows from that is the approval of Gay Clergy. Both deceptions were on display this week at the National Convention of the "Evangelical (!) Lutheran Church of America". They voted to ratify both deceptions. The concept of respecting the consciences and rights of fellow Christians who disagree with us on these subjects again trumped the authority of the Bible and 2000 years of Tradition. Satan won a big one.

[http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2009/08/elca\\_approves\\_s.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2009/08/elca_approves_s.html)

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/augustweb-only/133.41.0.html?start=2>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:06

Tuesday, August 18. 2009

### **NOT A MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS!**

I have been occupied the last 3 weeks with a study of Spiritual Warfare. Satan is the Deceiver and deceiving people about moral values is one of his major schemes. This morning's Washington Post carries an article stating that Mr Obama is renewing his effort to have the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) repealed. My point here is that the arguments presented are all about ""Human Rights" and that DOMA is discriminatory against homosexuals. I have written repeatedly that "Human Rights" are determined only by God and revealed in the Bible. There are many- Homosexual Marriage is not one of them. According to God and the Bible, gay couples do not have the "right" to marry. "Gay Marriage" is impossible by definiton. Marriage as insitituted by God is heterosexual- for the union of males with females. "Gay Marriage" is an oxymoron- a contradiction like "Jumbo Shrimp". (At best, arguments can be made for Gay "Civil Unions" created by Courts or Legislatures.)

The major advocacy group for homosexual "Marriage" calls itself the Human Rights Campaign. That approach is the one that is persuading Evangelicals to support the concept. Multitudes are being convinced that the debate is all about human rights. As I have said often- that is not so!! Do not be deceived. People who do not believe in God or in His Word will not be persuaded by what I have written, but Evangelicals should be <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/17/AR2009081702722.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:33

Tuesday, July 28. 2009

## **WHY BEING PRO-LIFE MUST REMAIN THE TOP MORAL PRIORITY**

"Ever since C. Everett Koop and Francis Schaeffer pricked our consciences, abortion has been on the front burner for socially minded evangelicals. Thirty-five years since Roe v. Wade, it's time to ask whether it should remain the sine qua non of Christian social engagement. Claiming to represent the new center, an increasingly self-confident wing of sincere evangelicals thinks not. "The evangelical social agenda is now much broader and deeper," asserts Jim Wallis in his new book, *The Great Awakening*, "engaging issues such as poverty and economic justice, global warming, HIV/aids, sex trafficking, genocide in Darfur, and the ethics of the war in Iraq." [Many Evangelicals] seem to be saying that fighting legalized abortion—the deliberate, state-sanctioned taking of 50 million unborn human lives from their mothers' wombs since 1973 (and the accompanying national guilt)—should simply be one item among many on an ever-expanding evangelical to-do list."

Read the entire Article here. It actually is encouraging  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/may/28.66.html>

Should abortion be the top moral priority of our time? It should not. Being pro-life should be. The first God-given universal Human Right is the Right to live. Life is the highest priority. If we accept the definition that human life begins at the moment of conception, then eliminating voluntary abortion (the intentional taking of that human life) should remain a top priority among moral issues in our Society. Conception is the fertilization of an egg by a sperm. This is the beginning of an embryo, a human being. Some birth control methods prevent sperm from reaching the egg and thus fertilization. The fertilized egg, called a zygote, undergoes rapid cell division and growth. This cell mass, now called the blastocyst, is implanted into the inner wall of the mother's uterus, where it will remain for the duration of prenatal development. The embryo is called a fetus after eight weeks. Some birth control methods prevent the blastocyst from being implanted in the uterus. Since there is normally a continuum from conception to birth, it can be said that the zygote, blastocyst, fetus and the embryo are a human being at different developmental stages. Every human child and adult began his or her life at conception. The adult is a zygote fully developed. To destroy a zygote (or a blastocyst, fetus and the embryo) is to destroy a specific human being. Every human being becomes a Person. A Person is a composite of all those attributes or faculties that Human Beings possess because they are created and conceived to be the Image of God. That is the essential argument against Abortion on demand. To me, the most compelling argument for insisting that an embryo is a human being is that being a "person" involves having a body. This is what makes the resurrection of the physical body so essential and important. Persons can not exist as disembodied spirits. A Person is not a dualism: body and soul; but rather a person is a unity: one. Body is integral to being a Person. Inasmuch as the body begins with conception, therefore, so does personhood. Soul or *Nepesh* [naw fahsh] is used 700 times in the Bible. It never means "soul" as that word is commonly understood today. The root meaning of *Nepesh* is "breath". It is used in that basic sense. (Genesis 1:30, 2:7, 7:21) *Nepesh* comes to mean anything with breath. This includes all beings, animals- "living creatures" (Genesis 1:20,21,24 also 2:19, 7:21, 9:9-16) *Nepesh* comes to mean a human being, i.e.- Man is a soul. (Genesis 12:5,13;14:21; 17:14) Finally, *Nepesh* also can mean the emotional center of human beings (cf English "heart") Note: Hebrew for "heart" is *LEB* and that normally means the intellectual and volitional center---these are not technical, precise terms] Psalm 6:3 My soul is in anguish. Psalm 107:9 God satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry soul with good things. Psalm 119:20 My soul is consumed with longing... Psalm 35:9 my soul will rejoice in the LORD. Deuteronomy 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart [LAY VAHV= MIND] and with all your soul. Thus, conception could be said to be the beginning of a "soul" and abortion the death of a soul. And that happens about 1 million times each year in America! All of these issues are wrapped up in the one subject of Abortion and are reasons why it must remain a top priority, and not just one of many social concerns. The meaning and value of being "human", a "person", is extremely important and is under serious assault in many quarters today and the practice of abortion is a part of that. Many other subjects are related to Abortion, including Sexuality, Gender Roles (a "woman's rights") and Marriage and Family. All these follow immediately after Abortion on that list, but being Pro-Life is at the very top of the list for good reason. It must not be dismissed as a Fundamentalist obsession. The solution to such problems such as World Poverty and Aids actually requires that we address first the issues involved with Abortion. The latter is not an add-on or only one of many priorities. When the world is truly Pro-Life, Pro-Human first, followed by Pro-Marriage and Family, then it will have the platform from which to address seriously all the other Social and Economic and Political Issues.

The above is a revision of a Post on this Blog from last Summer. It needed to be said again!

Thursday, July 23, 2009

## **TIRED OF OBAMA**

OK, I must confess- I am absolutely sick and very tired of Barak Obama and his Policies and his arrogant and reckless push to make sweeping change in our Country, just because he says we must. All our lives, my wife and I and our children, with God's help, have worked for what we have (which is not much, but we are content). We believe that is the way to achieve anything. If you want a good job or career, you do what it takes to be qualified. That means you go to school and excel. Not going was not an option. We are talking family values here! If you want to buy a car or a house, you work for it. If we could not afford something, we went without until we could afford it. Simple! We knew we had to have insurance for the car as well as life insurance and then renters and finally home owners insurance, so we worked to buy them. The same applied to medical insurance. Absolutely none of these things were ever considered our "Right" to have. They are all privileges, including the license to drive the car we paid for. We never have believed that the world or our government owed us any of these things. We believe strongly in private property and private enterprise. These are Biblical Principles we grew up with and have lived by all our lives. That means I have no patience or sympathy with those who do not work or earn them and instead expect or want the government to provide any of these things. I believe they are wrong in this and I do not want our hard earned money to be involuntarily taken from us to be distributed by the Government to provide the things we have worked for on our own to such people. This is very simple. The Bible says, if you don't work you don't eat. Again, very simple. As Christians we are not materialists nor are we addicted to buying things we do not truly need. We are not consumed with being consumers. Almost everything we see advertised we have no need for or interest in purchasing. We pay off our debts and seek to owe no money. We do not believe in handouts or bailouts. We balance our personal budget and live within our means. I expect our Government to do the same. I find it incredible and unconscionable that so many citizens have no problem with our Government grandiosely spending huge sums it does not have and then having the gall to take money from our pockets to pay the bill for something we did not want to spend it on in the first place. This is extremely poor and foolish money management, as well as theft on a grand scale. It is indenturing our children's children and will produce citizens who are dependent on the Government from cradle to grave. I am outraged that multitudes of our fellow citizens, including millions of Christians who should know better, applaud this. I don't!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:03

Wednesday, July 22, 2009

## **DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ELDER DRIVERS**

The story making the headlines in this area's papers today is the confrontation between a man and the police at his home. He had been out of the country and arrived home to find himself locked out. A neighbor reported seeing two men breaking and entering his house. Police came and found the man and his driver in the house and they were questioned. The police did not know the man was the owner until this point. He and his friend had indeed broken in, but it was his house and he objected to the treatment he thought he was getting from the police. To me it sounds like they were just doing their job. But to him, it was racial profiling at work, inasmuch as he is a Black man. He has charged the police with racism. Because the man is famous around the world, the incident and his charges are headline news. The police have since dropped charges made because of his behavior toward the Officers and they have apologized, but he is persisting in his complaint against them, irrate over what he perceived as racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is a bad thing. I agree that discrimination against an entire group of people across the board because of their "Race" or skin color is wrong. To discriminate against a single person simply because of his or her membership in that group is wrong. But discrimination between individuals is not wrong. It is absolutely necessary and we all need to practice it every day everywhere. Certainly the police must do that as part of their job. It is the reasons for the discrimination that are important, they must be justified. This brings me to the point of this post. I believe the discrimination against an entire group of people across the board because of their age is as wrong as racial discrimination. The drumbeat in the media against elder drivers is incessant these days and so is my annoyance about that. In point of fact, drivers over 65 are involved in a small percentage of accidents and that is declining compared to all other age groups.

<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/12/declining-car-risk-for-older-drivers/>

Here is a list of the 6 major causes of accidents. Notice that age as such is not included. Anyone of any age could engage in the behavior described. It is those individuals who do that should be discriminated against, whether they be 80 or 18

See [most\\_common\\_causes\\_of\\_automobile\\_crashes](#)

I could have written this article about discrimination (and slander) in the media against State Employee Pensioners as well. I am one of those, too

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:51

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

## **DISCRIMINATION**

I was going to post an article here about Discrimination in response to the case of the Firefighters in New Haven CT decided on this week by the Supreme Court and the on-going debate in the media about Elderly Drivers. However, I realize that I have already written about Discrimination several times on this Blog. Therefore, I recommend you read those articles. You can find them by using the Quick Search box in the column to your right. Thanks

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:32

Tuesday, June 2, 2009

## **MURDER IS MURDER, A WRONG IS NOT A RIGHT**

Absolutely, the murder of Dr George Tiller was wrong and can not be excused or rationalized away. It was also very stupid because it will end up revitalizing the Abortion Movement that the killer wanted to stop. Who was Dr Miller and what did he do? He admits to killing 60,000 babies since 1974. He specialized in killing them when they were in the 3rd Trimester or after they were 21 weeks old and most probably viable. See the attached link for evidence of this, including his own testimony.

<http://www.dr-tiller.com/index.htm>The murder of this one man is condemned by all, but the murder by him of 60,000 other human beings who were totally innocent of all evil, is condoned by many who have no qualms about that. In fact, the doctor, more now than ever thanks to his killer, is a hero to many pro-choice activists!

This is the latest and most egregious example that the cause of "Rights" is way out of control. All kinds of evil is justified in our society by people claiming "it is my right", "it is their right", to do what ever they want, even if it is harmful to themselves, others and all of us. Violence (including Dr Miller's murder), wars, rapes, theft, greed are all justified because someone was exercising what they believed or claimed was their "right". Both discrimination and reverse discrimination is justified on this basis. Affirmative action, welfare and government handouts and bailouts of all kinds and so-called entitlements are justified in the name of somebody's perceived "rights". Having babies out of wedlock and killing babies are both considered someone's "right". "Gay Marriage" is a right. Government provided Health Care and Education (from preschool to post high school) are the rights of everyone. Being allowed to illegally live in this country with many benefits is considered a right. Carrying illegal guns and not wearing seat belts or exploding illegal fireworks are defended on the basis of "hey, its my right". The list goes on an on, with examples large and small. These days, "for multitudes, personal "Rights" trump responsibility and obeying the laws and being good neighbors and citizens anytime. Over and over, I have written in this Blog and on my website, that civil and civic and personal rights created or maintained by the Courts must conform to the Law of God. That, of course, is the rub. Who cares (a you know what) for the Law of God. Even Christians reject it in the name of love. Don't we know, they say, that Jesus did away with the legalistic Law stuff and taught us to love and affirm and support everyone and respect their "rights". There is the classic, "Hey, we are supposed to live and let live!" "How can we as Christians impose our values on anyone else? That is unloving." "To deny anyone their rights is wrong". Well, that is rubbish! No one ever has the right to dump toxic waste into waterways or dump trash in the streets. Some so-called rights are very much wrong. How do we know the difference between right and wrong? Is is not a matter of "conscience". That is easily hardened.

We must begin with the 10 Commandments and go from there. Self-professed evangelicals are not true Evangelicals, if they do not derive their understanding of what is right and wrong from the Bible, particularly the Law of God. If the Bible says something is wrong it is, even if a million other people insist that it is (their) "right"! That includes murder of a doctor and his murder of babies. Babies? Yes, if the Bible says an embryo is a human being and not simple a lump of tissue that a woman has a right to chose to remove, the woman and her doctor is wrong and the Bible is right. if the Bible commands respect for all life (the 6th Commandment) and the embryo is a human being with life ("viable"), to preserve and protect that embryo is right and to destroy it is wrong. See my Essay [HERE](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:05

Monday, May 18, 2009

## **CAPITALISM IS GOOD AND THE HOPE OF THE POOR**

John Wilson, Editor of Books and Culture, a splendid Christian literary magazine, writes, "On some subjects I have an embarrassment of riches when I start looking for potential reviewers. On other subjects, the reverse is true. One of the latter is labor history (not thriving in Books & Culture circles, alas, though a lot of bright young people are writing dissertations about the evils of capitalism)." My reading confirms "a lot of bright young people are writing ... about the evils of capitalism"- and that among these bright young people are Evangelicals. I am not glad they are buying into anti-capitalism.

I agree that many Capitalists are guilty of evil. I agree many have done evil in the name of Capitalism. I agree that Capitalism as currently practiced by many can be a source of evil in the world, but that is because of human sin and the failure of personal moral character. Greed and exploitation are not inherent in Capitalism as such. It not only is not evil in itself, but it incorporates Biblical Principles more than any other economic system and Christians should value Capitalism and work to make it work, infusing it with love and the concept of service and stewardship which, of course, are also Biblical Principles. Capitalism including Private Property, the Profit Motive and a Free Market are the best long range solution to Poverty that there is. I respect Michael Novak's argument-HERE "When serious people wish to create new wealth and to raise the poor out of poverty, they make sure to let capitalism do what it alone can do." "In Asia, the turn to the capitalist way has raised up more than a half billion human beings out of an immemorial poverty just in the past twenty years." "The United States continues to raise millions of its poor people out of poverty, not least among them the ten to twelve million immigrants who arrive in this country nearly penniless and often not knowing the language or the customs of the place. The nation's poverty rolls remain more or less constant precisely because of this steady annual influx of the poor. But a great many of the individuals who are statistically counted among the poor continue to enter at one end and to graduate from the other, no longer poor, within five or ten years."

Please also read what Mr Novak writes HERE "In ad 1000, there were barely two hundred million people in the world, most of whom were living in desperate poverty, under various tyrannies, and subject to the unchecked ravages of disease and much civic disorder. Economic development has made possible the sustenance now of more than six billion people—at a vastly higher level than one thousand years ago, and with an average lifespan almost three times as long." "No other part of the world outside Europe (and its overseas offspring) has achieved so powerful and so sustained an economic performance, raised up so many of the poor into the middle class, inspired so many inventions, discoveries, and improvements for the easing of daily life, and brought so great a diminution of age-old plagues, diseases, and ailments." "The economic historian David Landes, who describes himself as an unbeliever, points out that the main factors in this great economic achievement of Western civilization are mainly religious:• the joy in discovery that arises from each individual being an imago Dei called to be a creator;• the religious value attached to hard and good manual work;• the theological separation of the Creator from the creature, such that nature is subordinated to man, not surrounded with taboos;• the Jewish and Christian sense of linear, not cyclical, time and, therefore, of progress; and• respect for the market." Let me repeat, not only is Capitalism itself not evil, its Principles are grounded in Scripture and Christian Doctrine. Apparently, many young Evangelicals do not know that. They are convinced that Socialism is far more Christian and is rooted in what they understand the Gospel is all about. They are misinformed.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:34

## **STALEMATE or SOLUTION?**

In his speech yesterday at Notre Dame, Mr Obama tried to address the division in our Country over the topic of Abortion (actually, becoming even more controversial is the topic of "Gay Marriage" which is beginning to divide us even more). He pleaded for civil discourse and mutual respect. Sure, good, yes, let there be civil discourse and mutual respect. But, as he acknowledged the positions in the debate seem irreconcilable.

If we are true Evangelicals we argue from the Bible, the entire Bible, with texts being interpreted in contexts. In both these subjects, we begin with the Scripture and our opponents do not. Result? Stalemate.

But we all should be able to agree on those measures which will decrease the numbers of unwanted pregnancies and abortions in our Country. That is easier said than done, but it is possible and that is where we should all focus instead of yelling at each other from two sides of the street. With a few individual exceptions neither side is going to convert the other.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:08

Saturday, May 16, 2009

## **IS "TORTURE" EVER JUSTIFIED?**

Out of Ur Newsletter 5-15 This article (in bold letters) is written by Skye Jethani, managing editor of Leadership. The fact that Christians draw their faith, life, and identity from a Messiah who was the victim of political torture seems ironic in light of new research by the Pew Forum that indicates 62 percent of white evangelicals believe torture of suspected terrorists is "often" or "sometimes" justified. Jesus was not "the victim of political torture" in the sense meant by this article (treatment of prisoners captured in the Iraq war by Americans designed to secure information they might have regarding possible terrorist attacks on the USA). Jesus was treated as a criminal and suffered capital punishment for his alleged crime. In no way was he a victim. He knowingly, intentionally allowed the Authorities to kill him as part of God's Plan to make atonement for the sins of the world. The research shows that people who attend church regularly were more likely to rationalize torture than those who do not go to church. How do we explain these findings? Are Christians being more influenced by Jack Bauer than Jesus Christ? Lurking behind this passive support of government torture is a utilitarian ethic that believes the ends justify the means—torture is justifiable if the information attained will save innocent lives. Almost everything our current Administration does is governed by this "utilitarian ethic", especially in this current economic crisis. President Obama is known for being pragmatic. And yes, most Evangelicals agree with doing so. Mr Jethani implies that pragmatism about the treatment of prisoners of war is simply wrong, even evil. If it is evil in this case, is the same ethic evil in everything else? But David Neff, editor of Christianity Today, points out a problem with this argument: But evangelicals have been eager to reject utilitarian ethics when addressing other issues—embryonic stem-cell research, for example. Even if embryonic stem-cell research turned out to be the best way to cure Parkinson's disease, most evangelicals would oppose it, just as we would oppose abortion even if it were shown to reduce, say, food insecurity. So Evangelicals see pragmatism as evil sometimes, as in the case of embryonic stem-cell research, so why not with the treatment of prisoners? We are, Mr Neff is saying, inconsistent or contradictory. When it comes to defending the lives of the unborn, most evangelicals utterly reject utilitarian ethics. Life is sacred, and all people—even the unborn—are created in the image of God. But this belief is put to the test when the life in question is that of a suspected terrorist. But is this the same? "Torture" is not defined here, but it is not intentional murder of innocent human beings. On the contrary, it is important to keep the detainee alive. We may strongly oppose murdering the prisoner (because we believe his life is sacred) even while we agree to using methods necessary to get him to divulge secrets essential to preventing the murder of innocent civilians (whose lives are also sacred) in America. Do we really believe all human life is sacred or only innocent life? Are all people created in God's image or only those not labeled "enemy combatants"? This simply is not the issue. It is a false dichotomy. We believe all people are created in the image of God. Period.

Perhaps the condemnation of abortion and justification of torture found among our congregants is the result of pastoral teaching that is losing the forest for the trees. We have taught our people to oppose abortion, but have we failed to lift up the larger ethic of life's sanctity which applies far beyond the first, second, or third trimester? Again, Mr Jethani is confusing two different issues. He is falsely, unfairly, illogically equating all "Torture" with murder. To be opposed to the murder of totally innocent babies does not require opposition to interrogation of alleged Terrorists whose intentional personal behavior in a war got them into prison in the first place, all the while keeping them alive. These are altogether different subjects. Maybe it's time for us to preach an ethic of life that stretches from the womb to the tomb—one that even encompasses the prison camps that lie in between. This is very misleading. We do preach and hold such an ethic of life. Mr Jethani is implying that if we agree to the "torture" [still undefined] of war prisoners we do not. He again equates "torture" with the murder of innocent people. I have explained why this is a false and unfair conclusion. If Mr Jethani is himself to be consistent, he must oppose all war, as well as the death penalty. I am guessing that he does. The problem with that would be a failure to acknowledge the God-given purpose of Government to maintain law and order in the Land, by coercion if necessary. That is exactly what the Government is doing by incarcerating citizens convicted of crimes and, in some cases, executing them by the authority of the God whose image they bear because they have murdered other image-bearers. If that is a valid use of Government (not personal) coercion, so is the detention and interrogation of non-citizens because of their association with or implication in terrorist attacks on our Nation, in order to obtain information vital to prevent further attacks. I have no problem with that.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:23

## **WHY NEW ENGLAND AND EVANGELICALS SUPPORT GAY MARRIAGE**

An article in the Boston Globe by Jenna Russell (May 11, 2009) was trying to explain why New England is going for "Gay Marriage". New Hampshire is set to legalize it next week, joining Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The piece begins with a Maine State Legislator explaining that, while he is a "born again Christian" and does not agree with homosexuality or "Gay Marriage", he nevertheless voted for it because "it was purely an issue of

fairness ... these people deserve the same rights." that non-homosexuals have to get married. HEREMs Russell proposes several reasons for support of "Gay Marriage" by New Englanders- their view of religion as private and personal, and their separation of their own beliefs from politics... acceptance or tolerance of same-sex marriage is more likely because they tend to separate their faith from policy matters a set of demographics that makes them fertile ground for an expanding view of marriage: large number of Democrats, ...higher education levels, some of the whitest states in the country ... liberal transplants from New York ... a libertarian streak of "live free or die"- "You do what you want on your side of the fence, and I'll do what I want." roots in a democratic tradition that values equal treatment and neighborliness, "If people are different, you figure out how to live with them." Finally, the article says, The presence of GLAD, based in Boston, might be the single biggest factor in the advancement of same-sex marriage through New England. The legal advocacy group has pushed for years in the region... Its lawyers fought the court cases that led to gay marriage... its staffers spent years organizing public forums... to build a foundation of support for marriage have no doubt that aggressive and savvy, street smart community organizing strategy and political maneuvering by GLAD were very effective, especially GLAD's appeal to a sense of fair play with the civil rights issue. The appeal of that argument is carrying the day on this issue. Advocates of Gay Marriage are winning the struggle for acceptance on the basis of the Rights Issue, constantly making comparisons with the Civil Rights Issue in the treatment of African Americans. "If them, why not us. If they had a valid case, so do we." Youth and young adults, including Evangelicals, are buying this argument. But I am convinced that the fundamental reason the latter group, and Christians across the board, are accepting this change is the first reason mentioned in the article- spiritual and moral dualism. their view of religion as private and personal, and their separation of their own beliefs from politics... acceptance or tolerance of same-sex marriage is more likely because they tend to separate their faith from policy matters Are these the same Christians who love to say and sing, "Jesus is Lord". Apparently, they mean, "Jesus is my personal Lord" and by that they mean, "Jesus is Lord of my private beliefs and values, but not of anyone or anything else". This is a foolish, wrong-headed and very unbiblical point of view. The truth is "Jesus is Lord of all or He is not Lord at all!" There is nothing that happens out there in the world, in society, by people, which does not involve faith, values, morals, ethics. Where do we get the idea that Jesus has no connection with faith, values, morals and ethics? Where do we get the idea that the Christian Religion can be separated from faith, values, morals and ethics? Don't we constantly see evidence of corruption, greed, violence, theft, fraud and sexual immorality in the news and in our community? Is Jesus really irrelevant to all this? This is not the time for Christians to pull back into our caves or stick our heads in the sand and separate our Religion from Politics or anything else.

Perhaps these New England Christians are guilty of a more pernicious problem than separating Jesus from Politics. And that is separating Jesus from His Word. Jesus without His Word is muted or gagged. He is a toothless tiger or a warrior without his sword or a King without his scepter (see Rev.1:16 with 19:15) If Jesus is Lord, so is His Word Psalm 138:2) When Jesus goes into the fray, he does so wielding His Word. It is time to reassert the Lordship of Christ and His Word over all. If they took a stand on that necessity, Christian New Englanders (or any one else) wouldn't be such push overs for those who promote perversions of God's Principles (about anything). But what about the Civil Rights argument? Columnist Eugene Robinson in his piece published in today's paper, argues the entire matter of legalizing "Gay Marriage" is a matter of civil rights. Period! On this issue he says, "I really don't see anything but black and white. [It is a matter] "of granting full equal rights to gay and lesbian Americans... It is a long overdue imperative." It is time, He goes on, "for a popular, progressive President to speak loudly and clearly about a matter of fundamental human and civil rights." Christians should not be hoodwinked by this argument. Those who know their Bibles know that "Gay Marriage" is not a fundamental human right. Civil rights are those rights granted by Judges and Courts or Legislatures. Fundamental Human Rights are determined and declared by God alone in His Word. Bible Christian should not, must not, confuse these two separate categories. The former are supposed to conform to the latter, but they do not necessarily do so and often do not. Human Laws and Rights can be bad laws and not true rights if judged by God's Laws. Once enacted, we must respect and obey the laws of the State or suffer the consequences of disobedience (Acts 4:18-20, 1 Peter 4:15-16) Christians are not anarchists! As I have written elsewhere, the fundamental human rights, the universal God-given inalienable rights, upon which all other rights must depend, are summarized as follows. 1. Everyone has a right to physical life- to live. No person has the right to deprive another person of life or of anything essential to living. Every person has the responsibility to live and to see to it that other persons live as well. 2. Everyone has a right to those resources that are essential for maintaining life. Everyone has the responsibility to work, to work for the development, procurement and equitable distribution of the necessities needed to sustain life, for self and for others 3. All men and women have the right to marry a counterpart and produce children. All men and women have the responsibility to marry and produce children [unless God has made this impossible in specific cases] This Right and Responsibility has to do with fulfilling the Command to multiply, fill and subdue the Earth in the service of God as part of the "Cultural Mandate" (Genesis 1: 26-28) These fundamental Human Rights are from the first book of the Bible (Genesis). They are elaborated on in the second book (Exodus, the Decalogue) and then in the rest of the Bible. (See the 3-part discussion on my website [HERE](#) ) The use of the phrase "men and women" in Universal Right #3 is based on the Biblical definition of Marriage, which marriage is the prerequisite for procreation. By that definition (Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:4-6), homosexuals do not have a God-given "right" to either marriage or children (family). Courts and public opinion may support their claim, but Christians must not agree with that claim. It is not a simple matter of human rights at all. The basic problem with homosexual "marriage" is that it can not fulfill the function for

which God designed sexuality and intended for marriage. Same sex intercourse, adoption or the use of artificial insemination by Gays are not acceptable or realistic substitutes. To claim that homosexual couples have a Right to Marriage, i.e.-heterosexual activity and procreation is obviously absurd. Only by changing the definition of Marriage to something like "a loving commitment of two consenting adults" does the argument using civil rights work. If the definition of Marriage has to be changed, however, it is no longer Marriage. Whatever homosexuals end up with, it is not the union of a man and woman for the natural or normal procreation of children. It is something else, hence it requires a different name, not the old name with a new definition. I can accept the name,"Civil Unions".

The main reason that name, Civil Union, is not acceptable to many advocates of "Gay Marriage" is because they want their union to have the same respectability and acceptance that traditional Marriage has had in societies around the world for millennia. The advocates of "Gay Marriage" are convinced that they will gain that acceptance only by calling a legal civil-union "Marriage". This is not a matter of semantics for either side of the debate. People who know and believe and want to follow their Bibles (and the universal, time-honored definition) will not be fooled by the changed definition any more than they will be duped by the argument about fundamental human rights and fairness. FOOTNOTE: The entire discussion may be rendered pointless by the trend to avoid Marriage altogether in our Society. It is ironic that homosexuals are going to great lengths to be "married", while hetero-sexuals are increasingly "down-grading" Marriage or abandoning Marriage altogether. See the next story for evidence of this trend.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:27

## **ILLEGITIMATE BABY BOOM**

A story in this week's Post is about "a far-reaching social trend unfolding across the United States: The number of children being born out of wedlock has risen sharply in recent years, driven primarily by women in their 20s and 30s opting to have children without getting married. Nearly four out of every 10 births are now to unmarried women."Although the report did not examine the reasons for the increase, ... experts cite a confluence of factors, including a lessening of the social stigma associated with unmarried motherhood, an increase in couples delaying or forgoing marriage, and growing numbers of financially independent women and older and single women deciding to have children on their own after delaying childbearing."

"I think this is the tipping point," said Rosanna Hertz, a professor of sociology and women's studies at Wellesley College. "This is becoming increasingly the norm. The old adage that 'first comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby in the baby carriage' just no longer holds true." "About 1.7 million babies were born to unmarried women in 2007, a 26 percent rise from 1.4 million in 2002 and more than double the number in 1980, according to the new report. Unmarried women accounted for 39.7 percent of all U.S. births in 2007 -- up from 34 percent in 2002 and more than double the percentage in 1980."If you see 10 babies in the room, four them were born to women who were not married," Ventura said. "The percentage of babies born to unmarried women in the United States is starting to look more like that in many European countries, the data shows. For example, the proportion of babies born to unmarried women is about 66 percent in Iceland, 55 percent in Sweden, 50 percent in France and 44 percent in the United Kingdom." See article [HERE](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:12

Sunday, May 10, 2009

## **TRIBUTE TO JACK KEMP**

Here is a nice tribute to Jack Kemp by Newt Gingrich-

Unlike most Republicans, Kemp took very seriously the economic insecurity of the working class and the plight of their aging, decaying industrial base. Unlike most Democrats, Kemp knew that high taxes, big government, and welfare were not a solution--they were a trap that would destroy people and communities. Once he got to Congress he discovered daring, change-oriented economists like Arthur Laffer, who understood that high tax rates (which then topped out at 70 percent) stifled growth and investment. He also met the leading writer about investment-led growth (which is what "supply side economics" is all about) Jude Wanniski. They and others rapidly educated Kemp on the case for lower taxation as the key to productivity and economic growth. Convinced by the "supply side" model of lower taxes and greater entrepreneurship, Kemp became the leading evangelist--and legislator--of the new movement. After Barack Obama's high tax, big-government, politician-centered model of trickle-down bureaucracy fails, and its \$9 trillion debt brings on inflation and economic disarray, it will be time to dust off Jack Kemp's speeches and educate Americans once more in the virtues of growth and opportunity that he devoted his life to."

Read it all [HERE](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:26

## **IT IS NOT SOCIALISM**

"An old friend e-mailed me this week about how to characterize Obama's economic interventions into the banking and auto sectors (with health care next on the list). He says it's not really socialism. Nor is it fascism. He suggests it's state capitalism. But I think of it more as corporate capitalism. Or even crony capitalism, as Cato's Dan Mitchell puts it. It's not socialism because the government won't actually own the means of production. It's not fascism because America is a democracy, not a dictatorship, and Obama's program doesn't reach way down through all the sectors, but merely seeks to control certain troubled areas. And in the Obama model, it would appear there's virtually no room for business failure. So the state props up distressed segments of the economy in some sort of 21st-century copy-cat version of Western Europe's old social-market economy. So call it corporate capitalism or state capitalism or government-directed capitalism. But it still represents a huge change from the American economic tradition. It's a far cry from the free-market principles that governed the three-decade-long Reagan expansion, which now seems in jeopardy. And with cap-and-trade looming, this corporate capitalism will only grow more intense." Read more [HERE](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:17

## **PRINCIPLES OF CONSERVATIVE ECONOMICS**

Here are comments about Jack Kemp written by Larry Kudlow. This is the Conservatism of the Republican Party that I remember and still advocate. When I first visited with Jack Kemp in his congressional office in Washington, D.C., in the late 1970s, I couldn't help but notice the row of books on his desk. There was Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Benjamin Anderson, and Milton Friedman. And of course there was Jude Wanniski's *The Way the World Works*. Jack extracted big ideas from these big books, and he applied them to an American nation that was in big trouble. Working with Wanniski, Arthur Laffer, Robert Mundell, Alan Reynolds, Steve Entin, Norman Ture, and many others, Jack developed an agnostic economic formula that solved the vexing problem of economic stagflation and malaise. Lower tax rates for everyone, he argued. Make it pay after-tax to work, produce, invest, and take risks, and the country will get more of all of it. Along with lower marginal tax rates to reignite economic growth, stabilize the free-falling dollar to curb inflation. And add free trade to that mix, since tariffs are nothing more than taxes on the purchase and sale of international goods. Foster policies that will unleash our God-given creativity and imagination, Jack Kemp argued. And let individuals take it from there. "A perpetual optimist, Jack told the Republican convention in 1996, "You see, democratic capitalism is not just the hope of wealth, but it's the hope of justice. When we look into the face of poverty, we see the pain, the despair, and need of human beings. But above all, in every face of every child, we must see the image of God." He then added, "I believe the ultimate imperative for growth and opportunity is to advance human dignity." Another of Jack's pet projects was the bringing together of capital and labor, workers and investors, and businesses and jobs. His ultimate goal was to make the non-rich rich. And to achieve that, he knew Wall Street had to work with Main Street; investors had to work with unions; and high finance had to work with the hard-hit folks in the inner cities. Over the years Jack often called me to affirm and encourage my simple paradigm: You can't have a good job

without a healthy business to create it, and you can't have a good healthy business without the investment capital to fund it. It's a unifying message.

<http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=NWQyNWEyODdjNmQ0ZmFINDE5MzY3ZGM4N2E4OGRmZjc=>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:59

## **REASONS EMERGENTS SUPPORT MR OBAMA**

I believe Christians were and are wrong to support Barack Obama. However, the reason many evangelicals voted for him and support him are spelled out well by this man here "For the following reasons, I decided to vote for Obama on Tuesday:1) The poor will be better off with Obama. I believe this to be the first question we must ask of a candidate. Jesus promised a jubilee to his followers. He created a community that shared generously with one another. For a Christian to support a candidate, that candidate must look to create a system that resembles this community of sharing. I don't call it "socialism" — I call it gospel...2) Blessed are the peacemakers — we must support people who strive for peace. And Jesus was not saying use the sword to achieve peace — it was 'use the means of peace to achieve the ends of peace' (why would he say 'love your enemies in the same Sermon?). I believe Obama seeks to end the war. I've been concerned by the strong military talk by both candidates. However, I think Obama is taking a more direct route to peace. We must support the peacemakers to align ourselves with the Sermon on the Mount.

3) I believe Obama will begin to repair the damage done in our relationships with other countries. I believe he will look to bring reconciliation where there are divisions. In Christian baptism, the two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, become one. The body of Christ, made up of many members from many races, is to be one. It is at the heart of our faith that we overcome our divisions while celebrating our differences. For a candidate to receive the Christian vote, he or she must seek to do likewise. In the United States, I believe that Obama will be a force in healing the racial divide in our country. It is a huge task, and we might not get very far, but I think he will move us in the right direction.4) I believe Obama will bring other voices to the table. Jesus spent time with the outcasts and sinners shut out from the main halls of power. I believe a candidate, to get the Christian vote, must create a space to hear other voices. I believe Obama himself is one of these other voices. In addition, we need to talk to those who hate us, and we need to know why. I believe Obama will do this in foreign policy — and I believe he will do it here in the US.5) We are to be better stewards of creation. Right now, it appears we've damaged the way the earth is to function through driving our cars and consuming so much of our natural resources. We need to move in the direction of better stewardship of creation as we honor God's gifts to us. I believe Obama has a better plan to move to alternative fuels and energy than does John McCain. I believe, after 9-11, we should have pushed for energy independence for many of our families through tax breaks for solar panels on houses. For these five reasons, I'm casting my vote for Obama on Tuesday...

This was written by Ryan Bolger, Associate Professor of Church in Contemporary Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary. Dr Bolger self-identifies as an Emergent Evangelical Christian. I know many like him. Actually, you do, too.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:48

Monday, May 4, 2009

## **BOOKS, BUCKS AND OBAMA**

This is the title of an article in today's Post:

Obama Plan to Expand Federal Control of Lending Includes Creating Entitlement Absolutely, college costs far too much for many students, particularly at private schools. Reform is called for, but there must be a better way to do that than more Federal Government control. Here are excerpts from the article. Add this to all the other areas of Government expansion, intervention and control over every aspect of our lives. Christians should be alarmed! President Obama's health-care goals may be garnering attention, but his higher-education proposals are no less ambitious. If adopted, they could transform the financial aid landscape for millions of students while expanding federal authority to a degree that even Democrats concede is controversial. At stake is a plan to expand the Pell Grant program, making it an entitlement akin to Medicare and Social Security. Key to the effort is a consolidation of student lending that would give the U.S. Department of Education a near monopoly over the practice Obama outlined his initiatives, which also include incentives for colleges to cut costs and to raise graduation rates,

The aim is to improve access to post-secondary school for those who need it most: lower-income students. The administration's plans are "the most fundamental rewriting of federal student aid policy in 35 years," said Terry Hartle, senior vice president of the American Council on Education. "These are big changes. The administration has suggested it wants to change the distribution formula... to give priority to needier students and to reward schools that control costs. Rep. Timothy H. Bishop (D-N.Y.), a former college provost, said the lending proposal "goes to the very heart of one's perception of what is the role of the federal government." Exactly! What is the God-given role of federal government? Read my blog and website essays

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/03/AR2009050302251\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/03/AR2009050302251_pf.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:49

Saturday, May 2, 2009

## **THE MASSACHUSETTS MODEL**

"Several physicians and policy makers said the state information, along with other new data from Harvard researchers, suggests that emergency room crowding and rising costs will not be solved by providing people with health insurance alone, despite optimistic talk by politicians who advocated for the law. What is needed, they said, are more primary care doctors and nurses, and a new payment system that encourages intense monitoring of patients with diabetes, asthma, and other chronic illnesses."

[http://www.boston.com/news/health/articles/2009/04/24/er\\_visits\\_costs\\_in\\_mass\\_climb/](http://www.boston.com/news/health/articles/2009/04/24/er_visits_costs_in_mass_climb/) This week, my wife had a serious fall, breaking an arm and her hip. The ambulance driver took her to the smaller of our two inner city hospitals. She had a 7 hour wait, lying on a gurney in the hall way, along with dozens of others, before being admitted. I sat in a full waiting room for about 3 of those hours. Almost every one there seemed to be low income minorities and seemed to collectively have a multitude of ailments, none life threatening. Critical Trauma cases were constantly being admitted directly into the ER. We have had this experience many times. The article I am linking to came to mind. State provided "Universal" Health Insurance is not the solution to medical care it is being touted as. We have it here in Massachusetts. As the article and my experience confirms, multitudes of low income people are still using 911 and the ER for their primary health care delivery system. That in turn is largely do to lack of accessible Primary Care Physicians. PCPs are out there, but there are far too few of them (the majority of MDs are specialists, for a variety of reasons, most having to do with money) Appointments to see a PCP, if you have one, for non-emergencies take time. ERs are far more convenient. So is transport by ambulance. People simply use the Insurance card at the hospital. In addition, many low-income people are not into preventative health care and/or chose behaviors that are injurious or dangerous to their health. There is a long list of health care problems that Universal Insurance does not come close to addressing. Having State (tax-payer) provided insurance does not make any difference or prevent these problems (or maybe actually it makes it easier for this situation to prevail for many). Read the article and be very, very skeptical about Mr Obama's so-called health care reform.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:09

## **HEALTH INSURANCE IS NOT HEALTH CARE**

"Much as I hate to be the bearer of bad news, I must report the shocking facts: Medical care is medical care. Nothing more and nothing less. This may not seem like a breakthrough on the frontiers of knowledge. But it completely contradicts what is being said by many of those who are urging "universal health care" because so many Americans lack health insurance. Insurance is not medical care. Indeed, health care is not the same as medical care. Countries with universal health care do not have more or better medical care."

[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/04/21/words\\_versus\\_realities\\_96086.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/04/21/words_versus_realities_96086.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:00

## **HEALTH CARE REFORM?**

"In the service of his ultimate mission -- the leveling of social inequalities -- President Obama offers a tripartite social democratic agenda: nationalized health care, federalized education (ultimately guaranteed through college) and a cash-cow carbon tax (or its equivalent) to subsidize the other two."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/23/AR2009042302983.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:55

Monday, April 27, 2009

### **CANDY TODAY, SPINACH TOMORROW**

"Why do you think the stimulus package pours \$1.1 billion into medical "comparative effectiveness research"? It is the perfect setup for rationing. Once you establish what is "best practice" for expensive operations, medical tests and aggressive therapies, you've laid the premise for funding some and denying others."

[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/04/24/obama\\_the\\_grand\\_strategy\\_96152.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/04/24/obama_the_grand_strategy_96152.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:31

Saturday, April 18, 2009

## **HOW CAN CHRISTIANS SUPPORT MR OBAMA'S AGENDA?**

My take on the reason why many Evangelicals/ Christians are so supportive of Mr Obama is because of their understanding of the Gospel. They define the Gospel in terms of social justice and they see the this President as God's instrument to achieve that justice. Charles Krauhammer is right on target about Mr Obama's Agenda for America and it is exactly what left-leaning, so called "Progressive" Christians believe the Gospel is all about. Read his column [HERE](#) I quote it below (italicized)

Obama has far different ambitions [than to fix the woes of the Detroit auto industry]. His goal is to rewrite the American social compact, to recast the relationship between government and citizen. He wants government to narrow the nation's income and anxiety gaps. Soak the rich for reasons of revenue and justice. Nationalize health care and federalize education to grant all citizens of all classes the freedom from anxiety about health care and college that the rich enjoy. And fund this vast new social safety net through the cash cow of a disguised carbon tax. Obama is a leveler. He has come to narrow the divide between rich and poor. For him the ultimate social value is fairness. Imposing it upon the American social order is his mission. Fairness through leveling is the essence of Obamaism.

All this, many sincerely believe, is what the Gospel is all about. Hurray for Mr. Obama! Bizarre and constitutionally suspect as these [bailouts and interventions in the auto and banking industry] may be, the transformation of the American system will come from elsewhere. The credit crisis will pass and the auto overcapacity will sort itself out one way or the other. The reordering of the American system will come not from these temporary interventions, into which Obama has reluctantly waded. It will come from Obama's real agenda: his holy trinity of health care, education and energy. Out of these will come a radical extension of the welfare state; social and economic leveling in the name of fairness; and a massive increase in the size, scope and reach of government. If Obama has his way, the change that is coming is a new America: "fair," leveled and social democratic. Obama didn't get elected to warranty your muffler. He's here to warranty your life. Exactly! The problem is that this is not what Jesus would do. This Agenda is not the Agenda of the Gospel. This is not what the Gospel is about! This is not what the Bible teaches about the role of Civil Government or about Economics. Nothing, absolutely nothing about this Agenda is Biblical. Just the opposite. I have explained repeatedly in this Blog and on my Website (quod vide) what the Bible does teach about "social justice". Obama's vision of government, "leveling" and "fairness" is wrongheaded and dangerous.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:29

Thursday, April 16, 2009

## **"SCIENCE" FICTION**

"I do not believe that a human embryo is the moral equivalent of a hangnail and deserves no more respect than an appendix. Moreover, given the protean power of embryonic manipulation, the temptation it presents to science and the well-recorded human propensity for evil even in the pursuit of good, lines must be drawn. I suggested the bright line prohibiting the deliberate creation of human embryos solely for the instrumental purpose of research -- a clear violation of the categorical imperative not to make a human life (even if only a potential human life) a means rather than an end. On this, Obama has nothing to say. He leaves it entirely to the scientists. This is more than moral abdication. It is acquiescence to the mystique of "science" and its inherent moral benevolence. How anyone as sophisticated as Obama can believe this within living memory of Mengele and Tuskegee and the fake (and coercive) South Korean stem cell research is hard to fathom". <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/12/AR2009031202764.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:36

## **SORDID HISTORY**

"Until this year, most Americans hadn't heard of "comparative effectiveness research." But then came the giant stimulus package, which established a Federal Coordinating Council for Comparative Effectiveness Research and earmarked \$1.1 billion to comparing medical treatments. And then came the president's budget, which lauded such research and promised it would "enhance medical decision-making." This might be the case, but, if mishandled, comparative effectiveness research (CER) could lead to severe restrictions on the kinds of treatments available to sick Americans. It's up to President Barack Obama to make sure that his CER initiatives are implemented wisely, and not used to justify rationing. When used properly, CER can help patients and their doctors to make informed health care decisions by providing valuable information about what therapies work best. But this type of research has a sordid history of being abused by government agencies to lower health care costs at the expense of patients' health." Source- <http://www.masslive.com/viewpoint/republican/index.ssf?/base/opinion-0/1239434203168000.xml&coll=1>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:33

Monday, March 30, 2009

## **POINTS OF LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS**

I just came from the Garage where I left our car for work it needs.. I walked the 2 miles back and, as usual, found the sights and sounds and smells interesting on this very damp, dreary day. Most buildings and houses on most streets around here are dingy and dumpy and in disrepair. But, there are daffodils and crocuses pushing through ugly brown lawns. And there are houses here and there where the owners show pride and care for their property. That is always inspiring and encouraging to me. These folks are not giving in to the neglect, abuse and blight surrounding them. They are not giving up or doing as their neighbors do. (Hopefully, they will be an example others will follow) They are keeping their candles burning. They are points of light in the darkness.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:50

## **THE RISE OF THE "NONES" AND THE FUZZY WUZZIES**

In his latest newsletter, James Emery White wrote about the new American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) released on March 9, 2009. "What was most alarming", he says, "was the increase in [those who are unaffiliated with any Religion] – nearly doubling from 8% to 15%, making those who claim no religion at all the third largest defined constituency in the United States, eclipsed only by Catholics and Baptists". The "nones" rose in percentage in every single state. Barry Kismun, co-researcher for the survey, said, "These people aren't secularized. They're not thinking about religion and rejecting it; they're not thinking about it at all." Dr. White draws conclusions from the data. "Many who believed decided 'to deal with modernity by embracing it – to defuse modern threats to the traditional bases of belief by bringing God into line with modernity" (p. 266)...unbelief emerged because church leaders too often forgot the transcendence essential to any worthwhile God. They committed religion functionally to making the world better in human terms and intellectually to modes of knowing God fitted only for understanding this world' (p. 267). Mark Silk, director of the Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College, seems to be in agreement with Dr White's thesis, noting that there is a 'considerable softening of the edges in doctrine, politics and social values' contributing to the rise of the "nones." And Dr White, former president of Gordon Conwell Seminary, concludes, "we must see America as a mission field". I agree with this conclusion, but I think the diagnosis is incomplete. Pragmatically, yes, increasing numbers of Americans are living a-theistically (without God). But no one is actually indifferent to God, even when they say they are. Romans 1:17 teaches us that which is known about God is evident within them -NAS and v. 19 teaches us that all people men suppress the truth NIV and v.25 states they exchange what they know to be the truth of God for a lie NAS All human beings, whether they have a Religion or not, know God. They deny that knowledge. They suppress and restrain that knowledge. In this we have the root of many psychological, emotional, mental problems. It certainly is the root of much antisocial, rebellious and self-destructive behavior. And it is the root for the so-called "secular" ideologies that control our Society, as well as the root of the anti-Church fervor spreading across the Land. Dr Silk (above) is quoted saying there is 'considerable softening of the edges in doctrine, politics and social values' contributing to the rise of the "nones." Yes, there is and sharpening those edges is the need of the hour that I want to address and that Pastors and Churches should be addressing. Enough already with all the soft, fuzzy, feel-good, PC "Christianity" in churches and among Christians everywhere these days.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:35

## **THANK GOD FOR TEACHERS**

Our City of 150,000 has many problems. We could save millions of dollars if we stopped busing children over 6th grade to their schools. But someone pointed out to the School Board that State Law requires busing for children who are poor enough to qualify for the free or reduced price breakfast and lunch programs. (I don't understand the connection) That turns out to be more than 85% of some 29,000 public school students. Most of those children will not graduate from high school. Most of those live in single parent homes. We have one of the highest teen birth rates in the State. Over and over, we hear how essential it is to have a family where there is a father, as well as a mother. We hear repeatedly how essential it is to have parental involvement and support of children if they are to do well in school. We know how hard, if not impossible, it is to get good jobs without an education and skills. I think of all this as I walk by the schools and the many children walking to them this morning. Most of these children, unless these problems are addressed, are facing a future more bleak than the streets are today. Thousands of lost kids. I pray for them and I pray for those who teach them and staff these schools. They are doing God's redemptive work in the class room (or at least, could be) We all should value and support the educators of our children. Likewise, all those who volunteer in Mentoring and Tutoring

## Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>

programs. Churches which provide afterschool help are also making a real difference. And then there is the whole matter of reaching these children for Christ, making disciples of them by baptizing and teaching them to obey the Commands of the Lord in their personal lives. Children (many of whom are from other countries), Schools and Education- all this is a real mission field.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:15

Tuesday, March 17. 2009

### **SELFISH SHORT-SIGHTED SUPPORT OF SOME SCIENCE**

Here are two excellent articles about Stem Cell Research and Mr Obama's recent decisions and comments.  
<http://www.crosswalk.com/news/commentary/11600936/>  
<http://www.crosswalk.com/news/commentary/11600938/page1/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:55

Friday, February 27, 2009

## **CHANGING THE COUNTRY**

Many Evangelicals have their heads in the sand or blinders over their eyes these days. They are interested only in their "personal relationship" with Jesus and quite willing to let the President and Congress shape the future of our Country. Other Christians actually believe that what is happening is wonderful because they believe it is the responsibility of Civil Government to provide for education, welfare, health care, banking, housing, jobs, energy, biotechnology and our waistlines, too. Some Evangelicals do not know what the Bible says about any of these things but agree with warnings and solutions being offered by conservative, but secular, radio and TV hosts and writers. It is inconceivable that God has not revealed His will about all of this. It is inconceivable that He has no Word to guide us as citizens through the turmoil which engulfs us these days. It is inconceivable that there is no Scripture to help us formulate public policy and by which we can analyze our new President's initiatives.

What are Biblical Doctrines and Values that should influence Politics? The following is a short, broad sketch from a neo-calvinist perspective. The Concept of Sphere Sovereignty is crucial to Neo-Calvinist Political Science. The Bible teaches that God created people in His image. They would be like Him and they would represent Him. He gave them a mandate, as His representatives, to care for and cultivate all that God had made. This is known as the Cultural Mandate. As part of this plan, God ordained three institutions. First is Marriage (defined as the life long covenant commitment of a man and a woman) with the consequent extended family. Married couples and families are to work together to keep the Cultural Mandate. Second, God created the Covenant Community, which became the Church, and third, God created Civil Government. Each of these three institutions, known as a "Sphere", is autonomous, but under God- responsible to Him. One Sphere is never to interfere with or usurp the authority or sovereignty of the other. This is known as Sphere Sovereignty. There are extensions of the Marriage-Family and Church Spheres, which become other, secondary institutions in society, i.e.-voluntary associations of individuals for work and the production and distribution of goods and services (Business and Trade). Other voluntary associations will naturally arise for Education, Communications, the Arts and Recreation. None of these Spheres are autonomous, but cooperate with each other. Each is meant to function according to the Law of God and is accountable to Him. There are serious consequences of this Doctrine of the Spheres and Sphere Sovereignty. For example, the education of children is the right and duty of their parents. The State can never rightfully (in God's eyes) claim that those children belong to it or that it is the State's right and duty to educate children against the will of their parents. Parents are not to acquiesce to this claim by the State or relinquish their privilege and duty to educate their children. In practice, this Doctrine leads to the support of Home Schooling, Parochial Schools and the use of Vouchers to use tax money for school choice. At the very least, this Doctrine should lead Christian parents to become involved on local school boards and in the selection of text books, as well as leading Christians to become professional educators, who will promote and teach Biblical values in State schools, which most children attend. The Family also has the responsibility to teach work or vocational skills, as well as the Biblical work ethic. People who do not work do not eat; but more than that, working is a God-given duty, a commandment, laid upon all to support themselves and their extended family. This is a major way to carry out the Cultural Mandate and thus serve God. The State has no business to interfere with this duty or to care of those who shirk it.

This Doctrine of the Spheres gives the responsibility for welfare and the care of the sick, the widowed and orphaned, the unemployed and the homeless to the Family and Faith Community. The State has no business to interfere with or usurp these God-given responsibilities either. Calvinists oppose the concept and practice of the "welfare state" and the liberal ideology behind it and are very suspicious of all entitlement programs and oppose the popular entitlement mentality. The State has no right to take money (taxes) for most such programs (at the most, such axes should be minimal) That would be compounding error with theft.

The voluntary civic associations are not to forgo their independence and look to the civil government for support. These groups, whether for business or the arts, are extensions of the Family and Church. Again, the State has no right to interfere with them in any way. In practice, this Doctrine leads to a rejection of "tax breaks", as well as government funding and subsidies. In our Society, it means advocating for privatization of just about everything. The Faith Community or Church has its God-given privileges and responsibilities which include public corporate worship and evangelism, as well as its ministries of charity. The Civil Government has no lawful right to abridge or interfere with the Church in its duties. The only legitimate, God-given responsibility for Civil Government is maintenance of Law (involving Legislation in harmony with the principles of Biblical Law) and Order, (Law enforcement, Courts and a legal system guaranteeing due process- as well as the Military) all to maintain peace and to protect citizens from harm and danger from any quarter. Taxing the people for this is not theft. It is the obligation of citizens to pay for these services. Civil government is not autonomous, nor is it to be of the People, for the People or by the People. It certainly is not meant to be of, by and for those who govern. Civil Government is of God, for God and according to the Law of God. It is

accountable to Him in all things. It will be judged by Him. Neo-Calvinists, being in the Reformed Tradition, also hold to other Doctrines which greatly influence their politics. Prime among them is the "Total Depravity" (Radical Corruption) of Human Beings. This leads to the emphasis on the negative role of the Civil Government. Because people who rule are also fallen sinners, there is among all Calvinists a serious mistrust of all those in power and of any particular government Administration. One consequence of this is the strong advocacy by all Calvinists of a division of powers, wherein there will always be a system of checks and balances to inhibit the government from becoming an instrument of evil. Finally, because we hold to the infinite value of the person, Calvinists also believe in the necessity of the consent of the governed to be governed and the right to rebel when such freedom is denied and human beings are enslaved. This means the Reformed Christian is very much concerned with the possibility of totalitarianism, in which the State becomes God and takes over total control of the minds and lives of its citizens. Thus, we are very much opposed to an ever growing government and in favor of an ever decreasing government presence in our lives and business. This, of course, flies against all the current trends and practices of our Government and the desire and beliefs of most of our politicians and citizens today, especially the so-called Progressives and Left-leaning Liberals among us who are now in control (Spring 2009). The State is not to interfere with the life and work of the Church and the Church has no business doing the work of the State (this is the original intent of the First Amendment). However, the Church, in its prophetic preaching and teaching ministry, has the duty to remind the State of its responsibilities under God and of His judgment upon it when it fails in them. Apparently, the church also needs to teach its members the Biblical function of Civil Government! Changing the Country must begin with changing the Church.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:50

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

## **PRAYING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS**

Across the street from the aforementioned church is a Middle School. Around 2:30 every weekday hundreds of young teens gush from the bowels of the building and pour out on the sidewalks and into the street. Like a river, they flow around the church which stands empty most of the time. Rapidly and noisely, they disappear into the neighboring-hoods. Almost all of students are Hispanic or African American. I pray for them and I pray especially for their Teachers. What important and "challenging" work they have cut out for them. I am very thankful for Christians who answer the call to minister in Public Schools, all public schools, but particularly inner city ones. (To be honest I wouldn't want to do it. But I was an inner city social worker and an inner city Pastor and we have lived for years in an "inner city") Most of the students in our City drop out before twelfth grade. The majority live below the poverty level. Many are from single parent homes. In spite of that, our Superintendent is quoted in today's paper that "Demographics do not determine destiny." He himself is a Black man with a PhD who has a tough "No excuses" policy. He says self esteem is important and the way to find it is through academic achievement! And he repeats the truism, the key to that achievement is parental involvement. I pray for him too. Good man!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:04

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

## **NOT A COLOR, BUT A CULTURE**

Barak Obama and, it seems, most Americans, considers himself to be Black (or to present himself as Black) even though he is equally White, genetically. My guess is that this is because it serves a political and personal agenda far more than being White would. It especially enables African Americans to claim him as their own and to help fulfill their own myths and romantic, idealized notions of their Identity and Story. If he is seen as White, they could not claim that he was fulfilling MLK's Dream or their own. I used "European" for "White" in the Post above because we watched a fascinating PBS documentary last night about tracing African American family genealogies through DNA. Throughout the film, "European" was used as a substitute for "White". That is a common usage for the name in some parts of the world, although it usually means of European origin or ethnicity. "White" or Light as a skin color is obviously variable. The research featured in the Study was into the lineage of African American celebrities, such as Chris Rock, Quincy Jones and Oprah. (There is a Part 2 with other celebrities). One result was that almost all African Americans have a percentage of East Asian, American Indian and European "Blood". All the celebrities were excited about tracing their African roots, even though they had European roots. In the Documentary, all the celebrities were adamant about this. They completely disavowed or minimized their European Blood and totally embraced their African lineage. The latter meant a lot to them. We are not really talking genetics or color, but culture and ethnic identity. The celebrities agreed their grandparents did not value any connection they may have had with Africa. It was amazing to hear the blatant racist comments of those grandparents being interviewed or of their grand children's remembered comments by them. Africans were considered by African Americans of that older generation to be unwashed, ignorant primitives. They were not proud of any African lineage. I have had Africans tell me that they think the current adoption of "Africa" by Black Americans is an affectation, an adopted, romanticized identity, worn as a fashion. It is interesting that these same Africans are sub-Saharan and they do not consider people born in South Africa to be true Africans, nor the people born above the Sahara. People from either of those areas of the Continent of Africa are not considered to be true Africans. Again, it is not a matter of color, but of culture. "It was not until the late 1960s that black (or Black) gained its present status as a self-chosen ethnonym with strong connotations of racial pride, replacing the then-current Negro among Blacks and non-Blacks alike with remarkable speed. Equally significant is the degree to which Negro became discredited in the process, reflecting the profound changes taking place in the Black community during the tumultuous years of the civil rights and Black Power movements. African American achieved sudden prominence at the end of the 1980s when several Black leaders, including Jesse Jackson, championed it as an alternative ethnonym for Americans of African descent. The appeal of this term is obvious, alluding as it does not to skin color but to an ethnicity constructed of geography, history, and culture, and it won rapid acceptance in the media... . But... African American has shown little sign of displacing or discrediting black, which remains both popular and positive." The research featured in the Study was into the lineage of African American celebrities, such as Chris Rock, Quincy Jones and Oprah. (There is a Part 2 with other celebrities). 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Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:04

Wednesday, December 17, 2008

## **SEEKING TO BE RELEVANT WITH YOUNG EVANGELICALS**

"National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) chief lobbyist Richard Cizik has won plaudits from the New York Times and criticism from his own constituency for shifting NAE to the left, on global warming and other issues over the last 6 years. But endorsing same sex civil unions on National Public Radio proved to be too much even for NAE, which announced Cizik's resignation after his return from an anti-nuclear weapons event in Paris." <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/906jbvvs.aspl> refer you to this story as a record of the way younger evangelicals have been changing in the last few years to the left on social issues. Mr Cizik is not young, but is an older evangelical seeking to be relevant

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:30

Monday, November 24, 2008

## **YOU WANT TO EAT? GET A JOB!**

I know many Christians who want to imitate the New Testament Church. For example they use the early church as their model for living in "Community" or for seeking and using the Gifts of the Spirit or for making much of miracles and "power evangelism" or for including the Lord's Supper in their weekly meetings. Here is a NT passage that is rarely held up as an example we must follow today.<sup>2</sup> Thes. 3:6 And now, dear brothers and sisters, we give you this command in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>7</sup> you know that you ought to imitate us. We were not idle when we were with you. <sup>8</sup> We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We worked hard day and night so we would not be a burden to any of you. <sup>9</sup> We certainly had the right to ask you to feed us, but we wanted to give you an example to follow. <sup>10</sup> Even while we were with you, we gave you this command: "Those unwilling to work will not get to eat." <sup>11</sup> Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work ... <sup>12</sup> We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to...work to earn their own living. (NLT) This is the most basic economic principle in the Bible: You want to eat? Get a job. If you can't afford something (food, wheels, an apartment, a Blackberry smart phone) you do not get it. The 4th Commandment is specific: "You shall work!" There must be no welfare for those who are physically able to work and do not! Do not borrow to buy something if you can not afford to repay the loan. If you can't get a job to get money to get food because you are not qualified, go to school and get qualified.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:22

## **THE TRAGEDY OF COMPASSION IN AMERICA**

It is very popular today to insist that local churches should be governed by a group of "Elders", not the traditional Clergyman or Pastor. They supposedly get this model for "Elder Rule" from Paul's letter to Timothy (and to Titus, as well). These same Believers are not adamant about obeying the following practice of the early church in its care for the Poor among them. Paul does not specifically command Elder Rule or the Plurality of Elders in every church in his letter to Timothy, but he does make the following commands about caring for widows in that letter to Timothy-

1 Timothy 5:2 Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters. <sup>3</sup> Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her. <sup>4</sup> But if she has children or grandchildren, their first responsibility is to show godliness at home and repay their parents by taking care of them. This is something that pleases God.<sup>7</sup> Give these instructions to the church so that no one will be open to criticism. <sup>8</sup> Those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers. <sup>9</sup> A widow who is put on the [church's] list for support must be a woman who is at least sixty years old and was faithful to her husband. <sup>10</sup> She must be well respected by everyone because of the good she has done. Has she brought up her children well? Has she been kind to strangers and served other believers humbly? Has she helped those who are in trouble? Has she always been ready to do good? <sup>11</sup> The younger widows should not be on the list ... <sup>14</sup> So I advise these younger widows to marry again, have children, and take care of their own homes. <sup>16</sup> If a woman who is a believer has relatives who are widows, she must take care of them and not put the responsibility on the church. Then the church can care for the widows who are truly alone. The local church is responsible for the care of those widows who are members. The Church, not the State, has the responsibility to care for the Poor; but not all who want care are put on the church's List for welfare. Some are not truly in need. The Church is to care for those Poor members who are spiritually and morally qualified and have no family at all to provide for them. The Church is also called to reach out to the Poor beyond its members. The idea that the State is responsible for the Poor is simply not Biblical. Why do those who insist on following the practices of the New Testament churches not follow this Teaching? The book to read about all of this is "The Tragedy of American Compassion" by Marvin Olasky. Mr Olasky documents clearly the shift from church based local programs of mercy and compassion in the early years of our Country to the present programs to care for the Poor run by the Federal and State Governments.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:13

Saturday, November 8, 2008

## **SHOULD EVANGELICALS BE POLITICAL ACTIVISTS?**

I had read that African Americans voters were very influential in repealing the legalization of "Gay Marriage" in California this last week. <http://www.freep.com/article/20081107/NEWS15/81107126> But it is interesting that "Gay Marriage" advocates are holding the Mormon Church responsible for their set back. Mormons apparently were a major factor. They poured much money and work into the effort. Now the Gay Activists are coming up with schemes to hurt the State of Utah's (!) tourist trade in retaliation. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/07/AR2008110703786.html?wpisrc=newsletter> This is ironic. The Mormons historically have had their own problem with the definition of Marriage, having once advocated Polygamy. The argument that "Gay Marriage" is acceptable because it involves consenting adults could serve as an argument to support Polygamy!

The advocates of "Gay Marriage" main argument is that theirs is a civil rights issue. They insist their constitutional rights are being violated. Then they turn around and seek to violate the rights of all those who legitimately voted against them. I am often amazed at how illiberal people can be in the name of being liberal, as well as illogical and unjust toward those who disagree with them. Finally, here is a case to confound those Evangelicals who say we have no business in politics and that "our values" can not be legislated and we should quit the public square. "Gay Marriage", Abortion, Euthanasia, Embryonic Research and Cloning are all examples of moral issues important to our Society, to say nothing about Poverty, Health Care and the Environment, as well as the War on Terrorism and Genocide. These are all moral matters of immense import to America's life and future. The struggles over them are necessary and are fought out in the public square and outcomes are determined by politics and government action. Are we Evangelicals really to sit on the sidelines? Furthermore, the lesson in California is that we not only must be politically active but we can do so in consort with groups we do not agree with. Often it is the Pope who is the standard bearer on these matters and the Bishops of the RC Church that take the lead. In this California vote, victory was made possible by the work of Mormons!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:03

## **"GAY MARRIAGE": EDUCATION, NOT CONFRONTATION**

I watched very unhappy Gay People expressing, on TV, their anger and frustration over Tuesday's vote in California against "Gay Marriage". There was a particularly poignant close-up shot of an anguished man with tears rolling down his cheek, saying "We're human. We are human like everyone else! Why are we being treated this way?" Others were just plain angry, saying the vote was totally unfair, denying them their civil rights. That was the main theme. It is all about civil rights. Another shouted, "We won't give up. We will never give up until we gain our civil rights!" One of the Justices of the State Supreme Court here in Massachusetts retired last week. One of the high lights of his career was voting to make "Gay Marriage" legal here. It was simple, he said, a matter of civil rights. The Constitution demanded it. Human beings have the right to marry. No one can be denied that constitutional right! The same argument is made by Pro Choice people: a woman has the constitutional right to do what she wants with tissue in her body. That is all the fetus in question is, her tissue. There is no baby. The procedure is not murder or homicide because no person is killed.

According to some, The Episcopal Church is a Gospel preaching, Bible believing, Orthodox Church. Episcopalians are Christians. They love the Lord and are committed to doing His work in the world. Members are greatly grieved and offended when anyone suggests otherwise. To millions of people, Barak Obama is an African American and his values and proposed policies will bring the change America and the world needs. How can so many sincere, well intentioned and educated people disagree so passionately about all of these things? The most obvious explanation is that each group holds to different or contradictory definitions of the same terms. We use the same words, e.g. -"Human Rights", "Marriage" "Freedom", "Recession", "financial reform", "Socialism" and even "Black Man"; but we are often not arguing

about the same things at all. In stead of hate and anger, we must address this underlying problem of different definitions. Until we agree on definitions of terms and concepts, we shall never agree with each other. We can not even have reasonable dialogue. We need a common "dictionary" to go by, an Authority we all accept that will guide our thinking. We need to do that because we all live together in the same community (or State or Nation). Separation or the subjugation of one group by the other is not good. Agreeing on definitions would be progress, but people will naturally prefer definitions that they agree with. The Constitutional Right to "Privacy" can mean very different things. Likewise, the Right to Bear Arms is interpreted in contrary ways. People do want to have their views or acts validated. That means they always will want to have the Authority legitimize what they want! If it is the Bible or the Constitution, they will insist on their own interpretation of what it says, the interpretation that justifies their actions. Churches, Laws and Tradition have universally and historically, for many generations, agreed that Marriage involves the union of a man and a woman. That makes no difference to "Gay Rights" advocates. For their own personal reasons, to serve their self interest, they stubbornly insist on setting all that aside and rewriting the "rules" as they want them to be. Debate is futile. Common ground does not exist. It is a battle of wills, each side seeking the attrition and capitulation of the other over time. "Gay Marriage" advocates are making progress and will not quit. Attrition is happening. Society is gradually accepting their demands because society is gradually buying their argument about Civil Rights. Evangelicals are also buying the argument that Jesus, the Gospel and Christian love is about accepting and respecting diversity and being tolerant and non-judgmental. This play into the hands of the "Gay Marriage" advocates. The response to "Gay Marriage" Advocates is not direct confrontation. The best response to them is education of the open and wavering Traditionalists, especially much more extensive teaching about what the Bible (God) says about Marriage and Family. This is not the same as debating the subject of Homosexuality as such. That is a different subject. Evangelical youth need this education the most, as surveys reveal they are the segment of Evangelicals that is moving in the direction of acceptance of "Gay Marriage". We Evangelicals also (and ironically) need to teach our youth about the facts and meaning of Jesus' earthly ministry and message, the Gospel and Christian Love. They will hopefully learn that the message and ministry of Jesus, the Gospel and Love is not about being open and affirming of all values, behaviors and lifestyles that are out there in the world.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:07

Friday, October 24, 2008

## **JUST WONDERING ABOUT RACISM**

Just wondering: If it is racism when whites will not vote for Sen Obama because he is "black", is it not racism for the many Blacks who say they will vote for Sen Obama because he is black? Of course it is. But also wondering if people who will vote either for or against Obama because he is black have noticed the color of his grandmother? She is white. His mother was white. Both groups are wrong for two reasons- because they are being racist and because Obama is not a Black man! He is as much white as black. He is both. Obama is bi-racial. This "race issue" is wrongheaded and should have no part in this election. If there was ever a concept that is socially constructed it is the concept of "Races". There is no such thing. We are all human beings. There is only one Race: the Human Race. Period! We must vote for the candidates we are convinced, on credible evidence, will be best for our Country- on that basis alone!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:02

Monday, October 20, 2008

## **BARACK OBAMA'S RECORD ON ABORTION**

Lives depend on our  
vote- <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ODE0MGFkNWU4ZjZlODFiYjllODRlZmMzMzNkOTQyMTE=>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:21

Friday, October 17, 2008

## **BEING AMERICAN, BEING PATRIOTIC**

The Apostles Creed mentions the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. It grounds Jesus in a time and place. Paul makes much of his rights as a Roman citizen. That is the context in of which he lived his life. Among many other particulars that shape and govern my life is the reality of being born in 1938 and growing up in America (and for me, that was an all white, English speaking, middle class America). This is the given, historical context of my life. It is true, honest and realistic to acknowledge that I am an American. Yes, I am a Christian. (Saying I am an American does not take away from being a Christian. Being a Christian is supposed to influence what I am as an American.) America is where God in His Providence has seen fit to put me. It is right and proper that I express gratitude and thanksgiving for this Providence.

To complain or denigrate America, is to express ingratitude to God for what he has done in my life: "God, how could you do this to me? What were you thinking? This is a Nation full of greedy, selfish capitalists. It oppresses Minorities and the Poor. It is a war mongering, imperialistic Nation that oppresses other countries. It is a Land full of violence, with more people in prison than any other. How dare you place me here?" Even if any of this were true, which I adamantly dispute, I am still an American. To say I am thankful for God's providence placing me here is being both Christian and Patriotic. Many are rightfully concerned about the their personal welfare and some are concerned about the welfare of the City and the State in which they live. For all the same reasons, we must all be concerned about the welfare of the Country in which we live. This is Biblical and Christian. The Bible commands Christians to honor and pray for their Rulers, pay taxes and be obedient citizens. All of that is what Patriotism means. Whatever obligations we have to other countries, our first obligation is to our native [or adopted] land. This is the same as saying that, although we are to love all our neighbors, we must begin with our own families. This is very Biblical. It would be very unbiblical and foolish to put someone else's wife or children ahead of my own. Locally, we celebrate Puerto Rico, Ireland, Greece, Poland and Italy and the Caribbean countries (among others). But our history and heritage as Americans is unique and must come before all others. (All who immigrate here and become citizens need to respect and honor this.) Many people, including people born in this country, seem to find it very difficult to admit and acknowledge God's Hand in the creation of this Nation and the unique Biblical Foundations upon which it is built- unlike any other Nation. I am very grateful to God that I am an American. I know and cherish those foundational Principles and Values which are uniquely American. I believe in American Exceptionalism. "American exceptionalism, a term coined by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1831, has been historically referred to as the perception that the United States differs qualitatively from other developed nations, because of its unique origins, national credo, historical evolution, and distinctive political and religious institutions. American exceptionalism is the idea that the United States and the American people hold a special place in the world, by offering opportunity and hope for humanity, derived from a unique balance of public and private interests governed by constitutional ideals that are focused on personal and economic freedom."- Wikipedia Believing in American Exceptionalism is being Patriotic. I do not see how a Biblical and historically informed American Christian could not believe in it. Another good reason to be Patriotic, that Christians should gladly endorse, is that Patriotism counters the perverse myopia rampant among us. When we think of our Nation and our fellow citizens and act on what is good for all of us, as a people, one Nation under God, we are saved from the selfish indulgence of me-ism and the ever fragmenting effect of increasing tribalism, as we divide and compete over special and local interests. The American Ideal is E PLURIBUS UNUM That, too, is Patriotism

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:21

Monday, September 15, 2008

## **DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY: a concern for Christians?**

China spent the last 7 years getting ready for the Olympics. They spent billions to clean-up, fix-up, modernize and construct buildings for the Event. The USA spent the last 7 years and billions seeking to end the threat of another terrorist attack like "9/11". Which Country accomplished the most for their effort? - got the most value for their money?

According to an article on the subject in Wikipedia-"The War on Terrorism (also known as the War on Terror) is the common term for the various military, political and legal actions initiated by the United States government, in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks. The official objectives of the 2001 War on Terrorism are to counter terrorist threats, prevent terrorist acts and curb the influence of terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda." There have been 69 alleged terrorists acts or attempted acts and responses by the USA in these seven years. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are part of this larger War on Terrorism. There had been previous attacks, attempts to attack and threats to attack before 9/11. Our Country entered Afghanistan immediately after 9/11 to seek and destroy the terrorist organization, Al-Qaida, led by Osama bin Laden. The latter were responsible for the deaths of the approximately 3000 innocent people we recently commemorated. They were driven from that Country into Pakistan where they are still very strong and active. In Afghanistan, another terrorist organization, the Taliban, is also still alive and well. This means the War on Terrorism is still very much with us. But there is a whole other dimension to this War. With respect to defining his policy known as the War on Terror, President Bush has stated that: "...today's war on terror is like the Cold War. It is an ideological struggle with an enemy that despises freedom and pursues totalitarian aims....I vowed then that I would use all assets of our power of Shock and Awe to win the war on terror. And so I said we were going to stay on the offense two ways: one, hunt down the enemy and bring them to justice, and take threats seriously; and two, spread freedom." [my emphasis added][http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_on\\_Terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_on_Terrorism) Spreading "freedom" and democracy (and to resist threats to the same) is the current definition of the "Bush Doctrine" and the proposed mission of America in the world. How are we doing? What is the state of political freedom in the world today. How big is this mission? Here are some results from the latest survey on this subject by Freedom House-The population of the world as estimated in mid-2007 was 6,604.9 million persons, who reside in 193 sovereign states. The level of political rights and civil liberties as shown comparatively by the Freedom House survey is: Free: 3,028.2 million (46 percent of the world's population) live in 90 of the states. Partly Free: 1,185.3 million (18 percent of the world's population) live in 60 of the states. Not Free: 2,391.4 million (36 percent of the world's population) live in 43 of the states. The year also saw the intensification of an effort by authoritarian regimes to consolidate their power through the suppression of democratic opposition, civil society, and independent media—a process also known as the pushback against democracy. Freedom of association suffered a setback on a global scale, as governments in various regions initiated policies to weaken or neutralize nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), human rights monitoring groups, and trade unions. Especially important in carrying out this assault on civil society were a group of market-oriented autocracies and energy-rich dictatorships that combine elements of a capitalist economy with sophisticated techniques of political repression. These were among the principal findings of Freedom in the World 2008, Freedom House's annual survey of political rights and civil liberties worldwide. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=130&year=2008> A related article about the decline of democracy in the world is here-[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2008/09/14/democracy\\_on\\_the\\_wane/?page=1](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2008/09/14/democracy_on_the_wane/?page=1) Is belief in political and economic freedom a Biblical belief? Is the pursuit of such freedom, as well as its defense against its enemies, a Biblical duty for our Nation? for Christians? Yes, Yes and Yes

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:26

Friday, September 12, 2008

## **BAFFLE GRAB ON THE FLAKE**

"We need change, all right. Change from a liberal Washington to a conservative Washington. We have a prescription for every American who wants change in Washington - throw out the big-government liberals."- Mitt Romney, Sept. 3, 2008 And then the gorilla run knee socks paint porno on the Cadillac. But school laughed and didn't we sing hats? Maybe you wonder what the preceding gobbledygook means. I would ask which gobbledygook you mean: mine or Mitt Romney's? If he's allowed to spew nonsense and people act as if he's spoken intelligently, why can't I? If he gets to behave as if words no longer have objective meaning, why can't I? I mean, baffle grab on the freak flake. Really. And people hear this Orwellian doublespeak ... and cheer. Why not? They have been taught that words mean what you need them to in a given moment. And all [that] costs us is language, the ability to have reasoned and intelligent political discourse, the idea that words do, and should, have weight, dimension and intrinsic meaning. Maybe you disagree. In which case, let me just say this: Piffle crack eat monkey snow." This is from both a clever and educational article by Leonard Pitt.

He lambastes Mitt Romney for what the Governor said in a recent speech. Mr. Pitt accuses Mr. Romney of spouting gobbledygook, which he then illustrates with statements like "Piffle crack eat monkey snow." It is true that college students in Literary Theory classes are taught that words can mean anything you want them to mean. They have no intrinsic, objective meaning. This argument is used to denigrate the Bible and claims made to understand it. Conservative Evangelicals believe the words of Scripture do, indeed, have objective meaning and that we can know what that is. Scripture is not gobbledygook. But gobbledygook does not make a sentence. There is no subject or predicate in gobbledygook. There is no structure, no syntax, no grammar in something like "Piffle crack eat monkey snow." That is just a string of words. Mr Pitt is really accusing Mr. Romney of using normal sentences to say things that are untrue. This he says is intellectual dishonesty. He says Mr. Romney's sentences do violence to language and logic. Gobbledygook does that. Mr. Romney's statements do not do that. The Governor's sentences are fine. He just uses them to say things Mr. Pitt disagrees with. That does not make Mr. Romney's statements nonsense as statements. What Mr. Pitt is really accusing the Governor of doing is doublespeak. This means the Governor uses words with a different or opposite meaning than usual and does not tell anybody that. People hear him say one thing, when he is really saying something else by the same words. Did Mr. Romney do this in his speech? This is dishonest when it happens and it happens all the time but it did not happen with this speech in question. To me, Mr. Romney spoke the truth because I agree with him, i.e.- I agree with the definition of the words as he used them. Mr. Pitt, hearing the same speech, heard something else because he disagrees with Mr. Romney. His words meant something different to Mr. Pitt. It would be good if we need could get every one to agree on the definitions of the words they use. That once was far more possible in America say 100 years ago, even 50 years ago, than now. Most people agreed on the meaning of words like freedom, justice, God, marriage, peace, morality, human rights, common good, patriotism, poverty, honesty, charity and truth. Folks may not have agreed with the meaning, but they agreed on what the meaning was. And that was because some 100 years ago, most Americans shared a common language and Religion and the same basic moral and social values (even when they did not follow them). Hence, words meant the same thing to most of us. Gobbledygook and Doublespeak were not the problem we have now. Although we need to get every one to agree on the definitions of the words they use, I believe those days of sharing a common language and Religion and the same basic moral and social values by the majority are long gone.

[http://www.sunjournal.com/story/281874-3/Columnist/Romneys\\_classic\\_case\\_of\\_intellectual\\_dishonesty/](http://www.sunjournal.com/story/281874-3/Columnist/Romneys_classic_case_of_intellectual_dishonesty/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:36

## **TROPIC CASCADE and GAY MARRIAGE**

Many commentators on the subject of gay marriage here in Massachusetts love to say the sky did not fall when it became legal. The world did not end. So what was all the alarm? The alarm was about long term, not immediate, effects of the acceptance of gay marriage in our society. Ideas have consequences, often unintended. This is one of them. Another one, to illustrate my point, is about the extermination of wolves in the 1920's and they damage that has caused in this Century "The extermination of wolves in the United States was a source of national pride in the early 20th century. Biologists thought livestock would be safe from marauders and game such as elk would flourish, leaving a bounty for hunters. But the consequences would ripple through the decades, affecting ecosystems in ways no 1920s wolf-hunting government biologist could have foreseen -- including altering rivers in Olympic National Park in

## Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>

Washington. Heavy elk grazing has transformed steep-sloped rivers densely bordered with vegetation into shallow, sediment-heavy flows, Oregon State University's Robert Beschta and William Ripple report this month in the journal *Ecohydrology*. These changed rivers may affect fisheries and local highways. The chain of events that results from the loss of a top predator is called a trophic cascade." The change of events that will result from the acceptance of Gay Marriage will be, over time, the loss of Marriage as we have known it all our lives. That can be called a catas-trophic cascade![http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2008/07/century\\_without\\_wolves\\_alters.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2008/07/century_without_wolves_alters.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:29

Saturday, August 2, 2008

## **PARENTING AND INCOME INEQUALITY**

“Churches could use [the attached research] to argue for a different kind of social ministry, one that emphasizes parenting skills as much as poverty alleviation. Also, it shows once again, that the soft patriarchy model of the family is quite good for all involved. But, to me, it mostly argues that God had it right when he created male and female to be fruitful and multiply.” Studies repeatedly give abundant evidence that God’s norms for marriage and family are essential to the emotional and economic well-being of children. Repeatedly we read how essential a good (relevant) education is to the reduction of poverty. Want money, get a job. Want a job get an appropriate education. Want an appropriate education be brought up in a family that functions according to God’s Biblical Norms (even if it is not a Christian family). Such a family has parents that love and respect each other, are married and living together. Children in such a family, no matter what it’s social and educational status, will be encouraged, supported and enabled to get an education. That is what it takes to “reduce income inequality”. Read the article and it’s link [http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2008/07/parenting\\_a\\_lea\\_1.html](http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2008/07/parenting_a_lea_1.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:56

Saturday, June 21, 2008

## **BEWARE "ISLAMOPHOBIA"**

In the post below, about the negative consequences of the legalization of so-called "Gay Marriage" for society over time, I linked to articles that spelled out the potential threat to both freedom of Speech and Religion: woe to any who dare criticize or disagree with homosexual behavior. The language of Civil Rights will be used to deny those very Rights on behalf of special interest groups. Elsewhere on this Blog I have written against the danger of the steady increase of laws against so-called Hate Crimes- some Authority, representing the Civil Government, reading the thoughts and determining the intention in the mind of the doer of specific actions. This raises the specter of "The Thought Police" common in much fiction and many movies. Ironically, the "hate crime" may well be in the thought and intentions of those who bring accusations of hate crime against those who disagree with them. A very chilling example in the current news is the attempt by Islamic groups to make it illegal for anyone to criticize Islam. This, they say, would be the hate crime of "Islamophobia", which is compared to Homophobia. This attempt, if successful, is another threat to our freedoms of Speech and Religion. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121382874218086413.html?mod=djemEditorialPage>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:56

Thursday, June 19, 2008

## **THE DANGERS IN LEGALIZING "GAY MARRIAGE"**

My concern here is not with the subject of "same sex marriage", but with the consequences for society of its legal and social acceptance. The consequence is disastrous. Our newspaper editorials frequently celebrate the growing legal and social acceptance of "gay marriage", first here in Massachusetts and now in California. Letters to the local paper love to indicate that the world has not stopped turning. The sky has not fallen. There have been only salutary consequences for society. There is nothing to fear. All will be well. Here are two articles that argue the contrary. Not only is the entire concept of traditional "Marriage" itself endangered, but so are the freedoms of Speech and Religion. <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-stern17-2008jun17,0,5628051.story><http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ZGNmODNiMjI0MTQ1MTQwNGM4N2YyNmVhY2UyZTE0OWY>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 21:16

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

## **FATHERS AND POVERTY**

A friend went to a conference recently. It was about seeking solutions to the problem of poverty in America. When I see him I will ask if they addressed the issue of children growing up without their biological fathers in the home. There are at least 24 million children (one out of three) in this situation today. This is one of the major predictors of poverty.- Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor. In 2002, 7.8 percent of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 38.4 percent of children in female-householder families. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, P200-547, Table C8. Washington D.C.: GPO, 2003.- During the year before their babies were born, 43% of unmarried mothers received welfare or food stamps, 21% received some type of housing subsidy, and 9% received another type of government transfer (unemployment insurance etc.). For women who have another child, the proportion who receive welfare or food stamps rises to 54%. Source: McLanahan, Sara. The Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study: Baseline National Report. Princeton, NJ: Center for Research on Child Well-being, 2003: 13.- A child with a nonresident father is 54 percent more likely to be poorer than his or her father. Source: Sorenson, Elaine and Chava Zibman. "Getting to Know Poor Fathers Who Do Not Pay Child Support." Social Service Review 75 (September 2001): 420-434.- When compared by family structure, 45.9% of poor single-parent families reported material hardship compared to 38.6% of poor two parent families. For unpoor families who did not experience material hardship, 23.3% were single-parent families compared to 41.2% of two-parent families. Source: Beverly, Sondra G., "Material hardship in the United States: Evidence from the Survey of Income and Program Participation." Social Work Research 25 (September 2001): 143-151.3Excellent resource on this subject:[https://www.fatherhood.org/father\\_factor.asp](https://www.fatherhood.org/father_factor.asp)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:51

## **LESSONS FROM THE POOR**

"Government aid impedes success and creates dependence, while entrepreneurs create success and independence." "Listening to Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton repeat stories they claim to have been told by the poor and the unemployed, who are unable to pay for food and medicine and feel miserable about it, is enough to make one think we are living in a Third World dictatorship and not the United States of America. But victimhood and a "can't do" spirit is what the Democratic Party has mostly been about since the Great Depression. A more positive narrative comes from a new book, "Lessons from the Poor: Triumph of the Entrepreneurial Spirit," edited by Alvaro Vargas Llosa and published by the Independent Institute." <http://jewishworldreview.com/cols/thomas061008.php3>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:48

## **CAL THOMAS QUOTES:**

[Government mandated] "wealth redistribution [is] an economic philosophy at the center of the former Soviet Union. [Some politicians] wish to embrace it now in order to make more people dependent on government, rather than encourage people to rely on themselves and the opportunity America offers to most citizens, even illegal aliens. Guaranteed equal outcome is socialism." "America was built on and sustained by a "can do" spirit. Today, too many are taught a "can't do" spirit. They are told that because of factors over which they have no control - race, class, poverty - it is impossible for them to do anything for themselves and so they must increasingly rely on government. Government doesn't cure poverty. It merely sets up barriers that ensure that too many poor people will remain locked in poverty." <http://www.calthomas.com/index.php?news=2294>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:44

Tuesday, June 3, 2008

## **THE RELIGION OF ENVIRONMENTALISM**

"The largest threat to freedom, democracy, the market economy and prosperity," warns Czech President Vaclav Klaus, "is no longer socialism. It is, instead, the ambitious, arrogant, unscrupulous ideology of environmentalism." "For a century, an ambitious, arrogant, unscrupulous knowledge class -- social planners, scientists, intellectuals, experts and their left-wing political allies -- arrogated to themselves the right to rule either in the name of the oppressed working class (communism) or, in its more benign form, by virtue of their superior expertise in achieving the highest social progress by means of state planning (socialism). Two decades ago, however, socialism and communism died rudely, then were buried forever by the empirical demonstration of the superiority of market capitalism everywhere ... [and that it has] lifted more people out of poverty more rapidly than ever in human history. Just as the ash heap of history beckoned, the intellectual left was handed the ultimate salvation: environmentalism. Now the experts will regulate your life ... in the name of Earth itself. Environmentalists are Gaia's priests, instructing us in her proper service and casting out those who refuse to genuflect. (See Newsweek above.) And having proclaimed the ultimate commandment -- carbon chastity -- they are preparing the supporting canonical legislation that will tell you how much you can travel, what kind of light you will read by, and at what temperature you may set your bedroom thermostat." Read the entire article by Charles Krauthammer here - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/29/AR2008052903266.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:55

Tuesday, May 27, 2008

## **IS FIGHTING ABORTION STILL TOP PRIORITY?**

Ever since C. Everett Koop and Francis Schaeffer pricked our consciences, abortion has been on the front burner for socially minded evangelicals. Thirty-five years since *Roe v. Wade*, it's time to ask whether it should remain the sine qua non of Christian social engagement. Claiming to represent the new center, an increasingly self-confident wing of sincere evangelicals thinks not. "The evangelical social agenda is now much broader and deeper," asserts Jim Wallis in his new book, *The Great Awakening*, "engaging issues such as poverty and economic justice, global warming, hiv/aids, sex trafficking, genocide in Darfur, and the ethics of the war in Iraq." [Many Evangelicals] seem to be saying that fighting legalized abortion—the deliberate, state-sanctioned taking of 50 million unborn human lives from their mothers' wombs since 1973 (and the accompanying national guilt)—should simply be one item among many on an ever-expanding evangelical to-do list. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/may/28.66.html>

Should abortion be the top moral priority of our time? It should not. Being pro-life should be. The first God-given universal Human Right is the Right to live. Life is the highest priority. If we accept the definition that human life begins at the moment of conception, then eliminating voluntary abortion (the intentional taking of that human life) should remain a top priority among moral issues in our Society. Conception is the fertilization of an egg by a sperm. This is the beginning of an embryo, a human being. Some birth control methods prevent sperm from reaching the egg and thus fertilization. The fertilized egg, called a zygote, undergoes rapid cell division and growth. This cell mass, now called the blastocyst, is implanted into the inner wall of the mother's uterus, where it will remain for the duration of prenatal development. The embryo is called a fetus after eight weeks. Some birth control methods prevent the blastocyst from being implanted in the uterus. Since there is normally a continuum from conception to birth, it can be said that the zygote, blastocyst, fetus and the embryo are a human being at different developmental stages. Every human child and adult began his or her life at conception. The adult is a zygote fully developed. To prevent conception is to prevent a specific human being. To destroy a zygote (or a blastocyst, fetus and the embryo) is to destroy a specific human being. Every human being becomes a Person. A Person is a composite of all those attributes or faculties that Human Beings possess because they are created in, conceived to be, the Image of God. To me the most compelling argument for insisting that an embryo is a human being is that being a "person" involves having a body. This is what makes the resurrection of the physical body so essential and important. Persons can not exist as disembodied spirits. A Person is not tripartite: body, souls and spirit; but rather a person is a unity: one. Body is integral to being a Person. Inasmuch as the body begins with conception, so does personhood. What about the "soul"? Soul or *Nepesh* [naw fahsh] is used 700 times in the Bible. It never means "soul" as that word is commonly understood today. The root meaning of *Nepesh* is "breath". It is used in that basic sense. (Genesis 1:30, 2:7, 7:21) *Nepesh* comes to mean anything with breath. This includes all beings, animals- "living creatures" (Genesis 1:20,21,24 also 2:19, 7:21, 9:9-16) *Nepesh* comes to mean a human being, i.e.- Man is a soul. (Genesis 12:5,13;14:21; 17:14) Finally, *Nepesh* also can mean the emotional center of human beings (cf English "heart") Note: Hebrew for "heart" is *LEB* and that normally means the intellectual and volitional center---these are not technical, precise terms] Psalm 6:3 My soul is in anguish. Psalm 107:9 God satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry soul with good things. Psalm 119:20 My soul is consumed with longing... Psalm 35:9 my soul will rejoice in the LORD. Deuteronomy 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart [LAY VAHV= MIND] and with all your soul. Thus, conception could be said to be the beginning of a "soul" and abortion the death of a soul. All of these issues are wrapped up in the one subject of Abortion- top priority, indeed! The meaning and value of being human and a person is extremely important and is under serious assault in many quarters today. Many other subjects are related to Abortion including Sexuality, Gender Roles (a "woman's rights") and Marriage and Family. Being Pro-Life is at the top of the list for good reason and it must not be dismissed as a Fundamentalist obsession. The solution to such problems such as World Poverty and Aids actually requires that we address first the issues involved with Abortion. The latter is not an add-on or only one of many priorities. When the world is truly Pro-Life, Pro-Human first, then it will have the platform from which to address seriously all the other Social and Economic and Political Issues.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:47

## **POLYGAMY: Pro and Con**

Here is a very interesting discussion of the social, moral, Biblical and legal/constitutional issues on this subject, which is far more relevant to most of us than you have thought. There are also helpful links. [This is a different subject than the one above about the abuse of government authority in the raid of a Mormon community and the arbitrary and unfair removal of more than 400 children found there by State agencies.]

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/mayweb-only/121-52.0.html?start=1>

**Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>**

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:35

Friday, May 23. 2008

## **MISUNDERSTANDING MARRIAGE**

"Society has a vested interest in promoting only traditional marriage. Men and women are not interchangeable, and same-sex unions - no matter how devoted and enduring - cannot take the place of a married husband and wife. The essential function of marriage is to unite male and female. That is the only kind of union that can produce new life, and therefore the only kind of union in which society has a survival stake. Of course many gay and lesbian relationships are stable, loving, and happy. But since they cannot do what marriage can - bind men and women to each other and to the children that their sexual behavior may produce - they have never been regarded in the same light as marriage.

Somehow, that crucial distinction eluded a majority of the California Supreme Court. Happily, California voters will soon have the chance to make things right." - Jeff

Jacoby [http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2008/05/21/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/05/21/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:19

## **EDUCATION: A RIGHT OR A RESPONSIBILITY?**

Is Education a Right? An Activist on behalf of the education of African American children wrote an article recently in our local paper discussing the pitiful plight of many of our cities' young people because they do not complete High School - about half of them do not graduate. He was especially concerned because the majority of the drop outs are "Minority" children. Actually, he expressed outrage that the local, State and Federal governments were not doing enough to prevent and reverse this trend. He insisted the latter must solve the problem because "Education is a Human Right". Therefore, Government must provide it.

The essayist was talking about public school "education". Inasmuch as becoming educated in a school requires both a Teacher and a Student and is a process in which both must be actively, willingly engaged, the Essayist can only mean the Government is obligated to provide Teachers and an environment conducive to learning. The latter would include a curriculum, materials, methodologies and the goals and standards by which learning is measured. It is all of this which it is the right of every child. The writer assumes that if the Government provides this, children will want to stay in school, do his part in the educational process and become "educated" and graduate. That, I might add, is not proven or guaranteed - certainly not for the pupils currently dropping out. My question: Is Education a "Right", meaning does every child have a right for the Government to provide all that is necessary for every child to graduate from High School? Again, notice the assumption that graduating is the responsibility of the Government, not the student or his family. The Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and its Bill of Rights do not include a public school education for every child as a "Right". There are a multitude of personal rights that that we claim as husbands, wives, parents, children, property owners, gun owners and sportsmen, employees, tenants, landlords, and consumers. Many do claim that health insurance, education, a driver's license, housing --- and education are all claimed as Rights. The word "rights" commonly means deserved privileges, entitlements: Such and such is "due" to me or others. It is owed to me or to "them". We commonly believe it is our right to receive or enjoy what we believe is owed or due to us. Inasmuch as there is an ever expanding list of Rights being claimed in our Society. How far will we go? Who or what determines exactly what "Rights" are right? What determines whose rights prevail when they conflict? The Courts? Legislature? States? The federal Government? The Public through binding Referenda? This issue is certainly in the foreground with the decision last week of the California Supreme Court declaring by one vote (4-3) that homosexuals have the same right to marry as heterosexuals even though over a million Californians disagreed. [See the Post preceding this one] A few weeks ago, Courts decided that Fundamentalist Mormons do not have the right to practice polygamy or marriage and family as they understand it. Who decides what is the "Right" thing and on what basis? The phrase "Human Rights" is not found in the Bible. (Some modern translations do use the word "rights" occasionally.) Phrases such as "right to life/to die", equal rights", "women's rights", "gay rights", "animal rights" are not found in Scripture. However, there is a concept of Rights in the Bible and it is always connected to the concept of Responsibilities. The two must not be separated and both are grounded in God, His Revelation and Covenant. (The very meaning of "Human", as in human rights, can itself only be truly understood in relationship to God, whose image defines us) Remove or separate the latter from the former and there is no justified or certain (should I say absolute) ground for either Rights or for Justice.

Biblically, "Rights" are whatever God says they are. God-given Responsibilities are the converse of God-given Rights. (People have both a right to live and People have the responsibility to protect and preserve such life.) Rights and Responsibilities are defined by God's Law. Neither are something to be given or taken by Society or Government. Biblical Rights and Responsibilities take precedence over all society-made civil rights, legal rights, employees rights, consumer rights, etc. All such secondary or peripheral "rights" are to be evaluated, accepted or rejected, in light of the

God given, and truly inalienable, universal Human Rights. In the Creation Narrative, found in the first two chapters of Genesis, the Torah (the Law), we find Three Human Rights and their corollary Responsibilities. I will summarize them here. 1. Everyone has a right to physical life- to live. No person has the right to deprive another person of life or of anything essential to living. Every person has the responsibility to live and to preserve and protect the lives of all other people. 2. All men and women have the right to marry and produce children. Conversely, all men and women have the responsibility to marry and produce children [unless God has made this literally impossible in specific cases]NOTE: The use of "men and women" here is based on the Biblical definition of Marriage, which is the prerequisite for procreation. By that definition (found in Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:4-6), homosexuals do not have a God-given "right" to Marriage. 3. Every one has the right and responsibility to work to sustain life, for self and for others. This includes the right and responsibility to secure an education, training and skills required to work productively. It is the Parents responsibility to see to this on behalf of their children. It is not the responsibility of the Government. These are the three most fundamental, universal Human Rights and Responsibilities. In order to have a realistic opportunity to actualize them, there is a logical, concomitant Essential: Freedom. All human beings must have political and economic and social freedom, opportunity and security to enable them to exercise these rights and responsibilities. Conclusion: Becoming educated is not only a right, but a responsibility to one's self, one's family, one's society and to God. It is a duty and necessity to become educated. This is not the same as saying it is the right to receive and education from the Government. Parents who value education will see to it that their children will attend and complete School (of some kind) and the children themselves will be raised to personally value and pursue education (not simply a Degree) throughout their lives. Personally, this was never an issue for myself or my family or for anyone else close to us. We went to school. We worked hard and excelled at it. It was expected of us and we expected it of ourselves. Dropping out was never an option! Yes, all children deserve and need the best that Schools can offer. But the most obvious cause of the high drop out rate is dysfunctional, usually single parent, "families". When parents have their act together, children will too! That is a far more basic Right all children have.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:06

## **THE GREEN LEFT AND POLAR BEARS**

Today's "green left" is the old "red left" revised. Marx, a short-term pessimist but a long-term optimist, prophesied deepening class conflict but thought that history's violent dialectic would culminate in a revolution that would usher in material abundance and such spontaneous cooperation that the state would wither away. The green left preaches pessimism: Ineluctable scarcities (of energy, food, animal habitat, humans' living space) will require a perpetual regime of comprehensive rationing. The green left understands that the direct route to government control of almost everything is to stigmatize, as a planetary menace, something involved in almost everything -- carbon. Environmentalism is, as Lawson writes, an unlimited "license to intrude." "Eco-fundamentalism," which is "the quasi-religion of green alarmism," promises "global salvationism." Onward, green soldiers, into preventive war on behalf of some bears who are simultaneously flourishing and "threatened." - from George Will's column <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/21>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 06:59

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

"As with any other subject, when exploring environmental ethics, one needs to discern the underlying worldview in order to understand and critique it. What is the philosophy's view of humankind in relation to nature? Is human progress seen as bad, good, or even the central issue? Is there a true balance between the biblical elevation of man as steward/co-creator/image-bearer and the avoidance of that role's abuse? Backing up a step, is the assumption of man as superior to the rest of nature mere arrogance? What are the foundational presuppositions of the various branches of today's environmental movement and where do they lead?" Here are some good resources from the article just quoted-<http://www.leaderu.com/focus/environment01.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:42

## **THE GLOBAL WARNING'S DANGEROUS DOGMA**

"Expelled" the movie has many Christians rightly concerned about the expulsion from the Academy of those who teach Intelligent Design in their classes. They clamor for academic freedom to teach ID. At the same time, many of the same Christians are adamant about denying such freedom to those who would question the current campaign to convince everyone that human behavior (especially American) is the cause of Global Warming. Many Christians have no problem accepting that accepted "scientifically proved" dogma even while they question the accepted "scientifically proved" dogma of Darwinism. Here are excellent articles about this by Thomas Derr "Global warming has achieved the status of a major threat. It inspires nightmares of a troubled future and propels apocalyptic dramas such as the summer 2004 movie The Day After Tomorrow. Even were the Kyoto treaty to be fully implemented, it wouldn't make a dent in the warming trend, which seems to be inexorable. Doom is upon us. Except that maybe it isn't. You might not know it from ordinary media accounts, which report the judgments of alarmists as "settled science," but there is a skeptical side to the argument. Scientists familiar with the issues involved have written critically about the theory of global warming. The puzzle is why these commentators, well-credentialed and experienced, have been swept aside to produce a false "consensus." What is it that produces widespread agreement among both "experts" and the general public on a hypothesis which is quite likely wrong?"

-T.Derr <http://carnageandculture.blogspot.com/2007/07/thomas-sieger-derr-politics-of-global.html> [http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id\\_article=6000](http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=6000) [http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id\\_article=395](http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=395)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:35

## **HUNGRY BABIES**

Last week, another "summit" of Community activists about the problem of unemployment in this area. There is no end to the string of "Summits". And this afternoon, our Police Commissioner will announce his plans to prevent trouble this Summer among unemployed youth. Most of the youth here drop out of school. We also have the highest rate of illegitimacy in the State. And one of the highest rates of poverty in the country- mostly involving unwed mothers and their small children. The State must solve these problems. We need more money to fund more programs- That is the hue and cry. Why are folks so obdurate about accepting the obvious? Youth must graduate from High School. They must pursue skills in High School and beyond that make them employable. They must not have children until they (not the State) can support them or are at least married to someone who is employed in a decent job. It will always come down to these basics. Always! No excuses! No exceptions! <http://jewishworldreview.com/cols/fields041008.php3>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:20

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

## **KILLING GIRLS**

Abortion of girls: A different pro-life argument

[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 06:58

## **UNHEALTHY CARE**

Health Care and Civil Government

<http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/pipes200601260811.asp>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 06:54

Saturday, March 22, 2008

## **EASTER AND THE AUDACITY TO HOPE**

"...what my former pastor too often failed to understand is that ... society can change. The profound mistake of Reverend Wright's sermons is not that he spoke about racism in our society. It's that he spoke as if our society was static; as if no progress has been made; as if this country - a country that has made it possible for one of his own members to run for the highest office in the land and build a coalition of white and black; Latino and Asian, rich and poor, young and old -- is still irrevocably bound to a tragic past. But what we know -- what we have seen - is that America can change. That is true genius of this nation. What we have already achieved gives us hope - the audacity to hope - for what we can and must achieve tomorrow." [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/03/18/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_53.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/03/18/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_53.php)

I enjoyed the now famous speech of Barak Obama from which the above words are taken. I wish Mr McCain could write and deliver a message like that! I admit I was emotionally moved, not only by the rhetoric, but also by the Vision in the speech. I hope that the sermon I hear tomorrow in church will touch me the same way! That is the reason for the rhetoric- to stir and move hearts to dream and take action. Sermons should do the same. I do not agree with what Mr. Obama envisions the action should be, but his dream, the same as Martin Luther King Jr., is mine as well. I wish we had a conservative Republican who could light the same fire and stir the same passion and then show how the dream can be achieved on traditional conservative Republican Principles! Actually, the Dream of Racial Harmony [the end of racism] as well Equal opportunity [not outcome] and Equity [fair share] for all also requires conversion to Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all. This brings me to the above quote from the speech. I understand what Mr. Obama said and I recognize the truth and fairness of his explanation of where his former pastor was coming from when he preached. There was nothing new to me there. That Preacher. Rev Mr. Wright, echoed the sentiments of many African Americans (correct or not- see below). Conservative White people who do not know or associate with African Americans, let alone attend their Services, would find Pastor Wright's remarks a puzzle at best and very offensive at worse (Radical Leftist Whites would agree with much of it). The comment Mr. Obama makes that I have excerpted above struck me most on this Easter weekend. We are celebrating Christ's victory over the impossible. That gives all of us who believe in Him, the audacity of hope for victory over the impossible in our lives, in our society. Christ is the only hope for victory in Tibet, too, and in the Gaza Strip and in Pakistan and in Iraq- all places where people hate and kill each other and where division is so deep reconciliation is humanly impossible. The Easter Story assures us that miracles are possible in all these Nations and in ours as well. Because of the empty tomb, we have the audacity to hope for these things! Also see this commentary by this Black Pastor who carries solid Reformed credentials <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/marchweb-only/112-44.0.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:32

## **WHAT IS RIGHT ABOUT PASTOR WRIGHT'S SERMON**

Many of the comments in the Blogosphere about Pastor Wright's now infamous sermon and Barak Obama's response reveal that narrow mindedness, hate and racism do very much exist among white people. Every Bible believer knows that sin does find us out and the sins of fathers do lead to dire consequences for sons. These are oft repeated Biblical axioms. The fact is that white people did endorse and profit from African slave trade. Italian, Jewish and Irish immigrants were not brought here against their will to be slaves, only Black Africans were. Italian, Jewish and Irish immigrants had very hard times making it in America, but it was their choice to come and to remain here. Not so Black Africans. Italian, Jewish and Irish immigrants were not specifically denominated as property in our Constitution and thereby denied their "inalienable rights" as "men".

Yes, hundreds of years have gone by. None of us living today took part in slavery, but the consequences of that evil continue. The Bible holds all people responsible for their choices and behavior. But it is also true that much of the behavior of many, these many years later, still is the result of choices made under the influence of that slavery past (including years of segregation and discrimination that followed) We whites may deeply resent that reality. That only makes it worse. The sins of the fathers are visited upon their sons, even centuries later. This axiom will also be illustrated by our country's condoning the practice of abortion. Do you think we can condone the killing of millions of babies every year and not pay the as a price as a Nation? Many white Preachers have warned that America is under the judgment of God for this evil and that God will bring His wrath upon our Nation because of it (many other kinds of evils might and have been included here) Now if white people can agree with their Preachers who say God will judge

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America and bring down His Wrath upon it for the evil of Abortion, how can we be outraged when a Black Preacher says God will damn America for the evil of Racism? Only if we do not agree that America is racist or that racism is evil. [Mr Wright indicts our National Government for many things he says are evil. I do take great exception to much of what he claims to be factual] The actual title of Pastor Wright's sermon was "Confusing God and Government". We Americans do well to heed the warning of that disastrous error. It is actually patriotic when we warn America of its idolatries and other evils and call it to repent as Jonah did Nineveh. This can lead to the Nation being saved from God's Wrath and blessed by Him instead. Note: Pastor Wright would have been much wiser if he used the Biblical word, "curse" instead of "damn". When he says that his language ("God damn America") is Biblical, he is referring to texts like Deuteronomy 30 See both articles on this Blog <http://purechurch.blogspot.com/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:26

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

## **BRING ON THE CASINOS! AND OTHER FALLACIOUS ARGUMENTS**

It really annoys me when I read letters to the editor which use fallacious arguments. Probably most of them do. For example, this morning a writer was supporting the move to bring Casinos to our area. His fallacious reasoning? Casinos and scratch tickets are both gambling, he said. Since the latter is ok, the former is ok also. Bring on the casinos!

Well, I don't agree that scratch tickets are ok. (I have stood in line at convenience stores in poor neighborhoods, behind people who are putting down a lot of money- the last time the man in front of me paid out 10 ten dollar bills. They scratch them and invariably lose and throw away the expensive but worthless tickets within minutes after purchase- foolishness to me!) But the false argument is in making the casinos and scratch tickets equivalent. Yes, both involve gambling, but the similarity ends there and the stakes that are involved are very different beyond that! The casino is not a paper scratch ticket- it is a multi-acre multi-million dollar destination resort for the purposes of "gaming" and assorted entertainments. Thousands of people make their income off these "Resorts" and that is a major argument for them: jobs (the other is income for the State. That also applies to the lotteries) But, there is a huge social cost (gambling addiction, crime) as well as major changes in the local area with negative impact on local property values, roads and traffic, housing, schools and businesses. Scratch tickets and casinos are two very different matters, even if both involve taking a chance. Beware invalid arguments. And vote against the proposed casinos! The arguments in support of changing the gun laws in Washington DC illustrate another common fallacious argument. Both sides insist they are debating the same issue when they are not. In this case (and another currently before the Supreme Court), one side is arguing for the perceived constitutional right of all citizens to carry loaded, concealed handguns. (They assume that was what the Framers of the Bill of Rights intended in the 18th century). The other side is arguing about maintaining law and order in DC (and in National Parks in the other current case). This side marshals statistics about the use of handguns in crime and has the support of many Law Enforcement Officers to continue the present ban. The first group pays no attention to the crime stats. The second group does not heed the arguments being made about citizens right to bear arms. Nobody wins an argument or debate when they are really talking about very different subjects. They are arguing from different premises and will always end in disagreement because of that. The same is true about the argument that is supposed to be about Abortion. One side starts with the premise that embryos and fetuses are human beings and therefore, killing them is murder or at least homicide. The other side rejects that premise outright and thus will not agree to the conclusion. They go on to argue about the right of a woman to do as she will with her body, including having a lump of cells [not a human being] removed if she chooses. Another argument about homicide (the taking of one human life by another) is made by activists against all war and all capital punishment. They say, among other things, that the Bible forbids all "killing". They assume that "killing" means murder. Therefore, the Bible says, all killing (homicide) is murder. It is not. The conclusion is invalid because the premises are not valid and that is because the assumption about the meaning of "killing" is not valid. The Bible grants the State, as God's Servant, the right to wage just war (which includes the taking of human lives or justified homicide) and to execute capital punishment in certain cases (another justified homicide). What the Bible forbids is unjustified homicide, i.e.- murder.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:56

## **OUR SIN SHALL FIND US OUT**

How do we as Americans bemoan and berate the high illegitimacy rate among teenagers or unwed mothers living alone with their children with the absence of husbands who are also the fathers when Celebrities are commonly celebrated for this very behavior? How can we profess to being scandalized by adulterous affairs by public figures when we enjoy watching adulterous affairs every day on TV shows (not to mention frequent fornication)? How can we complain about speeding drivers or driving which endangers when that very thing is touted in automobile commercials daily and thrills so many of us in countless movies? Why are we so horrified when our economy is threatened and times become financially tough for people when greed and corruption or cheating is so rampant in our materialistic, self-indulgent, hedonistic consumer culture which is the base cause of the fiscal fiasco? Why are we so horrified by violence and killing when we spend billions every year on games and movies that glorify both? We even reward those which do this best! Why are we so concerned that every child have health care, but we kill almost a million babies every year before they even have a chance to get sick? How is it possible that we are the most "Christian" and church going Nation in the world?

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Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:25

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

## **DEADLY BLOSSOMS and A BETTER WAY**

I am frustrated when I hear of Evangelicals today turning to Christian left-wing speakers and books for answers to social problems. I remember the 60's and the rhetoric about Revolution to over turn the Establishment. T-shirts pictured Jesus as Che Guevara. I was a young inner city Pastor in those days. I remember the infatuation of affluent, white college students with Marxism and so-called Liberation Theology. I remember the civil rights demonstrations and protests against the War. I remember the Hippies and the Jesus Movement, too. I remember the Communes and Flower Power and the folk songs about peace, love and freedom. I am convinced the seeds of many of our worst social problems today were planted in the hothouse of that Decade. The flowers have born deadly blossoms.

Many young Evangelicals are becoming involved with social action. Christian colleges and churches of all kinds reflect the concern that many of us have with the state of our world. That is good. Turning to retread leftist ideas (especially coerced governmental social engineering and redistribution of wealth to help the Poor and welfare state entitlement programs) is not good. Buying into the rhetoric about Empire and denouncing America and market driven Capitalism as the major source of oppression and poverty in the world is as wrong now as it was in the 60s. Damning the American church outright as a Constantine sell-out to the Powers of Evil is offensive and slanderous to say the very least.

Appealing to Jesus and the "Red-lettered" verses in the Gospels as the Model and support for all this rhetoric is just plain wrongheaded (I can't say ignorant, because all kinds of professionally lettered academics are involved. But then that was true in the benighted 60's also). My earnest prayer is that young Evangelicals would look into the Torah. Here is a Biblical program- God's program- for dealing with the economic and social issues of our times. You want Justice? Learn what the real, Biblical meaning of that concept is- in the Torah. Most Evangelicals of all kinds have misunderstood and written off this portion of the Word. Big mistake. I hope you will give a fresh look at the Law as explained in the following Essay. I think both groups will be surprised and challenged!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:30

## **WHAT THE TORAH TEACHES ABOUT ECONOMICS**

**INTRODUCTION** Economics: "a social science concerned chiefly with description and analysis of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services" - Merriam-Webster Economics is about the choices people make with regard to scarce resources - People chose to sacrifice some things in order to obtain other things because there is a scarcity of those things and nothing scarce is free (every scarce thing has a price). Economics is about the exchanges people make of things [time, possessions, money, etc] desired less, for things [time, possessions, money, etc] desired more. These choices and exchanges are affected by values and incentives. They should also be determined by long-range (rather than immediate) consequences. The Bible does not have a detailed blueprint for any particular Economic System, e.g.- Capitalism or Socialism. What it does have in abundance are moral and ethical principles that are very relevant to economic topics, e.g. - work, private property, profit, money, employee and employer relationship, etc. These Biblical principles provide the values that guide economic choices and behavior

I.) The Four Fundamental Economic Principles [from Genesis 1-2 ]            A. Stewardship The dominant Biblical economic concept. God, as Creator, is ultimate owner of all created things. Any claim to ownership by Human Beings, collectively or individually, is conditional- never absolute. God, as Creator, has given responsibility for the management [stewardship] of His created World [including all living creatures natural resources] to Human Beings cf Psalm 24:1 and 115:16B. Sharing natural resources They are intended by God to be shared by all for the sustenance of all. All legitimate end products of the economic process are also to be available to all (This does not mean distributed or given to all) C. Work: "Fill & Subdue" All people have the right and responsibility to be engaged in economic work, i.e.- in the production and distribution of goods and services D. Growth: "Be fruitful & Multiply" Growth in population requires growth in economic production. This is to be desired and expected. Growth of population and production will result in surplus and scarcity of goods and services. Surplus and Scarcity will lead to exchange and trade governed by supply and demand.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:55

## **EFFECTS OF "THE FALL" ON ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR**

The Four Creation Principles (Genesis 1-2) to govern economic practice: Stewardship, Sharing, Work, Growth have been, throughout history, often violated: Stewardship has been universally rejected and replaced by absolute private ownership and exploitation of natural resources for personal gain. The natural world itself is generally uncooperative and resistant to cultivation. The work process has been corrupted, often being harsh and demeaning for millions of people. The Rights & Responsibilities of all people to work and share in the economic process are often denied or commonly manipulated in favor of a few. Economic growth has become an obsession, even an idol; prosperity, materialism and consumerism are pervasive and this leads to spiritual backsliding. God and economic justice are inseparable. All of these developments are evil, condemned by God and His Prophets. Economic evil is injustice and is inseparable from idolatry. These Biblical Economic Principles, derived from the Universal Laws revealed in Genesis are to be practiced by the Church today. It is the redeemed, regenerated and Spirit filled People of God who can do this and be the Model for the world.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:51

## **THE FOUR ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES FOR TODAY**

The Biblical Economic Principles, derived from the Universal Laws revealed in Genesis are to be practiced by the Church today. It is the redeemed, regenerated and Spirit filled People of God who can do this and be the Model for the world. I.) STEWARDSHIP The Cultural Mandate remains as God's Plan for Humanity, i.e.- the care, development and preservation of Creation, which includes Culture and Civilization

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:36

## **SHARING**

II.) SHARINGAs for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share... 1 Timothy 6:17 of the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35): Money is for Ministry. Wealth is for Welfare (defined as happiness, well-being and prosperity of all).  
A. Sharing by the extended family 1 Tim 5:3 Honor widows who are truly widows. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. 7 Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. 8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Christians must be activists on behalf of the family, the extended family (all families everywhere). We must be pro-natalist (birth, i.e.-pro-babies), pro-elderly, pro-life in every sense from the youngest to the oldest. We must oppose all the currents and developments in our society that weaken or undermine extended families (including those trends within the local church). We must teach and model the care of family members who become homeless or destitute due to tragedy, crisis or oppression.  
B. Sharing by the local church (and then area, regional, national and international organized, local churches) We must recover the concept of church as an extended family and the responsibility it has to care for its members (brothers & sisters in Christ) who become poor [homeless or destitute] due to oppression [violence, exploitation, theft] or tragedy. 1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? James 2:15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? The local church will also seek to minister to non-members who are poor. Galatians 6:10 as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.  
Think local! All of this is a call to plant and grow true neighborhood churches. Churches have always tended to be segregated economically, if not racially or ethnically: Churches tend to be primarily poor or middle class or affluent and churches are increasingly neither neighborhood nor local, but regional. Churches should be started in neighborhoods all over the city, dozens of them, ministering in very practical ways to everyone possible. They would co-operate, but each would incarnate Christ in that location. It would evangelize a neighborhood and assimilate and care for everyone in that neighborhood who comes to Christ- whether they be rich, middle class or poor. Effective care must be provided in the context of a community because hurting people require more than impersonal gifts (collections and distributions). It involves long-term, personal, accountable and responsible involvement with them. That is the Scriptural pattern in both Testaments. Such neighborhood churches would be a major part of a serious and Scriptural solution to poverty (including both the destitute and the working poor). The New Testament Church policy toward collecting money for the poor members of the church

was generous, systematic, proportionate, voluntary and ad hoc (formed to meet specific and immediate needs) All these adjectives are important. 2 Cor 8:1...brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality [= equity = fair share]. This is not a mandate for the distribution of all income or wealth equally among all Christians, let alone in society at large. It is definitely not an endorsement of socialism or any kind of coercive government program for the redistribution of the wealth of its citizens 2 Cor 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver 1 Corinthians 16:1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. People who become poor due to their own personal [sinful or lazy] behavior are responsible for themselves. Family, Church, Society (including the State) are not responsible for them. See 2 Thes.3:6 Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. C. Practicing the Tithe of all our wealth [financial assets] Most of the Tithe (2/3rd) should be given for Worship and the support of Pastors who work full-time for the Church The rest of the Tithe is to be given to the poor who have no family to care for them We are not to be legalistic about the Tithe. It serves as a rule-of-thumb"- a Principle like all the others. Those who insist Christians do not need to practice the Tithe because it is not in the New Testament must explain why they want to practice many other things from the Old not mentioned in the New. If the argument is that the Tithe is legalistic and narrow and we live under grace which is greater, then it follows that the person making the argument will give far more than a Tithe to the Church and the Poor, certainly not less. D. Gleaning- Businesses are to designate a portion of their product or proceeds for the unemployed poor who are to be given opportunity to "glean" [temp work] for it. \_\_\_\_\_ These are 4 very practical, Scriptural ways of "loving our neighbor" by sharing. All remind us that God is the owner of all we have. We trust Him for it. We use it in His service.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:31

## WORK

III.) WORK Christians must model, and promote the Biblical Work Ethic. They must be active in promoting and securing education, training and opportunities for employment and work for all people. This is absolutely crucial. It is a major factor in the elimination of poverty. Christians are to be pro-labor [not the same as pro-union]. As employers, they are to be sure their employees are treated fairly and not oppressed or abused, paid fairly and promptly, and given regular time off. If they are not employers, Christians must actively promote policies within their workplace that will do this. Failure to treat workers in this way is considered by God and His prophets to be very serious sin- outright evil. Christians are to be politically active in seeking and enforcing legislation and laws to these ends. NOTE: What is essential for economic viability today is extensive knowledge and skills and appropriate technology (as well as systems of family and community support), for every person, including those who are involved in farming. Christians must advocate for everyone's right to have an education, access to support systems and entrance into economic processes. "Oppression" would include intentionally depriving [robbing] people of these necessities, eg- denying certain children access to good schools or denying certain adults training and employment or "minority business owners" the opportunity to bid on contracts or to develop their businesses. We see such deprivation, often institutionalized, as a major cause of poverty in America.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:27

## ECONOMIC GROWTH

IV.) ECONOMIC GROWTH Growth in population requires growth in economic production. This is to be desired and expected. Growth of population and production, mandated by Scripture, will normally result in surplus and scarcity of goods and services. This will lead to exchange and trade, governed by supply and demand. Christians tend to interpret this concept by one of two extremes: laissez faire, free-market Capitalism or totally State controlled production and

distribution, ie- Socialism *laissez-faire* = French *laissez faire*, to let (people) do as they choose- a doctrine opposing governmental interference in economic affairs beyond the minimum necessary for the maintenance of peace and property rights so-cial-ism = any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods *cap-i-tal-ism* = an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market

Biblically informed Christians will support the ideal of free-market Capitalism, rather than any form of Socialism, ie -collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods. They will oppose governmental interference in economic affairs beyond the minimum necessary for the maintenance of peace and property rights. They will resist any coerced redistribution of economic wealth. The Fall and "Man's" inherited sinful nature, negatively impacts the dynamics involved in economic growth. It especially leads to the control, for personal advantage, of the means of both production and distribution of goods and services. Greed and selfishness generated by the Fall leads to huge accumulation of wealth by a relative few for the benefit of a few. Biblical Christians are realists about both human nature and the evils caused thereby in the economy. They will continually and intentionally seek the regeneration of the hearts of all employers & employees through evangelism, with the aim of people becoming "new creatures" in Christ. Such people, indwelt by the Holy Spirit and properly taught the Biblical principles laid out in this paper, will work for the re-formation or redemption of the economic system. The private ownership of property and wealth is Scriptural (given the understanding that such ownership is never absolute, but is rather a matter of stewardship with accountability to God for its use) **THE PROBLEM OF UNLIMITED GROWTH AND ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH:** The Pursuit of Justice God expects increase in personal wealth, e.g.- The Parable of the Talents -(Matt 25:14-30) There are many laws and safe guards in the Law designed to prevent or limit the growth or accumulation of private wealth when it comes at the cost of economic injustice (violation of the Four Creation Economic Principles) Christians should practice economic policies that respect everyone's right to Education, Technical "Know-How" and access to "Social Capital". They will promote policies and laws designed to prevent anyone's acquisition of those assets. No one has the right to monopolize them or to deny them to others. Christians will not take economic advantage of (will not profit off of) a hurting Brother or Sister [or anyone else] This is a prohibition of usury and profit-gouging, not a prohibition of charging fair interest rates in a contractual commercial transaction. All of the principles laid out here apply, by extension, to Christian owned businesses. Christians should also actively seek to persuade the Boards, Stockholders, CEOs, CFOs- and all levels of Management of all Corporations and Businesses to conduct business according to these Principles. Socially, this will be a major factor in the eradication of poverty and economic well-being of all.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:21

Monday, March 3, 2008

## **CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL**

I knew for whom I would not vote before the primaries began. I knew I would not vote for an economic or cultural Liberal. That means, of course, I would not vote for either Mr Obama or Ms Clinton. I am a registered Republican, but I am not happy with our candidates either. I am a Conservative, more than I am Republican, but I am also a realist. I definitely prefer Sen. McCain over his Democratic rivals. George Will wrote an excellent column comparing Conservatism and Liberalism. I have separated his statements about each "ism" and am posting relevant excerpts from Will's column separately. This makes clear the differences. This is not about Republicans and Democrats. Both of these Parties have moved from their ideological moorings. Neither one can be described as truly Conservative or Liberal today. This is about two very different sets of values and political world views: two ideologies. Which one is more Biblically based? For excerpts of Mr Will's article read my Blog for June 2, 2007

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:31

## **WHAT AND WHO IS A LEFTIST EVANGELICAL?**

What is a Leftist or Left-wing Christian? Here are dictionary definitions to help decide—American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition (emphasis added) left-wing A descriptive term for an individual or a political faction that advocates liberal, radical, or even revolutionary policies, usually in favor of overcoming social inequalities. In the United States, left-wing groups generally support federal social welfare programs designed to open opportunities to all citizens. Note: Although both major political parties in the United States have left-wing factions, left-wing policies are usually associated with the Democratic party. liberalism In the twentieth century, a viewpoint or ideology associated with free political institutions and religious toleration, as well as support for a strong role of government in regulating capitalism and constructing the welfare state. right-wing A descriptive term for an individual or a political faction that advocates very conservative policies. Right-wing groups generally support free enterprise. In the United States, the right wing generally argues for a strong national defense program and opposes federal involvement in promoting social welfare. Note: Although both major political parties in the United States have right-wing factions, right-wing policies are usually associated with the Republican party. Here are some names of Left Leaning Evangelicals and other Religious Leaders [http://www.beliefnet.com/story/159/story\\_15998\\_1.html](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/159/story_15998_1.html) [http://www.beliefnet.com/story/150/story\\_15052\\_1.html](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/150/story_15052_1.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:08

## **PLASTIC OR PAPER?**

The enemy is us. The problem with vehicles, guns, food, sports, emergency room care, churches, water, live performances, techno gadgets, Medicare, etc is not these things. It is us—our behavior, how we use or abuse these things. We don't need more legislation, we need more responsible, ethical people. The story featured this morning on the front page of our local paper, complete with a large photo of a "bagger", is the announcement of a local grocery chain that they will no longer use plastic bags. Bad for the environment, they say, jumping on the current bandwagon (undoubtedly pulled by horses fueled by corn).

The fact is there are pros and cons for both plastic and paper bags. A good case can be made, even by environmental groups, that plastic is better. The problem is not what the bags are made of, but how we humans use the bags. If we are irresponsible, use far more than we need and throw them away after only one trip home from the market or we scatter them to the wind, both plastic and paper are an environmental problem. Once again, it is our fallen sin nature that does us in. That is the case with all the items listed above. The answer to the question, Paper or Plastic? Is "Either will do with proper, ethical, responsible use." Hmmn, sounds like behavior Christians are supposed to practice. <http://www.reusablebags.com/facts.php?id=7> <http://www.sierraclub.org/bags/> [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/09/0902\\_030902\\_plasticbags.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/09/0902_030902_plasticbags.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:06

Sunday, February 17, 2008

## **IS JIM WALLIS RIGHT?**

In today's Boston Globe, Jim Wallis is interviewed. He is a major leader and spokesman for what is considered by many to be "progressive" Christianity. He discusses his vision for what he calls a "new evangelical agenda". It is, he says, not one issue, it's broader and deeper and includes subjects such as poverty, the environment, climate change, human trafficking, pandemic diseases -- HIV/AIDS, malaria, Darfur, human rights violations. a new foreign policy that understands "the exclusive use of war to fight evil is a moral and political mistake" "What ties it all together is the defense of the vulnerable. Let's not pit unborn children against poor children -- they're both in the category of the vulnerable, and Jesus calls us to defend the vulnerable." <http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2008/02/17/>

Historically, the label "Evangelical" has a very specific and narrow definition. An Evangelical is someone who has heard and believed the Gospel, becoming "saved" (converted, Born Again) and preaches (or shares) the Gospel so that others may hear and be saved. The Gospel is popularly defined (in the most broad and simple terms) as the Good news that Jesus, Son of God, died for our sins and rose again to be our living Lord and Savior and that those who believe that this is true and ask Jesus to forgive them their sins and be their Savior and Lord are in fact forgiven those sins and are given Eternal Life (Salvation). This faith in the Gospel requires faith that the source of the Gospel, which is the Bible, is also true, the inspired and the trustworthy written Word of God. Such a conviction is part of the usual definition of Evangelical. Normally, such new Believers are taught a certain way of living. That involves being baptized and joining (or getting involved with) a local church for worship and support, learning to pray and read (study) the Bible, separating from the sins that have been forgiven and seeking to live an upright (moral and loving) life at home and in the community and learning how to witness or share the Gospel with others. All of this has been the norm for generations throughout America. The so-called "new evangelical agenda" mentioned by Jim Wallis is not a part of any of this. That is not to say his agenda is good or bad. It is to say that it is not what is understood by Evangelicals to be their agenda as Evangelicals. To say it is, requires a change in the meaning of "evangelical". That may be Mr. Wallis' point. He just needs a new label that does not confuse most of us. In fact, much of what Mr. Wallis might describe as the old evangelical agenda is not evangelical either. It really is an agenda of conservative American cultural values which many socially conservative Evangelicals have co-opted as their own, but those values, too, are not "Evangelical" as such. I am thankful for traditional "Evangelicals" (as defined here) - sinners who believe in the old, old story of Jesus and His love and who consider themselves Blood bought and Blood washed. (A traditional Evangelical knows what those phrases mean) I have been one for more than 50 years and most of the Christians I know are the same. People with agendas involving various economic and social causes, conservative or progressive, whether they are evangelical or not, are in another category. What is needed is to teach and help Christians, evangelical or not, to adopt and live a life in line with the will of God. Mr Wallis says "... I'm calling people to follow Jesus into the world, with the concerns that Jesus has". Not as an Evangelical, but as a neo-Calvinist, I say, "I'm calling people to obey the Law of God which addresses the concerns that God has and that is what it means to follow Jesus." I share Mr. Wallis' concern about the topics on his agenda. But what I just wrote means he and I approach those concerns from very different perspectives. I have been trying on this Blog and on my website to make clear what my perspective is.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:56

Saturday, January 26, 2008

## **ARTY NIHILISM**

And the Award Goes . . . to Arty Nihilism. The Golden Globes and Oscars overlook a number of worthy films. By Thomas S. Hibbs Hollywood's obsession with stylish nihilism is on full display in the list of best-picture nominees for both the Golden Globes and the Oscars. From Eastern Promises and No Country for Old Men to There Will be Blood and Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street, the end-of-year critics' lists are awash in blood and violence. The inordinate critical acclaim these movies have enjoyed tells us more about those who vote for the annual awards than it does about the year in film. This past year featured a glut of graphic violence masquerading as high art, to be sure, but it also witnessed a welcome return to entertaining and even subtle storytelling <http://article.nationalreview.com>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:48

## **OBAMA ON ABORTION AND A GOOD RESPONSE**

"I am a Christian, and I am a devout Christian. I believe in the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I believe that that faith gives me a path to be cleansed of sin and have eternal life. But most importantly, I believe in the example that Jesus set by feeding the hungry and healing the sick and always prioritizing the least of these over the powerful. I didn't 'fall out in church' as they say, but there was a very strong awakening in me of the importance of these issues in my life. I didn't want to walk alone on this journey. Accepting Jesus Christ in my life has been a powerful guide for my conduct and my values and my ideals." -Barak Obama Article from [christianitytoday.com](http://christianitytoday.com) Senator Obama also said, in another interview, "But we also know that Roe v. Wade is about more than a woman's right to choose; it's about equality," Obama said. "It's about whether our daughters are going to have the same opportunities as our sons. And so to truly honor that decision, we need to update the social contract so that women can free themselves, and their children, from violent relationships; so that a mom can stay home with a sick child without getting a pink slip; so that she can go to work knowing that there's affordable, quality childcare for her children; and so that the American dream is within reach for every family in this country." Read the entire article for an excellent defense of the rights of babies to be born- that too, is about equality! It is from pro-life Princeton University professor, Robert George. Article from [christianitytoday.com](http://christianitytoday.com)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:44

## **YEAR OF PRO-LIFE MOVIES**

In some ways, 2007 was the Year of Pro-Life Cinema. From the church-friendly Bella to the raunchy Knocked Up, film after film depicted its main character facing an unplanned pregnancy and opting not for abortion, but for carrying the unborn child to term. Sometimes the mother kept the baby (Knocked Up, Waitress), and sometimes she gave the baby up for adoption (Bella, Juno, August Rush). But in each of these films, the mother, and sometimes the father, made a critical decision that was decidedly "pro-life." Quote from [christianitytoday.com](http://christianitytoday.com) On the other hand, 4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days is a foreign film that is both pro-choice and pro-life. The former by the story line, the latter in its visual effects on movie goers Article from [christianitytoday.com](http://christianitytoday.com)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:39

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

## **ABORTION IS NOT A STAND ALONE SUBJECT**

Below are three posts about Abortion. It would be a serious mistake to think that it is a stand alone topic. Many seem to think so. Wrong, very wrong. It Connected with it are several others: social-economic and cultural realities, birth control methods, eugenics, illegitimacy (and all its reasons), single parent families, child care, marriage itself, family. Other related topics are embryonic research (including cloning), biological and pre and post natal technologies and ethics and the large issue of what it means to be "human" (and when does human life begin). And then there is the matter of Feminism and Women's Rights and legal matters, too. If we are concerned about Abortion, we must also be concerned about all of these other matters. Abortion may be about a single baby, but abortion is not a single or simple or stand alone subject.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:42

Tuesday, January 22. 2008

**VIEWER BEWARE: VERY UPSETTING GRAPHIC MATERIAL**

A website with extremely disturbing photographs and videos of babies being violated by abortion is found here-<http://www.abortionno.org/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:21

Friday, January 18, 2008

## **ABORTION RATE DOWN**

That the overall abortion rate is down is good news, but read the article carefully for all the "buts ...". It is not the same for all parts of the country or among all groups. And reasons for the drop are significant, too. [Chicago Tribune Article](#)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:21

Monday, January 7, 2008

### **MARY AND JOSEPH: ILLEGAL ALIENS?**

Here is an example of how so-called Progressive Christians and Left leaning Social activists misuse the Bible. The Nativity, such people quoted in this article say, is actually the story of a couple who are illegal aliens who are homeless, seeking food and shelter and medical care (the woman is pregnant) but being rebuffed by an uncaring society. [http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/01/07/through\\_bible\\_story\\_many\\_others\\_told/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/01/07/through_bible_story_many_others_told/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:04

Friday, December 14, 2007

## **CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND THE VALUE OF LIVES**

We have had 20 homicides here this year so far. It seems redundant, but they were all so stupid and senseless. Yesterday, a man killed his wife and two small daughters and a few days ago, a "man" killed a 20 year old pizza delivery guy in order to steal his car. It was a random act. The lead editorial rightly bemoaned these killings, along with the recent church and mall shootings out west. Correctly the Editor deplored the increasing disregard for human life in our Society. He mentioned many contributing factors and concluded by saying, "There are no laws that can be written so that people will value human life." But there is such a law: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed"

This is the divine mandate from the Creator of life for Capital punishment, which this same Editor and many others today find so repulsive, including New Jersey which just voted to ban it. Detractors say such a law is vindictive and inhumane-killing for a killing. Not really. It is the intentional taking by the State, after due process and conviction in a Court of Law, of the life of a murderer as punishment for that crime. (This is not "killing for a killing" as in crime gangs having turf wars ) Surveys show that the Death Penalty is an effective deterrent of further crime and it certainly is for the criminal who has been executed. But that is not the reason God gives for Capital Punishment. The verse goes on, "for God made man in his image". (Gen 9:6) Human lives are valuable because humans are made in the Image of God. To teach the value of human life and to deter people from taking it, the highest price must be exacted for murdering a human being. That is the ultimate purpose behind Capital Punishment. If nothing else, it is in the best interest of Society to enforce this law. God himself dictated it. "For your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: From his fellow man, I will require a reckoning for the life of man." Granted, there are great inequities in the Legal System and innocent men and women have been put in prison- not only for murder but many other crimes. If the possibility of mistakes (miscarriages of justice) alone are the reason to repeal Capital Punishment laws, then the possibility of mistakes alone would be the reason to disavow other possible sentences, including life without parole, as NJ will now have. The System needs to be fixed, no question. Let's work to fix it! Due process must be honored. Everyone is entitled to a good lawyer and defense, etc. But none of the problems should be allowed to abrogate Capital Punishment as such. There should be no hesitancy in applying it in those cases where there is absolutely no doubt by anyone that the accused is indeed guilty. This includes eliminating years of appeals on "Death Row" by advocates who simply are against Capital Punishment on principle. If a person has been found guilty on good evidence beyond a reasonable doubt and confesses guilt, there is no reason not to give it to him or her. If a would-be murder knows what the sure and fast consequences of his act will be, hopefully, he or she will be more likely to "value human life" and not so inclined to kill it. Nevertheless, when the punishment has been meted out on those who were not deterred, Justice will have been served. A good Essay on this subject is here <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles4/BudziszewskiPunishment.shtml>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:40

## **A RETURN TO DODGE CITY**

All "law abiding" Citizens should be allowed to carry firearms in public. This would prevent the carnage we have witnessed in recent mall massacres. A law-abiding citizen with a gun did, in fact, prevent further killings at a church in Colorado. That proves the argument. And this seems to be the argument that Cal Thomas makes in today's column. I usually agree with Mr. Thomas. Not on this topic. I think this is a very bad idea! It is important to note that the law abiding citizen with the gun was, in fact, a Security Guard on duty. And she did her duty when she used the gun. I can see Security Guards at Malls carrying guns that they have been properly trained and licensed to use, while on duty- and using them if necessary. Perhaps the time has also come for metal detectors at the doors. We have them in many schools now. Very sad, but true. Many citizens illegally carry guns and are ready and willing to use them for very nefarious purposes. (The guns themselves may or may not be legal. Guns used in mass killings have either been purchased legally by the shooters or stolen from someone else who has legally bought them) Protection is required. And that is why I am not in favor of allowing all supposedly law abiding citizens to carry guns in malls or wherever they want to go. Mr. Thomas, using the church guard example, says that if someone starts shooting in a public place, there should be others around who can stop him by using their guns. Sure. Imagine the cross-fire that would ensue. Is every shooter going to hit their target, the would-be killer? Or are bullets very likely to miss and go astray and, also very likely, hit innocent bystanders in a crowded Mall? In those cities where drive by shootings occur, I don't want to imagine the scene where every one on the street or porches or out of windows returns gun fire on the shooter in the passing car. Neither would Mr. Thomas. We do not want a return to Dodge City or the Old West!

**Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>**

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:38

Wednesday, November 28, 2007

## **WHO IS A GOOD SCHOOL TEACHER?**

Our local paper has a monthly page featuring the opinions of teens from local middle and high schools. This week 17 of them answered the question, "Who is a good Teacher?" At first glance, it seemed almost all of them answered, "The ones who make the lessons or class fun." But what makes for fun in the class room? I reread their comments more closely. Laughter, for sure; but their involvement and participation in class makes for "fun". They like teachers who like their subject and like teaching it. They like teachers who show interest in their students and care how they are doing. They absolutely do not like lectures (boring!) They like teachers who act out roles or parts that illustrate the lessons, as well as demonstrate practical application, and who use a lot of visual aids or "games". Several said they do not like teachers who are pushovers or not strict and let kids get away with nonsense. Does any of this also apply to Sunday School teachers and to Preachers?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:26

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

## **SATAN SMILES**

According to Rev 20:2, Satan is bound, but- he is not destroyed, only restricted. According to Rev 13 and 17, Satan exercises control over the world through three agents: the Anti-Christ (which is totalitarian government, hence our serious concern about ever increasing "Big Brother" government and the "Welfare State", in which government becomes "god" in the lives of people); the False Prophet (the propaganda arm of the State, which works to promote and justify the influence of the State to its citizens. This agent is often a Church or Church Leaders which sell the need of Big Brother to the masses, when it preaches the Social Gospel); and finally, Babylon (which is hedonistic, materialistic society). We see the work of Satan in the gross, obscene consumerism of this Holiday Season. The problem of the Season is not the commercialization of Christmas, it is commercialization. period- the branding of America, especially of its children. How pervasive and perverse commercialization and consumerism is can be seen in the first argument used to encourage it: the Economy. The economy requires people to buy in order to create and protect jobs. And why? So people can make money so they can buy more. We are on a endless conveyor belt of consumerism from which there does not seem to be any escape. You may scoff. Satan smiles.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:27

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

## **GOT PROTECTION?**

Here is a recommendation from my webmaster, Norm-"Is your PC open to attack? You would be surprised. It only takes one wrong click and now your system is a Zombie, ready to be activated in a larger attack against bigger systems. How can you protect yourself? Good Security Practices, that's how. Belarc is a good step, ensuring your system is up to date. The next step is to see what others can see from the outside. Shields UP! is a good online tool, which will scan your system similar to what a hacker might do. Shields UP! is safe to use but read before "proceed". Copy and paste this link into your browser <https://www.grc.com/x/ne.dll?bh0bkyd2>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:48

Tuesday, November 13, 2007

### **BRING IN THE CLONES**

Human Cloning is coming. World had better prepare, says Report. How will we treat cloned humans. What will be their rights and their role?<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSSAT27272720071112>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:56

### **GIVING THE STATE OUR BABIES**

Universal pre-school for 3-4 year olds is the goal of legislation, backed by our Governor, for Massachusetts. It would also include health and dental care, as well as meals. There is even a bill working its way that would provide universal day care for infants. The justification for all of this, at tax payers expense, is the working Mom (and thus a Mom not available to care for her children at home) as well as the advantages for the children themselves (say Professional "experts" in the field of Education and Child Welfare (all of whom have vested interests in this). Whatever happened to the concept of family and the responsibility of parents (both of them) to provide for their own children? What about the advantages to those children which that would provide them? Is the alternative of handing all children, from infancy, over to the care, control and indoctrination of the State, really the way we want to go as a Society?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:52

Monday, October 29, 2007

## **ABORTION: DOES IT MATTER IN THE ELECTION?**

It is not irrational for voters to care deeply about a candidate's stance regarding abortion because that stance is accurately considered an important signifier of the candidate's sensibilities and sympathies, and of his or her notion of sound constitutional reasoning. But regarding abortion itself, what a candidate thinks about abortion rights is not especially important. This is from today's column by George Will. Could it be true?  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/26/AR2007102601864.html?sub=AR>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:41

## **ANN COULTER AND ACCUSATIONS OF ANTISEMITISM**

CNBC's The Big Idea host, Donny Deutsch, recently interviewed conservative columnist Ann Coulter. He said he was offended by her remarks and many other columnists and bloggers have picked up the story of Ms Coulter's alleged anti-Semitism expressed in that interview. What did she say? Everyone, including Jews, should become Christians. Mr. Deutsch, who is Jewish, said this was like the view of the "head of Iran" who wants to "wipe Israel off the face of the earth." Not so, countered Ms Coulter. She pressed the view that evangelical Christians believe everyone needs to believe in Jesus. When Jewish people do that, she said, they are "perfected". I think the preferred term is "completed".

I agree with Ms Coulter on this. It is what all evangelicals believe and what we all work for: the conversion of every man, woman and child to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations ("ethne": people groups), baptizing them..." This has absolutely nothing to do with "wiping" out the secular Nation which is Israel. It is not "anti-Semitic" (apparently defined as hate Jews), anti-Islam (as in hate Moslems) or even anti Atheism (as in hate atheists). It is love Jews, Moslems and Atheists. The most loving thing we can do for them (and everyone) is lead them to Christ that they may have Life Eternal. But certainly, we are not advocating hating and persecuting them or denying them (or anyone) their God-given human Rights. Come on! <http://www.mefedia.com/entry/3734727/#> But all that is exactly what liberal columnist Leonard Pitts insists Ann Coulter and all who believe as she does want to do. Last week, Mr. Pitts reports, Ann "Coulter said that in her perfect America, everyone would be a Christian. ... that Jews simply needed to be "perfected" -- i.e., made to accept Jesus as savior. Which is, of course, one of the pillars (along with the slander of Christ's murder) supporting 2,000 years of pogroms, abuse and Holocaust." He accused her (and all evangelicals) of ignorance, anti-Semitism, hate, and intolerance. He said his readers "ought to view [her] with alarm". "So, what about Ann Coulter? (Mr Pitts asked) What about the push-back against diversity, pluralism and tolerance, that she represents? [We should stand up and] shout against the Coulters of the world" Here is his article- [http://www.miamiherald.com/living/columnists/leonard\\_pitts/story/274100.html](http://www.miamiherald.com/living/columnists/leonard_pitts/story/274100.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:15

Tuesday, October 16. 2007

## **RED LETTER CHRISTIANS?**

Here is Stan Guthrie's take on the UN Report below. Also read his article on why he is not a Red Letter Christian. I agree with him and think Tony Campolo's retort is unfair to say the very least.<http://www.stanguthrie.com/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:21

## **THE SKY IS NOT FALLING**

"A new United Nations report called "State of the Future" concludes: "People around the world are becoming healthier, wealthier, better educated, more peaceful, more connected, and they are living longer."<http://www.opinionjournal.com/taste/?id=110010695>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:09

## **AT LEAST 87.7 % OF PEOPLE IN U.S. ARE NOT POOR!**

The nation's poverty rate was 12.3 percent in 2006, down from 12.6 percent a year before, the Census Bureau reported last Tuesday. The "poverty rate" is the percentage of all people in the US living below the poverty level. The "poverty level" is the official measure used to decide eligibility for federal health, housing, nutrition and child care benefits. <http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/070828/poverty.html>This means 87.7% of Americans live above the poverty level and are neither eligible for, nor do they need, welfare benefits. That is good news! There are all kinds of problems with statistics for poverty rate and levels. One is that they use arbitrary definitions of official poverty and the poor. They do not sufficiently take into account regional differences (especially variations in the cost of living) or count as income "in-kind" benefits (food, housing, child care, etc). They assume that poverty is permanent- it is actually often temporary and can differ by the month, as well as over the years. People move in and out of poverty and that must be accounted for. And within "people" there are different categories- single, couples, children, the elderly, etc. The official poverty level assumes that family needs are static, when actually they change with people moving in and out of a household and going through different ages and stages. A single parent with a teenager has different needs than a single parent with a baby than that same single parent whose child has moved out of the house. There is also a failure to account for the fact that reported expenditures are far more than reported incomes among the poor. Is this a matter of the latter overspending, i.e.-going into debt. Or is this a matter of inaccuracies in the way income is counted or reported? For many more related issues and a good, in depth discussion of determining poverty levels in America, study-<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/3930481.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:45

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

## **SEEKING THE COMMON GOOD**

We are having a debate here in Springfield about adopting Ward Representation. Certain sections of the City believe they are under represented and should be able to elect City Councilors that will aggressively pursue, not the common good, but their interests. Here is a very apropos statement. It is written about national politics, but certainly applies to our Town—"Politics in the United States has become increasingly issue-oriented, short-term, and pragmatic. Citizens approach government primarily as a means to achieve the ends that various interest groups, regions, or sectors of society hold dear. Politics often amounts to little more than interest-group competition among diverse groups, each seeking its own goals. Too little attention is given to the soundness of public institutions, to the art of long-term constitutional statecraft, and to the common good of the republic as a whole." "The prevalence of interest-group politics fuels an electoral process in which candidates raise money from special interests and typically appeal to voters on a narrow range of issues. Think tanks do research, some of it quite detailed and in-depth, but most of it focuses narrowly on particular issues, with little concern for other, equally vital matters. The political parties, interest groups, think tanks, and most citizens tend to take for granted this system along with the dominant ideologies and American civil religion that fuel the action." <http://www.cpjustice.org/distinguish.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:06

## **'PRINCIPLED PLURALISM'**

If a Christian Nation is defined as one in which it's Leaders and citizens are confessing Christians and its Laws are Scriptural and its Public Policies and predominant Culture are righteous by Christian standards, then the United States of America is not a Christian Nation today. If a Christian Nation is defined as one which was originally founded by Christians with the intent for it to be Christian, with most of its earliest settlers professing the Faith and its founding documents purposely designed to reflect Biblical Principles and these, in turn, were embodied in its Constitution as the Law of the Land, then a case could be made that the USA was a Christian nation. That, however, does not prove that it is one today. At the very most, we can argue that Biblical, Judeo-Christian principles, from its founding days, are embodied in many of our Laws and common "American" culture. However, in practice, the founding documents are interpreted by our Courts to increasingly reflect, at every level, a plurality of religious, moral and cultural values. Its secondary laws and policies increasingly embody a mix of Christian and very non-Christian principles. We are not, nor can we be, a Christian nation as defined in the opening paragraph. Inasmuch as Scripture does not mandate or justify a Theocracy in America, wherein our Civil Government officially endorses, supports and protects Christianity and whereas the Kingdom of God can not be legislated nor extended by political or governmental coercion, and inasmuch as the clock of history can not be turned back to Colonial Days (or to the days when there was a core Protestant Christian consensus, which arguably was the case in America until the early 20th Century), we must pursue another approach in seeking the common good for this Nation. That approach, which is Scriptural, is to work toward a nation which recognizes and conforms to the Natural Law of God. This has been called "Principled Pluralism". The "Principles" involved would be those moral laws and standards (Norms) revealed in Scripture which are of God and designed to be universal (rather than specific to the Church), e.g. - the 10 Commandments. Being universal they apply to everyone and every nation all the time. People and Nations do not need to be regenerate or Christian in order to obey them e.g. - Thou shalt not steal or murder and God judges Nations by how well they do this. [See my study on this topic posted below] Thus the Nation would respect the pluralism of Religions within it, while upholding in its Laws and Courts one set of core moral principles grounded in the Judeo-Christian Scripture. This is "Principled Pluralism" as I understand it. (Others have trimmed down the "Principles", substituting generic concepts such as "fairness" and "equality" and "freedom" and "human rights" or "human dignity" for specifically Biblical morals and Norms. I do not agree with that.) For Christians, Biblical Principled Pluralism falls short of our vision of the Kingdom of God on earth in our time, but it is a feasible approach to the common good which we can support and that goes a long way toward that ultimate goal.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:34

Monday, October 8, 2007

## **BEING A NEIGHBOR**

The commentary I sent out this morning [Today's QT Thots] about the story of the Good Samaritan has ramifications for public policy. If we use its model to guide America, as it wrestles with the issue of Poverty, we would at least be very leary of State Welfare programs, as well as private "Charity" which does not include some degree of personal involvement with the people we seek to help. It also supports the principle that welfare of any kind should be means tested (rather than a blank check, come one come all, no questions asked policy). A basic background book on this subject is "The Tragedy of American Compassion" by Marvin Olasky

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:33

Saturday, October 6, 2007

## **CAN HOMOSEXUALS CHANGE?**

Recent research seems to confirm that there are people who truly are homosexual. They have a dominant sexual attraction to people of the same gender, in contrast to heterosexual people, who do not have such an attraction. It is important to recognize the distinction between being homosexual and engaging in same gender sex acts. Many Christians still are convinced that both the nature and the behavior are intentional and can be changed or stopped at will. The latest research by Christian psychologists, reviewing the results of 30 years of reparative or conversion therapy indicates that it does not seem possible to change homosexual nature. There is no consensus as to the origins of this nature; but it is possible for some persons with that nature to change (modify) their behavior with a lot of help and support. With this help and support, some stop the behavior altogether, even while they remain homosexual by nature (Cf this to alcoholics who stop drinking but are still alcoholics) Read more here-<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/october/6.48.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:21

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

### **WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?**

Last Wednesday, our local paper headlined the bestowal by the State of a "1.4 million dollar grant to combat youth violence". We need it, officials are quoted as saying, because we have had an increase in youth crime. Actually, half a million will go to pay overtime for police and almost another quarter million to improve a local job training center. The rest will be divided up among a dozen social service and recreation agencies. Last year we had similar grant. Anything wrong with that picture? Today, the paper heralded an 11 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Some 1.6 million will go to Head Start to promote a "Healthy Marriage Initiative" for teens and unwed mothers. Some 9.5 million will go to improve programming in a few of our schools. Most of the state school students here do not graduate from high school, we have one of the highest rates of teen pregnancies in the State and we rank as having the 6th highest percentage of children living in poverty (44.6% under 18) in the entire Nation.

As Christians we must be involved with improving this situation. Because we are stoutly pro-life and pro-family and pro-education we have no choice but to be involved. But how? One thing is certain: pouring millions of dollars of tax payer money at the problems is not how. Sure, that money will temporarily alleviate some of the symptoms. That's good. But solve the problem? We need a major effort to evangelize and disciple the children of this city through the local churches. These kids need Christ! I was a Child Welfare Social Worker in Hartford, CT more than 45 years ago. I came to that conclusion way back then and became an inner city Pastor (in Lowell, MA) Millions and millions have been spent by the Government on these problems since then. The problems are still there. What not here in Springfield, is the massive effort necessary to evangelize and disciple children. Sure, there are efforts made and a few Christians are seriously committed- but not enough. Most of the children we are talking about are Hispanic and African-American and live in tough areas of this City and the churches needed for the work are neither. Oh, well, bring on the Government largess!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:17

Monday, October 1, 2007

## **FLOATING SCHIP -Faith and Policy**

Last Friday I wrote about Faith and Politics. The current debate about SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program) is a good opportunity to illustrate how Biblical Principles should influence public policy. Advocates of expanding SCHIP say it is being held captive to President Bush's ideology. Of course, the Advocates have their own ideology and that is what compels them to work for its expansion. The debate is not simply "about the children". To enter into this exercise, we must understand what SCHIP currently is and what expansion of it would involve. Figuring this out is not simple as it involves interpreting data and predicting trends and outcomes. This can be tricky. The exercise also requires getting a handle on relevant Biblical teaching. Many Christians think this is easy. There are poor kids without medical insurance and care. God loves poor kids. We all should love poor kids. Therefore, it is a no-brainer: the Government should expand Federal funding of SCHIP to provide for these children. To be against doing this is unconscionable and unchristian. Period. Well, it is not so simple. In that Friday Post about Faith and Politics (which included Public Health Policy), I laid out the neo-Calvinist principles (my Faith) that influence (my) politics. I am persuaded Scripture warns about growing government control over our lives (Totalitarianism), teaches us not to support a cradle to grave "Welfare State", especially ever increasing Entitlement Programs (Socialism), teaches us primary responsibility for the health and well-being of children belongs to their parents and not the State, teaches that the State has no right to use tax payers' money to do what the family is supposed to do and teaches we are to support private rather than state-controlled business (free-market capitalism) Bible believing Christians should support President Bush's veto, if we are convinced that the proposed expanded SCHIP will use taxpayers money to fund State health insurance that can instead be provided by Parents through private health insurance plans that are available to them. This would be an example of Faith influencing Policy. To claim that his veto would indicate that our President is "against children" is simply untrue and unfair. He approves extending the current SCHIP and encourages the States to be more intentional and aggressive to enroll eligible children currently uncovered. For more details read-<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/home/schip.aspx><http://www.kff.org/uninsured/upload/7694.pdf><http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/TurnerFocused.pdf><http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/014/177vjfix.asp?pg=1>[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB118662306308792513.html?mod=googlenews\\_wsj](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB118662306308792513.html?mod=googlenews_wsj)<http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ZGI3NjVIYWRI0GEyOTU2MjNIMWFmNTVjMzZINDQ0ZTg=>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:16

Wednesday, September 26, 2007

## **RON SIDER'S CLAIMS ABOUT EVANGELICALS AND SOCIAL ACTION**

"Today almost all agree that faithful mission must also include social ministry. More and more prominent evangelical voices—think of Rick Warren!—now embrace ESA's [Evangelicals for Social Action] longstanding call to empower the poor." "And even the National Association of Evangelicals' official public policy framework embraces what ESA has long promoted—namely, a pro-poor and pro-life, pro-peace and pro-family, pro-creation care and pro-marriage agenda." -Ron Sider ESA current website article But, what do each of these topics mean and involve? Does "pro-poor" mean increased pro-welfare- food, housing, health benefits, etc provided by tax payers for all people who's income is below the Federal Poverty level? Does "pro-life" mean anti-abortion on demand? Does it mean anti-capital punishment? Does "pro-peace" mean anti Iraq War? All war? Does "pro-creation" mean support of the Kyoto Agreements and blaming America for global warming? Does "pro-marriage" include the marriage of homosexuals? Does the NAE official policy embrace all of that? I am definitely pro-poor and pro-life, pro-peace and pro-family, pro-creation care and pro-marriage. But vague generalities aside, we must have definitions of these key terms and explanations of the means to achieve these goals, clearly spelled out. Only then can we see whether we are talking about the same things and work together.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 22:05

Friday, September 21, 2007

## **FAITH AND POLITICS: A DIFFERENT TAKE ON THIS TOPIC**

What is the connection between Faith and Politics? Very broad question! I assume the question means my personal faith and my personal politics. To start with, what is "Politics"? Let us say the word refers to all that is involved in organizing and facilitating what is necessary or desirable for the efficient and productive local, state or national community, i.e.- civil government. What is meant by "Faith"? I am a Neo-Calvinist Christian. Does the question mean "Do the doctrines I hold as a Neo-Calvinist influence what I believe about politics and political activism? Do they influence what I believe about the purpose of Civil Government? Do these Doctrines determine how I act as a citizen and how I vote? Does the question mean do the values or morals I hold as a Neo-Calvinist effect or determine any of these matters?" The answer to each question is "Absolutely, yes! Read more below to find out how. This is not the usual take on this subject.

The question becomes for me: What are the Neo-Calvinist Doctrines and Values that influence my Politics? The following is a short, broad sketch. The Concept of Sphere Sovereignty is crucial to Neo-Calvinist Political Science. The Bible teaches that God created people in His image. They would be like Him. They would represent Him. He gave them a mandate, as His representatives, to care for and cultivate all that God had made. This is known as the Cultural Mandate. As part of this plan, God ordained three institutions. These are Marriage (defined as the life long covenant commitment of a man and a woman) with the consequent extended family. They would all work together to keep the Cultural Mandate. God created the Covenant Community, which became the Church, and God created civil government. Each of these three institutions, known as Spheres, is autonomous under God, responsible to Him and His Law. One is never to interfere with, or usurp, the authority or sovereignty of the other. This is known as Sphere Sovereignty. There are extensions of each Sphere which become other, secondary institutions in society, i.e.-voluntary social associations of individuals for work and the production and distribution of goods and services. Other voluntary associations will naturally arise for Education, Communications, the Arts and Recreation. None of these Spheres, extensions of the original Marriage-Family and Church Spheres, are autonomous, but cooperate with each other and function according to the Law of God, accountable to Him. There are serious consequences of this Doctrine of the Spheres and Sphere Sovereignty. For example, the education of children is the right and duty of their parents. The State can never rightfully (in God's eyes) claim that those children belong to it or that it is the State's right and duty to educate children against the will of their parents. Parents are not to acquiesce to this claim by the State or relinquish their privilege and duty to educate their children. Furthermore, the State has no right to take money from the parents (taxes) for such education. That would be compounding error with the sin of theft. In practice, this Doctrine leads to the support of Home Schooling, Parochial Schools and the use of Vouchers to use tax money for school choice. At the very least, this Doctrine should lead Christian parents to become involved on local school boards and in the selection of text books, as well as becoming professional educators, who will promote and teach Biblical values in State schools. The Family, as part of their duty to educate their children, has the responsibility to teach work or vocational skills, as well as the Biblical work ethic. People who do not work do not eat; but more than that, working is a God-given duty, a commandment, laid upon all to support themselves and their extended family, including the truly poor in it. It is also a major way to carry out the Cultural Mandate and thus serve God. The State has no business to interfere with this duty or to care of those who shirk it. This Doctrine gives the responsibility for welfare and the care of the sick, the widowed and orphaned, the unemployed and the homeless to the Family and Faith Community. The State has no business to interfere with or usurp these God-given responsibilities not to take money (taxes) from citizens for programs that do that. Calvinists oppose the concept and practice of the "welfare state" and the liberal ideology behind it and are very suspicious of all entitlement programs and oppose the popular entitlement mentality. The voluntary civic associations are not to forego their independence and look to the civil government for support. These groups, whether for business or the arts, are extensions of the Family and Church. The State has no right to interfere with them in any way. In practice, this Doctrine leads to a rejection of "tax breaks", as well as government funding and subsidies. In our Society, it means advocating for privatization of just about everything. The Faith Community or Church also has its God-given privileges and responsibilities which include public corporate worship and evangelism, as well as its ministries of charity. The Civil Government has no lawful right to abridge or interfere with the Church in its duties. The only legitimate, God-given responsibility for Civil Government is maintenance of Law and Order (a system of Laws in harmony with the principles of Biblical Law), Law enforcement, Courts and a legal system guaranteeing due process- all to maintain peace and to protect citizens from harm and danger from any quarter. Taxing the people for this is not theft. It is the obligation of citizens to pay for such services. But always, civil government, as with the other Spheres, is not autonomous. It serves God under His Law and is accountable to Him in all things. While the State is not to interfere with the life and work of the Church and the Church has no business doing the work of the State or seeking to get the State to do the work of the

Church for it, such as enforcing morality (all of this is the original intent of the First Amendment), the Church, in its prophetic (preaching) and teaching ministry, has the duty to remind the State of its responsibilities under God and of His judgment upon it when it fails in them. More fundamental than the Doctrine of Sphere Sovereignty, Neo-Calvinists, being in the Reformed Tradition, also hold to other Doctrines which greatly influence their politics. Prime among them is the Total Depravity of Human Beings. This leads to the emphasis on the negative role of the Civil Government. Because people who rule are also fallen sinners, there is among all Calvinists a serious mistrust of all those in power and in any particular government. One consequence of this is the strong advocacy of a division of powers, wherein there will always be a system of checks and balances to inhibit the government from becoming an instrument of evil. Finally, because we hold to the infinite value of the person, Calvinists also believe in the necessity for freedom of expression and choice and the necessity of the consent of the governed to be governed and the right to rebel when such freedom is denied and human beings are enslaved. This means the Reformed Christian is very much concerned with the possibility of totalitarianism, in which the State becomes God and takes over total control of the minds and lives of its citizens. Thus, we are very much opposed to an ever growing government and in favor of an ever decreasing government presence in our Nation. This, of course, is revolutionary as it flies against all the current trends and practices of our Government and the desire and beliefs of most of our politicians and citizens today, especially the so-called Progressives and Left-leaning Liberals among us. I realize that implementing any of this would take a lot of teaching (when have you heard a sermon or Sunday school class or small group get into all of this?) and then gradual implementation here and there over time, as well as a lot of willingness to make major changes in most of our lives and in our contemporary Society. All of this is my brief answer to the original question.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:24

Saturday, September 15, 2007

## **MORE ON THE WAR- TO PROTECT THE UNBORN**

The previous post is about serving Christ the King. In all the current political debates, the subject of Abortion is almost never mentioned. The War in Iraq, The Economy, Health Insurance and Immigration Policy garner most of the attention. Yet, the Issue of Abortion remains and should not be ignored or made insignificant. It came to the fore last week when President Bush used a rare veto to block Federal funding for the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the grounds that this NGO is pro-choice and promotes abortion around the world. The lead editorial in our local paper yesterday insists the Agency does not promote abortion. It slams Mr. Bush for not only being against science and research that would find cures for many diseases with his veto of a bill to fund embryonic stem cell research, but now he proves, by this latest veto, that he is also opposed to the well-being of women and women's health! I would say, Mr. Bush has served Christ the King by both of these vetoes and he should be applauded for both, not condemned.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programs to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect- Mission Statement on the UNFPA website UNFPA makes it clear in many official statements that it does not do abortions or help women have them. It definitely states that it does not advocate abortion for family planning. However, digging deeper, UNFPA does promote and vigorously advocates abortion as a woman's right. Furthermore, it is very active around the world in trying to lobby and influence various governments to change their laws against abortion, replacing them with laws that legalize abortion and "reproductive freedom". Here are a few articles that should be read by Christians about UNFPA to help in their war to protect the unborn (and actually, to protect women, as well).

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/content/public/articles/000/000/003/645rcjyc.asp?pg=1>[http://www.c-fam.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_view&gid=10&Itemid](http://www.c-fam.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=10&Itemid)<http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewNation.asp?Page=/Nation/archive/200709/NAT20070914d.html>[http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=5457](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=5457)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:36

Thursday, September 6, 2007

## **ABSTINENCE PROGRAM TO BE CUT**

Many evangelical Christians are very upset with Patrick Deval. The Governor of our State is opposed to using federal money to continue a program sponsored and run by a Christian anti-abortion organization in certain public schools. Proponents insist they are not promoting a pro-life agenda but are teaching traditional values to teens about sexuality, especially self-control and, wait until marriage, abstinence. More than 11,000 students have been involved in the classes. The State would rather turn down the \$700,000 dollars outright than abide by the restriction placed upon its use. The powers that be, as well as the Planned Parenthood League which is very influential here, do not trust or agree with the "Healthy Futures" faith-based organization or its program. They insist teaching abstinence is not just useless, but that such a program prevents teens from getting the message about birth control methods that they really need. "We don't get to decide for young people when they have sex, but we can ensure that they have all of the necessary information and support to be intentional about sexual choices. Governor Patrick got it right on sex ed, because he understands its goals: to increase abstinence, reduce the incidence of unprotected sex, and reduce the number of sexual partners. Abstinence-only-until-marriage programs fail to achieve the first goal, and do not even attempt to achieve the other two. Sex education programs that do achieve these goals give a clear message regarding the value of delaying sexual activity, and a clear message that those who are sexually active must always use condoms and other contraceptives." PATRICIA QUINN Director of Public Policy Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy "The FY08 budget process is in full swing. The House has finished deliberation on teen pregnancy items, ... Please call your Senator and ask him or her to support \$4 million for teen pregnancy prevention (DPH 4530-9000). Investment in teen pregnancy prevention led to a 41% decline in the teen birth rate, saving taxpayers \$144 million in one year alone!" - from the Alliance website A report with encouraging statistics about the decline in teen pregnancies can be found with this link. It indicates that the message about abstinence and birth control is making a difference; but millions of teens are still sexually active. There are significant racial and economic factors involved as well, that must also be addressed in reducing teen pregnancies. See the second link. The largest percentage of teen pregnancies in our area are among Hispanic girls. I agree that an abstinence only program is inadequate. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,289172,00.html?sPage=fnc.health/pregnancy> [http://www.mfdp.med.harvard.edu/fellows\\_faculty/cfhuf/fellows/practicum/mcadoo.htm](http://www.mfdp.med.harvard.edu/fellows_faculty/cfhuf/fellows/practicum/mcadoo.htm)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:42

Monday, August 20, 2007

## **MARYLAND MANDATES TEACHING THAT GAY SEX IS OK**

If these articles are to be believed, high school students in one Maryland County, their teachers and parents, are in for anything but a gay time this year. More than the subject at hand, I am even more concerned with the claim quoted in the first article that the State (not parents) is in control of the education of children. (A reminder that "public" schools are state schools. They are all about what the State wants to have taught, by whom it licenses, using the methods it approves. They are not schools of or by the public.)  
[http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070802/28727\\_Pro-Family\\_Groups\\_to\\_Appeal\\_Against\\_Md.\\_Pro-Gay\\_Sex\\_Ed\\_Curriculum.htm](http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070802/28727_Pro-Family_Groups_to_Appeal_Against_Md._Pro-Gay_Sex_Ed_Curriculum.htm)  
[http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070817/28947\\_Pro-Homosexuality\\_Classes\\_to\\_Hit\\_Md.\\_Schools.htm](http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070817/28947_Pro-Homosexuality_Classes_to_Hit_Md._Schools.htm)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:26

Friday, August 17, 2007

**THE NEW RELIGION OF OUR DAY?**

<http://jewishworldreview.com/cols/thomas081607.php3>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:07

Wednesday, August 15, 2007

## **WHEN DISCRIMINATION IS GOOD**

Springfield is being sued by a group of several city employees for racial or ethnic discrimination. The dispute is over promotions. There are also three police officers who are charging the City with discrimination based on their ages because they did not get promotions. Is discrimination always wrong? Yes and No. Social activists (and the government) insist that discrimination against individuals based on membership in a group or class of people is wrong. The Bible and common sense insist that discrimination of individuals as individuals is often necessary and good. The conflict comes when the latter type is confused with the former or the former is used to prevent the latter. An individual can be totally unsuited for a job or promotion or a bank loan or school admission. Deciding that is valid discrimination. The problem is proving that the discrimination was truly justified and not based on the individual's membership in a racial or ethnic or social group or class. Many individuals use that membership to legally force employees, businesses and institutions to hire or reward them even though they are otherwise unqualified. That is wrong. Proving that in today's social climate often seems impossible. As Christians, we should not buy into the argument that all discrimination is wrong and should not be bullied into going along with it.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:07

## **MEMBERS ONLY?**

Americans seem to love groups, but we like to think we live as individuals. In theory, at least, we want to stand or fall (be judged, punished or rewarded) by who and what we are as individuals. We greatly value individualism and freedom to be all we can be as individuals. However, it is politically correct in our multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society to elevate and respect the importance of groups. Group identity is increasingly important and popular. Last month our City celebrated Puerto Rican Heritage Days. On the dark side, many of our teens believe they are nobody unless they belong to a gang and kill other teens just because they are members of another gang. We want it both ways. We can not criticize all Moslems as terrorists- only aberrant individual Moslems are terrorists. We must not stereotype people and profiling is wrong. Everybody should be treated as an individual. On the other hand, we advocate for group rights and interests. We want legislation passed that will protect or favor groups. We want the Supreme Courts to rule in favor of specific groups. We are concerned about all the illegal immigrants or "The Poor" as groups. Campaigning politicians are appealing to the Black vote or the Women's vote or the Southern vote. We have the Blue states and the Red states. We want someone elected who will be good for union members or the farmers or the homosexual community or "our" group. Be assured, when we each stand before the Throne on Judgment Day, we all shall answer for our lives as individuals. We will not be able to plead for mercy on the basis of any group membership. Americans love groups, but God does not deal with us that way.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:03

Monday, July 30, 2007

## **NEHEMIAH MINISTRIES AND WILBERFORCE**

Our friends at Nehemiah Ministries, a Christian city outreach ministry here in Springfield, sponsored a neighborhood "block party" this past weekend. They are a group of mostly young (and a few older but youthful) Believers who have a very attractive passion for living as disciples of Jesus in the city. They are far more serious and intentional about this than many other evangelical Christians. Their concern is about social justice and action and they do a lot of good, practical ("cup of water") work among those known as The Poor. I mention them here because the Church Calendar today commemorates William Wilberforce. He is remembered for his work on behalf of Abolition, but he too was involved in a variety of types of social activism. You may check out a short bio on the Oremus site (go to the bottom of the page) <http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?f>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:41

Thursday, June 28, 2007

## **WHO ARE THE REAL "ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS"?**

Why is there so much resentment against the current 13 million plus immigrants who have, in recent years, entered the United States illegally (saying they are simply undocumented misses or covers up that fact)? Why is there so much anger among many Americans about any proposal to grant them amnesty, allowing them to remain here, with minimal or no punishment, putting them on a track toward citizenship? Why such resentment and anger? There are a number of reasons. One is their large number and omnipresence in many parts of the country. This is made very noticeable by their predominately "brown" skin color, Spanish language and Hispanic culture. However, there are many people of "color", speaking a variety of languages, in the United States. Perhaps the resentment and anger is primarily a response of "white", English-speaking Americans who feel increasingly threatened (or very uncomfortable) by the demographic changes of this country's population in general. (We realize we are rapidly becoming a minority in the land where we were born and we do not like that.) The seemingly recent and "sudden" influx of Hispanic immigrants, legal or not, has exacerbated these feelings. We feel we are losing the country we have known and loved and, in this case, to millions of people culturally different from us, who have no legal right to be here. I am not here defending this feeling, only expressing its existence and saying something often not openly expressed in the debate.

That we are also being asked to support these immigrants with education, health and social services paid for by our tax dollars only makes the resentment and anger stronger. It does not help when we know that millions of dollars earned by the immigrants are sent out of this Country, back to the ones they came from. (Many of us do not buy the argument that these immigrants are economically necessary because they do jobs that citizens supposedly refuse to do. In fact, we resent companies that employ them rather than us, paying lower wages than we believe are fair.) These are familiar arguments. I want to propose that this group of Latino (Mexican and Central American) immigrants, indeed all immigrants, are not the problem many citizens say they are. They are not the threat to America or our way of life as many conservatives believe they are. Denying illegal immigrants citizenship or deporting them, as unrealistic (impossible) as that would be, will not put an end to the real threats to America or bring down the Nation we love. (Although I am definitely in favor of whatever measures are necessary to stop the flow of more illegal immigrants into this Land). Chapters 9 and 10 of the Book of Ezra are helpful in this debate. The country (Israel) was full of pagan immorality and especially idolatry. God was angry and about to bring destructive judgment upon that Land. The source of this problem was decided to be intermarriage. God had warned the Israelites not to marry pagans (actually citizens of other countries), lest the latter draw the Israelites into idolatry and pagan immorality (ruin their country). They did not heed the warning and this is exactly what happened. Under conviction for their sin and fearing for the future well-being of their country, the Israelites agreed to the draconian measure of breaking up their families, divorcing their pagan wives, sending them and their children back to their place of origin. See any similarity with our current immigration issue?

There was another solution possible. Paul tells Christians who are married to non-Christians, not to divorce them over this. Not only does God abhor divorce, there is the actual possibility that the non-believing spouse might be converted to the Faith. The latter is what Paul wants Christians in this situation to go for (1 Corinthians 7:12-15). What was ruining Israel, the Nation, was idolatry and pagan immorality. The Israelite men could have repented of those sins and changed the way they lived and worshipped, while keeping their wives and children, with the hope that the latter would become believers in God and obedient themselves to His Law. Certainly, Ezra 9 and 10 is not a Biblical mandate or justification for mass (or individual) divorce. It is a description of what the Israelites did under Ezra's leadership, not a prescription for Christians today, let alone for Americans dealing with immigrants. But what Paul said and what the Israelites could have done is a prescription for American Christians today. There are people who are ruining our Country, but that has nothing to do with their "color" or where they were born or originally came from. It has nothing to do with whether they are legal or illegal or with what their birth language might be. Who are they? Anyone who does not share our foundational beliefs as a constitutional democracy (a republic of states that are united in the central core beliefs and values that all Americans shared well into the 19th Century). Anyone who denigrates the basic Christian Faith of our Puritan Forefathers and the Colonial Founders of our Country. Anyone who opposes the absolute moral values grounded in what has been known as Judeo-Christian Religion (the Bible). Anyone who advocates multiculturalism and moral pluralism. Anyone who undermines the original intent of the Federal Constitution and its first 10 Amendments (The Bill of Rights) Anyone who endangers political and economic Freedom or works against the infinite value and dignity of each human being (which would include the unborn). Never mind the 13 million immigrants in the current debate. If we want to preserve or save America we must "deport" people I have just described- or convert them. In my mind, anyone who comes to America is welcome- if they are willing to learn and support all of this History and Heritage and adopt and uphold these beliefs and values. This should be required of all. Many people who have lived here for generations and are citizens do not. Everyone, whatever their first or "heart" language may be at home and in private, should also be required to learn and use publicly the language that our Forefathers and Founders spoke and in which all our historic documents are written. Actually, if the 13 plus million we are debating about assimilated and came to

## Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>

espouse and live by all these values of the Original American Way, they could be a great blessing to this Nation- under God!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:54

Wednesday, June 27, 2007

## **BEWARE SPEECH POLICE**

By George F. Will Sunday, June 24, 2007; "Marriage is the foundation of the natural family and sustains family values. That sentence is inflammatory, perhaps even a hate crime. At least it is in Oakland, Calif. That city's government says those words, italicized here, constitute something akin to hate speech...." Read the rest of the article-<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/22/AR2007062201704.html?sub=AR>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:42

Saturday, June 16, 2007

## **A PYRRHIC VICTORY**

Freedom, Justice, Civil Rights, Love, Marriage and Family all won a tremendous victory this week, here in Massachusetts---according to supporters of "Gay Marriage". When campaigning, our newly elected Governor said he was pro-"gay rights" and would push for defeat of any effort to repeal our State's law permitting Gay "Marriage". Well, he did and he has succeeded. Our Legislature overwhelmingly ended the attempt to overturn the Law. The legal issue is dead. Hundreds of activists in front of the State House cheered wildly, as they celebrated the aforementioned "Victory". Others of us, in fact, the majority of citizens here, according to polls, disagree totally and see this action by the Legislature as a defeat of what is right and an assault on the core institution of our Society- a Pyrrhic victory. How can people using the same words- Freedom, Justice, Civil Rights, Marriage and Family- totally disagree with each other? Definitions. The words are spelled the same, but are defined differently. That fact is rarely clarified. If Marriage is defined as "the covenant commitment of a man and woman to live their life together, henceforth, as husband and wife", then by that definition whatever relationship two people of the same gender may have, it can not be "Marriage". Period. If "Love makes a Family" as gay activists insist, meaning that a family is "any two people who want to live together, with children, in a loving relationship" they are wrong, if we define "Family" as "a married man and woman and children". A frequent TV commercial, being shown here before yesterday's vote, has a young man talking warmly about his parents: two women. It ends with him saying it is wrong to vote on people's rights. To vote Yes (to vote to repeal the new Law) and to amend our Constitution to specifically define Marriage as only for a Man and Woman, opponents insisted, would have ultimately written discrimination into our State Constitution. They framed this issue as the same as Civil Rights for African Americans. Civil Unions is not what they want. That is, they insist, equivalent to "separate but equal" schools, which are not, in fact, equal. Who is to decide on all of this? By what authority can Marriage be defined? How are "rights" to be determined? Majority vote? Public Referenda? Courts? Legislature? Constitution? To me, this entire exercise, in all of the above, demonstrates the futility and wrong-headedness of all of the above! Christians are naïve to think that civic righteousness can be pursued, let alone secured, by any of these methods- especially in our contemporary pluralistic, pragmatic and hedonistic Society. Atheists not withstanding, the only Authority to define rights and righteousness is God. The overwhelming majority of Americans say they believe in God. But what God and who or what speaks for God? How do we know what God wants? Thus, we move on to say, the Bible speaks for God (or better: God reveals His will in the Bible). For the Christian, the Bible is the Authority for rights and righteousness. If we want a true definition of Marriage and Family we look to the Book. It makes no difference what the Legislature, the Courts or even the Constitution says. It definitely does not make any difference what the masses or the majority say. All of them can be, and in this case of "Gay Marriage" are, absolutely wrong. If they are Biblical on some issues, without even knowing that, all the better. But none of them are the authority. None of them define what is a right or righteous. (They can define what is legal, but that is a very different matter.) But who interprets the Bible correctly? Even some advocates of "Gay Marriage" quote verses from the Bible, mostly about love, in support of their position. How can we know for sure what it teaches? That leads me to conclude by saying our Authority for deciding matters of Rights and Righteousness is the Bible, as understood by the Church, using the classic, historical Protestant rules of interpretation. For me, even that is not sufficient. Most Evangelical Christians agree with what I have just written, but do not go far enough. They do not, in practice, include the Torah- the first five Books of the Bible, when they use the Bible as the final authority in matters of Faith and Practice, let alone in determining Rights and Righteousness. It is in the Torah, that we find the strongest teaching about Marriage. There we learn most clearly how God defines it. And it is in the Torah that we have the foundation laid for all definitions of Rights and Righteousness. Legislatures and Courts and popular votes change with the times, influenced by politics, economics and demographics. The Torah is bedrock. I have explained how to interpret and apply the Torah in articles on my website- [http://www.calvinfox.com/web/biblical\\_law.html](http://www.calvinfox.com/web/biblical_law.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 05:53

Saturday, June 2, 2007

## **COMPARING POLITICAL CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS**

George Will recently wrote an excellent column comparing Conservatism and Liberalism. I have separated his statements about each "ism" and am posting relevant excerpts from Will's column separately. This makes clear the differences. This is not about Republicans and Democrats. Both of these Parties have moved from their ideological moorings. Neither one can be described as truly Conservative or Liberal today. This is about two very different sets of values and political world views: two ideologies. Which one is more Biblically based? The following are quotes from Mr. Will-

**CONSERVATISM** Today conservatives tend to favor freedom, and consequently are inclined to be somewhat sanguine about inequalities of outcomes. Conservatism's...argument about whether there ought to be a welfare state is over. Today's proper debate is about the modalities by which entitlements are delivered. Modalities matter, because some encourage and others discourage attributes and attitudes -- a future orientation, self-reliance, individual responsibility for healthy living -- that are essential for dignified living in an economically vibrant society that a welfare state, ravenous for revenue in an aging society, requires. This reasoning is congruent with conservatism's argument that excessively benevolent government is not a benefactor, and that capitalism does not merely make people better off, it makes them better. Liberalism once argued that large corporate entities of industrial capitalism degraded individuals by breeding dependence, passivity and servility. Conservatism challenges liberalism's blindness about the comparable dangers from the biggest social entity, government. Conservatism argues, as did the Founders, that self-interestedness is universal among individuals, but the dignity of individuals is bound up with the exercise of self-reliance and personal responsibility in pursuing one's interests. Conservatism's [argument] is that the entitlement culture subverts social peace by the proliferation of rival dependencies. The entitlement mentality encouraged by the welfare state exacerbates social conflicts -- between generations (the welfare state transfers wealth to the elderly), between racial and ethnic groups (through group preferences) and between all organized interests (from farmers to labor unions to recipients of corporate welfare) as government, not impersonal market forces, distributes scarce resources. This, conservatism insists, explains why as government has grown, so has cynicism about it. Conservatism argues that the essence of constitutional government involves constraining the state in order to allow society ample scope to spontaneously take unplanned paths. Conservatism embraces JFK's exhortation to "Ask not what your country can do for you -- ask what you can do for your country," and adds: You serve your country by embracing a spacious and expanding sphere of life for which your country is not responsible. Here is the core of a conservative appeal, without dwelling on "social issues" that should be, as much as possible, left to "moral federalism" -- debates within the states. On foreign policy, conservatism begins, and very nearly ends, by eschewing abroad the fatal conceit that has been liberalism's undoing domestically -- hubris about controlling what cannot, and should not, be controlled. Conservatism is realism, about human nature and government's competence. **LIBERALISM** Liberals are more concerned with equality, understood, they insist, primarily as equality of opportunity, not of outcome. Liberals tend, however, to infer unequal opportunities from the fact of unequal outcomes. Hence liberalism's goal of achieving greater equality of condition leads to a larger scope for interventionist government to circumscribe the market's role in allocating wealth and opportunity. Liberalism increasingly seeks to deliver equality in the form of equal dependence of more and more people for more and more things on government. Hence liberals' hostility to school choice programs that challenge public education's semi-monopoly. Hence hostility to private accounts funded by a portion of each individual's Social Security taxes. Hence their fear of health savings accounts (individuals who buy high-deductible health insurance become eligible for tax-preferred savings accounts from which they pay their routine medical expenses -- just as car owners do not buy insurance to cover oil changes). Hence liberals' advocacy of government responsibility for -- and, inevitably, rationing of -- health care, which is 16 percent of the economy and rising. Steadily enlarging dependence on government accords with liberalism's ethic of common provision, and with the liberal party's interest in pleasing its most powerful faction -- public employees and their unions. Liberalism argues that equal dependence on government minimizes social conflicts. Racial preferences are the distilled essence of liberalism, for two reasons. First, preferences involve identifying groups supposedly disabled by society -- victims who, because of their diminished competence, must be treated as wards of government. Second, preferences vividly demonstrate liberalism's core conviction that government's duty is not to allow social change but to drive change in the direction the government chooses <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/30/AR2007053002026.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:31

Friday, May 25. 2007

## **SPRINGFIELD TODAY- THE USA TOMORROW**

The majority of people who live here in Springfield are not "White" or native born anglophones. The majority of the majority are Hispanic. Spanish is the language most frequently heard. There are many Asians and African Americans, as well as a smattering of many other nationalities and ethnicities. Springfield today is what demographers predict all of the USA will be like in the next 40 years. On a personal note: When I walk or drive around the City, and last week at the major hospital here and this week at the doctor's office, I feel uncomfortable and like an alien in my own native country. It is a very different demographic and cultural world than the one I was born into and have lived in most of my life.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:53

Thursday, May 24, 2007

## **INTRANSIGENT FACTS ABOUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS**

Here is a solid, realistic take on the immigration issue by George Will. Check out the links and the intransigent realities they document <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/23/AR2007052301417.html> <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=MzFhZDE2Y2NiYzQzY2NiY2MxMjI3OWFhNzgzNTQ=> [http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/opinion/points/stories/DN-macdonald\\_21edi.ART0.State.Edition1.2975516.html](http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/opinion/points/stories/DN-macdonald_21edi.ART0.State.Edition1.2975516.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:49

Saturday, April 21, 2007

## **ANOTHER LOOK**

The first link takes you to even more articles that give perspectives on Global Warming different than what we read in our daily paper. Compare the second and third links for an example of hypocrisy on a different issue <http://planetgore.nationalreview.com/http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/20/AR2007042001964.html?referrer=emailhttp://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/20/AR2007042001589.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:30

Thursday, April 19, 2007

## **A DIFFERENT TAKE ON THE THREAT OF GLOBAL WARMING**

"In recent months, the news has carried a spate of stories about Christians embracing the cause of global warming. These news stories highlight some evangelical leaders who have endorsed alarmist claims in their public statements, urged political action on climate change, and even screened Al Gore's movie, An Inconvenient Truth, in their churches. It's no surprise that some politicians are welcoming converts to the cause on the eve of national elections, or that the news media is making much of a supposed split in the "religious right" that could weaken its political influence. Tellingly, not nearly as much attention has been paid to more cautious statements by Evangelicals who reject the claims of climate alarmism."<http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pages/article.php?&id=163>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:50

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

## **BEWARE OF WHAT YOU READ IN THE PAPERS**

I regularly question the newstories I read or hear in the Media. A current example of cause for concern is the reporting on the alledged scandal involving Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank. He has been promoting anti-corruption measures in countries with which the Bank does business. Now he is accused of personal corruption, alledgedly finding a very high paying job for his girl friend within the Bank. Our local paper has run stories about this for 3 days in a row now. They have inflamatory headlines and feature those groups that are calling for the resignation of Mr Wolfowitz. There is a far different story to be told than the one we are getting. Check out these two links. My primary interest here is not the Wolfowitz story itself but the way the reporting of it conveys a very important cautionary tale to those who follow any news

story.<http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110009948><http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-wedgwood17apr17,0,7950703.story?coll=la-opinion-center>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:28

Saturday, April 14, 2007

### **A NEW ERA FOR THE OLD ERA?**

The push for a new version of the ERA is not a good

idea.<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/chi-0704060457apr08,1,3467595.column?coll=chi-navrailn&ctrack=2&cset=true>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:19

### **TRYING TO CLARIFY SOME FUZZY THINKING**

Here is an excellent article that brings some sanity to the Global Warming debate and counters some of the "media-entertainment-environmental complex" efforts to brainwash

Americans.<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/11/AR2007041102109.html>This article also has some sane

suggestions<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/chi-0704110670apr12,1,7863096.column?coll=chi-navrailn&ctrack=1&cset=true>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:06

Friday, April 13, 2007

## **WOE FOR SAYING HO**

I do not believe that Mr Imus was actually saying that the African American members of the Rutgers Women's basketball team are prostitutes (hos = whores= prostitutes). I also think it is disingenuous when certain others say or imply he was saying that. One of the main lessons in this latest PC dustup is that words and phrases can be symbols carrying social and political meaning and consequences far beyond their literal or original intent or use. Cross-cultural context complicates this and can make attempts to communicate in that context a minefield, as this latest Imus affair illustrates "in spades". That last phrase also illustrates the lesson. It means "in an unusually great degree". To "call a spade a spade" means to speak frankly. However, in slang, a "spade" is an offensive name for an African American [Negro comes from the Latin for Black and that is the color of the blade or sword symbol of a particular suite of playing cards. "Spade" comes from the Italian, Spanish, Greek and Latin words for "blade"]. When our new African American governor said, in a recent TV interview, that he has been busy with spade work on legislation he is proposing, he meant research, digging up facts, meaning ground work. Several metaphors here, but I'm sure he did not mean to say he was doing a black man's work which, in turn, would mean demeaning work. Never mind etymology, words often mean only what people in a particular context want them to mean. Sometimes the same word has very different meaning depending on who is using them. The N word is one of those. I walked by a Black woman recently on the sidewalk. She had just starting talking to a Black man and had laughingly said to him, "Hey, how's my favorite N... ?" I would be in trouble if I said that. I googled "Ho" to find examples of its usage in Hip Hop and Rap music by Black male "artists". The word spoken by Mr Imus, so insulting to many, is very common in this popular music. How come that seems ok? I found many links. The following blog and the comments attached was very interesting and eye-opening. It helps explain why some believe it is right that Imus got the heave-ho for saying "ho". [http://djblackadam.typepad.com/damnitq/2007/04/it\\_is\\_worse\\_whe.html](http://djblackadam.typepad.com/damnitq/2007/04/it_is_worse_whe.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:17

Wednesday, April 11, 2007

### **ANTI SCIENCE! REALLY?**

Again our local paper's lead editorial today blasts President Bush for being anti Science by his refusal to support Federally funded embryonic stem cell research. Anti Science! [anti sick people, too] Today's Boston Globe carries a story about successful treatment of diabetes using stem cells- adult (somatic) stem cells. Exciting, promising scientific research is being done with good outcomes in this field. Most people, including TV news commentators apparently do not know there is such a thing. Our local paper ignores this science. Why? My guess: embryonic stem cell research is far more "sexy" with so much celebrity support, it is politically correct and chic (Senator Kennedy is a local hero) it will bring millions of dollars into our economy (UMass and the area biotech industry) and the Editor does not agree that there is anything unethical, or even potentially unethical, about research using embryos. Science is just Science. [that is what Nazis researchers said] It is also part of his anti Bush campaign as well. Here are just a few relevant sites to check

out.<http://stemcells.nih.gov/info/basics/basics4.aspx>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adult\\_stem\\_cell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adult_stem_cell)<http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2006/nov/06111302.html>[http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/04/11/stem\\_cell\\_treatment\\_used\\_for\\_diabetes/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/04/11/stem_cell_treatment_used_for_diabetes/)<http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-smith042302.asp>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:07

Monday, April 9, 2007

## **CITIZEN BEWARE!**

There was recently yet another article in our local paper about public school attendance and drop-out rates. Only about half of all students make it through high school here. And again there was yet another appeal (demand) that the State do something about it with funding of more programs. The same is said about our very high teen pregnancy rate. Hello, these are not problems for the state to solve. Parents, parental involvement is the key. Oh, that's right, we have a large population of single parent households. But the State is supposed to do more to solve that problem, too. (That is after it eliminates teen violence and drug use, too.) What is this? Whatever happened to personal and family and church responsibility? Our money still says, "In God we trust"; but, the truth is "In Government we trust". Ironically, there is very great suspicion and discontent with the present Administration. We really mean, "On Government we depend, like it or not". Jesus is Lord? Humph!(Once, not too long ago, there were dire and certain predictions of Global Cooling, Nuclear War, Population Explosion, World-wide Famine and the Total Depletion of Food and Oil supplies. There have been many others. Google "Disaster Predictions") One of the major reasons I am very leery of the latest public scare (Global Warming) is the politicalization of the issue and the call (from the Left) for even more Government control over our lives. The Bible emphatically warns us of the threat of Totalitarianism (that can be of the Left, as well as of the Right). I am also seriously suspicious of the media. The "complete consensus" of the scientific community is just not true. I have posted about that elsewhere. The biased media blitz against the Iraq war and our President is more reason to doubt the same media sources about the alleged Warming Threat from the burning of fossil fuel and especially the alleged complicity of Mr. Bush and his policy makers in this (especially when quoting Mr. Gore) I won't even mention the same media push to overthrow the present Administration's opposition to Federally funded research that could potentially lead to more abortion and eugenics, i.e.- embryonic stem cell research. Citizen beware. Christian Citizen be doubly aware.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:03

Thursday, March 8, 2007

## **SLIPPERY SLOPE**

Many in this State and our area are excited about the recent announcement of developments to bring embryonic research facilities here, spear headed by the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Supporters envision our valley becoming a national center for such research and the consequent biotech industry to follow. On the surface, of course, it is all about the prevention and cure of disease. After the first few obligatory sentences about that, the editorials and interviews are all about what this will mean for money, jobs and economic growth for this area. By the way, many folks here are also getting excited about the possibility for a casino, as well (we have a new Native American tribe in the State with big plans), for the same reasons (well, most of them) Columnist Charles Krauthammer, joins many prolife Christians in fearing the slippery slope in the realm of bioethics: "You don't need religion to tremble at the thought of unrestricted embryo research. You simply have to have a healthy respect for the human capacity for doing evil in pursuit of the good."<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/march/24.29.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:43

Thursday, March 1, 2007

## **NO, IT IS NOT SO SIMPLE**

Many seem to think the global warming thing is a slam dunk. Others see the dustup as an air ball. Consider this 3-part article [written a year ago] and some of the links that come with it. There is definitely more to the story than what the typical "man on the street" thinks. And if Al Gore is your American Idol, consider the second article below about his "footprint".

<http://www.keepmedia.com/pubs/TheWeeklyStandard/2006/02/27/1570701?page=1><http://www.opinionjournal.com/best/?id=110009720>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:34

## **THE POWER AND PERIL OF PRAISING CHILDREN**

The "Self-esteem" movement took root back in the 70's. Remember "I'm ok, you're ok"? Everyone was ok. Numerical grading in school was eliminated. Some schools even eliminated Grades and "tracks" as too discriminatory. Every child passed. Even games did not have winners- everyone was a winner. Every one was praised. Some of us saw the foolishness in this. Self esteem comes from achievement, not from Smiley stickers. Recent studies, 20 to 30 years later reveal how harmful to children the "self-esteem" movement was and still is. Constantly telling a child he or she is smart sounds like a loving thing to do; turns out it has at least two negative effects. Such children become narcissistic (it's all about Me- I am worthy and should have everything I want, after all. I am perfect) or such children become underachievers and failures. They do not learn to deal with challenges and obstacles. Being so perfect, they do not need to. When they come upon something that might shake that self-image, they avoid it. The emphasis on self esteem has led multitudes of very intelligent and gifted people to become miserable. Specialists in child psychology are once again saying self esteem and fulfillment comes through achievement. [That too has its serious downside, but that is another topic] Praise our children, yes; but praise them for their effort, their accomplishments. That is something they can attempt to control and improve and thus truly feel good

<http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/index.html><http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12392877/>[http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/02/27/study\\_college\\_students\\_more\\_narcissistic/?p1=MEWell\\_Pos5](http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/02/27/study_college_students_more_narcissistic/?p1=MEWell_Pos5)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:03

Thursday, February 22, 2007

## **MORE SLAVES NOW THAN EVER**

Tomorrow (23rd) "Amazing Grace", the movie opens in theaters nationwide. Christian and secular reviewers alike are giving it thumbs up. The true story of William Wilberforce is historically accurate and the man's Christian faith comes through clearly. It is the story of the successful effort to legally abolish the slave trade, 200 years ago. The shocking truth is that the slave trade has continued and is now, although illegal, more prevalent than ever. Over 25 million people, mostly women and children around the world, are considered to be slaves today. Check out this website of a Christian organization dedicated to stopping it today. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/march/16.40.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:48

Saturday, February 10, 2007

## **A COLOR-BLIND VISION**

Black History Month. I'm all in favor of learning and appreciating the contributions of various ethnic groups to the American Experience. We should learn about, and honor, "Black" Americans who have been important change makers in the history of our Country... and the Chinese, Cubans, Italians, Irish and Polish- to name only a few. We would need more than 12 months to do it. On the other hand, Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream of a color blind society. Me, too. Our City has many special interest groups noisily vying for a bigger piece of the political pie based on skin color or language. As Christians, of course, we are opposed to judging groups of people based on genetics (skin pigmentation), country of origin or language. So why don't we agree with MLK Jr. and support his vision? We know that discrimination against groups by such criteria is morally and Biblically wrong. We know that according to the Bible and Science, there is only one Race- the Human Race. So why do we continue to tolerate or advocate making political, social, economic decisions based on so-called "Racism" and Discrimination?

This weekend, a man who would be our President, officially begins his campaign. On one hand, he is all about "the people", appealing to everyone, advocating color-blindness like MLK Jr. On the other hand, he is promoted as an African American who would be our first Black President. Which is it? Ironically, the man's mother is white and he grew up in a white, middle class family. "Barack Obama was born in Honolulu, Hawaii to Barack Hussein Obama, Sr. (born in Alego, a village in Nyanza Province, Kenya) and Ann Dunham (born in Wichita, Kansas). His parents met while both were attending the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii at Manoa. When Obama was two years old, his parents separated and later divorced; his father went to Harvard University to pursue Ph.D. studies, eventually returning to Kenya. His mother married ... an Indonesian foreign student, with whom she had one daughter. The family moved to Jakarta where Obama attended local schools from ages 6 to 10. He then returned to Honolulu to live with his maternal grandparents, attending Punahou School from 5th through 12th grade and graduating from there in 1979." "In Dreams from My Father, Obama describes his experiences growing up in his mother's white, middle class family. His knowledge about his absent black Kenyan father came mainly through family stories and photographs. Of his early childhood, Obama wrote: "That my father looked nothing like the people around me — that he was black as pitch, my mother white as milk — barely registered in my mind." [13] As a young adult, he struggled to reconcile social perceptions of his multiracial heritage." -material from Wikipedia He could be seen, ideally, as an example of the union of black and white- an example of a man who combines the best of both "races". "Seen" is the operative word. This candidate is seen (perceived) to be "Black" by the public and chooses to identify himself as African American. I want to judge the man, pro or con, on his character and qualifications for the Office. Period. Why doesn't every Christian?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:32

Tuesday, February 6, 2007

## **POVERTY: BIBLICAL CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS**

In approaching the problem of poverty it is essential to define it correctly. For Christians that means going to the Bible. In the Bible, poverty is destitution. Poverty is not simply living below an arbitrary level of income, set by the Government. The truly "poor" are the destitute. In the Bible, more than 20 causes of poverty are mentioned. Oppression is the primary cause of true poverty (destitution). Oppression is exploiting those who can no longer work and support themselves. These would be widows, fatherless children, the sick or disabled or farmers who have had bad crops due to disasters. In some cases, their land is simply stolen. Oppressing, exploiting, stealing is injustice. It violates the law of God and the rights of these people. People are "poor" if they had property and means, but have lost their livelihood or are no longer able to work and be self-sufficient. They can't pay their bills, due to no fault of their own—plant closing, fire, accident, death in the family, debilitating illness, enormous medical bills or natural disasters like hurricanes, etc. These people are not victims of oppression, but the results are the same.

Oppression is exploitation, defrauding, cheating, and stealing. It can be by violence or at the hands of "powerful interests" using corrupt courts or bad laws. The victims of such oppression, in Scripture, are the weak and powerless—the very low income poor. Think of the Money Lender abruptly taking the farm from the widow and her children after the husband is killed in an accident. Think of the Government taking housing by eminent domain. Think of the Wealthy Landowner forcing the peasant off neighboring land to improve his view of the ocean. Many texts tell us that God is very concerned for these victims of oppression. He wants them to have justice. God is not on the side of the poor as such. God is on the side of Justice. All people have a right to work, to engage in the economic processes. They have the right to enjoy the fruit from their labor, to make a profit, to have private property, to own land. God is for all of these things. To deny any of these rights to anyone is injustice and God is against that. The primary cause of oppression (and, therefore poverty) is idolatry. As rich and powerful people reject God and His Law to follow idols, they substitute the ungodly values and behavior dictated by those idols. This leads them to oppress the weak into grinding poverty. (This is not to say that all people who are rich and powerful do this!) The Bible, primarily in the Book of Proverbs, also says that personal, irresponsible behavior (mostly laziness) is a cause of poverty. This is the cause that conservative Evangelical Christians emphasize, almost exclusively and they typically overlook what the Bible teaches about oppression, rooted in idolatry. This is a serious misreading of Scripture. Our local approach to the problem of poverty must begin with this Biblical definition of true poverty as destitution. Most of what is called poverty in America is not true poverty. Much of what is called poverty in our local area may very well be caused by personal lifestyle and behavior, especially multiply illegitimate pregnancies and fatherless "families" or youth dropping out of school, choosing not to acquire the skills needed for employment. None of these personal choices are necessarily, or even probably, connected with oppression. "Poverty" involving such causes must be addressed for what it is: personal lifestyle and behavior which must be confronted and changed. This is possible by aggressive evangelism and solid teaching, along with direct personal involvement by church members, in the lives of those especially at risk for such behavior. There must be a zero tolerance of teen illegitimacy, fatherless teen families and dropping out of schools by teens, especially among Christians. Practical ministries addressed to meet these needs must be mandatory in church programs. Destitution is also caused by mental, emotional or physical "disease". This, too, is not a matter of oppression unless treatment and support of people who are destitute for these reasons is denied to them. Such treatment and support, in my opinion, will require more specialized residential centers and clinics. Churches could cooperate to provide some of these resources. Poverty which is caused by oppression will not be solved by anything less than removal of that oppression. All the oppressive behavior mentioned in Scripture (theft, fraud, discrimination, etc) is illegal in America. Justice [an end to oppression] must be found through the Courts. Such action goes to the root of the problem. If the oppression is systemic and institutionalized, those systems and institutions must be confronted. This is particularly true if the oppression is some form of discrimination or racism. This calls for brave action from individuals, churches and the community at large. If oppression is a result of idolatry (e.g.- the worship of Mammon or the Gang and its Territory or Power or some ideology about what America is supposed to be), that idolatry must be confronted. According to the Bible, truly destitute and very poor people have the right to be taken in and supported by their kin, their extended family and helped by their Church. This responsibility must again be taught and emphasized from the pulpit and by church leaders. The truly poor have a right to share in the tithes [taxes] collected from the entire local community. They have a right to glean in the fields of others. [the largess of businesses, sharing their products or profits] This responsibility must be proclaimed from pulpits and by church leaders. To deny the truly poor these rights is injustice and God is against that. Bible-believing Christians and Churches should be in the forefront in the advocacy of Justice and in battle against Poverty as outlined above. The Biblical principles here are most workable in the care of destitute and innocent poor people, on a small scale, over time, in fairly small towns and cities. Ideally, the care-givers should be directly and personally involved with those

receiving care. More than money and material aide, the poor need “compassion- people who will “suffer with them”. The question of the size and type of aid necessary from the Federal and State Government is to be debated; but Biblical principles should be followed. Social Services should be as local and as grass roots as possible, working with resident families and local businesses, enabling them to chart the course and be responsible for outcomes. Indisputably, the Biblical role of government, whatever else it may do, is to maintain law and order and, particularly, to prevent waste and corruption in the delivery of those Services. There must be no victimization, no oppression and no exploitation or manipulation of the Destitute by any Government agency or program or those who administer them. By all means, aid that cripples those who receive it, deprives people of self-respect and responsibility and creates dependency must be avoided.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:47

Monday, February 5, 2007

## **NEW ARTICLE ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

My webmaster, Norm, just published my latest article on our website. This is a 3-part essay about Human Rights. What does the Bible say about them? What are they? Who defines them? All my articles can be reached by just clicking on the Quick Links box at the upper part of the column to the right. Also note, all the Articles are available in PDF. Just click on those letters at the top of each article and it will appear in a very easy to read and copy format. If you do use this material, please do not change it and please give me, and this website, credit for its origin. The material is copyrighted. Thank you!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:10

## **CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO FEDERAL BUDGET**

Most folks seem to be "splitters", while others are "lumpers". In grappling with the social issues of the day, seeking the mind of Christ as to what to do, my concern, first, is neither. For example, the newly proposed Federal Budget. Additional billions for the war in Iraq and major cuts for Human Services. This is immoral to those who oppose the war or to those who want increases to Health, Education and Welfare programs. Case closed on ideological or political grounds. All these folks are lumpers, judging things in general categories. Splitters would take each line item and look at specific figures, pro and con. This is too much for grenades and this is too little for band aides. That might reveal that the troops in harm's way are not getting the necessary supplies and that there are a lot of unused supplies stored in neighborhood clinics; but who has time or expertise to do that? It is far easier to be a lumper. I do not approach the Budget either way. I believe Christians must step back and first see what God has revealed in His Word about the purpose of Government. Is it His will for Civil Government to engage in any war? That, of course, raises the further issue of when, where and how? What are the Biblical guidelines for a "just" war and then, does the "Iraq War" qualify? Only after having done this Study and coming up with clear Biblical answers to these questions, can we go on to consider the best way to fund this War and, then, to examine the Budget. Second, is it the God-given purpose of Government to provide (any) Health, Education and Welfare Programs? Again, when, where and how? Whom does the Bible say qualifies for such assistance? Only after doing this Study, can we go on to examine the Budget and consider the best way to fund these Services. Third, we must reconcile the first and second issues. How do we balance them for the common good of the Nation. Again, what Biblical Principles can guide us in this? Politics must not drive any of this. We must think and act as Christians (even if this is hopelessly idealistic in this world. It is not naïve, however; we do it with eyes open- actually, with eyes on the Lord (like Stephen as he was stoned) The Articles on my website and on this Blog are intended to help. <http://www.calvinfox.com/web/articles.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:20

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

## **WHAT ABOUT AN UNJUST GOVERNMENT?**

This approach to Government [below] assumes that it practices Justice and not injustice. That is the ideal. When Government denies people their Biblical rights, then it has become evil and Christians do not have to obey it. To the view of the Apostle Paul, we must add the view of Apostles, Peter & John. Acts 5:27 Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. 28 "We [Rulers] gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." 29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! i.e.- Rulers/Government] This is not a call to civil disobedience. Rather, it is a call to passive or non-violent resistance. Christians must not cooperate with, blindly obey, Government, if it is promoting injustice [defined below as transgression of God's Law]. We should refuse to go along with its policies, but not attack or try to overthrow it. Rather, we would accept the consequences- suffering as a Christian for obeying God and pursuing Justice. 1 Peter 3:17 It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 4:14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. Rev 13:7 [throughout history, governments, on occasion, have been] given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. 9 He who has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints. [read Book of Revelation] Heb 10:32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. 33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. 34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. 35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:15

## **BEING SUSPICIOUS OF GOVERNMENT**

There is never-ending debate about specific government programs and line items in the Budget as to whether they are justified in "the war on poverty" and myriads of related subjects from Health to Education. It is very easy to get caught up in the debates and, personally speaking, very confused about details. There are so many projections and so much data, how is the "average" citizen to make informed and intelligent decisions? I need to step back and reaffirm some basic principles and start from there, rather than the more common pragmatic approach, that usually involves the tyranny of the urgent: perceived immediate personal needs that must be met now! As a Reformed Christian, I think what influences my thinking and action about "welfare" and the State the most, of many related ones, are the following four basic principles 1. God is God. The Bible warns, in the most urgent way, about idolatry; especially the worship of the State. Above all, we must be concerned about totalitarianism and, therefore, government intrusion and control over our lives. 2. Human beings are selfish and will always be inclined to serve their own personal (or group) interests. Thus, they not only do not love God with all their hearts, neither do they love their neighbors as they should. Sinners sin. Greed, corruption, crime, violence are an inevitable part of life at home and in the civic community. The first duty of the State is negative: to restrain sin and evil and to protect citizens from each other: Law and Order. Even then, because Government officials themselves are sinners, I tend to suspect or mistrust all that Government does and am cautious in my compliance. 3. The importance and absolute necessity of productive work. This is every person's God-given responsibility for the support of self and extended family, as well as for the good of the civic community (including church). 4. The corollary to the above is the responsibility of extended family and community (including church) to care for its needy and dependent members; especially, true victims of tragedy and hardship, literally those unable to work or care for themselves. These are absolute, Biblical Principles. Everything involving the State is evaluated in their light. If it can be demonstrated that a particular State program or "benefit" will have the long range consequence of compromising these Principles, at the very least, its suspension and endorsement of it by Christians should be very reserved.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:07

Monday, January 29, 2007

## **JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

What does God expect of any and all nations? What are the God-given functions of all Nations and of their Rulers and Citizens? Justice. Most simply put, there is Justice when people, animals and the Land are able to enjoy their Rights, as defined by Biblical Law [see previous posts] Injustice is the denial of those Biblical Rights. Isaiah 1:17 seek justice, correct oppression. Isaiah 30:18 the LORD is a God of justice. Isaiah 56:1 the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right" Isaiah 61:8 I, the LORD, love justice Micah 6:8 ...what does the LORD require of you but to do justice Amos 5:15 Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice This is God's world. He created it with a Plan and Purpose. He created it with Norms and an Order of His design. He wants this world and the people in it to live according to His will. In this way, He is glorified and People experience Life as their Creator intended. Simply put, God is glorified when His Creation and all creatures in it function or live according to His Design. Human Rights are not possible or desirable on any other basis. We must not and will not approach this subject apart from God.

Isaiah 28:17 I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line God judges a nation, as a nation, by its record and practice of Justice. The issue is not whether a Country is Christian. That is the wrong issue. The right issue is, simply, whether or not a Country is Just. That is the issue in choosing, by vote or appointment, all Leaders: Is the candidate (for any position) just? Is a proposed Program, Policy, Budget or Bill just? Isaiah 59:1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. [This is addressed to the Nation, not individuals] 3 For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things. 4 No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil. 6 ... acts of violence are in their hands. 7... they are swift to shed innocent blood. ...ruin and destruction mark their ways. 8 The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace. 9 So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. 11 ... We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away. 14 So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. 15 Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. 16 He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene. Inasmuch as God judges a nation, a people, by the yardstick of Justice, we must know- "What is Justice?" The following is the Biblical definition of Justice. There are two aspects. I.) Justice is God providing and securing those rights that He has decreed for all people, the environment and animals; but, especially for His Covenant People. II.) Justice is God punishing those people, groups and nations who deny or deprive people, the Land animals or, especially, His Covenant People the rights and responsibilities He has given them. The Hebrew word translated as "Justice" is "ts@daqah" [sed ah kah]. It is most often translated as "righteousness". The Righteousness of God is God acting rightly. God acts rightly when He is just. God is just when He keeps His Promise, especially His Covenant with His People, that He will defend their Rights and punish those who deny them those rights.

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Dictionaries/BakersEvangelicalDictionary/bed.cgi> Why is Justice so important to God? This is God's world. Injustice ruins it. God had a Design for His Creation. It can not be what He intends it to be as long as there is injustice. Injustice is a violation of God's Norms and Laws. Those reveal His character and will. Injustice contradicts and assaults God's character and denies His will. God is Sovereign of this world. Injustice say He is not. Injustice is an insult and affront to all God is. God establishes Justice directly by His action in history. Seen often in Old Testament Luke 1:51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. Daniel 2:20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, ... 21 ... He removes kings and sets up kings; Psalm 75:7 it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another. Psalm 107:40 he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes; 41 but he raises up the needy out of affliction God establishes Justice indirectly through Government [Rulers, Judges, Courts] We must have freedom to exercise our rights, as well as have them safeguarded and preserved. This is the function of government 1. to provide for social, economic, political and religious freedom and the protection of such persons. 2. to protect and restrain all that which demeans, exploits, neglects, injures or destroys persons. RO 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 3 ... rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Rom 13:6 This is why you

## Blog Export: DUTCH TREAT- Cal Fox's Blog, <http://www.calvinfox.com/blog/>

pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. What that means and how it works out in practice is explained in the Articles on my website [Biblical Principles of Civil Government](http://www.calvinfox.com/web/civilgov.html) <http://www.calvinfox.com/web/civilgov.html> Government and Justice (coming soon)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 22:34

Wednesday, December 20, 2006

## **LAMBASTING TURKEYS**

The Government (FEMA) has been lambasted lately for wasting more than a billion dollars in relief aid given inappropriately to certain Katrina victims. Why are the people who took that money fraudulently not being lambasted for keeping it?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:56

## **US AND THEM**

2 Thessalonians 1 To the church of the Thessalonians We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, ... we boast of you among the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith during all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring. ... it is just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to the afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at on that day among all who have believed Here is another passage about the Second Advent. Note again, that it will be a terrible day for non-Christians. It is a very common criticism of Christians that they are judgmental and intolerant. It is said we are to be pluralistic and multicultural and avoid any talk that distinguishes between "us and them". The Apostle Paul must have missed that memo

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:17

## **POLITICS AND RELIGION**

Our Governor-elect, Deval Patrick, has been holding town meetings all across the State. He has enlisted many business and community leaders to give him input on what the State, cities and towns, schools and businesses need. He has had thousands of suggestions and requests from every quarter. His campaign slogan was "Together we can". He says he is all about participatory democracy and many people are embracing him with enthusiasm (Note: Barack Obama is his clone in many ways). Time will tell how all this plays out. My question is: by what standard will he, as Governor, decide between all these ideas, suggestions and requests? What criteria will he use to determine the wheat from the chaff? What principles will guide his decisions, choices and actual actions? There must be standards, criteria, values and principles. He can not do what everyone wants willy nilly. There must be order and priorities assigned. There will be political pressures and fiscal restraints, but what moral values will govern the Governor? For all the profession of bi-partisanship, Mr Patrick is a social and economic liberal Democrat. That will determine much of what he will do when in Office. Many Christians believe that the values of liberal Democrats are Biblical, e.g.- Mr Patrick is expected to increase State spending on Education, Social and Human services. Many other Christians believe that Mr Patrick will promote non-Biblical values, e.g.- gambling, embryonic stem cell research, abortion, "gay marriage" and much of the involuntary redistribution of wealth to support programs of a socialized welfare State. People may always argue over Religion and Politics, but they are not only essential, they are inseparable. And the latter must be grounded in the former. More specifically, the latter must be grounded in Biblical values and principles. Let the arguments continue- we are in serious trouble if they do not.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:16

## **LOVE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES?**

The young woman, in line ahead of us, had on a tee shirt with the words of some Proclamation printed on the back. These were announcing an event on a local college campus, a Celebration of Love. Included was a line that said, "We celebrate love without boundaries". Sounds enlightened, right? Well, depends how she defines "love". If she is including sexual activity in the word "love", does her slogan include love between humans and animals? Adults and young children? Adults who are siblings? Multiple adults simultaneously? Married adults with other adults married and

unmarried? Adults of the same gender? She probably had the latter in mind. If the woman thought logically about it, she would have to agree (I hope) that there must be boundaries to love, if sex is involved. If her argument for no boundaries is based on freedom of choice and human rights, then all of these multiple couplings would be logically permissible. There must be boundaries, or society would degenerate (both meanings of that word). Ahh, but then- where do the boundaries come from? Who or what sets them? Not government or the courts of today. God- He sets the boundaries. And how do we know for sure what God decrees in this matter? Revelation from Him. Propositional revelation. Objective, absolute, propositional revelation. Where is that to be found? The 66 canonical Books of the Christian Bible.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:32

Wednesday, December 13, 2006

## **THINKING OF USING POWER POINT?**

"Reading Tufte on these matters [such as the use of Power Point] can be a life-changing experience for people, like me, who deal in information every day—who are, as the current argot has it, "information workers." After spending some time in Tufte's company you become less inclined simply to accept the usual ways in which quantitative information, or non-quantitative information for that matter, is displayed. You start to ask yourself whether there are more creative ways than you had previously perceived to outline an idea for a book, or summarize historical developments for a college class you teach, or make handouts even for Sunday School or church vestry reports. You learn to try out various ways to organize information—historically, thematically, geographically—and in the process you force yourself to reconsider the way you habitually organize data in your own head." <http://www.christianitytoday.com/books/features/bookwk/061211.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:47

Monday, December 4, 2006

## **LOVE AND THE MINIMUM WAGE**

We must spell out what we mean by "love". To say we are to love our neighbor sounds nice. All may say, Amen; but what do we mean by the word? AIDS spreads to many women, when their infected husbands or "boyfriends" say to them, "If you love me..." Many girls lose their virginity or become pregnant for the same reason. "Hey, if you love me, ..." Many people want to help eliminate poverty. They are convinced that raising the Minimum Wage will help do that, so they argue, "If we love the poor, we will be in favor of raising it. It is the loving thing to do." If we are against legislation raising the minimum wage, these folks will say, we do not love the poor. On the other hand, if we are convinced that raising the minimum wage will cost them their jobs, because their employers can not afford to pay the raise, we are actually hurting them. That is not love. From this perspective, being against raising the minimum wage is the loving thing to do. Both the pros and the antis believe in loving their neighbor. They define what that means differently. The simple exhortation to "Love" is not enough. We must spell out what it means to love. Then let people say "Amen" to that.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:04

Friday, December 1, 2006

## **World AIDS Day**

Heart disease and stroke will remain the top causes of death world wide, but AIDS will join them within the next 25 years, according to the latest projections published this week. Almost 3 million people die from AIDS annually, which is a horrible and needless tragedy. I was surprised to read the prayer in today's Oremus that says, in part, God, ... Inspire us to challenge the forces that allow the needless spread of AIDS to continue -- prejudice, unjust laws, repression, prudery, stigma and fear. My understanding is that most people contract the virus through intravenous drug use ("dirty needles") or from sexual intercourse with an infected partner. Increasingly, the victims are women and their children. In other words, the primary cause is behavioral and that means the primary solution is behavioral, meaning abstinence from using infected needles or from having sexual intercourse with infected partners. Very, very difficult, but simple. That change in behavior is possible through Christ and with relevant education and community support. That is what we should be praying for. It is significant that the prayer used today in Oremus was submitted by the Metropolitan Community Church, which is a "gay" denomination.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:36

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

## **OBSCENE**

OBSCENE! No, not the sexual immorality or political corruption constantly in the news; but, the money the Red Sox are going to pay just for the right to negotiate with a certain possible pitcher for their Team. Never mind whether it is a good baseball decision, it is a very immoral decision in my book. And that many fans will be indifferent is also a grave moral problem to me, as well. I write this in the middle of reading about poverty in the world and about the on-going atrocities in Darfur. The 51.1 million dollars will go to the pitcher's current "owners", if a deal can be made. Allegedly, the pitcher, who has never played major league ball, could be offered 7-10 million annually for the next 4 years. Meanwhile, the Yankees roster costs 200 million annually in salaries. I thought the game was about, well, the game. Obviously, it is not. It is about greed and profit. These salaries would not be paid, if there was not going to be a big return on the investment to the Team owners. Much of that will come from TV rights and merchandizing, but it all would be impossible without the collusion of multitudes of fans, who just want their team to win, especially when bets are being made, and are willing to put up millions of their own money to help make it happen. Period. Well, sorry, but to me this profligacy, money-grubbing and conspicuous consumption, in a so-called Christian nation, is obscene. Period.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:55

## **LARGESS FOR LOW-INCOMERS**

The State bought an apartment complex here in 1999 for \$10.5 million. It became 111 units of subsidized housing. There are 250-300 low-income tenants. They are being relocated temporarily, while their apartments are remodeled (new kitchens, bathrooms, windows, etc) They will move back in, along with additional tenants, for a total of 149 units. All subsidized. The State has chosen a Boston area firm to develop and manage the complex. The money for all of this comes from the Federal Government. That will be 17.3 million tax payers dollars. This is an example of the involuntary redistribution of private wealth by the civil government, taking from those who have more to give those who have less. (Except for the Management Company who, of course, are in business to make a profit.)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:37

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

## **BAND AIDS or SURGERY?**

Last Sunday's paper carried an op-ed piece by the Publisher addressing the need in our City to care for the growing number of homeless people here. The numbers have been increasing each year. Apparently, there are now 1400 individuals and 400-500 families counted as homeless. They are not street people, but live in rooms and apartments provided by various Service Agencies on a "temporary", emergency basis. (That is about 1% of the population. Somehow, the fact that 99% of the people here have permanent homes is not a big news item or cause of thanksgiving.) The Publisher lists the factors leading to this "homelessness". They include unemployment (He does not mention, the very high, school drop out rate which leads to the unemployment), family crises, drug and alcohol abuse and teen age pregnancies (single mothers with their kids are the "fastest growing segment" of the homeless.) The op-ed piece concludes by saying that reducing the growth of homelessness lies with the mayors of the neighboring cities and the new Democratic administration in Boston. By this the writer means money- funding of more agencies and their programs. The top of the fold, front page headline in today's edition declares "Critics decry [Governor] Romney's cuts. [Governor-elect] Patrick indicates reversal possible." The cuts [1.7% of the total Budget] were in budget allocations for human service programs.

When I was a State Social Worker, I had a case load of around 90 children, mostly young teen age boys in trouble. I spent almost all of my time putting out fires with squirt guns. I know the tyranny of the urgent, the pressure to meet immediate needs immediately. That was 45 years ago. Nothing has really changed- the social problems are the same today and so is the compulsion of Liberals to throw tax payer money at them. I became convinced back then that what my clients really needed for the long run, what would really make a difference in their lives, were heart transplants. The State Welfare Department did not do major surgery (just Band-Aids) Only God could perform the operation. Only God could remove the old, sinful heart and replace it with a new, Spirit-filled heart. I left social work to become a full-time Pastor. Through the power of God, the instruction of the Bible and fellowship with brothers and sisters in the Church Family, regenerate sinners are motivated to get an education and skills that make them employable. They work (more than that, they find and fulfill whatever vocation God has for them, which is far more than a "job"), they clean up their personal lives (more than that, they begin the process of growing in Christ-likeness) and they marry and have Christian marriages and families (if God leads them into those relationships) This is the way to effectively "reduce the growth of homelessness" in our city. It has nothing to do with the Mayor or the Governor or State funding and agencies and programs. It has everything to do with sharing the old fashioned Gospel, new life in Christ (holiness and righteousness) and the Church as Family. Band aids have their usefulness, but they are absolutely are not the substitute for needed surgery!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:53

Wednesday, November 8, 2006

## **THE STEM CELL RESEARCH WE ARE NOT HEARING ABOUT**

Across this State (as well as others), there is great hope and belief that the biotech field will be a boon to the economy, both in development and distribution. We are talking about hundreds of millions in investment and profits, as well as all kinds of employment opportunities. All this was a major subject in the recent gubernatorial campaign. Both major candidates, as well as other wannabes during the primaries, were strong proponents, especially for embryonic stem cell research. The debate was over the role of the State in the development of that research, particularly by State funded Universities and public tax money, versus the private sector. Always the debate was framed as being about Science and research. Conservative Republicans were constantly said to oppose both. Besides being ludicrous, it is not true. Neither conservative Republicans nor Christians are against Science (the latter are often accused of this when the subject is Intelligent Design). I have said elsewhere, the argument is only about embryonic stem cell research. That is because we believe embryos are nascent human beings and as such must not be destroyed.

"The principled objection to current methods of embryonic stem cell research is that they all require the destruction of human embryos. Human embryos, as a matter of scientific fact, are human beings at a very early stage of development. For one to deny this basic biological truth isn't simply to be wrong, but to be unreasonable. The science is clear. While sperm and egg are both genetically and functionally parts of the adult parents, when a sperm fertilizes an egg and the respective pronuclei fuse; a genetically and functionally new, distinct, and unique human organism comes into existence. This embryonic human being possesses all of the internal resources necessary to guide him through further stages of development." "The reason we treat the one-celled human zygote as the subject of profound worth and dignity is because it does possess the radical (root) capacity for higher mental functions, even if that basic ability is unexercised and incipient." <http://weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/861hhanx.asp?pg=1> "The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity maintains that stem cell research does not require the destruction of human embryos. To date, there are over 70 therapies benefiting human patients (and more than 500 clinical trials underway) using stem cells from non-controversial sources such as bone marrow and umbilical cord blood." <http://www.crosswalk.com/news/weeklystandard/1444349.html> <http://www.cbhd.org/media/pr/2006-08-24.htm> These three linked articles are excellent sources of information about the medical and ethical issues involved in stem cell research. Why is adult (bone marrow) and umbilical cord blood stem cell research and their great successes not publicized? Best guess: the profit motive by those who know and ignorance by those who do not

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:56

## **"HOMOSEXUALS GREAT BLACK HOPE?"**

A good article about Deval Patrick and his advocacy of "Gay Marriage" can be found here, along with other important points on that topic. It is not going away! This is from a Blog written by a conservative, Black Christian woman. <http://lashawnbarber.com/archives/2006/10/23/deval-patrick-and-homosexual-marriage/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:53

Sunday, November 5, 2006

## **SERIOUS POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS**

Racism (members of one race considering and treating members of another race as genetically inferior) is impossible. Why? God created only one race: the Human Race. Failure to teach this basic Biblical truth has led to untold human suffering over nothing. Discrimination is a necessary and good thing. God expects His people to make a distinction between righteous behavior and unrighteous behavior, between good and evil. He exhorts His people to be separate from whatever will be a detrimental influence on them. Even marriage and business partnerships between Believers and non-believers is forbidden. So practicing Biblical, reasonable discrimination is a good and necessary thing. Teaching children that all discrimination is a bad thing is a bad thing. Teaching them to avoid putting their "fingers" in what ever serves as an electrical outlet in their lives is a good and smart thing. Obviously, disrespecting and hurting other people, for any reason, is inexcusable, but that is not discrimination. That is unrighteous behavior from which Christians are to separate. Multiculturalism is a bad idea. All cultural values and behaviors are not equal and interchangeable, deserving of equal respect. Peripheral, sub-cultural preferences in matters of such things as food and music is not in question. Honesty, hard work, fiscal responsibility, sexual purity, fidelity in marriage, getting an education, non-violence, being a respectable and responsible citizen and neighbor- these are all cultural values. They are definitely superior to any cultural behavior which encourages or condones or celebrates the opposite values. Gay marriage is a total misnomer. There is only one, Biblical, definition of marriage: the committed, covenant relationship of a man and a woman. Period. Simple. All discussion about "Gay Marriage" is spurious. There can be no such thing. If we go by what the Bible teaches. That's the rub. Advocates of "Gay Marriage" do not, but we do not have to play by their rules (or definitions). Another popular misconception: We hear constantly that pro-life people oppose stem cell research. We do not. Every time you read or hear that make this correction: we oppose embryonic stem cell research. Here are helpful articles-<http://www.cbhd.org/media/pr/2006-08-24.htm><http://www.crosswalk.com/news/weeklystandard/1444349.html><http://weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/861hhanx.asp?pg=1>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:21

## **REASONS I AM STILL VOTING REPUBLICAN**

If the polls are correct, the Republican Party in this State will almost pass into oblivion this week. Only 12.5% of registered voters are Republicans. We are a very endangered and often maligned species here in Massachusetts. Some 50% of voters are registered as "Independents". I know the latter are convinced that being Independent allows freedom of choice between Primaries, candidates and issues, voting with out being tied to Party Lines, voting for the candidate of choice, regardless of affiliation. That sounds smart and I understand the appeal of being independent. I will be voting the Party. I admit that, for some offices, candidates of one Party might be better than those of the other; but, not better enough to make a difference to me. A major reason for voting the Party Line, is a belief in the two Party system. Independents have no Party Platform, no guiding principles or philosophy, no history, no authorized Leaders and no Convention. What governs them? Add the practice of legislation by public referenda to voting by independents of every stripe, you end with government dominated by dozens of competing private interest groups and rule by the masses, changing constantly with the times. Passions of the Day will trump Reason and principled, planned public policy. For all the complaints about partisan gridlock in the two party system, one Party system does away with competition, checks and balances and restraint, allowing for monopolistic and run away spending by the Party in control. A vote for Republican candidates in many races, especially here in Massachusetts, is a vote for the 2-party system

I agree with many who find there are very few clear distinctions between Parties and candidates these days and the Democratic Party currently has little specific to offer besides being the alternative to the present Administration. That seems to be enough for many people, saying: "We need a change!" But what do they offer, specifically, for example, about ending the Iraq War? "Don't know, don't care. We just must have a change!" Theoretically and traditionally, the Democratic Party tends to run toward an ever larger, liberal Welfare State and programs that appeal to the lower or underprivileged, worker class. Ideally, the Republican Party advocates a government of decreasing size, economic conservatism, favoring the private business sector and the upper class, with a strong emphasis on Law and Order. In recent decades, there has also been a strong element of social conservatism, as well, in allegiance with religious conservatives. In theory, these are important distinctives. As a Christian, I must vote for the Party that comes closest, at least in theory, to Biblical ideals. The Bible warns repeatedly about totalitarianism of all kinds. Therefore, as a Christian, I oppose the growth of government and its encroachment on our private lives. At the same time, Scripture

emphasizes that the primary function of Government is Law and Order and gives no support to the idea of the Welfare State. Scripture also supports the economic principles that under gird free market Capitalism. It does not support the idea of the involuntary Government sponsored redistribution of private property. Hence, you can see why I am voting the Republican Party. I know it is far from its own Ideals. Neither am I am deterred by the moral failure of individuals, who are Republicans. In the same way, I would not denounce and repudiate the Church, because some individual Clergy have turned out to be moral disasters. I am voting for the Ideals and want to work toward realizing them in practice.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:51

Saturday, October 21, 2006

### **JUST WONDERING WHY...**

Why do folks talk on their cell phones in the doctor's office when there are 5 easy to read signs on the walls and door requesting people not to do so  
People stand smoking by exits with signs saying this is a smoke free area  
Drivers turn left at the intersection near here where large signs are posted on traffic light poles saying, "No Left Turn"  
Why the neighbor is raking leaves today into the strong wind blowing them away  
Why the Editor of our paper says it is ok for convenience stores in Massachusetts to sell wine because 48 other states do and that gay marriage is ok here even though 48 other states say it is wrong.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:03

Friday, October 20, 2006

## **ARE EVANGELICALS TURNING LEFT?**

Americans overwhelmingly consider the U.S. a Christian nation: Two-in-three (67%) characterize the country this way, down just slightly from 71% in March 2005.<sup>1</sup> ... In 1996, 60% considered the U.S. a Christian nation. By 2002, however, the figure had climbed to 67%, and since then views on this question have remained fairly consistent. ... even among seculars nearly half (48%) view the U.S. this way. More whites than blacks characterize the United States as a Christian country (by 70% to 58%), and people ages 50 and older are more likely to express this view than are younger people (by 74% to 63%). When asked which should have more influence over the laws of the country - the Bible or the will of the people, even when it conflicts with the Bible - most Americans (63%) say the people's will should have more sway....relatively few Americans identify with either the "religious left political movement" (7%), or the "religious right political movement" (11%). However, there are far more conservatives who identify with the religious right than liberals who identify themselves as belonging to the religious left. 20% of white evangelical Protestants - say they think of themselves as members of the religious right. ... Fewer than one-in-ten in every major religious group identifies with the religious left. A relatively high proportion of adults under age 30 (14%) say they think of themselves as a member of the religious left, twice the level of any other age group. ... about a third of all Christians (32%) identify themselves as "liberal" or "progressive" Christians. ...only a somewhat higher percentage (38%) describe themselves as "born again" or evangelical Christians. ... more than a third of evangelicals (36%) also describe themselves as liberal or progressive Christians.

<http://pewforum.org/docs/index.php?DocID=153#4http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/november/8.24.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:44

Tuesday, October 17, 2006

## **CLONING IS COMING**

My comments in CAPs about an article found

here-<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/16/AR2006101601337.html?referrer=emailScientists>  
ts have now applied the technique [OF CLONING] successfully to cattle, horses, pigs, goats and other mammals. CAN HUMAN BEINGS BE FAR BEHIND? Each clone is a genetic replica of the animal that donated the cell from which it was grown.HUMAN BEINGS ARE MORE THAN PLUMBING AND WIRING- MORE THAN GENES. WE ARE THE IMAGE OF GOD AND EACH ONE TOTALLY UNIQUE. CLONING A GENETIC REPLICA OF HUMANS MAY BE POSSIBLE, EVEN PROBABLE, BUT THE REPLICA WOULD NOT BE HUMAN, BECAUSE THE IMAGE AND THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH HUMAN, WHICH IS WHAT MAKES US "HUMAN PERSONS" CAN NOT BE REPLICATEDIn the eyes of many in agriculture, cloning is simply the latest in a string of advances such as artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization that have given farmers better control over animal reproduction.IF THE ABOVE ARGUMENT IS VALID, CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION AND IN VITRO FERTILIZATION WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REJECT IT.WE MUST BE EXTREMELY LEARY OF ALL PROPOSALS AND PRACTICES TO "CONTROL" HUMAN REPRODUCTION. ALL KINDS OF EVIL ARE POSSIBLE.Farmers and companies that have been growing cloned barnyard animals from single cells in anticipation of a lucrative market REPRODUCTION OF HUMANS FOR PROFIT IS ONE OF THOSE EVILSsay cloning will bring consumers a level of consistency and quality impossible to attain with conventional breeding, making perfectly marbled beef and reliably lean and tasty pork TURNING BABIES INTO COMMODITIES AND WOULD-BE PARENTS INTO CONSUMERS WOULD BE ANOTHER EVILCLONING TO PRODUCE BABIES OF "QUALITY" NOT POSSIBLE BY "CONVENTIONAL BREEDING" IS ANOTHER EVIL.WE ALREADY CAN SEE TRENDS IN THIS DIRECTION WITHOUT CLONING.

"The government talks about being science-based, and that's great, but I think there is another pillar here: the question of whether we really want to do this," said Carol Tucker Foreman, director of food policy at the Consumer Federation of America.YES, THAT IS THE IMPORTANT ISSUE. MUCH IS DONE SIMPLY AND ONLY BECAUSE IT CAN BE. THIS APPLIES TO CLIMBING MOUNTAINS AS WELL AS DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGIES OF ALL KINDS. THE QUESTION MUST BE ASKED, 'DO WE REALLY WANT TO DO THIS?' WHAT ARE THE MORAL, ETHICAL ISSUES INVOLVED? WHAT WILL BE THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES? Surveys show that more than 60 percent of the U.S. population is uncomfortable with the idea of animal cloning for food and milk. The single biggest reason people give is "religious and ethical,"GOOD. BUT NOW MY MAJOR QUESTION: ON WHAT BASIS DO WE DECIDE THE RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL? WHAT CRITERIA CAN WE USE? WHAT YARDSTICK?MANY CHRISTIANS WILL SAY: THE BIBLE. GOOD, BUT WHAT PARTS OF THE BIBLE AND HOW WILL WE INTERPRET THEM? HERE IS A RELATED TOPIC THAT HELPS ANSWER THAT QUESTION- Scalia, ACLU head face off in TV debate by Hope Yen, Associated Press Writer October 15,

2006[http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2006/10/15/scalia\\_defends\\_positions\\_in\\_tv\\_debate/?p1=MEWell\\_Pos3](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2006/10/15/scalia_defends_positions_in_tv_debate/?p1=MEWell_Pos3)HOW DO AMERICANS DECIDE ON CIVIL RIGHTS OR STATES RIGHTS OR SOCIAL ISSUES SUCH AS ABORTION? WE GO TO THE CONSTITUTION. BUT HOW DO INTERPRET THAT AUTHORITY?Justice Antonin Scalia on Sunday defended some of his Supreme Court opinions, arguing that nothing in the Constitution supports abortion rights and the use of race in school admissions. "Whether it's good or bad is not my job. My job is simply to say if those things you find desirable are contained in the Constitution," he said.... Scalia outlined his judicial philosophy of interpreting the Constitution according to its text, as understood at the time it was adopted. THIS IS THE CLASSIC PROTESTANT APPROACH TO THE BIBLE: INTERPRETING IT "ACCORDING TO ITS TEXT, AS UNDERSTOOD AT THE TIME IT WAS ADOPTED"- THE HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL OR COMMON SENSE APPROACH.HOWEVER, MANY EVANGELICALS ARE INCREASINGLY SWAYED BY THIS PRAGMATIC ARGUMENT:Strossen [head of ACLU] countered that such a legal approach would have barred the landmark 1954 ruling in Brown v. Board of Education, a unanimous decision outlawing racial segregation in public schools.THIS ARGUMENT IS THAT TIMES AND NEEDS CHANGE. WE MUST NOT BE LOCKED INTO A LITERALIST APPROACH TO AN ANCIENT DOCUMENT. ACTUALLY, THE BIBLE, LIKE THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, IS A LIVING DOCUMENT AND BOTH MUST BE INTERPRETED IN LIGHT OF CURRENT SOCIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL NORMS. THAT COMES DOWN TO THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE- MAJORITY RULE OR AT LEAST THE VOTE OF CONGRESS. BUT, [I REPLY] THAT IS NOT THE WAY OUR GOVERNMENT WORKS. AND THIS IS GOOD, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE, THE MAJORITY, CAN BE VERY WRONG IN WHAT THEY WANT. THE CONSTITUTION ITSELF GIVES THE POWER OF INTERPRETING OUR LAWS TO THE COURTS. AND THAT COMES DOWN TO THIS-"And who is better positioned to represent and defend and be the ultimate backstop for rights of individuals and minorities than ... federal judges?"REALLY? AND WHAT MAKES JUDGES [OR ANY ELITE GROUP OR RULING CLASS] FREE FROM GREAT BIAS AND

PREDJUDICE AND IGNORANCE OR FROM HANDING DOWN VERY POOR OR MISGUIDED DECISIONS, SUCH AS IN THE CASE HERE IN MASSACHUSETTS ABOUT "GAY MARRIAGE"? ALL JUDGES OPERATE BY SOME JUDICIAL PHILOSOPHY. NONE ARE PERFECT. ALL JUDGES ARE FALLIBLE. I AM CONVINCED THAT THE MOST RELIABLE GUIDE FOR INTERPRETING BOTH THE CONSTITUTION AND THE BIBLE IS "ORIGINAL INTENT" - THE APPROACH OF JUDGE SCALIA IF WE SET THIS APPROACH ASIDE WE HAVE NO SOLID GROUND TO REJECT THE CLONING OF HUMAN BEINGS OR TO INSIST UPON THE INALIENABLE VALUE OF BEING HUMAN. CHRISTIANS MUST NOT BUY INTO 'MAJORITY RULE' OR RULE BY ANY ELITE. RATHER, WE MUST ASK: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY, ACCORDING TO THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF ITS WRITERS? WITHOUT THAT "YARDSTICK", WE HAVE NOTHING SURE TO GUIDE US ON ANY SOCIAL OR ETHICAL ISSUE. WE WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE MORAL VAGARIES AND VACILLATIONS OF OUR NON-CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:17

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

## **ANOTHER SIDE TO THE GLOBAL WARMING DEBATE**

Here are two articles by a qualified Scientist about Global Warming. He presents important data different, even contradictory to, what we hear most often. One article is far more technical than the other. Try both- <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v1/n2/global-warming><http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v1/n2/human-caused-global-warming>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:24

Tuesday, October 10, 2006

### **JESUS' MINISTRY OF HEALING IN OUR CITY**

Many Christians put a major emphasis upon Jesus' ministry of healing. Often, they see that in terms of "Miracles" and seem to be more interested in the dramatic process, rather than the end result. If we focus on the end result, however, than Jesus' ministry of healing is ongoing and increasing here in Springfield (as well as elsewhere). Another new health clinic, sponsored by one of the local hospitals, opened in our neighborhood this week. It is across the street from still another one. They are popping up all over the city and doing good work promoting the result: healing and health. The staff may not be intentionally doing their work in the Name of Jesus, as Christians, and their methods may not involve "Miracles", they nevertheless (in my book) are doing the work of Jesus. May the Lord continue to bless and use them.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:26

Friday, October 6, 2006

## **HOW MANY AMERICANS ARE CHRISTIANS?**

71% believe in God when described as the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today. (2006) 7% believe that God is the total realization of personal human potential. (2006) 9% of US adults classify as evangelicals (2006) - BA plus 7 Distinctives 36% of US adults classify as born again, but not Evangelical. (2006) Atheists and agnostics comprise 10% of adults nationwide. (2006) 10% of the US population identify with a faith other than Christianity (2006) <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=2>

Seventy-two percent of Americans are certain there is a God and have no doubts, while another 14% think that God probably exists and have only a few doubts. Only 3% are certain that God does not exist. There are no significant differences in belief in God by age. Men, those living in the East and West, those who are college graduates, and those with high incomes are less likely to believe in God than others. <http://www.galluppoll.com/content/default.aspx?ci=23470>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:02

Tuesday, October 3, 2006

## **IS AMERICA A CHRISTIAN NATION?**

If a Christian Nation is defined as one in which its Leaders and citizens are today confessing Christians and its Laws are Scriptural and its Public Policies and predominant Culture are righteous by Christian standards, then the United States of America is not a Christian Country. If a Christian Nation is defined as one which was originally begun by Christians and most of its earliest settlers professed the Faith and its founding documents were purposely designed to reflect Biblical Principles and these, in turn, were embodied in its Constitution as the law of the Land, and if that was historically true of America, then a case could be made that the USA was a Christian nation. That, however, does not prove that is such today. At the very most, we can argue that Biblical, Judeo-Christian principles are still embodied in many of our Laws and common "American" culture. It is more accurate to acknowledge that this nation increasingly reflects, at every level, a plurality of religious, moral and cultural values. Its laws and policies are increasingly a mix of Christian and very non-Christian principles. We are not, nor shall we be, a true Christian nation. Inasmuch as Scripture does not mandate or justify a Theocracy in America, wherein our Civil Government officially endorses, supports and protects Christianity and whereas the Kingdom of God can not be legislated nor extended by political or governmental coercion, and inasmuch as the historic clock can not be turned back or history reversed to the pre-pluralism days of Colonial Days (or the days when there was a core Protestant Christian consensus), we must pursue another approach in seeking the common good for this Nation. That approach, which is Scriptural, is to work toward a nation which recognizes and conforms to the Natural Law of God. This has been called "Principled Pluralism". The following material is excerpted from an article on my website. <http://www.calvinfox.com/web/civilgov.html>

1. God is the Highest Authority- The Kingdom, Power and Glory is His alone! He is Sovereign over all. 2. Kings [all governors] are to rule for God, as His representative and minister. This is true, even of pagan Rulers. 3. All people who hold authority are subject to God, particularly, to the Law of God, whether they acknowledge Him or not. 4. If the Rulers [civil governments] do not "keep the Law", eventually God's negative Judgment will come upon the Nation. 5. Does all of this about ancient Israel apply to other nations, including ours today? YES The pagan rulers mentioned in the Old Testament did not know the Mosaic Law. However, they were still held accountable to God for their actions according to the most basic moral principles of that Law. See the stories of Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:22f + 27f + 7), Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:9,11f), Belshazzar (Dan 5), and the king of Tyre (Ezek 28) The Apostle Paul tells us that God was just in His judgment of these pagan rulers, because Rom 1:19 what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that [Rulers] are without excuse. 32...they know God's righteous decree... Rom 2:14 Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them. Pagans, whether Rulers or simply citizens, have "written on their hearts" a basic sense of moral "oughtness". Yes, they have a "fallen nature" and they are "dead in sin"; but, they are still human beings and this inner witness of conscience is still present, as are all the other qualities of human beings, such as rationality and creativity. As Rom 2:15 says, they may well have great inner conflict over what is right and wrong and a sense of moral guilt, even if "hard-hearted"; but they still have an inner witness that some acts are morally horrific, while others are noble. It requires Special Revelation via the Scripture to know the Gospel; nevertheless this "Natural Law" exists and it is the basis God has for holding pagan Nations accountable for their actions. Natural Law, particularly, Natural Moral Law is all about Justice. That is God's yardstick for every Nation. Instead of politicking and legislating to make this a Christian Country, our goal should be to make it a Country wherein is Justice for all.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:05

Monday, October 2, 2006

## **CULTURE OF LIFE**

"As Christians, we are informed, inspired, and sustained by our faith in a commitment to a culture of life, which includes the protection and care of the unborn, the severely disabled, the dependent elderly, and the dying. The culture of life encompasses also the poor, the marginalized, and those who, for whatever reason, are vulnerable to neglect or exploitation by others." Irenaeus, the second-century Church Father, declared, "The glory of God is man fully alive." From the earliest noncanonical Christian writing, the Didache (probably written in the latter half of the first century), we learn how Christians confronted the pagan culture of the time: "There are two ways, a way of life and a way of death; there is a great difference between them. . . . In accordance with the precept of the teaching "You shall not kill," you shall not put a child to death by abortion or kill it once it is born. . . . The way of death is this: They show no compassion for the poor, they do not suffer with the suffering, they do not acknowledge their Creator, they kill their children and by abortion cause God's creatures to perish; they drive away the needy, oppress the suffering, they are advocates of the rich and unjust judges of the poor; they are filled with every sin. May you be ever guiltless of all these sins!" There are many ways in which the dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, is violated. Both historically and at present there is genocide, unjust war, innocent victims of just wars, economic exploitation, the neglect and abuse of children, the disrespect and mistreatment of women, the abandonment of the aged, racial oppression and discrimination, the persecution of religious believers, and religious and ideological fanaticisms that are the declared enemies of freedom. The depressing list goes on and on. We have no delusions that such evils will be entirely eliminated before Christ returns in glory to set all things right. But, as in the apostolic era, so also in our time, Christian witness and life is to stand in clear contrast and opposition to such evils, for we are called to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14). Quoted from the current issue of First Things-<http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0608/articles/ectstatement.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:05

Friday, September 29, 2006

## **MAKING POVERTY HISTORY**

Have you checked out the new article on my website entitled Biblical Economic Principles? Among many practical subjects, it outlines ways to help "make poverty history". <http://www.calvinfox.com/web/economics.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:43

Saturday, September 23, 2006

## **THE WORLD'S ACCELERATING PROSPERITY**

“...let's be honest. The plight of the world's poor is appalling. The world's poorest billion people--most of them living in Africa and India--sadly, are stuck where they were in 1500. The next 3 billion poorest--most of them living in the rural regions of Asia--are stuck in 1820. Top-spot Luxembourgers sport an annual income a hundred times greater than bottom-place Burundians. Of course, wealth gaps in and of themselves are not immoral. ...Wealth gaps are immoral and obscene when those at the bottom are deprived of nutrition, shelter and a ladder out. The minister Rick Warren says poverty solutions require a full-court press of assistance: from government, NGOs, charitable and faith-based organizations, and business. No single entity can do the job. Government has the authority, NGOs the special expertise, charities and churches the ground troops and distribution channels, and business the money and tools. Every poverty fighter would like more money from business. But I think the solution is more tools.” From a column by Rich Karlgaard in Forbers Magazine on line. He has good “memes” to share on the topic <http://www.forbes.com/columnists/forbes/2006/1002/029.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:57

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

## **RECONSIDERING THE "ONE" CAMPAIGN**

Christians, as well as multitudes of other people from around the world continue to enthusiastically support the ONE Campaign. Sign a petition, wear a bracelet- it doesn't take much to support it. For a while there were rock concerts to attend and a lot of celebrities to listen to, especially Bono. The campaign urges Congress to allocate 1% of the US Budget for foreign aid to the world's poorest countries. The campaign also advocates loaner nations canceling the debts of borrower nations and reform of the way trade is done between nations. Everyone, certainly, is for reduction of starvation and disease. The debate is about how to do this. Folks who support the ONE Campaign certainly mean well. That is why they also need to seriously consider flaws in the Campaign proposals and alternative ways to achieve their good goals. To that end, I suggest these resources-  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/011/33.90.html>  
[http://www.nationalreview.com/nrof\\_bartlett/bartlett060302.aspx](http://www.nationalreview.com/nrof_bartlett/bartlett060302.aspx)  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/010/19.38.html>  
<http://www.acton.org/blog/index.html?archives/196-Bo-no-Aid-or-Trade.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:56

Monday, September 11, 2006

## **GENEROUS AMERICANS**

Americans are considered by many social critics, including me, to be materialistic in the extreme. Thus it was very interesting to read that we may well be entering the Golden Age of Philanthropy. I enjoy and benefit each week from a magazine called THE WEEK. The current issue has a "Briefing" entitled Giving Away a Fortune. Among other statistics, we learn that American contributions to charities has increased dramatically over the last decade and is now over \$200 billion annually. There were private donations of \$4.2 billion to Hurricane relief last year and almost \$2 billion to the Indonesian tsunami relief. (Of course, this is in addition to the billions given by our government in all types of humanitarian aid). <http://www.theweekmagazine.com/article.aspx?id=1629>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:05

Friday, September 8, 2006

## **HOW TO DECIDE WHO TO VOTE FOR- Part 2**

The primary function of any and all civil governments is to be the instrument of God for Justice: 1. Secure and protect freedom for its citizens to exercise their rights and responsibilities 2. Prevent and punish all attempts to deny such freedom Rights are whatever God says they are. Rights are defined by His Law. Rights are not something to be given or taken by Society or Government. Neither are "rights" simply something with which all people are born. There are man-made civil rights, legal rights, employees rights, consumer rights, etc., but Biblical Rights and Responsibilities take precedence over them all. All such "rights" are to be evaluated, accepted or rejected, in light of God given, and truly inalienable, rights. Responsibilities are the converse of Rights. According to the Bible (the Torah), these are God-given Rights: All human beings have the right to live the right to Worship and offer God allegiance and obedience the right to work and workers have a right to fair wages and to periodic rest from their work Parents have the right to honor and respect and obedience from their children Husbands and wives have a right to the fidelity of their spouses Women have a right not to be abused and raped Widows and orphans have a right to be cared for by family and community Owners have the right to their possessions or property The accused have a right to a fair and honest trial Neighbors have a right to their privacy Land has a right to be cultivated and not to be destroyed- Deut 10:14, 11:12, 20:19f; Lev 25:2-7, 23 Domestic Animals have a right to be cared for - Exodus 20:10; Deut 22:6f, 10, 25:4 Human Beings have the following God-given Responsibilities: respect the life of others. practice Religion both to work and to rest periodically honor, respect and obey parents respect all marriage vows respect the property of others (never steal) be honest with others and never slander stay out of other people's business cultivate and care for the Land (the environment) care for and protect domestic animals and wildlife All of this gives us general Biblical principles by which we judge our Government and its Administration, all our elected and appointed Leaders, all domestic and foreign policies and programs, all budgets and legislation. It remains, of course, to work out definitions and details involved with the application of each. WHAT ABOUT AN UNJUST GOVERNMENT? This approach to Government [above] assumes that the Government and its representatives practice Justice and not injustice. When Government itself fails to protect or even denies its citizens' freedom to pursue their rights and responsibilities, it has become evil in those instances and Christians do not have to obey it.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 22:48

## **HOW CAN WE DECIDE WHO TO VOTE FOR? Part 1**

What does God expect of any and all nations? What are the God-given functions of all Nations and of their Rulers and Citizens? That is the measure of America and all other Nations. Isaiah 28:17 I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line God judges a nation, as a nation, by its record and practice of Justice. The issue is not whether a Country is Christian. That is the wrong issue. The right issue is, simply, whether or not a Country is Just. That is the issue in choosing, by vote or appointment, all Leaders: Is the candidate (for any position) just? Is a proposed Program, Policy, Budget or Bill just? What is Justice? The following is the Biblical definition: I.) Justice is God providing and securing those rights that He has decreed for people, the environment and animals-- II.) Justice is God punishing those who deny or deprive people, the Land or animals the rights and responsibilities He has given them God secures Justice through Civil Government. ROM 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 3 ...rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Rom 13:6 This is why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. [Note: Government, too, has rights- a right to respect and obedience from its citizens & a right to collect taxes]

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 22:44

Friday, September 1, 2006

## **REASON TO BE PRO-LIFE IS NOT REASON ENOUGH**

I often benefit from reading conservative columnist Fred Barnes. He has a column entitled Chosing Life: how pro-lifers become pro-lifers in today's issue of the Weekly Standard. It describes how 6 people, who were either pro-choice or indifferent, changed their minds and became avid pro-lifers. I am glad these people did that, but Mr Barnes column illustrates why it is not enough to simply be or think as "Conservatives".  
<http://weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/631kzmqf.asp>Each of these people apparently reasoned their way to their adopted position and/or came to it by some kind of inner voice of conscience, even, maybe, from God. Mr Barnes identifies himself as a Christian. It is very inadequate for a Christian to come to conclusions on great moral and ethical issues- life and death issues (he mentions Euthanasia, as well) on the basis of reason or instinct. Is that the best we can do as Christians? Non-Christians and Pro-Choice supporters take this same route to different conclusions. Conservatives may try to make their case based on reason or conscience, as Liberals also do; but, is that the authority that Christians depend on? We are to think, analyze and decide on such issues first and foremost as Christians, not as Conservatives. My primary authority for being pro-life is Scripture. My reason, experience and conscience are shaped by, or confirm, what Scripture teaches. Mr Barnes says, "All of us, because of the circumstances we found ourselves in, were forced to think about the taking of a life and what that means..." How did these people come to believe that what is aborted is "a life"? Only way we can have certitude about that is on the basis of Scripture. None of the 6 people in Mr Barnes' article changed their minds because of Scripture. That is the weakness of arguing as a "conservative" and it is not adequate.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 21:18

Wednesday, August 30, 2006

## **WHERE IS THE OUTRAGE?**

More leading officials and employees of the City pled guilty today to using their positions and authority to steal millions of dollars from us taxpayers. The Federal probe into corruption in our city government and white collar crime has been going on now, with great success, for several years. There are snickers and shoulder shrugs from people in the street, but not horrified outrage. Such crime is commonplace throughout our country at every level, from Congress to Corporations to Cities, large and small, and many seem to accept it as normal, not atrocious. Hundreds of millions of our tax payers' money have been lost (stolen) in the effort to aide stricken New Orleans and that area of the Gulf Coast. Again, no outrage- just cries for more government money. The media reports these things, but they are a blip on the screen to be quickly replaced by news of celebrities, sports and the latest sex crimes. Now that is news that really excites people. If anything will help destroy our Country, it is not delusions of "Empire", allegedly in the minds of some inner cadre of conservative Washington powerbrokers [see post below], it is plain old fashioned sin. Not just sins of the flesh, but wide spread sins of greed, dishonesty and theft on a grand scale, coupled with the indifference, even admiration, of the public at large. A major lesson in today's court case: such sin often starts at home and with small lies. An entire family of eight were involved. The father led the way and corrupted his wife, children and their wives (These were all consenting adults) The \$2.5 million theft allegedly began with the pilfering of quarters from city owned Laundromats (in public housing projects).

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:04

Sunday, August 27, 2006

## **WHO IS MENTALLY ILL?**

A letter to the Editor in today's paper rightly objects to the identification of the homeless with the panhandlers. A few of the former may be panhandlers and many of the latter may not be homeless; but they are not synonymous. The writer also correctly states that many of the homeless suffer from addictions and mental illness. The City needs to address those particular problems, as well as providing temporary shelter and social services. She makes an interesting statement: "Psychosis (being out of touch with reality) renders one incapable of freedom of thought, judgment and choice". If reality is found in God, does this mean that people who are out of touch with Him are incapable of freedom of thought, judgment and choice? Atheists have insisted for years that Christians are "crazy" or, at least, their Faith is a crutch for psychologically weak or ill people. Defining God as Reality and psychosis as "being out of touch with reality", means that unbelievers are delusional. Her statement (above) becomes a kind of explanation of the Doctrine of Total Depravity: Being out of touch with God (spiritually dead) renders one - unregenerate sinners- incapable of freedom of thought, judgment and choice. Their only hope is the prevenient and irresistible grace of God.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:08

## **CELLS AND PILLS**

There are two good posts, with helpful links, on the current CT web log about the latest developments regarding stem cell research and the Plan B pills. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/134/42.0.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:04

## **PRAYING FOR STUDENTS**

Our prayers go out for all the students returning to school this week and the Staff, too. Pray especially for Christian students and Teachers. This includes some of my most loved people. Nationwide, some 55 million children are enrolled this year in public schools (K-12)- the most in America's history. The boom is especially evident in the South and West, fed by the burgeoning immigrant population. The US Department of Education expects enrollment nationwide to grow, on average, by about 200,000 students annually, reaching almost 57 million, 8 years from now. Consider the importance of these figures: Public Schools exist to mold and train millions of [almost all] children who live in this Country for citizenship and for productive engagement in our national economy. These schools transmit and inculcate the dominant values of our Society in these children, shaping their characters and daily lives. Are those dominant beliefs and values Biblical? Will the Teachers, Staff, Curriculum, Programs and Environment of these State Schools be Christ-centered and Scriptural? If not, where will these same millions of children learn how to live as Christians? Home? Church? Your home? Your church?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:10

Tuesday, August 22, 2006

## **DEMOCRACY? NO!**

Time to get Biblical. We hear a lot, especially now with elections upon us, about Democracy; particularly the discussion focuses on who is eligible to vote and "getting people out to vote". We also hear a great deal about our country, the USA, seeking to promote Democracy abroad. In particular, many are concerned about the future of Democracy in the Middle East and a major reason, supposedly, we are seeking greater alignment with India is because it is the world's largest Democracy. Truth is- Christians should not be beating the drum for Democracy anywhere. The Bible teaches Principles that apply to civil government. They do not under gird Democracy. They under gird a Republic. Comparison of Democratic and Republican Models of Government

a de-moc-ra-cy a : government by, of and for the people; esp. rule of the majority b : a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly (through a system of Representation), usually involving periodically held "Meetings"

Democracy, as defined here, is not Scriptural- There is no Covenant (Contract) between People and Ruler. Citizens are not bound to Civil Authorities nor are the Civil Authorities bound to the people. Neither God, the Ruler, a Constitution or a Body of Law is the ultimate Authority- the will of the People is.

a re-pub-lic a : a government in which supreme power resides in a body of citizens, entitled to vote, and b: which power is exercised by officers elected directly by the Citizens and who are responsible (subject) to them and c: who govern according to a Constitution and body of Law

A Republic, as defined here, is more compatible with Scripture than a Democracy- it has more of the Basic Principles; but, will be blessed by God only if the Law, under which it governs, is in harmony with the Law of God. If not, eventually, it will be ruined. It will further be blessed if the Constitution separates the authority of the chosen Leaders into 3 divisions to serve as a system of checks and balances, preventing despotism and tyranny. It will also be blessed to the degree by which the citizens, if not Christians, are at least educated and virtuous and committed to the Common Good. They see themselves as One Nation. There will be trouble for the Nation to the degree that these essentials are not met.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 21:00

Sunday, August 20, 2006

## **LEGISLATING MORALITY**

There has been a lot of coverage lately, in the media, about the sale of certain birth control pills in pharmacies. As always, there are pros and cons and the articles in the Christianity Today link gives a good sample. Almost all writers put the issues in terms of morality. The government is not in the business of legislating morals. The arguments should be framed in terms of Justice. Laws deal with what is just. In this matter, what is just for the pharmacies, as businesses, is the issue. Instead of a particular pharmacist saying he can not, and will not, sell a item against his personal morals and the government ordering him to violate his conscience, the pharmacist should be arguing on the grounds that this is a business issue- a free market issue, if you will. The government can not make him do something he believes to be immoral (it can penalize him, of course, for breaking a law) And the government has no right to order him to sell products in his store against his business policy. (All of this has far reaching ramifications) This issue is not a matter of what is just for the would be customer, not when the birth control pills that person is seeking are widely and easily available in a number of other stores. The issue is not the life and death of anyone. There is no crime involved, unless it be the crime of government interfering with the owners of pharmacies (businesses) to conduct their business. If I can not get an item I want in a particular store, for any reason, I go to another store. That is business. I do not go to court to force McDonalds to sell theological books. I suspect the real issue here is the intent of pro-abortion advocates to use the government to further their agenda. Christians should not do that either, in matters of morals.  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/008/32.46.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 21:00

Thursday, August 17, 2006

## **MYTHS OF THE MINIMUM WAGE**

All students entering a private high school here were required, this Summer, to read "Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting by in America". It is written by liberal social critic, Barbara Ehrenreich. It is an argument in favor of raising the Minimum Wage, condemning all efforts in Congress to defeat the effort. It is the same type of "reporting" as Roger Moore does. I would only hope that these students also are required to read the following articles that try to explode the Myths of the Minimum

Wage [http://www.townhall.com/columnists/ThomasSowell/2006/08/08/a\\_glimmer\\_of\\_hope](http://www.townhall.com/columnists/ThomasSowell/2006/08/08/a_glimmer_of_hope) <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/592klkms.asp?pg=1>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:24

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

## **"Dutch Treat"**

The previous post explains the origin of the new name for this Blog: Dutch Treat. A treat is a desert, something enjoyable, a pleasure. I consider Neocalvinism, with its roots in Holland, to be all of that. I hope that my Blog will be that also- a Dutch Treat. The popular meaning of the phrase "dutch treat" is: everyone pays for their own. This means there will be "no free lunch" for anyone. The phrase means everyone has responsibility to support themselves, to pull their own weight (pay for their own meal). This is a Biblical concept (2Thess 3:10). Unless someone is unable to work due to age or health or some kind of "dis-ability", everyone is supposed to get a job and work for their livelihood. This is elementary. We as a society, do not owe any able bodied person their financial support or the benefits thereof. Of course, to work we must have training or appropriate education. This is so basic, but many (young people in particular) do not seem to be getting the message: life is dutch treat.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:43

Sunday, July 16, 2006

## **My Social Activist Friends**

Of all the Christians I know, among the most attractive and vibrant are those who are into serving the Poor. As a group, these are Believers with a heart and passion for following Jesus and living as his disciples. For them, that means one thing- ministry to the poor. And they walk their talk. They are literally out on the streets doing it. They are involved in actions that obey Matt 25 and Luke 4 and Isaiah 58, as they interpret these passages. These are idealistic, non-materialistic, unselfish, giving, spiritual and beautiful (mostly young) Christians who are a joy to be with. I thank God for them. I come away from time with them very conflicted. I want to support and encourage them, but, I do not agree with them on many topics, not the least of which is what it means to be disciples of Jesus. Definitions, I have said it over and over, definitions are essential. How do we define "Jesus", "discipleship", the "Gospel", the "Kingdom", the "Poor", "Justice" and how do we interpret Scripture, particularly Matt 25, Luke 4 and Isaiah 28? When we do not define any of these things, we sound alike, use the same words and get along fine. I should let it go at that, but I can't.

A Disciple of Jesus is anyone who is committed to obeying the will of God [about anything] as Jesus was, period, even to the point of dying to do it- literally. Jesus was about defeating Satan and the Powers of Darkness, Death and Sin. He was not about caring for the poor as such, he was about saving sinners, rich and poor, and doing that primarily through his death and resurrection [not his life] The Gospel is about all this. Jesus was the Nazarene, but He is now the risen Christ, enthroned above. We serve the King, not the Carpenter. The one we follow is a Sovereign, on the march in the world to bring all things under His feet. The Poor about whom God is concerned are, first of all, in the Old Testament, the Israelites in bondage and then in exile, then they are the righteous pious who are innocent victims of oppression by ruthless people, then the Poor are oppressed Christians (Matt 25 is about helping the suffering Church) Lastly, the Poor are also non-believers who are innocent victims of injustice. Practical Biblical Solutions for "Poverty": 1. Redefine "Poverty". Jettison the common definition as all people living below a certain government determined income. The Biblical definition is destitution due to no fault of those who are destitute (see above) 2. Separate out all the "poverty" caused by personal lifestyle and behavior. Let's bite the bullet here. If the problem is immorality and irresponsibility (including dropping out of school and refusal to get both job training and jobs), we, the public, are not accountable and must not be co-dependents. Society must stop carrying people who purposely refuse to carry themselves, including those who willingly chose to live as single parent families. Having multiple illegitimate babies is wrong. Period. Impregnating women and refusing the responsibility of fatherhood is wrong. Period. This will change only when society finally says, No! Such people will not be on the list of the Poor that society must plan to help. Neither the Church nor Government is responsible. 3. Separate out "Poverty" that is caused by genuine mental, emotional and physical illness and disability, including old age. Church and Society should plan to help people in this group with money, agencies, facilities and treatment. All the above leaves the truly Poor- People who are destitute due to oppression- the victims of exploitation, greed, theft, discrimination and violence- people who have been denied their basic, Biblical human rights. These true victims must receive society's help. 1. By (prophetic) exposure of the idolatries of our time for what they are until the idols in our society are abandoned 2. by private and public confrontation of those companies and agencies, whose policies are oppressive, until the oppression ends 3. through legal action and the Courts. Meanwhile, on a smaller, local scale 1. extended families (including churches) must take primary responsibility for caring for the truly destitute among them 2. the local community, public and private, must share responsibility for caring for the destitute, when that is beyond the resources of individual families and churches. Poverty must be seen primarily as a local problem, not a federal one. The primary role of the Government is to craft and enforce just legislation. It will also provide both funding, and oversight of its distribution, to help people in group # 3 (above). Of course, this means that the Government too, must be held accountable. It must not be allowed to renege on its responsibility. Fraud and dishonesty and waste within the Government must not be tolerated. Whistleblowers, bloggers and the media have a watchdog role to play. Ultimately, the people (voters) have the oversight in these matters. My activist friends are doing wonderful, good work. I am simply convinced it is not radical enough. Poverty is part of a much larger problem. My hope and prayer is that they will get passionate about seeking conformity to God's Norms in every aspect of our Society. Now that is discipleship!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:37

Thursday, July 13. 2006

## **Marriage**

Our local paper continues to insist that Gay Marriage is a civil right and that homosexuals are a minority in the same way African Americans are. To deny homosexuals the "right" to marry is in the same category as denying African Americans the right to vote. If someone could prove conclusively that homosexuality is totally genetic and biological, like "Race", and not a chosen life style or sexual preference, then the newspaper Editor (and others) would have a stronger case. But someone needs to shout that the reason for being homosexual is totally physical, has not been made. Even if it were, it does not follow that Gay Marriage is acceptable. There are religious, psychological, cultural, social, historical and physical reasons against Gay Marriage and in support of the traditional concept of Marriage. The other common argument in support of Gay Marriage is the high divorce rate of heterosexual marriages. That is as meaningful as saying that the reality of disease means we should not support efforts to secure Health. We are committed to Traditional Heterosexual Marriage, no matter how many couples try it and fail.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:08

Friday, July 7, 2006

### **The Faith of our Founding Fathers**

All of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America had strong faith in a Providence, actively working in the creation of our Nation. They believed in a moral government [by the Creator] of the Universe. In fact, they were convinced that virtue was produced by Religion and that Religion was necessary to the well-being of America. By Religion they meant Christianity. They all were well grounded in the Bible. Most of the Founders were probably not what we today call "evangelical", although some deeply held orthodox beliefs. The general population was by an large orthodox or evangelical. Evidence for all of this and more is marshalled from original documents (letters, diaries, speeches, etc) by James Hutson, chief of the manuscript division of the Library of Congress in his new book 'The Founders on Religion'. NOTE: The Biblical basis for the Constitution is laid out in my paper on Government found on my website.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:48

### **Casinos**

I wondered in an earlier post why the plight of Jersey casinos made front page headlines here. One reason is that this is the hub for Peter Pan bus line which was losing money because of the shut down. Turns out that New Jersey was losing \$1.3 million a day of tax money from those casinos, which were themselves losing \$16 million a day and their 36,000 employees were out of work. Connecticut would also lose millions if their American Indian casinos were to close. I see that, meanwhile, Casinos in devastated New Orleans are doing more business than ever before. Casinos are an evil. There are many Biblical and moral arguments against Gambling. When we lived in Springfield before, the churches here organized against a drive to have a casino here. It is outright wrong for States and cities to use them for revenue, let alone to become dependent on them. The stalemate in Jersey was over a 1% raise in sales tax, amounting to a projected \$275 a year per family. Much of the money raised would go toward offsetting property taxes. One of the reasons churches oppose casinos is that many of the people who gamble are the poor, who do not pay property taxes

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:01

Thursday, July 6, 2006

### **One Language?**

A local columnist in today's paper, makes a good argument for supporting Legislation that says federal services and documents do not need to be printed in language other than English, unless specified in other laws. Opponents of the Bill, sponsored by Sen Inhofe, point out that 93% of second generation Hispanics can speak English, so what's the point of the Bill. That assumes that Spanish is the only alternative. 26% of Immigrants are from Asia and speak Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese. 15% of Immigrants are from Europe and speak French, German, Italian or Portuguese. If one has a right to every government document in their own language, then all of them do. That is confusing and impractical at the every least. American English is, and most remain, the common language of this Nation. You would not know that it is if you visit Miami or, for that matter, if you use our local post office or shop at the grocery stores around here. Similarly, it would be a very helpful thing, if Chistians could all speak the same theological language, use the same Bible translation and worship with the same liturgy. I know- it's not going to happen. It adds to the confusion and poor communication among us and our identity as the One Body of Christ.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:29

### **More about treating lobsters "humanely"**

Adding to the post that I wrote about treatment of lobsters, is this piece from the Daily Standard. Lobsters v. Whole Foods

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:25

Thursday, June 29, 2006

### **Who is to decide what civil rights are?**

It took only one person, a State Supreme Court Justice, to declare gay marriage in Massachusetts to be legal. It is requiring a massive petition drive to get the required number of signatures and two separate votes of our Legislature to allow for a state wide popular vote on the new Law which could repeal it! It will require a constitutional amendment to undo that one State Judge's decision! Opponents of the proposed amendment insist that the issue is about civil rights and therefore, not subject to popular vote. Our conservative Republican Mormon Governor opposes gay marriage and supports the amendment. That is good, but his reasoning is not. He insists that the people, by popular vote, determine what civil rights are to be. The Legislature and the courts should serve the will of the majority of the people. That is very dangerous doctrine, although on this issue it is politically expedient. We are not a democracy (the people do not rule, other than to elect their representatives) We have a republican form of government. That also means the Judiciary does not make Law, the elected representatives of the people do. While not something that will persuade voters, the Governor should be saying that the Scripture determines what human rights are and that the Legislature is here to serve the people by serving God. Any claim to any civil right must be grounded in what God has declared to be Human Rights. Gay Marriage is not one of them.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:38

### **The Addiction is not to oil**

Having just driven to Maryland and back on the Interstate, interacting with thousands of vehicles, going well beyond posted speed limits (except when in grid lock for accidents, construction and toll booths) I can assert that Americans are not addicted to oil. We are addicted to cars and speed and that is not about to change. We also are addicted to keeping thousands of acres of grass mowed which requires power mowers fueled by gasoline. Something else that is not about to change.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:19

Wednesday, June 28, 2006

### **Flag Burning and Free Speech**

Just wondering why the major argument against legislation criminalizing "flag burning" is that it would be restricting free speech. Why doesn't that argument apply to painting swastikas on walls? Isn't that denying anti-semites free speech? We must be very careful about mind reading- judging people's mental thoughts, rather than their actions, especially if we allow the State to do the reading. Actions have consequences and so does speech. Try yelling "fire!" in a theatre. [I'm only being rhetorical ] Speech is not free.

Matt 12:36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak- Jesus

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:20

### **More Charity**

As an addendum to the post below this one, about Buffet and Gates, it should be noted that Americans, as a whole, gave \$260.3 billion to charity last year. This is according to the "Giving USA Foundation".

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:15

### **Making Capitalism look good?**

I'm still working on my new website. Meanwhile, today's lead editorial in our local paper carried the caption: "Buffet and Gates give capitalism a good name". It is about Warren Buffet giving billions of his personal fortune, to the Gates charitable Foundation, which in turn will give billions to combate such problems as world poverty and the AIDs pandemic. Capitalism only has a bad name among those who identify it with greed. Capitalism is not a synonym for Greed. It is People, the poor as well as the rich, who are subject to greediness. Buffet and Gates illustrate, in their charity work, what the Bible says about wealth: Money is for Ministry. Make as much as you ethically can, the more the better, and then give it away, or invest it, for the greater good. The issue is who determines the "greater good", who actually controls how the money is spent- for what and for whom. Much money spent by the wrong people or for the wrong reasons or to achieve the wrong goals can be a bane rather than a boon.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:23

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

### **America: Evil Empire?**

"We urgently need an antidote to the journalistic clichés and the even more deplorable pseudo-scholarly discourse surrounding the interlocked themes of globalization, empire, and imperialism. We need the distance—the perspective—that good historical thinking affords. The most provocative session I attended was the concluding keynote lecture by Deepak Lal, the polymathic economist whose book *In Praise of Empires: Globalization and Order* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) argued that peace and prosperity are likely to flourish under the umbrella of empire, while convulsive disorder typically follows the decay of imperial power." This is a quote from an article in the current *Books and Culture* newsletter by John Wilson, Editor. The speaker at the Conference [below] of whom he speaks, went on to give the evidence to prove Empire is beneficial to the world. Then, he makes the case for saying Christianity is impeding the American Empire, to its detriment. <http://www.bu.edu/historic/conference06.html>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:54

### **Making a Difference in Hartford**

The current *Yankee* magazine has a very interesting article about the Mayor of Hartford, CT. Last week, waiting in a doctor's office I read *Boston Magazine*, one of those glossy, slick zines with lots of photos and stories focused on the entertainment, fashion and gastronomic indulgences of the primarily young and rich players in that city. At another doctor's office, I looked at a very similar magazine, with the same focus, only this one was about Hartford. I know Hartford. It is nothing like the magazine spreads. Actually, it turns out there has been a boom in hotels, restaurants and nite spots that I was unaware of. All the more strange, because the Hartford I know is one of the poorest cities in the Nation. I guess it is two cities- one for those who work and visit there, but live in the suburbs (CT is one of the richest States in the Nation) and the other is the one for those who actually call the City Home. Most of them are Hispanic and almost half of them live below the poverty line. Very few children in the City graduate from High School; almost none go to college. The Mayor comes from that background. He is another amazing example of the little train that could. Against all odds, he made it through a top college and became successful in business. Now he is crusading to turn Hartford around- not for the privileged portrayed in the *Hartford Magazine*, but for the folks who live in the ghettos of that City

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:30

Friday, June 2, 2006

### **What the media has not reported and why**

In the previous post [below- about minimum wage] I said it is important that Christians research subjects. It is very easy for us to use real fuzzy logic and go mushy on subjects that seem to be all about human need and call for compassion. We must use our heads as well as our hearts. The topic of immigrants is one such subject. Here are some facts for consideration-<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/30/AR2006053001181.html?referrer=email>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 06:12

### **Facts about Minimum Wage Earners**

Massachusetts has the highest State minimum wage. As Congress debates increasing the Federal minimum, arguments pro and con abound. I appreciate what Economist Thomas Sowell has to say <http://www.townhall.com/opinion/columns/thomassowell/2006/05/31/199218.html> One of his major points is that most people do not stay in the lower percent of income, but, over time, move up. Most Americans who are poor, do not remain poor. From reading statistics for 2005, published by the US Department of Labor at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2005tbls.htm#7>, it seems that 2.5% of all hourly wage workers make the federal minimum or less. That percentage has been on a steady decline since 1979. Of them, 1.5 % are over 25 years old, while 8.9% are teenagers. The majority are single females, with less than a High School diploma working part time. They are almost evenly distributed by racial and ethnic groups, and most work in the food prep and service or hospitality industries. Even though the writer of the next article needs the reality check of the facts just cited, he addresses the issue of whether minimum wage increases eliminate jobs <http://www.highbeam.com/library/docfree.asp?DOCID=1Y1:93784152&ctrlInfo=Round20%3AMode20c%3ADocG%3AResult&ao=Why> concern ourselves, as Christians, with such "unspiritual" matters? Scripture makes it clear that God is interested in the Poor and Economic Justice. As Christians we need to do the homework and sort out the facts that are relevant to guide us in our action and the positions we advocate in the Public Square

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 06:04

Thursday, June 1, 2006

### **Which State offers true freedom?**

Three advocacy groups have ranked the States on how "liberal" they are when it comes to non-discriminatory laws favoring gay and women's (reproductive) "rights". New Mexico and New York raned the most liberal, while Ohio and South Dakota were most conservative. Their conclusion: "In this country, freedom depends on where you live."Freedom, at the time of the American Revolution and in the Declaration of Independence was defined as freedom from political oppression (The British Crown). That has been the traditional meaning ever since, especially when it comes to war: fighting to free others who are oppressed by Tyrants and to prevent us from becoming oppressed by them.To these advocacy groups, some States have laws that are oppressive to their chosen life style or behavior. In those States, they say, there is no freedom. They mean freedom for them, to do what they want. Such freedom for them depends on living in States that do not make their choices illegal. Biblically, the only true freedom is servitude to Jesus Christ. We are truly free only when we live under His control. Freedom depends on living in that state.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:46

Tuesday, May 30, 2006

### **Common Sense**

Recovery of one of the flood ravaged cities in northeastern Massachusetts, Lawrence, is being greatly hindered by language: the majority of the folks affected speak Spanish and many of the rescue workers [including those from FEMA] do not. The concept that English be declared the official language of this Country has been ridiculed by many as unnecessary. Of course, they say, everyone does or will speak English. Not in Lawrence- or dozens of other cities around the Nation. We continue to hear and read that many of us are against immigrants. We are all immigrants or children of immigrants, it is said. Welcoming immigrants is one of the factors that has made America great. We are indebted to immigrants. Yes, yes, all true- but besides the point. The debate is not about immigrants. No one is against immigrants as such. The debate is about illegal immigrants, particularly those crossing our border with Mexico. Our new neighbors here are having a dispute about a fence with the folks whose property adjoins theirs, so they are having it surveyed. We backed out of a deal to purchase a house here when we learned that the neighbor's driveway and fence was 3 feet on what would have been our land. Even if we agreed to that, the bank would not, because it was illegal. Another neighbor had large limbs of one of our trees cut off, because they extended over his property. That was his legal right to do. These are common occurrences and no one objects to the principles involved. We are a Nation. We have legal boundaries. We have laws. Is it really too much to expect people, who want to reside here, to obey them? [That, of course, applies to everyone, including our political leaders] I am sure it works the other way for any of us who would want to move to another Nation. I object when people, such as one of the local College Commencement speakers, insist that requiring immigrants be legal means being against immigration. Being against illegal immigration is just common sense. Do such speakers have another, hidden, agenda?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:46

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

### **Chickens do come home to roost**

One of the most stupid arguments, offered frequently, in support of making so-called "Gay Marriage" legal in Massachusetts is "See, the world did not end!" in the two years since that happened. Supposedly nothing changed. But it did! More than 2000 couples have had their relationship declared a legal Marriage with all the benefits thereof. Supporters of the concept have been encouraged and emboldened and the drift away from the traditional and Biblical definition of Marriage, as involving the union of a man and woman exclusively, has increased. Who said the test of the rightness or wrongness of Gay "Marriage" would be demonstrated by the "end of the world" and that within months of the State Supreme Court decision? As every thinking person knows, all ideas have consequences and social change as a result of radical ideas, happens over time, perhaps one or two generations. Certainly our society is different today than it was in the 50's and that change is directly related to the social upheaval of the 60's. Here is an example of social change over time-

"More than one in three children in Europe are born to unmarried couples... . The figure represents a sixfold increase over the past 35 years and points to far-reaching effects on children and social policies. Within the European Union the number of births outside marriage varies wildly—from 56 percent in Sweden to 4 percent in Greece. In between come France with 48 percent, Britain at 42 percent, and Germany at 28 percent, according to the EU's official statistics branch, Eurostat. In Germany, a recent Federal Statistics Office survey found that only 38 percent of women and 30 percent of men see marriage as a necessary part of living together. In Britain, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found in 1999 that cohabiting couples accounted for 24 percent of the men and 25 percent of women living in any kind of partnership—double the rates in 1986. Demographers point to the contraceptive pill, social acceptance of working mothers, and the decline of religion as contributing factors. In France, for example, there is no longer any legal distinction between married and unmarried couples."-----Christian Science Monitor, April 17, 2006

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 22:56

Monday, May 8, 2006

## **Liberals Claim the High Road**

Why is it that advocates of gay marriage are following Jesus, obeying the Gospel, honoring the true meaning of Marriage, being loving and compassionate; while those who oppose gay marriage are not following Jesus, not obeying the Gospel, not honoring the meaning of Marriage and not being loving and compassionate? The post below this one explains how Gay Rights Advocates come to such pronouncements.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:31

## **Coffee and Gasoline**

We had lunch at McDonalds today, after another doctor's appointment. Senior coffees were 70 cents (and it was literally senior. Coffee in an open carafe should be thrown out ever 20 minutes. Coffee held in a tightly closed pot stays fresh about one hour and then should be replaced) We had coffee recently at a regular slow food restaurant and were dismayed to see a cup cost us \$2.00 Of course, popular specialty coffees can cost \$4.50 Hmm, that is more than gas at the pump. Why is no one accusing the coffee makers of gouging? I understand that gas prices, adjusted for inflation, are less expensive now than they were 30 years ago. Meanwhile, in England drivers now pay at least \$6.50 for an equivalent gallon. We all could get fuel at lot cheaper, if we really wanted to by changing our lifestyles. I'm sure there is something in the Bible about that. My points are they we Americans are spoiled and indulgent. We also think the world revolves around us, when in fact, like the oil market, we are part of a global economy. That reality greatly effects what happens at the pump, as well as just about everything else in our lives.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:12

## **Building on Sand**

Rebuilding New Orleans has become a favorite "cause" for many churches and celebrities. I confess I do not share the burden. Hundreds of millions of tax dollars have already been lost due to waste and fraud. Hundreds of millions more are needed. For what? to rebuild a city on a swamp that is doomed to be flooded again? Many of the Insurance Companies are pulling out of the area. That should tell us something. Every celebrity and most crusaders for this cause, that I have heard, tell us how important New Orleans is to our history and culture as Americans. They do not really mean the City, they mean the entertainment district of the City. Interestingly, when people here in Springfield talk about revitalizing this near bankrupt city they also talk first and foremost about its entertainment district. I never go there. I have no interest in the bars and niteclubs. Why should any Christian? Rebuilding the City must first mean the housing, hospitals, schools and businesses (besides the ones on Bourbon St) Etc. But that brings us back to the original issue: why do any of that if the City is built on sand (Hmmm, that reminds me of something Jesus said) and the dikes will not hold if another Level 5 Hurricane hits. If folks say, "but it is my home" Well, let them rebuild and pay for it themselves, at their expense, not mine. There are a lot of beautiful places I would like to live. I can not afford it, so I don't. I'm sure many of the citizens consider themselves to be Christians. Christians are called to be wise stewards of the the Land and of their money

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:51

Saturday, May 6, 2006

### **Justifiable Racism?**

An outstanding local high school senior was just awarded a scholarship from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It covers complete expenses for him to attend MIT and Stanford grad school in California for his PhD in chemical engineering. That will come to about \$500,000. The Gates give these scholarships every year to minority students. That is great and the local Hispanic student sounds like an exceptional, bright young man who should do very well. This is a case of both racism and discrimination. Of course, there is discrimination in every case when schools decide whom they will accept. That is necessary and acceptable. It is rational (and reasonable) discrimination based on individual merit. What is not acceptable is discrimination based on group identity rather than individual identity. Affirmative Action programs are established to help members of racial groups because they are members of that group. By this definition, that is racism. In the case of the local student, we have both racism ("Minorities Only" could apply) and rational discrimination, based on individual merit, among all the minority students who did apply.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:34

Tuesday, May 2, 2006

### **W.W.J.D?**

When we woke up a few months ago there were several people, strangers, hanging around in our back yard. It is fenced, and posted clearly with "Private Property. No Trespassing" signs, but they had climbed over. They asked if I had any work around the yard or house to do. I thought of a few odd jobs that no one else in the neighborhood wanted, because I couldn't pay much. Friends of theirs continued to jump the fence and joined the growing number camping on my property. They needed to use our facilities. We said ok. Then they wanted to use the kitchen to cook, then the living room to relax. There were so many, they ran out of room and asked to sleep in the house. They asked us to take care of their children. They were not paying us for any of these things. In fact, I kept paying them to do work around the place. We thought we had become dependent on them. We thought they were saving us money we needed for other things. Today, they all came in and asked us to leave the house we own. They insist it is their right to have it. They refuse to leave and want to settle down here permanently. What should I do? Some of my Christian friends say that I should let them have it- that is the compassionate, Christian thing to do.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:39

Friday, April 28, 2006

## **Gouging?**

Everywhere you go these days, people are complaining about ever higher prices for gas at the pump. The most frequent explanation heard is "price gouging" on the part of The Oil Companies. The person most frequently blamed is President Bush, because he supposedly is not "doing something about" the alleged gouging. Somehow, the public is conveniently overlooking some basic economics, especially, the Market. Prices are determined primarily by the Market, by demand. This is Economics 101 (or less) If the consumers have a choice, ie- if they are not being forced to pay, if there is no extortion involved, then there is no "gouging".The Oil Companies are legitimate businesses, charging "all that the traffic will bear". Thomas Sowell, in his column today, goes over this familiar terrain.Springfield is bogged down still in contract negotiations with the Police, Fire and Teachers Unions. Why? The Unions insist on getting every penny they can for their members- all the Market [the City- actually, the tax payers] will bear. They have no problem with that.College football players, up for the Draft, hope they will get Pro contracts at the maximum salaries possible- all the Market will bear. The owners of professional teams all hope to make maximum profit for their investment. Fans willingly help them by paying the going prices for tickets and refreshments from vendors, also seeking maximum profits for their business venture. You get the idea. Everyone seeks to maximize profits, including the crude oil producing nations that Exxon, et al, have to buy from, also at Market prices. However, everyone else is not vilified for alleged gouging like the Oil Companies are.The problem and the solutions lie elsewhere and it is with us, the consumers. We are, indeed, addicted to oil. We have a choice: either cut way down on consumption or pony up for development of more supplies [as in Alaska] and refineries and/or for alternative energy resources. We are choices for the long run. Such development, in turn, of course, will generate more profits for investors- as much as the market will bear.Biblical Principles of Economics support the concept of investment for profit. In fact, Biblically, we should make as much profit as possible; but, with two conditions. One, of course, it must be made honestly and humanely. Two, and here's the real rub with profits, money is for ministry. Individuals and businesses are responsible to God to use profits for service to others, the community and the world. Profits are not made by celebrities, sports stars or business CEOs, et al, for their "conspicuous consumption" or hedonistic lifestyles.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:53

Tuesday, April 25. 2006

### **Getting Accurate Facts about the Environment**

A good column today by John Tierney (NYT) asks three questions. The answers are- the air in most places in the USA is cleaner now than it was 20 years ago (most air pollutants have declines sharply over this period) . The amount of forest land in the USA has been stable since the 1920's and has actually been increasing in the last decade. The USA is leading international efforts to reduce annual emissions of greenhouse gases by a greater amount than required by the Kyoto Protocol. You would not know all this from most accounts in the media. In fact, it contradicts what we ususally read. Tierney's article has good observations why this is so. He refers us to the research of the Program on Energy and Sustainable Development. If, as a Christian, you are concerned about the stewardship of God's Creation, this is one of many resources to know about. <http://pesd.stanford.edu/news/741/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:34

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

## **The Gospel and Illegal Immigrants**

There are a lot of columns and articles to help sort out the issues involved in the debate over amnesty for "Illegal Immigrants". (Using "Illegal" instead of "undocumented" and "amnesty" instead of "legalization" tips you off where I am at on this.) Here is a conservative columnist who uses columns from liberal papers to prove his own point, debunking the idea that there are good economic (business) reasons to welcome the Illegal Workers-<http://www.washtimes.com/op-ed/20060328-102545-2371r.htm>My concern here is to debunk the idea that somehow granting "legalization to undocumented immigrants" is mandated by the Gospel. No, it is not. Ms Clinton said this is a modern retelling of the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37. There are different versions in Matthew and Mark) I'll put it in a contemporary setting-

A white man was attacked by another white man and left for dead on a sidewalk. A white Pastor came along, saw the victim and refused to get involved. Another white Christian came by and also distanced himself from the beaten man, crossing to the other side of the street. They refused to help the needy man. No explanation is given. Then a Muslim from Uganda came upon the beaten white American. He stopped and gave the man all the help he needed, using his time and money to do it. The point of the story is that a "neighbor" is someone who helps others in need as s/he has opportunity. The point behind that point is that being such a neighbor is what loving God and others is about. The white American Christians in the story missed both points (as did the man who asked Jesus the original questions that led to the story) The despised Black foreigner, a non-Christian, did get the point and demonstrated what it means to be a neighbor. How does this illustrate any of the issues in the debate about Illegal Immigrants. Ms Clinton seemed to be saying that the beaten white American is the equivalent to an Latino man illegally sneaking across the American border and the Gospel compels the our Government to act like the foreigner, the "good Samaritan", to him. Or does she mean that white Americans are acting like the other white Americans in the story- ignoring the needs of one of their own? Who is supposed to be like the robbers who attacked the American in the first place? The story does not fit today's problem. Ms Clinton is off the mark, misusing the story. More often, I am hearing people say that helping the illegal immigrants is what the Gospel is all about. It is about nothing, if it is not about helping such people. If that last sentiment is true, then the Gospel is about nothing, because it most definitely is not about helping people sneak illegally into the United States of America. The Gospel is about Creation, the Fall and Redemption through the work of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the good news of God's grace for sinners received by faith alone in the blood of Jesus Christ alone. Christian living, which follows from conversion to Christ and is the result of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, definitely involves loving and serving others. It definitely involves ministry to people suffering from oppression and injustice. BUT- it remains to prove that involves the United States government granting amnesty to people who break the laws of out country by coming into it and remaining here illegally. These people are not the equivalent of the innocent victim of robbery lying on the road in the Samaritan story. That story does not mandate our Government is to give them aid in the form of welfare and medical care, let alone employment and education and citizenship.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:14

Sunday, March 26, 2006

## **Can Christians Serve in the Military?**

Jesus calls believers in Him to be his disciples. Disciples are those who so identify with a Teacher that they willingly accept his fate, if need be. We are called to carry our cross even as he did. Our cross is accepting the consequences of being faithful to God. That is the example of Jesus we are to follow. Obeying the Word of God is costly. Living by the Principles of the Kingdom can extract a painful price, e.g.- the loss of employment, the suffering of ridicule and rejection, (for some youth, it might mean forgoing playing on a sports team that insists on having its games on Sunday morning or for some college students it might mean loss of membership in some prestigious campus organization because of its hazing or discriminatory policies, et al) Perhaps for some, it might mean jail time or even death in some societies, as the recent beheading of 3 Christian teens in Indonesia by Moslems. In situations of these types, where we might suffer violence simply because we are going about our private lives faithfully as disciples of Christ, Christ calls us to not retaliate in kind. This is the context for his teaching on non-violence. "Turning the other cheek" is a mandate to individuals Christians. There is no warrant for applying it (and similar injunctions) , as a principle of foreign policy, to the United States or any other nation. I try to explain, in the study notes now on my website, that Authority is at the heart of the Universe. That authority, the Throne, belongs to God. He exercises it in various ways, ie- He has instituted specific agents through which He acts. This is the answer to those who reject the application of Capital Punishment with the argument that it is murder, asking "Who are we to take the life of another?" They are absolutely right. We as individuals, as private citizens, have no right to execute anyone. However, the State has the right. It comes from God. The State acts as His agent. Thus the capital punishment of someone who has murdered someone is not itself murder. [I know that there are miscarriages of Justice. Innocent people have been executed by the State. That is a different argument and a different problem] The staff carrying out the execution are not acting as private citizens. Thus, a Christian could serve among them. Likewise, private citizens, including Christians, can serve in military combat. As the State has the God-delegated authority to maintain and preserve Justice for its citizens, so a Nation does, likewise, on the international scene. [Again, I know that there are unjust wars and innocent civilians are killed or maimed. Again, that is a different argument and a different problem] A friend, solid Christian and 50 year old family man, who has served in the National Guard for years, has just been called up and will be deployed to Iraq in April for 18 months, leaving his ministry here as Principal of an inner city public school. To listen to many, including other Christians, our friend is on his way to help occupy and terrorize the innocent citizens of another country, being subjugated by America, in an evil war, only to serve the personal interests of a megalomaniacal President, his power and money grubbing friends in the oil business and neo-con supporters who are pursuing some kind of American Empire. Or- he is going, with our prayers, to serve God and his country- our country- to help another nation and its citizens, recently freed from terrible tyranny, rebuild and become a constitutional democracy (a republic) , wherein they have and enjoy the same First Amendment Freedoms that we Americans do, including those among us who are so adamantly opposed to his going. By going, he and his comrades will be acting with the faith that they are serving the Greater Good of the world in general and our country in particular.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:43

Thursday, March 23, 2006

### **Civil Unions are not enough**

Several homosexual couples in Connecticut, in "Civil Unions", are pushing a law suit through the Courts that will, they hope, bring them satisfaction. These men admit they now have all the legal rights that married heterosexual couples have. That is not enough- they do not have the social recognition granted to married couples. They feel they are being treated as "second-class" citizens because of this and thus suffer emotional harm. They want the courts to rectify this egregious situation. If "Marriage" is defined as the legal commitment of a consenting man and woman to live together as husband and wife, case closed. The definition was redefined by a Court here in Massachusetts. Here, now, Marriage is defined, in so many words, as the legal commitment of two consenting men (or women) to live together as spouses. That new definition did not change the majority public opinion about what Marriage is and did not win wide spread public acceptance and approval of "married gay couples" as really married. More than anything, public approval and validation is what many gay people want for their relationships. My take is that the traditional definition of Marriage stands in the way of that goal and therefore, the actual agenda of many gay activists is to do away with that definition of Marriage altogether. This is what has happened with the definition of Family. The exclusive use of the traditional definition (married parents and their children living together) is considered offensive and inappropriate in many circles. A "family" is now commonly considered as any combination of individuals living together in some kind of committed relationship. Google "Family" or "Alternative Family" and see. Increasingly, single-parent households (unmarried mothers and children) are considered families. Gay Couples with children are considered families. No one is allowed to say publicly that the latter are not families without strenuous objection by others. From what I read and hear, gay rights activists will not stop until homosexual "marriages" and "families" have the same social [as distinct from legal] acceptance and approval as traditional Marriage and Family has had for centuries.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:56

### **The Not So Gay Agenda**

Today's newspaper features an editorial cartoon showing our Governor throwing away a baby. Mr Romney has supported Catholic Charities in their effort to be declared exempt from the law requiring them to now recognize Gay Marriages and the right of Gay couples to adopt children from their agency. Thus, the paper has editorialized, the Governor is against all adoption and is anti-children, denying them the right to be adopted. Besides very poor, over generalizing, "black and white" logic, this is another case of our paper being anti-Roman Catholic. The paper is serving the agenda of gay rights advocates against the Church whose Biblical, religious belief leads it to oppose gay marriage and thus gay adoptions. Certainly, neither the Church nor the Governor are anti-children or anti-adoption. Where are the evangelical churches?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 18:21

### **Lost in the System**

Evil is not only perpetuated by individuals. Sometimes it is systemic and institutionalized. There has been a very controversial local case involving, a now 12 year old girl, which has made national news. She is foster child, a ward of the State, who has suffered terrible abuse throughout her life, nearly killing her. She has been in a Boston Hospital, with a beating induced coma, for months now, as the Courts and Officials try to sort out her story. A Special Commission came out with its investigative report this week: no one is to blame for the girl's terrible life experience- everyone in her life is to blame. They are all responsible for what has happened to this girl, one way or another. Besides those who actually beat her, she was lost in a system that did not protect her. The shocking account includes the fact that some 1000 reports of child abuse are made to this area's Department of Human Services, every single month! That is twice as many as are reported in Boston! Institutional evil has a life of its own, larger and stronger than the individuals in that system. Evangelicals continue to focus on personal redemption and the changing of individual lives. When we pray, as Jesus taught us, "Deliver us from evil", we must include the evil that abides in institutions, like the DHS. We must pray and work for its redemption, also. Our action should include money in the state budget to staff and support the DHS to the level necessary to prevent any more girls, like Haleigh Poutre, being lost.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 17:14

### **Neighborhood schooling can be unfair**

There is a nice looking elementary school near our house. It seems to have a good reputation. Children walk past our house to attend. I am in favor of neighborhood schools, but I can see why some parents oppose them. There is another elementary school near our house in the opposite direction. Students walk there also. That school building is dilapidated and the school itself has "problems." It, too, is a neighborhood school- the same neighborhood. The line was arbitrarily drawn by the administration. Which school children attend depends simply on which side of the street they live. But the outcome for these children could be huge and something, as children, that is out of their control. This is an example of discrimination. The dividing line has nothing to do with poverty or race. Both schools are integrated and diverse. The discrimination is institutional; unintentional, but real, nevertheless and unfair.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:47

Monday, March 20, 2006

## **The Oral Majority**

My world is full of books and words. I read and study words all the time. I can not imagine my life without doing this. Yet, the current March issue of Christianity Today states, 70% of the people in the world can't, don't or won't read. This boggles my mind and greatly distresses me. There are 6.5 billion people in the world and more than 4 billion of them are oral learners: the "Oral Majority". The writer in CT, Dawn Jewell, argues that this calls for a major change in mission methods, which traditionally rely on words, books and reading. If the OM are to be reached with the Gospel, she says, it must be through oral communication: story telling, drama, poetry and songs. Sounds like the contemporary American church. Supposedly, in this land of free education and arguably the world's best schools (some of which are not free) more than half of American adults do not engage in "literary reading" - books and articles that require literary skills to understand. These are people who "chose to be entertained, to learn and to communicate via oral means". The CT writer makes this striking comparison: "Western postmoderns and non-literate West Africans have much in common. Both are highly relational and experiential."

There was a major effort last year to raise money to "make poverty history". A much bigger effort needs to be made to make illiteracy history. I can understand the problem in doing this in an underdeveloped or developing "Third World" nation; but I suspect there is more involved in America than a lack of schools and teachers. Locally, 2 million dollars were spent, in the last two years, on teaching children to read. Test scores reveal continuing poor performance. The State has pledged an additional 3 million for more of the same. Someone is benefitting from all this money- most of it supposedly goes to training teachers how to teach reading. Reading is best taught and learned the old-fashioned way: from a parent and that does not cost any money- just time and effort and a free library card. I suspect the unaddressed issue in America and Western society, the real issue, is the changing theories of the meaning and use of words themselves. This, in turn, is about the meaning and acquisition of Knowledge and Truth. As the classic understanding of propositional Knowledge and objective Reality, understood primarily through the use of traditional Reason and Logic, is gradually replaced by theories of more intuitive, subjective and individual Knowledge and personally constructed Truth and Reality, the value of traditional literary reading is diminished (and, along with it, serious Bible study and sermons). The problem, at least for Americans, is not that most do not have the opportunity to learn to do literary reading (different than both the ABC's to get by on and work related technical reading), but that they no longer see the need for it.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:57

## **Polygamy**

Charles Krauthammer explains why the arguments for gay marriage are also the arguments for polygamy. I find this paragraph especially important-"I'm not one of those who see gay marriage or polygamy as a threat to, or assault on, traditional marriage. The assault came from within. Marriage has needed no help in managing its own long, slow suicide, thank you. Astronomical rates of divorce and of single parenthood (the deliberate creation of fatherless families) existed before there was a single gay marriage or any talk of sanctioning polygamy. The minting of these new forms of marriage is a symptom of our culture's contemporary radical individualism -- as is the decline of traditional marriage -- and not its cause." Here is the column-<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/16/AR2006031601312.html?sub=new>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:19

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

### **Affirmative Action: a bad idea**

I have written elsewhere on this Blog that "Affirmative Action" is not only unscriptural (it is racial discrimination, which God forbids), but very harmful to those it is intended to help. Here is a columnist who develops that argument-The American Enterprise: "Live" with Shelby Steele Dinesh D'Souza is even more helpful- [What I am advocating, he says] "holds the government to a rigorous standard of colorblindness, while allowing private actors to be free to discriminate as they wish. In practice, this means uncompromising race neutrality in government hiring and promotion, criminal justice, and the drawing of voting districts. Yet individuals and companies would be allowed to discriminate in private transactions such as selecting a business partner or hiring for a job. Am I calling for a repeal of the Civil Rights Act of 1964? Actually, yes. The law should be changed so that its nondiscrimination provisions apply only to the government." <http://www.dineshdsouza.com/articles/raceandstate.html> I recommend The End Of Racism, by Mr D'Souza. It is a very helpful book on this topic

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:17

Saturday, March 11, 2006

### **The Bishop and Tom Rindge, Homeland Security Secretary**

Writing as a Protestant, I want to express my admiration for the public stand taken by the Pope and RC Bishops on moral and ethical issues. Anti-catholicism does seem to be strong and growing. That is to be expected because of Catholic leaders strong public stand against popular politically correct positions, such as stem cell research. One of the largest St Patrick Day's parades in New England is here, in nearby Holyoke (MA). This year's Grand Marshall (a very big honor) is Tom Rindge of Homeland Security. Our local RC Bishop refused to take part in blessing Mr Rindge and the parade because Mr Rindge is a pro-choice Roman Catholic. The local Catholic Hospitals take a lot of heat because they will not do abortions or provide services they believe are related to abortions. The headlines in today's paper declare that the venerable Catholic

Charities organization is no longer going to do adoptions because the State insists that they must include homosexual couples among their clients. Of course, there is relentless criticism of the Pope because of his stand against ordaining known homosexuals, as well as women, to the priesthood. Very unfortunately and understandably, the Church's scandal over pedophile priests is used as a blunt instrument to constantly cudgel the Church; but that is hypocritically used as a weapon against the righteous stands of the Church in these other matters. (Since it did this..., therefore...) Never mind that the Church and its Bishops have made huge sacrificial changes to address that problem and is seriously seeking reconciliation. The local paper won't let the Church forget it and constantly berates the Church for all of the above. Protestants, meanwhile, seem quite content to let the Roman Church take the heat. They seem to stay out of the fray.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:30

Friday, March 10, 2006

### **Injustice in India**

India is front page news these days. While many articles are trumpeting their growing economy, they also reveal that the largest democracy in the world (yes, larger than the US) is a chaotic mess. The growth is bottom-up through enterpreneurial enterprise. Part of the government mess is a very poor legal and court system. It illustrates clearly what the Bible denounces as sin: oppression of the Poor. An AP article in today's paper here details a barely functioning legal system bloated with corruption of the police and courts. The rich and connected are not prosecuted or are let off with minimum consequences for their crimes, while the Poor languish in prisons for years, awaiting trials. Democracy and an economy, without Justice, is neither free nor good- to say nothing of Biblical.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:17

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

### **"Loving the Storm-drenched"**

"We can no more change the culture than we can the weather. Fortunately, we've got more important things to do." This is a quote from the current Christianity Today in an article by Frederica Mathewes-Green, entitled "Loving the Storm-drenched" Great title. The concept is simple: The weather of life can be rough and hard on some people. We should forget both cursing the weather and trying to change it. Both are futile. Weather is weather and it will change on its own over time. In fact, Ms Mathewes-Green suggests we all should watch old B&W movies and read 50 year old novels to remind our selves of the changing weather of our times. The "more important thing" she has in mind is to seek out individuals who are hurting from some aspect of our current culture, eg- the guilt of having had a culturally acceptable abortion or the pain of a socially acceptable divorce and loving this storm-drenched person. Good advice. But to say we can not change culture, and should not even try, to me, is terrible advice. "Culture" needs definition. The sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next. Anthropologists consider that the requirements for culture (language use, tool making, and conscious regulation of sex) are essential features The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition. 2002. Even as God the Creator changes the weather, he also changes attitudes, customs, and beliefs Christians, in preaching the Gospel and teaching Believers to live a life of obedience, are also changing culture. We are called to ministry Light, shining from a high hill, which is the public square! We do that through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:32

Wednesday, March 1, 2006

### **What Should a Christian do about Global Warming?**

Many national Evangelical Leaders have recently come together to address the issue of climate change. They are convinced that current global climate change is a negative result of the increased use of fossil fuel (among other things) and are making dire predictions of disaster that Christians must not ignore. They base their case on the conclusions of many Scientists and years of research and studies. Their website with important Links to others can be found here- <http://www.christiansandclimate.org/statement> Meanwhile, many other Evangelical Leaders take a very different, even contrary, position on the same issues. They also rely on many Scientists, years of research and studies. Their helpful website is here-[http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pdf/ISA\\_Climate\\_Change.pdf](http://www.interfaithstewardship.org/pdf/ISA_Climate_Change.pdf) What is a simple Believer to do? How can we make up our minds when the "Experts" do not agree? PhDs are pitted against each other. (Sometimes one group will accuse the other of being ignorant or at least, unscientific. This is untrue and very unfair. Compare the websites and link and see for yourself.) As is often the case, positions are really drawn for other than the stated reasons. Experts marshalled for each side tend to cancel each other out. What is left? Ideology and Faith on both sides. People take sides, choosing which experts to rely on and which to reject, based on a priori assumptions. This particular argument is not only about Global Warming. (The same is true about the current controversy over foreign contracts to manage American ports or even about VP Dick Cheney's hunting accident) And what might that Ideology be in this matter of Global Warming? Simply put: "Free Market Capitalism". Some see this Issue as a threat to it and to "American Business". Generally speaking, you can guess which side someone will take on this matter of Climate Change, especially causes and solutions, from where they are vis a vis FM Capitalism. Columnists will eagerly point out that some Statement is unreliable and biased because it is sponsored by some liberal or leftist organization, not mentioning their own affiliation with some right-wing, conservative "Think Tank" or organization. And vice versa.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:50

Monday, February 20, 2006

### **Band aid is a bandaid, or worse**

We can help the homeless here in Springfield by sending a donation to the local rescue mission- enough for a meal at their annual Easter Dinner. We can collect underwear for them, as one church did yesterday on "Undie Sunday". These are specific acts of kindness and they do offer some immediate, practical help. We could contribute to national Funds Collections to make Hunger History, as advocated by rock bands and celebrities. We could, on an even bigger scale, support the effort of celebrities to persuade our federal government to give 1% of our national budget to governments in Africa, for poverty relief. Our newspaper tells more about the 11.5 million people who are starving to death today, in East Africa. The article quotes several relief workers and experts who say that periodic drought itself is not the problem- it is manageable and does not need to lead to hunger or starvation. What is needed is money to be spent on electricity, water and irrigation, roads and transportation. This will enable local farmers to succeed in producing, selling and buying food. They can then support themselves. They do not need or want grain or boxes of food stuffs from the West. Billions of dollars worth of relief are sent, in periods of crisis, to save starving people, by well meaning and well fed people, NGOs and governments. That is the Easter Dinner, underwear collection, bandaid approach. It helps for the moment, but hinders and harms in the long run. The crisis passes and the cycle goes on until the next crisis.

What is needed most is help for the long term: long range, systemic planning and private investment to help local farmers get what they need to develop their own industry and trade- not government checks to American farmers to grow and ship crops to Africa, and definitely not money given directly to African governments without serious strings attached to prevent the corruption that is so prevalent on that Continent. (not to mention ineptitude, waste and fraud on this one). Granted, it is a complex issue. There is no easy fix, but the fix will ultimately be found in economic development and free trade, not government to government aid. Long term, systemic planning and policies and actions that will enable and equip people in need to become self supporting is what Christians must be engaged in as part of the Cultural Mandate given to us by the Creator. Here are some helpful websites-<http://www.ratzingerfanclub.com/blog/2005/07/debt-relief-trade-reform-and-one.html><http://www.acton.org/blog/index.html?archives/196-Bono-Aid-or-Trade.html>

[http://www.nationalreview.com/nrof\\_bartlett/bartlett060302.asp](http://www.nationalreview.com/nrof_bartlett/bartlett060302.asp)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:22

Sunday, February 19, 2006

## **E Pluribus Unum**

The juxtaposition of two articles on the front page of the second section of today's paper is a story in itself. At the top is a story "Latinos chart areas of concern". There was a meeting of Latino Leaders in our neighboring city of Holyoke with people from a "Latino think tank" from Boston to plan strategy for the next State elections. Half of Holyoke's population is Hispanic. It is the most poor city in the State. Top of the list of concerns is the highest teen pregnancy rate in the State and the highest school drop-out rate. The headline below "Latinos..." is one that reads, "Grand Colleen chosen at ball". It features a photo of 5 pretty Irish young ladies from Holyoke. It is part of the annual St Patrick's Day Celebration coming up. Same City, different worlds. Latinos in the area have their own Celebrations. African Americans do also. So do the Greeks and Italians and the Polish. And we just had Chinese New Year. All of this makes for an interesting, even vital, City; but it also makes for division and rivalry and detrimental competition. To save Springfield-Holyoke, all these difference must be set aside, or at least kept in perspective, with everyone pulling together for the benefit of all. E Pluribus Unum

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:22

Friday, February 17, 2006

### **How Many Races are There?**

The post before this one (below) reminded us a lot of rural French Quebec. This morning I had routine blood work done for a check up next week. The medical building we went to was packed. Most of the other people there were either African-American or Hispanic, with Spanish being the language most dominant. No French. The same scene is replicated in our PC doctor's office- actually, most everywhere we go here. This is not the White world we grew up in, nor the one we came from in Vermont. It is scary and uncomfortable, as well as exciting and interesting. Like it or not, it is the world we live in- a multi-ethnic, multi-"racial" America. I put quotes around "racial" because, Scripturally, there is only one Race: Human -Acts 17:26

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:40

### **Inspiring Film about a Man and 13 Children**

We watched a documentary today that was very interesting and touching. It is a French language film entitled "To Be and To Have" about a teacher and his 13 students, 3-10, in a very rural, one room school (covering the year 2002) This man, finishing his 20th year, is marvelous. The filmmaker has captured a very special relationship between students and teacher and among themselves as young children. It is about being human, as well as about the teaching-learning process. Inspiring.[http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/to\\_be\\_and\\_to\\_have/](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/to_be_and_to_have/)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:16

Thursday, February 16, 2006

### **Is Discrimination ever appropriate?**

There is a very interesting interactive website. Using it takes the viewer through a number of scenarios that will increase awareness of different types of discrimination in our society, along with possible courses of action to take in response. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5439480/?r=6>What does the Bible say about discrimination? Many verses clearly state that God shows no favoritism. His People are commanded to treat everyone equally. More exactly, Discrimination based on ethnicity (Jew vs Gentile) or based on social/economic (rich vs poor) is a sin. However, God is a Judge. He Himself does discriminate. Therefore, we can not say that all discrimination is wrong. God' discrimination is based on behavior, both of individuals and of groups. Neither ethnicity nor social/economic status excuses bad behavior. [Note: "bad behavior" is behavior God deems unacceptable, using His moral and ethical standards] Jews and Gentiles, Rich and Poor are all accountable for their personal and group behavior. Discrimination based on behavior is both appropriate and necessary and applies to everyone, equally, regardless of ethnicity or social/economic status. This is a very brief summary. I can supply the Bible verses.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:25

Sunday, February 12, 2006

### **Holding People Accountable**

I have been dismayed to learn about the fraud perpetrated by victims of Katrina. Read the attached MSNBC article. I am also dismayed the article places the blame for this theft of millions of dollars from us, the tax payers, entirely upon FEMA. Why are the people who filed the fraudulent claims and cashed the checks not held accountable for their behavior? Slipshod accounting is very regrettable, but not a crime- fraud, theft, is.<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11278238/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:24

Friday, February 10, 2006

### **When is our work done?**

I recently came across an organization that has a great track record for social activism, especially doing effective work with gangs and stopping inner city violence. Their approach seems sound and worth supporting to accomplish its puposes. See-<http://www.ncne.com/index.cfm>My question is: If gangs and youth-related violence are eradicated, indeed, if poverty itself is "made history", could we Christians be satisfied? Would our our work done? Why not?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:40

Saturday, February 4, 2006

## **The Contradictions of Black History Month**

This time every year, there are many programs and speeches honoring Dr Martin Luther King Jr. He is rightly esteemed as a great civil rights leader. Yet one of the important themes he ardently espoused has been repudiated by many of the people praising him. Dr King preached racial equality. His vision for America was that one day it would be color-blind. People must not be judged by the color of their skin, he said, but by their character. TV host, Tony Brown, was the featured speaker here this week, beginning a series of activities celebrating Black History Month. He echoed Dr King, encouraging people to keep his Vision alive. The contradiction is simple: if the vision is for society to become color-blind, why have a month celebrating "Black" History, Black Heritage, Black culture. The fact is that many Civil Rights activists do not share Dr King's Vision. Within only a few years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965 and Fair Housing laws of 1968, many Black Leaders came to the conclusion that no real progress had been made. Racism, defined as believing that a group of people are genetically (racially) inferior to other groups, had been dealt a serious blow. However, discrimination and segregation, while now illegal, continued to exist. Instead of a color-blind policy, these activists began to advocate for special privilege based on skin color. The group, now known as African-Americans, were to receive preferred treatment, as a Minority group, in employment, college admissions and elsewhere- what amounted to "quota" systems, based on skin color alone. Their leaders had become convinced that "color-blind" really ends up maintaining the status quo of discrimination in favor of White people. Policies like Affirmative Action were necessary to level the uneven playing field. So much for honoring Dr King's Vision and principles.

I agree with Dr King- people must not be judged by the color of their skin, but by their character and that means, by their actions. This is Biblical. If we are honest and consistent, all policies that give preference to any group, based on skin color, are not Biblical and must be rejected. That includes Affirmative Action. The Biblical approach is to respect all people as human beings, created equally as the Image of God. Period. Individual human beings will not be equal (the same) intellectually and physically and in their gifts and talents, achievements, character, personal history and behavior (and of course, all of these variables change over a life time). Thus, they will not be "judged" or valued equally. The ideal is that each one will be treated fairly, equitably and on their own merits, not on the merits or history of any group to which they belong by birth.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:04

Monday, January 23. 2006

### **"Glory Road" misleading**

A movie currently near the top of the charts is Glory Road. Some reviewers see it as just another Disney feel-good, inspirational, family sports movie wherein the underdogs take on the current champs and, of course, in the last scene, triumphs. Most of the reviewers, however, seem to see this film as about Racism and the end of segregation in college basketball [http://filmcritic1963.typepad.com/reviews/2006/01/glory\\_road.html](http://filmcritic1963.typepad.com/reviews/2006/01/glory_road.html)In that regard, today's column by George Will is enlightening. The Big Game in the movie was for the NCAA championship in 1966, in which Texas Western beat Univ of Kentucky. According to the movie, the Texas coach recruited and played 5 Black starters, against strong, life threatening bigotry and the all-white Kentucky team. First, Texas was ranked third in the nation, having lost only one game for the season. Second, 10 years before the Big Game, the University of San Francisco had won the NCAA championship, using four black starters (none other than Bill Russell, KC Jones, Hal Berry and Gene Brown) Third, 8 years before the Big Game, the Coaches choice for the All-American college team was all black (including Wilt Chamberlain, Oscar Robertson, Bill Russell, Bob Boozer, and Guy Roberts) Fourth, 4 years before the Big Game, the University of Cincinnati won the NCAA championship, starting with 4 black players. Fifth, 3 years before the Big Game, Loyola won the NCAA championship, starting 4 black players. By then, Chamberlain, Russell, Baylor and Robertson were considered the best players in the NBA Sports figures who personally knew the Texas coach say that he recruited and played the men that he did because they were the best he could find, in order to win the game. Not in order to make a social statement. Thus, the idea that this movie is about the team that broke the color barrier and ended segregation in college ball is false. Apparently, it is true that there was bigotry and racism in Kentucky and with the Kentucky coach. The President of the University wanted him to play black players- to win. But he refused. The Texas coach and his players did face great local opposition. When the UK Coach retired in 1972, his team was still all white. Today, the Kentucky Coach is black and the team is integrated. Movies that purport to tell a true story must be truthful. More important, accounts of racism and the struggle against it must also be true.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:50

### **Big Brother-Big Government**

We started to watch Enemy of the State with Will Smith on cable last night. Another creepy, disturbing movie about a good and innocent man being targeted by "the Feds" (in this case- NSA). The latter are evil and corrupt, let alone immoral and unethical in the name of national security. Ugh. Turned it off after maybe 15 minutes. I must confess though, to having a growing unease with the increasing controversies with the Federal government (one agency or another) over matters of privacy rights of citizens, as well as habeas corpus and due process. The Scripture clearly warns us about the evils of a totalitarian State (the Beast arising from the Sea in Rev 13) and we must be ever vigilant about abuse of power by the Powers that be. A cardinal doctrine among conservatives is the evil of Big Government. Interestingly, Social Conservatives apply this doctrine to social and religious practices, while Political Conservatives apply this Doctrine to fiscal and economic matters. Scripture applies the warning about Government playing "god" to everything.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:33

Saturday, January 21, 2006

## **Illegal Aliens**

The Massachusetts Legislature voted this week to deny illegal aliens, who are high school graduates, in-state college tuition rates. I was mulling this over, as I was doing my Heart Therapy (walk) today. I passed a number of Asians, which prompted my thoughts. I wasn't sure- I have heard and can see both sides of the situation. There have been letters and editorials in our paper. I have read little about in in Christian magazines. The common politically correct term is "undocumented workers or "guest workers". If someone breaks into my house, he is there illegally. Using this analogy, if someone breaks into my country, he is there illegally. I wondered how legal immigrants, many who have waited years for the documents giving them the legal right to enter, feel about illegal immigrants. I suspect they would not approve of them being here, let alone being given perks reserved for naturalized citizens. I agree with the Legislature. Some might say, "What about the Biblical mandate to Israel to treat aliens in Israel with justice and fairness?" Of course. We must not exploit or oppress workers, human beings, of any kind in any way. I understand that there may be millions of illegal workers in America and that they perform necessary work. They are still illegal. Let them become citizens. And if the immigration policies and laws need changing, let's change them. But we should not allow public policy to be determined by the pressure of special interest groups. That is the way "Gay Marriage" and "Gay Rights" activists (among others ) are bringing about changes in policy and law.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:56

Thursday, January 19, 2006

### **More Ominous Trends**

George Will is a columnist I respect and enjoy (usually). This article by him about schools of education is a must read. If what he says is true (and it is- I checked out all his references) we should be indignant and alarmed.

[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10753446/site/newsweek/Read Ms MacDonald's article for yourself](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10753446/site/newsweek/Read%20Ms%20MacDonald%27s%20article%20for%20yourself). [http://www.city-journal.org/html/8\\_2\\_a1.html](http://www.city-journal.org/html/8_2_a1.html) Here's some of the latest evidence that something is seriously wrong

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/24/AR2005122400701.html?nav=hcmodule>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:46

### **"...like a horse and carriage"**

"There are millions of poor Americans, living not just in down-on-your-luck hardship but in entrenched, multigenerational poverty. There is growing inequality between the haves and the have-nots. And there are reasons to worry whether the American dream is within the reach of all....these ominous

trends are entangled with the collapse of the nuclear family.' This is a quote from an important article about marriage and poverty- [http://www.city-journal.org/html/16\\_1\\_marriage\\_gap.html](http://www.city-journal.org/html/16_1_marriage_gap.html) City Journal, by the way, has excellent articles

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:34

Wednesday, January 18, 2006

## **Holistic Ministry**

It is time again for the annual United Way Fund Drive. The paper here is featuring the various agencies seeking help. I must say that many good people are doing good work in this community. This is Common Grace. In a "secular" way these people and organizations are doing God's work: they are providing human services and making life better for multitudes. Christians and Churches have always done works of mercy and charity. The Hospital we have used most often, and where my wife worked for years, is "Mercy" Hospital run by the RC Sisters of Charity. We have known many Christians who serve the Lord as teachers and doctors, dentists and nurses and who operate orphanages, clinics and shelters. There is nothing new about Christians being heavily involved in what today is called holistic ministry and activism for social justice. In some periods, this emphasis has waned, while in others it has thrived. Today is a time when it is thriving. Outreach is being done with two hands: evangelism and social action. An exciting demonstration of this can be seen in Mission America <http://www.missionamerica.org/Brix?pageID=12737>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:43

## **More Youth Violence**

The first homicide of the year happened Monday. A 20 year old was shot many times and left for dead in the stairwell of a tenement building here. Same day, another meeting, which had been already planned, was convened to come up with yet another plan to do something about drugs, gangs and violence here in Springfield. Again the call went out to get the city, police and clergy involved and cooperating to solve the mounting problem, primarily among inner city disadvantaged young people. Actually, all people have been working hard on the problem for years. Of course, they should continue; but, it seems clear that something is missing. Twice in the lead article about the meeting and the problem, people are quoted as saying, "Where are the parents?" All kinds of community leaders and agencies are involved, but not many parents. Probably, the majority of parents are involved and most kids are being raised well. This is not true of the kids who are in danger. More activities to "keep the kids off the streets" is not going to solve their problem. Offering more counseling and workshops is not going to cut it either. Big Brother and Big Sister mentoring is helpful, but is not the solution for these young adults. Such offerings are too little, too late.

The major problem that must be addressed is not the drugs, gangs and violence- it is the disadvantaged, single parent and dysfunctional family. Churches need to reach very young children and win their hearts, minds and bodies for Christ, teaching them effectively to adopt and internalize what the Bible teaches about relationships, marriage and family. That includes teaching them Biblical values about the care of their bodies, sexuality and parenting. They should also be learning what the Bible says about money and work, as well as about amusements and material things. They should be learning who they are in Christ and about living life for Him. I'm talking about doing this for all children from infancy through pre-teens. Concentrating on them, rather than the older youth. Prevention now instead of intervention later. We need to raise up a whole new generation to replace the current one. Eventually, This will lead to a new generation of parents, too. Hopefully, none of them will become disadvantaged or dysfunctional. Of course, to do this effectively will require much prayer and support and cooperation of many in the church (even more so for those children whose parents are not involved) especially when these young children become teens and young adults and try to live out, and be faithful to, what they have learned. Those teens who are currently seeking to do this, of course, need all the support we can give them, as well.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:25

## **Minimum Wage?**

The famous Winchester Arms factory in New Haven Connecticut is going to close. At their peak production the firm employed 19,000 people. Less than 200 now. One of the reasons this city of Springfield is in dire financial straits is the loss of its manufacturing sector. Nothing is bringing back these lost jobs. Times have changed. There is a major interest here in raising the minimum wage. Whatever the merits of doing that, the real solution to securing higher paying jobs in the long term is providing and securing the education and training required by today's market and the many business sectors that are booming. Like it or not, fair or not, the reality is that to get a good paying job (however that is defined) requires having the skills and the credentials that today's economy and society will reward. Pretty simple. If some choose not to go along with this, and I have been one of them at times through the years, they must accept the

consequences. I have.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:21

Tuesday, January 17, 2006

### **The Golden Globe Awards Go to the Homosexual Community (revised)**

The crux of the debate over homosexuality is its origins. Is a person born gay or does a person become gay? Is homosexuality natural and innate and not a choice at all or is it a chosen behavior? The gay community and those who are pro-gay insist that a person is born gay and should be accepted for who they are by birth. They can not change. To try to change them is oppression, even cruel. They are a minority group such as African Americans are. Discrimination against them is just as evil as discrimination against any other minority group. Civil Rights include Gay Rights. Is this a valid argument? The answer requires scientific evidence, not moralizing sermons and slogans. I am sure the gay movement toward full acceptance in our society will not stop. I am not sure marshalling any scientific evidence against their position will make any difference at all. However, it would be very helpful with certain individuals. One group that is a good resource on this topic is <http://www.narth.com/index.htm> Ultimately, the Norms of Scripture determine what behavior is approved

by God, not science. However, if a person uses science to support the "born gay" argument and that prevents him from listening to God's Word, having scientific evidence to question his position would be helpful and take away his(or her) argument (using science) for not considering what the Bible says. Of course, there is no assurance that they would do that, let alone change their orientation or lifestyle. They may very well want to remain gay for other reasons, whatever Science or the Bible may say. But, then they must accept full responsibility for their chosen behavior.

Personally, as a "straight" person, it would be very helpful to me to be persuaded by scientific evidence that there is no "gay gene", because I have been impressed by some homosexuals, whom I love and respect, that they could not be otherwise and have paid a great personal price to support that contention. The most I have been convinced of, so far, is that a person may indeed be born with a tendency toward homosexuality but whether it becomes overt and dominant depends primarily on a combination of emotional and social (especially early childhood) experiences.

Saying this does not mean acceptance or condoning of a behavior which is not Scriptural; nor does it mean "change" or, at least, control through the Holy Spirit is not possible. In fact, it is. What I am going for here is understanding. I find the simplistic disgust and denunciation that comes from some "Christians" toward homosexuals to be very distressing. A very highly rated and exhaustive Biblical study on the subject is by Dr Robert Gagnon and his website has helpful material <http://www.robgagnon.net/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:31

### **What is Main Stream?**

What do women want? Here's a good article answering that question about abortion-"Ayotte, a 2005 high court case in which Planned Parenthood is trying to crush New Hampshire's parental notification law, underscores the divide between the feminist-led abortion lobby and mainstream Americans: In a November 2005 Gallup/CNN/USA Today poll, 69 percent of respondents said girls under 18 should have to tell their parents before getting an abortion. Meanwhile, between two-thirds and three-quarters of Americans favor limitations on the procedure, or support banning it altogether (according to 2005 polls by CBS News, CNN/USA Today, and The Polling Company/Woman Trend)." <http://www.worldmag.com/subscriber/displayArticle.cfm?ID=11447>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:24

Tuesday, January 3, 2006

### **In the State We Trust**

Much was made in the speeches of the new mayors in this area during their inaugural ceremonies, some with great passion, that the local towns need more State financial aid. "It is our only hope." [even though they just claimed they need "the help of God"]. Other new leaders (mostly Councilmen) also repeated, during interviews, lists of local social woes and insisted that it is the moral duty of the State to rush financial aid to solve the problems. We are especially talking about money for schools and education, housing and health care. The State has the answer and that is more money. Never mind God, "In the State we trust." I was brought up believing that if I needed an education or a job or housing it was my responsible to stay in school to become qualified for employment, to find and hold a job and to secure housing I could afford. I did trust in God to help me do all that. The State could not do any of that for me.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:48

### **Is Christianity a White, Western, Male Religion?**

Christianity has its roots in the Middle East. Jesus and Paul looked and sounded more like Yassar Arafat than any of my English or Swedish ancestors. They were Jews from Israel. Increasingly, the typical Christian today is a poor woman living in an urban ghetto or rural village in the so-called "Third World" (the Global South, not the North). Here is another article with evidence for this statement, specifically as it regards evangelical Christians - <http://www.christianpost.com/article/missions/1937/section/new.lausanne.report.highlights.global.shift.of.christianity/1.htm>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 08:08

Friday, December 9, 2005

## **25 Years in Prison for Nothing**

The major argument commonly used against Capital Punishment is the possibility that innocent people might be executed. This argument is used, even in cases when there is absolutely no doubt of guilt- the person has confessed to the crime and everyone agrees that he or she is guilty. Yesterday a Judge in Atlanta released a man wrongfully sentenced to life in prison for a car jacking and rape. Almost 25 years later, DNA has proved another man did the crime. To be consistent, using the same argument, people should not be sentenced to life in prison, because the accused may really be innocent. Actually, that same argument could be used against sentencing any one for anything. Of course, that is nonsense. The argument should be dropped. Capital Punishment itself is not wrong. The legal system, that leads to the verdict, is the problem. It is subject to all kinds of error. That does not lead to the conclusion that we must jettison the judiciary. What is urgently needed is continued overhaul and reform of criminal law and law enforcement. By the way, what responsibility does the woman have who gave false testimony in the Atlanta case? The man was condemned on her word alone and she was wrong. And what kind of police work was done? Should someone else also be held accountable for what amounts to a crime against the man who lost 25 years of his life?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:30

## **The Right to Live revisited**

There is a local version of the Terry Schaivo case being played out here. A step-father is trying to prevent the IV tubes, keeping his brain dead 11 year old step-daughter alive, from being removed. He is the only one seeking this. He is also the one who allegedly abused the child and put her into this condition, hence most folks conclude his effort on behalf of the girl could well be an effort to save himself from a murder charge. Letters to the paper recite the familiar argument that the Court, no one actually, has the right to remove the tubes. The girl has the right to live. Only God, the argument goes, has the authority to decide if and when the child, anyone, lives or dies. Problem with this last point is that who ever put her on life support has already made a decision about whether the girl lives or dies- as much as any Judge who may decide to remove the support. Either way, not God, but people are deciding. If "Nature" were to take "her" course, the girl would have died weeks ago. Could it not be that "Nature" is a euphemism for God? The reality is that no one simply lives or dies all on their own, ie- "naturally". A recent study of life expectancy reveals how Americans are living longer than ever. Why? Because of improvements in environment (housing, sanitation, climate control, etc), food, health care- medical treatment (from flu shots to implants), prescriptions, life style, etc), airbags and safety measures, etc, etc. It could be argued that God is in all these developments. He uses them to preserve people's right to live. Or could it be the opposite, ie- means to keep people alive, whom God had decided to call into Eternity.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:02

Friday, December 2, 2005

### **The Oppression of Helpless or Innocent Women and Children**

As I reread the last post, there might be need for clarification. I mention that most of the 40 million people world-wide who have HIV-AIDS are women and children. The women contracted it, in most cases world-wide], from men who are sexually promiscuous or from men who are drug abusers. [In our local area the greatest increase is among women who are drug addicts and trade sex to feed their habit.] The children of course, got it from the infected women who gave them birth. In some circles here in the States, it is still common too think of this as primarily a disease contracted by homosexuals and that they deserve it as their punishment. We are, in fact, confronting the oppression of helpless or innocent women and children on a massive scale. Compassion certainly compels care for them.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:07

Thursday, December 1, 2005

### **Let's Be Honest About AIDS**

Today is AIDS Day. The media have been reminding us all day to be aware of the problem and to help alleviate it. No question, millions suffer from HIV-AIDS around the world, mostly women and children. No question, as pro-life people, we must do what we can to those who suffer. My problem is that the appeals for help by the media is predicated on the idea that these people are innocent victims of a disease, in the same way that others are victims of malaria or influenza. I did not hear the fact that these sick and dying people are victims of sexual promiscuity [hetero- as well as homo-] and/or drug abuse. The appeals, in the media, have all been for money to develop medical treatment. Is it out of place to expect the media to also appeal to their readers, viewers and listeners to forsake the deadly behavior that is the real source of the crisis? You say, that is too personal. People's behavior is their private business. Well, media people often warn us about behavior that endangers us. They warn us about smoking and overeating. They warn us about not going out on the thin ice, lest we drown, as two people did here, last weekend. With this Holiday Season, they will warn us not to drink and drive: Driving Drunk Kills. So if the crisis is really terrible (and it is) then these same media people, and certainly Pastors and other Community Leaders, should be honest, stop beating around the PC bush and come right out and shout: Stop being immoral! Stop using illegal drugs! By doing these things, you are spreading AIDS and killing people!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:24

### **Wal-Mart**

I read this today in the World magazine Blog. Check out the link for an excellent study on the retail giant and some good lessons in basic economics-"New York University visiting scholar Jason Furman, a former advisor to President Clinton and Sen. John Kerry, on Nov. 28 released a study called (improbably) "Wal-Mart: A Progressive Success Story." While not entirely uncritical of Wal-Mart, Furman shoots holes in theories that say Wal-Mart pays lower wages, kills jobs, and treats its employees badly."For interesting reading, check out all that the World offers- <http://www.worldmagblog.com/blog/>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:00

Monday, November 28, 2005

## **Confronting Social Issues**

Every day, I read about social problems and problems in our nation and world. It can be overwhelming and depressing. One solution to that, adopted by many, is not to read the papers or to read, but then setting the news aside and simply going about business, ignoring these matters. I can not do that. Violence and Poverty and Corruption and War and Disasters can not be ignored. They only get worse. I realize these are complicated issues. Celebrities singing about them and activists displaying bumper stickers and every one calling every one else "names" just does not solve anything. Certainly throwing money at the problems has never solved them in the long run- in fact, that has often made many problems worse. I see these matters, at root, as spiritual problems, requiring spiritual solutions. Many undoubtedly will laugh out loud at that. The following five posts taken together suggest an outline to use in coming to terms with social issues in the long term. Please read them from top down and all together.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:32

## **Being truly "Radical"- going to the "root" of Social Problems**

All evangelical Christians believe human beings are sinners and that is because we have a "fallen", sinful nature tracing back to Adam & Eve's sin in Eden. Problems in society, from violence and crime to divorce to child abuse to racism and poverty, are all attributed to this drive, within each of us, to sin. Social problems, it is believed, are really, at root, personal and individual problems. This is not the whole truth. Most evangelical Christians seem to have a difficult time recognizing that the problems of our society (and world) are also rooted in the institutions and structures of society. The problems are a combination of these structures and our fallen human nature. And that combination is complicated because each feeds off the other. Solutions require confronting and changing both. One Christian, who reacted negatively when he heard in a sermon what I have just written, is a dairy farmer. He agreed with the traditional evangelical view of social problems being problems caused by sinful individuals; but increasingly he spent his time combating what he saw as threats to his farm business and family welfare from government farm policies and various national and regional agricultural interest groups and organizations- not simply individuals. The issues were not considered sins by him, but were "wrongs" and injustices being wrought against family farmers like him. I mention him, solid Christian that he is, not to criticize him and his very legitimate concerns; but, because he really illustrates the problem I am writing about: we value individualism and personal freedoms, but the reality is that we live within systems and structures. And Scripture is clear- all of our institutions from marriage to church to government (including farm policies and foreign policies) can be taken over by evil spiritual powers.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:20

Friday, November 18, 2005

### **Crime in the City**

Yesterday there was another homicide in Springfield. A 19 year old was shot on the street. This is the 13 th of the year and there are the usual cries of outrage and calls for the "City" to do something. (Most of the homicides are drug or gang related) There has been a greater number of deaths in the city, so far this year, caused by drivers of cars who are breaking the law (usually speeding and going through lights or stop signs). No outcry. Yesterday's victim was a 15 year old. No one is calling upon the City to do anything. One teen is as tragically dead as the other and both by reckless, illegal behavior. The difference is only that reckless and illegal driving, like drunk driving, is still socially acceptable or condoned. How come?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:37

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

### **The Pre-eminent Moral Issue of our Time?**

A recent AP article quoting several polls and current research, indicates what seems obvious: the topic of abortion is a very important issue for the majority of Americans. One-third of all American women will have had an abortion by the time they are 45. The number of reported abortions declined in the 90's. There were 1.29 million reported in 2002. 41% of Americans believe abortion is wrong in some circumstances and 29% think it is morally wrong in almost all circumstances. 25 % do not think it is a moral issue. It is not only a literal life and death issue, but a touchstone for several others: gov't intrusion into personal privacy, women's rights, states' rights, judicial restraint- all kinds of "Liberal vs Conservative" issues cluster around this one topic. Certainly more is involved than only the topic of abortion itself. Debate about the latter must take into account the former. Being "pro-choice" means far more than being pro-abortion. Being "pro-life" should mean being far more than being anti-abortion. Those of us who say we are pro-life should be pro-marriage, pro-children and pro-family. Anti-abortion also should mean anti-Euthanasia and anti-Eugenics. Some would argue being pro-life should also include being anti-war and anti-capital punishment. How about anti-poverty and anti-death by preventable disease? It seems to me that many who are against abortion are often not really pro-LIFE. How could that be?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:00

Wednesday, November 9, 2005

### **What Price Peace?**

In the previous post. I wrote of the lack of minority representation and participation in the political process here in Springfield. One often proposed solution is Ward Representation, inasmuch as many minorities here are clustered geographically around the city. Each minority group (Ward) would elect and have its own representative fighting for its own interests. Is this really the answer? It is frequently heard that "ghettos" are unhealthy for the civic body. It is further heard that assimilation is absolutely essential. Thus, it seems that efforts to remove barriers and assimilate people of various languages and sub-cultures and nationalities would be called for. Homogeneity would be the goal: a united city. Many espouse this; but then contradict it in practice. Our languages, sub-cultures and nationalities are the source of our identity, our values: who we are. People naturally do not to give all that up and are very stubborn about it, even when there are dire consequences. So we end up wanting both unity and diversity. But if that continues, so does discrimination, suspicion, even hate, as well as unemployment, poverty and crime. Something, some one has to give. Who? What? How do we decide? These issues are being played out in terrible form today in France and Europe <http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110007491>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:39

Sunday, November 6, 2005

### **Helping the Homeless**

Our Sunday paper featured the story of outreach workers from two agencies here who work with the homeless, seeking to survive on our streets. They do important, good work for some extremely needy people. These people are homeless because they are addicts, alcoholics and mentally ill. Thus, they are also desperately poor. I remember when the local State School and the State Hospitals were closed down, maybe 25 years ago. The argument was freedom and dignity for the residents. They should not be made to live in these institutions. The enlightened among us insisted that their lives would be better on the outside. Minimal funding for agencies offering band aid "outpatient" services was supposed to provide the necessary care for the former residents and for other folks like them, who would come after. And many have come after them, including young adults who were children in foster care and grew to old for that system. The outreach workers and their sponsor agencies, funded with tax-payer money, are to be commended and appreciated. But a band aid won't do, when major surgery is needed. What role should Christians and churches have in providing that surgery (or even more band aids) ?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:07

Tuesday, November 1, 2005

### **Paying the Consequences**

The book I mentioned below about Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh concludes with the recognition that both men are enigmas. They combine their anti-Semitism and support of Hitler and the Third Reich with generous, humanitarian efforts and great contributions to the welfare of America and its economy and progress. No one seems able to explain their attraction to the "Dark Side". Their legions of admirers still defend them and excuse what they did before and during the War as simply bad judgement or ignorance. Mostly, many seem to believe, they were duped and exploited by others. There is truth to all of that. Both men saw themselves as patriots and were convinced they were serving the peace and good of the world. It is also true that they did not act alone. What they said and did found resonance among multitudes of Americans, who knowingly and gladly idolized both men. Hero-worship, even idolatry, having a strong strain in our society. But ideas have consequences. Even if these "heroes" had the best of motives [very debatable], the consequences of their words and acts resulted in horrible evil and suffering in the world. Whatever explanations may be given to explain them, they must still be held accountable for the outcome of what they said and did. That outcome is not disputed; and it is not erased if the men simply were duped or showing poor judgement. The same lesson applies to many other Leaders and the public that supports them, throughout our History and today.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:34

Friday, October 7, 2005

## **Rocking my Boat**

It is still possible to live in certain rural and small town areas of America and think that this is a Country of White people with a Western Heritage. Our local newspaper is running a series about the growing Latino population here and throughout the United States. This movement is primarily Spanish speaking people from Mexico, Cuba, Latin (Central and South) America and Puerto Rico. This, of course, is just the latest in a long history of population\ shifts. I watched a documentary this week about the wave of immigration into the USA from Eastern Europe around the time of WWI. Of course, our Country started with waves of immigration from the British Isles and Western Europe. And early on, in Colonial days, there was the importation (not immigration) of Africans into the Land. There are 9.3 million Hispanic families [40 million people] now living in the USA. There are 80,000 in the Greater Springfield area. One person in 10 in America speaks Spanish, soon it will be 1 in 4. By 2050 or within two generations, Hispanics will be the dominant ethnic [non-White] group in the Country: 1 quarter of the population. Coming behind them, next, are Far East Asians. And there are an ever growing number of people from the Near and Middle Eastern nations. What consequences does all this immigration have for the Church and its missions and ministries? Multitudes do not come here as Christians; but, other multitudes do. They all bring their languages and traditions with them. Remember that the typical evangelical Christian in today's world is an impoverished, urban woman of color living in the Southern Hemisphere. As an older, white, middle class Western (English, no less) conservative male, all of this rocks my boat. It is scary and exciting at the same time. What is my place in this changing world?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:44

Monday, October 3, 2005

### **Is God a Republican?**

Most evangelical Christians I know are, as I am, Republicans. They consider themselves conservatives. In reality, most of the latter are only cultural conservatives, who get very exercised over the so-called "family values" issues; but, care little about economics and are not fiscal conservatives (even though frugality and paying your bills while staying out of debt are very important Biblical, family values). Actually, many culturally conservative Christians are quite happy with big spending big government, even though the latter is contrary to what the Republican Party has traditionally, and now only rhetorically, stood for. Big spending big government is also contrary to what the Bible stands for. Hmmn, maybe conservative evangelical Christians need to rethink their party affiliation or work to change the one they belong to. <http://www.opinionjournal.com/diary/?id=110007351>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:07

Sunday, October 2, 2005

### **The Black Family: 40 years of Lies**

One of the best articles on the subject I have read [http://www.city-journal.org/html/15\\_3\\_black\\_family.html](http://www.city-journal.org/html/15_3_black_family.html)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:10

### **Guilt Trip?**

We hear, from people contributing money for the relief of flood victims, "we must do something." Why? Is it really for the victims or is it for us? I suspect that much of it is to assuage our guilt- I suspect many give to make themselves feel better, more than to help others. More than a million people will attend the New England States Exposition (the Big E) again this year, where they will again spend many millions of dollars on entertainment. Down the road is New England's Six Flags amusement park. The Basketball Hall of Fame is just a few blocks from here. And last night was the gala grand opening of the new Civic Center downtown, which is there to bring millions of dollars into this area- more entertainment money. The Symphony Hall is being refurbished again. Tickets from \$25 to \$55 each will allow you to enjoy more entertainment. And then there are the millions being spent on the major league play-off games this week. The Yankees alone have a \$200,000,000 payroll to recoup. Sure, let's give \$20 to the hurricane survivors (or to end hunger in Africa). But wait a minute- you and I are committed to giving maybe \$200 billion dollars to Gulf Coast relief and reconstruction. No, you say, that is the federal government contribution. Wrong. We are giving that money out of our pockets. That is money taxed out of our pockets (more accurately- the pockets of our children) and doled out by the federal government, on our behalf, for those people. So we are doing our part, as well as enjoying a ball game or a roller coaster. What a country!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:06

Tuesday, September 27. 2005

### **A Major Cause and Solution to Poverty and Problems with Youth**

Again, I will say a major cause for many social problems is fatherless "families". The latest article I have seen is this one [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/opinion/2002522692\\_raspberry27.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/opinion/2002522692_raspberry27.html) recent research on family structure and delinquency, concludes that — after controlling for race, income and education — boys who grow up without fathers are several times more likely to end up in jail. Earlier studies, says Gallagher, who is president of the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, show that children raised outside marriage are more prone to poverty, substance abuse, school failure, delinquency and adult crime."More money is not the answer. A local advocacy group here in Springfield is raising \$150,000 to be used to fund extended hours at area youth centers. Fine, but that is not going to do anything to address the major problem as described in the attached article. The article includes interesting information about the disconnect for many young women between marriage and having children. It also spells out the need for helping both young men and women set good goals for their lives and how to reach them those goals. But, the article concludes with a question: Where can these young people find the the essential mentors needed to help them with these issues, absent good parenting, especially fathers? It proposes school teachers. How about church members and solid Christian families "adopting" children at risk?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:42

Friday, September 23, 2005

### **Neither Left or Right**

I receive columns and articles, from well-meaning friends, on the Left and Right of today's news and issues. I appreciate getting them. I learn from them, but I am also concerned. Almost none of the writers of these columns reveal any interest in God, nor do they base their arguments and suggestions on any Scripture. I guess they all, Left and Right, assume they are advocating a Christian position. Certainly my friends do, Left and Right. That is a bad assumption. It is scary the way some Christians talk as though President Bush and the Administration can do absolutely nothing wrong. While many others damn them as outright evil. Never mind what Rush says, What does the Scripture say? Chapter and verse. I do not want to be a "Conservative", any more than a "Left-winger". I want to be a Biblical Christian. I get the idea that many Christians get their ideas primarily from secular conservative writers and thinkers. I use them as secondary sources only. For what it is worth, Christians on the Left are far more inclined to use Scripture to support their positions than those on the Right. Wonder what explains that?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:06

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

### **The Topic that will not go away**

Magazines covers, feature stories, newspaper columnists- all are preaching about the Problem of Poverty in America. Everywhere you look the topic confronts us. I addressed the problem in a Blog post last week. Let me sharpen the points made-1. Redefine "Poverty". Jettison the common definition as people living below a certain government determined income level. The Biblical definition of poverty is destitution due to no fault of those who are destitute. Adopting this Biblical definition greatly reduces the number of the Poor for whom we must advocate. People who are not destitute are not the "Poor" that society must plan to help. 2. Separate out all the "poverty" caused by personal lifestyle and behavior. Let's bite the bullet here. If the problem is immorality and irresponsibility (including dropping out of school and refusal to get both job training and jobs), we, the public, are not accountable and must not be co-dependents. Society must stop carrying people who purposely refuse to carry themselves, including those who willingly chose to live as single parent families. Having multiple illegitimate babies is wrong. Period. Impregnating women (often young girls) and refusing the responsibility of fatherhood is wrong. Period. This will change only when society finally says, No! Such people will not be on the list of the Poor that society must plan to help.3. Separate out "Poverty" that is caused by genuine mental, emotional and physical illness and disability, including old age. This group of Poor People, society should plan to help: money, agencies, facilities and treatment. Government would be involved. Doing all of this, we have now addressed, and greatly decreased, most of the "Poverty" Problem in America. This still leaves another group of the Poor, ie -

People who are truly destitute due to oppression- the victims of exploitation, greed and theft, fraud, discrimination and violence- people who have been denied their basic, universal human rights. These true victims, common in other parts of the world more than in America, must receive society's help- 1. through legal action and the Courts2. by confrontation of those those companies and agencies, whose policies are oppressive, until the oppression ends3. by exposure of the idolatries of our time for what they are until the idols are abandoned in our society. Granted, all this will take a long time. Meanwhile, on a smaller, local scale1. extended families (including churches) must take responsibility for caring for the truly destitute among them2. the local community, including businesses, must take responsibility for caring for the destitute that families and churches are unable to care for. Poverty must be seen primarily as a local problem, not a federal one. The primary role of the Government is to provide both funding, and oversight of its distribution, and to ensure that justice, the community and the poor are all served well.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:35

Friday, September 16, 2005

## **Poverty: Biblical Causes and Solutions**

In the Bible, poverty is destitution (not simply living below an arbitrary level of income, which often does not take into account welfare benefits) The primary cause of true poverty (destitution), according to a multitude of verses in both the Old and the New Testaments, is oppression- either at the hands of invading enemy armies or at the hands of rich and powerful people. The latter exploit those who can no longer work their land- (widows, fatherless children) and the sick or disabled or farmers who have had bad crops due to disasters of some kind and must borrow to keep going. Loans lead to indentured servanthood and forfeiture of the family farm. In some cases, land is simply stolen by the powerful. All of this is injustice. It violates the law of God and the rights of these poor land owners. This oppression is the cause of most destitution in the Bible. People are also correctly called "poor" if they had property and means, but have lost their livelihood or are no longer able to work and maintain their property- they can't pay their bills, due to no fault of their own- plant closing, fire, accident, death in the family, debilitating illness, enormous medical bills, etc. These people are not victims of oppression, but the results are the same. Hundreds of thousands of people are in this category today because of Katrina, a natural disaster.

Oppression is exploitation, defrauding, cheating, and stealing. It can be by violence or at the hands of "powerful interests" using corrupt courts or bad laws. The victims of such oppression, in Scripture, are the weak and powerless- the very low income poor. Think of the Money Lender abruptly taking the farm from the widow and her children after the husband is killed in an accident. Think of the King taking housing by eminent domain to make room for an addition to his palace. Think of the Wealthy Landowner forcing the peasant off neighboring land to improve his view of the ocean.

Many texts tell us that God is very concerned for these victims of oppression. He wants them to have justice. God is not on the side of the poor as such. God is on the side of Justice. All people have a right to work, to engage in the economic processes. They have the right to enjoy the fruit from their labor, to make a profit, to have private property, to own land. God is for all of these things. To deny any of these rights to anyone is injustice and God is against that. God is against anyone being denied the right to work, to make a profit, to have property. The primary cause of oppression (and therefore a cause of poverty) is idolatry. As rich and powerful people reject God & His Law to follow idols, they substitute the ungodly values and behavior dictated by those idols. This leads them to oppress the weak into grinding poverty. (This is not to say that all people who are rich and powerful do this!) The Bible, primarily in the Book of Proverbs, also says that personal, irresponsible behavior (mostly laziness) is a cause of poverty. There are more than 20 causes mentioned altogether. This is the cause that conservative Evangelical Christians emphasize, almost exclusively. They overlook what the Bible teaches as the far more basic reason: oppression, rooted in idolatry. This is a serious misreading of Scripture. (It would be a much better world if conservatives showed as much concern about oppression as they show about abortion) Our local approach to the problem of poverty must begin with a Biblical definition of true poverty as destitution. Most of what is called poverty in America is not true poverty by the Biblical definition. Furthermore, perhaps most of what is called poverty in our local area may very well be caused by personal lifestyle and behavior, eg- multiply illegitimate pregnancies and fatherless "families" or dropping out of school and choosing not to acquire skills needed for employment. None of these personal choices are necessarily, or even probably, connected with oppression. "Poverty"

involving such causes must be addressed for what it is: personal lifestyle and behavior which must be confronted and changed. Destitution caused by mental, emotional or physical "disease" will require even additional solutions. This, too, is not a matter of oppression unless treatment and support of people who are destitute for these reasons is denied to them. Poverty which is caused by oppression will not be solved by anything less than removal of that oppression. All the oppressive behavior mentioned in Scripture is illegal in America. Justice [an end to oppression] must be found through the Courts. Such action goes to the root of the problem. If the oppression is systemic and institutionalized, those systems and institutions must be confronted. This is particularly true if the oppression is some form of discrimination or racism. This calls for brave action from individuals, churches and the community at large. If oppression is a result of idolatry, that idolatry must be confronted. Candidates for contemporary Idols in America are Etatism (a'-taht-ism, worship of the state), Scientism (worship of Science, the scientific method, the Philosophy of Naturalism), Technism (worship of Technology), and Economism (worship of The Market, making money). There are many lesser, but related, idols in popular culture, eg- Celebrity, Consumerism, Status, Sports or Competition, Success and Power According to the Bible, truly destitute and very poor people have the right to be taken in and supported by their kin, their extended family [the family's God-given responsibility] The truly poor have a right to share in the tithes [taxes] collected from the entire local community. [the community's God-given responsibility] They have a right to glean in the fields of others. [the God-given responsibility of businesses] To deny the truly poor these rights is injustice and God is against that. Bible-believing Christians should be in the forefront in the advocacy of Justice and in battle against Poverty as outlined above. The Biblical principles here are most workable in the care of destitute and innocent poor people, on a small scale, over time, in fairly small towns and cities. How to implement them in mega-cities and in huge national disasters, as we now have on the Gulf Coast, is another matter. Families and churches and private relief agencies through out the country are helping people with direct care. Charitable giving, in the amounts of millions of dollars, is being given for aid. Businesses are also being very generous and charitable. These are Biblical principles at work. The question always is the size and type of aid necessary from the Federal Government; but even here, the Biblical principles should be followed. Reconstruction should be as local and as grass roots as possible, working with resident families and local businesses, enabling them to chart the course and be responsible for their own future. Indisputably, the Biblical role of government, whatever else it may do, is to maintain law and order and, particularly, prevent waste and corruption in the rebuilding effort. There must be no victimization, no oppression, of the Displaced. That is a tall order if the Federal government is going to pour billions of dollars into the recovery. Note to reader: I apologize for the poor formatting above. I can not figure out how to improve it.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:09

Thursday, September 15, 2005

### **Before the Flood of 2005 was the Flood of 1927**

I am always surprised by how much United States history (among many other things) I do not know- never even heard of. One such topic is the Great Flood of 1927, centered around Greenville, Mississippi. Much film footage was taken and a fascinating documentary was shown here last night on

CPTV.<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/flood/timeline/index.html> This story is astounding similar to what has been happening in New Orleans, except the flood waters originated in the far northern tributaries of the Mississippi River rather than coming in from the South. It is about the ages long battle to control the Mighty River and trying to protect land and cities by a levee system that continually failed, although the experts kept saying it would not. Everything in today's story in is the 1927 story- everything. And in many ways worse. Check out the above link. One controversial aspect of what happened in New Orleans, is the charge of Racism. Well, take a look at what happened in Greenville. Whatever we Whites feel about Blacks in our time, here is more incontrovertible evidence that Black Americans were more than greatly abused by White Americans in our history.

The abuse was caused by economics. The major landowners depended on Black people for labor on their cotton plantations. Technically, these laborers were free, not slaves; they were sharecroppers, which made them indentured servants. They "owed their souls to the company store" The largest land owner treated his workers very well and was not a racist per se. On one occasion, he stared down a mob of KKK members who came to Greenville intent on running down Blacks (Catholic and Jews, also) The town ousted the Klan after listening to Mr Percy's own fiery speech against the Klan and for the Blacks. But Mr Percy's motive was economic- he needed the labor. Later, he refused to rescue thousands of Blacks from the rising flood for fear that they would leave the area. After the waters receded, the angry and bitter Black laborers did just that. They migrated en masse to Chicago, changing that city and the history of the North. Herbert Hoover, running for President, was in charge of Flood Relief. He ignored the documented abuse of the stranded Blacks. Actually, he suppressed it for fear of alienating his white supporters. He did this with the promise to Black community Leaders of much aide to them once he became President. He did not keep his promises. Thus, Blacks, who had been Republicans, threw their support to F.D. Roosevelt and the Democratic Party.

Everything has consequences. We have "inherited the whirlwind". We White Americans insist on comparing African Americans negatively with other minority groups "of color" who have immigrated to America and with many of our own ancestors like the Irish or Polish, We say, "See, these people were discriminated against, but they have done well." Meaning that African Americans should likewise overcome the odds and do well. Actually, many have. They have done very well. Many more will. That said, African Americans, historically, as a people, have had a very different experience than all the rest of us. That must be acknowledged and worked with in our efforts toward racial reconciliation today.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:01

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

## **Driving**

I have said I like living here in Springfield and Western Massachusetts. The one thing I absolutely do not like is driving the car here. You take your life in your hands just going out of the driveway. Most people seem so used to it that it does not bother them. They live with it. I hope we can live with it, literally. It is a sign of our times: people living too fast, being too busy, not planning ahead, disregarding the safety of others (and their own as well), losing tempers, being selfish and downright stupid. Every day, every where. Ughh

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:23

Friday, September 9, 2005

### **Who is to decide?**

The local paper is at it again with today's editorial denouncing those who want a referendum about gay "marriage" on the ballot in the state elections . This move would give the people a choice, inasmuch as they never had one on the subject. Gay "marriage" was made legal here by the vote of one State Supreme Court Justice. Polls indicate that the majority of the people would vote against such "Marriage". The legislature does not have the votes to change the law on this. But should moral issues be decided by referendum or popular vote, rather than by their elected representatives? What if what the people want is wrong Biblically? No, I think they would be right on this subject of gay "marriage"; but this would be a precedent. There is a principle here. If the people are wrong, does the fact that they get their way by referendum make their decision right? Politically, I believe that policy decisions should be made by elected officials or those appointed by them. If everything is subject to referendum, we'd end up with chaos and mob rule. If the people do not like those decisions, they replace their representatives with new ones. In spite of the current trend, The function of the Court is not to make policy, but only to ensure that the policy made is legal, ie-constitutional. None of this is should be sufficient for Christians. Biblically, the government is meant to rest on the shoulders of Christ our King. The people, their elected officials and the courts are all subject to His Law. Scripturally, government is of the Lord, by the Law of the Lord and for the glory of the Lord. [the challenge here is how to have a Theonomy when a Theocracy is out of the question]

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:09

### **Planning ahead**

Much is being made of the plight of thousands in New Orleans who were unable to leave the city because they did not have cars [actually, many people in cities everywhere, including the affluent, do not have cars. Besides being expensive to drive and house, they are usually not needed with mass transit available and easier] The federal government is being held to blame for their plight. Did the local officials of New Orleans have any plans in advance to evacuate these people, say, with local school buses? Did the citizens themselves, knowing that they were living in a flood zone, make any plans for themselves, like arranging for those same school buses. When we get on a plane, we are instructed how to exit in an emergency. We look around to see where the doors are. It is reasonable and routine to do this. We plan ahead. We think more than twice about going [let alone living] anywhere where our lives might be endangered. We take precautions, especially if we have family to provide for. We plan ahead. One of the most basic principles, ingrained in many of us, is the importance of self-reliance- being responsible for your self: your safety and health, your employment, housing and, yes, transportation. We are taught from childhood, to plan and prepare ahead for all the necessities (at least) of life. We have a difficult time being sympathetic for those who do not. This includes those affluent people who insist on building million dollar houses on steep hillsides that are prone to mud slides. We were never taught that it was the responsibility of the government to provide for all our needs, certainly not to literally bail us out of the deep waters we put ourselves in. Quite the contrary. If we couldn't afford to live in a particular town, it was not the responsibility of the government to provide "affordable housing" for us in that town. We lived elsewhere. We planned ahead for ourselves. We leave the house every day believing that God does the same: He looks ahead and takes care of what He sees will be needed. That is called Providence [pro-video]

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:35

Thursday, September 8, 2005

### **Curse the Dark or Light a Candle?**

In the news this morning was the report by a Commission investigating the Food for Oil program administered by the United Nations to help poverty stricken (hungry) people in pre-war Iraq. It conclusively revealed evidence of waste, mis-management and corruption up to the highest levels of the UN. These are evils. The same evil has been found with the (mis) management of relief efforts to the Tzunami victims. Closer to home, the State appointed Control Board, overseeing the fiscal affairs of Springfield, continues to reveal evidence of gross mismanagement and corruption by top officials as the major cause of the problems here. This, too, is evil. What also is evil is the attitude of acceptance or apathy toward all of this by citizens. So what there was political and corporate greed and dishonesty and abuse, millions of people did receive aide in Iraq and Malaysia; these "evils" are the price to pay- it is the way things get done. Here in Springfield, heads in sand, many people hate the Control Board. They just want it to go away and let things be the way they are- business as usual. Many Christians (including Pastors) do not see any of this evil as their business. It's the way the world is. They worry, instead, about private or personal sins or the need to build up their personal spiritual lives or self-esteem or maybe work on their marriages. Such Christians do not read their Bibles very much- at least not the Law and the Prophets. Or, if they are employed by corporations that engage in these evils, they compartmentalize their lives and say it is not their personal responsibility to do anything- "Nothing I can do about it. I just work here and I want to keep my job." Christians often say they are not responsible for systemic, structural evil- only personal sin. OK- let's start there, with our personal responsibility as citizens and where we are employed.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:53

Wednesday, September 7, 2005

## **Backpacks, Welfare and Subsidies**

My point in an earlier post was that by making hand-outs routine, people can become dependent on them. I was using the annual distribution of back-packs as a metaphor for all kinds of other "hand-outs" which create and perpetuate a dependent class or group. This could apply to the status of Native Americans. Many of them live in abject poverty. Their condition of almost total dependency upon government welfare, therefore their poverty, is a direct result of government policies governing Indian Affairs. Many other groups, who do not see themselves in the same dependent category as native Americans, are also almost totally dependent on government welfare programs. This would include all those corporations that receive government subsidies (welfare) in order to exist, eg- airlines, railroads, certain groups of farmers and the oil, gas and fishing industries. Even the owners of sports stadiums and teams receive subsidies. Google the topic and see for yourself. Innumerable corporations and businesses, as well as Native American Indians and so-called "welfare moms" receive and depend on back-pack handouts. A major hand-out is government flood insurance. Many would not be building on flood plains or next to rivers that overflow every year, if they had not become dependent on federal flood insurance. They can make irresponsible decisions (to build or rebuild) because they know the government will bail them out. Sounds like welfare to me. (The solution would be to make people responsible for the reclamation of their own property by buying private flood insurance, same as they do with fire insurance) Charity is Biblical. Christians are responsible for the care of the legitimately poor. Not the government- for individuals or corporations. A footnote to this is the generous outpouring of millions of dollars in aide (charity) from individuals and the private sector for disaster victims, again and again. We see evidence of human sinfulness; but, this is evidence of human goodness and "common grace". Very impressive.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:11

## **Parental Responsibility**

Yesterday, I wrote in support of public schools on the condition that parents be very involved and exercise oversight of all that goes on in those schools. Most of the 28000 children that are in public (state) schools today here in Springfield will not graduate. They will drop out and I believe most of the responsibility for that is on the parents. I actually agree with our local paper's editorial today: a major factor in all this violence among the youth of the city is the absence of involved parents. Where are the parents? More accurately- where are the fathers? Over and over again, most of the social problems we have, including poverty, are attributable to single parent families, ie- the absence of fathers. We can not continue to ignore this issue. One reason it is side-stepped is because many of the people involved are Black and criticism leads to accusations of Racism. People also ignored the predictions of New Orleans being flooded.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:42

## **Just wondering**

Just wondering if my pacifist friends learned the value and necessity of military and police force to save lives and maintain law and order demonstrated in New Orleans last week? If so, just wondering if they can, therefore, also grant the same value and necessity on an international scale? I find that one of the greatest weaknesses of anti-war pacificism is the absence of a doctrine of human depravity (and how to restrain it). Dismissing the use of all military and police force as only occasions for the oppression of one group by another (which sometimes it might very well be) is both foolish and untrue. When troops use force to stop shootings, raping, pillaging and the wanton destruction of private property- on a local scale or internationally- that is not oppression, that is justice.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:29

## **Should we blame the devastation in New Orleans on Racism?**

I watched a documentary last night about Haiti. Terrible poverty, including annual floods in which hundreds drown. All

Black people. Much violence- many Black people killing Black people. Is this Racism? Gang related shootings escalated here over the weekend. Young Black men killing other young Black men. Is this Racism? I watched another documentary recently about the down and dirty politics in Newark, New Jersey- Blacks against Blacks. Is this Racism? No. These are not examples of Racism. Neither is New Orleans. They are examples of the Haves against the Have-nots. Violence and strife, more often than not, is about economics, money, poverty and all that always is about power, its use and abuse. This is what the Civil Wars in Africa are about- and just about everywhere else, too. Even when people of different skin colors are involved. Why some people have transportation and resources to flee a flood and others do not is a different matter. Why some people live in ghettos and slums and others do not is another matter. Why some people Have and others Have-not is a different matter. And the answer in these matters is also not Racism

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:13

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

## **Backpacks and Welfare**

Many churches and organizations made a major effort again this year to collect and give backpacks to children for school. Ostensibly, the reason for doing this every year is poverty. Supposedly, families can not afford to buy backpacks (and often notebooks and pencils that go with them). If parents know that well-meaning people are going to provide these supplies free every year, won't they come to expect this every year- depend on it, take it for granted and therefore, never be able to "afford" it? Why should they? The money the parents do have will go to other things, because they know the backpacks will be provided free. The well-meaning people feel good because they are helping "poor" children. Is it possible that they are actually helping to keep them poor and dependent?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 06:06

## **Back to School**

This morning, public school begins here in Springfield. There is one private Protestant school (there are several RC parochial schools); but most of the city's children are in public schools - 28,000 of them. I favor public schools, but with a very important proviso: parental involvement. This is essential! As long as Christian parents are on top of everything going on in their children's education and school experience, public school is good. The correct name for public school is state school- it exists to educate children to become productive and responsible citizens of America (the State). Period. In every class, values deemed correct by the State are taught- mostly in the Humanities (English, Social Studies, History) but also in the Arts and in the Sciences as well. Some of these values will be good; many will not be. That is where parental involvement comes in. What values are being taught in each class. What values are the children learning? Are they Christian? Biblical? If not, corrections must be made- in every subject. What about course content itself. In many classes, there may be non-Christian or unscriptural material taught or Christian and Scriptural perspectives not taught. Again, the Christian parent must be on top of the curriculum and make the adjustments as needed. All of this means that parents of public school children must devote a lot of time to their children's education. That may well mean major changes in the parent's daily schedule and commitments. It also means that a parent must be well educated in the Bible and Christian perspectives on all subjects. Hmmn- how's that going to happen? Will churches provide that education for their members? Will members take the time to learn? Then there is the matter of all the other things that children experience in school- the social interaction before, during and after classes- in class rooms, the hallways and locker rooms and on the playgrounds. Parents must be on top of that, too. I know this all sounds overwhelming, but it must be done. Abdicating parental responsibility is inexcusable. In education or anything else. It is one of the great evils of our time.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 05:55

Friday, September 2, 2005

### **What Gospel? What Compassion?**

The Summer issue of Gordon-Conwell's magazine, CONTACT, arrived this week. It is dedicated to Urban Ministry- the Church in the City. Featured are the stories of ministries in the metro Boston area. They are growing and doing vital, wonderful things in the city, especially cross-cultural, multi-ethnic ministries to youth and marginalized peoples in the inner city. All kinds of practical, service-oriented ministries: tutoring classes, medical clinics, feeding the homeless, recreation, job training and placement, et al. Young Christian adults are especially interested and excited about this kind of living out the Gospel. This is a growing movement everywhere. How does it differ from similar, secular social services? These churches see what they are doing as an extension of the Gospel. The Gospel both commands this kind of incarnational, agape love and fuels it. What they do comes from who they are as Christians and they are very clear about that to those with whom they work. They share the Bread of Life as well as bread. This, they say, is their major criticism of the typical evangelical churches from which these activists come: Talk, but no walk. Creed, but no compassion. All of this sounds great. Is it?

I am thankful for these churches and what they are doing. There are two major concerns I have- What Creed? What Compassion? What Creed? The congregations in CONTACT are regular, organized churches. There are also, springing up in the inner cities around the country, small intentional communities of young people doing similar incarnational ministry. They are featured in the latest issue of Christianity Today. To them, the "Creed" is, typically, anabaptist and pacifist. The Gospel is nothing less than a call to Discipleship, to obedience to the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. The Gospel is about Reconciliation and Peace. If I read the stories in CONTACT correctly, the "Creed" of these activist churches is a Gospel shaped by Post Modern values. (If you do not know what that means, check out my website in the weeks ahead- major subject! ) To me the "Creed" should be the Gospel as outlined by the 16th C. Reformers: [note: the Anabaptists also are 16th Century. They are called the "Radical Reformers" in contrast to Luther & Calvin and their followers. Both groups insist they are Biblical] 1. Scripture [interpreted using the grammatical-historical method] Only 2. [Atonement by] Christ Only 3. [Justification by] Faith Only 4. Salvation [election, calling, regeneration, faith, repentance, justification, sanctification, perseverance and glorification by] Grace Only 5. [all for the] Glory of God Only The corollary of this Reformed Gospel are the 5 points of Calvinism What Compassion? This Gospel does call for activism: the pursuit of the Sovereignty of Christ in all areas of personal and social life for the Glory of God. This includes the pursuit of social, political and economic justice; but "justice" according to the Law of God and not the current, politically correct, values of American society. It is tragic that many of today's Christian activists do not seem to know this Gospel or its call to Kingdom living. People in the inner cities would be much better served if they did. I am convinced that this should be the "Creed" and the "Compassion"

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:49

Thursday, September 1, 2005

### **Just wondering**

Why do some people damn the Rich and feel terrible for the Poor-- because they are not rich? If the Rich became poor would we then feel badly for them? If the Poor became rich would we then damn them? If there were no Poor, many people (agencies and programs) who serve them would be out of work. What would happen to them? Do they have a vested interest in keeping the Poor poor? While many people are horrified at the devastation along the Gulf Coast, how is it that many people are elated? There are going to be lots of jobs, and money for rebuilding, coming their way. Great loss for some will turn into great gain for others (hopefully, those not losing will also be among those who will gain in the long run)

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:44

### **Helping the poorest victims of New Orleans and beyond**

What is happening in New Orleans stirs renewed concern about poverty in our cities [and world] and what to do about it. Jim Wallis (Sojourners) expresses his views at <http://www.soho.net/index.cfm?action=sojomail.display&issue=050831#3BUT>, there is more to be considered. These articles and issues should also be studied-<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/009/8.36.html>  
<http://www.worldmag.com/subscriber/displayarticle.cfm?id=10764>

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:27

Tuesday, August 30, 2005

### **Children being left behind**

Some children in your Sunday School class "accept Jesus". You are thrilled. They have salvation. If you care about them, you are not satisfied. You want to see them grow in the knowledge and nurture of the Lord. That will involve reading their Bibles and learning lessons from their SS workbooks about Christian values. But what if they can not read? They will be left behind. If they are from a poor rural or inner city family, chances are, statistically, they can not read well and will be dropping out of school. One-third of all American teens do not graduate from high school. Fifty % of minority children do not. Of all teens who do graduate, only half read well enough to do any college level work. The stats are in a shocking report <http://www.ourfuture.org/docUploads/gsbfpopup.html>. The people who put the report together are concerned with the economic future of the children and of America. I'm talking about something far more important. If you love that child in your SS class and want to see him or her grow as a Christian and develop and use their gifts and talents for Christ in a fulfilling life as an adult- that is what you want, correct?- then having them accept Jesus is not enough. You must be involved in helping them learn to read and to do well in school.

The report offers strong recommendations: longer school days, tougher academic standards, more and better qualified teachers and more local (ie- parental) involvement. Ah, there is the rub. The families of many under-achievers or drop outs are very often dysfunctional and/or one-parent "families", which makes it difficult for family involvement or support of young students in their school work (more so when there are several children in the family). Furthermore, many of the parents are themselves school drop outs and formal education (especially college) is not a major concern or a personal value with high priority. Then there are the schools- many of those which are attended by poor students are themselves poor and inadequate. OK Now what is your responsibility as SS teacher or youth leader if you care about the child in your class in these situations? Leading them to "accept Jesus" is not enough by a long shot. If the object is maturity in Christ, all of these issues must be addressed- to that end. Of course, these are not common concerns for many students who attend Sunday Schools in affluent, suburban churches and that is where you teach. Or is it?

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:12

Friday, August 26, 2005

### **Rick Warren in Rwanda**

Here is a very interesting article

<http://www.opinionjournal.com/taste/?id=110007165>It is Alan Wolfe's take on Rick Warren's mission to a war-torn, poverty stricken nation. He commends Warren's motive and effort (the President of the country invited him).The second half of the column hits on a very important topic: systemic evil. This Mr Fox completely agrees with Mr Wolfe. Sin is not only personal: it is also corporate. Evil is in the human heart and it is also buried deep within human institutions and structures. They are inseparable. Salvation must include both. Most Rwandans profess to be Christians and yet they have been participating in a society rife with greed, hate, corruption, oppression and violence. Deliverance from all of this will involve far more than personal piety. Christians in Rwanda, as well as in America, must discover a life driven by the purpose of redeeming the social, economic and political systems in which they live every day.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 11:33

Wednesday, August 10, 2005

## **There are no Races**

A prominent citizen is quoted in our local newspaper insisting that the Black Race is not being well represented on our City Council. There is no such thing as the "Black race"- or the "White Race", either. If "Racism" is defined as "Any action, practice or belief that reflects the racial worldview- the ideology that humans are divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called 'races', that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality and other cultural behavioral features and that some "races" are innately superior to others", there is no Biblical basis for Racism or the concept of "Races" [quote is from the Britannica Concise Encyclopedia Online] Actually, as defined here, I do not believe there is much Racism in America. This is not to say there is no Discrimination. Actually, I believe there is much of that, but that is not Racism as defined in the quote. And that is a different subject.

Scripturally, we can talk only of one Human Race, based on the creation of Adam as the single common ancestor of all human beings. "[God] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth" - Acts 17:26 All human beings are human beings. Our identity begins here and we must insist on it. We are one in Adam. All human beings who are Christian are one in Christ. This is bedrock doctrine! We share one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism and one Spirit. We are all one Body and in that Body there are to be no racial or ethnic divisions. "In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you all are equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ" Gal 3:28 (The Message) We are not to define ourselves as primarily African American or White or Latino or Asian. We are Christians. This is our prime identity. This is the Truth we build community upon. We must insist upon this. Here is the beginning of reconciliation where there is division anywhere: We all are human beings and must respect that fact above all and act accordingly. Who are you? I am a human being. That is radical. Next, we humans who are Christians must consider all other humans who are Christians as brothers and sisters, equals, in the Lord. This, too, is radical. What a difference just insisting on these two truths would make in our divided society.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 14:20

## **Who are we?**

At the most recent Puerto Rican Festival here, last weekend, repeatedly people interviewed said proudly, "I am Puerto Rican", "We are Puerto Ricans." There is a major effort being made to change Springfield's form of government. We now have a City Council composed of councilors elected at large. Some folks are insisting that we go to Ward (District) representation to better serve neighborhood interests and have petitioned for a special vote on this. A few Hispanic and Black activists are in favor of the proposed change, but are opposed to the proposed districts because they say they do not accurately reflect the Hispanic and Black population. The rhetoric is all racist. We are ... and we need people on the Council who will represent our interests. The city still faces bankruptcy due to wide spread corruption and mismanagement by the last Administration. Federal prosecution is ongoing and the City is now managed by a Control Board, set up by the State in Boston. Special Interest groups are making lots of noise, especially by unions, about city employment contracts. Tribalism reigns. Everyone seems to have a "the city be damned" attitude- insisting on getting what they see is their due, no matter what. Very few seem to be concerned about what is good for the City as a whole. Folks are not thinking as citizens of Springfield- they are thinking only of themselves- their tribe. That is who they are- Whites or Blacks, Firefighters or School Teachers, people who live in this neighborhood, but not in any other. Where are the Christians? How do they fit in? I do not hear anyone identifying themselves as Christians in any of these disputes. If Christ is my Lord, He comes before my tribe. If He is the Lord, He must have a purpose for this entire City and a will for how it is to be run.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:45

Tuesday, August 9, 2005

### **Setting the Agenda**

Over and over again, on every subject I find myself getting sucked in to secular arguments. From Shaivo to Stem cells, from Darfur to Iraq, from Energy Bill to Artic Oil Fields, from Gay Marriage to Affirmative Action, from Supreme Court decisions to local School Board policies. There are no end of topics being discussed in the public square, no end to the opinions of columnists and magazine articles from the Left to the Right. I'll have discussions with Christians and we debate diverse positions, quoting the above columnists and magazines, but they all have one thing in common- all of them are secular. Almost never do I hear anyone use Scripture on any of these matters. Most will baptize their secular arguments and dogmatically insist that they are "Christian". Of course, they are. Or are they? We Christians, including myself, are in the habit of letting secularists set the agenda of every debate and arguing on their terms. That is a great mistake. Never let your opponent set the agenda or terms of the debate. We must forcibly tear ourselves away from this bad habit and learn to approach subjects from Scripture. Everyone debates from assumptions or presuppositions. We must go into every frey with a Biblically saturated mind set. Do not start with what Rush says or go by what you hear from Bill Reilly. We do not want to "ditto" anyone. What does the Bible say? Start there.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:41

Friday, August 5, 2005

## **Our Heritage**

Those of you who enjoy "Lord of the Rings" type stories and action, will find today's history lesson from the Calendar in Oremus interesting. <http://www.oremus.org/oremus.cgi?f>On my mother's side, I have Italian blood. Sometimes, I enjoy that heritage; but temperamentally, I am English, from my father's side. Intellectually, culturally, linguistically and as a Christian, my roots are in England- in the people and the Church. All Americans who appreciate and enjoy the Colonial beginnings of this Country, including its Puritan Faith, are tied to England. That is our Heritage and it used to provide our Center as a Country. Today's History retells a bloody part of that Heritage. Like it or not, it also illustrates that our Faith has sometimes spread through violence and force. And it illustrates how that Faith served to unite a very divided Land of competing "Tribes". We would not be here today, as Americans or as Christians, if it were not for men like Oswald, King of Northumbria, Martyr, 642

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 10:17

## **Catching up**

We have been out of town this week- looking for air conditioned stores like Barnes & Noble and Borders in which to stay cool with a good book and iced coffee. Also visited old friends. A recent cartoon had a woman saying to the man sitting next to her, "I have such a conflict- whether to seek peace of mind or to read about current events." Me, too. My current reading about multiculturalism has led me to a new appreciation for our motto: "E Pluribus Unum". We need far less "pluribus" and far more "unum". The writing of the new constitution in Iraq is bogged down because of "Tribalism"- the Kurds, Shiites and the Sunni each want what is best for their "tribe". Iraq will only progress when its factions set aside their differences for the common good. Same here in America. With everyone pushing their private ethnic or group identity, needs and agenda, the public or civic good suffers. We are, after all, supposed to be the States of America United. What desperately needs to be reaffirmed is a Center. This Country had one until, arguably, the 1960's. Now what could that possibly be? more later-

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:38

Saturday, July 30, 2005

### **The Christian whose work led to the abolition of slavery**

Today the Church Calendar commemorates William Wilberforce who served God in the British Parliament. "He was a major supporter of programs for popular education, overseas missions, parliamentary reform, and religious liberty. He is best known, however, for his untiring commitment to the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. He introduced his first anti-slavery motion in the House of Commons in 1788, in a three-and-a-half hour oration that concluded: "Sir, when we think of eternity and the future consequence of all human conduct, what is there in this life that shall make any man contradict the dictates of his conscience, the principles of justice and the law of God!"

The motion was defeated. Wilberforce brought it up again every year for eighteen years, until the slave trade was finally abolished on 25 March 1806. He continued the campaign against slavery itself, and the bill for the abolition of all slavery in British territories passed its crucial vote just four days before his death on 29 July 1833. A year later, on 31 July 1834, 800,000 slaves, chiefly in the British West Indies, were set free." [written by James Kiefer, found on Oremus]

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 07:34

Thursday, July 21, 2005

### **Terrorists, Freedom Fighters or Human Beings?**

Last night we saw a POV documentary on our local Public TV channel. It was the alarming, disturbing story of the current effort of Albanians living in this country to finance and supply a guerilla army, "freedom fighters", fighting in Kosovo [they pronounced it Kuh SOV ah] against the dominant Serbians. It is an area now under NATO control. Many American troops once fought there [Bosnia- all parts of the old Yugoslavia]. The film showed these Albanians, here in America, openly going about buying and shipping arms of all kinds to Kosovo. Supporters of the IRA in Ireland have been doing the same thing. It's all legal, but is this right? Aren't these people terrorists?

These Albanians insist they are not terrorists because they do not purposely target civilians, only enemy military troops. The film showed them enjoying life here in the USA where they are employed, living normal-looking lives among us. The Leader is even a citizen of the US. But he made no bones about it- he and his cohorts are Albanians who love their country, are fighting for it and will die to secure its freedom from the Serbs. That is their entire focus- what they live to do. One has to admire their commitment, but is it right? One of the ironies is that these Albanians are Moslems while the Serbs, who are indeed guilty of atrocities against the Albanians, are Orthodox Christians. But this is not about religion. It is about politics. It is, most of all, about ethnicity and culture. There was media coverage yesterday about the large Latino Convention at which the Chairman of each of the National (Political) Parties spoke and about the effort of both Parties to attract the Latino vote. Note: The media used "Latino" and "Hispanic" interchangeably, but the emphasis seemed to be on appealing to Mexican-Americans and people from Latin America who are coming to this country in record numbers. The conferees wanted to be told what each Party would do for them- again, it was a group of people who are motivated most by ethnicity and culture. Reaction to the nomination of Judge Roberts to be a Justice on the Supreme Court was negative to many simply on the basis that he is not a she. Add gender concerns to ethnicity and culture. Personally, I would do away with all hyphenated names and labels. There will never be peace in Iraq between the Shiites and Sunni or between Palestinians and Israelis or between "Blacks" and "Whites" or between ethnic Albanians and non-ethnic Albanians until we all first and foremost see ourselves as HUMAN BEINGS. There are no such things as "Races". There is only the Human Race- all are the children of Adam. This is not unrealistic idealism on my part. It is fact. It is Biblical and insisting on it as the starting point for all our relationships is absolutely necessary. Even Christians would do well to realize and recognize that we, too, are Human. We would be better Christians, if we were better at being Human. more later-

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:16

Friday, July 15, 2005

## **Definitions of Hispanic and Latino**

In an earlier post I mentioned Hispanics. My main topic was cultural diversity and the challenge and opportunity it is to the local church to have people of several ethnic or cultural groups in the area. My concern was to appreciate cultural differences and the necessity to communicate the Gospel accordingly. Please check out the comments to that post below. I am referring to common, popular usage in this area. Here is how one dictionary defines "Hispanic" and "Latino". It illustrates some of the issues.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition. 2000. Hispanic ADJECTIVE:1. Of or relating to Spain or Spanish-speaking Latin America. 2. Of or relating to a Spanish-speaking people or culture. NOUN:1. A Spanish-speaking person. 2. A U.S. citizen or resident of Latin-American or Spanish descent. ETYMOLOGY: Latin *Hispanicus*, from *Hispania*, Spain. USAGE NOTE: Though often used interchangeably in American English, Hispanic and Latino are not identical terms, and in certain contexts the choice between them can be significant. Hispanic, from the Latin word for "Spain," has the broader reference, potentially encompassing all Spanish-speaking peoples in both hemispheres and emphasizing the common denominator of language among communities that sometimes have little else in common. Latino—which in Spanish means "Latin" but which as an English word is probably a shortening of the Spanish word *latinoamericano*—refers more exclusively to persons or communities of Latin American origin. Of the two, only Hispanic can be used in referring to Spain and its history and culture; a native of Spain residing in the United States is a Hispanic, not a Latino... In practice, however, this distinction is of little significance when referring to residents of the United States, most of whom are of Latin American origin and can theoretically be called by either word. A more important distinction concerns the sociopolitical rift that has opened between Latino and Hispanic in American usage. For a certain segment of the Spanish-speaking population, Latino is a term of ethnic pride and Hispanic a label that borders on the offensive. According to this view, Hispanic lacks the authenticity and cultural resonance of Latino, with its Spanish sound and its ability to show the feminine form *Latina* when used of women. Furthermore, Hispanic—the term used by the U.S. Census Bureau and other government agencies—is said to bear the stamp of an Anglo establishment far removed from the concerns of the Spanish-speaking community. While these views are strongly held by some, they are by no means universal, and the division in usage seems as related to geography as it is to politics, with Latino widely preferred in California and Hispanic the more usual term in Florida and Texas. Even in these regions, however, usage is often mixed, and it is not uncommon to find both terms used by the same writer or speaker. Chicano is used only of Mexican Americans, not of Mexicans living in Mexico. It was originally an informal term in English (as in Spanish), and the spelling of the first recorded instance in an American publication followed the Spanish custom of lowercasing nouns of national or ethnic origin. However, the literary and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s among Mexican Americans established Chicano as a term of ethnic pride, and it is properly written today with a capital. While Chicano is a term of pride for many Mexican Americans, it remains a word with strong political associations. Since these politics are not necessarily espoused by all Mexican Americans, and since usage and acceptance of this word can vary from one region to another, an outsider who is unfamiliar with his or her audience may do well to use Mexican American instead.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:07

Wednesday, July 13, 2005

## **Hispanics**

Trying to get a handle on this topic of multiculturalism is daunting. I write often about cultural diversity and that may seem a remote, even irrelevant, topic to some of you. The reality is that the urban world is a multi-ethnic world. While there are only 6000 Hispanics in the entire State of Vermont, there are 10 times that many in the Springfield area where we live and a total of 1.2 million in New England.

Definition is a problem (as always). People from Spain, although speaking Spanish, are not Hispanic or Puerto Rican. They are Spanish and Puerto Ricans are not, although that is what the latter are often called here. We know folks from Mexico who do not like to be called Hispanic and do not want to be confused with Puerto Ricans. They are Mexican. The same is true of people from Cuba.

Puerto Rican people can have very dark skin color and can be confused with African Americans. Some Puerto Ricans are very light skinned and seem to be White. Meanwhile, people who come here from Africa do not want to identify with African Americans, nor do people from the Caribbean, even though many of them may have very dark skin color. ("Africans" are actually from nations in central Africa and not from North or South Africa)

The writer of our daily paper's column, La Vida Latina, says in today's article, that the way to relate to Latinos is by the heart. She encourages businesses who want to reach the Latin market to show emotion (nationally, half all new consumers are Hispanic. The Latino TV viewership is a \$700 billion market) "We are emotional. Move a Latino by showing respect for the language, family, heritage and the community."

All of this kind of information is important for Christians and churches seeking to effectively communicate Christ cross-culturally.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 16:54

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

### **Immigration is Booming**

The world around us continues to change. Levels of immigration in Massachusetts are headed toward levels seen at the beginning of the 20th century. Legal immigrants here now are 14 % of the 6 million residents and 19% of them are from Brazil. Large numbers are also coming from other Central and South American countries, as well as the Far East. Significantly, many of these immigrants are strong Christians in the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal Traditions. One of the main reasons we choose to live here is to be close to, and involved with, this changing, multicultural world and to seek to be a witness to Christ in the midst of it.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 13:13

Sunday, June 19, 2005

### **Father's day without fathers**

It's Father's day. Where are the fathers? Researchers at the University of Washington and Columbia University said, in a study released last week, the percentage of unmarried births in this country have been steadily increasing. A third of all children today are born into single parent households. As I said in an earlier blog, if we are to really address the problems of violence and poverty, we must address this problem of missing fathers. This is the latest study to affirm that children of single parents run a higher risk of poverty, dropping out of school and other social problems such as we deal with in Springfield. The important new statistic in this study is that those states which have and enforce tough child-support laws have up to 20% fewer out-of-wedlock births. Men who have to pay are less likely to play. It is not the whole solution, of course, but we absolutely must learn the lesson here.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 21:25

Thursday, June 16, 2005

### **Conversion by itself is not enough**

Many evangelicals believe that the act of conversion [being born again] can lead to social transformation. Philip Yancey, in the CT article I spoke of in an earlier Blog, gives an hypothetical illustration: A drunk is converted and stops drinking. He now keeps a steady job, stops beating his wife and provides for his family. His wife is enabled to also get a job and they are able to afford an education for their children. As more and more people experience such a transformation, "the economic base" of the whole town "rises". This is a very simplistic, naive and unrealistic scenario.

What if there are no jobs available to the convert or he is not allowed to work because of his race or language? What if the husband is an illegal resident or dying of AIDs or the area of town where they live is controlled by gangs and violence is rampant. Would his conversion lead to getting a good job and upward social mobility?

What if women are not allowed or able to work in available jobs or the man's wife has no skills for a decent job or has several other young children at home to care for? What if the water or air in the town are polluted and the children have cancer from the toxins? Would his conversion change any of that?

What if the convert had not been an unemployed drunk who abused his family, but rather a skilled employee in a local business, whose wife and family were well cared for. Would his conversion change the economic base of the town?

The only way conversion would effect the local economy or change a town is if it motivate and enables the convert to take action to change the economic systems and social structures of that town. And of course, that would require the support and involvement of all the converts and Christians (the Church) of the town in such social action. Evangelicals need to awaken to the need to confront systemic evil as well as personal sin, to the conversion of structures as well as conversion of souls.

Actually, conversion to Christ, Biblically, should include conversion to doing this very thing.

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 19:05