



# Christian View of the News



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Norman Pyle, Editor

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## LESSONS FROM THE ELECTION

The American people meant to send a message to their leaders, and the future of the conservative movement depends on an accurate reading of the substance they meant to communicate, and a realistic reassessment of the current state of our politics. Herewith, some lessons from the debacle -- some of them obvious, but others counterintuitive and unexpected.

**1. Yes, the public voted for "change" in Iraq, but that doesn't necessarily mean surrender or unconditional withdrawal.** Exit polling showed 59% of voters expressing "disapproval" of the Iraq war, but many (if not most) of those voters dislike Bush's policy because they feel it's not aggressive enough. Tens of millions of Americans long to see a more intense, more focused approach to crushing the insurgency, even if it means more boots on the ground.

Many of these citizens voted for Democratic candidates (who remained deliberately vague about their alternatives to Bush policies) as the only means to register their frustration with the President's allegedly "half-hearted" approach to warfare. These militant victory-at-any-cost, protest voters will get little satisfaction from the new democratic majorities: the prospect that the Pelosi-crats would actually approve more funding and more force for Iraq is dim to non-existent. Instead, the President will receive the long-awaited report from the bi-partisan Baker commission that will feature significant suggestions about redeployment and more effective cooperation with the Iraqi government. Bush will also seek Democratic support for quick implementation of those suggestions, with the aim of giving the struggling democracy in Iraq at least some chance to establish itself without encouraging the terrorists by stipulating a date-certain U.S. withdrawal.

**2. You can't beat something with nothing.** Under nearly impossible circumstances the Republicans conducted a decent campaign but failed to provide voters with enough reason to vote for the GOP instead of simply voting against the Democrats. Given the widespread dissatisfaction with the last two years of Republican rule, they needed to suggest some convincing reason that two more years of GOP dominance would produce the improvement and change the public demanded. The party leadership could have come together to promise quick attention to some important new issues that hadn't been addressed sufficiently in the last Congress -- energy independence, say, or radical tax simplification, or across-the-board cuts in spending, or sweeping law suit reform. Given the intra-party bickering over the last six months, however (especially concerning anti-terror legislation and immigration) the Republicans looked incapable of working together for any purpose. The Dems might emphasize meaningless gestures (raising the minimum wage, lowering interest rates on government backed student loans, officially endorsing the recommendations of the 9/11 commission) but at least they looked united in doing so.

**3. Gay marriage remains a potent issue, but not a partisan one.** Despite many articles claiming that public opinion had shifted on the issue of same sex marriage, and predicting that some of the ballot initiatives defending traditional marriage might actually lose on Election Day, opinion looks as lopsided as always regarding the effort to redefine matrimony. In Tennessee, where the Democratic governor captured over 60% of the vote, the electorate favored one of the most sweeping anti-gay-marriage measures in the country by a stunning margin of more than 80%. If these crushing victories for traditionalists helped Republican candidates elsewhere on the ballot, however, that assistance is far from apparent. After today's vote, media talking heads and gay rights advocates need to acknowledge that the opposition to the redefinition of marriage isn't just a partisan ploy, but a sincere conviction shared by strong majorities in every corner of the country.

**4. Despite the traditional GOP distrust of pollsters and pundits, their predictions proved shockingly accurate this time.** In 2000 and 2002 and 2004, elections produced some big surprises and some of the high-profile polling proved misleading. This time, the pros seemed to have achieved new levels of professionalism -- calling each race (in the most up-to-date figures) with unexpected accuracy. The pollsters proved right not only in forecasting outcomes, but even when it came to margins -- properly designating those contests that counted as close and those that did not. *The New York Times* on election day cited a prediction by Charlie Cook, one of the most respected insider analysts, that declared that Democrats would gain "between 20 and 35 seats in the House." Give credit where it's obviously due: the experts appear to have put aside partisanship (for now) and refined the reliability of their product - Michael Medved, *townhall.com*, 11/8/06

### RUSH LIMBAUGH: WHY REPUBLICANS LOST

Republicans took a beating on Election Day because they abandoned their conservative principles and in the end stood for nothing, Rush Limbaugh says. . . . "There was no dominating conservative message that came from the [Republican] top and filtered down throughout in this campaign."

[Because they won, Democrats were not crying "fraud" as usual} Rush quoted Thomas Sowell as explaining that the latest example of election fraud is actually what the Democrats did -- they nominated a bunch of moderate and

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conservative candidates for the express purpose of electing a far-left Democratic leadership.

Republicans in Congress were held captive by the party's leadership in the White House. They were put into a position of having to endorse policies with which as conservatives they disagreed. "The Democratic Party," Rush went on to say, "is the party of entitlements; but the Republicans come up with this Medicare prescription drug plan that the polls said that the public didn't want and was not interested in. That is not conservatism. Conservatives do not grow the government and offer entitlements as a means of buying votes. But that's what the Republicans in Congress had to support in order to stay in line with the Party from the top.

"It is silly to blame the media; it is silly to blame the Democrats; it is silly to go out and try to find all these excuses," Rush said. "We have proved that we can beat them. . . we have proved that we can withstand whatever we get from the drive-by media. Conservatism does that. . . It just wasn't utilized in this campaign." - *NewsMax.com*, 11/8/06

### THE CULTURE OF CORRUPTION LOSES

The "culture of corruption" was real. That phrase was a much-contested talking point during the past two years, with Democrats touting it as an accurate description of the degraded ethical state of the congressional GOP and Republicans dismissing it as a smear.

Democrats were much closer to the truth. Voters took a good whiff of the odor emanating from Washington and some of their Republican representatives, and recoiled. One-third of Republican losses in the House came in congressional districts where the party had been tainted, to varying degrees, by scandal. . . .

As the scandal around Jack Abramoff developed, Republicans should have forced those members most directly implicated -- Reps. Tom DeLay and Bob Ney, along with just-defeated Sen. Conrad Burns -- to step aside expeditiously. They didn't, partly for understandable reasons -- delivering bad news to friends and colleagues is always hard. That's why reformers must be zealous. It take zeal to break through the natural barriers to staying clean. Unfortunately, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert was the opposite of zealous, refusing to force his members to purge themselves and adopt a wide-ranging, meaningful reform agenda.

Republicans just hoped they could hang on, without voters dwelling on the fact that all they seemed to care about was their own self-perpetuation. If there was ever any chance that strategy would work, it was eliminated by Florida Rep. Mark Foley's disgrace. The scandal again presented an image of a Republican Party resolutely unenergetic in policing itself and consumed with trying to shift the blame once misconduct came to light.

Exit polls show that more voters cited corruption as their top concern than even the Iraq War. Pundits are dismissing this number, but Republicans do so at their own peril. When given the chance to pass a verdict on a party disproportionately composed of fat and happy self-serving politicians, the public did a very American thing - it gave them an unmistakable rebuke. Republicans now will have time in the minority to reacquire their reforming zeal. As for cleaning up their own ranks, it is no longer necessary. All elected Republicans in any way associated with scandal are now gone, courtesy of the American voter. - Rich Lowry, *townhall.com*, 11/9/06

*(Christians and genuine conservatives will always be held to a higher standard, as they should be. When it comes to Clinton-like immorality and ethics, it is to be expected of liberals who have no conviction about right and wrong, or what the Bible calls "sin.")*

*"Be sure your sin will find you out." And it did this election, with some collateral damage [Santorum and Allen, et al]. Proverbs 16:33 and Acts 1:26 show that man may cast his ballot, but God determines the outcome. As someone said, we eventually get the kind of government we deserve. It gives us much to pray about. - N.P.)*

### THE BIGGEST WINNERS

The biggest winners in last week's election were the enemies of the United States, who see the results as confirmation of one of their doctrines: the United States is weak and does not have the commitment to fight a protracted war.

There is no talk of a new strategy on their side. They don't hold elections to replace their leadership with people who will negotiate and compromise with the United States, or the elected Iraqi government. Their media do not carry voices calling for a new approach to the war.

America's enemies are gloating more than Democrats. But unlike Democrats, their intentions are evil. If the terrorists are to be believed (and who can credibly doubt them?), the U.S. election will encourage them to fight on and kill more of our soldiers.

Here is some of their post-election analysis: The leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, posted a recording on the Internet on which he claimed to have 12,000 armed fighters and 10,000 others waiting to be equipped to battle American troops in Iraq. He said he wants Americans to stay in Iraq so more can be killed. "I swear by God we shall not rest from jihad until we blow up the filthiest house known as the White House," the voice on the recording said.

Those "fabulous Baker boys" will soon deliver the Iraq Study Group's report to the president. Expect whatever it recommends to be implemented. These mostly former associates of former President George H.W. Bush have long believed that Israel is the primary cause of destabilization in the region. This is, and always has been, a false doctrine, but it is an enticing one for those who do not want to disturb the flow of oil and other monetary benefits that come to people who either want to hide their anti-Semitism and/or reap large profits from Arab oil magnates.

If this were a novel, it would be chilling enough, but this is reality. The Islamofascists really do want to defeat America in Iraq and then use a failed state to replicate 9/11s (and worse) around the world. They say so, and their actions prove their intent.

Europe is in a permanent state of denial. The European media are clucking about the election results. They believe if America prematurely withdraws from Iraq, Europeans will be safer. In fact, Europe will be -- and, in reality, already is -- in its greatest danger since World War II.

Another reminder of the increasing threat to Europe comes from the head of British intelligence. The director general of MI5, Eliza Manningham-Buller, said as many as 30 major terrorist plots are being planned in the country and that future threats could involve chemical and nuclear technology. She said young Muslims are being groomed to become suicide bombers and that MI5 agents are tracking 1,600 suspects, most of whom were born in Britain and are linked to al-Qaeda in Pakistan. Prime Minister Tony Blair, who once called for the expulsion of seditionist radicals and the closing of some mosques, has been rebuffed by the British courts, which continue to treat terrorism as a crime problem instead of a war. Radical Muslims have flooded Europe, but Europeans pretend they will not be harmed if they imagine the enemy poses no threat.

Both a novelist and a realist could write the following scenarios: In an effort to take Iraq off the table as an issue in the 2008 presidential

campaign, the Bush administration adopts most of the provisions of the Iraq Study Group. In a modern version of the Paris Peace Talks, which allowed the United States to have "peace with honor" and withdraw from Vietnam (resulting in the deaths, imprisonment and "re-education" of unknown numbers of Vietnamese who wanted to be free), the administration then orders a "redeployment" of forces after "negotiations" with Syria and Iran (recommended by Blair). This allows just enough time for American troops to leave before al-Qaeda murders the elected leadership and takes over Iraq.

Meanwhile in the United States, mosques and Islamic schools paid for by the extremist Wahhabi sect, multiply like fast-food franchises. Terrorists are imported and recruited from prisons. Al-Qaeda announces that weapons of mass destruction have been placed in key American and European cities. They demand that the United States withdraw its protection of Israel. If we refuse, they threaten to detonate their weapons, killing millions of people. What president, or prime minister, will reject that demand? After capitulating on the installment plan, who will have the political or moral capital (or military capacity) to stop Armageddon? - Cal Thomas, *townhall.com*, 11/14/06

### WHY DID HE WAIT SO LONG?

It was the morning after "The Drubbin," and George W. Bush was both loose and lucid. He had just announced to the Washington press corps that Donald Rumsfeld would be stepping down as secretary of defense.

The president was blunt and straightforward about the massacre his party had endured at the hands of American voters. Then he spoke of the probable cause for most of that political bloodletting: the maddening massacre for the past three years in Iraq. "We haven't executed well enough for the American voters," the president summarized, "and not fast enough."

Oddly -- and quite sadly both for himself and for so many of his supporters -- Mr. Bush might well have been speaking of the last couple of years of his presidential performance. "Not well enough, not fast enough." But here he was with a gaggle of reporters (some hostile to his leadership, others just cynical), masterfully weaving, bobbing, jabbing, and punching his way through their obstacle course, so that you couldn't possibly watch it without asking: "Where have you been in recent months, Mr. President? Why didn't you do this well on the campaign trail? Why weren't you a little faster on the uptake?" . . .

Not once in the press conference did the president fall back on his old "stay-the-course" line about Iraq, that three-word chant that had to be a turn-off for tens of thousands of voters. But if "stay-the-course" will never be part of his vocabulary again, you still have to ask why it took as long as it did for the president and his advisers to sense how ready-made the little phrase was for Democratic devastation of his Iraq policies. And why was it so clear, just a few hours after the returns were in, that the time had come to set the phrase aside?

If all this sounds like a broadside against an already beleaguered president, keep in mind the context. I'm applauding his press conference performance. It is instead to raise the question so dominant in the minds of many of Mr. Bush's long-time supporters. Why, when you hold the convictions you do, and why, when you from time to time demonstrate the capacity to argue for those convictions so passionately and winsomely -- why do you go for such considerable stretches with little or nothing to say about the big issues? Why forfeit, or at least minimize, some of the programs you've sometimes said you wanted to be the trademarks of your time in office? You're the only man in the world right now with the bully pulpit of the presidency. Why use it so cautiously and sparingly?

But maybe it takes being in a corner to bring out the best in George W. Bush. If that's the case, the opportunity is huge. If that's what it takes, the last two years of his presidency may actually hold some unusual promise. - Joel Belz, *WORLD*, 11/18/06

### SUPREME COURT ON PARTIAL BIRTH

New court, new vote? Government lawyers defending a partial-birth abortion ban before the Supreme Court Nov. 7 hope so. When Congress passed the law in 2003, pro-abortion activists mounted immediate legal challenges. And though the court struck down a similar statute in 2000 on a 5-4 vote, analysts believe the new court could uphold the ban on a slim one-vote majority. Justice Samuel Alito gave no hints on how he might vote. In fact, the justice didn't speak at all on the opening day of arguments. Chief Justice John Roberts, also a Bush appointee, signaled he might be inclined to uphold the ban, as tense proceedings were interrupted when liberal Justice John Paul Stevens insisted one of the lawyers use the word *fetus* rather than *baby*. - *WORLD*, 11/18/06

### TATTOOS/PIERCINGS FOR THE REBELLIOUS

A new survey on tattoos and piercings in America found that "what your mother may have told you about who has tattoos is true: people who drink, do drugs, have been jailed or forgo religion are more likely to be tattooed" ("Tattoo Nation," Associated Press, June 10). The study, which was published by the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, found that about one in four Americans age 18 to 50 have at least one tattoo and one in seven have a piercing other than in the soft lobe of the ear. Tattooing and piercing has always been associated with paganism and rebellion, and nothing has changed. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5:22). "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (I Cor. 10:31-32). - *O Timothy*, 7/06

### THE BIOETHICS OF BETHLEHEM

Bioethicist Nigel M. de S. Cameron points to a significance of the incarnation that may be missed by many. Cameron points back to the conception of Jesus in Mary by the Holy Spirit, and to the concrete reality of Christ's human nature during Mary's pregnancy.

*God took human form; and he took it not simply as a baby, but as the tiniest of all human beings, a mere biological speck, so small and so undeveloped that it could be mistaken for a laboratory artifact, a research specimen, an object for human experimentation. But this speck was God; this complete genetic human organism, in its primitive and undeveloped form, was so much "one of us" as to bear the existence of the Creator. He dignified humanity by taking the form of this creature he had made in his image: and he did it at the most inauspicious and feeble point in the human life story. At the heart of the Christmas celebration lies the fact of all facts, that God became a zygote.*

*It is important to realize that there are several powerful arguments against using human embryos for research, some of which do not depend on the idea that the embryo is "one of us." And we can argue that the embryo is "one of us" -- that human dignity is as indivisible as biological human nature -- without ever arguing from theology and Christian belief. But if we are Christians, we have theological underpinnings for such arguments. We believe that all human beings are made in the image of God. We believe that Jesus Christ was God taking human form for himself. And we believe that we started right at the beginning -- that incarnation took place in*

embryo.

This is profoundly true and deeply significant. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us -- even in Mary's womb. This does provide a substantial and deeply theological basis for a Christian bioethic. Recognizing the true humanity (as well as the true deity) of the child in Mary's womb, how can we not speak in defense of every child in every womb at every stage of development?

From Martin Luther's incarnation hymn written for his five-year-old son, Hans, published four years later in 1531:

*From Heaven above to earth I come, To bear good news to every home; Glad tidings of great joy I bring. Whereof I now will say and sing.*

*To you, this night, is born a Child of Mary, chosen mother mild; This tender Child of lowly birth, Shall be the joy of all your earth.*

*"Tis Christ our God, Who far on high, Had heard your sad and bitter cry; Himself will your Salvation be; Himself from sin will make you free. - AlbertMohler.com, 12/23/05*

## POLICE OFFICERS DESERVE RESPECT

Once a police officer says, "You are under arrest," you must and will be taken to jail. Hopefully, you will go voluntarily, but if you physically resist arrest, then the officer or officers must use whatever force is necessary to subdue you and take you to jail. They have no choice. In most states, resisting arrest is itself a felony, and in many states a police officer is authorized to use lethal means to arrest a felon.

This means a physical fight, because the only logical reply to force is counterforce. In the past, most police officers carried clubs and blackjacks. The old-fashioned blackjacks were a lump of lead on a steel spring wrapped in thin leather. Both these and clubs can inflict serious injuries, even fatal injuries sometimes.

Today, in most departments, officers are equipped with pepper spray and a Taser. These are provided as nonlethal means of subduing someone who is resisting arrest. So, if you remove these nonlethal tools from the officers, what is the alternative? I'd rather be stunned than cracked on the head with a club. I'd rather be stunned than shot.

Happily, most people don't resist arrest. Professional petty criminals know the routine and know it's pointless to resist. Usually, those who resist are people who are out of control due either to mental illness or to the effects of drugs, or they are people who have committed a serious felony and know they will go to prison. These conditions, however, do not relieve the arresting officer of the necessity of physically subduing the person.

Police officers deserve to be cut some slack by the public. They are the only public officials who are legally authorized to take a human life without a trial. They take this terrible responsibility seriously, and I can assure you the overwhelming majority of local and state law-enforcement officers have no desire to kill somebody.

The flood of make-believe violence produced by the entertainment and gaming industries makes killing seem like a casual affair, but it is not, and nobody knows this better than a policeman who has been forced by circumstances to take a human life.

The problem for the police officer is that out on the street, in the presence of a violent individual, he has no time to consider the situation leisurely, much less call in medical professionals -- who aren't available anyway. The officer has to act and often must make a decision in seconds. His obligation is to protect himself and other innocent people in the vicinity.

Parents should especially stress to teenage children that under no circumstances should they ever attempt to flee a police officer, resist arrest or talk back sarcastically. If there is a problem with the

arrest, the place to sort that out is in court.

Police officers are human beings, just like the rest of us. They can have bad days. Their job in itself is stressful. When they stop a car at night, they don't know who the driver is. He might be a teenager with a heavy foot. He might be some guy who just robbed a store and murdered the clerk. He might be a serial killer or a wanted felon. The officer, who wants to go home to his family, must necessarily be cautious and stern. And, if you are the driver, you don't want to do anything that the officer can interpret as a threat.

Keep your hands visible at all times and wait for his instructions. If you go rummaging in the glove box for registration papers or reach behind you for your wallet before he asks for them, he might think you are reaching for a gun. That's a good way to get killed. - Charley Reese, *Conservative Chronicle*, 7/12/06

## SADDAM SENTENCED TO DEATH

The verdict of death for Saddam Hussein reminds us of how satisfying it would have been if "the new Germans" could have put Hitler on trial, making his monstrous crimes a matter of undisputed public record, sentenced him to death and exacted a token payment for the crimes, paid at the end of a rope. Making comparisons to Hitler has become a cliché, but in many ways they're similar in their monstrous evil, differing mostly as a matter of scale. . . .

Both tyrants showed utter contempt for their own. Both not only killed anyone suspected of conspiring against them, but killed their families to exact revenge and reprisal. After the assassination of SS Leader Reinhard Heydrich, Hitler ordered the massacre of every man and boy over 16 in the Czech town of Lidice. Saddam was found guilty of ordering the murder of 148 civilian men and boys in reprisal for a 1982 attempt on his life, and unless he is hanged first he will go on trial for the massacre of 100,000 Kurds. (A terrorist group named for Qusay, one of the two monstrous Saddam sons killed by American bombs, continues to target Iraqi officials and their families.)

The war in Iraq is not going well, but the trial of Saddam shines a light on what it's about. Saddam was a deadly threat to the Iraqi people and a threat to the world. We didn't find the weapons of mass destruction everyone knew he once had, weapons that he intended to have again. But we knew he was a mass murderer who would use them once they were restored to him.

If the world had been more attentive to the atrocities of Hitler against his own people, and confronted his evil early on instead of appeasing him with compromises, enhancing and extending his power, millions of lives would have been spared. Wars must always be fought reluctantly, but history teaches that sometimes there is no choice but to go to war. We see up close the vicious tactics of the insurgents who were once Saddam's men, whose only aim is the perpetuation of a culture of death to embrace us all.

The trial of Saddam Hussein with all of its flaws is a new model for the Middle East, and shows aspiring democrats under the heel of despotic power in other nations what they could have if they will make the sacrifices that come with fighting for freedom. The death penalty for Saddam is questioned by Europeans who as a matter of principle do not believe in capital punishment, but the verdict of the court finds approval nearly everywhere. The verdict should give a lift to those in Iraq who have worked to create a new system of justice. The trial and the verdict will give other tyrants pause. It wasn't Nuremberg, but it wasn't bad.

As long as Hitler lived, he emboldened his followers; like Hitler, Saddam Hussein remains a hero to Ba'athist insurgents who took to the streets in protest when the verdict was read. When the sentence is

carried out, few will grieve, and Iraq and the world will be better for it.  
- Suzanne Fields, townhall.com, 11/8/06

## WESTERN NATIONS HAD BETTER STAND UP

European nations protesting Saddam Hussein's death sentence, as they protested against forcing secrets out of captured terrorists, should tell us all we need to know about the internal degeneration of western society, where so many confuse squeamishness with morality.

Two generations of being insulated from the reality of the international jungle, of not having to defend their own survival because they have been living under the protection of the American nuclear umbrella, have allowed too many Europeans to grow soft and indulge themselves in illusions about brutal realities and dangers.

The very means of their salvation have been demonized for decades in anti-nuclear movements and protesters calling themselves "anti-war." But there is a huge difference between being anti-war in words and being anti-war in deeds.

How many times, in its thousands of years of history, has Europe gone 60 years without a major war, as it has since World War II? That peace has been due to American nuclear weapons, which was all that could deter the Soviet Union's armies from marching right across Europe to the Atlantic Ocean.

Having overwhelming military force on your side, and letting your enemies know that you have the guts to use it, is being genuinely anti-war. Chamberlain's appeasement brought on World War II and Reagan's military buildup ended the Cold War.

The famous Roman peace of ancient times did not come from negotiations, cease-fires, or pretty talk. It came from the Roman Empire's crushing defeat and annihilation of Carthage, which served as a warning to anyone else who might have had any bright ideas about messing with Rome.

Only after the Roman Empire began to lose its own internal cohesion, patriotism and fighting spirit over the centuries did it begin to succumb to its external enemies and finally collapse.

That seems to be where western civilization is heading today.

Internal cohesion? Not only does much of today's generation in western societies have a "do your own thing" attitude, defying rules and flouting authority are glorified and Balkanization through "multiculturalism" has become dogma.

Patriotism? Not only is patriotism disdained, the very basis for pride in one's country and culture is systematically undermined in our educational institutions at all levels.

The achievements of western civilization are buried in histories that portray every human sin found here as if they were peculiarities of the west.

The classic example is slavery, which existed all over the world for thousands of years and yet is incessantly depicted as if it was a peculiarity of Europeans enslaving Africans. Barbary pirates alone brought twice as many enslaved Europeans to North Africa as there were Africans brought in bondage to the United States and the American colonies from which it was formed.

How many schools and colleges are going to teach that, going against political correctness and undermining white guilt?

How many people have any inkling that it was precisely western civilization which eventually turned against slavery and began stamping it out when non-western societies still saw nothing wrong with it?

How can a generation be expected to fight for the survival of a culture or a civilization that has been trashed in its own institutions, taught to tolerate even the intolerance of other cultures brought into

its own midst, and conditioned to regard any instinct to fight for its own survival as being a "cowboy?"

Western nations that show any signs of standing up for self-preservation are rare exceptions. The United States and Israel are the only western nations which have no choice but to rely on self-defense -- and both are demonized, not only by our enemies but also by many in other western nations.

Australia recently told its Muslim population that, if they want to live under Islamic law, then they should leave Australia. That makes three western nations that have not yet completely succumbed to the corrosive and suicidal trends of our times.

If and when we all succumb, will the epitaph of western civilization say that we had the power to annihilate our enemies but were so paralyzed by confusion that we ended up being annihilated ourselves?  
- Thomas Sowell, *Conservative Chronicle*, 11/15/06

## TRUTH ABOUT CLINTON AND BIN LADEN

Retired CIA officer Michael F. Scheuer, in a letter to the American Conservative magazine, says former President Bill Clinton "does a vast disservice to CIA officers, to the historical record and to the truth when he continues to claim that he did all he could to stop bin Laden. Nothing could be further from the truth."

Said Mr. Scheuer: "On behalf of CIA officers who risked their lives in Pakistan and Afghanistan to provide President Clinton with the chance to capture or kill Osama bin Laden, I can only shake my head with wonder over the former president's unwillingness to accept his direct culpability for bin Laden being alive.

"The 9/11 Commission -- notwithstanding its many faults -- listed the occasions when Clinton could have ordered an attempt to kill or capture bin Laden based on information provided by CIA officers and on many occasions corroborated by signals intelligence or overhead imagery. On one day in particular, Clinton had the U.S. Air Force drop tons of bombs on the Serbs -- who had not harmed or even threatened Americans -- while refusing to sanction an attack on bin Laden.

"It would be in the interest of all Americans to settle this matter. The 9/11 commissioners chose not to. The documents submitted to them prove beyond doubt that Clinton had chances to kill or capture bin Laden. Indeed, on several occasions he, Sandy Berger and Richard Clarke were told that the quality of intelligence was very unlikely ever to be better."

Mr. Scheuer added: "I personally submitted almost 500 pages of material pertaining specifically to missed opportunities to eliminate bin Laden, and I and many other officers testified under oath to the opportunities that were presented to Clinton and his National Security Council. None of these documents have been released to the public and none of the officers were allowed to testify publicly." - *Washington Times Weekly*, 10/16/06

## WORLD'S FIRST SUICIDE STATE

There aren't many parallels between the war in Vietnam and the attempted suicide of Iraq, but the ghost of George Aiken hovers over Baghdad.

George Aiken, the late Republican senator from Vermont, is most famously remembered for his wry suggestion that the way to extract the United States from quagmire in Vietnam was to declare victory and get out.

His suggestion was borne of the frustration now bedeviling everyone in, around and about Iraq, the grim realization that not every problem has a neat and easy solution and a reminder that patience is not necessarily an American virtue.

Frustration is pushing everybody -- the Americans, the Arabs and most of all the Iraqis -- to consider a dramatic "course correction" over the next few months. Nobody wants to call it "the Aiken strategy" but the Sunnis and the Shi'ites could get on with their violent rituals of national suicide in the name of the religion of peace.

The inevitable "task force" investigating what to do with Iraq, led by James Baker, the former secretary of state, is leaking like an infant, and some of the suggestions are weirder than others: a partition of Iraq into three regions defined by ethnic or religious demographics, withdrawal of U.S. troops to be dispatched to nearby friendly places where they could -- theoretically -- be called back to deal with appropriate "emergencies." It's difficult to imagine an emergency dire enough to get them back once they're out, which is of course the point of the strategy.

The weirdest suggestion of all is that the U.S.-trained Iraqi army would overthrow the new government in Iraq put in place by the coalition of the willing, and replace Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki with a strongman, perhaps someone like Saddam Hussein, only not yet a monster. He would restore "order" while the United States and Britain content themselves with viewing with alarm for a "decent" interval, after which Washington and London would recognize the new government.

Comparing Iraq to Vietnam betrays an ignorance of history. As brutal as the communists were in Vietnam, there was an ideological purpose to their brutality. The war in Vietnam was a war for "the hearts and minds," as the cliché went, in pursuit of a Marxist order. In Iraq, the insurgents (to use a term they don't deserve) don't care about hearts and minds, about taking territory or establishing a new Jerusalem. They're interested not in hearts and minds, but body parts, to be strewn across the neighborhood in an endless festival of Sunni blood and Shi'ite gore.

"Iraq takes today's 'cult of the suicide bomber' a stage further," says Brendan O'Neill, a British pundit in *Spiked*, an Internet magazine. "We could say that Iraq is the world's first Suicide State, responding to war and occupation not by mobilizing the masses in opposition or organizing resistance armies, but rather by destroying itself, by committing suicide in front of the world's cameras."

Mercy and morality might not have constrained the North Vietnamese from blowing up 26 children taking sweets from an American soldier, or 38 women and children lining up for rations of kerosene, or blowing up 74 worshippers in a mosque, but the men of Hanoi knew that to do those things would make it difficult to persuade the masses to follow the Marxist path to national salvation.

Unlike in Vietnam, there's an absence of politics in Iraq, no concern for national salvation, no Ho Chi Minh to rally the countryside, no alternative government in waiting, no attempt to take and hold territory. It's killing to prove that only Sunni spilling of Shi-ite blood can appease Allah, that only Shi-ite dismembering of Sunni children can make Allah happy. The only purpose of the mayhem seems to be getting on television with guns blazing, bombs exploding, bodies flying.

Once upon a time the West could look at mayhem in the Muslim world with more bemusement than horror, but now we can't. The world has grown too small. This is the dilemma of George W. Bush, and it will be the dilemma of whoever follows him. (These people are wickedly crazy and cannot be ignored, and you cannot reason with them. - N.P.) - Wesley Pruden, *WTW*, 10/23/06

## VETERANS DAY: AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

When the son of John McCain announced he was joining the

Marines a few months ago, it made headlines across the country -- not only because his father was famous, but also because his decision was so unusual.

Few sons of senators serve in the military these days, nor -- with few exceptions -- do the sons of congressmen or presidents or governors, or New York Times editors. They're too busy doing what they consider more important things -- like attending Yale, or running their father's company. And yet, these are often the very same people who one day are going to lead our country. This situation is not only inherently unfair, but also deeply dangerous.

Kathy Roth -Douquet and Frank Schaeffer are the authors of *AWOL: The Unexcused Absence of America's Upper Classes from Military Service -- and How It Hurts Our Country*. They argue in the book that from our country's founding onward, serving one's country in the military has always been expected -- especially among the scions of the upper class, what a previous generation called noblesse oblige. As evidence, the authors point to the fact that, as recently as the 1950s, half the graduating classes of Princeton and Harvard -- the sons of bankers and businessmen -- signed up for a tour of duty, as I myself did after graduating from Brown. Today, fewer than one percent do. Overwhelmingly, those who serve today are from the middle and working class, rural and small town.

Why is this dangerous? Well, the authors write, wealthy elites who avoid military service will someday be running America -- and their ignorance about what our military endures or is capable of may cause them to misuse our troops. Studies show that they tend to look down on those who do serve, and they put too small a value on their willingness to serve, why they serve, and on what this service gives in return.

Frank Schaeffer, the son of the late Francis Schaeffer, admits that when his own son announced his plans to become a Marine, he was horrified -- and embarrassed. After all, most of his friends' kids were planning to attend elite colleges. But then he met some of the men his son served with.

As Schaeffer write, "I started to understand that it was degrading to have to justify John's being a Marine to people who struck me as snobs -- in other words, to people like me, people who never lifted a finger for anybody. It began to occur to me,," Schaeffer concludes, "that maybe something was wrong with me and not with [my son] John."

Ditto, writes Roth-Douquet. When she -- a Princeton grad and former Clinton appointee -- told friends she was planning to marry a Marine officer, they were shocked. But then, September 11 happened. As Roth-Douquet puts it, "Friends who previously hinted that [my husband] should probably find responsible work in the civilian world were now suddenly glad to have him in the Marine Corps."

Schaeffer and Roth-Douquet are right: It's wrong for an entire class of Americans to consider themselves exempt from serving their country -- and then to expect to lead it. Tomorrow -- Veterans Day -- we ought to reflect not only on the sacrifices made by earlier generations of veterans, but also on how we can spread out the sacrifice more fairly among all classes of Americans.

America's most privileged youth should remember something their ancestors well understood: To whom much is given, much is expected -- and that applies to serving their country. - Chuck Colson, *townhall.com*, 11/11/06

## MYSFACE.COM: PORN FOR KIDS

In May, I learned that my 13-year-old daughter had opened a MySpace.com account at the urging of some of her friends. When I

became aware, I admit I knew little about MySpace, so I was unprepared for what I was about to encounter. . . .

(Let me preface everything with this statement that I think every concerned parent needs to accept: Your child is probably much better at navigating the internet than you; they are probably better versed on how to conceal information on the computer than you, and, as a parent, this is not a time for passive parenting. Our children are at risk, even good children who give you no reason to doubt their sincerity. Internet predators seek out the weakest prey. Innocent children are abducted, raped, and molested each and every week by these predators who have no conscience for innocent life.)

During the first two weeks of my MySpace.com investigation, I was more than shocked on several occasions. . . .

The materials I saw were posted by 13 - and 14-year old boys and girls, either through pictures taken with camera phones or in text form.

Here's what I saw:

Every word in the cursing vocabulary, including the vilest ones. References to every sexual act imaginable.

A poem that was so sexually graphic, I cannot print it in this public forum.

A picture of a young boy smoking dope.

Sensuous pictures of young girls that are borderline pornography.

Personal information including phone numbers, schools attended and addresses.

This I found with minimal searching, so I am sure there is much worse out there. Now, knowing children are involved in this is bad enough, but what about the possible unseen and unrecognized "who" on the other end...the sexual predator? - Brad Courtney, *Baptist Bible Tribune*, 9/06

In October, *O Timothy* ran a lengthy article by David Cloud entitled, "My Space or God's?" Here is how he began:

In the year 2000, a youth pastor in Ohio told me that the worst problems he was having with young people in the church pertained to the internet. He was referring to chat rooms. And that was long before MySpace.com exploded onto the scene.

MySpace is a massive, supercharged, visual-enhanced chat room. A recent survey found that 61% of Americans aged 13-17 have a MySpace profile. This site features 74 million profiles with 85,000 new ones added every day. During any given week it has 36 million active users. . . .

Never has strict separation from the world been more urgent for Christian homes and churches, and never has it been less practiced among those who claim to be Bible-believing people. We are in an awful, desperate battle for the souls of young people, and churches and families that do not get serious about this battle will surely regret it. . . .

**Porn, Pedophiles, and MySpace.** MySpace is just the latest example of the creeping oversexualization of our culture. The truth is that pornographers aren't content to exist only in their own sick little corner of the Internet. They've got to troll for new victims. And they do it by wading into what amounts to an Internet kiddie pool and snagging innocent kids. That's why your child's e-mail inbox is constantly filled with spam porn. It's why sites such as MySpace have been infiltrated by perverts. It's why you've got to be worried about what's going on within the "safety" of your own home if you have unlimited, unmonitored Internet access.

Parents, vigilance is key. Protecting your kids from Internet smut

may be hard, but it's not impossible. Talk to your kids. Keep your computer in a common area. Limit Internet time. Know who your kids are chatting with online. And get an Internet filter -- NOW! There are many great, inexpensive filters on the market, but I use the filter from BSafe.com. - Rebecca Hagelin, *townhall.com*, 5/30/06

## CALVINISM ON THE MARCH

A report in *Christianity Today* for September 2006 was entitled "Young, Restless, Reformed: Calvinism Is Making a Comeback - And Shaking Up The Church." It documents the rapid spread of Calvinism in evangelical circles, and I am seeing the same thing among Fundamentalists. The report cites John Piper, R.C. Sproul, R. Albert Mohler, Louie Giglio, Joshua Harris, J.I. Packer, and the Puritans as among the chief influences responsible for the upsurge in Calvinism. Piper's book "Desiring God" has sold more than 275,000 copies.

The trend toward the acceptance of Calvinism is evident at leading evangelical seminaries such as Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Under the direction of Al Mohler, Southern Seminary has become "a Reformed hotbed" and is turning out "a steady flow of young Reformed pastors."

Writing in *SBC Life*, Malcolm Yarnell, associate professor of systematic theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, observed that TULIP theology is causing division in churches. Steve Lemke, provost of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, warns: "I believe that [Calvinism] is potentially the most explosive and divisive issue facing us in the near future. It has already been an issue that has split literally dozens of churches, and it holds the potential to split the entire convention" ("The Future of Southern Baptists as Evangelicals," April 2005). Lemke says that "the newest generation of Southern Baptist ministers" is "the most Calvinist we have had in several generations." He warns that Calvinism can result in a lowered commitment to evangelism, saying: "For many people, if they're convinced that God has already elected those who will be elect. . . I don't see how humanly speaking that can't temper your passion, because you know you're not that crucial to the process." There are exceptions to this, but in my estimation there can be no doubt that Calvinism tends to cool evangelistic fervor. Among Calvinists, evangelism is done *in spite of* Calvinism, not because of it. Those who protest that it doesn't hinder evangelism point to *exceptions* rather than to the rule.

While Charles Spurgeon was an evangelistic Calvinist, for example, a large number of Calvinists of his day opposed him and denounced his broad, indiscriminate invitations for sinners to come to Christ. One Calvinist publication warned in Spurgeon's day, ". . . to preach that it is man's duty to believe savingly in Christ is ABSURD" (*Earthen Vessel*, 1857; cited in *Spurgeon vs. the Hyper Calvinists* by Iain Murray). Calvinism almost killed the evangelistic zeal of the Baptist churches of England in the 18th century. Baptist historian Thomas Armitage wrote: "William Carey's 'Inquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathen' was published in 1792, but it found few readers and produced little effect. To most of the Baptists Carey's views were visionary and even wild, in open conflict with God's sovereignty. At a meeting of ministers, where the senior Ryland presided, Carey proposed that at the next meeting they discuss the duty of attempting to spread the Gospel amongst the heathen. . . Ryland, shocked, sprang to his feet and ordered Carey to sit down, saying 'When God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without your aid or mine!' - David Cloud, writing in the October issue of *O Timothy*.

**ARE YOU GROWN UP BECAUSE YOU GROW UP?**

Michael Bywater is concerned that the present generation is growing up, but not becoming grown-ups. Writing in *The Telegraph* [London], Bywater bemoans the infantilism of the culture and the immaturity of so many young adults.

"My grandfather was born in 1888 and he didn't have a lifestyle. He didn't need one; he had a life," Bywater observes.

Yes, his grandfather's life was almost assuredly very different than his own. Previous generations did not think of life as an endless experiment, and they saw their grown-up role as a matter of responsibility, not a lifestyle choice.

He adds: *I suspect that my grandfather's life was real in a sense that my father's life hasn't quite been, and my life is not at all. The crucial difference is my grandfather's lack of self-consciousness, and that self-consciousness is a hallmark of the perpetual, infantilised adolescents we have all become.*

The invention of adolescence as a major stage of life was a major mark of the twentieth century. The twenty-first century seems destined to be the generation of extended adolescence -- *really* extended. A significant number of post-college young adults are moving back to live with parents. Many others delay marriage well into the late twenties or thirties.

*My grandfather wasn't nagged. Once he turned 21, he was a man, and a grown-up, and nobody battered him round the clock with opportunities he was missing, miseries he didn't know he had, aspirations ditto, inadequacies doubly so.*

*Nobody told him about being good in bed, grooming tips, what*

*his car said about him, what he should have to eat, how much he should drink, what his house said about him, where he should go on vacation, what this season's must-have product would be, how his suits should look.*

*He knew some of these things, and didn't care about the others because nobody was drawing them to his attention. He knew what his suits should look like: trousers, waistcoat, jacket, all made out of the same material.*

*He knew about grooming; you shaved. He knew what he should eat; breakfast, lunch, dinner. He probably had no idea that good-in-bed even existed, or that furniture did anything except furnish, or that where he went on vacation was of any significance.*

It is surely interesting that Mr. Bywater finds his grandfather's life so different from his own -- and yet is fascinated with this difference. This is the voice of generational yearning, and it may well be most pronounced in young men. The extension of boy culture into the years of early manhood is not without consequence. These consequences are not merely external matters of education, marriage, achievement, work, and economics. Indeed, the most significant consequences are almost surely internal -- rooted in a confused sense of manhood and adult male identity.

This represents a significant challenge for the culture, but also for the Christian church. There are obvious implications for parents here. We must help this generation of promising young people to grow up to be grown-ups. *AlbertMohler.com, 10/27/06*

**Thank you for your gifts for CVN this year. May you have a wonderful Christmas. God bless you. - N.P.**



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**2780 Mt. Carmel Road**  
**Hampton, GA 30228**  
**Brad Blanton, Pastor**  
**[www.biblebaptistministries.com](http://www.biblebaptistministries.com)**

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