



Christian View of the News



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IF MCCAIN IS THE MAIN MAN

I must confess that I have struggled over this matter. I have disliked McCain because of a number of things he has done as a Senator. However, all of these candidates, Democrat and Republican, have weaknesses. That should not be surprising since we're dealing with sinners like us. Some are better speakers than others. There are those who have made major mistakes in their lives politically and/or morally.

I closed out what I said in the last CVN about the primaries by saying that I would not vote for a Democrat. That includes the general election too.

It now appears that the choice otherwise will be either Huckabee or McCain. Many believe that Huckabee cannot survive all the way to the Convention. I don't know, but he is making a run for it right now.

If either of them become the Republican candidate, they will need all of the genuine Christians and conservatives behind them. If McCain, who is leading at the present, becomes the Republican nominee, he has some work to do. Here are some recent articles on that subject:

CONSERVATIVES WARILY BACK MCCAIN

Harsh criticism of GOP presidential contender John McCain from some conservative leaders is fading as McCain, now the frontrunner, looks to solidify the nomination of his party.

Grover Norquist, president and founder of Americans for Tax Reform, for example, criticized McCain in an interview with Cybercast News Service in January. "If the rest of Congress had voted the way Senator McCain did over the years, your taxes would be a trillion dollars higher than they are today," he said.

But on Saturday, in another interview with CNS, Norquist seemed ready to put the past away and support the frontrunner, apparently in light of McCain's recent statements that he is now a hard-line anti-taxer. "McCain has staked a good tax position," said Norquist. "He has said twice he will veto a tax increase. I will support the Republican nominee."

McCain made a case for himself as a conservative at the Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC) on Friday.

"I have argued to make the Bush tax cuts permanent, to reduce the corporate tax rate, and abolish the AMT," McCain said. "I will not sign a bill with earmarks in it. I will fight for the line-item veto, and I will not permit any expansion whatsoever of the entitlement programs that are bankrupting us." . . .

Calling McCain "a liaison in the Reagan movement," **Morton Blackwell**, president and founder of the conservative Leadership Institute, said he too is willing to stand behind McCain if he is nominated. "He was not my first choice, but it is my practice that I always will support the Republican nominee," said Blackwell. He had previ-

ously endorsed Fred Thompson and then Mitt Romney, both of whom have dropped out of the campaign race. . . .

Despite his opposition to the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law and the McCain-Kennedy immigration bill, former House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** noted his support for McCain in an exclusive interview with CNS on Saturday. Although McCain is a moderate conservative rather than a movement conservative, Republicans should support him, said Gingrich, who added, "If Sen. McCain becomes the Republican nominee, we should support him if for no other reason than for Supreme Court Nominations." . . . - Josiah Ryan, CNSNEWS.COM/2/12/08

PENCE TO MCCAIN: 'EMBRACE THE RIGHT'

Leading conservative **Rep. Mike Pence** (R.-Ind.) threw his support behind John McCain (R.-Ariz.) Friday, but that support was qualified.

Pence, speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington, D.C., said he was encouraged by what McCain had told CPAC the day before. He also praised McCain's commitment to a strong military and to keeping federal spending down.

However, Pence said he disagreed with McCain on many issues, specifically two that are clear examples of McCain's tendency to depart from the conservative political base of the Republican Party: McCain's support for the political left's views on climate change and his support for curtailing free speech through campaign finance reform.

"After the marvelous speech at CPAC, Senator, we know you hear us," Pence said, in what he called a message to McCain, who all but wrapped up the GOP presidential nomination Thursday when his closest rival Mitt Romney left the race.

"You need to know that you need this movement to win in November," Pence said. "Sen. McCain, embrace the right, and the right will embrace you, across the finish line and into the White House." . . .

As for global warming, Pence described it as the Democrats' "plan to regulate our economy in the name of climate change."

Pence also expressed his opposition to the regulation of talk radio through the Fairness Doctrine, a federal regulation that was halted by President Reagan and the Federal Communications Commission in 1987 but could be re-imple-

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mented. Pence called on all conservatives to "oppose censorship of all forms, whether it's taking the form of the Fairness Doctrine or campaign finance reform."

Pence concluded his speech saying, "God still governs. The times and providence called forth the right man to lead America for such a time as this," Pence said of McCain. - Fred Lucas, *CNSNEWS*, 2/8/08

(In my opinion Mike Pence would make an ideal Vice President. He is not only a strong political conservative, but is a strong, rather than weak, Christian. - N. P.)

MCCAIN OR THE WILDERNESS

Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham aren't the only conservatives in agony over John McCain. The base is bummed. . . . There are murmurs of heading into the political wilderness. Sit this one out. Rather than sell the party's soul to John McCain, let Hillary have it, or Barack. Go into opposition for four years while the party gets its head together and comes up with an authentic conservative candidate. If this sourness takes hold at the margin, say among GOP anti-immigrant voters, it might happen.

The wilderness is a good place to find yourself, if you're a prophet. There are reasons, though, why a principled political retreat won't make conservative prospects better. The point of a principled retreat would be to rediscover coherence amid doctrinal confusion. The exact opposite is likely to happen. . . .

The big lesson of the failed Harriet Miers nomination is that a real establishment on judicial nominations exists now in Washington. Throwing another David Souter over the transom and onto the Court is nearly impossible. A participant in this process who has discussed it with Sen. McCain tells me that he says his advisers on major judicial nominations will include **Ted Olson, Sam Brownback and John Kyl. Miguel Estrada**, a victim of the Gang of 14 senators on the judicial filibuster, has endorsed Mr. McCain.

Sen. McCain's capos on economics and taxes are **Phil Gramm**, the probable Treasury nominee, and **Steve Forbes**, a GOP Hall of Famer who in the 1996 and 2000 campaigns kept Reaganomics alive. By now, the coming sellout is reaching Himalayan proportions. One may still assume the worst. Conservatives always do, not without reason. It is politically obstinate, though, to ignore the presence of this ballast. (For those who still insist on sitting it out over immigration, global warming or stem cells, there is no hope.)

The idea of a concession on national security by conservatives is especially troubling. After six years of blood and treasure, and with the counterinsurgency working, to consciously turn over Iraq to Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama. . . words fail. . . .

Conservatives are not in the wilderness. They should get back in the game. - Daniel Henninger, *The Wall Street Journal*, 2/7/08

OTHER THINGS MCCAIN COULD DO

Pick a fight with the press. One of the most persistent sources of conservative suspicion about Mr. McCain is the belief that he has an overly cozy relationship with liberal journalists, and will betray conservatives to remain in their good graces. Once he becomes the nominee, of course, he will be attacked by the media, which will reintroduce us to the "radical right-wing McCain." One opportunity for the senator and the press may be when Gen. Petraeus gives his next report to Congress in March.

Pick a conservative running mate early. Mr. McCain needs a young vice president with stellar conservative credentials so that conservatives can know that an acceptable successor is being trained

and waiting in the wings. Nothing would endear conservatives more, and nothing would make it clearer that Mr. McCain is serious about reaching out to them. Rudy Giuliani, Joe Lieberman and especially his friend, Florida Gov. Charlie Crist, will not do, and would send many conservatives over the edge. One option would be 47-year-old Mark Sanford of South Carolina. (I've already told you what I think about Mike Pence for VP. - N.P.) - Alfred Regnery, *WSJ*, 2/7/08

PRO-LIFERS TO MCCAIN: 'CONVINCE US'

Pro-life leaders in Congress are taking a "show me" attitude towards Republican frontrunner Arizona Sen. John McCain. Rep. Trent Franks (R.-Ariz) said McCain is going to have to prove himself to the pro-life community. "If he really wants to ignite the pro-life community, he can help them understand that his commitment to this is real and not just a voting record that reflects it, but something where we really know this is in his heart," Franks told CNS. "If he does, I think we would walk through glass to help him get elected." . . .

"His record indicates that on straight-up issues, many times he votes pro-life," Franks said. "But he has not been someone who has actively fought for legislation protecting the unborn. We need to know somewhere in our hearts that he is going to give us Supreme Court justices that will not allow the genocide that kills 4,000 children every day."

Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (R.-Ga.) echoed the call for specific assurances from the Republican frontrunner that his judicial nominees would be originalists when it comes to the Constitution. "I think the pro-life movement has to get some type of admission from him publicly about the type of justices he's going to appoint," Westmoreland told CNS. "I think his record in the Senate has been pretty much pro-life, but we need that commitment on the judges. That's where the rubber meets the road."

Another major commitment they are seeking is for McCain to state that he will support the pro-life plank in the Republican national Platform, which calls for a human life amendment and extending 14th Amendment rights to the unborn. - Pete Winn, *CNSNEWS*, 2/12/08

OLIVER NORTH SUPPORTS JOHN MCCAIN

Just four hours after Gov. Mitt Romney's pragmatic decision to suspend his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, Sen. John McCain stood before the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) and asked the assembled activists to support his bid for the White House.

The "maverick" acknowledged differences he has had over the years with many in the room, offered a spirited defense of his 24-year record in Congress and made an eloquent, self-effacing appeal for conservatives to unite in the "urgent necessity of defending the values, virtues and security of free people against those who despise all that is good about us." . . .

Over the course of the last six years I have made a dozen protracted trips to cover U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, Guardsmen and Marines defending us against a Jihad hostile to all that we hold dear. In the dark days when Al Anbar province Iraq was the bloodiest place on the planet -- John McCain was one of the few in Congress brave enough to venture into that cauldron. I know, because I saw him there.

During those trips he listened to bright, brave young Americans wearing flak jackets and flight suits and became a steadfast supporter of a winning strategy for ending this long and costly conflict. But the senator's commitment goes far beyond political rhetoric. One of his sons is a student at our alma mater, the other is a U.S. Marine Lance Corporal, serving in harm's streets in Ramadi and Fallujah where we

used to dodge bullets, EIDs and RPGs. (Not only are his sons following the military, but Senator McCain comes from a military background. His grandfather, John S. McCain, Sr. was an Admiral who commanded a WWII task force in the Pacific. His father, Admiral John S. McCain Jr. was Commander in Chief of U.S. forces in the Pacific in the Vietnam era while his son was in a North Vietnamese prison. - Bob Novak)

The election in November will determine how we proceed on the most profoundly important matter confronting our nation: the crucial outcome of an unprovoked war being waged against us by radical Islam. All other issues, as important as they are, pale in comparison to achieving victory over those who seek to destroy our way of life.

Sen. McCain has pledged to win this war. We must do so, for the consequences of failure would be staggering. But, as he has acknowledged, he cannot do that without the support of conservatives who man the phone banks, raise the funds, walk the precincts and turn out the vote on Election Day. I hope my fellow conservatives will decide as I have, that we need John McCain as Commander in Chief. - Oliver North, *FoxNews.com*, 2/12/08

"CHURCH, "STATE AND FINANCES

Some 750,000 religious nonprofit organizations in America are required by law to share their Form 990 tax returns with anyone who asks to see them. Form 990s reveal income, and also information such as the compensation of key executives.

But what if you don't want people -- including Sen. Charles Grassley of the Senate Finance Committee -- to see your tax returns? No problem. Just call yourself a church.

Grassley last year requested financial data from six religious nonprofits known for having big non-church businesses. All six call themselves churches, although only three hold Sunday services. The due date was Dec. 6, but a month later only two of the six had complied with Grassley's request.

(The 'Grassley Six' - Kenneth & Gloria Copeland and Joyce Meyer met the deadline. Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn, Eddie Long and Randy & Paula White did not.)

One of the televangelists -- Creflo Dollar of Atlanta-based World Changers Church International -- went on *Larry King Live* and dared Grassley to get a subpoena or turn the matter over to the Internal Revenue Service.

Dollar's challenge to Grassley was a risky but carefully crafted response. If the matter goes to the IRS, it remains out of sight of the public -- unless criminal charges are filed. If Grassley decides to issue subpoenas, the Republican senator risks alienating religious voters in a presidential election year.

At least Creflo Dollar has an actual church among the many organizations he runs. Not so with some of the others.

Benny Hinn Ministries, another Grassley target, calls itself a church even though it doesn't hold regular Sunday services or engage in traditional church functions such as "marryin', buryin', and baptizing." Hinn garners more than \$100 million annually, according to the Trinity Foundation, a ministry watchdog. No one knows for sure where Hinn's money goes, but an NBC *Dateline* investigation in 2002 found some of the money went to pay for private jets and \$1,000-per-night hotel suites for Hinn and his family when he is on the road doing crusades. . . .

The problem is huge. Religious organizations that provide very little information about their spending receive from donors at least \$1 billion per year. Popular televangelists Rod Parsley, Joel Osteen, and Robert Schuller all refuse to disclose financial information to the public. - Rusty Leonard and Warren Smith, *WORLD*, 1/26/08

CHARITY: BODIES, NOT SOULS

Viewers of The Inspiration Networks, Trinity Broadcasting Network, and Sky Angel are familiar with heart-wrenching infomercials from the Christian Children's Fund (CCF). Founded in 1938, it is one of the nation's largest relief organizations, with a 2006 income exceeding \$206 million. It is also average or slightly above average in financial efficiency, with less than 20 percent of CCF income typically going to fundraising and administrative costs.

CCF also does, more or less, what it says it is going to do: It feeds children. If it called itself the Children's Fund, no one could object. But Christians who contribute to it thinking that, because of the name, the Christian Children's Fund helps children spiritually as well as materially should think again. Kristen Hongisto, a spokesperson for CCF, told *WORLD*, "We do not call ourselves a ministry. We are not Bible-based. We are not a Christian organization except in the sense that we do good work."

CCF has no doctrinal statement, is not a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and does not require any statement of faith for any staff or board members. . . .

So if CCF is not a Christian organization, why does it market itself to Christian audiences under the name "Christian?" Perhaps because, as bank robber Willie Sutton said about his favored destinations, "That's where the money is." Mainstream media stories generally ignore the inconvenient truth that religious conservatives -- whether measured by amount of money given, percentage of income given, or hours volunteered -- are more generous than progressive liberals. . . .

So CCF's continued use of the name "Christian" is a smart move. Sure, many Christians watching Christian television ads might reasonably expect that CCF would care about souls as well as bodies. Yet, many viewers make assumptions and write checks. CCF does some good work, but so do other organizations. . . . - RL & WC1/12/08

STIMULATING NONSENSE

The hottest buzzword of the day is "economic stimulus." Virtually every politician and pundit agrees the government must act quickly to forestall a recession by increasing consumer spending. President Bush and the Democratic leadership in the House quickly got together on a \$150 billion package that also includes tax incentives for business investment.

The Republican and Democratic presidential contenders back "stimulus" too. (Ron Paul is the exception.)

Any government program that wins the support of the political class and media commentators makes me suspicious.

The economy does seem to be slowing, and there was a net loss of jobs in January. The housing industry is sluggish and the credit market tight because of the subprime-mortgage problems. So, to "get the economy moving," the anointed experts want the government to quickly put cash in our hands. When we rush out to spend it, the story goes, the economy will get out of the ditch.

Interesting theory, but it's hardly new, and it's been demolished many times before by free-market economists. One problem, which George Mason University economist Russell Roberts observed, is that the money that will allegedly be "injected" into the economy is already in the economy. So how can it be a stimulus?

"The politicians are always going to inject some amount of money into the hands of consumers and into the economy, like a doctor giving a lifesaving blood transfusion," Roberts says. "But where does the economic injection come from? It has to come from inside the system. It's not an outside stimulus like the chest paddles or the trans-

fusion. It means taking money from someone or somewhere inside the system and giving it to someone else."

The federal government is in the red. Bush's new budget has a \$400 billion deficit. There's no lockbox with \$100 billion in it. So to give everyone a tax rebate, the government will have to borrow more money. But that only moves the cash from one part of the economy to another. As Roberts says, "It's like taking a bucket of water from the deep end of a pool and dumping it into the shallow end."

Unless the government cuts spending, which the theory says would neutralize the stimulus, the only other way to get the money will be to raise taxes or to have the Fed create money -- inflation -- which would raise the price of everything.

How will that stimulate anything but the politicians' short-term approval ratings? . . .

The other forgotten principle is that consumption can't cause prosperity. Yes, consumer spending is 70 percent of GDP, but consumption is the result -- not the cause -- of economic growth. You can't consume what hasn't been produced.

Milton Friedman was right. There really is no such thing as a free lunch.

I'm not saying the government can do nothing about the economy. The best thing it can do is get itself out of the way. Economies boom when governments remove impediments to production: high taxes, regulations, subsidies, trade barriers, manipulation of the money supply, etc. Removing those should be permanent -- not temporary -- measures. - John Stossel, *townhall.com*, 2/13/08

THE MORAL ECONOMY

In this heated campaign season, housing prices are plummeting. Banks write off billions of dollars in unrecoverable debt. The stock market wildly fluctuates almost hourly. Candidates promise painless and near instant relief.

But despite the politicians' rhetoric, it is not hard to understand why America is in trouble.

First, there has been too much madcap real estate speculation. In recent years, housing prices were driven sky-high on the expectation that almost anyone, often with little security, could profit by borrowing easy money to buy and sell property.

Too many investors lost the old pedestrian notion that the purpose of a house was to be a home in which to live, to raise a family and to take pride in ownership. Its acquisition used to be a multi-year, if not once-in-a-lifetime, investment -- not quite comparable to the easy buying or selling of volatile paper stocks and bonds. Others did not have the means to afford the type of home they purchased, once risky variable interest rates climbed.

Gasoline prices, meanwhile, are well over \$3 a gallon in many places, sucking hundreds of dollars out of annual family budgets. But how long did we really believe that oil-exporting belligerents in the Middle East, Latin America and Russia, or our economic rivals in China and India, were going to allow the United States to continue gobbling up a quarter of the world's daily output at \$20 a barrel?

American households have on average the largest houses in the world, the most cars and plentiful conveniences like big-screen televisions and DVD players. Yet there is a growing sense that we are paying the tab by borrowing trillions from the Chinese, Japanese, Europeans and South Koreans.

Some economists might argue that it is a win/win situation to have others toil to send us their cheap consumer goods, lend us the money to buy them and get little interest back on their debt. But when in history has a debtor ever felt better -- in a moral, psychological or

practical sense -- than his lender? ("For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and *thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow*. . . ." Deuteronomy 15:6 - N.P.)

Our candidates avoid that sort of honest tough talk. Republicans instead want an indebted government to pump up the economy by interest-rate cuts and tax rebates. And if we listen to Democrats, you would think no American could survive another maxed-out credit card without another new government bailout program.

Yet in truth, there are few options left to stimulate the already frenetic economy.

The United States is still racking up large annual budget deficits and trade imbalances -- while serially piling up aggregate national debt. Soon America won't be able to meet its ever-expanding Medicare and Social Security obligations.

Current interest rates are not historically high. So cutting them might well convince our foreign borrowers to take their capital elsewhere for higher returns. And we can't pay for the federal programs we now provide, let alone expand them to offer universal health care or heavily subsidized college tuition.

What then can we do?

First, at this late date, Republicans shouldn't vote for any candidate who promises another tax cut without first offering a matching slash in expenditures. And Democrats should reject any candidate who promises another multi-billion dollar entitlement without detailing how the additional revenue is to be raised.

Second, instead of demanding new billion-dollar programs for health care and education, we should take more responsibility for our own welfare.

Americans need to readjust their budget priorities. One might be able to believe that a \$200 dollar a month private catastrophic health plan is out of the reach of most Americans -- if we were also to hear that sales of video games, cell phones and plasma televisions have crashed.

Third, we need to ignore the alarmist hysteria, calm down and appreciate that life is better than at any time in the last 5,000 years of civilization. People are living longer; we're healthier; and millions of Americans have the opportunities to travel, communicate and avoid physical drudgery that were once reserved only for a tiny aristocracy. There is plenty of excess in modern American life that can be shed without real hardship.

Finally, we must view our present economic challenges in a larger philosophical and ethical framework -- and redefine success as being able to pay off what we owe, and spend only what we earn.

Who knows? Knowledge that we live in a nation that has a strong currency, no annual deficit and no aggregate debt to be passed on to our children might bring Americans as much pride and joy as the next iPhone or trip to Vegas. - Victor Davis Hanson, *townhall.com*, 1/24/08

THE LATE GREAT SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

On the Ides of October the first baby boomer applied for Social Security retirement. A Maryland teacher, born a second after midnight on Jan. 1, 1946, will become eligible to receive early retirement benefits next New Year's Day.

And so begins the next crisis.

When Social Security was set up, its supporters pooh-poohed critics who warned that by not investing the collected funds the government was setting up a major fiasco. The pooh-poohers were wrong, of course, the skeptics right.

Now all those baby boomers whose FICA withholding kept the

system afloat for years will begin to drain the funds. Soon, the money going to retirees will far exceed money coming in. Hence the crisis.

What to do?

Putting the whole thing on an investment basis is essential. But we still have to pay out generations expecting retirement help whose funds were *not* invested. Raise FICA taxes? Been there, endured that. Raise the retirement age to say, 72? Yikes.

To postpone Social Security's inherent insolvency by either a dramatic tax increase or a setting back of the retirement age -- or both -- would be to admit, quite plainly, the swindle at the heart of the system, the system that politicians devised and politicians exploited and politicians still praise.

And as for a new government health care plan: Fix Social Security first!

This is Common Sense. - Columnist Paul Jacob, 10/22/07

DARWIN: TOO OLD- FASHIONED TO BE TRUE

New York Times columnist John Tierney, recently offered a materialist version of "intelligent design": All of us are actually characters in a computer simulation devised by some technologically advanced future civilization.

Fanciful to the extreme, sure, but the growing number of such theories -- life comes from the past (Mars, when it was theoretically livable) or future (Tierney) -- is one more indication that Darwinism no longer satisfies. Reporters pretending to referee the origin debate used to have it easy: slick evolutionists vs. hick creationists, progress vs. regress. Now, Darwinism is looking fuddy-duddy, and sophisticated critiques of it are becoming more diverse.

I interviewed Michael Behe, author of "Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution" and a new book, "The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism." This Lehigh University biology professor points out that "Darwin and his contemporaries knew very little about the cell, which is the foundation of life. Microscopes of that era were too crude to see many critical details. So 19th-century scientists thought the cell was simple protoplasm, like a piece of microscopic Jell-O."

Behe explained what has changed: "Now we know that the cell is chock-full of sophisticated nanotechnology, literally machines made from molecules. The same goes for the universe. In Darwin's era, the universe was thought to be pretty simple. Now we know its basic laws are balanced on a razor's edge to allow for life and that our planet may be the only one in the universe that could support intelligent life. The more we know about nature, the more design we see."

We also have data now from a half-century of careful malaria-watching, which -- because malaria reproduce so quickly -- let us see what happens to thousands of generations of parasites that are under constant attack from man-made drugs. Darwin predicted that random mutation and natural selection would lead to the development of new species, but no new kinds of malaria have emerged, just tiny changes in existing strains.

The mass killer HIV also has provided evidence to disprove Darwin. Behe points out that HIV, like malaria, "is a microbe that occurs in astronomical numbers. What's more, its mutation rate is 10,000 times greater than that of most other organisms. So in just the past few decades, HIV has actually undergone more of certain kinds of mutations than all cells have endured since the beginning of the world. Yet all those mutations, while medically important, have changed the functioning virus very little."

Behe's summary of HIV: "It still has the same number of genes that work in the same way. There is no new molecular machinery. If we

see that Darwin's mechanism can only do so little even when given its best opportunities, we can decisively conclude that random mutation did not build the machinery of life."

It's important to remember that Behe and other "intelligent design" believers are talking about macroevolution, a change from one kind of creature to another, and not the microevolution of longer beaks, different-colored wings and so forth; no one doubts that microevolution happens. Behe sees development as an incredibly difficult maze that an intelligent agent could navigate but an utterly blind process could not -- and Darwin's most radical claim was that evolution is utterly blind.

One more analogy: Some Darwinists have portrayed evolution as a walk up the stairs of a building, but it's hard to keep going higher if many of the steps are missing. Behe says Darwin did not know that "there are many biological steps, called amino acids, between biological floors, and many are missing. Even plentiful microbes have great difficulty jumping missing biological stairs to go from floor to floor. So we can conclude that life did not ascend by Darwinian evolution." - Marvin Olasky, *townhall.com*, 10/25/07

PORNOGRAPHY ON MILITARY BASES

The U.S. Department of Defense is ignoring a law which forbids the sale of pornography on military bases. In military exchanges throughout the world, our Department of Defense does a brisk business in the sale of pornography, both magazines and videos. In 1996, Congress passed the Military Honor and Decency Act which forbids the sale of pornography on military bases.

But the Department of Defense is defying the law and ignoring Congress. Congress banned pornography after sexual harassment of women in the military became a major problem, and military families complained that children were exposed to pornography in the military stores. Now, 11 years later, the Department of Defense is still selling pornography. Porn is even sold in our nation's military academies.

When contacted about their ignoring the law, Department of Defense responded by saying they planned to continue selling pornography. Incredibly, the Department of Defense does not consider such publications as Penthouse, Playboy, Playboy's Nude Playmates, and Playmates in Bed magazines to be sexually explicit! That would come as a surprise to Hugh Hefner and the thousands of American soldiers who buy these magazines.

MILITARY PROMOTES GAMBLING ADDICTION

The U.S. military is operating slot machines in its bases around the world, taking some \$130,000,000 from those defending us, with those games of no chance. One Marine, Aaron Walsh, was shot down in Afghanistan. He recovered from that but not from the slot machine addiction he acquired, thanks to the military slots. The slot machines run by his hometown of Bangor, Maine proved his undoing. He had been booted out of the Marines because of his addiction, which the Marines caused.

When he arrived home, his addiction returned thanks to the greed of Bangor. Eventually, heavily in debt, he killed himself with a gun.

Prof. John Kindt, a leading expert on gambling, appeared on CNN and said, "The military should not be a predator on its own soldiers and their families. . . To be a predator of their own people that are serving their country is outrageous." In England, top-secret Cruise missile information was sold by a U.S. Naval officer to help pay for his gambling habit. What other military secrets may be sold when the gambling fever takes over more of our military personnel? . . .

Since the Congress and most state legislatures do the bidding of the gambling promoters, it may not be surprising that the military have adopted the same moral standards. It is tragic that, while expecting the best of its personnel, the military provides booze, porn and gambling, vices that never improve character, performance or vigilance. - EFD *The National Statesman*. Above two from *Plains Baptist Challenger*, 1/08

BR-R-R! WHERE DID GLOBAL WARMING GO?

The stark headline appeared just over a year ago. "2007 to be 'warmest on record,'" BBC News reported on Jan. 4, 2007. Citing experts in the British government's Meteorological Office, the story announced that "the world is likely to experience the warmest year on record in 2007," surpassing the all-time high reached in 1998. But a funny thing happened on the way to the planetary hot flash. Much of the planet grew bitterly cold.

In South America, for example, the start of winter last year was one of the coldest every observed. According to Eugenio Hackbart, chief meteorologist of the MetSul Weather Center in Brazil, "a brutal cold wave brought record low temperatures, widespread frost, snow, and major energy disruption." In Buenos Aires, it snowed for the first time in 89 years, while in Peru the cold was so intense that hundreds of people died and the government declared a state of emergency in 14 of the country's 24 provinces. In August, Chile's agriculture minister lamented "the toughest winter we have seen in the past 50 years," which caused losses of at least \$200 million in destroyed crops and livestock. Latin Americans weren't the only ones shivering.

University of Oklahoma geophysicist David Deming, a specialist in temperature and heat flow, notes in the *Washington Times* that "unexpected bitter cold swept the entire Southern Hemisphere in 2007." Johannesburg experienced its first significant snowfall in a quarter-century. Australia had its coldest ever June. New Zealand's vineyards lost much of their 2007 harvest when spring temperatures dropped to record lows.

Closer to home, 44.5 inches of snow fell in New Hampshire last month, breaking the previous record of 43 inches, set in 1876. And the Canadian government is forecasting the coldest winter in 15 years. Now all of these may be short-lived weather anomalies, mere blips in the path of the global climatic warming that Al Gore and a host of alarmists proclaim the deadliest threat we face. But what if the frigid conditions that have caused so much distress in recent months signal an impending era of global cooling?

"Stock up on fur coats and felt boots!" advises Oleg Sorokhtin, a fellow of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences and senior scientist at Moscow's Shirshov Institute of Oceanography. "The latest data. . . say that earth has passed the peak of its warmer period, and a fairly cold spell will set in quite soon, by 2012." Sorokhtin dismisses the conventional global warming theory that greenhouse gases, especially human-emitted carbon dioxide, is causing the earth to grow hotter. Like a number of other scientists, he points to solar activity - sunspots and solar flares, which wax and wane over time - as having the greatest effect on climate. "Carbon dioxide is not to blame for global climate change," Sorokhtin writes in an essay for *Novosti*. "Solar activity is many times more powerful than the energy produced by the whole of mankind." In a recent paper for the Danish National Space Center, physicists Henrik Svensmark and Elgil Friis-Christensen concur. "The sun. . . appears to be the main forcing agent in global climate change," they write.

Given the number of worldwide cold events, it is no surprise that 2007 didn't turn out to be the warmest ever. In fact, 2007's global

temperature was essentially the same as that in 2006 - and 2005, and 2004, and every year back to 2001. The record set in 1998 has not been surpassed. *For nearly a decade now, there has been no global warming*. Even though atmospheric carbon dioxide continues to accumulate -- it's up about 4 percent since 1998 -- the global mean temperature has remained flat. That raises some obvious questions about the theory that CO₂ is the cause of climate change.

Yet so relentlessly has the alarmist scenario been hyped, and so disdainfully have dissenting views been dismissed, that millions of people assume Gore must be right when he insists: "The debate in the scientific community is over."

But it isn't. Just last month, more than 100 scientists signed a strongly worded open letter pointing out that climate change is a well-known natural phenomenon, and that adapting to it is far more sensible than attempting to prevent it. Because slashing carbon dioxide emissions means retarding economic development, they warned, "the current UN approach of CO₂ reduction is likely to increase human suffering from future climate change rather than to decrease it."

Climate science isn't a religion, and those who dispute its leading theory are not heretics. Much remains to be learned about how and why climate changes, and there is neither virtue nor wisdom in an emotional rush to counter global warming - especially if what's coming is a global Big Chill.

(So far, the winter of '08 in most of the country has been frigid. Just ask folks in the Midwest and Northeast- N. P.) - Jeff Jacoby, *Boston Globe*, 1/6/08

TEEN BIRTH RATES RISE WITH SEX ED

When adults repeatedly tell youth, "Do what comes naturally, just take 'precautions,'" the results are very predictable: emotional damage, an epidemic of STDs and, as the new CDC numbers show, more teen pregnancy. How anyone can blame an increase of unplanned pregnancy on abstinence education when abstinence receives roughly 1/12 of the federal funding given to the failed contraceptive message is beyond us. When are we going to stop promoting a message that seriously damages kids, their families and their communities? - *The Sword of the Lord*, 1/25/08

NOT-SO-GREAT BRITAIN

Where there are large concentrations of Muslims in England, "no-go" zones are being established and, according to Michael Nazir-Ali, the Church of England's Bishop of Rochester, non-Muslims who trespass in such neighborhoods risk attack.

Nazir-Ali, a native of Pakistan and convert to Christianity, writes in *The Sunday Telegraph* that a spiritual vacuum in Britain, along with its indifference to the rise of Islamic extremism and a growing "multi-faith" society, is putting its future in jeopardy. He is not alone. A poll of the General Synod -- the Anglican Church's parliament -- shows that its senior leaders also believe that Britain is being damaged by uncontrolled immigration.

Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights, believes the country is "sleepwalking into segregation." David Davis, the shadow home secretary, goes further, accusing Muslims of promoting "voluntary apartheid" by shutting themselves off from surrounding culture and demanding immunity from criticism.

No wonder Britons are growing increasingly uneasy, even despondent, about life in their country. A poll conducted by the respected YouGov organization and published in the Dec. 30 *London Times* found that more than half of all men and four in 10 women said

they would rather live abroad if given the choice. The main reasons are antisocial behavior among a growing underclass and immigration.

Three British cities already have high Muslim populations, thanks to immigration, high birth rates, and conversions (but don't try converting any of them to another faith, which is one reason they are creating "no-go" zones). Seventeen percent of London's population is Muslim (1.3 million out of 7.5 million). In Luton, it's 14.6 percent. Birmingham has 14.3 percent.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has expressed concern about the loss of "Britishness" and the failure to learn English and embrace the national heritage. But unless he does something to slow, even reverse Muslim immigration, Britain, as we've known it, will be lost and radical Islam will remake Britain in its own image. - Cal Thomas, *WORLD*, 1/26

SHARIA LAW IN GREAT BRITAIN?

The Archbishop of Canterbury has instant access to the media and his office carries a great deal of symbolic weight in Great Britain, where he is the senior cleric in the established church. That said, the current archbishop, *Rowan Williams*, seems to attract an unprecedented amount of controversy. (He is head of the Anglican Church, worldwide and called Episcopalians in the U.S. - N.P.)

As a matter of fact, the Archbishop's current controversy now threatens his leadership, with senior figures calling for his resignation and even his predecessor lambasting his arguments. Some in the media are even questioning his state of mind, asking what many others must be thinking.

What got the Archbishop in such trouble? He called the establishment of some kind of Islamic Sharia law in Britain inevitable. . . .

The reaction was explosive. Influential columnist Ruth Gledhill of *The London Times* asked the obvious question: "**Has the Archbishop gone bonkers?**" This is how she saw the issue:

And now Queen Elizabeth II's very own Archbishop -- and let's not forget she is his Church's Supreme Governor -- wants to introduce a new 'jurisdiction into this realm of England.' And an Islamic one at that!

It is one thing for judges to take Sharia into account, as has happened in Germany. It is quite another to follow the line the Archbishop is suggesting. It led to near disaster in Ontario, Canada two years ago and would have created untold and unnecessary distress here were it to be implemented here.

The Archbishop has staked everything on trying to maintain unity in his own Anglican Communion. At the same time, he is advocating a policy that could only fragment the society around him.

In another column, Gledhill would tie the Archbishop's proposal to "intellectual arrogance." Whatever the cause, the Archbishop's proposal has caused a conflagration in Britain. The Queen, who constitutionally serves as the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, is said to believe that Archbishop Williams is undermining the credibility of his office and of his church. (He is already tearing his denomination apart through his weakness on homosexuality. - N.P.)

Europe is fast abandoning its Christian heritage, but when the Archbishop of Canterbury sets himself as an advocate for Sharia law in Britain, some key watershed has been crossed. Ruth Gledhill's question is the right one. - AlbertMohler.com, 2/13/08

RETRIBUTION FOR CAPITAL MURDER

Retribution is the goal of restoring the scales of moral justice to balance as possible.

For instance, when someone thievs, the objective is to restore the victim to his condition prior to the loss. This requires restitution

equal to the theft plus a penalty to cover the lost use of that money and the intangible damage to his confidence and security. Civil law is the easiest illustration for understanding retribution. We quantify all sorts of things in civil courts for the sake of saying what the offender owes, and the idea is to restore balance by taking from the criminal and repaying the victim.

But there are always two victims of every crime: the particular person and the moral fabric of the society itself. For every infraction against this fabric, we assess varying degrees of penance including jail time, community service, and fines. These all have their own merits, but the retributive purpose is to make the criminal pay enough to restore balance to the moral universe just as he must to be victim. Not only is this about compensating those who have lost, but it is about forcing the offender to pay his debt to society so that he may satisfy the demands of just retribution. Once paid, we are no longer owed, and he no longer owes.

What, then, is the proper retribution for murder? As death penalty opponents are so fond of saying, "Executing the murderer will not bring his victim back to life." That, of course, is true. It's just as true, however, that giving him life in prison without the possibility of parole will also fail to accomplish a resurrection. And that's the point. There is simply nothing the murderer can do to truly restore the social fabric to the status quo ante for the obvious reason that there is no way to replace missing people. Nonetheless, as history and the Bible so clearly have held, blood alone can atone for shed blood. By requiring his life of him, we make him pay the only correct price and force him to fully pay it. This balances both the moral fabric as well as the murderer's personal register.

Once we comprehend this distinction between murder and all other crimes (which can be restituted for), it should be clear that retribution not only justifies execution, it requires it. Execution is the only correct penalty-in-kind for murder. - Andrew Tallman, *TH*, 1/25/08

A recent example of failing to do this here in Georgia comes from a Letter to the Editor in the Atlanta paper for Feb. 9:

TALE OF 2 COUNTIES

It's Georgia's sad Dickens tale, except this is "A Tale of Two Counties." The contrast of justice between the Dawson and Fulton county judicial systems could not be more black and white.

In Dawson County, a killer is caught, prosecuted and convicted for the brutal murder of an innocent young girl within 30 days. Good police work and expeditious judicial process led to the swift conviction of the killer.

Turn the page now to Fulton County. Because of poor incarceration of prisoners, Brian Nichols managed to free himself in the Fulton County Courthouse, kill people in front of dozens of witnesses and elude the entire Fulton County police force, to finally be captured by Gwinnett County police. Fast-forward: The judge in the case has resigned, *\$2 million has been spent on Nichols' defense so far*, Nichols nearly negotiated his escape. The media have made Fulton County the Keystone Kops of the nation. It would be comical if it weren't such a Dickensian tragedy. - Richard Erickson

According to the Atlanta Journal/Constitution for Feb. 17, Fulton County tax payers have spent \$216,000 to pick a jury to hear the death penalty case against this man, who killed a judge and 3 others in cold blood in front of many witnesses. The original judge says that thousands of people know he is guilty. My question is: Why not take him out behind the Court House and dispatch him into eternity at the hands of a police firing squad. That would save a lot of money, balance the scales of moral justice and fulfill the command of God in Genesis 9:6 and several other passages of Scripture. - N. P.

THE SOFT SIDE OF EUTHANASIA

Charlotte Allen doesn't want to sign a roadmap that could lead to euthanasia. That's why she refused to sign what is now commonly known as a "living will" when she was diagnosed last year with breast cancer. Writing in Sunday's edition of *The Washington Post*, Allen recounted her experience overcoming "efforts to persuade me to sign onto the currently fashionable notion of a 'good death.'" . . . In the course of her hospitalization and treatment, Charlotte Allen had time to consider what the living will and the concept of a "good death" might really mean. She explains:

*In fact, when I contemplate the concept of "dying well," I can't avoid the uneasy feeling that it actually means "dying when we, the intellectual elite, think it is appropriate for you to die." Consider what's happened in recent years: The classic Hippocratic Oath and its prohibition against physicians giving people a "deadly drug" has collapsed with the growing acceptance of such notions as physician-assisted suicide, the "right to die," and even giving some very sick, disabled or demented people a little push over the edge, as seems to be the case in the Netherlands. People facing end-of-life decisions may well feel subtle pressure from the medical and bioethical establishments to make the choice that will save the most money, as well as spare their relatives and society at large the burden of their continued existence. A "good death" -- that's the English translation of the Greek word that begins with an "e." You know, **euthanasia**.*

She also traced how the movement toward a "good death" has spread to places once thought safe from the temptation, such as hos-

pices. As she reports, just a few months ago "the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine reversed its long-standing opposition to physician-assisted suicide (which is legal in Oregon and said to be quietly practiced by many doctors elsewhere) and adopted a new set of rules that effectively endorsed the practice. The academy even decided on a new euphemism for the procedure: "physician-assisted death." Even where assisted suicide is illegal, many hospices now endorse "terminal sedation," the ethically murky practice of anesthetizing terminal patients, then cutting off their nutrition and liquids.

Changing "physician-assisted" suicide" to "physician-assisted death" is a clever manipulation of the language, but it cannot disguise the fact that the key word to the concept is *death* -- assisted by a physician. . . .

Christians understand the reality of death, but we must also affirm the gift of life. Furthermore, the Bible makes clear that we are not the masters of our own fates, nor the sovereigns of our own souls. In the end, our lives are in God's hands. This society's transit down a freeway to euthanasia should concern all citizens, but Christians in particular.

The idea of a self-defined "good death" has its place in the pagan cultures of antiquity, but not in the biblical culture of Christianity. Given advances in medical treatments and technologies, end of life issues can be truly vexing and excruciatingly difficult. Be sure you know what you are signing when someone presents you with a form for a living will. Are you sure it is truly consistent with your Christian beliefs? Are you sure that those reading the document will understand -- and follow -- what you sign? - AlbertMohler.com, 10/16/07



Christian
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