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Engaging Culture: Not Easy, Not Optional



Cover Story

University of North Carolina Wilmington Professor Mike Adams began his professorial career in the normal way, as an atheist and political liberal. But then he did something distasteful: he converted to Christianity. As it happens, changing worldviews changed his politics, and Adams found himself committing the one unforgivable sin in the eyes of liberal professors: he became a conservative. This put Adams in opposition to many of his fellow faculty members at UNCW, a tension that grew worse as Adams became a popular conservative columnist. So when Adams applied for a full professorship in criminology

and sociology, a promotion he was fully qualified for, the UNCW brass stiff-armed him, arguing that his conservative columns had hurt the university and that he should therefore be denied the promotion.

Attempts to resolve the conflict internally failed, and Adams filed suit against the school. The Alliance Defense Fund took up his case. Attorneys for the university went so far as to argue that Adams had no First Amendment right to publish his columns as long as they ran counter to the school's institutional worldview.

Unfortunately, similar situations are becoming increasingly common.

The Battles Are Heating Up

The university campus has become the arena of choice in which postmodern,

secular humanist, and Marxist-Leninist ideologues wage their cultural battles. In recent months a spate of universities have attempted to hamstring Christian student organizations by forcing them to admit non-Christians as group leaders or else lose school funding, their school monikers, and their campus meeting places. Academics who espouse anything other than politically correct views on a host of issues — including same-sex marriage, biological origins, and the veracity of Scripture — are regarded as “anti-intellectual.”¹

But the university isn't the only battleground. Christians in the entertainment industry almost have to live closeted lifestyles, lest they be found out and blacklisted. An unforgiving press corps demonizes Christian politicians. Labor laws may soon silence those who don't think it permissible for men who feel like women to use the women's restroom. And, depending on outcomes in the judiciary, employers may soon have to pay stiff penalties if they object to buying their employees contraceptives and abortifacients.

In each case, Christians submitting to what the late Chuck Colson called “the spiral of silence” worsens the problem. Middle ground no longer exists. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote, “Silence in the face of evil is evil itself. To not speak is to speak; to not act is to act.”

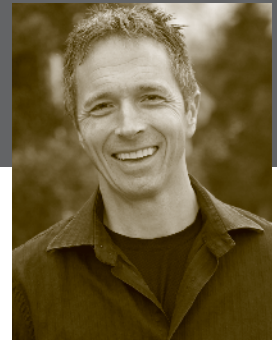
Engagement Is Not Optional

As we pointed out in the December 2011 *Journal*, appropriate cultural engagement is a responsibility Christians have inherited. From the rescue of abandoned

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from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers



On May 8, 61 percent of North Carolinians voted for Amendment One, which enshrined marriage between a man and woman as the only domestic legal union valid or recognized in the state.

One would expect that same-sex marriage (SSM) advocates, who demand that politicians follow the “will of the people” when they think the polling favors them, would have replied, “We are disappointed but the people have spoken.”

Instead, judging by on-line chatter, they’ve decided that the voters are just “bigots” or “haters.”

Commenters on online stories and blogs have used barbs like:

- “North Carolina — keeping hate alive.”
- “... really brings out the human garbage side of our species.”
- “NC’s electorate is dumb as trash.”

Even the mainstream media is running with this theme. One op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times* ran with the headline: “Obama, gay marriage and a win for bigotry in N.C.”

Accusations of “Bigotry” and “Hate” Are a Political Strategy

In 1987, Marshall K. Kirk and Erastes Pill wrote an article called “The Overhauling of Straight America,” encouraging gay activists to vilify their opponents by accusing them of “hate.”

Accusations of evil motives are the nuclear option of argument: “Our opponents argue from evil intent so their arguments should be dismissed without further consideration.”

Such a strategy occasionally makes

sense. It’s a waste of time, for example, to wade through the pleas of neo-Nazis who call for the adulation of Adolf Hitler. Those who argue that people of color are less than fully human should be similarly ignored.

That the SSM community would malign their opponents as evil, though, is either a sign that they’re out of good arguments or that they think they can

persuade voters to see them as victims whose civil rights are being trespassed. Sexual orientation is apparently the new skin color.

To put it mildly, this line of

argument cheapens the struggle for civil rights. Hundreds of thousands of people fought and died for the right of people with dark skin to be considered fully human. Isn’t it a little pretentious to hijack that history based on one’s sexual attraction to people of the same sex?

No one doubts that true haters do exist, but this “rhetoric of hate” is nothing but a cynical ploy. It poisons civic debate and makes it difficult to discuss complex issues in a mature fashion.

How to Respond to Name-Calling

Summit teaches that man-woman marriage is God’s idea. We even feature a speaker whose testimony includes coming out of the homosexual lifestyle, getting married, and having children. To many SSM advocates, this makes us bigots. We’ve even been called a hate group.

But simply calling someone a bigot or hater doesn’t make it so. According to the *Oxford American Dictionary* a bigot is

“a person with strong and prejudiced views who will not listen to the opinion of others.” If someone calls you a bigot, you might say:

- “I’m sorry that you feel you have to call names instead of making an argument. Just because you call someone that name doesn’t mean it is true.”
- “A bigot is ‘a person with strong and prejudiced views who will not listen to the opinion of others.’ If you’re not willing to listen to my point of view, then who is really the bigot here?”

Be careful, though. The point isn’t to be smart-alecky, but to demonstrate by our words and actions that all humans are created in the image of God, that the effects of the fall include sexual brokenness, and that redemption through Christ is powerful enough to restore us and make us whole.

Name-calling as an argument is spiritually as well as logically flawed. It says that one’s opponents are somehow less than human. Its very use demonstrates that the arguer doesn’t understand what it means to be made in God’s image.

Accusations of hate and bigotry are hurtful, but they won’t stop us from introducing a generation of young adults to the good news of redemption: we are broken, but we aren’t stuck that way. Jesus came that we might have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10).

It’s no secret that Americans disagree with one another about many things. These disagreements occasionally lead to sharp words. But it’s time to stop lobbing accusations of bigotry and hate and start treating difficult issues with the seriousness that they deserve.

“Simply calling someone a bigot or hater doesn’t make it so.”

Jeff Myers

How to Take Sociology 101

Leading Questions: Socialism

- Would GPA redistribution lower academic standards?
- Would wealth redistribution lower the overall standard of living?
- Why was the Berlin Wall constructed?
- Why was the Berlin Wall destroyed?
- Do you favor a wall along the southern border of the U.S.?
- Would you support a wall on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande?
- Are all nations and cultures equal?
- Morally, is a society that must build walls to keep its own citizens in the same as a society that builds walls to keep citizens of other countries out?

Leading Questions: Same-Sex Marriage

- By what authority does a government redefine an institution that predates its existence?
- Does judicial redefinition of marriage violate the separation of church and state?
- Do you support incestuous marriages?
- Do you support polygamy?
- (Assuming the answer to the preceding questions is no) Why don't you support marriage equality?

Courtesy of Mike Adams

infants on Roman hillsides, to equal education and legal standing for women, to the abolition of the slave trade, Christian engagement is a fundamental part of what we consider to be good about Western Civilization.

The call to engage culture, in the spirit of the apostle Paul in Athens (Acts 17), is still as big a part of Christ's disciple-making commission as it ever was. Tactics and points of engagement have changed, but the call remains.

Mike Adams eventually won his lawsuit and has since been teaching as a full professor at UNCW. The experience has propelled him to champion students being quieted by university speech codes, often aimed at hushing those with a biblical worldview. "It's helped me to teach kids at Summit," Adams said. "We've handled it in a Christian way. I tried to resolve things [at UNCW] internally, but they wouldn't allow me to do so."

But cultural engagement doesn't

ordinarily start in the legal arena, or even the political. For those wanting to intensify their engagement, we suggest three steps.

Cultural Engagement Step One: Ask, Don't Tell

Too often Christians try to engage by preaching to the culture. If no one listens, they raise their voices. Summit students learn that the key to unlocking cultural engagement is asking questions. If you preach, people can ignore you. If you ask questions, though, they have little choice but to converse and defend their assumptions.

Through years of teaching at Summit, Adams has developed a strategy for cultural engagement. This summer he's introducing a new lecture to Summit students: "How to Take Sociology 101." In it he walks students through a series of thoughtful yet direct questions they can ask a sociology professor spouting the benefits of socialism, same-sex marriage, or other postmodern or secular

humanist-based positions.

Of the dozens of books Adams has purchased from the Summit bookstore through his years of teaching (one summer he left Manitou Springs with fifty-two books: one for each week of the year), he considers Greg Koukl's *Tactics* to be the most helpful. "Greg nailed it, he really did," Adams said.

Tactics introduces readers to ways they can engage skeptics about any number of issues. The foundation for Koukl's approach is what he calls the "Columbo Tactic," named after the TV detective. Koukl writes:

The key to the Columbo tactic is to go on the offensive in an inoffensive way by using carefully selected questions to productively advance the conversation. Simply put, never make a statement, at least at first, when a question will do the job.²

The advantages to using questions while engaging others are numerous, according to Koukl. For one, they're flattering to our interlocutors. Second, questioning our interlocutors educates us on what they believe, setting up a better conversation. Third, as Koukl says, "questions allow you to make progress on a point without being pushy." And most importantly, "carefully placed questions put you in the driver's seat."³

The Columbo Tactic begins with two questions: "What do you mean by that?" and "How did you come to that conclusion?" The third step in Columbo is the use of leading questions (like those Adams has developed for his lecture on sociology). These questions help push the conversation forward in

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a non-abrasive fashion while cutting to the heart of a person's logic (or lack thereof). Koukl says:

If someone's thinking is flawed, the key to finding the error is to listen carefully to the reasons and then ask if the conclusions follow from the evidence. Point out errors with questions rather than statements. You might soften your challenge by phrasing your concern as a request for clarification or by suggesting an alternative with the words "Have you considered . . ." before offering your own ideas.⁴

Koukl spends the rest of the book helping culture engagers spot logical inconsistencies. The Columbo questions, though, set up the opportunity to get past rhetoric and get to the logic of a particular argument. When engaging others, questions are indispensable.

Cultural Engagement Step Two: Develop Personal Relationships

Engaging in individual conversations and focusing closely on the ebb and flow of each question and answer may seem an inefficient way to change the culture. But the possibility that it may actually be the best technique is a concept New Zealander Greg Fleming is pondering more and more.

Fleming and his family are on sabbatical in Manitou Springs, speaking to Summit students and diving deep into the world of ideas. Back home, Fleming is the CEO of the Maxim Institute, a New Zealand public policy think tank similar to America's Heritage Foundation. Maxim's aim is to speak into the political conversations in New

Zealand in a way that improves the everyday lives of the country's citizens.

When he began with Maxim, Fleming thought being louder and

more articulate than the opposition was the way to change culture. Now, with Maxim's flourishing internship program, Fleming is

beginning to see his role in equipping individuals — particularly the culture shapers of the next generation — one person at a time. "The dawning realization is that politics is downstream of culture," Fleming said. "I did not think that when I started; I was a reluctant convert. It's at the level of persons that ultimately culture is to be changed."

As New Zealand becomes more postmodern, engaging at a personal level is becoming an even more significant strategy. The population at large is not likely to pay attention overarching metanarratives, but it is more interested than ever in engaging in conversation.

Cultural Engagement Step Three: Engage Souls, Not Just Culture

No matter what form our engagement takes — a Columbo conversation with a professor, a mentoring relationship with a fellow church member, an internship program for college students, or film production in Hollywood — we need to remember that people make culture, and people are both rational and emotional. The same-sex marriage debate illustrates how emotional investment can shape

a conversation for better or worse (for a closer look at that issue, see the Summit Spotlight on page 7).

The fact that personal engagement

is necessary doesn't make political engagement irrelevant. If current trends continue, though, the number of voters who

support traditional values will continue to decline. How we vote is no replacement for how we engage our neighbors, family, and friends through direct, person-to-person persuasion. Good questions "keep on asking" even after the conversation is over, and good conversation echoes in a person's mind. Koukl aptly sums up the objective of cultural engagement: "All I want to do is put a stone in someone's shoe. I want to give him something worth thinking about, something he can't ignore because it continues to poke at him in a good way."⁵

Notes

1. "The Evangelical Rejection of Reason," Karl W. Giberson and Randall J. Stephenson, *The New York Times*, October 17, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/18/opinion/the-evangelical-rejection-of-reason.html?_r=1&emc=eta1.
2. Greg Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2009), p. 47.
3. Ibid, 48-49.
4. Ibid, 88.
5. Ibid, 38.

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Greg Koukl

a look at our world

news and commentary



Editor's Note: Our President Emeritus, Dr. David Noebel, helps us with research by sending 20-30 pages of clippings of each month's news. Below is a look at that reading. To see the complete list of Doc's clippings, go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/, open the PDF, and scroll to page 9, or call us at 866.786.6483.

Biblical Christianity

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It is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began... Pride always means enmity — it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man but enmity to God...

In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that — and therefore know yourself as nothing in comparison — you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and of course as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.

— C.S. Lewis
Mere Christianity

“I saw myself as I never had before. And the picture was ugly.”

Chuck Colson

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For a few moments after hearing these words Colson entered a dream world of flashbacks, revisiting past episodes in his life when high-blown pride had puffed him up into excesses of arrogant behavior. Some of the images that whirled before his eyes went back to his prep school days at Browne & Nichols; to his first marriage, with Nancy; and to his early successes as a young Boston lawyer. However, most of the scenes that were suddenly tormenting his troubled mind involved incidents from his rise to power in the Nixon administration. These flashbacks were accompanied by echoing voices of the White House

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"And then I prayed my first real prayer. 'God, I don't know how to find you, but I'm going to try! I'm not much the way I am now but somehow I want to give myself over to you.' I didn't know how to say more, so I repeated over and over the words, 'Take me. . .'"

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Sitting alone, staring out across the rocks to the Atlantic Ocean he loved, Charles Colson said these words: "Lord Jesus, I believe you. I accept you. Please come into my life. I commit it to you."

As he said this prayer of acceptance, Colson felt an immediate inner surge of strength and serenity. Old fears, tensions, and animosities were draining away. They were replaced by a new sense of peace and assurance. His conversion experience was complete. The long unrelenting and courageous effort that conversion begins was about to open as a new chapter in his life.

Global Warming

The injection of politics into the global-warming hypothesis has made it difficult to know where facts and falsehoods begin. While alarmists have been blam-

ing their fellow man for every hurricane, tornado and other ill wind whipped up by Mother Nature, science is now concluding that the cause of these damaging storms has nothing to do with human activity.

The surprise absolution of human beings from the crime of triggering severe weather phenomena was handed down by none other than the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), leader of the campaign to sell the world on anthropogenic climate change. The IPCC's Special Report on Extremes, released March 28, reads, "There is medium evidence and high agreement that long-term trends in normalized [property] losses have not been attributed to natural anthropogenic climate change." The breathtaking admission is a sign that objective science is reclaiming a leading role in the discussion.

— *The Washington Times*
April 9, 2012, p. 38

Sexual Revolution

Pascal Bruckner, a recovering French progressive, is wondering why [the sexual revolution of the 1960s hasn't made everyone happier and safer]. His latest book, *The Paradox of Love*, ponders how the sexual revolution didn't turn out as planned, teasing out what may be the heart of the matter: "How can love, which attaches, be compatible with freedom, which separates?" Small caveat: Freedom does attach, principally to the source of truth that makes us free (John 8:32). But a generation accustomed to throwing off restraint in the name of freedom isn't likely to catch that distinction. Being answerable to none but self is considered liberation, in the conventional wisdom of the day.

Love, which attaches, is the first casualty. But not the last.

— Janie B. Cheaney
WORLD Magazine
April 21, 2012, p. 22

Sociology

Even Muslim and Arab writers have noted that nowhere in the Arab or larger Muslim world does an Arab or any other Muslim have the individual rights, liberty, and dignity that a Muslim living in America has. As for Latinos and Asians, vast numbers of them from El Salvador to Korea regard America as the land of opportunity.

And when any of these people come here, they are accepted as Americans the moment they identify as such. If someone — from anywhere, speaking any language, looking like a member of any race — becomes an American, he or she will be regarded as fully American. This is not true elsewhere.

— Dennis Prager
National Review Online
April 10, 2012

Politics

It was announced a few weeks ago that colleges and universities, including Christian institutions, must provide free contraceptives that kill babies (abortifacients). Get this! Companies may only disclose this provision at the time of purchase, and they may only advertise the total rate with the abortion surcharge, which will make it almost impossible for pro-life groups or individuals to find out about the abortion surcharge until it is too late. The truth is shielded by a "gag rule." The deck is stacked thanks to the duplicity of our Chief Executive.

— Dr. James Dobson
Family Talk Newsletter
April 2012

Knopp Exemplifies Courageous Cultural Engagement



Elizabeth Knopp

In the wee hours of April 24, 2012, rocks slammed into nine windows of a 103-year-old church building in Portland, Oregon. Two century-old stained glass windows were ruined in the attack.

The shattering glass ignited a media storm, thrusting the young congregation inhabiting the building, Mars Hill Church Portland, into the spotlight. Since the church's official launch in January, congregants had found themselves in the midst of controversy. Their church building is positioned in Sunnyside, a neighborhood populated by many homosexuals. At the church's launch service, angry crowds greeted church attendees by hurling insults, names, and declarations that congregants would burn in hell because of the church's stance against homosexuality.

Summit alumna Elizabeth Knopp was one of those members and now works as assistant to lead pastor Tim Smith. She has maintained an active, front-and-center role in Mars Hill's ongoing dialogue with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community

in Portland. That dialogue didn't start with the April 24 vandalism, for which an anonymous group calling itself Angry Queers later claimed responsibility. The dialogue between the church and the LGBT community began when Mars Hill's pastor reached out to Logan Lynn, public relations and innovations manager for the Q Center, a Portland homosexual support center.

Every month, sixteen representatives from Mars Hill and the Q Center gather to talk with one another about the differences that divide them. Knopp said much of the first few months has been spent listening to each others' stories, and the discussions are often tense. Mars Hill doesn't back away from the belief that homosexuality is a deviation from the original created order. "It is heated," Knopp said. "We love each other, but it can get controversial."

Lynn and Smith said on a recent radio broadcast that they're not sure where the series of talks will take their groups. There are no delineated goals for the dialogue. But Knopp said she's learning something powerful about truth and love, which must be part of any cultural engagement of the Church, as she attempts to practice the principles she learned at Summit. "[Before the dialogue] I would often hold the truth on a higher level than I would hold love," she said. "I don't want to be the person who goes around blasting truth without love. We're called to love one another, especially those who oppose us."

Knopp emphasized that Christians ought to recall the *imago dei* in every person, even in the midst of heated debate

about truth and identity. "Despite their skewed views of sexuality, they are image-bearers of God. Everything I do has to reflect worship toward God, so my interactions with them are part of my worship."

Knopp said the Q Center has actually received more negative feedback from their own community than Mars Hill has; many gays and lesbians see Lynn and his colleagues as selling out by engaging in dialogue with Mars Hill. Standing in solidarity with the Q Center — not on the matter of homosexuality, but in the interests of neighborliness — can open doors for the deeper conversations about identity and the power of the Gospel to heal brokenness of all sorts, Knopp believes. In fact, many members of the Q Center came to help clean up Mars Hill after the vandalism.

Knopp has gleaned some practical wisdom from her recent experience that other Christians may find helpful when engaging in such divisive issues:

- Don't engage alone. Church is a body, a community, so we should engage with fellow Christians supporting us.
- Don't make assumptions. Listen and ask questions of the other person before making assertions.
- Truth and love go together. "Don't hold one higher than the other," Knopp said. "They've got to match each other."
- Don't fear the outcomes. "Shattered glass doesn't change the Gospel. Someone being homosexual doesn't change the Gospel. It will always be that Jesus Christ came to seek and save those who are lost."



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**INSIDE: Peter Falk would be proud:
the Columbo tactic at the heart
of cultural engagement**

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learn how to **discern** truth. learn how to **defend** it.

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equipping Christians to defend the faith

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a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel

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Sitting alone, staring out across the rocks to the Atlantic Ocean he loved, Charles Colson said these words: "Lord Jesus, I believe you. I accept you. Please come

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into my life. I commit it to you.”

As he said this prayer of acceptance, Colson felt an immediate inner surge of strength and serenity. Old fears, tensions, and animosities were draining away. They were replaced by a new sense of peace and assurance. His conversion experience was complete. The long unremitting and courageous effort that conversion begins was about to open as a new chapter in his life.

The wicked want to see the virtuous stumble; the flâneurs accept them as a piece of the city’s gorgeous mosaic. And Christians have their own marching orders: “Put on therefore . . . bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness . . .” Tebow can etch Colossians 3:12 on his eye black.

— *National Review*
April 16, 2012, p. 12

On that floating microcosm of opulence, consumerism, and elitism [the Titanic], an amazing event transpired. Men of power and prestige sacrificed their lives for women and children of the lower class, many of whom were indentured servants, day laborers, and domestic workers. On this flotilla of self-absorption, self-sacrifice became a prevailing virtue during a crisis moment, and the powerful chose death that the powerless might receive life.

The analysis in the following days persistently asked the obvious question: “Why?” The answer, almost universally acknowledged — even by the agnostic and secularist — was the undeniable influence of Christianity. The Christian virtue of self-sacrifice for the well-being of others and the biblical imperative for men to lay down their lives for women and children were chosen instead of selfpreservation. These virtues triumphed in the context of real life-and-death

choices on the Titanic.

Could the same permeating virtues be propagated in today’s culture, which is marked by self-absorption, self-gratification, and self-exaltation? Scripture and history say yes.

— Dr. Harry Reeder
Tabletalk Magazine
March 1, 2012

On July 9, 1974, Charles W. “Chuck” Colson spent his first night in a federal prison. He had worked hard to get there.

Raised in Massachusetts, Colson attended Brown University and George Washington University Law School. In the 1950s, he got married, was a captain in the U.S. Marines, and worked for his home state’s senior U.S. senator, Leverett Saltonstall. In the 1960s, he got divorced, remarried, built a lucrative inside-the-Beltway law firm, and became a player in national GOP politics.

In 1969, President Richard M. Nixon made Colson, then just 37 years old, his top White House legal counsel. Colson later confessed that he was “ruthless in getting things done” for Nixon, which eventually led to his conviction for obstruction of justice after the Watergate break-in. Among other infamous acts, he leaked information from confidential FBI files on antiwar activist Daniel Ellsberg of Pentagon Papers fame, and he fulminated about firebombing the liberal Brookings Institution.

Nixon’s once-powerful “hatchet man” was the first Watergate figure to become an incarcerated felon. But just before Colson landed behind bars, he got old-time religion. While in prison, he promised fellow inmates that he would never forget them. He made good on that promise by dedicating his life to helping prisoners and their families,

improving prison conditions and working to reform penal codes. In 1975, he wrote his bestselling book, “Born Again.” In 1976, he founded Prison Fellowship, an international evangelical Christian ministry based in Virginia.

Well into the 1980s, Colson’s just-before-jailhouse conversion was widely panned as a pre-emptive performance for the parole board. Many commentators mocked him and his fledgling ministry. In the 1990s, his ecumenical work with groups like Evangelicals and Catholics Together deeply upset many orthodox Protestants. And, in the 2000s, his activist opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage deeply upset many progressive Protestants, among others.

As an urban Democrat, a Jesuit-inspired Catholic and an academic, I disagreed with Colson about many things. Differences on policy and cultural issues aside, he insisted that hard science supported “intelligent design” even when leading evangelical Christian scientists, like Francis Collins, former head of the international human genome project, counseled otherwise. He embraced studies touting faith-based programs but sometimes squinted past their shortcomings.

Still, for nearly four full post-Watergate decades, Colson, who died this past Saturday at age 80, steadfastly practiced what he preached about prisons, prisoners and penal reform. Where criminal justice was concerned, he was God’s good man, not Nixon’s bad man. He gave his ministry most of his adult life and almost all of his money, including royalties on about two dozen books, speakers’ fees, and the \$1 million Templeton Prize for spiritual endeavors that he won in 1993. While maintaining his Break Point radio show, he worked endless hours raising

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the tens of millions of dollars a year that supported the ministry's operations.

In the 2000s alone, Colson's Prison Fellowship mobilized more than 10,000 volunteers to work in 1,329 prisons from coast to coast and also mustered nearly 15,000 volunteers each year to purchase Christmas gifts for more than 350,000 children of prisoners. Recognizing that about 700,000 prisoners are released each year, the Colson ministry created eight InnerChange Freedom Initiative prisoner re-entry programs across five states, and found jobs for about 60% of all IFI parolees.

But Colson's most consequential criminal-justice legacy is still in the making. He nearly single-handedly put America on a bipartisan path to zero prison growth. With another born-again ex-prisoner, former California state legislator Pat Nolan, he led the charge against states' mandatory-minimum sentences for nonviolent offenders and for the federal government's Second Chance Act, which gives grants to nonprofit organizations that help ex-prisoners find jobs, get drug treatment, and reconnect with loved ones.

Promoting the concept of "restorative justice," Colson godfathered into being several conservative coalitions that are now making real headway in reducing prison populations and changing penal codes in many states. For example, as documented by the Texas-based Right on Crime organization, in recent years the Lone Star State has cut crime rates while reducing its adult prison population by thousands, and the number of juveniles behind bars by more than 50%, by repealing draconian sentencing laws and increasing support for community-based corrections.

As I recount in my book "Godly Republic," in the late 1990s Colson was

among those who softened and spiritualized my views on crime. Visiting prisons with him, watching him relate pastorally to prisoners, was an inspiring experience that never got old. Through his ministry, his second chance became a second chance for hundreds of thousands of others. When it came to treating incarcerated citizens, recent parolees, and all persons touched by crime, both perpetrators and victims, with Christ-like care and compassion, he was "ruthless."

— John J. Dilulio Jr.

Wall Street Journal

April 24, 2012, p. A15

Global Warming

The injection of politics into the global-warming hypothesis has made it difficult to know where facts and falsehoods begin. While alarmists have been blaming their fellow man for every hurricane, tornado and other ill wind whipped up by Mother Nature, science is now concluding that the cause of these damaging storms has nothing to do with human activity.

The surprise absolution of human beings from the crime of triggering severe weather phenomena was handed down by none other than the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), leader of the campaign to sell the world on anthropogenic climate change. The IPCC's Special Report on Extremes, released March 28, reads, "There is medium evidence and high agreement that long-term trends in normalized [property] losses have not been attributed to natural anthropogenic climate change." The breathtaking admission is a sign that objective science is reclaiming a leading role in the discussion.

— *The Washington Times*

April 9, 2012, p. 38

Forty-nine NASA scientists and astro-

nauts sent a letter to NASA Administrator Charles Boden last week admonishing the agency for its role in advocating a high degree of certainty that manmade CO₂ is a major cause of climate change while neglecting empirical evidence that calls the theory into question.

The group, which includes seven Apollo astronauts and two former directors of NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, are dismayed over the failure of NASA, and specifically the Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS), to make an objective assessment of all available scientific data on climate change. They charge that NASA is relying too heavily on complex models that have proven scientifically inadequate in predicting climate only one or two decades in advance.

— *National Review Online*

April 11, 2012

Writing for *Forbes Magazine*, climate change alarmist Steve Zwick calls for skeptics of man-made global warming to be tracked, hunted down and have their homes burned to the ground, yet another shocking illustration of how eco-fascism is rife within the environmentalist lobby.

Comparing climate change skeptics to residents in Tennessee who refused to pay a \$75 fee, resulting in firemen sitting back and watching their houses burn down, Zwick rants that anyone who actively questions global warming propaganda should face the same treatment.

"We know who the active denialists are – not the people who buy the lies, mind you, but the people who create the lies. Let's start keeping track of them now, and when the famines come, let's make them pay. Let's let their houses burn. Let's swap their safe land for submerged islands. Let's force them

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to bear the cost of rising food prices,” writes Zwick, adding, “They broke the climate. Why should the rest of us have to pay for it?”

As we have profusely documented, as polls show that fewer and fewer Americans are convinced by the pseudo-science behind man-made global warming, promulgated as it is by control freaks like Zwick who care more about money and power than they do the environment, AGW adherents are becoming increasingly authoritarian in their pronouncements.

Even as the science itself disproves their theories – Arctic ice is thickening, polar bears and penguins are thriving, Himalayan glaciers are growing – climate change alarmists are only becoming more aggressive in their attacks against anyone who dares question the global warming mantra.

— Paul J. Watson
Infowars.com
April 19, 2012

Sexual Revolution

Pascal Bruckner, a recovering French progressive, is wondering why [hasn’t the sexual revolution of the 1960s made everyone happier and safer]. His latest book *The Paradox of Love*, ponders how the sexual revolution didn’t turn out as planned, teasing out what may be the heart of the matter: “How can we love, which attaches, be compatible with freedom, which separates?” Small caveat: Freedom does attach, principally to the source of truth that makes us free (John 8:32). But a generation accustomed to throwing off restraint in the name of freedom isn’t likely to catch that distinction. Being answerable to none but self is considered liberation, in the conventional wisdom of the day. Love, which attaches, is the first casualty. But not the last.

— Janie B. Cheaney
WORLD Magazine

April 21, 2012, p. 22

Sociology

Even Muslim and Arab writers have noted that nowhere in the Arab or larger Muslim world does an Arab or any other Muslim have the individual rights, liberty, and dignity that a Muslim living in America has. As for Latinos and Asians, vast numbers of them from El Salvador to Korea regard America as the land of opportunity.

And when any of these people come here, they are accepted as Americans the moment they identify as such. If someone — from anywhere, speaking any language, looking like a member of any race — becomes an American, he or she will be regarded as fully American. This is not true elsewhere.

— Dennis Prager
National Review Online
April 10, 2012

Politics

It was announced a few weeks ago that colleges and universities, including Christian institutions, must provide free contraceptives that kill babies (abortifacients). Get this! Companies may only disclose this provision at the time of purchase, and they may only advertise the total rate with the abortion surcharge, which will make it almost impossible for pro-life groups or individuals to find out about the abortion surcharge until it is too late. The truth is shielded by a “gag rule.” The deck is stacked thanks to the duplicity of our Chief Executive.

— Dr. James Dobson
Family Talk Newsletter
April 2012

The Army is pushing more women closer to the front lines and in closer contact with men even as the number of sexual attacks on female soldiers has surged during

the past six years.

Army figures show that reports of violent sex crimes have nearly doubled, from 665 in 2006 to 1,313 last year.

Nearly all the victims were women. Most were young soldiers moving from one post to another, a time when they were most vulnerable, according to “Generating Health and Discipline in the Force,” a comprehensive study into the Army’s mind and body.

“This chilling trend suggests that the increase in offenses going forward will likely continue unless directly mitigated by other factors,” the report says.

— Rowan Scarborough
The Washington Times
April 9, 2012, p. 23

While Democrats rage on about an imaginary conservative “war on women,” the Obama administration has just declared, in Texas, the first front in its own war on women’s health care. Their cause belli? Over the past several years, the Texas legislature has continually (and lawfully) redirected health-care funds away from clinics that perform abortions or refer women to doctors who, leading to the closure of twelve Planned Parenthood clinics. In particular, on March 15, HHS cut off \$30 million worth of Medicaid family-planning funding for Texas because abortion clinics were ineligible. Governor Rick Perry has insisted that the state will fund the program on its own. Liberals have made their true health-care mantra perfectly clear: Don’t mess with abortions.

— National Review
April 16, 2012, p. 6

Biological Origins

When People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) sought a court ruling

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declaring SeaWorld's killer whales "slaves" under the 13th Amendment, the nation got a badly needed chuckle. PETA argued that because the amendment doesn't specify that its terms apply only to human beings—"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist within the United States"—then captive whales can be slaves too.

The case—Tilikum, Katina, Corky, Kasatka, and Ulises, five orcas et al. v. SeaWorld—was brought in the Ninth Circuit, where history shows anything can happen. But not this time. District Court judge Jeffrey T. Miller made short work of PETA's publicity stunt, ruling sensibly:

Both historic and contemporary sources reveal that the terms "slavery" and "involuntary servitude" refer only to persons. In 1864, the term "slavery" was defined as "[t]he condition of a slave; the state of entire subjection of one person to the will of another." . . . The clear language and historical context reveal that only human beings, or persons, are afforded the protection of the 13th Amendment.

In other words, since humans are, and animals aren't, persons, case dismissed!

— Dennis Prager

The Weekly Standard

April 16, 2012, p. 23, 24

Marxism-Leninism

The difference between Che Guevara and Pol Pot, Anthony Daniels once observed, was that Guevara never studied in Paris. The fathers of Galway, Ireland, have now decided to erect a monument to Guevara — the master of La Cabana, his abbatoit; the architect of the Cuban gulag; a man who seemed to get an almost sensual pleasure out of murdering the innocent. As Paul Berman once summed up, "Che was an enemy of freedom, and yet he has been erected into a symbol of freedom. He

helped establish an unjust social system in Cuba and has been erected into a symbol of social justice. He stood for the ancient rigidities of Latin-American thought, in a Marxist-Leninist version, and has been celebrated as a freethinker and a rebel." After 60 years, there is little excuse for not knowing who Che Guevara was.

— *National Review*

April 16, 2012, p. 10

Take former President of the United States and official "Elder Statesman" of the Democratic party, Jimmy Carter: "Fidel Castro first and foremost is and always has been a committed egalitarian. He wanted a system that provided the basic needs to all — enough to eat, health care, adequate housing and education. Cuba has superb systems of health care and universal education . . . We greeted each other as old friends."

— Humberto Fontoya

FrontPage Magazine

April 12, 2012

There are more Marxists teaching in Sociology Departments in America than living in the former Soviet Union. These sociologists hold themselves out as scientists despite the fact that they fail consistently in their efforts to predict the future. In fact, most of them lack the competence to accurately predict the past. Among the least competent and most intellectually dishonest is Gary L. Faulkner, Professor Emeritus from the University of North Carolina.

Faulkner recently claimed that Marx predicted the events we are seeing in the Occupy Wall Street movement. He also claimed that events from the 20th Century bolster the credibility of Marx as both an economist and political prophet. He further castigates Republicans for their refusal to

embrace Marxism. Faulkner states, "There is something really ironic about Republican's hatred of Marxism. Years ago Marx predicted capitalism would collapse. The reason - workers would rebel."

And they did. They rebelled in China, Russia, North Korea, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Vietnam. Their rebellion produced Marxist governments. And the governments killed millions.

— Mike Adams*

Townhall.com

April 3, 2012

* Note: Dr. Adams is professor of criminology at the University of North Carolina (Wilmington) and a Summit professor.

Pope Benedict XVI's recent trip to Cuba was described by the Vatican as way to spread the gospel to a nation captured by an atheist state. And surely it was the Pope's purpose to inspire as many Cubans as possible. The irony of the Pope's visit is that it has provoked a crackdown on dissent.

Agence France Press reports that in the last week at least 43 dissidents in the eastern province of Santiago, one of the stops during the Pope's three-day Cuban sojourn, have been detained by the police. They include former political prisoner José Daniel Ferrer and his wife Belkis Cantillo.

Mr. Ferrer was one of the 75 arrested in Cuba's "Black Spring" in 2003, and he was among 12 who refused to accept exile as a condition of release in 2011. He is the leader of the Patriotic Union of Cuba. Ms. Cantillo is among 10 members of the Ladies in White—Catholic mothers, wives and sisters of political prisoners—who were arrested in the sweep.

The Ladies in White had lobbied the Vatican through the papal nuncio in Havana for a meeting with the Pope. Cuba's Jaime

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Cardinal Ortega told them that the Holy See's schedule was too tight. This request was widely publicized before the visit. So it was hard not to miss the contrast of the Pope's inevitable meetings with the Castro brothers, Raúl and Fidel, and even with the ailing Venezuelan strongman, Hugo Chávez, in the country for medical treatment.

The unhappy truth is Benedict would have had to go into the Cuban jails to see many of the island's Christian dissidents. Local activists provided the names of almost 300 who were detained in the week before the Pope arrived and held so that they couldn't attend the papal Masses in Santiago and Havana.

Thirty-eight-year-old Andres Carrión Alvarez, who did make it to the papal Mass in Santiago and chose the moment to shout "down with Communism" in front of the cameras, was beaten and led off by state security. He has not been heard from since.

Some of those arrested ahead of the Pope's visit have been released, including Ms. Cantillo. Others, like Sonia Garro, are in lock-down. Ms. Garro, a particularly courageous member of the Ladies in White who had her nose broken by Castro mobs last year, was taken away by Cuban security from her home on March 18. She has since been transferred to the Guatao women's prison in Havana and is being charged with "disrespect." She could get a sentence of up to four years.

Fairly or not, her fate and that of many other Cuban dissidents caught up in this post-papal crackdown will always be linked to the visit of Benedict XVI. They deserved a hearing while he was there.

— *Wall Street Journal*
April 9, 2012, p. A 14

**From David Noebel: With nearly 1,000*

Cubans murdered by the Castro brothers under the direction of "Che" Guevara, Fidel's chief executioner, one would certainly indicate think a religious leader would insist on meeting with those in the jails and console them. Instead, this Pope chose to meet with their jailers and most likely the murderers of their fathers and mothers. This is a scandal of the first order, and the Pope should be called on to explain his action. He also had time to meet with the Communist Hugo Chavez who is now pleading for Jesus to heal him from his cancer. Chavez mentioned Jesus and Che in the same breath.

The Cuban dictatorship did pretty well out of Pope Benedict's visit to that tortured island. Cuba's democrats and human-rights activists — most of them Catholic, of course — are heartbroken, befuddled, and angry. The pope met with no members of the opposition. The Vatican explained that the dictatorship made this impossible. Democrats said, rightly, that the pope could have insisted. He saw not only the Castro who is nominally in charge, Raul, but the Castro who is still supremely in charge, Fidel. This meeting was "very cordial," said the Vatican. The pope made no mention of the many victims of the Castros. People strained to see, and longed to see, criticism of the regime in what the pope said. (A sentence in a Reuters report began, "In a possible dig at Marxism...") The pope very clearly, however, denounced U.S. policy toward Cuba. Before his visit, the dictatorship rounded up hundreds of democrats, to limit their troublemaking. During the visit, state security sent a text message: "As soon as the pope leaves, we are going to disappear you all." After the visit, the state made good, as old women were beaten up and parents dragged off to dungeons while their children screamed. Many such episodes are

documented. In short, the pope's visit sent a message to the dictatorship, however unintended: "You can get away with it." They have gotten away with it for more than 60 years now, ever since young Catholics, being murdered by the Communists, shouted, "Viva Cristo Rey!"

— *National Review*
April 30, 2012, p. 10

Islam

Old and seriously ill, [he] was wheeled into court on a hospital gurney to face charges that he was responsible for giving orders to shoot and kill some 800 demonstrators — for this he might well be sentenced to death. Meanwhile the Supreme Council turns a blind eye to the burning of Christian churches and murderous attacks on Copts, 200,000 of whom have fled abroad in the past year.

— Daniel Pryce Jones
National Review
April 16, 2012, p. 20, 22

The grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz bib Abdullah, made a statement that raised some eyebrows. It is "necessary," he said, "to destroy all the churches in the Arabian Peninsula." We would have thought it was superfluous.

— *National Review*
April 16, 2012, p. 10

Art

When the newly renovated Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, N.C., was reopened in 2010, the single most dramatic work of art inside was a 15-by-31-foot mural called "The Cross," painted by Thomas Kinkade. In a video explaining the work, Kinkade speaks of the commission (by Franklin Graham) as "a moment of divine inspiration" and says that the painting offers viewers "a glimpse of a heavenly realm."

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Humble as the Graham Library may be in comparison, it's hard not to see in this epic painting and its creator a faint echo of the Sistine Chapel and its own heroic muralist.

When it was reported that Kinkadee had died on Good Friday this year, at age 54, after a night of heavy drinking, no one was more shocked than his legion of Christian admirers who consider his paintings beacons of serenity and faith.

The artist's death brought to a tragic end a life that seemed equal parts Norman Rockwell and *Citizen Kane*. In so many ways, it is a quintessentially American story: the triumph of a rags-to-riches rebel who challenges the establishment (in this case the art world), touching the hearts of millions and achieving success with paintings that celebrate God, country and family values.

The artist, who trademarked himself as "The Painter of Light," produced a steady stream of hugely popular, soft-focus, nostalgic renderings of country cottages, lighthouses and wintry street scenes. To many of his believing fans, the light in these paintings was nothing less than the grace of God.

Kinkadee's Christian faith was essential not only to his popularity but to his own understanding of his vocation. Of his Christian conversion during his art school years he once said: "When I was saved, my art got saved." His faith impelled him to create inspirational art. "I'm a warrior for light," he said. "My paintings are messengers of God's love."

To those who questioned the prettiness of his paintings—their too-good-to-be-true sentimentality—he had a theological answer: "I like to portray a world without the Fall." A retort to that statement would be that faith itself teaches us that a fallen

human is ill-equipped to imagine an Edenic world—and that in any case our task in life is not to look away from the sin-scarred creation and dwell on an ideal world but to look for grace and redemption in the midst of the mess we've made.

It's an argument I've made myself, in an essay criticizing Kinkadee's aesthetic. Yet I am still forced to admit that he raised a valid question about the purpose and meaning of art. After all, Western art in many ways starts with the Greeks, who made ideal beauty, with its glimpse of divine perfection, the hallmark of their culture. Doesn't seeing the world as it ought to be elevate and enlighten us, offering us a small respite from the darkness? That's precisely what so many have found in Kinkadee's art: a powerfully nostalgic longing for the way it ought to be, a break from the daily grind and the thousand disappointments that drag us down.

The best response I've found to a vision of a world without the Fall comes from Pope Benedict XVI, who once said that what Christianity brought into the world was a radical challenge to the Greek aesthetic. In the *Passion of Christ*, argues the pope, the Greek aesthetic of ideal beauty had not been rejected but rather overcome by a broader vision that included brokenness and suffering. In the cross, he concludes, the beautiful gains "new depth and realism," showing us both the nobility of man and his fallenness.

Given Kinkadee's upbringing—he grew up poor, with an absentee father, in Placerville, Calif.—one can perhaps understand his deep hunger for the ideal.

His brother Patrick has spoken of his "Victorian Christmas" (1992), which depicts a house they knew as children. "It was a fine house with fine people living there, with big parties," Patrick says. "Tom and I would

stand outside the gates and say, 'That's the kind of house I want to live in.' We were always on the outside of the gate looking in." That's the genius of Kinkadee's paintings: They keep us on the outside, where we can gaze longingly at cozy, secure homes.

But if faith teaches us anything, it should be that our nostalgia is for an ideal we can only find after accepting, and passing through, the brokenness of a fallen world. Any other approach, in art or in life, is a form of denial.

—Gregory Wolfe

Wall Street Journal

April 20, 2012, p. A11

Atheism

WASHINGTON—The display tent at the Reason Rally 2012 on March 24 smelled of wet rain gear and sweaters soggy from the near-constant drizzle. Atheists, freethinkers, and secularists of all stripes were checking out booths from two dozen or so atheist groups.

The crowd inched around the perimeter of the tent, but traffic stalled where people clustered for photos. Like carnival-goers with a musclemans cutout, they took turns standing behind an empty picture frame with, "This is what an atheist looks like" printed below.

That's what I had come to find out. Organizers of the rally, held on the Mall near the Washington Monument, clearly hoped to use "history's largest" gathering of atheists and like-minded brethren to combat their public image as cheerless, caustic scolds.

Outside the tent, most of the 10,000 or so attendees—a mix of college students, adults, and a scattering of families with children, some with bright umbrellas and plastic ponchos—applauded speakers. The day-long schedule included activists, bloggers, entertainers, and a couple of congress-

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men, all headlined by world-famous Oxford professor Richard Dawkins.

Giant video screens flanked the stage. Five flags flapping overhead read, “Equality,” “Charity,” “Compassion,” “Diversity,” and “Reason.” Rally organizers asked attendees not to curse at the “Turn or burn” counter-demonstrators, who obligingly showed up bearing signs warning of Hell.

That led to some sharp exchanges, and some atheist signs were vulgar or insulting, such as “Don’t pray in my school and I won’t think in your church,” and “So many Christians, so few lions.” But “Ask me” stickers were also common.

Among the speaker highlights:

The emcee, actor Paul Provenza, said when Christians try to witness to him he glances at his watch and says, “I’d love to stay and chat, but I’ve gotta take my girlfriend for an abortion because I’m pretty sure the baby is going to be gay.”

Blogger Greta Christina was upset that some wives submit to husbands and “my wife and I had to get married three times before we finally had a marriage the state recognized.” Anytime she (or any other speaker) mentioned gay rights or abortion, the crowd cheered or booed as appropriate.

Elisabeth Cornwell of the Richard Dawkins Foundation argued that Thomas Jefferson would have been appalled at Virginia’s recent passage of a pro-life ultrasound law. At her direction, the crowd of freethinkers faced Virginia and repeated three times after her: “Build up that wall!”

Then Cornwell stalked off the stage, and soon the skeptics were chanting, “Richard! Richard!” Dawkins approached the podium with equanimity. In a crisp British accent he delivered a short lecture rehashing some arguments from his books. The crowd laughed at his jokes and cheered when he

said religious claims about reality “need to be challenged and, if necessary, ridiculed with contempt.”

Dawkins did not mention his admission in a filmed interview that the spontaneous origin of life on Earth is so improbable that maybe aliens seeded it here. After Dawkins finished, a security team hustled him off to his after-party.

While wandering amidst the crowd, eventually I began to realize that behind every sign was a lost person with a story:

Chazz Turnbaugh came to the rally from York, Pa., where he and his handful of freethinker friends, surrounded by Menonites, feel isolated: “People look at us like we’re silly.” Turnbaugh was happy to chat about his evolutionary beliefs, that we’re all the result of condensed clouds of gas and that morality is just a matter of science. He described lengthy conversations with religious friends but said he is unwilling to make a “leap of faith.”

A sign reading, “God hates figs” collected admirers as Fran Welte of Cincinnati carried it along the edge of the crowd. This, she explained, was a swipe at both an infamous Westboro Baptist slogan regarding homosexuality, and the Bible episode where Jesus curses the fig tree. “That’s where [Christians] get their rules from,” interjected a bystander: “It’s lunacy.” Welte said her Catholic mother beat her as a child for not going to church. People, she said, are naturally atheists and believe in God only because their parents conditioned them to it: “My mother told me to pray. I tried that and nobody was there.”

Virginian Lydia Rice was holding a sign that read, “Get out of my [picture of pink frilly underwear].” “Out” was spelled with a Star of David, a sideways Muslim crescent, and a cross. She was tall, with long, frizzy hair and a wide-brimmed hat festooned with but-

tons for liberal causes. Her family was very religious, and it irked her that her parents treated her and her brothers differently.

Rice said she considered various religions but finally rejected them all. “I’m a seeker,” she grinned. “You know, ‘Seek and you shall find’? I sought and I found.”

— Les Sillars

WORLD Magazine
April 21, 2012, p. 70

Law

In June, 2010, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that the “University of California’s Hastings College of the Law acted reasonably, and in a viewpoint-neutral manner, in refusing to officially recognize and give funds to a campus chapter of the Christian Legal Society because the group refused to abide by the school’s requirement that student groups open their membership to all” (as reported by Peter Schmidt for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*)....

The court’s decision also opens the door for campus lunacy. What if a bunch of ardent Republicans decided to take over the campus’s Democratic club? Or atheists decided to take over the Hindu club? Or Jews for Jesus decided to take over the Hillel club? Or Greenpeace devotees decided to take over the hunting club? Or meat-lovers decided to take over the PETA club? Or gay activists decided to take over the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship club? Or evangelical Christians decided to take over the LGBT club? (Oh wait. I’m sure someone would find a way to stop that.)

Is it unreasonable that campus groups would require members – let alone officers – to adhere to their values and beliefs? Isn’t that the purpose of the club?

— Michael Brown
Townhall.com
April 7, 2012