

Emperor Bush, Pirate bin Laden, Calvin College, and the Gospel

“The king asked the fellow, ‘What is your idea, in infesting the sea?’ And the pirate answered, with uninhibited insolence, ‘The same as yours, in infesting the earth! But because I do it with a tiny craft, I’m called a pirate: because you have a mighty navy, you’re called an emperor.’ (St. Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson, New York: Penguin Books, 1984, IV, 4, p. 139).”

In *The Vancouver Sun*, June 13, 2005, the headline read: “BUSH AS SCARY AS BIN LADEN: POLL”. The article began: “Canadians believe U.S. President George Bush is almost as great a threat to our national security as Osama bin Laden, according to an opinion poll obtained by the *National Post*.”

“The 1,500 people contacted for the poll conducted last February for the Department of National Defence, listed ‘International Organized Crime’ as the top danger, with 38 per cent ranking it as a great treat to security...

“But tied for second in the poll were ‘U.S. Foreign Policy’ and ‘Terrorism’, with 37 per cent rating it a great risk.”

The following article appeared last month in *The Detroit News*.

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Thursday, May 19, 2005

President’s visit stirs dissent at conservative Calvin College

By Laura Berman / [The Detroit News](#)

The president may have been expecting a warmer welcome from Calvin College than he’ll get Saturday.

He’s delivering a commencement speech to 900 graduating students.

It’s a liberal arts school that defines its mission as “developing the Christian mind,” and requires what its spokesman, Phil de Haan, calls “an allegiance of faith” from its faculty, and theology studies from its students.

But 100 members of the faculty and another 40 staff and former faculty members have signed an open letter of rebuke to the president that’s scheduled to appear as a half-page ad in the Grand Rapids Press on the day of the president’s speech.

While welcoming the president, the letter delivers a carefully worded critique of administration policies from a Christian viewpoint. It calls the Iraq war “unjust and unjustified,” expresses dismay at policies that “favor the wealthy ... and burden the poor,” challenges policies of intolerance toward dissent, and environmental policies that are at odds with being “caretakers of God’s good creation.”

The letter signers view the occasion of the president’s speech as a teachable moment.

“People have been saying that the president’s visit will put us on the map. But there are some maps we don’t want to be on,” says David Crump, a Calvin professor of religion who helped draft the letter.

Crump says that news of the open letter has gotten response from around the country. It's tapped into what he sees as "a silent majority in the Christian evangelical community that resents the Christian vocabulary being hijacked by the religious right."

Crump and Randall Jelks, a history professor, told me they view the president's appearance as an occasion to register dissent -- in a respectful and honorable and Christian way.

"We are guided by Christian conviction. ... John Calvin wasn't an easy pushover kind of guy, either," says Jelks. "He was a reformer."

The letter is one way to register the fact that even in the heart of Christian America, religion does not dictate politics. It reminds Americans that even at a conservative Christian school, where religious values are paramount, people have different social, political and cultural views.

It's a way, the professors say, to counter stereotypical thinking about Christian institutions.

They are insistent on a tradition of liberal thought, grounded in religious belief, that suddenly feels positively 19th century.

And while news of the letter has raised the ire of some alumni, others have been surprised and even delighted to see a diversity of viewpoints on campus, spokesman de Haan said.

The administration may not be thrilled by open dissent -- but it's not planning retribution, either.

And de Haan pointed out that 200 faculty members did not sign the letter.

"Within the bounds of our religious faith, we argue a lot at Calvin. That's what makes us unique," said Jelks.

At Calvin College, they're warming up to an idea that used to be as American as apple pie -- dissent delivered with respect.

Laura Berman's column runs Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday in Metro. Reach her at (248) 647-7221 or lberman@detnews.com.

<http://www.detnews.com/2005/metro/0505/19/B01-186713.htm>

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Last year, *The New York Sun* ran this headline: "AUDIENCE GASPS AS JUDGE LIKENS ELECTION OF BUSH TO RISE OF IL DUCE"

The article continues:

"'2nd Circuit's Calabresi Also Compares Bush's Rise to That of Hitler'" It continued further: "A prominent federal judge has told a conference of liberal lawyers that President Bush's rise to power was similar to the accession of dictators such as Mussolini and Hitler.

"'In a way that occurred before but is rare in the United States, somebody came to power as a result of the illegitimate acts of a legitimate institution that had the right to put somebody in power. That is what the Supreme Court did in Bush versus Gore. It put somebody in power,' said Guido Calabresi, a judge on the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals, which sits in Manhattan.

“ ‘The reason I emphasize that is because that is exactly what happened when Mussolini was put in by the king of Italy,’ Judge Calabresi continued, as the allusion drew audible gasps from some in the luncheon crowd Saturday at the annual convention of the American Constitution Society.

“The king of Italy had the right to put Mussolini in, though he had not won an election, and make him prime minister. That is what happened when Hindenburg put Hitler in. I am not suggesting for a moment that Bush is Hitler. I want to be clear on that, but it is a situation which is extremely unusual,’ the judge said.”

Sociologist and Catholic priest Andrew Greeley wrote last year in an article entitled “Is U.S. like Germany of the ‘30s?”: “Today many Americans celebrate a ‘strong’ leader who, like Woodrow Wilson, never wavers, never apologizes, never admits a mistake, never changes his mind, a leader with a firm ‘Christian’ faith in his own righteousness. These Americans are delighted that he ignores the rest of the world and punishes the World Trade Center terrorism in Iraq. Mr. Bush is our kind of guy.

“He is not another Hitler. Yet there is a certain parallelism. They have in common a demagogic appeal to the worst side of a country’s heritage in a crisis. Bush is doubtless sincere in his vision of what is best for America. So too was Hitler. The crew around the president -- Donald Rumsfeld, John Ashcroft, Karl Rove, the ‘neo-cons’ like Paul Wolfowitz -- are not as crazy perhaps as Himmler and Goering and Goebbels. Yet like them, they are practitioners of the Big Lie -- weapons of mass destruction, Iraq democracy, only a few ‘bad apples.’

“Hitler’s war was quantitatively different from the Iraq war, but qualitatively both were foolish, self-destructive and criminally unjust. This is a time of great peril in American history because a phony patriotism and an America-worshipping religion threaten the authentic American genius of tolerance and respect for other people.

“The ‘real’ America is still remembered here in Berlin for the enormous contributions of the Marshall Plan and the Berlin airlift -- America at its best. It is time to return to that generosity and grace.

“The strongest criticism that the administration levels at Sen. John Kerry is that he changes his mind. In fact, instead of a president who claims an infallibility that exceeds that of the pope, America would be much better off with a president who, like John F. Kennedy, is honest enough to admit mistakes and secure enough to change his mind.”

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Commenting on the article by Greeley, partially quoted above, Rowan Wolf asked and responded: “Can it happen here? It is happening here.”

He wrote in full:

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Creeping fascism

By S. Rowan Wolf, Ph.D.
Online Journal Contributing Writer

June 18, 2004 - It is just one lie after another, one cover-up after another, one egregious tromping of our Constitution after another, and yet almost half the population supports the Bush Regime. Unfortunately, that half is also strongly represented in the legislative branch of our government. This means that while the exposes, and atrocities, and lies continue to dance across the headlines, legislation continues to be put forward and passed that cements the travesty of the current regime's vision.

Andrew Greeley asks in his June 11 [2004], article <http://www.suntimes.com/output/greeley/cst-edt-greel11.html>, Is U.S. like Germany of the '30s?. He points to the humiliation of the German people and their anger at their leaders as key to the rise to power of Hitler. He argues that Hitler was a strong leader who appealed to the "dark side" of Germans.

Greeley's article does not do justice, in my opinion, to the comparisons to be made. It also doesn't address the scope of the deception being played out in front of our eyes.

There is a pervasive belief in the U.S. that what happened in Nazi Germany could never happen here. The belief goes beyond the Holocaust, to the transformation of a democracy into a fascist state; to the transformation of protection of individual freedoms into a police state with massive surveillance. Yet it is happening, and the people submit. Even as voices rise, most still feel that much of the actions of the last three years were necessary.

There are striking similarities between George W. Bush and Adolph Hitler. They both belong to secret death societies - Hitler to the Thule Society and Bush to the Skull and Bones. (Fact: Prescott Bush made a fortune doing business with the Nazi Regime - links below) Both brought their brotherhood and their vision to their leadership in their respective nations (Bush currently has five "Bonesmen" in his administration). Both were "messianic." Both saw their role as a calling to power to lead their nations to global domination. Both thought no cost was too great in this quest. Both acted on the belief that evil means were justified in the pursuit of the greater vision. Both promoted a good/evil dichotomy to their citizens. But these similarities aside, there are other similarities between Hitler's Germany and Bush's United States.

At a basic level, Greeley is right in that upon the rise to power of these two men, their respective nations were looking for a change. In the US, the tilt for two decades has been towards a corporate government model. (I remember during the early 1980s there was some talk of running Lee Iacocca, CEO of Chrysler, for President of the United States). Certainly, George Bush and his administration have reflected that desire. There was a desire for "morality" after the spectacle of the Clinton sex scandals. George sold

himself well in this regard, as well.

However, the fascist transformation of the United States has been long in the making (see http://www.uncommonthought.com/mtblog/archives/052204-fascism_usa.php Fascism USA, UTJ 5/22/04). We have been moving towards this for over 20 years. GW is just taking us over the cliff, and he is doing it by promoting and enforcing a perverted patriotism, and promulgating a campaign of fear. This, too, is similar to Hitler's rise to power. He didn't just spring full-blown on the German scene.

Now to the present and the undermining of a nation.

There has been an ongoing erosion of the line between various branches of government. Under the auspices of the "war on drugs," there has been an increasing blurring of the line between the military and the police. This legal line is blurring to invisibility in the aftermath of 9/11. In the 6/21/04 Newsweek article <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5197014/site/newsweek/> Intelligence: The Pentagon Spying in America? by Michael Isikoff, we learn that the Senate Intelligence Committee has eliminated the restriction that the Department of Defense no longer has to comply with the Privacy Act (the CIA is also exempt from this restriction). What is frightening here is that both the CIA and the military are only tasked to operate outside the United States, that is, until the U.S.A. P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act, and the merging of departments and agencies under the Homeland Security Act, and the various intelligence reorganization policies. Now both of the non-domestic tasked agencies can (and do) operate inside the US.

An examination of recent legislation coming out of the <http://intelligence.senate.gov/legis.htm> Senate Intelligence Committee is instructive. Both domestic intelligence authorizations and Department of Defense authorizations are in the same bills. Joint reports, programs, and transfer of personnel are common. There are provisions in other legislation being proposed that should also raise alarm.

S.1047 - Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (Engrossed as Agreed to or Passed by Senate). Section 1037 allows the use of "unmanned aerial vehicles for support of Homeland Security missions. That is the "predator drones being used in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. The bill allows them to operate over population centers inside the US.

S.1050 - National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (Placed on Calendar in Senate). Sections 3131 and 3132 authorize restarting the nuclear weapon development program and underground testing of nuclear weapons.

Public Law 108-177 - Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 from S.1025 Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. Exempts the Department of Defense from the constraints of the Freedom of Information Act (Section 503, item 5 D).

All of the above is new legislation that erodes the boundaries that protect the population from the overbearing power of our government. They join a slew of other legislation: the U.S.A. P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act and all of its siblings, the Homeland Security Act, numerous anti-privacy and anti-rights infringements. All of these in the name of “security,” and argued as “necessary in the war on terrorism.” Wasn’t it Ben Franklin who said something to the effect, “That he who gives up liberty for security gets neither”?

But it is largely a hidden and misrepresented erosion of democracy that faces us. It is an erosion that largely is not marketed with the face of the dominant race in the United States, and when it is (such as has happened recently) it is the face of the convert to Islam, or the “environmental terrorist,” or the political activist. Anti-patriots all, according to the new rhetoric. These are the faces of the “terrorists” in our midst; the unknown element able to hide in “our” neighborhoods and strike us without warning. Interestingly not on the list (given the recent Nichols trial) is that of the White Supremacist, or the armed militia groups. So we add the “TIPS” program to the mix, for average citizens to turn in their neighbors, people on the street, or people acting “strangely” to the FBI for investigation.

Likewise the Germans (or rather those selected as loyal Germans) had their fears quieted by the Hitler propaganda machine. They blindly and unwittingly gave up their democracy to fascism because those “rules and punishments” applied to someone else—the Jew, the Gypsy, the immoral, the homosexual, the anti-Reich resister—not to them. Those extreme government actions were for “their” protection and for a greater Germany. It is more than hauntingly familiar. It is playing out day by day in front of our eyes.

So why does this tactic of framing the leader as a father and protector of the “real” national values work? It works because it plays upon the racism and ethnocentrism embedded in the culture. This is particularly true in the US which styled itself for so long as the true white democracy—reserving rights of citizenship and social participation for “whites.” This creates (still) a sense of entitlement and protection. The tactics of fear work within this rubric of entitlement and protection because whites are being protected from “them.” Included in them are those “traitors” who challenge the system and who challenge the entitlements (the perpetual enemy within). The dreams of grandeur work because the embeddedness of entitlement, purity, morality and “rightness” embedded in the nationalism it creates leads naturally to a belief in national entitlement and right within the world. The world is rightly “ours” and all that is in it is “ours.”

It worked in Germany. It has, and is, working in the United States. We see similar processes at work in the policies of Israel, and in the anti-immigrant movements and far-right shifts in parts of Europe. The US is not unique in any of this. What is unique is that we have the military power to take by force externally, and the perceived justification and technology of controlling by force internally.

Those of us who are alarmed are told “Don’t worry. If you have nothing to hide, then the protections of law are not needed.” If “they” are a threat, then “take them out.” How inconvenient that “our” oil (or other desired resource) is under someone else’s land.

Can it happen here? It is happening here.

Resources:

Secret Society Links

Three World Wars

<http://www.threeworldwars.com/world-war-2/adolf-hitler.htm> The Real Adolf Hitler

IAE <http://home.iae.nl/users/lightnet/world/awaken/skullandbones.htm> THE SKULL AND BONES SOCIETY

Cephas Ministry/Library <http://www.cephasministry.com/nwothule.html> THE THULE SOCIETY & NWO

Kris Millegan, Parascope,

<http://www.parascope.com/articles/0997/skullbones.htm> The Order of Skull and Bones

Steven Bonta, The New American,

http://www.thenewamerican.com/tna/2000/07-17-2000/vo16no15_bush.htm The Power Elite & George W. 7/17/2000

The Bushes and the Nazis

http://www.tupbiosystems.com/articles/bush_nazi.html The Third Reich.

Wasserman and Fitrakis, Rense.com,

<http://www.rense.com/general43/byrd.htm> Sen Byrd, Media Begin To Cover Bush-Hitler Connection

http://www.infowars.com/print_prescott.htm Article showing Skull and Bones members, E. R. Harriman, and Prescott S. Bush (The President's Grandfather.) tied to Hitler's funding and Banking. The Bush-Nazi Connection The Zanesville Signal, Zanesville, Oh., Thursday, July 31, 1941

http://www.onlinejournal.com/Special_Reports/061804Wolf/061804wolf.html

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In juxtaposition to authors Greeley and Wolf, Dr. Richard Land, Dr. Chuck Colson, Dr. Bill Bright, Dr. James Kennedy, and Dr. Carl Herbster, household names in American Evangelicalism, wrote: "How different and how much safer would the history of the twentieth century have been had the allies confronted Hitler when he illegally reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936 in clear violation of Germany's treaty agreements? It is at least possible that tens of millions of the lives lost in World War II might not have been lost if the Allies had enforced treaty compliance then instead of appeasing a murderous dictator. We are extremely grateful that we have a president who has learned the costly lessons of the twentieth century and who is determined to lead America and the world to a far different and better future in the twenty first century."

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These Evangelical leaders to a man apparently have no "eyes to see" (Jesus) what the rest of the world does, and Canadians recently indicated: that President Bush is himself a "murderous dictator" hell-bent on establishing his own "Evil Empire" (President Reagan) by the name of *Pax Americana*, this time like no other empire, since its imposed

American “peace” encircles the globe. Please read below the full article by these Christian leaders, and notice one glaring omission throughout: *the Gospel*. Theirs is appalling practice of evangelism without the Gospel.

“But the Emperor has nothing on at all!!!”, the little boy blurted out in Hans Christian Andersen’s compelling tale, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*. In the case of President Bush, one can add, certainly he wears no clothes of the kind the Apostle Paul enjoined followers of Jesus to put on: “Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” (Romans 13:14)



A Letter from Conservative Christians to President Bush

Leading evangelicals lend their support to the President in the effort to go to war with Iraq.

October 3, 2002

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. President,

In this decisive hour of our nation’s history we are writing to express our deep appreciation for your bold, courageous, and visionary leadership. Americans everywhere have been inspired by your eloquent and clear articulation of our nation’s highest ideals of freedom and of our resolve to defend that freedom both here and across the globe.

We believe that your policies concerning the ongoing international terrorist campaign against America are both right and just. Specifically, we believe that your stated policies concerning Saddam Hussein and his headlong pursuit and development of biochemical and nuclear weapons of mass destruction are prudent and fall well within the time-honored criteria of just war theory as developed by Christian theologians in the late fourth and early fifth centuries A.D.

First, your stated policy concerning using military force if necessary to disarm Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction is a just cause. In just war theory only defensive war is defensible; and if military force is used against Saddam Hussein it will be because he has attacked his neighbors, used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, and harbored terrorists from the Al Qaeda terrorist network that attacked our nation so viciously and violently on September 11, 2001. As you stated in your address to the U.N. September 12th:

“We can harbor no illusions. . . . Saddam Hussein attacked Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990. He’s fired ballistic missiles at Iran and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Israel. His regime once ordered the killing of every person between the ages of 15 and 70 in certain Kurdish villages in Northern Iraq. He has gassed many Iranians and forty Iraqi villages.”

Disarming and neutralizing Saddam Hussein is to defend freedom and freedom-loving people from state-sponsored terror and death.

Second, just war must have just intent. Our nation does not intend to destroy, conquer, or exploit Iraq. As you declared forthrightly in your speech to the U.N. General Assembly:

“The United States has no quarrel with the Iraqi people. . . . Liberty for the Iraqi people is a great moral cause, and a great strategic goal. The people of Iraq deserve it; the security of all nations requires it. Free societies do not intimidate through cruelty and conquest, and open societies do not threaten the world with mass murder. The United States supports political and economic liberty in a unified Iraq.”

This is clearly a just and noble intent.

Third, just war may only be commenced as a last resort. As you so clearly enumerated before the U.N., Saddam Hussein has for more than a decade ignored Security Council resolutions or defied them while breaking virtually every agreement into which he has entered. He stands convicted by his own record as a brutal dictator who cannot be trusted to abide by any agreement he makes. And while he prevaricates and obfuscates, he continues to obtain and develop the weapons of mass destruction which he will use to terrorize the world community of nations.

The world has been waiting for more than a decade for the Iraqi regime to fulfill its agreement to destroy all of its weapons of mass destruction, to cease producing them or the long-range missiles to deliver them in the future, and to allow thorough and rigorous inspections to verify their compliance. They have not, and will not, do so and any further delay in forcing the regime’s compliance would be reckless irresponsibility in the face of grave and growing danger.

Fourth, just war requires authorization by legitimate authority. We believe it was wise and prudent for you to go before the U.N. General Assembly and ask the U.N. Security Council to enforce its own resolutions. However, as American citizens we believe that, however helpful a U.N. Security Council vote might be, the legitimate authority to authorize the use of U.S. military force is the government of the United States and that the authorizing vehicle is a declaration of war or a joint resolution of the Congress.

When the threat of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba presented a grave threat to America’s security, President Kennedy asked for the support of the U.N. and the Organization of American States, but made it clear, with or without their support, those missiles would either be removed by the Soviets, or we would neutralize them ourselves. The American people expected no less from their president and their government.

Fifth, just war requires limited goals and the resort to armed force must have a reasonable expectation of success. In other words, “total war” is unacceptable and the war’s goals must be achievable. We believe your stated policies for disarming the murderous Iraqi dictator and destroying his weapons of mass destruction, while liberating the Iraqi people for his cruel and barbarous grip, more than meet those criteria.

Sixth, just war theory requires noncombatant immunity. We are confident that our government, unlike Hussein, will not target civilians and will do all that it can to minimize noncombatant casualties.

Seventh, just war theory requires the question of proportionality be addressed. Will the human cost of the armed conflict to both sides be proportionate to the stated objectives and goals? Does the good gained by resort to armed conflict justify the cost of lives lost and bodies maimed? We believe that the cost of not dealing with this threat now will only succeed in greatly increasing the cost in human lives and suffering when an even more heavily armed and dangerous Saddam Hussein must be confronted at some date in the not too distant future. We believe that every day of delay significantly increases the risk of far greater human suffering in the future than acting now would entail.

How different and how much safer would the history of the twentieth century have been had the allies confronted Hitler when he illegally reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936 in clear violation of Germany’s treaty agreements? It is at least possible that tens of millions of the lives lost in World War II might not have been lost if the Allies had enforced treaty compliance then instead of appeasing a murderous dictator.

We are extremely grateful that we have a president who has learned the costly lessons of the twentieth century and who is determined to lead America and the world to a far different and better future in the twenty first century. As you told the world’s leaders at the U.N.:

“We must choose between a world of fear and a world of progress. We cannot stand by and do nothing while dangers gather. We must stand up for our security, and for the permanent rights and hopes of mankind. By heritage and by choice, the United States of America will make that stand.”

Mr. President, we make that stand with you. In so doing, while we cannot speak for all of our constituents, we are supremely confident that we are voicing the convictions and concerns of the great preponderance of those we are privileged to serve.

Please know that we join tens of millions of our fellow Americans in praying for you and your family daily.

Sincerely Yours,

Richard D. Land, D.Phil.
President

Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
Southern Baptist Convention

Dr. Chuck Colson
Chairman
Prison Fellowship Ministries

Dr. Bill Bright
Founder and Chairman
Campus Crusade for Christ International

D. James Kennedy, Ph.D.
President
Coral Ridge Ministries Media, Inc.

Dr. Carl D. Herbster
President
American Association of Christian Schools

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Contrary to the above, columnist Bob Herbert wrote November 1, 2004 in *The New York Times*: “Unofficial estimates of the number of Iraqis killed in the war have ranged from 10,000 to 30,000. But a survey conducted by scientists from Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University and Al Mustansiriya University in Baghdad compared the death rates of Iraqis before and after the American invasion. They estimated that 100,000 more Iraqis have died in the 18 months since the invasion than would have been expected based on Iraqi death rates before the war.

“The scientists acknowledged that the survey was difficult to compile and that their findings represent a rough estimate. But even if they were off by as many as 20,000 or 40,000 deaths, their findings would still be chilling.

“Most of the widespread violent deaths, the scientists reported, were attributed to coalition forces. ‘Most individuals reportedly killed by coalition forces,’ the report said, ‘were women and children.’

That people are dying by the tens of thousands in a war that did not have to be fought - a war that was launched by the United States - is mind-boggling.”

And top American Evangelical leaders not only do not see, they apparently *choose* not to see, not unlike former South African apartheid cabinet member Leon Wessels who said that they [white South Africans] had not wanted to know, for there were those who tried to alert them.

I tried to alert Dr. Richard Land to these realities. He and I had met in 1997 as dialogue partners on capital punishment in Fairbanks, Alaska. Below is what I wrote him more recently:

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November 10, 2003

Dr. Richard Land
901 Commerce Street
Suite 550
Nashville TN
USA 37203

Greetings, Dr. Land!

It has been almost seven years since you and I shared a lecture hall in March, 1997 in Fairbanks to discuss capital punishment at the invitation of the Presbyterian Church. I appreciated the brief encounter with you: your great erudition and zest for life!

In some recent discussions, I mentioned you, and thought to look you up on the web. You were not hard to find!

As you know, I am a Canadian. Like the vast majority of Bible-believing Christians around the world, I see America from the outside, something you, not only an American, but a sixth generation Texan, cannot easily do! Above all, through fairly extensive reading and writing in this area (with much more to come, God willing), I see America as the latest expression of a long, tragic line of Empires desiring to impose, in this case *Pax Americana* on the rest of the world. Like biblical Christians in the first century, I see Empire as “The Great Beast”, utterly at odds with Christ and the Gospel.

Dr. Land, you confided in me in Alaska that you had come a long way ethically from your early Texan racist views of Blacks, and your dad’s support of the Vietnam War. That you would have encouraged Richard Junior when I met you (he was 18 then, I believe, and a recent top draft pick for College football) to have burnt his draft card if ever America engaged again in a War as unrighteous as Vietnam. Do you remember that? I remembered suggesting in response that perhaps capital punishment was the next on the list for you to change you mind about! Now, in light of what you have been saying about the justness of America’s “War on Terrorism”, I’d like to suggest “just war” be added to that list. I’d like also to suggest that America *is indeed* fighting just that kind of an unrighteous War right now.

God’s visitations come so often as “wee small voices” in our lives. When I had supper with you and others that first night in Fairbanks, I thought of you initially as the quintessential expression of “the ugly American”, anything but a “wee small voice”. You were so loud, so emphatically self-assured of all your opinions, so full of, well, yourself

(it seemed to me). I learned differently and to respect and appreciate you over the next 48 hours.

When I read your posted bio on your “Faith & Family” site, I thought again however as I first thought of you: “Who can hope to teach Dr. Land anything? His paraded accomplishments seem perfect filters for ever changing his mind. He’s now the authority on everything ethical, with a long line-up of credentials as likely to serve as blinkers to faithful interpretation and application of biblical truth...”

I am moving towards publication of a novel based upon two years of missionary experience in West Berlin in the early ‘70’s. Chapter 60 is a culmination of the reprised struggles of the young missionary, Andy, to come to terms with his Evangelical faith in a world that just did not “fit” his many assumptions, which one after another, were forced to undergo biblical re-appraisal. That Chapter, still in draft form, is enclosed. It raises questions that sent Andy/Wayne reeling back then, and still today, given the juggernaut of Evangelical Christianity in America that cannot see its own collusion in Empire. Many of us outside America in reading our Bibles and the world believe America to be the latest most evident expression of “The Beast” of Revelation 13. Our reasons for this appraisal abound. I invite you, just for a moment, to step “outside America”, and you will instantly have “eyes to see”...

I have enclosed two shorter articles, as well. One is being published in a new journal soon. The other, we’ll see...

I do not expect you to respond to me. You are a very important and busy man. But I would encourage you to respond to the “wee small voice” of God, to pray with David: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Ps 139:23-24).” If we Christians outside America are right, then America is as great an evil in its bid to dominate the world today as ever the Roman Empire (or any other) was in its day. And there is consequently a “desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9) way in every American church leader “*carte-blanching*” American Empire.

Conversion from that wickedness for you would be immensely difficult, I acknowledge. It would be shattering like Saul’s – and for similar reasons. So please feel no obligation to respond to me, rather to God. If the questions raised by Andy in Chapter 60 at all strike a chord, please listen to God. I can only urge you not to cop out. Very easy for me to say, when I am not remotely known like you, when the conversion I imagine for you would be devastating on multiple levels at first. But you have gone through other significant ethical conversions, Dr. Land. More is still possible, by God’s grace!

If you feel so inclined, I suggest two resources (of hundreds, of course!): Chapter Fourteen of New Testament scholar Richard Hays’ massive *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (Harper/Collins, 1996); and Lee Griffith’s *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. (This latter was completed, title chosen, and at the publisher’s, when Sept. 11, 2001 hit. Many of us believe the book to be not

only biblically and otherwise brilliant, but profoundly providential.) Both authors are Americans.

The final paragraphs from Hays' study is quoted below, for your interest:

“4. Living the Text: The Church As Community of Peace

“One reason that the world finds the New Testament’s message of peacemaking and love of enemies incredible is that the church is so massively faithless. On the question of violence, the church is deeply compromised and committed to nationalism, violence, and idolatry. (By comparison, our problems with sexual sin are trivial.) This indictment applies alike to liberation theologies that justify violence against oppressors and to establishment Christianity that continues to play chaplain to the military-industrial complex, citing just war theory and advocating the defense of a particular nation as though that were somehow a Christian value.

“Only when the church renounces the way of violence will people see what the Gospel means, because then they will see the way of Jesus reenacted in the church. Whenever God’s people give up the predictable ways of violence and self-defense, they are forced to formulate imaginative new responses in particular historical settings, responses as startling as going the second mile to carry the burden of a soldier who had compelled the defenseless follower of Jesus to carry it one mile first. The exact character of these imaginative responses can be worked out only in the life of particular Christian communities;⁵⁸ however, their common denominator will be conformity to the example of Jesus, whose own imaginative performance of enemy-love led him to the cross. If we live in obedience to Jesus’ command to renounce violence, the church will become the sphere where the future of God’s righteousness intersects—and challenges—the present tense of human existence. The meaning of the New Testament’s teaching on violence will become evident only in communities of Jesus’ followers who embody the costly way of peace.

“58. Where do we see concrete instances of communities that live this vision? Every reader will be able to think of different examples. Some that come to mind are Clarence Jordan’s Koinonia Farm in Americus, Georgia; Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston, Illinois; and the Sojourners community in Washington, D.C. (along with the network of communities associated with it) (pp. 343. 344. 346).”

There used to be a saying: “You can tell an Englishman anywhere, but you cannot tell him anything.” It was popular during the British Raj. I believe it is true of Americans defending the moral rightness of American Empire today. And tragically, it is true of majority American Evangelicals. I believe it was true of Romans in the early church era – and for all other loyalist empire citizens known to human history.

Philip Yancey once went on a long snowy retreat and did not return until he had reread the entire Bible! I wish you would do the same, Dr. Land, with one searing question: What did Jesus mean with “Love your enemies”?

Alexis de Tocqueville came from France to observe America in the 19th century. I wonder whether you might do the opposite? Apart from reading a great number of your own secular and Christian prophets (Chalmers Johnson, Thomas Merton, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Chris Hedges, Gore Vidal, William Blum, Sheldon Rampton and

Sheldon Stauber, of course Michael Moore, and a Canadian, Rosalie Bertell to name just a few), listen to what others from other parts of the world see in America today. Just ask one question: “Is America today the Roman Empire of the early church era?” You may discover that your double insularity of being Texas born and bred and American indoctrination yield some profoundly disturbing, alternative discoveries to “America the Beautiful”. You obviously have the intellectual capacity for that kind of research. Do you have the heart or the courage?

What is God’s call on your life, right now, Dr. Land? May I, do others similarly, serve you as Nathan did King David? You are a man of God, Dr. Land. Are you possibly also “the man” to give a profound wake-up call to America for its overweening sin of arrogance as Empire/Beast?

I leave you with this final quote – from a non-Christian!:

“Isn’t it odd that Christendom – that huge body of humankind that claims spiritual descent from the Jewish carpenter of Nazareth – claims to pray to and adore a being who was prisoner of Roman power, an inmate of the empire’s death row? That the one it considers the personification of the Creator of the Universe was tortured, humiliated, beaten, and crucified on a barren scrap of land on the imperial periphery, at Golgotha, the place of the skull? That the majority of its adherents strenuously support the state’s execution of thousands of imprisoned citizens? That the overwhelming majority of its judges, prosecutors, and lawyers – those who condemn, prosecute, and sell out the condemned – claim to be followers of the fettered, spat-upon, naked God? (Mumia Abu-Jamal in *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*, Mark Lewis Taylor, Fortress Press, 2001, p. xi).”

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Dr. Land did not, in fact, respond to me.

My challenge to Calvin College?: Next year, please issue an invitation to Osama bin Laden to do the convocation address, and be sure to precede it with selections from *Mein Kampf*.