

Pope Francis – A Childish Pope

On January 15, in the wake of the Islamist attacks on the French *Charlie Hebdo* satirical magazine, the Pope came out and had the following to say about the violent attacks ((I should note here that the Vatican website notes that the interview took place, but somehow doesn't have the text. **Emphasis in bold is mine.**))

"You cannot provoke," Pope Francis said on Thursday. "You cannot insult the faith of others. You cannot make fun of the faith of others."

Though he defended the principle of free expression and paid lip service to the notion that violence is always wrong, he warned "you can't make a toy out of the religions of others."

"To kill in the name of God is an aberration," Francis said. However, he added that it was natural for those who have been insulted to lash out violently.

"In freedom of expression, there are limits, like in regard to my mom," Francis continued. "If he says a swear word against my mother, he's going to get a punch in the nose. That's normal."

((<http://hotair.com/archives/2015/01/15/the-latest-to-justify-religious-violence-pope-francis/>))

I wonder if the Pope really understands the difference between children and adults? Children get offended at many things and never allow an offense to pass. Adults, on the other hand, can be insulted and overlook the offensive statement, understanding that words spoken or written reflect far more on the one speaking or writing, than on what is spoken of, or written about. Apparently Pope Francis does not understand

that distinction at all.

Perhaps that is because the Pope shares far more with the immature persons in the Muslim world than he does with any sort of maturity level sought for in rational western culture. At least at one time in western culture, striving to be as mature and understanding as possible was a goal.

It certainly is a desired for goal from a Scriptural point of view. In the Scripture we are admonished continually to grow and be mature and let nothing offend us. We are continually encouraged and exhorted to not be children.

But, there again, being a Catholic, the chances of the Pope actually reading the Scripture to receive that exhortation are slim to none. To defend childish behavior as normal, certainly indicates he didn't.

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (*Psalms 119:165*)

Mindless Drivel

So the new Pope wrote a letter. And what did he write? Well, it sounds sort of nice. Indeed, it probably will play well in some progressive circles, but for the hardened atheist, the following by Pope Francis is, well... drivel:

*In comments likely to enhance his progressive reputation, Pope Francis has written a long, open letter to the founder of La Repubblica newspaper, Eugenio Scalfari, stating that **non-believers would be forgiven by God if they followed their consciences.***

Responding to a list of questions published in the paper by

*Mr Scalfari, who is not a Roman Catholic, Francis wrote: "You ask me if the God of the Christians forgives those who don't believe and who don't seek the faith. I start by saying – and this is the fundamental thing – that God's mercy has no limits if you go to him with a sincere and contrite heart. **The issue for those who do not believe in God is to obey their conscience.***

"Sin, even for those who have no faith, exists when people disobey their conscience." ([Pope Francis assures sceptics: You don't have to believe in God to go to heaven, The Independent, 9/11/2013](#))

Uh-huh. However, last time I checked, the Catechism said no such thing, and, as far as I can tell, the Pope is NOT greater than the Catechism. In fact, the Pope can be fired, but if you did away with the Catechism there would be NO Catholic Church.

It seems to me, that the Catechism trumps the Pope whenever there is any conflict – and there certainly is conflict here.

II. HANDING ON THE FAITH: CATECHESIS

*4 Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God **so that believing they might have life in his name**, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ. ((CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH))*

PART TWO – THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

SECTION TWO – THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

CHAPTER ONE – THE SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

ARTICLE 1 – THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

*1213 **Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit** (*vitae spiritualis ianua*),⁴ and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of*

*God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."*⁵

I. WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

*1214 This sacrament is called Baptism, after the central rite by which it is carried out: to baptize (Greek baptizein) means to "plunge" or "immerse"; the "plunge" into the water symbolizes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as "a new creature."*⁶

*1215 This sacrament is also called "the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit," for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit **without which no one "can enter the kingdom of God."** ((CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH))*

Perhaps if the "vicar of Christ" had bothered to read his own church's documentation, he might not have engaged in mindless drivel...

Stupidity – Writ Large

Of late, my time is consumed by many things which have prevented me from posting and writing the way I would like. However, the time is spent preparing lessons, conducting those lessons, and preaching. Between those things and working full-time, and trying to fix my house, my time to write is non-existent. Nonetheless, in researching and attempting to write, one of the subjects I am studying is the issue of righteousness: what constitutes it, what destroys it, et cetera, et cetera. In my apologetics research on righteousness

I came across the following:

Fundamentally, there are two opposite errors regarding original sin. One is an error of deficiency, in which original sin is treated as less damaging to human nature than it actually is. That is the error of Pelagius. The other is the error of exaggeration, in which original sin is treated as more damaging to human nature than it actually is. (([Protestant Objections to the Catholic Doctrines of Original Justice and Original Sin, Bryan Cross, Oct. 16, 2011; NOTE: It is unclear here whether Mr. Cross is quoting Professor Lawrence Feingold or simply building off his material.](#)))

So the Catholics mean to say that the effect of Adam's fall was/is a nuanced thing in which we have to understand precisely the effect it had, else we will either:

- A.) Not go far enough in assigning the effects of the fall.*
- or*
- B.) Go too far in assigning the effects of the fall.*

I am sorry, but this sounds like something I would shovel out of my neighbor's barn.

Why?

Because the Scripture could not be more plain:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, **and death by sin**; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (*Romans 5:12-14*))

And again:

For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. **For as in Adam all die**, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (*I Corinthians 15:21-22*)

And yet again:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (*Hebrews 2:14-15*)

I really do not know how you can “go too far in assigning the effects of the fall” as it were. After all, this death includes the following:

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And **whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.** (*Rev 20:12-15*)

I suppose there is something out there worse than eternity in the Lake of Fire, but nothing ever describes it or even alludes to it.

So then, how is it that one can “go too far” in holding that the effect of the fall upon man was utterly devastating, warping man’s perception and distorting man’s ability to understand?

I suppose it could be that most Baptists and Protestants hold that man is utterly depraved and incapable of righteousness at

all.

Well, not quite:

Here we find the opposite error with respect to original sin, namely, an exaggeration of original sin.

Martin Luther

Luther's two principal errors with respect to original sin are as follows:

(1) Treating original sin as the complete corruption of human nature, rather than as the loss of the preternatural and supernatural gifts.

(2) Treating concupiscence (i.e. the involuntary disorder in the lower appetites) as original sin. ([Protestant Objections to the Catholic Doctrines of Original Justice and Original Sin, Bryan Cross, Oct. 16, 2011](#))

Without going into all the convoluted arguments, let us examine what the Scripture declares about man's fallen state:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; **and were by nature the children of wrath,** even as others. (*Ephesians 2:1-3*)

The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God. They are *all* gone aside, they are all together become filthy: **there is none that doeth good, no, not one.** (*Psalms 14:1-3*)

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. (*Psalms 51:5*)

Well now, if we are all the children of wrath by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, and exist in iniquity prior to coming to Christ, and there is nothing we can do about it outside of coming to Christ for salvation... How do you exaggerate that?

I find it hard to believe that anyone could think, especially after the evidence of Scripture, that the depravity of man could be worse.

No, if you are borne with a nature to do wickedness, and the LORD God accounts you as dead in trespasses and sins, bound to do every evil work, it is kind of hard to top that. No, there is no exaggeration when it is stated that man is utterly depraved and incapable of any righteousness. That is, if you evaluate what the LORD God evaluates – the soul.

If, on the other hand, you ignore the soul and concentrate on the flesh, and concentrate on sin, rather than iniquity, then you could claim that declaring the soul utterly corrupt is in error and excessive. However, since it is the LORD God who is the sole determiner of who is righteous and who is not, it really matters little what the Catholic Church believes and teaches.

The sad part is, the Catholic Church has had over 1500 years to get this teaching right – and they have not. Instead, they cling to a doctrine that is provably wrong.

That is the very definition of Stupidity – writ large.

What's Wrong With the Amish

The following story illustrates plainly what is wrong with the Amish religion. Please, watch it all.

You will find that they will persecute their own for STUDYING THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH AND PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

Sickening

Some things are just utterly sickening to find out about. [The story in Bangladesh's The Daily Star, dated Thursday, Feb. 3rd, 2011](#) is one of those sickening stories you pray you never hear about, let alone have happen anywhere near you.

What happened? Well, the gist is that a terrible crime was committed against a fourteen (14) year old girl – and then horribly compounded by the followers of a sick, twisted, demented religious system.

In brief, the fourteen year old was raped by a 40 year old cousin. This was bad enough. However, lest we forget, or are ignorant, in Islam, if a woman is raped – it is automatically her fault – and rape carries the same penalty as adultery – death (or 100 lashes if you are not married). Now, you can argue that 100 lashes does not constitute a death sentence,

but let's see you take the 100 lashes given by a strong man using a cane. If you are not dead when he is done, it will be a miracle.

So, the local religious leader promptly issued a fatwa calling for 100 lashes for the 14 year old (and nothing of note for the 40 year old), which was then carried out by persons in the village. The young girl died after 80 lashes.

Now precisely what did the young girl do wrong? We can ask lots of questions as to why the LORD allowed this. But perhaps we would be better served asking the question as to why such a religious system is allowed to continue unchecked and unhindered? Regardless of where it is in the world, Islam is Islam, meaning that Islam remains the same, no matter where or when we find it.

Hence, understand these things about Islam, as they are indisputable tenets of that religion:

- The woman is always to blame.
- Women are little better than property.
- If you do not agree with Islam, you are a blasphemer subject to be put to death.
- Living peacefully with Islam means being converted to Islam.
- Pedophilia is okay. Rape is okay. Having a mistress is okay. Having more than one wife is okay... just DO NOT blaspheme Muhammad.

Now, there are those who will rush to the defense of Islam and swear up and down that these things are not true. . .

However. . .

Tell that to those who have been (and are still) being forced to convert to Islam under pain of death.

Tell that to the little girls who are subject to forced

circumcision.

Tell that to the women and girls who have died in innumerable "honor" killings.

Tell that to the innumerable Christians, Jews and other "infidels" ((Some are truly infidels, and some are perhaps not, but is that a reason to deprive them of life, liberty and property?)) who have been subject to systematic persecution, up to and including being put to death.

Tell that to the "dancing boys" of Afghanistan.

Tell that to the countless girls and women who have been raped by Muslim men who yell "Allah Akbar" while raping them.

And all of this sanctioned by the religious leaders of Islam.

You know, ordinarily we would call all the above criminal behavior, worthy of severe penalty, up to and including death.

Only, when it is done under the cover of Islam, we just shrug our shoulders and go on as if nothing happened.

At what point will we realize that a religion as destructive as Islam cannot be allowed the liberty to exist and flourish? You know, religions which require human sacrifice are illegal in America. Why can we not see that a 14 year old was sacrificed to satisfy a religious tenet?

And we are told that fundamental, Biblical Christianity is a religion of hate and meanness.

Twisted to Fit: Pt. V

It should be apparent to any child of God that the Devil has many lies to tell, and he really doesn't care which one you believe, so long as you fall for one of his lies, and he can then use that to draw you away from ever really knowing the truth, and ever really serving the LORD God rightly and properly. If the Devil can render the believer's witness and testimony suspect, or nullified, then he has accomplished much of his purpose. If he can get believers to buy into a lie about man's nature, and thus teach and act counter to the actual working of God, then he has also accomplished as near as he can hope to accomplish in having a believable, willing, albeit ignorant accomplice in his work of subverting the true knowledge of the LORD and His working among men.

Thus, when statements are made like the following, which are contrary to the Scripture, we can know that the Devil is hard at work subverting the Scripture:

But Christianity is in a sad state. In the Church can be found some of the greatest supporters of the state, its leaders, its military, and its wars. Christians who are otherwise good, godly, disciples of Christ often turn into babbling idiots when it comes to the subjects of war, the military, and killing for the state. There is an unholy desire on the part of a great many Christians to legitimize killing in war. There persists the idea among too many Christians that mass killing in war is acceptable, but the killing of one's neighbor violates the sixth commandment's prohibition against killing. Christians who wouldn't think of using the Lord's name in vain blaspheme God when they make ridiculous statements like "God is pro-war." Christians who try never to lie do so with boldness when they claim they are pro-life, but refuse to extend their pro-life sentiments to foreigners already out of the womb. . . "

“Christians who claim to have the mind of Christ show that they have lost their mind when they want the full force of government to protect a stem cell, but have no conscience about U.S. soldiers killing for the government.” ((Laurence M. Vance))

The great problem that exists among those who identify themselves as Christian, is not their glorification of war per se. Rather, it is the exact same problem that Christian pacifists and secular “peace activists” have:

They are bereft of the truth of the Scriptures concerning the nature of the LORD’s judgement and what war is really about.

The reason for this is perhaps traced directly back to the ugly nature of man, and what admitting that requires of each and every one of us. In this, Mr. Vance is no exception. Throughout his dissertation on the evils of war, he consistently failed to mention anything about the nature of man, and how that we cannot change that, anymore than a leopard can lose its spots. Like it or not, the Scripture is expressly clear about man’s nature and just how wicked and evil we really are. Moreover, Mr. Vance also failed to express anything about the dual nature of a Christian. In this, the Scripture is also clear that the born-again believer has the nature of Christ in the soul and the old nature of Adam in the flesh. Moreover, these two natures are continually at war one with the other.

Thus, when Mr. Vance declares:

“But Christianity is in a sad state. In the Church can be found some of the greatest supporters of the state, its leaders, its military, and its wars. Christians who are otherwise good, godly, disciples of Christ often turn into babbling idiots when it comes to the subjects of war, the military, and killing for the state.” ((ibid))

He rails against something that is part and parcel to the very nature of the flesh, and must be fought in the born-again child of God by feeding the soul through the word of God. However, his criticism of Christians in general is also misguided in that he draws no distinction about the legitimacy of government in Scripture, and that Christians are supposed to support civil government insofar as that government obeys the laws of God for government. The problem with most Christians is a lack of understanding about their role in civil society and the extent of their involvement in government. While it is nowhere near what some Christians engage in, it is also nowhere near what Laurence Vance is advocating. Thus, the truth is between the extremes advocated by Mr. Vance and those he chastises.

What then is that truth about war and a Christian's view of war? Simply put, it is this:

War is the normal state of human affairs, and has been ever since Adam's fall from innocence.

Thus, it is pointless to rail against war and think that somehow man can stop the wars that are engaged in by individuals and government. Moreover, a careful study of Scripture plainly reveals that war is one of the means of judgement used by the LORD God against those nations that exceed the bounds of conduct He has set. This will not change.

Sadly, I can only conclude that Laurence Vance is either entirely ignorant of the truth of Scripture (all the while touting his Theology degree and Christian credentials), or he is using Christianity as a cover for his real agenda, which has nothing to do with actual Christianity, and everything to do with promoting an ideology incompatible with the foundation of the United States.

If Mr. Vance really wanted to change the "war mentality" and serve Christ honestly, we would read and hear a whole lot more

of the Gospel from him that what we do. Sadly, like the “Rev.” Jeremiah Wright, “Rev.” Jesse Jackson, “Rev.” Al Sharpton and the “Rev.” Michael “Snuffy” Pfleger, the Gospel is strangely absent. This tells the whole truth of what Laurence Vance is really all about – twisting the Scripture to fit his own agenda.

Twisted to Fit: Pt. IV

It is sad that many of those who hold degrees in Theology and Divinity seem to have little to no understanding of what the Scripture actually states. However, they are not alone in this as it is not the degree (or lack thereof) in Theology or Divinity that gives an understanding of the LORD God. Rather, it is adhering to the word of God and being obedient to His commands. This begins with actual salvation in Christ and continues with the believer’s obedience in being baptized in a proper New Testament church. This is the path the LORD ordained for this dispensation, and He will not change it until this particular dispensation ends.

Now, there are those who disagree with this, and they are free to do so, but it will not make them right. The reason they disagree is due to the fact that under the program the Lord Jesus Christ instituted, their degree becomes essentially useless as the LORD God will not honor it by giving them insight into His word. However, since they are not really interested in pleasing the LORD God, (if they were, they would have followed the Bible) but are interested only in impressing men, the degree in Theology or Divinity works perfectly fine for their purposes. Since we are here, perhaps the following question could be answered by those who possess a degree in Theology or Divinity:

Where in the New Testament do we find the school the Lord Jesus Christ ordained and commissioned to qualify individuals to receive degrees in Theology and/or Divinity?

Now, why is this brought up? Due to the following statement made by Mr. Vance (who holds a degree in Theology, and claims to be a conservative Christian):

War is the greatest destroyer of religion, morality, and decency. War is the greatest creator of fertile ground for genocides and atrocities. War is the greatest destroyer of families and young lives. War is the greatest creator of famine, disease, and homelessness. War is the health of the state.

Let us go back to the real reason war exists:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (*Isaiah 14:12-15*)

War exists on this earth because Lucifer (now Satan) brought it here when he tempted man in the Garden of Eden and man succumbed to that temptation and rebelled against the express commandment of God to not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In so doing, Satan conquered man's dominion and now rules the earth. We are expressly told of four specific aspects of Satan's administration of this earth in Revelation:

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard,

as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:1-8)

We know this is Satan's administration of the earth due to statements in Scripture that speak directly to the Fall and who the god of this world is:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (Romans 5:12-14)

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (II

Corinthians 4:3-4)

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (*Luke 4:5-8*)

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (*Ephesians 2:1-3*)

Thus, by the above, man is at war with God, and bent on rebellion to the LORD. We can also see that man has a greater penchant for following the Devil, than anything the LORD God states that man ought to do. By this, we ought to understand that wars exists on this earth, not due to government and some unknown desire of the "state" to wage war. But solely due each of us individually, and the violence we harbor in ourselves toward the LORD and His rule over us. This also is made plain by the Scripture's account of the Millennial Reign of Christ and what will happen after 1000 years of peace on this earth with Satan bound and unable to influence man.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the

Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. (*Psalms 2:1-6*)

Even though there will be peace on this earth, it will be an enforced peace as man is violent in his nature and extremely selfish. We want what we want, and don't care who we hurt in the process. Though we may only intend to benefit ourselves and leave everyone else untouched by our actions, we cannot perceive the full ramifications of our actions and thus know everyone that will be affected. This is the law of unintended consequences. Only the LORD God knows the full ramifications of our thoughts and actions, and has expressly instructed us that we are not capable of governing ourselves. However, we do not wish to hear that. Moreover, we do not want the LORD telling us what we will do, and when we will do it. Yet, this is exactly what will happen during the Millennial Reign of Christ. The response of man is already made known by the LORD in His word. After 1000 years of chaffing under the just rule of Christ, man is ready to openly rebel, all the people of the earth need is a leader:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (*Revelation 20:7-9*)

No, the problem is not that war is the health of the state. The problem of war is solely due to the wicked heart of unregenerate man and his hatred for his Creator. All that Satan has to do is convince someone that engaging in the destruction of another person is somehow beneficial and ought to be done. Like flies on stink, we are drawn to it every time. It is a problem inherent in the fallen, wicked and

sinful nature of man, and it will not change short of being born again with an entirely new nature – the nature of Christ.

Thus, Mr. Vance, the Mennonites, Quakers, Jehovah's Witnesses, Amish and various other "peace activists" are in denial of the truth about man. This makes them no better than the Communist who believes that man can better himself, if only the social environment is brought in line with communist doctrine. Worse yet, it renders all the religious groups listed above easy prey for the Devil – as they already believe one lie about man.

To be continued . . .

Twisted to Fit: Pt. III

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. (*Exodus 15:1-3*)

The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. (*Isaiah 42:13-15*)

I have made some shocking statements about religious people,

perhaps even some provocative and incendiary statements. In fact, people that don't know anything about me might be inclined to believe that my remarks thus far have been an attack on Christianity. To the contrary, I am a Bible-believing Christian, as conservative as they come. Probably more conservative than many nominal Christians would feel comfortable with. True, I have spoken or written negative things about every religion, sect, and Christian denomination – including my own – but the difference between me and Christian apologists for Bush, the Republican Party, the military, war, and the state is that I worship the God of the Bible, not Mars, the god of war. Although I am not an ordained minister, I have preached in churches and other venues. I have earned degrees in theology. I have taught children in Sunday school and adults in Bible college. I will put my conservative Christian credentials up against anyone.

Really?

Obviously Mr. Vance, you do not read the Scripture as much as you say as the above verses reveal the LORD God to be a “man of war.” Your very clear statement “*and the state is that I worship the God of the Bible, not Mars, the god of war.*” is a reference that could have easily been left out of the speech altogether if all you were after was to rebuke those “Christians” that are so bent on totally supporting President Bush without regard to the rightness of his actions. Instead, you have equated the LORD God of the Bible to the false god and idol of Roman religion, Mars. According to your own statements concerning your qualifications, you should know better. Oh, you do attempt to give cover to your statements by continuing with the following:

I think I know Christianity and Christians as well as anyone. So, please understand that it is not Christianity I am criticizing; it is Christians who, by their persistent support for war, the warfare state, and the military, are

giving Christianity a bad name.

If you really “knew” Christianity as well as you say you do, you would know that the Scripture plainly teaches there is no “Church,” but there are churches, meaning that the Scripture does not teach the concept of a universal church, visible or invisible. You would also know that there were churches throughout the last twenty centuries that never came under the wicked system of Roman Catholicism, and were never part of the “Reformation” and the Protestant movement. Moreover, you would know the names of these various groups and that their doctrines were remarkably similar, and very much in keeping with the doctrines of fundamental Baptist churches you find today. Understand though, this does not refer to Board, Fellowship, or Convention Baptist churches, but those little, out of the way, unaffiliated churches who still hold fast the Scripture.

No, Mr. Vance, your criticism of “Christians” is very much like the pot calling the kettle black. The “Christians” you supposedly oppose have an agenda, and you have an agenda – and its not holding fast the word of God. You could have easily criticized those who claim Christ, and have considerable error, without attacking a government institution that has existed since the first king ruled and reigned on this earth. In fact, your attack upon the use of any force by a child of God implicitly attacks Abraham (Genesis 14:13-16) and Samuel (I Samuel 15:32-33) and it denies the reality of this world and the reality of the spiritual war that has been on-going since Lucifer rebelled against the LORD God:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the

clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (*Isaiah 14:12-15*)

You know Mr. Vance, if you knew the Scriptures as well as you say you do, you would know of certainty that the wars and conflicts of this world are but a reflection and shadow of the spiritual war. You would also know that war is one of the ways the LORD God judges nations:

In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. (*II Kings 24:1-4*)

Whether we like it or not, war is, and will remain a prominent feature of life on this earth. Until this earth is destroyed by a fire so hot that even the very particles of the atoms are consumed, war will be a continual feature of man's existence. Even during the Millennial Reign of Christ in which peace will be enforced with a rod of iron in the hand of the Word of God and Satan is bound for a thousand years, man will be at war with God in his heart. The Scripture does not lie, in our unregenerate state, we hate God and His rule over us. We are rebellious to the core, and want nothing better than to satisfy our own selfish desires at the expense of everyone else. That is why the LORD states in the Scripture:

I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the

princes. (*Psalm 82:6-7*)

And, why the LORD God challenges man with the following:

Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you. (*Isaiah 41:21-24*)

In fact, the LORD God has done everything He can do to reconcile man to Himself, yet man hates God, and will continue to hate God as long as there is one soul that refuses to come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. In this, the Scripture is extremely clear:

They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away. (*Psalm 69:4*)

Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. (*Psalm 109:1-4*)

He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be

fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. (John 15:23-25)

Man will never escape war on this earth. Thus, to make the following declaration is to deny the truth of man's state, and deny the truth of what the LORD God has repeatedly stated:

War is the greatest destroyer of religion, morality, and decency. War is the greatest creator of fertile ground for genocides and atrocities. War is the greatest destroyer of families and young lives. War is the greatest creator of famine, disease, and homelessness. War is the health of the state.

To be continued . . .

Twisted to Fit: Pt. II

There are so many spurious charges and broad brush statements made in Laurence Vance's speech that I almost do not know where to begin in addressing the outright errors present. Perhaps then, after answering some outright erroneous statements, it would be best to concentrate on a few certain things the Bible states about war and the relationship of the Christian to civil government.

In beginning, I think it essential to separate out the fact that, like Jeremiah Wright, Laurence Vance uses the Scripture as a cloak for his actual agenda, in which he attempts to legitimize his claims with out of context and partial quotes from Scripture. In going through his speech, and then perusing his other writings, it is quite apparent that Mr. Vance, despite his claims to the contrary, has another agenda besides

trying to turn Christians back to a stricter adherence to Scripture. The essence of that agenda is found in the closing statements of his June 8th speech:

It is high time for Christians who still defend the state, its leaders, its military, and its wars to wake up and open their eyes and recognize some cold, hard facts:

- * The United States has become a rogue state, a pariah nation, an evil empire.*
- * The United States' military is the greatest force for evil in the world.*
- * The United States is the arms dealer to the world.*
- * The United States is not the world's policeman.*
- * The United States cannot redeem the world through violence.*
- * The United States is not the God-anointed protector of Israel that enjoys a special relationship with God.*
- * The United States government is the greatest threat to American life, liberty, and property – not the leaders or the military or the people of Iraq, Iran, Syria, China, Russia, or Venezuela.*

Our republic is crumbling. It is imperative that we return to the noninterventionist foreign policy of the Founders. Christians, of all people, should be leading the way.

Now, is it really the purview of Christians to direct the society of the United States, and thus its government to return to the Constitution?

Moreover, is it absolutely true that the United States has become "a rogue state, a pariah nation, an evil empire."?

Is it true that "The United States' military is the greatest force for evil in the world."?

Is it true that "The United States is the arms dealer to the world."?

Is it true that "The United States is not the world's policeman."?

Is it true that "The United States cannot redeem the world through violence."?

Is it true that "The United States is not the God-anointed protector of Israel that enjoys a special relationship with God."?

Is it true that "The United States government is the greatest threat to American life, liberty, and property – not the leaders or the military or the people of Iraq, Iran, Syria, China, Russia, or Venezuela."?

The problem with so many of these statements is that they sound just like known communists and propaganda straight from the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. One would have to be a fool or totally ignorant of the statements and publications of the Soviet Union, the PRC, and their agents and front men to not be familiar with the theme espoused in the above statements.

However, the real question is:

As a Christian, whose purpose it is to serve the LORD God and put forth the gospel every day, what does any of this really have to do with me and my service to God?

In answering that, which must be done to thoroughly answer the rest of Mr. Vance's assertions, we must understand the Christian's relationship to the world, and to the nation in which the LORD God put them. However, before continuing, a brief answer to the above questions are:

No, it is not the responsibility of Christians to force or "lead the way" to a return to constitutional government. Please note the use of the word "force" in the answer. It is the duty of the Christian to witness and testify of the Lord

Jesus Christ and His gospel, and uphold the constitutions, State and Federal, as they were framed.

No, *the United States is not “a rogue state, a pariah nation, or an evil empire.” If you think so, try living in Russia, the PRC, Cuba, or North Korea. Now, while we are not that bad, we are certainly not following the Constitution, or the spirit and intent of it. We do need to return to what the Founders intended as they did understand how a nation ought to function in this world.*

No, *it is not true that “The United States’ military is the greatest force for evil in the world.” If it is, then it is worse than the FSB (formerly KGB), Islam (which sends people to Hell every day), the Catholic Church (ditto), Buddhism (ditto), Taoism (ditto), Jehovah’s Witnesses (ditto), Mormonism (ditto), etc. etc., and a host of other false religions. The greatest force for evil in this world is our own individual hearts. If you doubt that, then you call the LORD God a liar – and I wouldn’t want to be in your shoes.*

No, *it is not true that “The United States is the arms dealer to the world.” Try China and the former Soviet satellite states for that one. The most common combat small arm in the world is not the M-16 or its variants. Rather, it is the AK-47/74 and all its variants. By the way, who did produce the most tanks, combat aircraft, missiles, ships, bombs, etc. all those years of the Cold War? Moreover, just where are those weapons now?*

Yes, *it is true that “The United States is not the world’s policeman.” However, it is also true that the United States should be an influence throughout the world. We simply do not need to, and should not “impose” our form of government on everyone else. Education is far more effective at*

demonstrating the superiority of the American system.

Yes, *it is true that “The United States cannot redeem the world through violence.” However, it is also true that no one else can either. This statement displays nothing but ignorance of the Scripture, and presents a straw man to be destroyed by Mr. Vance. The fact is, this world will never be redeemed by any method – violent or otherwise. No, the LORD God is interested in redeeming individual souls through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone (which, by the way, was a violent act). This world will be, in the end, destroyed – not redeemed. Did the Lord Jesus Christ die for the world (all the people in it)? Yes, He certainly did. However, the Scripture does not lie, and it plainly states that the vast majority of people in this world reject the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel, and consign themselves to eternal damnation.*

Yes, *it is true that “The United States is not the God-anointed protector of Israel that enjoys a special relationship with God.” However, to say that we should not stand by Israel, is to fly in the face of Scripture. Mr. Vance ought to know this as well. Israel, whether they currently follow the LORD God or not, is still the apple of God’s eye, and they will not depart from His presence. When the United States is long gone, Israel will still be around. Why? Because they are the physical children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which the LORD gave certain promises to, which said promises are not yet completely fulfilled.*

No, *it is not true that “The United States government is the greatest threat to American life, liberty, and property – not the leaders or the military or the people of Iraq, Iran, Syria, China, Russia, or Venezuela.” However, this is not the “us versus them” shallow issue that Mr. Vance makes it out to be. In fact, again Mr. Vance has set-up a straw man to knock*

down. **The truth is that the American People are the greatest threat to their own liberty – not the American Government.** There are approximately 300 million people in the United States. Of that, over half own some sort of firearm (most own several). In fact, there are probably enough firearms in private possession to equip every man, woman, and child in the United States with at least one firearm, and ammunition to boot. Plainly, the liberty of the American citizen is in their own hands, and not in the hands of the government. Moreover, the majority of individuals in the U.S. Military believe in liberty, and in private possession of arms. While they may disagree over the extent of the right, they do agree that private possession of arms should be the case. Now, whose fault will it be if the American citizen loses their liberty? The problem with the American Government arises from a problem with how American citizens think and behave, and what they allow the American Government to “get away with,” and not with the government itself. I would remind Mr. Vance of the truth of the following statement by Samuel Adams:

“A general dissolution of the principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy... While the people are virtuous they cannot be subdued; but once they lose their virtue, they will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader... If virtue and knowledge are diffused among the people, they will never be enslaved. This will be their great security.” – **Samuel Adams**

The problem with the American people is one of a loss of virtue and accountability. Thus, the American people do not demand those in government be virtuous, nor do they demand accountability from their government. If they did so, America would not have the problems she has.

This, interestingly enough, brings one right back to the duties of a Christian in civil society, and what a Christian’s

view of war ought to be.

To be continued . . .

Twisted to Fit

Today, LewRockwell.com [posted a speech given by Laurence M. Vance](#) at the June 8, 2008, Future of Freedom Foundation's conference on "Restoring the Republic: Foreign Policy and Civil Liberties." In this speech, Mr. Vance spoke specifically on the subject of Christians and war. In his speech, he critiqued "Christians" severely for their support of war. He also drew no distinctions about what makes one a "Christian," and where, in Scripture he finds the support for his contention that war, in and of itself, is wrong for a Christian to engage in. In the very first paragraph of his "talk" he states:

"If there is any group of people that should be opposed to war, torture, militarism, the warfare state, state worship, suppression of civil liberties, an imperial presidency, blind nationalism, government propaganda, and an aggressive foreign policy it is Christians, and especially conservative, evangelical, and fundamentalist Christians who claim to strictly follow the dictates of Scripture and worship the Prince of Peace. It is indeed strange that Christian people should be so accepting of war. War is the greatest suppressor of civil liberties. War is the greatest destroyer of religion, morality, and decency. War is the greatest creator of fertile ground for genocides and atrocities. War is the greatest destroyer of families and young lives. War is the greatest creator of famine, disease, and homelessness. War is the health of the state."

And if ever there were a broad brush, Mr. Vance has used it. About four-fifths of the things given in the first sentence do not even belong together. If we examine this list, we find some things that are strongly supported by Scripture, and others that Scripture expressly condemns. However, according to Mr. Vance, for one to be a Christian, one must oppose all items on the following list:

“If there is any group of people that should be opposed to war, torture, militarism, the warfare state, state worship, suppression of civil liberties, an imperial presidency, blind nationalism, government propaganda, and an aggressive foreign policy it is Christians . . .”

If we take this list at face value, according to Mr. Vance, King David could not have ever been a Christian.

Why?

Because King David engaged in virtually everything on this list almost his entire life. Now, was everything David did right and proper Scripturally? No, obviously not. However, there are only three specific incidents of transgression the LORD God was displeased with:

The unlawful and improper transport of the Ark of the Covenant. (I Chronicles 13, 15)

The matter of Uriah the Hittite's wife. (II Samuel 11-12)

The numbering of Israel. (I Chronicles 21)

Funny how that only when it came to building the temple was King David told by the LORD God that his wars prevented him from doing that. (*I Chronicles 22:6-8*)

However, before going further, I suppose it ought to be established whether King David was a Christian or not, seeing that most do not believe that believers in the Old Testament were.. In a word: yes, King David was a Christian. The proof

of King David believing in Christ to come is throughout the Psalms. The proof that people were saved in the time of the Old Testament by grace through faith in Christ (or the Messiah) to come is extensive in Scripture and I have written about it in the following articles:

[Where Did the Old Testament Saints Go?](#)

[A Departure](#)

[A Departure, Pt. II](#)

[A Departure, Pt. III](#)

Any proper study of the Scriptures will indeed show that, as Christianity is defined (a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ – the Saviour), all believers in the Old Testament were (and still are) ((An understanding of what it means to be “in Christ” is essential to understanding how one, once born again, will never leave the status of “in Christ.”)) Christians. This applies to everyone from Adam and Eve forward. (*Hebrews 11:4*)

To return to the issue at hand: how can it be that someone who has a degree in Theology, and claims to have studied the Scripture, have such a remarkable lack of understanding of what the Scripture states about war, its origin, what a born-again child of God’s relationship to, and view of war ought to be? Instead, the extent of Mr. Vance’s citation of Scripture in his speech consists of three (3) verses, one of which is taken out of context and another is only partially quoted. Mr. Vance fronts his citations with the following paragraph:

“The early Christians were not warmongers like so many Christians today. They did not idolize the Caesars like some Christians idolize President Bush. They did not make apologies for the Roman Empire like many Christians do for the U.S. Empire. They did not venerate the institution of the military like most Christians do today. They did not participate in the state’s wars like too many Christians do today. If there was anything at all advocated by the early

Christians it was peace. After all, they had some New Testament admonitions to go by:

- * Blessed are the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9)*
- * Live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:18)*
- * Follow peace with all men (Hebrews 12:14)"*

Then, Mr. Vance goes on to begin the next paragraph with the statement:

"Aggression, violence, and bloodshed are contrary to the very nature of Christianity."

Now, whatever evidence Mr. Vance has for his contentions concerning early Christians, he certainly does not use the Scriptures to support it, and indeed mixes things that are valid Scripturally, with things that are invalid. For instance, it is true that aggression, violence and bloodshed are incompatible with spreading the gospel. But, they are ordained and given to the state by the LORD God. The assertion that "early Christians" did not participate in state wars is patently against what the Scripture plainly states concerning Cornelius and many others in the Roman army:

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. (Acts 10:1-4)

What we find in this chapter is Cornelius' obedience to God in sending for Peter, Then Peter coming to Cornelius' house and preaching the gospel to Cornelius and all his house and close

friends. During Peter's preaching we find the following occurs:

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (Acts 10:44-48)

Now, we will search in vain to find where Peter explains to Cornelius that he must leave the Roman Army to serve God. Why? Because it is not there, and it is not there because it is not required nor demanded. In fact, the relationship of the child of God to military service was explained much earlier by John the Baptist as he preached the gospel and prepared the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ:

And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he

will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. (*Luke 3:10-18*)

If we note what John told the soldiers, we will note the absence of any demand they leave military service. Rather, he tells them to uphold their duty in a right and just manner, ((The statement "Do violence to no man," does not mean to avoid combat in the line of duty. What it means in the context given is to not arbitrarily and capriciously, wantonly do harm to someone simply because you can. It is a frequent temptation for armed soldiers, especially stationed in a foreign land, to lash out and unnecessarily strike someone simply because they can.)) and be content with their wages. He does not say "Don't go to war." or "Leave the military." or "Don't support the Roman empire's wars." Those statements, and others like them are notably absent throughout the New Testament. Surely, if a Christian serving in the military were such a serious issue, don't you think the LORD God would have addressed it directly?

To be continued . . .
