

above doctrinal truth, the second stage with the denial of doctrinal truth altogether for achieving political goals.

Richard John Neuhaus provided us with a classic example last year. His magazine *First Things* printed a long manifesto signed by prominent Protestants and Catholics. In page after page, it chronicled our troubles with family breakup, crime, declining respect for authority, growing permissiveness toward sexual deviance, the public schools, etc. There was truth in much of it. But then there was a surprise ending, and some of the signers claim to have missed it. The signers pledged themselves not to engage in "sheep stealing," that is, proselytization.

Yet there are real differences between Catholics and Protestants, and they are larger than mere subjective preference. No social crisis should be allowed to drive either side to promise, for example, not to bring up the nature of the Eucharist. If we do put aside essential beliefs to improve, it is said, the social order, where do we draw the line? Should we agree with "socially conservative" Muslims not to discuss the divinity of Christ?

Politicization has had an especially pernicious effect on the Catholic faith. In our times, the problems began with Vatican II. Its documents were highly political, and they precipitated three decades of liturgical and theological disaster. Why didn't conservatives protest? Some did. But many more did not, on grounds that they wanted to support *Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI's letter on abortion and birth control. Conservatives hung onto this document for dear life. Eventually, the Catholic right came to focus on the single issue of abortion, and developed an enormous industry to do it.

During the welfare debate, Republicans faced some fierce opposition to the idea of cutting off subsidies to women who have children out of wedlock. Initially, the opposition came from the left. But it was National Right to Life, in conjunction with the bishops, that defeated the idea. The reasoning was that the women might abort their children if they were not paid to have them.

The Family Research Council desperately tried to explain that cutting off subsidies was an essential precursor to changing the lewd culture that governs the inner city. But National Right to Life merely expressed shock that any pro-lifer would disagree on welfare for single

mothers. With that, it became clear that the pro-life establishment had joined the forces of socialism.

One wonders how far they will take this. Suppose someone introduced legislation to have the federal government pay \$100,000 for every live birth. Would pro-lifers support that too? Thirty years ago, no. They would have understood there were other principles at stake. But today, they are afflicted with such myopia that they would surely say yes.

The Catholic bishops, too, mix their pro-life agenda with leftism, speaking, for example, of their duty to defend the "unborn and the undocumented." In their recent "statement on Political Responsibility," the bishops pledged themselves to the "continued defense of human life as the 'preeminent human rights issue of our day,' strongly opposing abortion and euthanasia." They went on to call for a ban on "anti-personnel landmines," an end to the death penalty, more affirmative action, more government jobs, more environmentalism, more Food Stamps, and more socialized medicine that "respects life." They also oppose "anti-immigrant sentiment," "isolationism," abortion, and handguns.

In his recent address to the United Nations, John Paul II called on the organization to "become a moral center where all the nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being." But didn't Christians once believe that the moral center of nations, and the shared awareness among all people, was the Church itself?

In her speech before the United Nations, Mother Teresa took a different route. She related how often people ask her how they can do what she does. She tells them: Don't do what I do. Do what *you* are supposed to do. Be a good father and worker. Be a good mother to your own children. Be responsible for those in your care.

That is advice the Church needs as well. Christians do not need to leave political activism, although some leaders of the prominent groups represent as great a danger as any secular opponents. But Christians should not proclaim themselves as religious people tired of sitting in the back of the bus, and follow Rosa Parks in demanding their rights as a special-interest group.

Already, our religious leadership seems more interested in press conferences than defending the faith. Conservatives, at least, need to recognize that

the essence of their faith cannot be found in the public square, for it is not the source of good families, good theology, authentic liturgy, and loving neighbors, not to speak of eternal life. Conservatives must not pretend to establish a Christian-friendly official culture in Washington, or get government to start subsidizing religious schools as opposed to public schools. Nor can Christians hope to impress the governing elites with the fruits of their religion, except to the extent that they fulfill the designs of that elite. Neither can they hope to gain greater tolerance for the expression of Christian values from a regime that is implacably hostile.

Instead, Christians should hoe their own spiritual row, avoid the temptation to become part of the Leviathan state, and refuse to follow those who would use the faith to curry favor with the central government and the official culture. If Christians have a special interest, it is not prime-time news coverage, but salvation.

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Evangelicals on the Durham Trail

by D. G. Hart

What do Billy Graham and Stanley Fish have in common? According to most assessments of the ongoing culture wars, the answer is an emphatic "not much!" With the exception of a few inconsequential details—both are older white men living in North Carolina—little seems to unite these two figures or the movements for which they have become figureheads. Graham is, of course, the patron saint of American evangelicalism, the one who as an object of admiration or scorn determines what it means to be an evangelical. And Fish, professor of English at Duke University of deconstructionist, postmodernist fame, has become one of the principal cheerleaders for efforts within the academy to make the literary canon specifically, and the humanities more generally, more inclusive and less oppressive. Identified in this way, the constituencies to which Graham and Fish speak would ap-

pear to be about as far apart as Newt Gingrich and Hillary Clinton.

James Davison Hunter, for instance, argues that evangelicals are a large part of the orthodox constituency which defends the traditional family, opposes political correctness and multiculturalism in the academy, and supports efforts to cut federal funding for objectionable art. This explains why they have lined up in bookstores across the land to buy and read to their children William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*. Thus, evangelicalism, at least in the common configuration of the ongoing culture wars, is the antithesis of the cultural left.

Why is it, then, that when evangelicals retreat from the public square into their houses of worship they manifest the same hostility to tradition, intellectual standards, and good taste they find so deplorable in their opponents in the culture wars? Anyone familiar with the so-called "Praise & Worship" phenomenon (so named, supposedly, to remind participants of what they are doing) would be hard pressed to identify these believers as the party of memory or the defenders of cultural conservatism. P&W has become the dominant mode of expression within evangelical churches, from conservative Presbyterian denominations to low church independent congregations. What characterizes this "style" of worship is the praise song ("four words, three notes and two hours") with its mantra-like repetition of phrases from Scripture, displayed on an overhead projector or video monitors (for those churches with bigger budgets), and accompanied by the standard pieces in a rock band.

Gone are the hymnals which keep the faithful in touch with previous generations of saints. They have been abandoned, in many cases, because they are filled with music and texts considered too boring, too doctrinal, and too restrained. What boomers and busters need instead, according to the liturgy of P&W, are a steady diet of religious ballads, most of which date from the 1970's, the decade of disco, leisure suits, and long hair. Gone too are the traditional elements of Protestant worship, the invocation, confession of sins, the creed, the Lord's Prayer, the doxology, and the Gloria Patri. Again, these elements are not sufficiently celebrative or "dynamic," the favorite word used to describe the new worship. And while P&W has retained the talking head in the sermon,

probably the most boring element of Protestant worship, the substance of much preaching turns out to be more therapeutic than theological.

Of course, evangelicals are not the only ones guilty of abandoning the treasures of historic Protestant worship. Various churches in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Missouri Synod have begun to experiment with contemporary worship. The traditionalists in Reformed circles, if the periodical *Reformed Worship* is any indication, have also begun to incorporate P&W in their services. And Roman Catholics, one of the genuine conservative constituencies throughout American history, have contributed to the mix with the now infamous guitar and polka mass. Yet, judging on the basis of worship practices, evangelicals look the most hypocritical. For six days a week they trumpet traditional values and the heritage of the West, but on Sunday they turn out to be the most novel. Indeed, the patterns of worship that prevail in most evangelical congregations suggest that these Protestants are no more interested in tradition than their archenemies in the academy.

A variety of factors, many of which stem from developments in post-1960's American popular culture, unite evangelicalism and the cultural left. In both movements, we see a form of anti-elitism that questions any distinction between good and bad (or even not so good), or between what is appropriate and inappropriate. Professors of literature have long been saying that the traditional literary canon was the product, or better, the social construction, of a particular period in intellectual life that preserved the hegemony of white men, but which had no intrinsic merit. In other words, because aesthetic standards turn out to be means of sustaining power, there is no legitimate criteria for including some works and excluding others.

The same sort of logic can be found across the country at weeknight worship planning committee meetings. It is virtually impossible to make the case—without having your hearers go glassy-eyed—that "Of the Father's Love Begotten" is a better text and tune than "Shine, Jesus, Shine," and, therefore, that the former is fitting for corporate worship while the latter should remain confined to Christian radio. In the case of evangelicals, the inability to make distinctions between good and bad poetry and music does not stem so much from

political ideology (though it ends up abetting the cause) as from the deeply ingrained instinct that worship is simply a matter of evangelism. Thus, in order to reach the unchurched, the churched have to use the former's idiom and style. What is wrong with this picture?

The traditionalists are of no help here. Rather than trying to hold the line on what is appropriate and good in worship, most of those who are devoted full-time to thinking about liturgy and worship, the door-keepers of the sanctuary as it were, have generally adopted a "united-colors-of-Benetton" approach to the challenge of contemporary worship. For instance, a recent editorial in a Reformed publication says that the old ways—the patterns which used Buxtehude rather than Bill Gaither, "Immortal, Invisible" rather than "Do Lord," a Genevan gown instead of a Polo shirt—have turned out to be too restrictive. Churches need to expand their worship "repertoire." The older predilection was "white, European, adult, classical, with a strong resonance from the traditional concert hall." But this was merely a preference and reflection of a specific "education, socio-economic status, ethnic background, and personality." Heaven forbid that anyone should appear to be so elitist. For the traditional "worship idiom" can become "too refined, cultured, and bloodless . . . too arrogant." Instead, we need to encourage the rainbow coalition—"of old and young, men and women, red and yellow, black and white, classical and contemporary." And the reason for this need of diversity? It is simply because worship is the reflection of socioeconomic status and culture. Gone is any conviction that one liturgy is better than another because it conforms to revealed truth and the order of creation, or that one order of worship is more appropriate than another for the theology which a congregation or denomination confesses. Worship, like food or clothes, is merely a matter of taste. Thus the logic of multiculturalism has infected even those concerned to preserve traditional liturgy.

Yet when one looks for genuine diversity in worship, multiculturalism—again, the great leveler of tradition and cultural standards—offers up a very thin band of liturgical expression. Advocates of diversity do not seem to be very interested in the way "the people" have worshiped in the past. Is there, for instance, any real effort among the various experiments

in worship to recover the Psalm singing of the Puritans, the simple and spontaneous meetings of Quakers, the hymnody of German pietism, the folk traditions of the Amish, the revival songs of Ira Sankey and Dwight L. Moody, or the spirituals of African-American Protestants? The answer, of course, is no. For these expressions of Protestant piety, even though originating from some groups which would hardly qualify as elites, are no better than the liturgies from the Lutheran, Anglican, and Reformed establishments. What the P&W crowd really wants is a very narrow range of musical and lyrical expression, one which conforms to its admittedly limited worship "repertoire."

Indeed, contemporary worship—and church life—depends increasingly on the products of popular culture, from its musical mode of expression, the liturgical skits which ape TV sitcoms, and the informal style of ministers which follows the antics of late-night TV talk show hosts. Thus, just as the academic left advocates including Madonna and *Leave It to Beaver* in the canon, so the evangelical champions of contemporary worship turn to popular culture—primarily contemporary music and television programming—for the content and order of worship. This is remarkable for a Christian tradition that once found its identity in avoiding all forms of worldliness and that continues to rail against the products of Hollywood and the excesses of the music industry. Yet, as in the case of the cultural left, we are seeing a generation that grew up on TV and top-40 radio stations now assuming positions of leadership in the churches. And what they want to surround themselves with in worship, as in the classroom, is what is familiar and easily accessible. Rather than growing up and adopting the broader range of experience that characterizes adulthood, evangelicals and the academic left want to recover and perpetuate the experiences of adolescence.

In fact, what stands out about P&W is the aura of teenage piety. Anyone who has endured a week at one of the evangelical summer youth camps that dot the landscape will be struck by the similarity between P&W and the services in which adolescents participate while out of their parents' hair. The parallels are so close that one is tempted to call P&W the liturgy of the youth rally. For in the meetings of Young Life, Campus Crusade for Christ, or Bible camp are all the

elements of P&W: the evangelical choruses, the skit, and the long talk by the youthful speaker calling for dedication and commitment to Christ. While these youth ministries are effective in evoking the mountain-top or campfire-side experience, they rarely provide the sustenance upon which a life of sacrifice and discipline depends. Yet, P&W is attractive precisely because it appears to offer weekly the spiritual recharge that before came only once a year. Consequently, many megachurches that follow the P&W format thrive because they help many people recover or sustain the religious experience of youth.

Some may wonder what is wrong with assisting adults to perpetuate the emotions and memories that sustain religious devotion. The problem is that such experiences and the worship from which they spring is concerned primarily with affect. One searches in vain through the praise songs, the liturgical dramas, or the sermon/inspirational talk for an adequate expression of the historic truths of the faith. It is as if the content of worship or the object which elicits the religious experience does not really matter. As long as people are lifting up and swaying their arms, tilting back their heads and closing their eyes, then the Spirit must be present and the worship genuine.

What is ironic about contemporary worship is that its form is almost always the same even while claiming that older worship is too repetitive. Another standard complaint about "traditional" worship is that it is too formal. Evangelicals believe that God is never limited by outward means. Believers who rely upon set liturgies or who repeat written prayers, some charge, are merely "going through the motions." Real faith and worship cannot be prescribed. Yet, for all of the attempts by the practitioners of P&W to avoid routine and habit, hence boredom, contemporary worship never seems to escape its own pop culture formula. Again, the songs are basically the same in musical structure and lyrical composition, the order of the service—while much less formal—rarely changes, and the way in which people express their experience demonstrates remarkable unity (e.g., the arms, the head, the eyes). This hostility to form and the inability to think about the ways in which certain habits of expression are more or less appropriate for specific settings or purposes is what finally puts evangelicalism and the academic left on the same side in the

culture war. For the idea that the autonomous individual must find his own meaning or experience of reality for himself ends up making such individuals unwilling to follow and submit to the forms, habits, and standards that have guided a community or culture. Besides the fact that the radical individualism of modern culture has bred as much conformity as human history has ever known, evangelicals and the academic left continue to buck tradition in the hope of finding the true self capable of experiencing religion or life at its most genuine or authentic.

What evangelicals who prefer P&W to older liturgies share with academics who teach Louis L'Amour instead of Shakespeare is an inability to see the value of restraint, habit, and form. Evangelicals and the academic left believe that we need to be liberated from the past, from formalism, and from existing structures in order to come into a more intimate relationship with life or the divine. This is really quite astounding in the case of evangelicals whose public reputation depends upon defending traditional morality. Yet, the effort to remove all barriers to the expression and experience of the individual self is unmistakably present in the efforts to make worship more expressive and spontaneous. This impulse in evangelical worship repudiates the wisdom of various Christian traditions which, rather than trying to liberate the self in order to experience greater intimacy with God, hold that individuals, because of a tendency to sin and commit idolatry, need to conform to revealed and ordered patterns of faith and practice. The traditions which Presbyterians follow, for instance, are not done to throttle religious experience but rather as the prescribed means of communing with God and his people. These means were not arbitrarily chosen by John Calvin and John Knox. Rather Presbyterians have conducted public and family worship in specific ways because they believe worship should conform to God's revealed truth. But just as the academic left has abandoned the great works of Western civilization because of a desire for relevance in higher education, so evangelicals have rejected the various elements and forms which have historically informed Protestant worship, again, because they are boring to today's youth.

Antiformalism also explains the stress upon novelty and freshness so often found in P&W. The leader of worship

planning at one of the dominant mega-churches says, for instance, on a video documenting a P&W service, that she is always looking for new ways to order the midweek believer's service so that church members will not fall into a rut. She goes on to say that people are often tired, having worked all day (an argument for worshipping on Sunday) and need something that will arrest their attention and put them in a proper frame of mind. This perspective, however, fundamentally misunderstands the relationship between form and worship. C. S. Lewis had it right when he said that a worship service "works best when, through long familiarity, we don't have to think about it." "The perfect church service," he added, "would be the one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God. But every novelty prevents this. It fixes our attention on the service itself; and thinking about worship is a different thing from worshipping. . . . 'Tis mad idolatry that makes the service greater than the god.' A still worse thing may happen. Novelty may fix our attention not even on the service but on the celebrant." But this is precisely what has happened in P&W, where the service and elements are designed to attract attention themselves rather than functioning as vehicles for expressing adoration to God. Lewis knew that repetition and habit were better guides to the character of worship than novelty and manipulation. In fact, one does not need to be a professor of liturgics to sense that the idiom of Valley Girls is far less fitting for a believer to express love for God than the language of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Such an instinct only confirms the wise comment of the Reformed theologian Cornelius Van Til, who while preferring Presbyterian liturgy still remarked that "at least in an Episcopalian service no one says anything silly."

But even to criticize contemporary worship, to accuse it of bad taste or triviality, is almost as wicked as smoking in public. Arguments against P&W are usually taken personally, becoming an affront to the feelings of contemporary worshipers. Which is to say that the triumph of P&W, like the ascendancy of the cultural left in the academy, is firmly rooted in our therapeutic culture. The most widely used reason for contemporary worship is that it is what the people want and what makes them feel good. Again, just as there are no intellectual

standards for expanding the literary canon to include romance novels, so there are no theological criteria for practicing P&W. But there are plenty of examples that show that if we give people what they are familiar with, whether sitcoms in the classroom or soft rock in church, they will feel comfortable and come back for more. As David Rieff has noted, the connections between the therapeutic and the market are formidable. So if we can expand our worship or academic repertoire to include the diversity of the culture we will no doubt increase our audience.

This is why P&W services are also called "seeker-sensitive." They are part of a self-conscious effort to attract a larger market for the church. Yet, while evangelicalism may have a large market share, its consumer satisfaction may also be low, especially if it deceives people into thinking they have really worshiped God when they have actually been worshipping their emotions. Thus, once again, evangelical worship turns out to be as deceptive as the academic left which tells students that the study of Batman comics is just as valuable as the study of Henry James.

Of course, anyone who knows the history of American evangelicalism should not be surprised by P&W. In fact, Billy Graham's recent inclusion of Christian Hip Hop and Rap bands in his crusades is of a piece with evangelical history more generally. (It also differs little from his efforts in the 1970's, seldom remembered, to appeal to the Jesus People. With lengthy locks, an inch over the shirt collar, and long sideburns, Graham said, playing off Timothy Leary's famous psychedelic slogan, "Tune in to God, then turn on . . . drop out—of the materialistic world. The experience of Jesus Christ is the greatest trip you can take.") As R. Laurence Moore argues in *Selling God*, since the arrival of Boy George in the American colonies, George Whitefield that is, evangelicals have been unusually adept at packaging and marketing Christianity in the forms of popular culture. The intention of Protestant revivalism was "to save souls, but in a brassy way that threw religion into a free-for-all competition for people's attention." Revivalism, in fact, according to Moore, "shoved American religion into the marketplace of culture" and became "entangled in controversies over commercial entertainments which they both imitated and influenced."

Seldom have evangelicals recognized that this commitment to making the gospel accessible deforms and trivializes Christianity, making it no better than any other commodity exchanged on the market. As H. L. Mencken pointed out about Billy Sunday, evangelicalism "quickly disarms the old suspicion of the holy clerk and gets the discussion going on the familiar and easy terms of the bar-room." Mencken went on to say that evangelicalism is marked "by a contemptuous disregard of the theoretical and mystifying" and reduces "all the abstrusities of Christian theology to a few and simple and (to the ingenious) self-evident propositions," making of religion "a practical, an imminent, an everyday concern." Thus, the pattern of evangelical practice shows a long history of being hostile to the more profound liturgies, prayers, and hymns which God's people have expressed throughout the ages.

The reason for this hostility, of course, is that these traditional forms of expressing devotion to God are not sufficiently intelligible to outsiders. But in an effort to reach the unchurched, just as the university has abandoned its mission in order to reach the uneducated, evangelicals have reversed the relationship between the church and the world. Rather than educating outsiders or seekers so they may join God's people in worship, or rather than educating the illiterate so they may join the conversation of the West, we now have the church and the academy employing as its language the idiom of the unchurched and undereducated. In effect, P&W is dumbing down the church at the same time that multiculturalism is dumbing down the university. In the case of P&W the church, by embracing the elements and logic of contemporary worship, has abandoned its task of catechesis. Rather than converting and disciplining the seeker, the church now uses the very language and methods of the world. So rather than educating the unbaptized in the language of the household of faith, the church now teaches communicants the language of the world.

Hughes Oliphant Old, in his fine study of worship, concludes with a reflection about mainline Presbyterian worship that applies well to what has transpired in contemporary evangelical churches. "In our evangelistic zeal," he writes, "we are looking for programs that will attract people. We think we have to put honey on the lip of the bitter cup of

salvation. It is the story of the wedding of Cana all over again but with this difference. At the crucial moment when the wine failed, we took matters into our own hands and used those five stone jars to mix up a batch of Kool-Aid instead." Such is the state of affairs in contemporary evangelical worship. The thin and artificial juice of popular culture has replaced the finely aged and well-crafted drink of the church through the ages. Aside from the merits of the instant drink, it is hardly what you would expect defenders of tradition and the family to choose to serve at a wedding, or at the banquet supper of our Lord. And yet, just as evangelicals in the 19th century substituted Welch's for red wine, so a century later they have exchanged the superficial and trivial for the rich forms of historic Protestant worship.

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Does God Believe in Gun Control?

by David B. Kopel

"You are doing God's work," Brady Bill sponsor Charles Schumer remarked to Sarah Brady at a congressional hearing. And perhaps one could argue that if it took God seven days to make the world, people should not be able to buy a handgun in any less time. But did God really support the Brady Bill? One would certainly think so, given the huge number of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious organizations that endorsed the Brady Bill, and which endorse virtually every other gun control proposal.

God's antigun army is prominent not just in Washington, but also in the state legislatures. This year, for example, as legislatures have debated laws allowing licensed, trained citizens to obtain a permit to carry a handgun for protection, some of the most vocal opponents have been religious groups. The state chapter of the National Council of Churches does not show up at legislative hearings armed with criminological data. Instead,

persons claiming to testify on behalf of "the religious community" come to express their "moral" opposition to the use of deadly force against criminal attack.

This same worldview is at the heart of the federal ban on so-called "assault weapons," which attempts to distinguish good "sporting" firearms from bad "antipersonnel" weapons. It likewise motivates the publicly announced long-term agenda of Sarah Brady's organization Handgun Control, Inc.: to outlaw possession of firearms for self-defense.

Within the gun control movement, one does not have to dig very far to find the sanctimonious belief that the NRA and its ilk are moral cretins because they believe in answering violence with violence. But is hostility to the lawful use of force for defense the only morally legitimate position? The moral authorities relied on by most Americans suggest otherwise.

The Book of Exodus specifically absolves a homeowner who kills a burglar. (Exodus 22:2, "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.") The Sixth Commandment "Thou shalt not kill" refers to murder only, and does not prohibit the taking of life under any circumstances; notably, the law of Sinai specifically *requires* capital punishment for a large number of offenses.

A bit earlier in the Bible, Abram, the father of the Hebrew nation, learns that his nephew Lot has been taken captive. Abram (later to be renamed "Abraham" by God) immediately calls out his trained servants, set out on a rescue mission, finds his nephew's captors, attacks, and routs them, thereby rescuing Lot (Genesis 14:14, "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan"). The resort to violence to rescue an innocent captive is presented as the morally appropriate choice.

Most gun prohibitionists who look to the Bible for support do not cite specific interdictions of weapons (there are none) but instead point to the general passages about peace and love, such as "That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39); "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you" (Matthew 5:44); and "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Romans 12:17).

None of these exhortations take place in the context of an imminent threat to life. A slap on the cheek is a blow to pride, but not a threat to life. Reverend Anthony Winfield, author of *Self-Defense and the Bible*, suggests that these verses command the faithful not to seek revenge for evil acts, and not to bear grudges against persons who have done them wrong. He points to the passage "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18), as showing an awareness that in extreme situations, it might not be possible to live in peace.

Further evidence that the New Testament does not command universal pacifism is found in the missions of John the Baptist and Peter, both of whom preached to soldiers who converted. Neither John nor Peter demanded that the soldiers lay down their arms, or find another job (Luke 3:14; Acts 10:22-48).

John told the soldiers "not to extort money and accuse people falsely, just as he told tax collectors not to collect any more than they are required to collect." The plain implication is that being a soldier (or a tax collector) is not itself wrong, so long as the inherent power is not used for selfish purposes.

Of course most gun prohibitionists do not see anything wrong with soldiers carrying weapons and killing people if necessary. But if—as the New Testament strongly implies—it is possible to be a good soldier and a good Christian, then it is impossible to claim that the Gospel *always* forbids the use of violence, no matter what the purpose. The stories of the soldiers support Winfield's thesis that the general "peace and love" passages are not blanket prohibitions on the use of force in all circumstances.

Is an approving attitude toward the bearing of arms confined to professional soldiers? Not at all. At the Last Supper, Jesus' final instructions to the Apostles begin: "When I sent you without purse, and script, and shoes, lacked ye anything?"

"Nothing," the Apostles answer.

Jesus continues: "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his script and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." He ends by observing, "This that is written must yet be accomplished." The Apostles then announce, "Lord, behold, here are two swords," and Jesus cuts them off: "It is enough" (Luke 22:35-38). Even if the passage is read with absolute literal-