

Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

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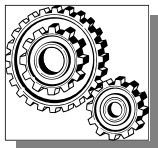
Bearing False Witness

By
Kay Trudell

Pro-life Legislation

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In the Works

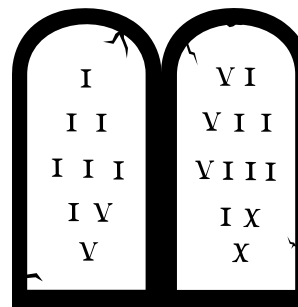
2011 Legislative issues

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 372-6442.

Let us open the Bible to *Exodus 20* and read the Ten Commandments there. “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” seems particularly applicable as a topic for this month’s CAM newsletter. How can we avoid writing about the horrible tragedy that occurred on January 8, 2011? In a senseless act that shocked our nation, an allegedly mentally disturbed young man, Jared Loughner, planned and then attempted to carry out the assassination of Democrat Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords from Arizona as she was greeting her constituents at a “Congress on the Corner” event in the parking lot of a local *Safeway* store. During this attempt on her life, six people were murdered, and thirteen wounded.

What was your immediate reaction when you first heard the news story? I was on vacation in another state. The TV station showed a picture of the congresswoman, said there had been a mass shooting in Tucson, and promised to provide additional details as soon as they became available. I had never heard of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and did not know her political party affiliation. I never gave

that a moment’s thought. Instead, I offered up an immediate prayer: “Oh Lord, touch her and heal her. Touch all the people who were wounded. Heal them and comfort their families.” That was my first reaction. Millions of people undoubtedly prayed similar prayers.



The first reactions of others were not so benign. Even though federal law enforcement officials said they were “stumped” by suspect Loughner’s motive, according to the January 17th *Washington Post*, the rhetorical attacks upon various individuals and organizations that followed the shootings was appalling for its immediacy and ferocity. There had been no time for an investigation, no evidence had been produced, no trial had occurred, and no verdict had been rendered by a jury of peers in a court of law. Yet the members of the political

party opposite from the one to which the Congresswoman belonged were vilified, cursed, and treated to a figurative Wild West-style lynch mob rush to judgment. Former White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel once said, “Never let a serious crisis go to waste”, and numerous individuals heeded that statement. Without one shred of evidence, almost before the police had finished placing yellow tape around the crime scene, a verbal tsunami of truly astonishing proportions was hurled nonstop against conservative authors, Fox TV, several of its program hosts, conservative talk radio, the grassroots tea party movement, and “right-wing Republicans” by the mainstream media, the County sheriff (a member of the same political party as the Congresswoman) where the shootings occurred, numerous members of Congress, media personalities, Hollywood actors, etc. Sadly, a member of Vermont’s own Congressional delegation leaped into the fray as well. Numerous people were accused of being accessories to murder. This invective had not been used following similar events in the past. “Right-wing” Republicans, Constitutionalists, supporters of the tea



“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”
Exodus 20:16

party movement, Glenn Beck, his audience, Fox TV, their audience, talk radio, their audience, people who question man-made global warming, people who oppose the new healthcare law, and gun owners --- all were accused of hate speech, causing the shootings, and were tarred by the broad brush of collective guilt. The echo of gunfire had barely died when the Orwellian accusations began.

Under the U.S. Constitution, people are presumed innocent until proven guilty by a jury of their peers in a court of law. We have Constitutional rights to free speech, to own guns, and to petition the government for redress of grievances. Our Founding Fathers sacrificed and died to secure these rights for us. All of these were sacrificed for political opportunity. Instead of calls for prayer, political opponents were accused of murder, inciting murder, tried in the court of media opinion, and pronounced responsible for the tragedy. Demands for censorship of free speech, the internet, talk radio, debate in Congress, and calls for massive gun control proliferated. Shortly thereafter, one of Congresswoman Giffords's supporters who had been wounded at the scene threatened to kill the leader of the Tucson-area tea party movement. The man who made the threat was immediately arrested and subsequently ordered by a judge to undergo a mental health examination. People who were not within a thousand miles of the shootings were all tarred by the same broad brush of collective guilt. They were accused of purveying "hate speech" that influenced Jared Loughner to act as he did. Calls for censorship of political opponents abounded. One member of Vermont's own Congressional delegation sent out a lengthy fundraising letter shortly thereafter which linked by innuendo the attempted assassination of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to his political opponents. The letter then asked supporters to send campaign donations. This was an attempt to raise campaign funds by linking political financial gain to the Arizona tragedy. Even

the usually liberal-leaning Vermont media questioned this particular elected official about the letter. WCAX television posted the entire fundraising letter on its website so people could read it and draw their own conclusions. There are often verbal exchanges on television and talk radio that make some Christians feel uncomfortable; nevertheless, here in America this is the very type of speech our Founding Fathers had in mind when they wrote the First Amendment. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was designed to protect speech --- even unpopular political speech and robust public debate.

The U.S. Constitution limits federal government power and guarantees to its citizens numerous freedoms. In America people are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Did the elected official who wrote that fundraising letter forget these basic constitutional rights at the same time he was calling for "civility"? Jared Loughner will be given those presumptions of innocence, but apparently private citizens and conservative public figures will not. Sadly, the official positioned himself as judge and jury, using a profit motive to declare the collective guilt of millions of his fellow citizens. This official --- and many others --- bore false witness against their neighbors for political gain. The first amendment was established to protect free speech, including the use of similes and metaphors some might find offensive. When President George W. Bush was routinely portrayed with a Hitler moustache on hundreds of pre-printed, mass-produced signs at protest rallies against the war in Iraq in the years after 9/11, there were no protests from this Vermont official. When President Bush was called "Hitler" and a "Nazi" by those same protesters, there was no call for "civility". Such protests were called "patriotic" by the political left. When President Barack Obama was very rarely portrayed with a Hitler moustache on a few signs at protests against the healthcare legislation several years later, the political left was outraged. Per-

sonally, I wouldn't carry such a sign, but freedom of artistic expression (which is what posters are) has long been a cherished right of the left, and has actually been a part of political debate in the United States since the Sons of Liberty printed caricatures and broadsides two hundred years ago during the American Revolution, and hanged King George in effigy. We do not condone threatening speech, but partisan political speech and strong opinions on issues are not threats. Actual threats or acts against a person's life or family or property have absolutely no place in political debate. In fact, when running for the office of President in 2008, presidential candidate Barack Obama said (of his political opponents) at a Pennsylvania fundraiser on June 14, 2008: "If they bring a knife to this fight, we'll bring a gun." That was strong speech. One can certainly debate whether that type of metaphor was appropriate usage by someone running for the highest elected office in our nation; nevertheless, it was protected speech under the Constitution. Calls for censorship of speech must be rejected. Christians would be among the first groups to lose their free speech if such laws passed.

It was wrong of our Vermont Congressional official to smear not only political and media opponents who are public figures, and try to link them to the shootings by innuendo in an effort to raise money, but to smear over 60 percent of ordinary U.S. citizens who opposed the healthcare legislation and sometimes protested it vigorously in public last year. This is bearing utterly false witness against millions of ordinary people with whom you happen to disagree politically. According to his friends, Jared Loughner didn't listen to talk radio and was not a conservative political activist. He didn't belong to the tea party movement. But even if he had been, millions cannot be blamed for the actions of one or two. Apparently Loughner was, as the profiles of most mass murderers are, an alienated and isolated loner nursing grievances formulated by a

disturbed or delusional mind. Among his alleged reading materials of choice were Karl Marx (*The Communist Manifesto*) and *Mein Kampf* from the *National Socialist German Workers Party Nazi* leader Adolf Hitler. Those are hardly the standard reading fare of everyday Republicans, Democrats, Independents, or Tea Party supporters. We reject the conclusion that everyone is to blame for Loughner's shooting spree in Arizona. Neither Fox TV (which is seen as leaning to the right) nor MSNBC (which is seen as leaning to the left) is responsible for what Loughner did. Neither is Rush Limbaugh, Sarah Palin, Sean Hannity, Michael Savage, Mark Levin, Glenn Beck, the NRA, Republicans, the Tea Party, cardboard posters, or similes and metaphors. All have been accused. The person who fired the weapon is responsible. Scripture says in *Deuteronomy* 24:16 that each man is held accountable for his own sins. The controversial fundraising letter the Vermont politician sent out was exploitation of national tragedy for financial gain. He should apologize to all Vermonters, demonstrate the "civility" he himself demands, and refrain from false witness and guilt by association.

Even as the far left was calling for more "civility" in public discourse, they continued excoriating their political opponents. Certainly, one cannot quarrel with calls for civility. However, the walk must match the talk, and not simply be empty words used for political advantage. The following events, some widely reported and others barely mentioned, have occurred since January 8, 2011. Christians need to be aware of these events.

Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik, a liberal Democrat who was a political supporter of Congresswoman Giffords, bore false witness when, within 24 hours of the shootings, he went before the TV cameras in Tucson and also appeared on Fox News speculating that Republicans like Sharon Angle and Sarah Palin somehow bore responsibility for Loughner's acts because they made "outrageous" and "irresponsible" statements

(Continued on page 3)

which “were not without consequences”, and “we may be seeing the fruit of it here.” He was then challenged by the TV interviewer about the appropriateness of injecting personal feelings about the political climate during what should have been a law enforcement briefing. This is highly inappropriate for a serving law enforcement official, and casts doubt on his ability to be impartial when investigating a crime. There have been protests in Tucson and calls for his resignation since he made those comments.

He castigated Sarah Palin, a Republican, for using target imagery on campaign graphics during the 2010 campaign, but did not similarly castigate by name the Democrats who did the same thing in 2004 and 2009, thus demonstrating political bias.

A new group has formed on Facebook calling themselves “young feminists who want to behead sarah palin”.

In Missoula, Montana, during a recent theatrical production of “The Mikado”, a classic Gilbert and Sullivan comedic operetta, new lyrics which called for the beheading of Sarah Palin were inserted into the play. After criticism from some audience members who attended the performance on January 23rd, the lyrics were removed. The director defended it as satire, but audience member Rory Page wrote a letter to the local newspaper, in which he stated of the play’s

director: “As a professional you should be ashamed of yourself, the audience should be ashamed of themselves, and I am ashamed of myself for not standing up and leaving at that very moment. I would like to see an apology from you not because I want to hinder free speech, but for the hypocrisy this so clearly shows.” Page also stated that he found it offensive that “we had to hear that it is okay to call for the killing of Sarah Palin because we don’t like her and no one would miss her. Unbelievable.” This incident was also discussed on radio station WHBL 1330 in Montana. Have any of our readers heard this incident reported in any national media??

The *Media Research Council*, a conservative organization that tracks fairness and balance in the media, exposed “through meticulously documented [research] through our own [news] divisions and the alternative media --- talk radio, blogs, cable TV and the internet . . . that the evening news at ABC, CBS, and NBC, often smears conservative and Tea Party [political] candidates as “extreme” or “fringe”. Yet on those same news stations “not one liberal candidate” was ever labeled in the same way. Not one. The Republicans were labeled as “conservatives”, but Democrats were not labeled at all.

NBC’s *Today* show called New York gubernatorial candidate Carl Paladino an “angry candidate” who practiced “gutter

politics”, and implied that he hated homosexuals because he believes that a child has the right to a male father and a female mother.

Chris Matthews (MSNBC) made frequent references to 1930’s Nazi Germany when he covered stories involving the Tea Party or Rand Paul, the newly-elected junior senator from Kentucky. No similar comparisons were ever made when Code Pink and open socialists and anarchists protested during the Iraq war. ABC’s Joy Behar said of Republican candidate Sharron Angle prior to the November elections: “I am not praying for her. I’m telling you right now. She’s going to Hell. She’s going to Hell. . . .”

At a progressive/liberal January 30th California rally, white attendees called for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and his wife to be lynched, for Thomas to “have his toes cut off” and “be sent back to the fields.” Thomas is African-American.

On Election Day in November 2010, the *New York Times* editorial page endorsed 25 political candidates and not just in New York. For the 25 races in question, the *Times* endorsed 23 Democrats, 2 Independents, and 0 Republicans. If any of our readers feel that Fox TV is biased, where does that leave all the other TV news channels, newspapers, and incidents mentioned above? If blame is to be assigned, in view of this type of rhetoric, there is more

than enough blame to go all the way around.

These are disturbing and turbulent times. We must pray and seek God’s face continually as we deal with evil influences whose origin is not of this world. Christians have a Rock upon which we stand, come what may. One trend we should keep a careful eye on is the beginning of calls for people to be beheaded. As Bible readers know, this is one of the characteristics of the last days’ kingdom of the antichrist --- believers will be beheaded if they refuse to follow him (the antichrist). I have heard plenty of strong partisan political rhetoric in my life, but never have I heard calls in the United States for people to be beheaded. Even as free speech that is not acceptable. This tells me that an antichrist spirit has been loosed upon the world, and we are starting to be made aware of its satanic influence. And no, I am not accusing ANYBODY alive today of being the antichrist, but Bible-believing Christians will probably agree there is definitely an antichrist spirit loose in the world. That spirit surely influenced Jared Loughner. Lift up your eyes, for the time is short, however shortness of time is measured in the spiritual realm, where one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day. This fallen world needs Jesus desperately.

Kay Trudell attends Community Bible Church and is a CAM Board member.

“It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure virtue.”

John Adams

Signer of the Declaration of Independence and second President of the United States

What can I do?



Faith without works is dead James 2:17

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Next Meetings

March 8, 7:00 pm Roadside Assembly of God Rutland, VT.

April 12, 7:00 pm Parkinson home Hinesburg, VT.

Making A Difference in Vermont!

Two bills have been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate that Christians should watch carefully. A bill to end taxpayer funding of abortion has been introduced in the House of Representatives. It is bill H.R.-3. This bill, known as the No Tax-Payer Funding for Abortion Act, was introduced by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) on January 20th. It already has 173 co-sponsors. If this passes, it would defund the abortion provisions of the new healthcare law, and eliminate taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood.

The second bill was introduced by Senators Rand Paul (R-KY) and Roger Wicker (R-MS). It declares that life begins at conception and guarantees that the unborn will be protected under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This is called the Life at Conception Act and is Senate Bill S-91.

Call your Vermont Congressional delegation and tell them that you support these bills.

Sen. Patrick Leahy—1-202-224-4242
Sen. Bernard Sanders—1-202-224-5141
Rep. Peter Welch—1-202-225-4115 or 1-202-225-6790



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