

Spring 2011  
Vol. 84, No. 3

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Published for the International Association of Torch Clubs, Inc. by Association Builders, LLC. Torch never knowingly presents any but original unpublished manuscripts. Opinions expressed are those of the contributors. Neither Torch nor Association Builders, LLC assumes responsibility for errors or omissions in the articles.

*The Torch* is published three times per year by the International Association of Torch Clubs, Inc. (IATC) for its members. Second class postage paid at Norfolk, VA 23510-1517. Postmaster: If undeliverable, return form 3579, postage for which is guaranteed, to IATC, 11712C Jefferson Ave #246, Newport News, VA 23606. ISSN 0040-9448.

Permission to reprint material may be granted by the editor upon agreement with the contributor. Manuscript submissions, reprint requests, and club reports should be mailed to the IATC office (see above). Address changes and subscription requests should also be mailed to the IATC office. Subscription \$20/year in the U.S.; \$25/year elsewhere. Library rate: \$10/year.

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# From the President



Dear Torch Member,

It's time to make your travel plans to Hagerstown, MD, June 23-26, for the annual Torch convention. This is your opportunity to gather with Torch members from around the country and Canada for top-notch papers, lively discussion, and local exploration. The Hagerstown Club has put together a high-quality experience for you! This year's convention, which explores "A Border State Perspective," will be at the Hagerstown Hotel and Convention Center. The convention committee has negotiated a very favorable room rate of \$77.

In conjunction with the IATC Convention, the Hagerstown Torch Club is sponsoring a BOOK FAIR so that Torch members attending the convention may display books they have authored. The Fair will be an integral part of the convention, giving authors the opportunity to discuss their books with fellow Torch members. In addition, on Sunday afternoon following

the convention, the public will be invited in to enjoy the same experience. Get more information at our website: [www.Torch.org](http://www.Torch.org).

Speaking of the website, many of you have already noticed we have undergone what is called a "soft launch" of the new website. It has been up and running since mid-February. Some of the features you are familiar with remain the same, while many new features have been added. Our goal is to make this a valuable resource to Clubs and members—please let us know how it can better serve you. We will be continually making improvements based on your feedback and recommendations.

I hope you continue to enjoy your Torch involvement as much as I do, that it enhances your life and your friendships, and keeps you engaged and continuously learning. See you in Hagerstown!  
—Edward B. Latimer, IATC President

## Gold & Silver Torch Awards

At our annual convention, special Gold and Silver Torch Awards may be given to individual members for truly outstanding service, through nomination by their local clubs, submitted in advance through the Awards Chairman.

### Gold Award

The Gold Torch Award honors members who have served Torch at the local, regional, and—most importantly—the International level. To qualify for this award, the nominee must have been a Torch member for at least 10 years. In any one year, the number of Gold Torch Awards may not exceed 0.1% (rounded to the nearest whole number) of the membership of the International Association of Torch Clubs (i.e., three awards for membership of 2,500 to 3,499).

### Silver Award

The Silver Torch Award recognizes members who have served in an exemplary manner at the local club level. To qualify for the Silver Torch Award, the nominee must have been a member for at least 5 years. In a given year, the number of Silver Torch Awards nominees by a local club may not exceed one for each 25 members or portion thereof.

Nominations for both Gold and Silver awards should be sent by March 31, 2011 to Charles E. Carlson at IATC, 11712C Jefferson Ave #246, Newport News, VA 23606 with copies to your regional director.

# Who Wrote the Bible?

*Biblical scholars reveal some surprising answers to the question of scriptural authorship.*

**By Roland Zimany**



## About the Author

Roland Zimany retired at the end of 2003 after five years as pastor of Luther Memorial Church in Des Moines, IA. For the previous thirteen years, he was Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Blackburn College in Carlinville, IL. With an AB from Princeton, an MBA from New York University, an MDiv from Union Theological Seminary in New York, and a PhD in religion from Duke, Roland first worked for twelve years as a management consultant and with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and then managed the National Urban League's management systems before embarking on his academic career in 1980.

Presented to the Des Moines Torch Club on May 23, 2007.

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## Two Creation Stories

Biblical scholars say the Bible underwent a long developmental process, starting with people reporting their interpretation of events they experienced and with others repeating those reports orally until they eventually were written down. The written material was later edited and sometimes changed or added to, to make it more relevant to the time it was compiled. In the Pentateuch (five books) of the Hebrew Bible, Genesis provides one version of creation as a seven-day process with humans created after the rest of the world, including plants (Genesis 1-2:4a) and another version (Genesis 2:4b) describing the creation of humans before plants. One might account for two

creation stories simply by assuming that Genesis 1 contains material from one particular group or source, and Genesis 2 contains a different creation story from a different tribe. In view of the diversity of the twelve tribes of Israel, one tribe might account for its origins and the history of the Hebrew people in general with a story that differed from that told by another tribe. As a way of confirming the claim that we are dealing with two stories generated by two different groups, notice that God is given different names in these two stories. In Genesis 1 the word for God is "Elohim;" in Genesis 2 God is given two names in Hebrew: "Yahweh Elohim." When they are translated into English, the fact that God is given two names does not appear strange to us, because the names are translated as "the Lord God." But if you know that each Hebrew word is really a different name for God, what you see this particular passage saying is "God God." The passage takes two names for God and puts them together.

As an explanation, we should remember that eventually all of the tribes of Israel came to worship one God, named "Yahweh." But prior to that time, scholars theorize, more than one group of tribal traditions had already been written down with just "Elohim" as the name for God. It is very possible that at a later date, an editor went through that written material and said, "We must make it clear which particular elohim—which particular god—we worship." So every time he saw "Elohim" he inserted the word "Yahweh" in front of it, to make clear that it was *Yahweh* Elohim that the Israelites worshipped. The editor never did get his hands on the

material in Genesis 1.

## Interwoven Sources

Eventually, the stories of the first "tribe" (in this case, probably some priests), the stories of the second group of tribes, and accounts from other sources were interwoven into what has become the first five books of the Bible, called the "Pentateuch." Understanding the different strands of stories that have been woven together helps to explain that some puzzling passages in the Old Testament seemingly marred by internal contradictions or the same story's being repeated are in fact accounts from different tribal sources placed side by side so as not to offend a particular tribe.

For example, in one account of the Exodus, at one point the Pharaoh decides to let the Hebrew slaves go. In another passage shortly thereafter, people are all excited because the slaves have escaped. Did the Pharaoh let them go or did they escape? It is probable that one tradition says they escaped, and another tradition says they were permitted to leave in response to the miracles that Moses was supposed to have performed. In each tradition's account, the story makes perfect sense. But when the accounts are interwoven, you have what looks like a contradiction. It is also likely that there was more than one exodus. The accounts of the routes that the Hebrews took as they were leaving Egypt depict some of the former slaves taking various routes along the northern part of the Sinai peninsula, while others swooped down to the southern part of the peninsula where Mt. Sinai may have been.

## J and E Sources<sup>1</sup>

Scholars have been able to sort out these combinations of stories, partly by identifying those that talk about “Yahweh” and those that talk only about “Elohim.” One source of written material they label “J,” for the group that calls God “Yahweh.” The letter J is used because German scholars decided on the labels, and in German a “Y” sound is spelled with a “J.” This material comes from the two tribes that stayed in the southern part of Israel. Their stories can be contrasted to another source that is labeled “E,” because its stories refer to God as “Elohim,” and they seem to come from the ten tribes that remained in the northern part of Israel after Solomon’s kingdom was divided. An examination of the content of these two groupings of stories reveals other recurring features that show that the sources reflect two different types of societies. The J source is much more authoritarian than the E source, for example. When governmental and religious leaders act, in the J material, they act autocratically; in the E source, there is much more democracy. While in J, God makes Moses the mediator, the people make Moses the mediator in the E source. In E, God’s covenant is made with all the people (Exodus 19:2b-6; 24:3-8); whereas, in J, the ceremony sealing the covenant is only for a select group (Exodus 24:1-2, 9-11). In J, God is considered to be very near, and there is reference to seeing God. God is given human features. E, on the other hand, posits a great distance between God and the world; it speaks only about hearing God. Its God is more spiritualized, less concrete.

## Retrojective Commandments

Another interesting observation of scholars is that all of the commandments God gave to the Hebrew people were given only to Moses. During the time of

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*Deuteronomy seems to have been an ancient scroll that was found in the Temple some time after the reign of Solomon. King Josiah was cleaning out the Temple, wanting to purify the religion of Israel, and found a scroll which seems to be the core of what is currently Deuteronomy. Later, some sections were added at the beginning and end; but with regard to the issue of sources, Deuteronomy provides its own source.*

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the judges, after the Hebrew tribes had entered the Promised Land, God gave no new commandments. When the new kingdom of Israel was being developed under Saul, David, and Solomon, God didn’t give any new commandments. When the Temple was being built and questions arose concerning how big it should be and what kind of sacrifices should be offered and when, none of the answers to those questions can be found in accounts of the days of Solomon. The answers, when they were provided, were given by God to Moses while he was in the wilderness, leading a nomadic people. They were leading sheep and wandering around, presumably for forty years, and yet it was at that time that God gave them laws on how to arrange their agricultural

affairs: what crops not to grow next to other crops, how to divide up plots of land, and when to let the crops lie fallow—matters ostensibly irrelevant to nomads. Another inconsistency noted by scholars in the Exodus story is that Moses urges everybody to get going because the Egyptians are breathing down their necks, but suddenly he stops, and for two chapters he tells his people how to celebrate the Exodus after they have arrived safely in the Promised Land, many years later.

The conclusion that scholars have come to is that all of these commandments actually originated much later than Moses’ time. They were developed at a time when they were needed: when the Israelites needed agricultural laws and when they needed some decisions about sacrifice in the Temple and about how to celebrate the Exodus. But as a way of authenticating the commandments, to get the people to treat them seriously, the claim was made that God had given the commandments to Moses, way back in the times of their ancestors, and now was the time when they were expected to carry out God’s ancient laws. Of course, this view does contradict the tradition that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. But that is only a tradition. There is nothing in the Bible that says Moses wrote the first five books. If he did, then he described his own death, in Deuteronomy, a book that has its own story. Deuteronomy seems to have been an ancient scroll that was found in the Temple some time after the reign of Solomon. King Josiah was cleaning out the Temple, wanting to purify the religion of Israel, and found a scroll which seems to be the core of what is currently Deuteronomy. Later, some sections were added at the beginning and end; but with regard to the issue of sources, Deuteronomy provides its own source.

## Priestly Source<sup>2</sup>

There was one other spurt of writing that probably began during the Exile, after the Babylonian army destroyed the Temple for the first time, in the year 587 BCE,<sup>3</sup> and moved large numbers of people from Jerusalem to Babylonia, in what is now southeastern Iraq. Priests from the Temple were included among the exiles. In exile, they came to understand their nation's history and theology differently than they did when they were in Palestine. They came to believe, for example, that God was not restricted to the Temple but had moved with them into Babylon. Ezekiel's vision of the wheel in the middle of the air was a symbol of God on the move with the Israelites. They also came to believe that Yahweh was more than just a tribal God. And it was probably then that the first creation story in the Bible was written, because they began to conceive of Yahweh as the God of the entire world. They probably made use of a number of the features of the Babylonian creation story when writing the one that we find in Genesis; but they modified those features to portray what they believed about God.

Scholars have given the label "P" to the writing that these priests did. We have now looked briefly at "J," "E," "D" (for Deuteronomy), and "P," which seminarians in all of our mainline denominations learn routinely. The information presented here is not new. It has existed for one hundred years, although it has not always filtered down to the general public.

## Establishing the Hebrew Bible

The books of the Pentateuch were probably combined into a single document when the Second Temple was built, as described by Ezra and Nehemiah. Many other religious writings existed, but the Jews did not

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*Another way of checking authorship is by comparing the language used. There are many words that Paul uses over and over in his genuine epistles that are not used at all in the Pastoral Epistles. And there are words that are characteristic of the Pastorals that do not appear at all in Paul's genuine epistles.*

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have to decide whether to count them as Scripture until Christians came on the scene. People then started calling Jesus the "Messiah" and started to treat as Scripture the letters that Paul wrote and some gospels that had been written. Also, the Temple was destroyed for the second time. So around the year 90 CE, the successors of the Pharisees met in the town of Jamnia on the Mediterranean coast, and finally decided which writings would be Holy Scripture for them. They chose which prophets they would revere, which psalms they would select from the oral tradition of campfire songs and meditative poems, and which pieces of wisdom literature, such as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, they would include in their Bible. In other words, it was only then that they decided the content of what Christians traditionally have called the "Old Testament" (but what people who are more respectful of Judaism nowadays are calling "the Hebrew Bible").

## The New Testament—Gospels and Epistles

Similar blending of sources characterizes the Christian New Testament. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke—called "synoptics" because they share a common perspective on the events of Jesus' ministry—differ from the fourth Gospel, that of John. The Synoptics describe Jesus cleansing the Temple (turning over tables and driving out money-changers) near the end of his ministry, while John places the same event in Chapter 2. John's writing is much more symbolic. He wants to depict Jesus as a "new broom that sweeps clean," so he places the event of Jesus cleansing the Temple right at the beginning of his Gospel, as if to say, "Here is somebody who is going to make a really big change in the Jewish religion." John does not seem to be at all concerned about being historically accurate.

The Synoptics are not exactly the same, but there are large portions of them with the same wording. Fifty-one percent of the verses in Mark are repeated exactly in Matthew and Luke, suggesting that all three Gospels were not firsthand accounts. It is highly unlikely that different people who saw the same event would describe it in exactly the same words. Perhaps copying assured the legitimacy of an account, since it appeared to corroborate other versions. Scholars have determined that Mark was the first of the Gospel writers, since Matthew and Luke share Mark's sequence except for deviations by one, which the other follows. Also, Mark's Greek is worse than Matthew's and Luke's, and it makes more sense to think that when Matthew and Luke were copying from Mark, they cleaned up his grammar, rather than to suppose Mark was copying from perfectly good grammar

and made it worse. Mark is more redundant than Matthew and Luke. In their versions of similar stories in Mark, they leave out his unnecessary wording.

Mark's Gospel includes some Aramaic phrases, although it is written in Greek. It is likely that Jesus spoke Aramaic. The gospel closest to the time when Jesus lived might have remembered phrases that Jesus actually used, whereas later gospels would be less likely to. Matthew and Luke do not use those phrases. Mark also contains some errors. In one instance in his Gospel when Jesus lists the Ten Commandments, Jesus includes a commandment that is not one of the Ten Commandments. He says, "Do not defraud." When Matthew and Luke report this event, they simply leave out "Do not defraud." In another place, Mark quotes from a prophet but gives him the wrong name. He says he is quoting from Isaiah, but the quotation comes from Malachi. When Matthew and Luke deal with that passage, they identify the prophet correctly. In all of these examples, it seems likely that Matthew and Luke were working with Mark's material and improving it as they did so, thereby indicating that Mark wrote first.

Moving to another topic, there are some passages which are the same in Matthew and Luke but not mentioned in Mark at all. Certainly in those instances Matthew and Luke could not have been copying from Mark. Scholars propose—and this is only a hypothesis—that there may have been another document filled with sayings of Jesus (not reports of healings, not narrative), which Matthew and Luke took material from when they were writing, but which was not available to Mark. Scholars call this document "Q," from the German word "Quelle," which means "source." Matthew also has

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*It was not until 367 CE,  
however, that Bishop  
Athanasius in Alexandria,  
Egypt,  
came up with the list of  
New Testament books used  
in the New Testament  
today. Although the  
content of the New  
Testament was fluid for  
three hundred years,  
eventually everyone  
accepted Athanasius' list.*

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some special material that none of the other Gospel writers have. For example, Matthew is the only one who talks about the three wise men finding Jesus at his birth. Matthew also is the only one who talks about the holy family going into Egypt after Jesus is born. Luke, too, has special material not found in the other Gospels. Luke is the only place where there is an account of angels and shepherds at Jesus' birth. Luke's is the only Gospel that has the Good Samaritan parable and the parable of the Prodigal Son.

It thus seems likely that all of the stories, accounts, narratives, sayings, and teachings in the Gospels once circulated as independent units. Somebody saw Jesus heal someone; that person remembered that event. Another person heard Jesus say something particularly insightful; that person remembered that. And these recollections persisted, often unrelated to any other occurrences for long periods of time, as different people who were with Jesus at different times remembered different events. The

person who saw Jesus heal Peter's mother-in-law may not have known whether that event came before Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek" or afterward. He or she may not even have been present when Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek." There is no way to coordinate all of this material so as to make it chronologically accurate. Eventually, it probably was Mark who pulled those reports together and wrote them down, but we have no way of knowing the chronological order of the events in Jesus' life. What Mark seems to have done was to depict Jesus as starting out in Galilee, getting a group of followers there, and only at the end of his life going to Jerusalem. And to the extent that Matthew and Luke follow Mark, they follow basically the same course of events. John, on the other hand, has Jesus go to Jerusalem for at least three Passover festivals. So we are not even sure whether Jesus' ministry lasted a year (as it could have, in Mark's chronology) or as long as three years. The fact that we do not know the chronological order of Jesus' life, however, does not automatically mean that particular events that were reported had not actually occurred.

### **The Gospel of John**

John also is listed as an apostle, but John's Gospel reflects all sorts of non-Jewish ways of looking at the world. Scholars do not think that John the apostle wrote John's Gospel, partly because it reflects a typically Greek—not Hebrew—way of looking at things. The ancient Hebrews tended to be very concrete in the way they viewed reality. As already noted, John's Gospel is filled with symbols. You do not find that in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Only in John's Gospel do you find such abstract phrases as being "of the truth" and "children of light." That is hardly the

language of a Jewish fisherman, which John is reported to have been. Whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke include many pithy sayings of Jesus and short parables, such material is lacking in John's Gospel, where Jesus instead engages in discourses as long as three chapters. Similarly, the healings reported in the Synoptics are not found in John's Gospel.

Scholars think that John was written last, after the early Church had a chance to start thinking extensively about who Jesus was. John's Gospel reflects much more theological development than the others. For example, Jesus talks about himself, in John, in ways that are very different from the Synoptics. In John he says, "The Father and I are one" and "I am the Vine, you are the branches" (another example of an abstract way of speaking).

## Epistles

Not all of the Epistles attributed to Paul were written by him. Seven are considered his—Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, I Thessalonians, and Philemon. The authorship of others is in dispute, even three claiming to come from Paul—I and II Timothy and Titus. Modern readers might be offended by the idea that a writer would make a false claim of authorship. Nevertheless, in the Roman Empire in the era of the early Christian Church, it was very common for people in a "school" of philosophy founded by a leader one or two hundred years earlier to write new material in that philosophical way of thinking and to attribute it to the school's founder. It was a way of honoring their dead leader, rather than plagiarism or of pretending that somebody else was doing the writing. Scholars suspect that that practice was being followed in the case of the "Pastoral Epistles," those epistles written to Timothy and Titus,

who were new pastors in the Church at that time. Scholars make this claim in view of stark contrasts they find between those epistles and the ones that they think genuinely come from Paul. Paul's epistles reflect the expectation that Christ will return soon. In I and II Timothy and Titus, there is no expectation of Christ's returning soon. Instead, there is reference to passing on the tradition to the next generation. The Church has settled into its new role as an organization, and in order to avoid false teachings, what it emphasizes is passing on the tradition about Jesus accurately.

Paul's doctrines and references to church government also contrast with material in non-Pauline writings. "Faith," in Paul's view, was personal trust in God, living with God minute by minute.<sup>4</sup> "Faith" in the Pastoral Epistles is referred to as "the Faith"<sup>5</sup> and treated as that, had not yet developed when Paul was writing. In Paul's time, the Church was governed by charismatic leaders, people whose sense of being filled with the Holy Spirit led them to take charge of local congregations. By the time of Timothy and Titus, there were presbyters and bishops who were ordained by the laying-on of hands. Ecclesiastical affairs were getting much more organized and settled. And since these contrasts are so great, scholars are inclined to say the Pastoral Epistles were probably not written by Paul. Another way of checking authorship is by comparing the language used. There are many words that Paul uses over and over in his genuine epistles that are not used at all in the Pastoral Epistles. And there are words that are characteristic of the Pastorals that do not appear at all in Paul's genuine epistles.

## Establishing the New Testament

Many people are surprised to learn that other gospels and epistles were

written that were not included in the Bible, such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, and the Epistle of Barnabas. Over the centuries, bishops in different locations made lists of books that they considered to be authentic Scripture for churches in their diocese. It was not until 367 CE, however, that Bishop Athanasius in Alexandria, Egypt, came up with the list of New Testament books used in the New Testament today. Although the content of the New Testament was fluid for three hundred years, eventually everyone accepted Athanasius' list.

## Notes

1. Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 22, 65, 152, 158, 245-6, 289-90.

2. Ernst Sellin and Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. David Green (New York: Abingdon, 1968), 178-86.

3. **Before the Common Era** is an alternative to **Before Christ**; the **Anno Domini** equivalent is **CE**.

4. Romans 3:25; 4:11; 10:6; II Corinthians 4:13; Galatians 5:15.

5. I Timothy 1:2; II Timothy 4:7; Titus 1:13.

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# The Claim of Conscience in a Pluralist Society

*Precedents from American courts suggest a broader secular/multicultural context for Canadian rulings on the rights of conscience.*

By Michael Manley-Casimir



## About the Author

Michael Manley-Casimir is Professor of Education and Director of the Tecumseh Centre for Aboriginal Research and Education at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. He received a BA from the University of Exeter (U.K.), an MEd from the University of British Columbia, and a PhD from the University of Chicago. Before coming to Brock in 1998 as Dean of Education, he taught in the education department at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, BC, for twenty-four years. Having a long-standing interest in the intersection of law and policy but lacking a formal legal qualification, he completed an LLM with the Faculty of Law at the University of British Columbia in May 2004, investigating the meaning of “freedom of conscience” in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This paper is based on his thesis for that degree.

Presented to the St. Catharines Torch Club on April 9, 2009.



There is no more archetypal conflict than that between the individual standing against the state on grounds of a deeply held personal position and the state demanding compliance with its duly enacted will. History and literature are replete with examples of individuals caught at the moment of full-fledged tension with the state. Socrates, Antigone, and Thomas More are three prominent examples. Central to such conflicts are claims of individual, moral, and religious autonomy, on the one hand, and the requirement imposed through the authority of the state for civic and citizen

obedience on the other. Frequently these conflicts are couched as claims of conscience and religious freedom juxtaposed with the civic necessity for order and legal compliance. And, at least historically and dramatically, these conflicts of categorically held positions on both sides often result in the death of the individual, ultimately powerless against the awesome power of the state.

It is, of course, exactly this imbalance of power that the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was intended to rectify by establishing and protecting the rights of individuals in Canada with countervailing constitutional force.<sup>1</sup> While admittedly vulnerable to criticism<sup>2</sup> and requiring extensive judicial interpretation in its application, the *Charter* nevertheless expresses a commitment to balance the potentially overweening power of the state by entrenching (in its distinctively limited way) the individual rights of Canadians, residents, and (in some instances) visitors to Canada. And it is through s. 2 that the *Charter* confers fundamental freedoms on “everyone”, including in s.2(a) “freedom of conscience and religion”. While such a right may seem self-evidently desirable, the language of the right and its meaning are problematic, as evident in the following legal opinions:

It is from these antecedents that the concepts of freedom of religion and freedom of conscience became associated, to form, as they do in s. 2(a) of our *Charter*, the single integrated concept of “freedom of conscience and religion.”

Chief Justice Brian Dickson in *R. v. Big M Drug Mart*<sup>3</sup>

It seems to me, therefore, that in a free and democratic society “freedom of conscience and religion” should be broadly construed to extend to

conscientiously held beliefs, whether grounded in religion or in a secular morality. Indeed, as a matter of statutory interpretation, “conscience” and “religion” should not be treated as tautologous if capable of independent, although related, meaning.

Justice Bertha Wilson in *R. v. Morgentaler*<sup>4</sup>

These quotations highlight a jurisprudential tension in the *Charter*: whether “freedom of conscience and religion” is an integrated, unitary concept as Chief Justice Dickson suggests—the *established* view—or, as Justice Wilson suggests, the notions of “conscience” and “religion” are related but separable components of the right—the *emergent* view. Is it possible for a person to seek redress against state action on the grounds of a non-theistic moral position, thereby invoking the right on the grounds of “conscience” alone, or must a claim under s. 2(a) be “religiously grounded” to receive constitutional protection? And how should the claim of conscience be interpreted in a multicultural and pluralist society such as Canada?

## The Established View

Common to the dramatic examples is the tension between the political authority of the state to make and enforce laws for the common good versus the challenge of the individual to preserve his/her personal autonomy as an independent moral agent. The tension is between the state’s demand for compliance and the individual’s preservation of personal integrity, between the state’s power to coerce and the individual’s affirmation of volition. The claim of conscience is wholly an individual standard, discerned by the individual who recognizes and then acts on its categorical, imperative moral force.

Individuals thereby affirm, in their different ways, the fundamental integrity and dignity of the self; their moral autonomy in the face of coercive state authority.

Reviewing the conceptual development of conscience from its classical roots in Greek and Roman thought yields the idea of conscience as the ‘inner witness’. With the integration of this notion with Christianity, the ‘inner witness’ evolved into the voice of God speaking to personal dilemmas of good and evil, right and wrong. As such the ‘inner witness’ became the lawgiver to the individual, expressing the will of God. Conscience and religious belief became intimately linked and inseparable. Ultimately the Reformation in England created the political conditions of religious persecution, at different times both Protestant and Catholic, such that the quest for religious toleration arose on pragmatic grounds voiced in terms of freedom of conscience and religion. Over time, the principle of religious toleration emerged as the dominant motif and as the basis for a pragmatic accommodation of religious difference. Conscience and religion thus became integrated, as recognized in *Big M*.<sup>5</sup>

In this case, the Supreme Court of Canada decided that the federal Lord’s Day Act, in imposing mandatory Sunday closing of stores, created an unconstitutional infringement of ‘freedom of conscience and religion’ in the *Charter*. This decision laid the groundwork for constitutional interpretation in related cases. Chief Justice Dickson noted that “[a] truly free society is one which can accommodate a wide variety of beliefs, diversity of tastes and pursuits, customs and codes of conduct,” thereby endorsing a pluralist, inclusive view of society and recognizing the validity of diverse beliefs.<sup>6</sup>

Central to the Court’s conceptualization of freedom are the related notions of personal choice, free will or volition, and autonomy. These are the values undergirding the concept of freedom of religion that the right protects. Individuals are free only when they can choose their religious beliefs, do so from

their own volition, and thereby exercise choice as the practice of their personal autonomy; the correlative notion here is the absence of coercion of belief by the state or by agencies of the state. Such coercion is impermissible, since it inevitably vitiates these values and thereby denies the right. The individual must be free to practice and exercise religious beliefs freely and without hindrance by any other, especially by the state, its agents, and agencies.

The Court explicitly recognized that the *Charter* protects citizens from both direct and indirect coercion, compulsion and restraint; its conclusion that “[f]reedom means that...no one is to be forced to act in a way contrary to his beliefs or his conscience” appears to open the door to a broader interpretation; a tacit recognition that “conscience” may include non-religious beliefs or world views. Chief Justice Dickson went on to elaborate the test establishing the meaning of a right or freedom protected by the *Charter*: “The meaning of a right or freedom guaranteed by the Charter was to be ascertained by an analysis of the *purpose* of such a guarantee; it was to be understood, in other words, in the light of the interests it was meant to protect.”<sup>7</sup>

The idea of freedom of conscience and religion as an *integrated concept* refers to the intimate linkage between conscience and religion evident during the Reformation and the ensuing decades. During these eras, adherents of self-professed true belief, whether Catholic or a dissenting Protestant sect, all justified their claim to conscience on particular religious grounds. Religion and conscience were treated as the opposite sides of the same coin. This seems a plausible understanding of the Court’s characterization of ‘freedom of conscience and religion’ as an integrated concept.

Chief Justice Dickson’s characterization of ‘freedom of conscience and religion’ in *Big M* as an integrated concept has substantially influenced subsequent judicial decisions. Few decisions have recognized the possibility that a claim of conscience,

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...the state cannot permit judicial affirmation of difference that would threaten the existence of the state itself. The question then is what range of difference could the modern liberal state permit in the quest for recognition of the right to freedom of conscience.

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absent a religious affiliation, could be advanced. Justice Wilson’s reasoning in *Morgentaler* opened the door to a broader conception of conscience,<sup>8</sup> but we have to turn to the United States to find cases that actually affirm a secular, ethical claim to conscience.

### The Emergent View

As the United States Supreme Court noted in *Welsh*, the controlling factors in *Seeger* (1965) and *Welsh* (1970) were strikingly similar.<sup>9</sup> Both men for whom the cases were named had been raised in religious homes, had attended church regularly in childhood, neither had continued formal religious adherence into young adulthood, and neither belonged to any organized religious group or church community. When registering for Selective Service, neither had yet developed pacifist principles. As their views on war developed, however, they sought exemption from military service under §6 (j) of the *Universal Military Training and Service Act* that permitted exemptions from military service:

Nothing contained in this title shall be construed to require any person to be subject to combatant training and service in the armed forces of the United States who, by reason of religious training and belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form.

Religious training and belief in this connection means an individual's belief in relation to a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation, but does not include essentially political, sociological, or philosophical views or a merely personal moral code.<sup>10</sup>

While neither Seeger nor Welsh could sign the Selective Service form affirming that their objection to military service rested on their 'religious training and belief' as defined in the statute, both affirmed their deeply held conscientious objection to taking part in wars where people were killed. "Both strongly believed that killing in war was wrong, unethical, and immoral, and their consciences forbade them to take part in such an evil practice."<sup>11</sup> No doubt existed in either case about the sincerity and depth of their conviction. Their cases reached the Supreme Court because lower and appellate courts could not find evidence to satisfy their 'belief in relation to a Supreme Being' as required by the statute.

So for the first time in *Seeger*, the U.S. Supreme Court confronted a plaintiff's reliance on the authenticity and centrality of his "belief in and devotion to goodness and virtue for their own sakes, and a religious faith in a purely ethical creed." Did such a belief satisfy the requirement for conscientious objection? In grappling with this, the Court stipulated that "[t]he test might be stated in these words: A sincere and meaningful belief which occupies in the life of its possessor a place parallel to that filled by the God of those admittedly qualifying for the exemption comes within the statutory definition.<sup>12</sup> In assessing Seeger's claim, the Court noted:

If an individual deeply and sincerely holds beliefs that are purely ethical or moral in source and content but that nevertheless impose upon him a duty of conscience to refrain from participating in any war at any time, those beliefs certainly occupy in the life of that individual "a place parallel to that filled by...God" in traditionally religious persons.

Ultimately, the Court went on to

approve Seeger's claim for conscientious objector status:

We think it clear that the beliefs which prompted his [Seeger's] objection occupy the same place in his life as the belief in a traditional deity holds in the lives of his friends, the Quakers.<sup>13</sup>

Considering Welsh's claim, the Court noted that he was both more insistent and explicit than Seeger in denying that his views were religious. Yet Welsh had declared his beliefs were "certainly religious in the ethical sense of the word." The Court record shows that in his original application for conscientious objector status he had written:

I believe that human life is valuable in and of itself; in its living; therefore I will not injure or kill another human being. This belief (and the corresponding 'duty' to abstain from violence toward another person) is not 'superior to those arising from any human relation.' On the contrary; *it is essential to every human relation*. I cannot, therefore, conscientiously comply with the Government's insistence that I assume duties which I feel are immoral and totally repugnant. [The Court went on to note that] Welsh elaborated his beliefs in later communications with Selective Service officials. On the basis of these beliefs and the conclusion of the Court of Appeals that he held them "with the strength of more traditional religious convictions," 404 F 2d, at 1081, we think Welsh was clearly entitled to a conscientious objector exemption. Section 6(j) requires no more. That section exempts from military service all those whose consciences, spurred by deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs would give them no rest or peace if they allowed themselves to become a part of an instrument of war.<sup>14</sup>

Especially noteworthy here is the judicial expansion of the interpretation of section 6(j) of the *Universal Military Training and Service Act* by reading meaning into the language of the statute

recognizing the claims of Seeger and Welsh to conscientious objector status on the grounds that the depth and authenticity of their convictions were such as to be equated with the depth and sincerity of belief of a devoutly religious person.

### Relevance to a Pluralistic Society

In seeking to understand and appreciate the character of freedom of conscience and religion in a pluralist society, especially one like Canada with its commitment to multiculturalism, it is helpful to think in terms, as Taylor puts it, of the 'underlying intuitions of value.'<sup>15</sup> Such are the presuppositions undergirding our conventional understanding of rights.

The Reformation struggled to establish the Protestant affirmation of both "...the principles of private judgment and [the] *absolute* primacy of conscience..."<sup>16</sup> This development reaffirmed the claim of the individual conscience. The rise of Protestantism and the emergence of religious toleration as a value of civil society laid the groundwork for the individual's claim to conscience on private, religiously affiliated grounds and, at the same time opening the door to claims based on private, non-theistic and secular reasons. Such recognition also carried within it the recognition of personal autonomy as an 'underlying intuition of value' with the associated notions of volition or free will, and choice. Autonomy and personal agency on matters of conscience connect in this view and provide the basis for individual claims to moral deliberation and right action. These values underpin much of the jurisprudential construction reflected in the *Charter*.

Analysis of the U.S. cases yields other insights about the character of a claim to conscience judicially recognized. In several places in *Welsh*, the U.S. Supreme Court notes and commends the 'sincerity' of the positions advanced by Seeger and Welsh. Indeed the Court stipulates the appropriate test of conscience as a sincere and meaningful belief that occupies in the life of the possessor a place parallel to that filled by God in those with a devout religious affiliation. Such a view connects

with Trilling's analysis of the rise of sincerity in European literature and society from the sixteenth century onwards and its contemporary manifestation as 'authenticity.'<sup>17</sup>

What appears to have happened in *Welsh* is that the U.S. Supreme Court was instrumentally involved in the process of the moral life revising itself by recognizing and adding sincerity and authenticity to the adjudication of the claim of conscience. In so doing, the U.S. Supreme Court moved away from an exclusive reliance on the traditional definition of conscience as a faith-based claim to one recognizing a claim based on ethics and reason, thereby endorsing a secular, ethically grounded, and personal conception of conscience.

A further and perhaps more significant 'intuition of value' in the *Charter* is the recognition and protection of 'difference' as a fundamental constitutional value. This value certainly undergirds 'freedom of conscience and religion,' especially when conscience is conceptualized to admit both religious and secular claims. The variety of individual religious affiliations and ethical positions possible in a pluralist society, especially one committed to multiculturalism as in Canada, presume the value, recognition, and judicial affirmation of difference both as a presupposition and as an interpretive principle of legal reasoning. The focus on difference and the implications of such a value for law has attracted a substantial body of legal scholarship in the United States, particularly in the work of Martha Minow and Iris Young.<sup>18</sup> In Canada, the work of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka on multiculturalism brings a distinctive Canadian perspective to the discussion.<sup>19</sup> The recognition of pluralism in religion and the rise of secularism have also drawn attention in the United States. Monsma and Soper identify the significant trends giving rise to the need for their work: increasing religious pluralism in the U.S., the growing numbers of people espousing fundamentally secular systems of belief, essentially viewing the rise of secularism as a "community of moral conviction", and the increasing dissatisfaction with the

judicial decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in church-state matters.<sup>20</sup> Rogers Smith calls for fully equal treatment in these terms: "My call for fully equal treatment does not mean that rights of religious conscience cannot be placed in a 'preferred position', as in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. It does mean, however, that rights of secular conscientious belief should be given equal preferred standing."<sup>21</sup> Secular conscience should thus be granted status equal to that of religiously grounded conscience.

The Canadian Supreme Court has not yet addressed this issue. Structural differences between the U.S. and Canadian Constitutions make it unlikely that judicial reasoning in Canada would exactly parallel that in the United States. What is more likely is that the increasing multiculturalism and pluralism of Canadian society together may give rise to an increasing secularism in Canadian society which may well provoke similar challenges to established interpretations. Secularism and pluralism may generate a new definition of freedom of conscience and religion in Canada.

Ultimately, the justification for such a definition must rest in the interpretation of the *Charter*. The *Charter* is the expression of liberal democracy in Canada. While the tolerance of the liberal democratic state for difference rests at the core of the challenge for judicial interpretation, the state cannot permit judicial affirmation of difference that would threaten the existence of the state itself. The question then is what range of difference could the modern liberal state permit in the quest for recognition of the right to freedom of conscience? The Canadian Supreme Court would have to devise an appropriate judicial test to assess and recognize the character of such a range. In this task, the reasoning in U.S. cases may be persuasive.

#### Notes

1. Part 1 of Canada, Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B of United Kingdom, Canada Act, 1982, c.1 [hereinafter *Charter*].

2. See, for example, the critique

offered by Allan C. Hutchinson, *Waiting for Coraf; A Critique of Law and Rights* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

3. *R v. Big M Drug Mart* [1985] 18 D.L.R. (4<sup>th</sup>) 321 [hereinafter *Big M*].

4. *R v. Morgentaler* [1988] 44 D.L.R. (4<sup>th</sup>) 496 [hereinafter *Morgentaler*].

5. *Big M*, 321-374.

6. *Ibid.*, 353.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, 357.

9. *Welsh v. United States*, 26 L.Ed. 2d 308 (1970) [hereinafter *Welsh*], *United States v. Seeger*, 380 U.S. 163 (1965) [hereinafter *Seeger*].

10. *Welsh*, 317.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, 318.

13. *Ibid.*, 319

14. *Ibid.*, 320-21 (italics in the original).

15. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and "the Politics of Recognition"; An Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 41.

16. <http://socrates58.blogspot.com/2007/01/conscience-catholic-churches-and.html> [accessed January 16, 2011]. Italics for emphasis in original.

17. Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

18. Martha L. Minow, *Making All the Difference* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990); Minow, *Not Only for Myself* (New York: New Press, 1997); Iris M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); and Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

19. Taylor, 19; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996).

20. Stephen V. Monsma & J. Christopher Soper, *Equal Treatment of Religion in a Pluralist Society*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1-5.

21. Rogers M. Smith, "Equal Treatment? A Liberal Separationist View," in Monsma and Soper, 181.

# The Root Causes of the Great Depression

*Both a major war and increased federal economic control set the stage for America's financial crash.*

**By James Hassinger**



## About the Author

Jim Hassinger is a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University and has an AA in Surveying Technology, a BS in Aerospace Engineering, and an ME in General Engineering. He taught mechanical engineering technology and math at Hagerstown Community College in Maryland and retired in 2005 after 32 years in the classroom. The author of the World War II novel *Sea of Deception*, he has recently finished *End of Deception*. Jim volunteers as a patient and physics tutor for his wife's radiography program at the community college. He and his wife, Brenda, are active members of Haven Lutheran Church. They are looking forward to Brenda's retirement in June and to the Torch convention to be held in their hometown.

Presented to the Hagerstown Torch Club on November 17, 2009.

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To explore the root causes of the Great Depression of the 1930s, one must examine the state of the union before 1929. The creation of the Federal Reserve and its subsequent policies and actions contributed to the massive inflation of the late 1920s that led to excessive speculation in the stock market. Other events influencing the economic collapse include the establishment of a national income tax and the Great War, which led to the economic isolation of Germany by the European powers.

In the fall of 1910, seven men representing a significant portion of the

world's wealth gathered at Jekyll Island, Georgia, to establish a central bank. The group objectives were to stifle competition from independent banks in the Western United States and the self-financing of corporations. The large banks wanted a mechanism to gain access to fiat money for expansion and for protection from bank runs resulting from fractional reserve banking. Among the seven men present at the meeting were Paul Warburg, a partner in Kuhn, Loeb and Company and the architect of the plan for a new central bank; Benjamin Strong, head of J. P. Morgan's Bankers Trust Company, an American citizen and strong British supporter; and Nelson Aldrich, Republican Senator and John D. Rockefeller's father-in-law.<sup>1</sup> The Aldrich Bill to establish a central bank initially failed and Nelson Aldrich lost his senate seat in the 1912 election. The bill was reintroduced with a few changes under a new name, passing in 1913 as the Glass-Owen Bill which established the Federal Reserve System. Federal Reserve Notes issued by a private corporation became legal obligations of the United States Government.<sup>2</sup>

## Impact of the Great War

Popular culture attributes the United States' entry into World War I to German U-boat attacks on merchant ships on the high seas including the sinking of the British auxiliary cruiser *Lusitania* which was carrying munitions when she went down.<sup>3</sup> In fact, underlying reasons for entering the war included anti-German press exploitation of German atrocities in Belgium and the

possibility the United States would be unable to collect on foreign debts in case of a German victory.<sup>4</sup> While Wilson was preaching peace without victory his confidant, Colonel House, and his secretary of state, Robert Lansing, were telling the British leadership the United States supported their war effort. Eventually Wilson fired Lansing; however, he never suspected House was going behind his back in foreign affairs.<sup>5</sup>

Some historians believe Wilson engineered a declaration of war to force international cooperation in his quest to establish a League of Nations. As early as 1916 and in his January 1917 address to the Senate, Wilson envisioned a world peacekeeping organization that would spearhead an unprecedented era of prosperity. Eventually his vision developed into a fourteen-point proposal giving birth to the League of Nations. Highlights of his agenda included free trade, a gradual end of colonialism through a system of mandates, some equality between large nations and small nations, manufacturing of weapons by the government instead of private industry, and an international peacekeeping body with some enforcement mechanism. Wilson believed he could change European and American foreign policy that was based on a balance of power into a humanitarian international organization.<sup>6</sup> The ending of World War I by the armistice on November 11, 1918, was followed by the establishment of the League of Nations on April 28, 1919. The League was far from being the utopian organization

Wilson envisioned, however; U.S. membership was never ratified by the United States Senate, and the League was never taken seriously by European powers.

The Great War drastically changed both the domestic and foreign status of the United States. As bank credit generated both debt and inflation, the value of the dollar fell by 50 percent.<sup>7</sup> As a result of the Great War, the domestic national debt increased from \$1 billion to \$25 billion. Although the domestic debt dropped by over \$8.5 billion, by 1931 it started to climb again.<sup>8</sup> In a few years, the United States changed from an international debtor nation to a creditor nation with an external trade surplus. Before the war, the United States owed \$3 billion; after the war, the international community owed the United States \$4 billion from private transactions and about \$10 billion from government loans, of which about \$4 billion were from Great Britain. Surplus funds invested overseas were not available to compensate for interest-bearing domestic federal debt. As a result of the war, gold backing for local currency fell drastically, particularly in France and Russia. Gold backing for the British pound fell from about fifty percent to about one-third the face value.<sup>9</sup>

Under the peace terms, Germany accepted guilt for causing the Great War and agreed to pay reparations of fifty billion marks. Germany was to pay to about three billion marks per year and that sum included the interest on the debt. Actual amounts varied and were less than expectations, resulting in a temporary occupation of the Ruhr industrial area by France, Belgium, and Italy in early 1923. Payment of reparations was handled by the Bank of International Settlement, which is a private institution then owned by seven of the world's central banks. After the

war the United States had excessive production capabilities and instead of pursuing a policy of balanced trade, generally pushed for free trade. European countries restricted trade with Germany, limiting the ability of Germany to generate a trade surplus to pay off the war reparations. The United States lent money to the German government, which used most of the funds to pay the reparations. Money then flowed back to the United States to cover foreign government loans. Both the United States position as a creditor nation exporting and the German position as a debtor nation importing were inherently unstable.<sup>10</sup>

### **Actions of the Federal Reserve**

Beginning in 1924 and as a result of a series of meetings between Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England, and Benjamin Strong, Governor of the Federal Reserve, the Fed instituted a policy of inflation to equalize prices between the United States and Great Britain, where costs were about ten percent higher than in the states. This policy was pursued even though the Fed realized that an increase in the money supply could lead to dangerous speculation in the stock market. The Fed lowered the interest rate at its discount window where banks went to borrow money. Financial institutions, through fractional reserve banking, created new money from the funds injected into the system by the Federal Reserve.<sup>11</sup>

Another method used by the central bank to inflate the economy was to buy bankers' acceptances as short-term securities. Acceptances were contracts issued by a bank that guaranteed payment to an overseas seller if the buyer defaulted. Since the bank charged a fee for the transaction, the acceptances generated a small amount of interest over the life of the

contract, usually less than six months. Since banks could generate more capital from other investments, they were more than willing to sell acceptances to the central bank. The International Acceptance Bank of New York, whose chairman was Paul Warburg, was the most active player in the transfer of acceptances. Money flowed into the stock market. Money could be borrowed at a low rate in the United States and invested abroad at a higher rate of return. On the domestic scene, many investors were buying stocks on margin. The buyer would put up a small portion of the cost of a stock and borrow the rest from a broker. Most brokers obtained their funds by borrowing from a bank. Margins were also referred to as "call loans" because the broker could demand payment from the investor with a twenty-four hour notice. If the investor could not cover the loan, the stocks would be sold. For the investor to make money from call loans, the value of the stocks had to appreciate at more than nine percent annually. The value of stocks outpaced the increase in industrial production. Many investors were in the market for the short-term to make money from the increase in the selling price of their stock. About 70 percent of the increase in value of the stock market came from speculation.<sup>12</sup>

In 1927, a crisis developed when France undervalued its currency, prompting a demand on the international market for francs. By 1928, the Bank of France held about \$1.2 billion in foreign currency which it used to buy gold on the international market. At a meeting of international bankers, the Fed committed to accelerating its policy of inflation to assist Great Britain's economy. Since England's gold reserves were low, the Federal Reserve decided to use American gold to exchange for francs letting England out of the loop.<sup>13</sup>

As the Fed went through another buying spree, the money supply increased by 62 percent after World War I. In early 1929, the Fed became concerned over speculation in the market and that their policy of compensating for the outflow of gold through inflation was working too well.<sup>14</sup> The central bank decided to deflate the economy. They had on hand \$300 million in acceptances and a large number of government war bonds.<sup>15</sup> Since a significant portion of the money supply was created through central bank debt, sale of the bonds would deflate the economy by removing money from circulation. Bonds purchased by the public bought with existing money did not change the money supply.<sup>16</sup>

The Federal Reserve sold \$150 million in acceptances, pulling the money out of circulation. They tightened credit by raising the discount rate to 6 percent and increased the margin on call loans from 7 percent to 13 percent. In June, many foreign investors, unhappy with the election of a new labor government in Britain, transferred money to U.S. stocks. In late September, the Bank of England raised its interest rate. Many of the European investors pulled out of American markets and bought English securities. Stock sales skyrocketed in the middle of October and, on Thursday, October 24, almost twenty million shares were sold. The value of stock plummeted. Margin loans were called in and more foreign investors pulled out of the U.S. market. Money was unavailable for industrial use and production fell, with a devastating effect on the labor force.<sup>17</sup>

After the stock market crash, Germany was unable to borrow money or pay reparations. In 1931, the largest bank in Austria defaulted and the banking crisis spread throughout Germany. England lost millions that had been on loan to Germany. With high

production costs, low gold reserves, high public debt and the inability to obtain credit abroad, the pound sterling was in serious trouble. Public spending was cut and more gold flowed to France and the United States. On September 21, 1931, Britain went off the gold standard. In the United Kingdom, international trade stability and domestic policy were no longer coupled through gold. England drastically increased taxes, raised tariffs, and lowered interest rates. The prewar gold block which was controlled by France, England, and the United States ceased to exist. The world's currency was divided between England and its colonies and the United States and France, whose currency was still tied to gold. The pound sterling was devalued and England established a favorable balance of trade by increasing exports over imports. With a favorable trade balance, England forced France to accept a policy of appeasement with Germany. When Britain went off the gold standard, France was caught with a third of its foreign currency in pounds. France again converted its currency into gold from the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Many of the supporters of free trade claim the Smoot-Hawley Act of 1930 prolonged the Depression. This is a myth that refuses to die. Smoot-Hawley raised tariffs on some imports to the United States; however, it had nothing to do with causing the deflation the country experienced. In 1930, Smoot-Hawley applied to only 1.3 percent of gross national production at a time when imports totaled only 4 percent of the GNP.<sup>19</sup> After the crash, international trade was about 40 percent of the 1928 value and remained at about the same value long after the demise of Smoot-Hawley in 1934. From 1931 to 1933, the United States suffered from deflation. The government tried to inflate the domestic economy through the Reconstruction Finance

Corporation that, by 1933, had lent \$1.5 billion to banks and corporations. The Federal Reserve Bank in New York lost \$756 million in gold to foreign and domestic sources and it drew on gold from secondary banks in the Fed system. Bank runs occurred in several states and the government closed all banks on March 4, 1933. Most banks reopened a few days later and, on April 20, 1933, private ownership of gold was declared illegal and paper currency could no longer be exchanged for gold. In 1934, after the failure of the World Economic Conference to stabilize international trade, the U.S. switched to a gold bullion standard, set the dollar at 59 percent of its former value, and bought gold at thirty-five dollars an ounce.<sup>20</sup>

The Thomas Amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act gave the president \$3 billion in new currency and authorized Roosevelt to institute an extensive public works program. Since agricultural prices were low the government tried to restrict production by paying farmers to remove land from cultivation, a practice that continues to this day. There is disagreement over the effectiveness of the deficit spending of the New Deal to stimulate the economy. While there is no doubt the program provided some assistance to families in need, Amity Shlaes questions the results of the program and claims Roosevelt's policies had a negative effect on business and prolonged the Depression.<sup>21</sup> Carroll Quigley says the reduction in deficit spending in 1937 hindered recovery.<sup>22</sup>

The United States sought to build world trade and neglected the debt problem. With underutilized manufacturing and a desire to improve its standard of living, the United States pushed for free trade and passed the Hull Reciprocal Trade Agreement in 1934, which established most favored

nation status and gave the president the authority to bilaterally reduce tariffs by up to 50 percent. When a tariff reduction was agreed upon, the president could then extend the same reduction to trading partners with most favored nation status. Congress relinquished much of its constitutional authority to regulate trade. The executive branch no longer used trade to benefit United States industry, and trade regulation became an instrument of foreign policy.<sup>23</sup> In spite of many unilateral trade concessions on behalf of the United States, yearly trade still remained at about 40% less than the 1928 level.

### Crippling Effects of Taxation

The initial peacetime attempt at establishing a direct tax on individuals had occurred in 1894 but was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Republicans in the Senate supported the bill to force the issue with the expectation the states would never approve a direct tax. In spite of Republican opposition, the states ratified the Sixteenth Amendment on February 12, 1913. Through 1934 up to the beginning of World War II, the economy underwent inflation and the price index rose above the 1913 base level but never reached the 1929 level. With the decrease in tariff revenue, the government turned to fiat money and the income tax to support public works programs. In 1913, the income tax was collected from 0.5 percent of the population and applied only to citizens earning above \$250,000 in current dollars. Rates ranged from 1 percent to a maximum of 7 percent.<sup>24</sup> The maximum income tax rate was raised from 25 percent to 60 percent by the Hoover administration. Roosevelt increased it above 90 percent, crippling incentives for the upper middle class.<sup>25</sup>

Shortly before Germany invaded Poland, the federal government

discovered it could use rearmament as a mechanism to inflate the economy. By 1939, the federal debt had risen to \$40 billion and the yearly interest was a staggering \$1 billion.<sup>26</sup> With the entry of the United States into World War II, unemployment dropped and deficit spending reached astronomical levels. The Depression officially ended; however, many of the underlying problems remain unresolved to this day.

### Notes

1. Edward Griffin, *The Creature from Jekyll Island* (Westlake Village, CA: American Media, 1998), 2-13.
2. [www.Wikipedia.org](http://www.Wikipedia.org), *Federal Reserve Act* [accessed November 1, 2009]
3. Griffin, 247-51.
4. Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy & Hope: A History of the World in our Time* (1966; repr. Rancho Palos Verdes, CA: GSG & Associates, 1975), 250.
5. Thomas Knock, *To End All Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 45-47, 258.
6. *Ibid.*, 118, 143-44, 195-96, 201-9.
7. Griffin, 259.
8. John Gordon, *Hamilton's Blessing: The Extraordinary Life and Times of our National Debt* (New York: Walker and Co., 1997), 206.
9. Quigley, 319-22.
10. *Ibid.*, 305-12, 339.
11. Griffin, 425-28, 194-95.
12. *Ibid.*, 482, 492-94.
13. Quigley, 342.
14. Griffin, 488, 495-99.
15. Quigley, 344.
16. Griffin, 484-86.
17. Quigley, 344-45.
18. *Ibid.*, 344-51.
19. Patrick Buchanan, *The Great Betrayal* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1998), 245-53.
20. Quigley, 349-54.

21. Amity Shlaes, *The Forgotten Man* (New York, Harper Perennial, 2007), 391-96.

22. Quigley, 360-61.

23. Ian Fletcher, *Free Trade Doesn't Work: What Should Replace It and Why* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Business & Industry Council, 2010), 140-41; Quigley, 362-63.

24. Neal Boortz and John Linder, *The FairTax Book* (New York: Regan Books, 2005), 9-17.

25. Amity Shlaes, "More than a Game," *Forbes*, January 18, 2010.

26. Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), 189.

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# The Internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II

*A shameful chapter in American life sheds light on other cases of national paranoia.*

By Anne L. Legge



## About the Author

Anne Legge has chosen to live in Virginia for most of her life, since 1973 in Winchester. She earned a BA and was inducted into the Alpha chapter of Phi Beta Kappa at William and Mary, and later received an MA from the University of Virginia. She retired in 2004 as Associate Professor of English at Lord Fairfax Community College in Middletown, Virginia, having devoted thirty years to teaching writing and American literature to students ages 16 to 75. Her avocation for all these years has been breeding, training, and showing Bloodhounds, establishing the internationally famous Legacy Kennels, which produced 121 show champions as well as law enforcement and search and rescue dogs. She was a conformation and field trial judge until her recent retirement from the sport. Anne's days are full with three grown children, five grandchildren, nine dogs, freelance writing, extensive and eclectic reading, a Great Books discussion group, three dog clubs, and the Winchester Torch Club—which she joined in 1983, serving as vice-president and president, and receiving a Silver Torch Award from Torch International. This, her sixth Torch paper and the second to be published, won the 2008 President's Best Paper award.

Presented to the Winchester Torch Club on February 8, 2008.



While pledging “liberty and justice for all,” Americans have repeatedly regarded some elements of our society with fear and prejudice, at times even depriving them of their civil rights—such as the case with American Indians and Negro slaves. Yet another egregious injustice was the relocation and internment of more than 110,000 Japanese-Americans following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Of these, 73 percent were American citizens. This paper will examine the political, social, psychological, and economic conditions that led to this internment with the hope that we can learn something to inform our present and future behavior. We are fortunate to have an extensive body of information about this period: memoirs, fiction, films, websites, history, even a book about art created in the internment centers, *Beauty Behind Barbed Wire*.<sup>1</sup>

A child at the time in West Virginia, living amid food and gas rationing, defense stamps in my primary school, and blackouts, along with cards bearing the silhouettes of enemy aircraft to help us identify them, I well remember the “day of infamy,” though I had no awareness at the time that Americans of Japanese descent were being interned on the other side of the country in a knee-jerk reaction to America's outrage at being attacked by Japan.<sup>2</sup> The early morning attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, left 2,403 American sailors, soldiers, marines, and civilians dead and 1,178 more wounded, with 149 planes

destroyed, five battleships sunk, and three destroyers and other vessels badly damaged. Another surprise attack later that day from Formosa wiped out an American air force base near Manila. In both cases, authorities had received a warning but had not acted immediately. Very soon, however, a startled America expressed its determination to seek revenge. In his “Day of Infamy” speech, President Roosevelt voiced the indignation of America's citizens: “Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.”<sup>3</sup>

With Congress declaring war on Japan the next day, and three days later Germany and Italy honoring their agreement with Japan by declaring war on the U.S., our nation lost no time taking vengeful action. Within one week, the FBI had apprehended in the U.S. mainland and the Territory of Hawaii 2,451 German, Italian, and Japanese nationals (known as Issei, or Japanese-born, barred by law from becoming citizens) who were considered dangerous; in a short time 25,655 enemy aliens, along with 5,629 Japanese-American Nisei (second-generation American-born citizens of Japanese descent) who had renounced their American citizenship were incarcerated—a total of more than 31,275 who were uprooted from their homes and put in detention camps.

At the time of Pearl Harbor, 127,000 Japanese-Americans, Issei and Nisei, lived in the U.S., three-fourths of them in California. The first Japanese immigrants were mainly farm workers, later share croppers. Although the non-citizen Issei were prohibited from buying land, they had acquired it in the names of their native-born sons or through corporations headed by Caucasians. Typically, the Japanese bought seemingly worthless land, and they and their families brought it to life and profit by labor-intensive means. Some became commercial fishermen; some bought businesses, restaurants, boarding houses, hotels, and shops and made them profitable. At the time of Pearl Harbor, the value of Japanese-owned businesses and farmlands was estimated at \$140 million in California alone. Predictably, as Japanese prospered, they became the targets of xenophobic racism and of competing economic interests.

Restrictions on persons deemed to be security risks, especially in times of perceived danger, are not new in America. The Alien Enemies Act of 1798, still in force, provides that in case of war or threat against the U.S., all males 14 and over who are not naturalized are liable to be “apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed” as alien enemies. The Third and Fourth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, which forbid quartering soldiers in private homes without consent of the owners and ban unreasonable searches, admit exceptions in times of war. Besides the over 31,000 enemy aliens interned here in World War II, the War of 1812 saw the removal of British citizens from East Coast cities to be interned in nearby towns; President Lincoln’s suspension of *habeas corpus* rights enabled him to detain thousands of Civil War “security risks” without access to

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*The first measures targeted the Japanese-born Issei. Their homes were ransacked, bank accounts and businesses closed, and the men rounded up and incarcerated in some seventy-four camps scattered throughout the U.S., Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.*

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judges; and the internment during World War I of some 6,300 European enemy aliens in prison barracks. These restrictions on aliens reflect a reasonable effort to balance national security and civil rights in time of war, assuming international humanitarian laws were observed. What is troubling is the extension of such treatment to the Nisei, American-born citizens of Japanese descent.

### **The Power of Panic**

In his memoir *The President Is Calling*, Milton Eisenhower, brother of Dwight and first head of the War Relocation Authority (WRA), charged with interning the Japanese, noted that “panic and rumor swept the West Coast after the Japanese attack.” Of course the mass media fanned the flames. In Eisenhower’s view, “As the Japanese armed forces systematically crushed all opposition in the South Pacific, the threat of invasion of the U.S. mainland was viewed as very real.”<sup>4</sup> The overwhelming security concern was the West Coast with its access from the Pacific and its numerous critical defense facilities—aircraft factories and other

defense plants, oil fields, bridges, dams, and military bases. Anxiety flared on February 23, 1942, when a Japanese submarine off the California coast fired on the Elwood oilfields near Santa Barbara. Although it inflicted no damage, the symbolic implications reverberated—it was the first foreign attack on the U.S. mainland since the War of 1812.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, all Americans of Japanese descent on the West Coast were subject to curfew, travel restrictions, and confiscation of such “contraband” items as shortwave radios, cameras, flashlights, weapons of any sort, dynamite (often used for clearing fields), and any items expressive of Japanese culture. When President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, defining military areas “from which any or all persons may be excluded as deemed necessary or desirable,” Japanese-Americans were not specifically referenced, yet they were the only people restricted. Lieutenant General John De Witt, a blatant white supremacist with a fundamental mistrust of the Japanese, was appointed head of the Western Defense Command to implement the policy. The first measures targeted the Japanese-born Issei. Their homes were ransacked, bank accounts and businesses closed, and the men rounded up and incarcerated in some seventy-four camps scattered throughout the U.S., Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. As for the Japanese-American Nisei, they were at first simply encouraged to vacate the coastal areas voluntarily, provided that they had a sponsor, job, or school to go to. However, with the increasing hostility toward them by the state governors, other leaders, employers, and residents of the inland areas, the Nisei were met with signs of “No Japs allowed.” One military official said voluntary

evacuation smacked “too much of the spirit of Rotary” and did not conform to the “necessary cold-bloodedness of war.”<sup>5</sup>

On March 2, 1942, De Witt issued Public Proclamation 1, declaring the right to remove Axis aliens and anyone of Japanese ancestry from delineated West Coast military areas. Two weeks later, Roosevelt created the War Relocation Authority, summoning Milton Eisenhower to implement the removal of designated persons from the restricted areas, a job Eisenhower later described as “the most difficult and traumatic task of my career,” calling the evacuation a “terrible tragedy.” After three months, Eisenhower was shifted to the Office of War Information, replaced at the WRA by Dillon Meyer. Over 110,000 people, including children, the sick, and the elderly, were required—often on short notice—to leave their homes in Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona, arriving by bus at seventeen makeshift military-run “assembly centers” in such places as the Santa Anita (CA) Racetrack and the Puyallup (WA) Fairgrounds. Amazingly, some 73 percent of these evacuees were U.S. citizens. Noting that “the problem of the Japanese-Americans on the West Coast seemed remote and insignificant to the average American on the East Coast,” Eisenhower called his job “a nightmare” as he tried “to carry out the evacuation as smoothly, quickly, and humanely as possible.” Public opinion ran the gamut from racist rants to charges of the “kidnapping” of these “hostages.” Such officials as Attorney General Francis Biddle, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of War Stimson, and FBI head J. Edgar Hoover questioned the indiscriminate roundup. Others, like Eleanor Roosevelt, wanted to incarcerate Japanese-Americans for their own safety. De Witt argued that

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*...there was never any evidence of espionage or sabotage on the part of any Japanese-American citizen. In his memoir, Milton Eisenhower asked, “How could such a tragedy have occurred in a democratic society that prides itself on individual rights and freedoms?”*

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both Issei and Nisei would support a Japanese attack on the Pacific Coast, adamantly declaring that “one could not tell the difference between a loyal and a disloyal Japanese American.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Stories of Suffering**

In her memoir *Nisei Daughter*, Monica Sone tells the story of her family, typical Japanese evacuees.<sup>7</sup> Monica’s Issei parents, the Itois, bought a dry cleaning business in Seattle, then refurbished the old Carrollton Hotel and lived there with their four children. Sone describes an idyllic childhood attending public schools as well as Japanese schools, helping with the hotel, and celebrating traditional holidays of the Emperor’s birthday and the Japanese New Year. She recalls a trip back to Japan to visit relatives. Sone encountered prejudice when the family ventured outside the Japanese community and tried to rent a seaside cottage—always “just too late.” She also reports tensions between traditional, reticent older Issei and their children who had adopted assertive American behavior. When the order to evacuate came, the Itois complied with

instructions to “Dispose of your houses and property. Wind up your business.” In April 1942, they were given one week to be ready to move to the Puyallup assembly center with just one sea bag and two suitcases per person. Families were kept together and given large white tags with the same number; the Itois were #10710. Monica’s father found a buyer on short notice for the family hotel. At the Puyallup assembly center, the five Itois, one son having died of dysentery during the visit to Japan, shared a small stall with a leaky roof and partitions that did not reach the ceiling. Other than metal cots with straw mattresses, their furniture consisted of tables, benches, and shelves they made from found materials. Hastily refurbished, such sites were expected to be used for no more than six months. Though the government made token efforts to safeguard the property of evacuees, designating the Federal Reserve Bank to protect property and the Farm-Security Administration to take control of farms and farm equipment, these measures were ineffective in the face of the sudden evacuations, and the Japanese had to sell at distress prices or give away their possessions. Theoretically, the evacuees could do business from the camps. Actually, in most cases, their income was cut off and their bank accounts frozen so that no rent or mortgage payments could be made. Crops that had been planted rotted in the field. An editorial in the paper of the Heart Mountain (WY) camp records the situation of the evacuees:

Bewildered, hurt, frustrated, we sold our properties. Sometimes for as little as a few cents on the dollar. Much was given away to friends, more was wheedled from us by folks we believed to be good neighbors, but the professional buyer with cash on the barrel got

the most of it.<sup>8</sup>

By Fall 1942, some 120,000 evacuees were moved to ten “relocation centers,” administered by the newly created War Relocation Authority. These were located on Federal land away from both strategic facilities and large numbers of Caucasians, which placed them in high deserts and swamplands in California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Arizona, and Arkansas. Most residents lived for two or three years in these camps, all of which were surrounded by barbed wire and secured with guard towers, searchlights, and armed guards. In addition to these “relocation camps,” two “Citizen Isolation Camps” were set up for Japanese-Americans judged to be troublemakers and high security risks. With inconsistency, the various camps were called isolation camps, detention camps, assembly centers, internment camps, and occasionally, a slip up by President Roosevelt and others, concentration camps.

Conditions varied among the ten internment centers from Poston, Arizona, the largest with 20,000 residents, to Amache, Colorado, with less than 8,000. The housing consisted of tarpaper covered barracks, roughly constructed and poorly insulated against extremes of heat and cold. Each block of 12-14 barracks had its own mess hall, laundry room, latrines, and showers. Dirt and sand blown by constant winds made cleanliness impossible. As many as seven people—sometimes one family, sometimes more—were quartered in a 20x24-foot room with a coal-burning potbellied stove and one metal cot per person. According to Michi Weglyn, “Evacuees ate communally, showered communally, and defecated communally,” an affront to Japanese culture which prizes both cleanliness and privacy.<sup>9</sup> Medical care was minimal. Diet was inconsistent with

Japanese practice: hash, pork and beans, canned wieners, beans and more beans, no fresh fruits and vegetables.

A recent defense of the camps claims that “military planners and camp residents did the best they could to create decent, self-sustaining communities.”<sup>10</sup> Residents covered rough walls with paper, made homemade quilts to pad rude furniture, and wove rugs on homemade looms from unraveled burlap and gunny sacking dyed with vegetable dyes. Each camp had its own governing committee, nearly always men, and its own newspaper. Residents could work at paid jobs in agriculture, irrigation, manufacturing, medicine, dentistry, education, and small business. They also worked to clear brush, repair canals and roads, and plant gardens. Schools of varying quality were organized for the camp children, staffed by paid teachers and aides as well as volunteers. The schools were careful to incorporate such patriotic elements as the pledge to the American flag of “one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” and the singing of “My country, ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty.” To people like the Japanese-Americans, used to dawn to dusk labor, the enforced leisure was a new experience. Plays and exhibitions were put on and classes were organized in bonkei (miniature landscapes), bonsei (miniature trees), artificial flower making, flower arranging, wood carving, calligraphy, poetry writing, and the traditional tea ceremony. Since no knives were permitted, artists had to make their own tools from wood, stone, and scrap metal. To meet the need for farm labor now that many Caucasians had left the fields for better-paying defense jobs, the government established a seasonal leave program, placing 10,000 Nisei men and women volunteers under military guard in the

sugar beet fields of Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana by mid-October 1942, with other workers volunteering to pick cotton. Farmers were to pay them the prevailing wage.

### **A Proud Nisei Military Unit**

Another opportunity for Japanese-Americans was military service. In September 1940, the first peacetime draft was instituted, and by November 1941, 3,100 Nisei had been inducted. After Pearl Harbor, all servicemen of Japanese descent were reclassified 4-C, ineligible because of ancestry. The War Department discharged half of these in the interest of national security; the remainder were reassigned to noncombatant, non-sensitive duties. Under pressure from Japanese-American leaders, the War Relocation Authority instituted a registration procedure in the fall of 1942 to give Nisei the opportunity to volunteer for military service, providing a two-question loyalty oath which was ambiguous in its intent and provoked resentment and ill will in the camps. Nevertheless, early the next year 2,500 volunteered for the army, the only military branch to accept Nisei. An all-Japanese unit (with Caucasian officers) was formed, the legendary 442nd Regimental Army Combat Team, composed of Hawaiian National Guard members and volunteers from the camps. For its size and length of service, the 442nd became the most decorated unit in the U.S. forces. Fighting in Italy, France, and Germany, they participated in seven major campaigns, suffered 9,486 casualties, were awarded 18,143 individual decorations, and received seven Presidential Distinguished Unit Citations. Some of the alumni of the 442nd went on to become U.S. Representatives and Senators after Hawaii became a state in 1959. One of these, Daniel Inouye,

came back to the U.S. mainland with a Distinguished Service Cross and a hook for an arm, only to be told in a San Francisco barbershop, “You’re a Jap, and we don’t cut Jap hair.”<sup>11</sup> With Germany’s surrender on May 7, 1945, and Japan’s on August 8, the internment camps were dismantled, except for one in Tule Lake (CA) designated for hard-core dissidents.

After the war, the Department of Justice and the FBI reported that there was never any evidence of espionage or sabotage on the part of any Japanese-American citizen. In his memoir, Milton Eisenhower asked, “How could such a tragedy have occurred in a democratic society that prides itself on individual rights and freedoms? How could responsible leaders have made such a fateful decision?”<sup>12</sup> What we had in 1941 was a very human reaction of fear and prejudice that resulted in seeking a scapegoat. Parallels with the McCarthy era and the panic following 9/11 are clear. Now all Muslims and turban-wearers are regarded with fear. Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and other prison camps in the Middle East and the United States have incarcerated “unlawful combatants” in a legal black hole. Economic hard times have fueled a climate of tension, fear, and prejudice, often aimed at immigrants, legal or not. As George Santayana famously admonished, “Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it.” Apparently we are doomed to repeat it over and over again.

## Notes

1. Allen H. Eaton, *Beauty Behind Barbed Wire: The Arts of the Japanese in Our War Relocation Camps* (New York: Harper, 1952).

2. My introduction to America’s internment of Issei and Nissei came in recent years when I read David

Guterson’s moving account in *Snow Falling on Cedars* (New York: Random House, 1995).

3. Quoted in Michelle Malkin, *In Defense of Internment: The Case for “Racial Profiling” in World War II and the War on Terror* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2004), 149.

4. Milton S. Eisenhower, *The President Is Calling* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 100-101.

5. *Ibid.*, 106. Japanese-American faculty and students were expelled from West Coast colleges, some within weeks of graduation. Although administrators tried to place students, inland colleges were resistant. The Quakers provided considerable help with placement of the Nisei.

6. *Ibid.*, 98, 113, 116.

7. Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953).

8. Eaton, 184.

9. Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America’s Concentration Camps* (New York: William Morrow, 1976), 80.

10. Malkin, 104.

11. Robert Asahina, *How Japanese Americans Won a War at Home and Abroad* (New York: Gotham, 2006), 229. Responding to a manpower shortage, Secretary of War Stimson announced on January 20, 1944, that Japanese-Americans were eligible for the draft. Some responded; some resisted.

12. Eisenhower, 124-25.

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# The Keynesian Economic Theory Is Out of Date with a Modern Global Society: A Debate

We vary the Torch tradition by presenting the pro and con sides of a debate proposition, a Youngstown Torch Club tradition. The club assigns a member each to defend and oppose the proposition, whether or not they agree with the assigned position.

By Donald K. Allen and John Fockler Jr.



## About the Authors

Born and raised in Rockford, IL, **Donald Allen** joined the Air Force in 1967, serving as a reporter, photographer, and editor of an award-winning base newspaper in the Philippines, and then in journalism and public relations at George AFB, CA, until his discharge as a staff sergeant in 1971. He began a part-time horseshoeing business in Illinois while earning a BS in animal science and an MS in animal nutrition, working for a year at Chicago's Brookfield Zoo. Earning a BS and DVM at the University of Illinois in veterinary science in the late 1980s, he practiced in that state before moving to Youngstown, where he eventually opened his own busy practice in 1992. He received the Masonic Community Builder's Award in Youngstown and the Distinguished Service Award from the Ohio Animal Health Foundation. Active in the military reserves, Dr. Allen also pursues such interests as marksmanship, archery, skiing, genealogy, philately, photography, scuba diving, taekwondo, and travel.



A 1979 graduate in history from Colgate University, **John Fockler** has made his living for most of the last thirty years in the hotel industry, doing almost every task to be found in a hotel and managing properties in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Fockler has been active in the Libertarian Party for more than ten years, running as a candidate of the party for the Ohio legislature in 2000 and 2010. He currently serves as secretary of the Central Committee of the Libertarian Party of Ohio and as the party's Mahoning County Development Coordinator. A member of Torch since 1999, he is a past president of both the Youngstown and Akron Torch Clubs, remaining active in both. This is his seventh appearance in *The Torch*.

Presented to the Youngstown Torch Club on November 16, 2009.

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The Keynesian Economic Theory Is Out of Date with a Modern Global Society  
**PRO** By Donald Allen

We all know how hard it is to admit you were wrong about something. Right? Now, let's say you spent a lot of time studying and researching a subject, perhaps for a PhD thesis or even a book. Here's an example. About fifteen years ago, a veterinary graduate student wrote his PhD thesis on the premise that dogs and cats didn't suffer from stroke, a strictly human disease. Other animals had what he called "vestibular syndrome," a problem with the middle ear apparatus that created all the central nervous system signs normally attributed to a stroke. Now, hold that thought while I discuss John Maynard Keynes.

The study of economics is relatively new, primarily developing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. British economist John Maynard Keynes published his conclusions on the

subject in 1936 in a book entitled "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money."<sup>1</sup> It soon became one of the most controversial and variously interpreted theories of its time, and has influenced governments' attempts to control their economies ever since. In fact, the current administration is putting all its eggs in Keynes' basket right now. Or, rather, our president is putting all OUR eggs into that basket.

The Federal Reserve System was set up in 1913 to "maintain the stability of the financial system and contain systemic risk that may arise in financial markets," among other things, yet it has never been able to do so. It didn't prevent or control the Great Depression, and it hasn't prevented or solved any of the subsequent recessions, including the one we are in now. Likewise, Mr. Keynes' theory was used by President Roosevelt to end the Great Depression, but it failed miserably. The massive industrial mobilization of World War II is what brought us out of the Depression, not any economic theory. So now we have what we call a "global economy," and a subsequent "Modern Global Society." I've argued that we have had a global economy ever since the first wooden ship left shore with a cargo to trade; it's just that this is done faster and on a much bigger level today. So why should Keynes' economic theory work any better today than it did before? President Obama believes that President Roosevelt simply didn't spend enough money.

Here's Mr. Keynes' theory in a

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nutshell. First, he believed that we should spend all the money we make, or total spending in the economy, termed “aggregate demand.” Now, that’s hard to take. It reminds me of the fable about the grasshopper and the ant. Next, he thought that aggressive government action could stabilize the economy. This is based on his belief that large fluctuations in the economy significantly reduce well-being, and that the government is wise and capable enough to improve on the free market. I guess that means we should trust in the knowledgeable judgment of our elected officials, like House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank (D-MA). Keynes’ solution to a recession or depression is to stimulate the economy by reducing interest rates and having government invest in infrastructure. This is supposed to have a “domino effect” by funding income, which leads to more spending in the general economy, thereby stimulating more production and investment. This is supposed to repeat over and over, so that the end result is a multiple of the initial government investment. Times have changed significantly, however, from the 1930s.

I’ve had a copy of *Fortune* in my office for many years. I think I bought it because it is from the war years, and I’m very interested in World War II. Inside this December 1942 issue was the third in a series of reports “on potential courses for democratic action” after the war was over, assuming at the time that would be in less than two years. Under “The Domestic Economy,” the report discussed “fallacies of debt”:

The commonest objection to a policy of government spending arises from the fear of public debt. To some extent this fear is grounded in a theoretical misapprehension: that public debt is like private debt, and that if the government continually spends more than its income it will go broke or cause inflation....

This analogy is false so long as the productive capacity of the nation is maintained, the debt is internally held, and the government retains its taxing power. For with production flowing, since the interest on the debt is paid to residents of the country, the government can always recover an equivalent sum in taxes, no matter how huge.<sup>2</sup>

Has the productive capacity of our nation been maintained? No, it has mostly gone to China. Is our debt internally held? No, thirty percent of our national debt is foreign-held, with nearly half of that (48 percent) held by China, Hong Kong, and Japan. Has our government retained its taxing power? Yes, but one out of three isn’t good enough. The *Fortune* report goes on to state that some economists urged “a fairly drastic redistribution of income from the saving to the consuming class. The ‘propensity to consume’ is highest in the lowest income groups; therefore, for the sake of stability, let us tax the rich and subsidize the poor.”<sup>3</sup> Sound familiar? We see all around the country signs of our president’s stimulus plan at work, even on billboards that cost \$900 to make and erect. He believes that Roosevelt’s application of Keynes’ theory didn’t work because he didn’t spend enough money. Obviously, he’s taken care of that. Roosevelt thought in millions and billions. Mr. Obama is calling on trillions to do the job. Do you think it will work today?

The assumption of a static economy seems to underlie Keynes’ entire work. I don’t believe he ever ran a business himself, and had no experience with the

“human factor” of the economy. He really didn’t take into account an important ingredient: public trust and confidence. The only people who truly believe that government has all the answers and should run everything are the liberal-socialists. The rest of society, if they know any history at all, realize that socialism is horrible.<sup>4</sup> As Winston Churchill said, “The vice of capitalism is that it stands for the unequal sharing of blessings; whereas the virtue of socialism is that it stands for the equal sharing of misery.”

So, yes, I believe that the Keynesian economic theory is out of date with a modern global society. It is out of date with *any* society outside the halls of academia, and has proven so whenever it was used to solve a recession or depression. Why do some think it will work now?

Remember the theory of “vestibular syndrome?” Well, about ten years ago a group of pathologists, after studying over a thousand post-mortem examinations of dog and cat brains, discovered that animals other than man do, in fact, have strokes. Nevertheless, a whole generation of veterinarians is still telling pet owners that their pet did not suffer a stroke, but instead has vestibular syndrome. Many veterinary colleges continue to promote the theory to this day. And the funny thing is that the treatment we’ve always used for a stroke—anti-inflammatories, antihistamines, and time to heal—seems to cure the problem no matter what you call it.

Even though you’ve proven a theory to be wrong or ineffective, it inevitably persists. Nobody likes to admit they were wrong.

## Notes

1. John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (London: Macmillan, 1936).

2. The Editors of *Fortune*, “The

United States in a New World—A Series of Reports on Potential Courses for Democratic Action,” *Fortune*, December 1942, 6.

3. *Ibid.*, 8.

4. For several decades our children have become ignorant of the lessons of history.

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The Keynesian Economic Theory Is Out of Date with a Modern Global Society  
CON By John Fockler, Jr.

My honorable opponent has argued the case that Keynesian economics is out of date in today’s global society. In the shortest possible terms, Keynesian theory argues that the beautiful simplicity of *laissez faire* economics is insufficient to meet the demands of a complex modern economy.<sup>1</sup> The free market is inconstant, leading to oscillation between peaks and valleys of economic output—between prosperity and recession or depression. According to John Maynard Keynes, the founder for whom the theory is named, when the cycle enters its recession portion, it is necessary to stimulate the economy to push it out of the trough and back toward the peak. The instrument for such stimulation must be government, because no other instrumentality is large enough to do the job. Government must use some combination of interest rate reductions and government investment in infrastructure. The combination injects income, leading to increased spending, which in turn leads to more production and employment. This, so the theory goes, leads into a self-sustaining period in which the income generated by better economic output stimulates even more spending, generating more income, and so on. The implicit idea here is that eventually, this sequence will run its course, eventually a new trough will be entered, and government will stand ready to inject more income.

In a perfect universe of perfect individuals, pure *laissez faire* capitalism could reign. Any lover of freedom would

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prefer absolute liberty without government interference. Certainly, we all understand that in order to inject wealth into the economic cycle, government must obtain it from somewhere, either through taxation, borrowing, or the creation of baseless fiat money. Any of these methods amount to robbing Peter to pay Paul, as government has no wealth of its own. So why would we permit—even advocate—such a policy?

As lovely as pure *laissez faire* capitalism is, it is also inefficient in meeting economic emergency. Contrary to the belief of classical economists, stated as Say’s Law, Keynes believed that aggregate demand for goods and services might be insufficient, during an economic downturn, causing unemployment and reduced economic activity.<sup>2</sup> The marketplace is blind, functioning without regard to human need. In addition, it is unconscionably slow. Of course, we all believe that *in time*, the free marketplace will strike down the ineffective competitor and raise up the superior one. We understand that this process eventually produces increased investment, stable

employment, and improved production. But this is a process that takes time. And time is not always a luxury we can afford.

Modern economies are large and complex. They are the aggregation of tens of millions, or even hundreds of millions, of individual producers and consumers. Such a large body has tremendous inertia, meaning that to move it in a desired direction requires huge force (in the sense the term is used in physics), abundant time, or a combination of both. Without the injection into these economies of coherent force, the modern economy will require months or years to move in the desired direction. This force can only come from government.

We must always remember that economic hardship—recession or depression—is not an abstract occurrence. It is the unemployment or impoverishment of thousands of individuals and families. It is lost homes, repossessed cars, and aborted educations. This is real human suffering. It cannot be ignored. We cannot say to the sufferer, “Don’t worry. Just hang on, and everything will work out in the end.” These people cannot wait.

Further, what happens in any one national economy today cannot occur in isolation. We live, as the call to this debate recognizes, in a Global Society. Every economy in the world is dependent, to a greater or lesser degree, on every other. Nowhere has this been shown more clearly than in the recent events in Ireland and Greece, in which those nations’ fiscally-healthier partners, and international financial institutions, gave billions of Euros to prevent collapse.<sup>3</sup> Even were we to be content to allow our own economy time to right itself through supposed “natural” powers of the free marketplace, the delay could, and most likely would, have serious negative impact on the economies of our trading partners around the world. It is poor global citizenship.



Since some time in 2008, we have seen the American economy enter a serious recession. Some economists have said that the current recession is the worst since the Great Depression of 1929-1939. Unemployment exceeded nine percent for 20 consecutive months through December 2010, even using the statistical system that doesn't include the long-term unemployed in the figures.<sup>4</sup> Due to what many say is a failure of the marketplace and a failure of government to do its duty in regulating sectors of the economy, key players in banking and industry have been to the brink of collapse, rescued only by injections of government dollars.<sup>5</sup> This current Administration, as well as the one preceding it, has moved beyond spending for infrastructure as called for in traditional Keynesian, though, to direct investment in companies and the promotion of targeted consumption, as in the so-called "Cash for Clunkers" program. The stimulus package passed by the Obama Administration is also spending money in the kind of infrastructure improvements that Keynes would have approved. Anyone travelling the freeways lately has seen the signs that indicate that.<sup>6</sup> While unemployment continues to lag, recent indicators show that new applications for unemployment benefits have leveled out, and some economists have marked an expansion in gross domestic product, indicating that the government's policy is beginning to show results.<sup>7</sup>

As indicated before, this economic disruption has spread beyond our shores, affecting the economies of our trading partners. Reduced consumption in the U.S. has cost jobs in China and in other emerging economies that manufacture cheap goods for the domestic market. The disruption of the American economy has threatened our position of leadership in the global economy, and even threatened the position of the dollar as the base currency of world trade. Should the dollar be replaced by the Euro as

the main reserve currency in the world, as some have suggested, or by the creation of a new world fiat currency, as China has suggested, the effect on this country and on our purchasing power could well be monumental.

There is a final danger to economic disruption: political unrest. Simply put, a hungry man will do whatever is necessary to survive. From such desperation are revolutions born, whether in France in the eighteenth century or in Germany in the 1930s. I don't want to be overly dramatic. Our social "safety net" in this country, with its transfer payments to the unemployed and the poor, probably has sufficient assets to hold out for quite some time. Social Security, for instance, is currently estimated to remain solvent until 2037.<sup>8</sup> But that well is not bottomless. If the economy is not put to rights soon, eventually the limits to the safety net will be reached. The longer it takes for a solution to be reached, the more resources must be expended in remedial measures and the less will be available for investment later. The same conditions apply for our partners in the developed world, including those in Europe and Japan. The danger may be more immediate in more fragile economies in the developing world, such as India, Pakistan, or much of Latin America. Sustained recession here may well lead to domestic unrest and the overthrow of governments. Some of these states are known or suspected possessors of weapons of mass destruction. The danger to world peace seems obvious.

We may not like to tinker with the economy as Keynes advocated. It may very well offend our sense of order or rightness. It may require that we sacrifice some of our individual rights as producers and consumers, at least temporarily, for the general good. But it does seem certain that only by mobilizing the awful power of government, as Keynes suggested, can economic depression be addressed in a thorough

and timely fashion.

## Notes

1. "Keynesian economics," *New World Encyclopedia*, [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Keynesian\\_economics](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Keynesian_economics) [accessed January 25, 2011].

2. Ibid. See also John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (London: Macmillan, 1936).

3. Michael Schuman, "Will Ireland's Bailout End the Euro Crisis?" *The Curious Capitalist Blog*, entry posted November 22, 2010, <http://curiouscapitalist.blogs.time.com/2010/11/22/will-ireland%E2%80%99s-bailout-end-the-euro-crisis/> [accessed January 25, 2011].

4. Associated Press, "U.S. Unemployment Rate Falls to 9.4%, Hiring Up," *Detroit Free Press e-Edition*, January 7, 2011, under "Nation/World Business," <http://www.freep.com/article/20110107/BUSINESS07/110107018/0/TEXTCASTER> [accessed January 25, 2011].

5. Jackie Calmes, "TARP Bailout to Cost Less Than Once Anticipated," *New York Times.com*, under "Business Day," [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/01/business/01tarp.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/01/business/01tarp.html?_r=1) [accessed January 25, 2011].

6. U.S. Government, "The Recovery Act," *Recovery.gov Track the Money*, [http://www.recovery.gov/About/Pages/The\\_Act.aspx](http://www.recovery.gov/About/Pages/The_Act.aspx) [accessed January 25, 2011].

7. Sean Kennedy, "U.S. Recovery Facing Strong Headwinds in 2011," *Gather Blog*, entry posted January 10, 2011, <http://www.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474978901190> [accessed January 25, 2011].

8. Lisa Smith, "A Social Security Reality Check," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 3, 2011, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/a/2011/01/03/investopedia5096.DTL> [accessed January 25, 2011].

# A Critical Look at the Ten Commandments

*What was said to be carved in stone may not indeed be appropriate for such display.*

**By William H. Jennings**



## About the Author

After an academic career focusing on America's interactions with her religions, Bill Jennings is now Professor of Religion Emeritus at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA. He holds a BA from Lenoir Rhyne College and a PhD from Yale University. He also graduated from the Lutheran Southern Seminary, serving as a Lutheran pastor early in his career. He has taught at Susquehanna University and at Fudan University in China, as well as at Sheldon Jackson College in Alaska. His recent book *Storms over Genesis* deals with controversies surrounding the biblical creation stories.

Presented to the Lehigh Valley Torch Club on February 4, 2010.



Chief Justice Roy Moore of Alabama had his flash of fame in 2004. He installed in the rotunda of his court building a two-ton granite pillar on which the Ten Commandments were carved. A federal judge ordered the pillar removed, but Judge Moore refused and then was stripped of his office by the unanimous vote of his peers on the Alabama Court of the Judiciary. This stone pillar was last seen in a closet gathering dust.<sup>1</sup> With the opportunity to present a Torch paper, I decided to explore something in the news today that I have never in my career addressed and that would offer me an opportunity to do extended new research.

The Ten Commandments are an icon in American life; they are as

American as apple pie. A 2005 Pew opinion survey found that 74% of Americans support their placement in government buildings and only 22% oppose.<sup>2</sup> Yet the courts will not allow them in many public places. Indeed, our Supreme Court said “no” in one of its two Ten Commandments cases in 2005. Against this negative action by our courts, there is a movement afloat called “hang ten” to get around what the courts say.<sup>3</sup> Commentators speculate that this renewed and intense interest in the Ten Commandments comes about because of a widespread view that we are seeing a deterioration of values in our schools and in our public life. Like Judge Moore, many think the Ten Commandments are the rock upon which our values, both religious and secular, are founded. If God gave them to Moses, they are eternal and deserve our respect, many would say. I wish to argue an alternate view, that the commandments are flawed and do not deserve the respect often afforded them.

## I. How the Commandments Came About

Some of the commandments probably go back to the period of history before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, maybe as early as 1300 BCE. Charlton Heston engraved on the American consciousness an image of Moses coming down a mountain with two tablets, but this is almost certainly a biblical legend. Scholars say that some of the commandments developed in the wilderness during the time of Moses, but others came from later centuries. Scholars have constructed early

possible lists of commandments, sometimes with ten, sometimes even with twelve. The number ten seems to have stuck because that was easiest to memorize on ten fingers. Most scholars see the final ten coming from the time of the prophets or even of the exile. It took many centuries for the commandments to take a final form through the experience of the Hebrew people.<sup>4</sup> To understand these early biblical times, it is helpful to look at what the commandments actually say.

## II. Your Neighbor's Wife and Concerns of Feminists

Look first at the last commandment, as recorded in Exodus, “You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”(Exodus 20:17)<sup>5</sup> The commandments presuppose that wives, along with donkeys and slaves, belong to their husbands. Indeed the commandments were intended for the **men** of Israel, for those bound to a covenant by circumcision.

In a book titled *Standing Again at Sinai*, Jewish feminist Judith Plaskow thinks of going back to the story of Moses and along the way making corrections towards a fair treatment for women.<sup>6</sup> Plaskow notes that as preparation for receiving the Ten Commandments and the other laws, the people of Israel were told “Do not go near a woman.”(Exodus 19:15) The *people* of Israel obviously meant the *men* of Israel. Women did not count. Indeed another feminist asks of the Ten Commandments: “Am I an Addressee?”<sup>7</sup> What has happened

among feminist scholars represents a watershed. Here are scholars who are committed Jews or Christians but who recognize that Judaism and Christianity have done harm to women through the centuries. Most male scholars of any note today take into account the excellent scholarship of those hundreds who identify themselves as feminists. This is especially true in biblical studies, including ways of dealing with the Ten Commandments.

This feminist scholarship prompts us also to look at “You shall not commit adultery.”(Exodus 20:14) Here is a commandment of high ideals but again, it is just for men. Look at the setting. Men sometimes had several wives, the better to produce male children. The command is concerned with a man’s behavior towards another man in the covenant community. Respect your fellow Israelite and his family and he should respect yours! A man having sex with a female slave was OK, along with sex with a single woman as long as she was not betrothed to another man of Israel.

### III. Yahweh-God, Problems of Translation, and Other Concerns

There are other problems with the Ten Commandments, in addition to their negative attitude towards women. There is an often-unrecognized problem with the first commandment, “I am the LORD your God, you shall have no other gods before me.”(Exodus 2:2-3) Christians, Jews, and Muslims say there is only one God, but the Ten Commandments say there are others. The focus today is on a single god, a god with no name except G-o-d. For the Israelites, the focus was on a god with a name, **Yahweh**, a distinctive god with a special holy name and a special relationship with his chosen people, a god different from the other gods.

The commandments begin “I am the

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*most displays of the  
commandments are  
advocated by  
fundamentalist Protestants  
who see this as a way of  
maintaining Christian  
influence in an  
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country.*

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LORD your God” and then say, “You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God.”(Exodus 20:7) The name **Yahweh** in the Hebrew is translated into English as “LORD.” There was a view in early biblical times that a name should always be respected because the name contained something of the god who was being called. If you said “**Yahweh**” the very name contained something of the god **Yahweh**. So one needed to be careful with the name! For this reason people stopped speaking or writing the holy name out of respect for its awesome power. Thus English translations have “LORD” rather than “**Yahweh**.” Most of the time we are unaware of the meaning of the commandment and think that if a worker hits a finger with a hammer and says “God damn it” he or she has violated the commandment. No, a violation involves the special name **Yahweh**.

The translation of two other Hebrew words raise problems. We are familiar with “Do not kill,” but this seems inappropriate for a people who fought wars and used capital punishment and killed regularly with animal sacrifices. Many scholars now prefer “murder”, not “kill”, with “murder” being used in some translations popular today. Judge Moore and most others who wish to post the commandments use the King James version of 1611 which says

“don’t kill”, not an accurate rendering for many scholars!<sup>18</sup> The other problem word is “covet”. “Covet” in English means “want” or “desire”. If that is what it means, the commandment stands against most advertising and most of the capitalist system which is built solidly on human desires. According to scholars, the commandment means more than our English word “covet”, the commandment is about an inappropriate *action* which follows from a desire, an action that would do *harm* to another man of Israel. “Covet” in the commandments is very close to the command not to steal.<sup>9</sup> More could be said about the original meanings of the commandments, but this look at how women were viewed and at the difficulties in moving from the original Hebrew into English is enough to question the assumption that the Ten Commandments are to be followed today.

### IV. The Challenge for Christianity

Christianity today generally embraces the Ten Commandments, but there are problems to address. The long and complicated living tradition in Judaism of dealing with the commandments is not our concern here. Nor are the views of Muslims, who also accept the commandments. Jesus, of course, was a Jewish man and certainly knew the Ten Commandments. But the gospels offer a revealing story. Jesus is asked in the Gospel of Matthew, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”(Matthew 22:36) The term “law” here means the Torah, with its many rules for conduct and worship and which includes many commandments. Later Jewish tradition counts them as 613, which would include our ten. So, Jesus, which is the greatest? He does not choose from the Ten Commandments but substitutes two other so-called “laws”, one from

Deuteronomy and one from Leviticus. Jesus says the greatest is “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”(Deuteronomy 6:4). Then he says a second is like it, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”(Leviticus 19:18) Remarkably, Jesus bypasses the Ten Commandments and focuses on love.

In a time when Jews thought of the laws of the Torah as having been given to Moses on a mountain, the author of Matthew pictures Jesus as a new Moses, giving a new message on a new mountainside in what is called “the sermon on the mount.”(Matthew 5-7) In this sermon of Jesus, we hear some alternate ideas—”you have heard it said, do not murder...but I say to you...; you have heard it said, do not commit adultery...but I say to you...” Jesus says turn the other cheek if attacked, love your enemies, do not lust after a woman who is not your wife, be pure in your heart. This seems to be an alternative list of rules to the Ten Commandments.

But wait! The gospels reveal some ambiguity. Jesus is also reported by Matthew (5:18) to have said that the Torah and all its commandments are important and will not pass away. In another gospel, Mark, Jesus cites approvingly five of the Ten Commandments (do not murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness,... do honor to mother and father) (Mark 10:19). Jesus here shows great respect for this Jewish tradition and does not say “but I say to you”. This tension between rules and love—*do this, don't do that* on the one hand and *have love in your heart* on the other—continues in Christianity to the present day. Much of Judaism was scuttled by the early Christians, but fortunately the Hebrew Bible and much of Judaism was also kept. Christianity accepted the Ten Commandments as

its own, just as Jesus at some points seems to have. We see them at numerous places in Christian history—in St. Augustine, in St. Thomas Aquinas, in Martin Luther’s catechisms, in John Calvin and the Puritans in early America, in today’s Catholic Catechism.

## V. The Ten Commandments in Modern Law

In keeping the commandments, Christians have given them meanings different from their original intent as found in Exodus or Deuteronomy. Christian reinterpretation of the commandments has spilled over into the larger society. This reinterpretation began in early Christianity when Christians began to worship on Sunday. The commandment clearly says to keep the Sabbath day, and Sabbath means the seventh day, Saturday. Christians early considered it appropriate to say Sunday fulfills the commandment. Reinterpretation continues today in the view that the commandments demand monotheism, the commandments demand faithfulness in monogamy, the commandments are for both men and women. Indeed, the commandments as widely understood today differ significantly from the understanding of those early Israelites. They exist in a kind of common law realm, removed from their original intent.

A parallel may be seen in the United States Constitution. Here is a beloved document that originally supported slavery and which was intended only for white men of property. The Constitution, like the Ten Commandments, has been amended a number of times and is today in important ways different from its original intent. Two recent Supreme Court cases involved the Ten Commandments, both in 2005. In the *McCreary* case from Kentucky, the court ruled that the display of the

commandments in two courthouses was unconstitutional because the intent was to promote monotheistic religion. In the *van Orden* case from Texas, the court said that the commandments carved on a six-foot monument on the capitol grounds in Austin could stay because their purpose was historical rather than religious, since the monument was one of 38 items which commemorate important events and factors in Texas history. Four justices voted for the placement of the Ten Commandments in each case, and four justices voted against. Justice Stephen G Breyer voted *against* the Kentucky placement and *for* the Texas placement, so his vote carried the day in both. The court obviously was badly split, five to four, in both cases. The court has given no clear guidance on the issue and there will no doubt be more court challenges in the future.

Interestingly, two weeks after these two opinions, the judges who hold court in the Northampton County courthouse here in Pennsylvania had a meeting to discuss a prominent plaque in the courthouse displaying the Ten Commandments. It could stay, the judges voted unanimously, because the plaque is historical, not religious.<sup>10</sup> The unusual background of the Northampton plaque was a factor, because it was donated in 1955 by the Bethlehem-Easton Jewish communities to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Jews’ arrival in America. By contrast, most displays of the commandments are advocated by fundamentalist Protestants who see this as a way of maintaining Christian influence in an increasingly secular country.

## Conclusion

Public placement of the Ten Commandments is a very complex issue. They are listed differently in two

places in the Bible; which is to be used, Exodus or Deuteronomy? Which translation—would you choose a Jewish version, the “traditional version” which for many means the King James Bible of 1611, or a more contemporary translation where “murder” replaces “kill”? In any case, to display the Ten Commandments means to proclaim that a wife belongs to her husband, which should be unconstitutional in America. And it must always be understood that the commandments proclaim loudly that there is one God to be worshipped, something which increasing numbers of Americans do not agree with.

Not once in my long academic career have the Ten Commandments come up as important. My academic fields, even in retirement, are Christian Ethics and Comparative Religion. I entered graduate school to specialize in Christian Ethics forty-eight years ago, and have for years been involved in a professional organization, The Society of Christian Ethics. In my academic career I often taught college courses in Christian Ethics, and for a time team-taught with a rabbi a course in Jewish and Christian Ethics. For me, professionally and personally, the Ten Commandments have not been and are not important.

Americans seem to like the idea of the Ten Commandments as something solid upon which to base personal and social values. But at the same time, Americans usually do not know them. While one poll showed that 74% of Americans favor placing them in public places, another poll found that fewer than 10% of Americans can name more than four of the ten.<sup>11</sup> And even for those who can name them from memory, we may predict that few know of the problems I have discussed. Americans favor them but do not know them. Clearly, the Ten Commandments do not belong in public places. They are very

complex and best kept within religious communities where their original intent may be understood and their reinterpretation today may be continuously addressed.

### Notes

1. Running for governor in the 2010 Republican Primary, Judge Moore came in fourth.

2. See the results of 1,090 telephone interviews at The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press Poll Database, March 27, 2005, The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, <http://people-press.org/questions/?keywordtext=ten+commandments> [accessed February 3, 2011].

3. Sponsored by the Family Research Council.

4. A good introduction is Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Ten Commandments in Recent Research*, trans. Maurice Edward Andrew (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1967).

5. Here and elsewhere biblical citations are from the *New Revised Standard Version* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

6. Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 24.

7. Brenner, Athalya, “An Afterword: Am I an Addressee?” in Brenner, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Exodus and Deuteronomy* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 255-58.

8. Using “murder” are the NRSV, the New International Version, and the TANAKH. Walter J. Harrelson argues for “kill” in his various works.

9. Martin Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 166.

10. “County to Keep the

Commandments,” *Allentown Morning Call*, July 13, 2005.

11. See results of a 2005 telephone poll of 2,130 respondents in Deanna Swift, “Few Americans Familiar with More than Four of Ten Commandments,” The Swift Report Blog, entry posted June 28, 2005, [http://swiftreport.blogs.com/news/2005/06/poll\\_few\\_american.html](http://swiftreport.blogs.com/news/2005/06/poll_few_american.html) [accessed February 3, 2011].

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# Old Age

*An octogenarian faces the challenges of aging with good cheer and helpful advice.*

**By Nan Graf**



## About the Author

Nan Graf earned her undergraduate degree at Stanford in 1949 and went on to receive an MA in English. A native of California, she taught English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she eventually earned a PhD. Intending to return to California after a short sojourn in Nebraska, she ended up living in Lincoln for the next sixty years, where the warm friendships more than offset the cold winters. From 1965 to 1993 Nan was Professor of English at Nebraska Wesleyan University, and since her retirement has mentored gifted students in the Lincoln Public Schools. She is an active Yoga teacher, crediting her forty-four years of Yoga with healing her from the after-effects of childhood polio.

Presented to the Tom Carroll Lincoln Torch Club on December 21, 2009.

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The subject of old age garners so many negative comments about miserable old lives that I need to regenerate my own spirit and those of my readers by celebrating old people who thrive in spite of the problems or hardships they face. I'm not an expert on old age, but I've learned about it from books, people, and my own old age at 82. I suppose I should define at the outset what I mean by old age. The U.S. government tells us that old age begins at age 65 when we qualify for Medicare and Social Security benefits. Gerontologists have divided old age into two phases: "young old" (ages 65 to

74) and "old old" (ages 75 and after). Thus, I myself am well into "old, old age," as I imagine some readers to be as well.

One's understanding of growing older often gains helpful perspective from books. I am particularly drawn to the memoir of Florida Scott-Maxwell which she composed in her 70s and 80s, titled *The Measure of My Days*, based on daily journaling when she was a young woman living in Scotland with her husband and children, engaged in promoting women's suffrage. Subsequently, after 1933, she began her career as an analytical psychologist influenced by the writings of Carl Jung. "Age puzzles me," she writes in later life. "My seventies were interesting and fairly serene but my eighties are passionate. I grow more intense as I age. To my own surprise, I burst out with hot conviction."<sup>1</sup> I feel drawn to her words about the 80s because I too get worked up about injustice and war, about justice and peace. I've invested in stacks of postcards that I mail frequently to President Obama, sharing with him my passionate outbursts about key issues. It's good therapy for me, but I doubt that Obama ever sees my messages. At times, though, I fantasize that the President says to a staff member: "Oh, here's another card from Nan in Nebraska—send her my regards, and tell her we'll get right on it." Scott-Maxwell says what I've also found to be true since I've arrived at the "old old" stage: "The crucial task of age is balance, a veritable tightrope of balance, keeping just well enough, just brave enough."<sup>2</sup> I would say in addition that I try to strike a balance between solitude

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*I would say in addition that I try to strike a balance between solitude and sociability. I enjoy being alone for my reading and my yoga or for just plain reflection, but I also enjoy seeing my friends and family.*

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and sociability. I enjoy being alone for my reading and my yoga or for just plain reflection, but I also enjoy seeing my friends and family.

French existentialist Simone de Beauvoir's hefty book on aging, translated into English in 1972 as *The Coming of Age*, is thoroughly engrossing and hard to put down.<sup>3</sup> She asserts repeatedly that the reason there are boring old people is that they were boring young people. She made me realize then that the time to prepare for old age is when you're young. But most young people, including me when I was young, wouldn't waste their time preparing for old age, because they're too busy living it up while they're young, with an urgency expressed well by poet Robert Herrick: "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may...." Mainly, Beauvoir objects to a passive role for old people, just as she objected to a passive role for women in her earlier book, *The Second Sex*.<sup>4</sup> She rails against non-old adults who tyrannize over old people, whether in their families or in society.

Always one to stand up for fairness in her youth *or* in her old age, Beauvoir emphasizes the importance of self-determination in the lives of all people.

Studs Terkel's book, *Coming of Age: The Story of Our Century by Those Who Lived It*, records his interviews with seventy people between the ages of 65 and 95, with a dedication "To those old ones who still do battle with dragons."<sup>5</sup> Of special interest to me as a Nebraskan is Terkel's interview of Merle Hansen, a farm activist and an anti-war protester who lived near Newman Brave, Nebraska. Hansen, one of the founders of Nebraskans for Peace, died this year in his nineties. I had the good fortune to sit next to him several times at luncheons or meetings and found him to be a gutsy, well-informed reader with great compassion for the underdog. Hansen shrewdly assesses politicians and political movements in the Terkel interview and especially criticizes President Theodore Roosevelt:

Teddy Roosevelt said these populists should be lined up and shot. He's the one who called Tom Paine a dirty little atheist. . .

Teddy Roosevelt was supposed to be the big trust-buster, which is a bunch of baloney. He was forced to take the position because of pressure from down below.

As for his support of Nebraskans for Peace, he opposed U.S. wars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He explains his philosophy of life simply: "What better thing can you do with your life than to try to build a more just world?"<sup>6</sup>

Although Terkel includes a few famous people in *Coming of Age*, the unknowns of grit, wit, and determination dominate his pages. One of them is Hank Oettinger, a former printer and union activist in Chicago. Oettinger tells

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*My mother grew up in a farm family of nine children. Her siblings who lived to 96, 98, and 103 didn't smoke, but the others did, including my mother, who died of lung cancer. I've found that the good and bad examples from our friends and family help us make wise decisions in our lives.*

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Terkel, "I was automated out of the printing business. I'm one of those automates. I get a very small pension, nothing like we expected when we pioneered in union pensions." Having just turned 80, he spends his time writing Letters to the Editor of major U.S. newspapers; about 1500 letters so far are "aimed at what I feel is injustice." Oettinger ends the interview by saying "There is only one more thing I want to do as the time is running out. I want to win the lottery, buy three ships, man them with American Indians, and send them over to discover Italy."<sup>7</sup>

One of the women I appreciated reading about in Terkel's book is Helen Nearing, widow of Scott Nearing, the famous economics professor who was fired from both the University of Pennsylvania and then Toledo University for his opposition to World War I as well as for his criticism of laissez-faire capitalism. His case became famous as a violation of academic freedom. Nearing explained his firings this way: "That is one of the symptoms of war fever. Those who tell

the truth or try to tell the truth are among the first victims of any war."<sup>8</sup> It is Helen Nearing, however, who is the subject of Terkel's interview; like Scott, she thought "outside the box." Of her marriage to Scott she says, "I was twenty-four and he was forty-five when we met. I had the good sense to recognize his integrity and his greatness, so I latched onto him."<sup>9</sup> In addition to several books Scott and Helen Nearing wrote together, she herself wrote a famous memoir *Loving and Leaving the Good Life*, which tells of her husband's dying by choice at age 100.<sup>10</sup> In the Terkel interview, she tells it like it is: "Scott decided at the age of 100, that was enough. He wasn't sick. He didn't have any aches or pains or anything. His body was tired and he said, 'That's enough.' He stopped eating. I aided and abetted him and he got no food. Three weeks after he reached 100, he left. That is exactly what I will do when I get looser in the head or body."<sup>11</sup> Helen Nearing describes her day to Terkel this way: "I get up early and have an orange or an apple for breakfast. Then I write. . . I'm working on a book now: *Aging and Dying Well*." When asked if she suffered from infirmities, Helen said: "No! I've never been sick. . . . It's not so much diet as spirit. . . . I believe in loving nature and wanting to live in a beautiful place. I was born in New York City, but you can have it. . . . I read and re-read the classics. . . . I listen to music on the radio. I have it tuned to NPR only. I still have no television. . . . I'm a bit of a Luddite. . . . I grow my own food. Vegetables and fruit. I don't eat animals. . . . I own 400 mainly classical records—Bach, Beethoven, Brahms. . . . And even Joan Baez." She lives well on four acres in Maine and misses Scott but manages a good life on her own. As for growing old, she claims "It's a

wonderful process. It's a mellowing and a growing and a completion...." About dying, she says, "I have no fear of dying. None at all." Although she's not religious in the conventional sense, she believes in reincarnation and intends to meet her husband after death.<sup>12</sup>

I'm a fan of two Lincoln writers—Lela Shanks and Mary Pipher—both of whom have increased my understanding of old age. Lela Shanks demonstrates in her groundbreaking book about her husband's battle with Alzheimer's Disease, *Your Name Is Hughes Hannibal Shanks*, that this devastating disease in old age can actually become the opportunity for spiritual growth, not only for the caregiver but for the whole family. Lela's daughter Shela Shanks, a New York lawyer and the third among four children in the Shanks family, records in an appendix to the book the turning point in Hughes's disease: "My father is now beyond the point of calling me by name. Accepting that he has AD has opened the way to a beautiful relationship that has given me greater understanding of the value of human life."<sup>13</sup> Shela's mother Lela Shanks ends the account in the book proper, "Hughes is still my great love."<sup>14</sup> The responses of both Hughes's daughter and his wife remind readers how important LOVE is at any age and any state of health.

Lincolnite Mary Pipher helps navigate what she calls the "emotional terrain of our elders" in her bestselling book, *Another Country*. She especially criticizes the segregation of age groups, suggesting that generations should be "mixed together so that the young can give the old joy and the old can give the young wisdom."<sup>15</sup> Who knows? Pipher's suggestion about integrating rather than segregating the young and the old could fire up a plan for intergenerational housing on college

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*The person who taught me most about old age in a practical way was my dad, who lived to be 87. All his life he loved to exercise; so exercise became a staple in my life from the time I was a little kid. "Let's go for a walk" was Dad's daily mantra; he regularly walked five miles a day until he trimmed it to a mile a day at age 85.*

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campuses. How about a young-old housing mix in the dormitories on our universities' campuses, with alternating floors for young and old?

Many other fine writers discuss old age either briefly or in detail, but I chose the writers whose books led me to fresh ways of thinking about old age. In addition to insights garnered from books, I've benefited from the words or examples of people I've known. Although she didn't make it to old age, dying instead at 51 when I was 21, she did show me how to live bravely and to die well, illustrating in her life what Robert Louis Stevenson wrote: "The best of health is to be able to get along without it." My mother explored spirituality during her two-year dying process and helped me prepare for loss (without actually telling me what she was doing). She also tried to nudge me on a spiritual path of my own and often advised me to start building up my inner resources. However, I didn't mind my mother until I was about 70, but better late than never. Now I know the importance of the "Kingdom within," the

"Buddha within," and the "Guru within." Or, as East Indian philosopher Krishnamurti put it at the end of an all-day conference in the 1970s at the University of Nebraska: "Be your own Guru."

The person who taught me most about old age in a practical way was my dad, who lived to be 87. All his life he loved to exercise; so exercise became a staple in my life from the time I was a little kid. "Let's go for a walk" was Dad's daily mantra; he regularly walked five miles a day until he trimmed it to a mile a day at age 85. During a sabbatical from Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1980-81 I did research for building a Peace Course at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where my dad and stepmother had retired. One day when I was driving Dad to his annual doctor's appointment, I said to him, "Today I'd like to ask your doctor about all the pills you take—to see if he can eliminate some of them." No shrinking violet, Dad said immediately, "Now I'd say that's none of your business. I'm a walking pharmacy, but it's better than pain!" Then he added, "When you're in your eighties, you can do whatever you want to do. But I'm in charge of my life!" I know from his example and from my own experience, as well as from books, that self-determination in old age is at the top of the "to do" list.

After my mother died, I went to stay with my paternal grandparents for part of the summer in Sioux City, Iowa, and they introduced me to Grandpa James, then 92, who had just lost his beloved wife of many years the year before, and we became kind of grieving buddies. His form of therapy was a brisk walk every morning, and he invited me to join him. Apparently, I used Grandpa James as the shoulder to cry on and even as my personal psychologist, though he



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*Lincolnite Mary Pipher helps navigate what she calls the “emotional terrain of our elders” in her bestselling book, Another Country. She especially criticizes the segregation of age groups, suggesting that generations should be “mixed together so that the young can give the old joy and the old can give the young wisdom.”*

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was a bricklayer by trade, because one day he told me in his cockney accent: “Dearie, never feel sorry for yourself unless you have to eat Roast Rat for Christmas dinner.” The most unforgettable line of my life! Grandpa James had grown up poor in the London slums. One year before Christmas, his mother had sent her sons into the London sewers to kill rats for Christmas dinner. He left England for the United States when he was sixteen and vowed never to eat Roast Rat again. He died in his sleep at age 103 without ever being sick. I used his story to remind me and my children not to complain and to be grateful for what we have.

My mother grew up in a farm family of nine children. Her siblings who lived to 96, 98, and 103 didn’t smoke, but the others did, including my mother, who died of lung cancer. I’ve found that the good *and* bad examples from our friends and family help us make wise decisions in our lives. For instance, I don’t smoke, given the statistics regarding old age in my own family. It’s important to remember, though, that

people age differently from birth to death, depending on their circumstances. Genetics, individual problems, individual potential, and lifestyle all matter in the mix of things. A positive life view may help, whether from religion or philosophy; being at peace with one’s inner self bolsters old people because most of them spend more time alone than in earlier years.

I’ll close with survival advice from baseball great Satchel Paige:

1. Avoid fried meats which angry up the blood.
2. If your stomach disputes you, lie down and pacify it with cool thoughts.
3. Keep the juices flowing by jangling around gently as you move.
4. Go very light on the vices, such as carrying on in society. The social ramble ain’t restful.<sup>16</sup>

#### Notes

1. Florida Scott-Maxwell, *The Measure of My Days* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 13.
2. *Ibid.*, 36.
3. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Coming of Age* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1972).
4. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953).
5. Studs Terkel, *Coming of Age: The Story of Our Century by Those Who Lived It* (New York: The New Press, 1995). Terkel himself was 83 when this book came into print; he even wrote more after that until he died in 2008 at the age of 96.
6. *Ibid.*, 125, 127.
7. *Ibid.*, 417, 419.
8. Scott Nearing, *The Making of a Radical: A Political Autobiography* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1972), 101.
9. Terkel, 449.

10. Helen Nearing, *Loving and Leaving the Good Life* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1992).

11. Terkel, 447.

12. *Ibid.*, 449-50. Helen Nearing died in an automobile accident at age 95.

13. Lela Knox Shanks, *Your Name Is Hughes Hannibal Shanks: A Caregiver’s Guide to Alzheimer’s*, with a foreword by Steven H. Zarit (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), appendix, “Reflections from Others in Hughes’s Family,” 173. Because of this book’s ongoing popularity, the University of Nebraska Press has since released it in paperback.

14. Shanks, 156.

15. Mary Pipher, *Another Country: Navigating the Emotional Terrain of our Elders* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999), 312.

16. Satchel Paige, “Maybe I’ll Work Forever,” *AARP Bulletin*, April 2007, 15.

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# World's Greatest Pirate

*From the 1700s in East Asia comes the remarkable story of a maritime manipulator of politics and trade.*

**By C. Walter Clark**



## About the Author

C. Walter Clark is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Drake University, where he taught for 35 years prior to retirement in June 1998. He earned his PhD at Indiana University with the support of a National Defense Education Act fellowship in Asian Studies. Teaching and research subjects include Russia and the Middle East, as well as a long-standing interest in East Asia. He spent four months in Taiwan in the late 1950s and most recently visited the People's Republic of China in 2005. A Torch member since 1992, Walter received the Paxton Award in 1995.

Presented to the Des Moines Torch Club on February 10, 2010.



Mid-seventeenth-century East Asia provides the historical and geographical backdrop for the interesting exploits of one who can well be described as the world's greatest pirate. Despite its central location in the region, Japan took itself out of the story with its policy of isolation in those years. On the other hand, China, along with the migration of settlers from its Fujian province to the nearby island today known as Taiwan, provided the essential theater for this fascinating tale. A review of these three societies will set the stage for our adventure.

## Japan

At the dawn of the seventeenth

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*Under the Shogunate system, from its establishment early in the seventeenth century to well into the nineteenth century, Japan existed in self-imposed isolation. This decision for isolation came at exactly the time when European intrusion in East Asia was building; Japan's isolation was not only deliberate but was meant to be complete.*

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century in East Asia, Japan was advancing steadily toward unification as feudal Japan was becoming pre-modern Japan. In feudal Japan power was vested in the hands of daimyo, feudal barons, who wielded absolute power in their own domains and frequently warred with each other. Movement toward unification emerged in western feudatories, directed by a succession of three capable military leaders. The last of these, Tokugawa Iyeyasu, established himself as Shogun, or military dictator, in a unified and centralized feudal state. He constructed a highly fortified new capital on the coast

of the rich Kanto plain at Edo, known today as Tokyo. Under the Shogunate system, from its establishment early in the seventeenth century to well into the nineteenth century, Japan existed in self-imposed isolation. This decision for isolation came at exactly the time when European intrusion in East Asia was building; Japan's isolation was not only deliberate but was meant to be complete.

Portuguese landed in Japanese territory as early as 1542 and in 1557 were established at Macao, off China's southern coast. The Dutch established a trading post in Japan in 1609, securing trading rights from the Shogunate. Already by the early 1620s Western access to Japan became more restrictive, and soon it was prohibited. The new foreign relations policy was called Sakoku ("Locked Country"). A seclusion decree issued by the Shogunate in Edo to bakufu (government) authorities and to the governor at Nagasaki, the chief foreign trade port of the day, illustrates the completeness of the isolation sought by the Japanese leaders:

1. It is strictly forbidden for any vessel without a valid license to leave Japan for a foreign country.
2. No Japanese subject may leave for a foreign country in any vessel without a valid license.
3. Japanese subjects who have resided abroad shall be put to death if they return to Japan. Exception is made for those who have resided abroad for less than five years and have been unavoidably detained.

They shall be exempt from punishment, but if they attempt to go abroad again they are to be put to death.

While Japan was not completely isolated under Sakoku, strict regulations limiting commerce and foreign relations were in place, and it was clear that Japan would not be a major player in the dramas unfolding in East Asian waters in the seventeenth century.

### China

At the dawn of the seventeenth century the empire of China, under the dynastic name Ming, was, in the words of historian Jonathan Spence, “the largest and most sophisticated of all unified (political) realms on earth.”<sup>1</sup> It is only with the advantage of hindsight, however, that we can know that the Ming Dynasty in this period was, in fact, past its peak when, as Spence writes, a “dangerous unraveling was at hand.” Internal disorder was on the rise. In key cities silk weavers went on strike, riots broke out, houses were burned to the ground, and local tyrants emerged—in some cases to be seized by irate mobs and lynched.<sup>2</sup> Orderly government under direction of Chinese officials had given way to illegitimate local tyrannies and even mob rule. The imperial court in Beijing was increasingly isolated, its ruler—the Son of Heaven—remaining secluded in the inner recesses of the “Forbidden City.”

The long life of the Ming dynasty featured a few quite dramatic shifts in foreign policy. Early in the dynasty, in the years between 1405 and 1433, a grand eunuch admiral named Zheng He, under authority of the royal court, made seven voyages seeking trade and exotica from places as far away as Africa. China seemed on the verge of discovering a sea route to Europe before Europe discovered a sea route to

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China. But those voyages were abruptly cancelled. Fiscal difficulties and opposition of Confucian-trained scholar-officials, who opposed trade and foreign contact on principle, were the chief causes. Huge “treasure ships,” as the enormous Chinese vessels were called, were destroyed and shipyards at Nanjing shut down.<sup>3</sup> Chinese boats were permitted to operate only within a two- to three-mile limit, and their design made the law workable. They were small flat-bottomed boats, good for fishing but for little else. These restrictive policies were in place when Portuguese and Dutch vessels first arrived in Chinese waters, and they were in place when Manchu forces seized Beijing in 1644.

The Manchus, occupying what are today China’s three northeastern-most provinces once commonly referred to as Manchuria, were originally of Jürchen stock, tribal herdsmen who, after many years living in close proximity to Chinese culture, were eventually transformed, or Sinicized, by the experience. The life of their leader, Nurhachi, illustrates this transformation. Born in 1559 to a noble Manchu family, he traveled to Beijing as a youth to pay ritual homage to Ming rulers and also to trade, ultimately receiving honorific Ming titles. In the 1590s, when Japanese forces threatened Korea, Nurhachi assisted Ming armies in repelling the invaders. In 1610, however, Nurhachi suddenly broke relations with the Ming on the grounds that they had humiliated him and had tried to wreck his economic base. Over the next ten years, Nurhachi extended his domain. In the west, he subdued Mongol tribes then incorporated them into his realm. To the south, he seized the Liaodong Peninsula, suppressing Chinese rebels who had organized against Manchu incursions.

Upon Nurhachi’s death in 1626, he was succeeded by one of his sons, five-year-old Hong Taiji, with a Manchu nobleman, Prince Dorgon assuming real power as Regent. Under Dorgon’s leadership, the long-standing process of the Sinification of Manchu culture continued, and the Manchu military apparatus grew in size and strength. In 1636, Dorgon announced the establishment of a new dynasty called Qing, meaning “pure.” Now there existed two imperial dynasties, the Ming and the Qing, both claiming possession of Heaven’s mandate to rule. Manchu territorial expansion slowed after 1642. Again and again, Ming garrison forces at the capital repulsed Manchu troops. But in 1644, a new challenge to the

Ming emerged in the figure of an ambitious Chinese rebel named Li Zicheng, who also claimed to found a new dynasty. So in 1644, the Ming court confronted enemy armies to the west, the forces of Li Zicheng, and Manchu armies to the north.

Li's forces were first to enter the capital, but they did not remain for long. When Li's effort to collaborate with the Manchu failed, his undisciplined troops looted the capital and fled to the west. Shortly thereafter, also in 1644, Manchu forces occupied Beijing. The reigning emperor hanged himself, but many members of the imperial family fled south. Until recently most historians of China, both in the west and in China, marked the death of the Ming dynasty in 1644, when the court was driven from the capital. Traditional Chinese historians writing at the end of the nineteenth century did so in accordance with the ancient theory of the Dynastic Cycle, the endless rise and fall of dynasties as determined by a passing of Heaven's Mandate from one ruling house to another, as described in this traditional account from late in the Qing years:

Thus amidst bloodshed and disorder the Ming power vanished before its conqueror. It at first owed its rise to the same unhappy forces that finally caused it to disappear. We have no pity for the family that has just fallen. It had never proved by its purity or statesmanship that it had a divine commission to rule the empire. As the years went by it showed by its reckless and lavish expenditure of the revenues of the country, and by the licentious habits that turned the palace into a pandemonium, that it was unfitted for its high position. It fell as other dynasties did before it, because of the inherent want of moral qualities,

without which no power will ever be long tolerated by a people like the Chinese, who demand so high an ideal in their sovereign.<sup>4</sup>

Pursued by Manchu troops, the Ming Court fled southwest eventually reaching Burma, where they were seized by authorities and returned to China's Yunnan Province. There, in 1662, the last Ming emperor and his son were executed. Others loyal to the Ming fled to the southeast coast provinces of Zhejiang and Fujian where they too held out until 1662. Historian Lynn Struve refers to the years 1644 to 1662 as the era of the "Southern Ming."<sup>5</sup> These are also the years of special importance to any who would undertake to learn about the world's greatest pirate.

### **Dutch Settlements in Taiwan**

Some hundred miles off the east coast of Mainland China, the island of Taiwan extends 245 miles long and 89 miles wide, with steep mountains covered by tropical and subtropical vegetation. Before my "world's greatest pirate" took an interest in Taiwan, the island was visited by the Portuguese and the Dutch. The Portuguese visited in 1590, naming the island "Formosa," which means beautiful island; but the Portuguese moved on, and in 1663 the Dutch established a colony at Tainan, on the island's southwest coast. At the same time western colonial powers were taking an interest in Taiwan, the island became important in Ming China. The first great wave of Han Chinese settlers, approximately 100,000, migrated to Taiwan from Fujian Province between 1624 and 1644, a time of political, social, and economic disorder on the Mainland. In this migration lies the beginning of a question in Taiwan that persists to the present: Are the Taiwanese of Chinese descent, speaking a dialect virtually identical to

that of Fujian Province in China, to think of themselves primarily as Taiwanese or Han Chinese?

### **The Pirate Kingdom**

The geographic and historical stage is now set to consider the role the world's greatest pirate plays in my story. China's sea kingdom under the control of Zheng Zhilong and then his son, Zheng Chenggong, takes center stage.<sup>6</sup> Zheng Chenggong was better known by his epithet "Guoxingye" ("Lord of the imperial surname"), bestowed on him by Prince Tang, who was proclaimed successor to the Ming Dynasty throne in 1645 with Zheng's help. "Guoxingye" was transmogrified by the Dutch to "Coxinga" or sometimes "Koxinga." The extensive sea kingdom domain that came to be controlled by Zheng Chenggong included the eastern seaboard of China south of Japan to and including the Taiwan Strait. Zheng's father, Zheng Zhilong, was active in maritime trade—often indistinguishable from piracy. Goods traded were usually purchased in one place then sold in another, but sometimes goods were confiscated and transported elsewhere to be sold. Controlling sea routes sometimes meant eliminating competitors and/or protecting one's vessels from pirates. Japanese pirates, for example, continued to practice their craft after Japan officially isolated itself. Zheng Zhilong possessed a large fleet, certainly in excess of 1,000 ships. He married a Japanese woman whose family name was Tagawa, future mother of Guoxingye, and later took a second wife, a Chinese woman, who gave birth to a son in 1642.

Zheng Chenggong (Guoxingye) lived his first seven years in Japan in the care of his mother. When he was eight years old his father brought him and his mother to Quanzhou, a city in Fujian

Province, where he studied with tutors following what we may surmise was a traditional— that is, Confucian— curriculum, enrolling at the Imperial Nanjing University, the premier university of the Ming Dynasty. Both father and son, Zheng Zhilong and Zheng Chenggong, were Ming loyalists. Manchu leaders who seized Beijing in 1644 were keenly aware of the father's vast naval resources and his control of key coastal ports, and rightly considered him to be a potential and powerful source of opposition. The Qing court sent envoys to Zheng Zhilong, offering him official positions and honors if he would surrender. To the chagrin of his son, he agreed and handed himself over to Qing forces in Fuzhou in November 1646. Zheng Chenggong, the son, persisting in his loyalty to the Ming, gathered ships under his immediate command and secured bases on the coast of Fujian and in the Pescadores, an island chain in the Taiwan Strait. Operating principally out of Xiamen (today Amoy), on the coast of Fujian Province, Zheng Chenggong proved himself to be a talented military leader, in a few months attracting large numbers of men to his cause. Using the superiority of his naval forces, he launched raids on Manchu-occupied territory in Fujian, seizing control of two of the province's prefectures early in 1647.

But in the spring of 1647 the Manchus counterattacked, storming the Zheng family's hometown of Anping where Chenggong's mother, Tagawa, resided. Rather than submit to capture, according to some traditional accounts, she committed suicide. In spite of this setback, by 1650 Zheng Chenggong was sufficiently strong to establish himself as the leader of the Zheng family. He declared loyalty to the only remaining claimant to the throne of the

Ming Dynasty, who with a ragtag entourage was in southwest China in flight from Manchu forces. A costly last-ditch attempt to save the court failed, and Zheng concluded he could do nothing more to rescue it. He decided instead to concentrate on securing his own position on the southeast coast.

In 1651 and 1652, Zheng Chenggong enjoyed a series of military successes, increasing the Qing government's anxiety about the threat he posed. The rebel was invited to negotiate. It was the same strategy the Qing had applied in dealing with Zheng's father, who joined in the effort by writing to his son from Peking, urging him to negotiate and to lay down his arms, joining him in Peking as an "honorable prisoner." Rewards, titles, and honors were offered in long series of negotiations between Zheng Chenggong and the Manchus, ending only in 1654. Some sources suggest Zheng Chenggong negotiated in good faith; others argue that it was a ploy, a successful effort to buy time to further develop his army and navy.

In the end the Manchus lost patience. Prince Jidu was appointed to lead a major assault against Zheng's territory. On May 9, 1656, Jidu attacked Jinmen, an island just off the coast of Fujian Province, which Zheng used to train his forces. Thanks in part to a major storm, the Manchus were decisively defeated, losing most of their fleet of five hundred ships. Now that the Manchus were temporarily without an effective naval force in the Fujian area, Zheng was free to send a huge army north to Zhoushan, which he seized and then used as a staging area for launching his most ambitious project, an assault on Nanjing. When that assault failed, Zheng's army was obliterated.

Driven from the mainland, Zheng

depended solely on his huge fleet, which, though unchallengeable in the waters off China's southeast coast, lacked necessary land bases. He turned his attention to Taiwan, at the time under the control of Dutch colonialists. In 1661, Zheng Chenggong led his forces in a massive amphibious assault on the island. A German mercenary serving the Dutch recalled the invasion: "As... the fog lifted we perceived such a fleet of ships, Chinese junks lying in the sea... that we could not even estimate their numbers much less count them."<sup>7</sup> The assault on what the Dutch called Fort Zeelandia was successful. On February 1, 1662, the Dutch Governor of Taiwan surrendered the fort to Zheng Chenggong, whom the Dutch knew as Guoxingye. Ending thirty-eight years of Dutch rule, Guoxingye set about making Taiwan into an effective base for anti-Qing sympathizers desirous of restoring the Ming Dynasty to power. Unfortunately, Zheng Chenggong died of malaria later that year at the age of 37. The "Southern Ming" dynasty breathed its last in 1661, the year before our pirate hero Guoxingye died, but the dream of a Ming restoration endured a little longer, until 1683. In that year, the regents of Guoxingye's grandson surrendered to the Qing Dynasty, at which time Taiwan became a prefecture of Fujian Province. Some years later, the administrative status of Taiwan was elevated when it became a province of the Qing Empire.

## Conclusion

Guoxingye is a remarkable historical figure. Trained in seafaring and in piracy by his father, he built and manned an enormous fleet of ships by 1644, the year Manchu forces seized Beijing and made it the capital of a new dynasty, the Qing. He remained loyal to the Ming court and invested heavily

in an effort to restore its authority and power, an effort that ultimately failed. His pirate fleet consisted of more than 1,000 ships with manpower in the hundreds of thousands. He enjoyed many successes in battle on land and at sea, successes ending finally in disaster in the costly lost effort to seize Nanjing in 1656. His final manifestation of loyalty to the Ming was the capture of Taiwan and the establishment there of a haven for Ming loyalists.

Stories of his achievements, his victories and his defeats, and especially of his intense loyalty have kept his memory alive. Late Qing Dynasty historians writing *The Imperial History of China* acknowledged the “celebrated Coxinga,” who rejected his father’s surrender to the Qing and, instead, set sail to commence “that system of warfare which has made his name so famous in the history of that period.”<sup>8</sup> Three hundred fifty years after his death, Guoxingye continues to be honored. In coastal Mainland China, especially in Fujian Province, in Taiwan, and among overseas Chinese throughout Southeast Asia, he is worshipped as if a god. There is a temple dedicated to Guoxingye and his mother in Tainan City, Taiwan. The stage play *Battles of Coxinga*, by Chikamatsu Monzaemon, was first performed in Kyoto, Japan, in the eighteenth century. A movie about his life called *Zheng Chenggong, 1661*, starring actor Zhao Wenzhuo as Coxinga, was released in 2001. Its English title was *The Sino-Dutch War of 1661*, but it was re-titled *The Battles of Coxinga* after a 2002 revival of Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s play.

Reasons for continuing to celebrate Coxinga’s memory vary from place to place, from Japan to Mainland China to Taiwan. In all three places he is held in esteem, but for different reasons.

During Japan’s long occupation of Taiwan, from 1895 to 1945, Coxinga was honored largely because of his maternal link to Japan. His mother was Japanese, and so by honoring Coxinga the Japanese sought to build a bridge of sorts between Taiwan and Japan, simultaneously legitimizing Japan’s occupation. In the People’s Republic of China he is considered a hero principally because he expelled the Dutch from Taiwan, thus establishing Mainland China’s claim to the island. It is a claim that Beijing strongly asserts today, and the story of Coxinga is used to confirm it. Many Taiwanese view Coxinga as a hero because he stood firm against the Qing Dynasty after 1644, making him a desirable model for those seeking today to retain independence from the Mainland. One basic divide in contemporary Taiwanese politics is that between those who advocate reunion with the Mainland and those who prefer independence. Coxinga is an important historical symbol for the latter.

From each of these three perspectives Coxinga is a hero. Perhaps no other pirate has enjoyed such widespread acclaim. He is unique, both in terms of the extent to which his memory is honored and in terms of the vastness of his kingdom, geographically and in numbers of ships and men. Defined not so much by a flashy sword and tricorne hat as by his success as an independent sea warrior, Coxinga was indeed the world’s greatest pirate.

#### Notes

1. Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1990), 7-9.
2. *Ibid.*, 15.
3. For a full account of the voyages of Zheng He, see: Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne,*

*1405-1433* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

4. J[ohn] Macgowan, comp., *The Imperial History of China, Being a History of the Empire as Compiled by the Chinese Historians* (1906; repr. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1997), 517.

5. Lynn A. Struve, *The Southern Ming, 1644-1662* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

6. Details of the life of Zheng Chenggong are taken from Donald Keene’s *The Battles of Coxinga* (London: Taylor’s Foreign Press, 1951) and Jonathan Clements, *The Pirate King: Coxinga and the Fall of the Ming Dynasty* (Phoenix Mill, United Kingdom: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2004).

7. Keene, 56.

8. Macgowan, 522.

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## **Call to Annual Business Meeting and Torch Convention–Hagerstown, MD–June 23-26, 2011**

*Thursday, June 23:* 3:00pm Officers' Exchange; 4:00pm Business Session I; 5:30pm Dinner & Torch Paper #1

*Friday, June 24:* 8:45am Business Session II; 10:00am Torch Paper #2; 11:15am Cafeteria Lunch & Tours; 5:00pm Bus to Country Club for Dinner & Silver Awards, then to Museum for Blues Concert

*Saturday, June 25:* 10:00am Torch Paper #3; 11:15 Lunch & Tours; 6:00pm Banquet, Gold Awards, Paxton Paper

*Sunday, June 26:* 7:30am Breakfast; 8:00 Interfaith Dialogue; 9:00 Torch Paper#4; 10:30 Business Session III

### **2011 Torch Convention Highlights**

Thursday, June 23–Torch Paper #1

*Divided Loyalties* – presented by Edwin Itnyre. Ed earned his BS and JD degrees from George Washington University and spent his career in the Federal Executive Service. A member of Torch since 1997, in retirement he has pursued an interest in the Civil War, concentrating on understanding the divided loyalties of a border state.

Friday, June 24–Torch Paper #2

*A Community's Response to the Influenza Epidemic of 1918* – presented by Melinda Marsden. Mindy earned her BA from Bucknell University and an MBA from Frostburg University. She has been a member of Torch since 1997, and is the retired Executive Director of the Washington County Historical Society. Her paper, culled from newspaper accounts of the time, takes the measure of a community by its response to a crisis.

Saturday, June 25 – Torch Paper #3

*The Washington County Museum of Fine Arts* – presented by Rebecca Massie Lane. Rebecca earned her BA and MA degrees in Art History from the University of Virginia and previously served as Director of the Sweet Briar College Museums and Galleries. She has been Director of the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts since 2008.

Sunday, June 26 – Torch Paper #4

*Washington County Fossils* – presented by R. Alan Hedges. Alan earned his PhD from Ohio State University. He taught theater arts, directed over 100 plays from the Greek Classics to Avant-garde, and has written numerous One-Act plays. His paper addresses an avocation – fossils (including a discussion of plate tectonics, the geologic time line, and the process of turning a plant or animal into a fossil background), focusing on his fossil-findings in Washington County, MD. Alan has been member of Torch since 2002.

## **“A Border State Perspective”**

### **2011 Int'l Torch Convention Hagerstown, MD June 23-26**

#### Registration Form

Paid by February 1, 2011 \$320/person

Paid by May 1, 2011 \$330/person

Paid **After** May 1, 2011 \$350/person

#### **Partial Registration upon request:**

Contact Jim Marsden

***Make check payable to:  
Hagerstown Torch Club***

***Mail check to:  
James Marsden  
19570 Leitersburg Pike  
Hagerstown, MD 21742***

*Please use one form per person*

Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name on Badge: \_\_\_\_\_

Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Torch Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Hotel Reservations are not included in registration fee.**

Make reservations directly with the  
Hagerstown Hotel and Convention Center  
1910 Dual Highway  
Hagerstown MD 21740  
(301) 790-3010

[www.hagerstownhotelandconventioncenter.com](http://www.hagerstownhotelandconventioncenter.com)

Room rate \$77 + tax: king, queen, double  
(Convention rate is available for extended stay)

**Further convention information is  
available at [www.torch.org](http://www.torch.org)**

### **TOUR CHOICES**

(Please select **One** for each day)

Friday, June 24

#### **Antietam National Battlefield**

Site of the bloodiest day of the Civil War, this bucolic vista is devoid of the commercial intrusions found at other battlefields. The monumental effort by both forces to end the war at Antietam only led to the war's extension.

Or

#### **Downtown Hagerstown**

Miller House, home of the county Historic Society, is the starting point for this inside view of Hagerstown's cultural treasures.

Saturday, June 25

#### **Fort Frederick**

The largest surviving stone fort in the United States, built in anticipation of the French and Indian War but never used. This jewel of a Colonial Fort was restored by the CCC and government programs and became Maryland's first state park.

Or

#### **Historic Homes of Washington County**

Patricia Schooley, Author of *Architectural & Historic Treasures of Washington County Maryland* will lead a tour of three of the homes featured in the book.

In conjunction with the IATC Convention June 23-26, 2011, the Hagerstown Torch Club is sponsoring a BOOK FAIR so that Torch members attending the convention may display books they have authored. The Fair will be an integral part of the convention, giving authors the opportunity to discuss their books with fellow members. In addition, on Sunday afternoon following the convention, the public will be invited in to enjoy the same experience

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## *Reflections*

*One is always  
responsible for what one  
makes of  
what is made of one.*

–Jean-Paul Sartre,  
interview, c. 1979

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