

Intentions not enough

We human beings like to feel good about ourselves. We try and fail, we try again, and through it all, we harbor the idea that as long as we *mean well*, things will be "OK." After all, why else would our perennial phrase for the excusability of failure be, "I'm only human?"

But are good intentions really morally sufficient?

Aristotle would be the first to remind us that good intentions are not enough—that compassion without knowledge will do more harm than good, and that knowledge without compassion is nothing more than self-serving. Only in the combination of knowledge and compassion will wisdom be achieved and true good enacted in society.

Therein lies the rub, however. Motives may be pure, but has the individual's knowledge brought him or her to the correct conclusion? Is the course of action a right one? Hell's road may be paved with good intentions not only because those intentions were *not* realized, but in some cases because they *were*.

I have pointed out in the past, as G.K. Chesterton before me, that it is precisely on the "right solution," enacted from "pure motives," that people disagree the most strongly. How can one determine which action is right?

The late songwriter Rich Mullins has an insight here: "Because I grew up in Indiana, in the Protestant tradition, in fact in the Quaker tradition—that had a lot to do with biasing me. . . I need to be aware of what my perspective is, so I can both appreciate it and be a little distrustful of it."

An individual's perspective, whether cultural, political, or spiritual, is inherent to that person, which is not necessarily bad: people need a reference point for judgment. It's impossible to make decisions in a vacuum. Perspective, then, is a tool, to be used wisely.

And so we arrive back at our old question: by what standard do we judge behavior to be moral or immoral, right or wrong? Is there an

THE ALTAR OF AN UNKNOWN GOD

JOEL P. SHEMPERT
Copy Editor



Absolute on which to stand?

Many begin from the principle, "Do harm to no man." I would even further refine this idea to encompass the Golden Rule: "Treat others the way you would like to be treated." This is the essence of love—not only avoiding harmful actions but also actively seeking helpful ones.

At this point I must again ask, "What about good intentions?" As long as I *try* to help, as long as I *mean well*, is my conscience clear?

I must answer no. Actions that lead to harm, even unintentionally, are wrong. If I do not, through *wisdom* (knowledge combined with compassion), do all I can to avoid this harm, I have not done all I can in love.

Solomon, in his Proverbs, asserted that "There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." This is why I am grateful to have a reference to a perspective higher than my own when making the big decisions of life. My perspective is imperfect. My perspective is incomplete. I see truth "through a glass, darkly."

In other words, I don't have all the answers, but I know Who does. I know it's awfully Judeo-Christian of me to keep bringing up the Biblical perspective, but this is the anchor that helps to keep my good intentions from drifting toward disaster. *I show you a more excellent way.*

To Whom it May Concern:

The idea expressed in *The Clackamas Print* about de-commissioning the public safety officers is not only foolhardy, but seems to be putting the students safety second to cost.

There are several reasons to keep the officers we have now. First and foremost is the physical presence and training the officers already have. I am currently a security officer and shift leader for Mall 205 Security. I have seen personally the difference between how civilians/students react to both security officers and police/commissioned officers. The reactions are 180° different. The reaction to security officers is "Yeah right this is only a civilian with a crackerjack badge," and the reaction to police/commissioned officers is "OK, this officer can give a ticket/arrest me, I better comply."

The visibility of the officers is a factor also. There is no one more professional looking or more welcoming in a serious situation than an officer of the law. Many would argue against it, but the drugs, violence, and general peaceful attitude maintained against (drugs/violence) and maintained (peacefulness) are due to these officers. The people least wanted (i.e. drug pushers, speeders, burglars) are kept away due to them.

I implore, whichever committee is in charge of this decision to rethink getting rid of "our" officers. I feel safer with them here.

Respectfully,
Dennis Knight



Making money off of fears

Last week, I walked out to my car in the middle of the day, and watched as a group of people circulated through the parking lot placing fliers on windshields.

Smurfing one off of the nearest windshield, I had my eyes assaulted by the garish green color. The flier screamed, "Lose 30 pounds in 30 days!" Sure, I mused, if you're spending money in British Pounds.

Of course, maybe the weight loss program was in the exercise gained in putting the fliers on the windshields... the slightly overweight people who I saw sweating their way across the parking lot sure looked like they were losing weight.

The worst thing about the incident is that almost everybody who received a flier simply ripped it off and threw it on the ground, littering the environment, wasting paper, and so on. The only good thing about the fliers is that they pointed out a part of our culture that sickens me.

It is a sad thing when a whole portion of our society feels so depressed about the way they look that they are willing to take

heavy model in a department store ad? Nope. What kinds of magazines are on the newsrack? I'll name a few. Redbook, Seventeen, Fitness... need I keep going?

And then there's the stores. The majority of women are 'plus-sizes'... and the department stores only carry things for skinny people.

Until we, as a people, can feel comfortable with ourselves, our minds, and our bodies, we will never be able to exorcise the sick parts of our society... those that will try to make money off of someone's fears.

It's your choice. Use your voice.

TO BE IN A PERFECT WORLD

KARL KATZKE
Assoc. Editor



drugs that may harm them, call numbers on handwritten signs along the freeways, and starve themselves to look like that person on TV.

And what's even worse is that we have entrepreneurs who will capitalize on people's weaknesses. Can we not, as a culture, have the common decency to allow someone to feel good about themselves?

Of course, the media plays a part in this. Have you ever seen a

Correction

In the Feb. 3 article entitled "McGee: a student living in history," an incorrect phone number was printed for the Civil War Council. The correct phone number for Chairman Donny Cameron is 645-4184.

THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

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