

Saints and sinners: Fifty-nine ways to better ourselves

According to a magazine I read many years ago, when Charles Lindbergh was a young man, he used to review himself each night on 59 character traits he wanted to develop.

The alphabetical list began with altruism — doing good for others without hope or expectation of being rewarded, repaid or benefited — and ended with unselfishness.

Lindbergh was said to have put a red X next to the traits he had satisfactorily mastered that day. Those he failed would get a black X. If he had not had an opportunity to demonstrate a particular trait, there would be no mark at all.

For years, I gave talks based on “Lindy’s 59.” I also used the character traits as a Lenten checklist for readers of my newspaper column.

Then the idea came to me to write to Lind-

bergh, asking him how he happened to compile the list, how long he had stuck to it, etc. I never really expected to get a reply. Lindbergh felt a deep hostility toward the press after the kidnapping and murder of his baby son. He resented the media’s hounding of him and his wife, Anne. It made him bitter and aloof.

So I was surprised to find in my mail one morning a letter from Lindbergh, sent from his home in Hawaii.

He apologized graciously for his reply being late. Then he let the bombshell drop. He wrote: “The character-trait list is pure bunk, one of those numberless concoctions of the press that have no basis in fact whatsoever - like the cat I was supposed to have carried with me in the ‘Spirit of St. Louis’ to Paris.



george
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• saints & sinners

“These stories get into the newspaper record files and are carried over and over again through the years until they are rather generally accepted as factual.

“The ‘character-trait’ list attributed to me has even been carried in a dictionary. Actually, I had no such list and had no interest in this type of thing.”

Lindbergh’s letter appeared in newspapers

across the country — including The New York Times, The Boston Globe and The Philadelphia Inquirer. It carried such headlines as “Lindy Debunks ‘Character-Building’ Myth” and “Lindy Calls Character List ‘Bunk.’”

Scott Berg also published the story in the recent best-selling biography of Lindbergh.

Whether Lindy’s 59 is pure bunk or not, it would do us all good to grade ourselves every night on qualities such as “cheerfulness, no fault-finding, no sarcasm, perseverance, politeness, self-control, no talking about others, clean speech and pleasant voice.”

Such a character-building program would cure many of the problems in the world today — problems that Alan Greenspan and a tax cut can’t touch.

While public wickedness and vice (the kind of sins we go to jail for) are pulling America down, these things are not as responsible for our country’s decline as the lack of ordinary goodness in ordinary people - what we call “lack of character.” But when we use the term, we usually mean a lack of character in other people, not ourselves.

The best idea of all for getting America back on the straight-and-narrow might be for each of us to go on a character-building program.

Lent is a good time to start. Never mind that we are already into Lent. A lady in my parish in Boston used to say, “If you can’t begin in the beginning, begin in the middle.”

For a copy of “Lindy’s 59,” send a SASE to Lindy, P.O. Box 06174, Columbus, OH 43206-0174.

For American protestants, a turning point has been reached on gay issues

By Richard N. Ostling

AP Religion Writer

NEW YORK — It’s possible that someday U.S. mainline Protestants will look back upon mid-March of 2001 as a turning point in their seemingly insoluble dispute over homosexual behavior.

At a strictly guarded secret conclave last week near Hendersonville, N.C., 34 top world leaders of Anglican Christianity agreed to utter no complaint and take no steps to block increasing tolerance in America’s Episcopal Church. That appeared to remove the last obstacle to U.S. dioceses that ordain actively gay clergy and allow blessing rituals for same-sex couples.

Then on Wednesday, liberals in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) won a parallel triumph, defeating a ban on same-sex blessings. They will now work to repeal a four-year-old prohibition on ac-

tively homosexual clergy and lay officers at the nationwide church assembly in June.

For the moment, at least, uneasy compromises have been reached: Both denominations still officially uphold Christianity’s traditional teaching against same-sex relations. While the Episcopal church takes that formal stand, it lets dioceses do what they wish. Presbyterian conservatives won a 1997 ban on actively homosexual clergy, but now liberals have gained the right to bless same-sex couples.

Last May, the United Methodist Church decisively reaffirmed bans on both rituals and clergy, although dissenters plan to continue same-sex ceremonies.

Can this inherently unstable situation persist?

These three closely related denominations, with 14.3 million members and

54,215 local congregations among them, have struggled with this quandary for a quarter-century.

Elsewhere in U.S. Protestantism, the United Church of Christ has long followed an open policy on homosexual practice. Most other denominations are opposed.

While the Anglican leaders handled the dilemma at their North Carolina gathering with closed talks, arched eyebrows and ambiguous communiques, Presbyterian delegates have engaged in public debate.

Last year’s Presbyterian assembly passed the ban on rituals and sent it to 173 regional legislatures, or presbyteries, for ratification. By Wednesday, 87 had voted no, killing the measure.

Conservatives needed the measure to overturn a ruling from the Presbyterians’ highest church court. That ruling allows clergy to perform same-sex union ser-

vices so long as they are not confused with marriage.

A survey by the denomination shows 57 percent of members at large and 61 percent of lay elders support a law against clergy giving same-sex blessings, but only 50 percent of pastors.

The Rev. Laird Stuart, a San Francisco pastor and co-leader of the victorious Covenant Network, says the voting on same-sex rituals has significance for the separate issue of actively gay office-holders, currently banned. The vote, he says, indicates that a change to let presbyteries and congregations reconsider that matter “would be very attractive.”

“The quiet middle is beginning to speak up,” Harris says. “In a nutshell, people are getting tired of intolerance.”

On the opposite side, the Rev. Joe Rightmyer of Presbyterians for Renewal in Louisville, Ky., thinks the June assem-

bly will keep the ban on office-holders. And if it passes a repeal measure, conservatives will prevail when the presbyteries vote.

But Rightmyer sees the long-term scenario as troublesome. “Our denomination is sorely divided, and apart from supernatural intervention we are headed for destruction or schism.” He considers Presbyterian disagreements over the Bible’s authority irreconcilable.

Rightmyer is urging fellow conservatives to stick with the denomination despite the loss on same-sex rituals. Harris expects a conservative schism if his side wins on office-holders, but thinks it will be small.

In the Episcopal Church, conservatives still harbor hopes that the international leaders will eventually step in, even though they didn’t last week. But they’re obviously on the defensive, saying that at least the international meet-

ing approved special visiting bishops to serve parishioners who conscientiously oppose their regular bishop’s liberal policies on gay issues.

However, an aide to the head of the U.S. church said that’s not what the international leaders intended.

The president of Integrity, the Episcopal gay caucus, the Rev. Michael Hopkins of Glenn Dale, Md., observes of the international meeting, “Maybe if they had said something more definitive it would have slowed the process down,” but Episcopal change would have proceeded anyway.

Within the United States, Hopkins is confident the next Episcopal Church convention in 2003 will move beyond the current laissez-faire situation and formally approve same-sex rituals.

As for clergy ordinations, Hopkins says, “We don’t see the need for any legislation... It’s a done deal.”

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Pastor: Don Crutcher

Fifth & Broadway
899-7368

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Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 pm

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Pastor: Rev. Steve Rains

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Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am

Morning Worship: 10:30 am

Evening Worship: 6:30 pm

Wednesday: Family Night: 7 pm

Adult Bible Study and Youth Group

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If you would like to receive a free newsletter, please call the church office.

Church of Christ

401 Caldwell

899-6185

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 am

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Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm

Church of the Nazarene

Pastor: Matthew Delp

Third & Caldwell

899-2080 or 899-3797

Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am

Worship Service: 10:50 am

Evening Service: 6 pm

Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 pm

First Baptist Church

Pastor:

Fifth & Center • 899-3450

Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am

Morning Worship: 10:30 am

Evening Worship: 6 pm

Tuesday: Mens' Prayer Group: 5:30 am

Thursday: Ladies' Bible Study: 10 am

Seventh Day Adventist Church

1160 Cattletrail

Pastor: Bobby Potter • 332-3956

Saturday: Sabbath School: 9:30 am

Worship Service: 11 am



Word of Life Foursquare Church

First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

Pastor: Loren Strait

Elighth & Arcade • 899-5233

Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am

Worship Service: 10:30 am

Activities: Junior High & High School Youth Groups, Adult Bible Study, Choir, Men's and Women's Groups, Devotions Study, Monthly Fellowship

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1116 Sherman

899-3631

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Sonrise Christian Church

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Minister: Tony Kafka

Youth Minister: Doug Bean

Sunday: Worship Service: 9:30 am

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Wednesday:

Junior/Senior High Meeting: 7 pm

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Emmanuel Lutheran Church

13th & Sherman • 899-6161

Pastor: Scott Grimshaw

Sunday: Sunday School: 8:45 am

Worship Service: 10 am

Wednesday: Confirmation: 6 pm

Kanorado

United Methodist Church

Pastor: Leonard Cox

399-2468

Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am

Worship Service: 10:15 am

Goodland Bible Church

109 Willow Road • 899-6400

Pastor:

Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am

Morning Worship: 11 am

Evening Worship: 6 pm

Wednesday: Call for location

Grace Fellowship Church

104 E. Hwy 24 • 899-6423

Pastor: Bob Snyder • Residence: 899-0134

Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am

Worship Service: 11 am

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

13th & Center

899-2115 or Rectory 899-2114

Priest: Father Charles Schneider

Deacon: Gretchen Talitha

Saturday: Church School: 4 pm

Holy Communion: 5 pm

Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm

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1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO • (970) 664-2470

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Sunday School: 10:45 am

Priesthood/Relief Society: 11:30 am

Word of Life Foursquare Church

223 E. 10th

899-5250

Pastor: John Coumerilh

Sunday: Worship Celebration &

Kids' Church: 10:30 am

United Methodist Church

Brewster:

Pastor:

Worship Service: 10:45 am CST

Sunday School: 9:45 am CST

Winona:

Minister: Rev. Bob Winters

Worship Service: 9 am CST

Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

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