

commentary

from other pens...

Wartime campaign draws on wide field

The Democratic presidential field for 2004 is rapidly taking shape — with a heavy emphasis on congressional veterans with experience in foreign policy, military and intelligence matters.

But two already in the race don't fit that mold: a blunt-spoken Vermont governor and a freshman senator from North Carolina who argues his role as a relative "outsider" gives him a better understanding of regular people.

The Democratic field grew to four Thursday with the North Carolina senator, John Edwards, and departing House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt, a seasoned lawmaker who is forming an exploratory committee in the next few days.

They joined Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry, a Vietnam war hero with significant experience in international affairs, and Vermont Gov. Howard Dean.

The field is likely to grow to more than a half-dozen in the next week or so — with the entry of lawmakers like Connecticut Sen. Joseph Lieberman, who was the vice presidential candidate in 2000, and Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle, a South Dakota senator.

"I expect several more people to get into the race and I look forward to it," Kerry said Thursday after attending the inauguration of the state's new Republican governor, Mitt Romney. "I think it's an opportunity for the country to test leaders and test their ideas."

Sens. Bob Graham of Florida and Joe Biden of Delaware, two senators with plenty of experience in national security matters, are pondering running. Retired Gen. Wesley Clark of Little Rock, Ark., the former supreme commander of NATO, is also mentioned as a possible candidate. And the Rev. Al Sharpton is planning to form an exploratory committee later this month.

Edwards, a trial lawyer and first-term senator, is wading into this steep competition with an unusual — but necessary — strategy. He's boasting about his short time in Washington.

Though he has little experience on the national stage, Edwards said, "I'm more than happy to be judged on the basis of my ideas."

"If the American people want a lifelong politician in the White House, that's not me. They'll have a group of people to choose from if that's what they want," he said. "If they want instead somebody who is closer to them, more connected to them and spent his entire life fighting for them and comes from them, that is me."

Edwards' strategy is so audacious it could either fail miserably or surprise a lot of people. He's hoping his appealing personal style could overcome some concerns about his experience.

"Edwards has as good a shot as anybody, but it remains to be seen how well he will perform," said Emory political scientist Merle Black. "He has Shakespearean ambition. Most freshmen would defer."

Michigan State political scientist David Rohde said all candidates "try to trade on their experience." And he noted Edwards will have about the same time in politics as President Bush had when he ran in 2000.

"Experience is very important and especially executive experience," Black said. "That's what's missing from the pool this year. Where are the governors?"

The two with executive experience are Florida Sen. Graham, a former governor, and Vermont Gov. Dean, who is also a physician.

Dean has spent a great deal of time in early states like Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina. And when state officials are handicapping the field, they usually recommend closely watching Dean, who has impressed party activists in those states.

Any Democrat nominated is likely to face a tough battle ousting an incumbent president in wartime, said congressional historian Ross Baker of Rutgers.

"When the country is in danger," Baker said, "there tends to be a preference to hold onto what you have and not make changes."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Will Lester covers politics and polling for *The Associated Press*.



Time for serious New Year thinking

I don't know about you, but I'm still recovering from the holidays, so I am going to share a George Carlin quote to help you do some serious New Year thinking:

"The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways but narrower view points. We spend more but have less; we buy more but enjoy less; we have bigger houses but smaller families; more conveniences but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge but less judgment, more experts — yet more problems; more medicine but less wellness.

"We drink too much — smoke too much — spend too reckless — laugh too little — drive too fast — get too angry — stay up too late — get up too tired — read too little — watch TV too much and pray too seldom.

"We have multiplied our possessions but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too little and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living but not a life. We've added years to our life, but not life to our years.

"We've been all the way to the moon and back and have trouble crossing the street to



**lorna
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• commentary

meet a new neighbor. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space. We've done larger things but not better things. We've cleaned up the air but polluted our souls. We've conquered the atom but not our prejudice.

"We write more but learn less. We plan more but we accomplish less. We learn to rush but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less. These are days of fast food and slow digestion — big men and small characters — steep profits and shallow relationships. These are days of two incomes but more divorce — fancier houses but broken homes. These are the days of Quick Trips, disposable diapers, throw-away morality, one night stands and pills that do everything from cheer to quieting to killing.

Religious wars abound in history



**sharon
corcoran**

• use it or lose it

A coworker recently commented that she wondered how many wars throughout history had been fought in the name of religion. Research yielded the likelihood that it would be impossible to count them all.

In over 6,000 years of recorded human history, wars about religion have been fought regularly in countries around the world, and religious leaders have contributed to many political conflicts. Many wars over religion were even recorded in the Bible.

Catholics have fought Protestants in Ireland for over 200 years; Muslims have fought Jews in the Middle East and Christians around the world in recent years and months; many were put to death in the name of religion in the Inquisitions; the Crusades were fought over religion; and in the Middle Ages, people were put to death for the high crime of owning, reading or distributing the Bible. What was the Holocaust of World War II if not a religious war?

The list goes on and on. To add to this, wars have been fought almost daily since World War I began in 1914, most of which have been encouraged in some way by religious leaders who have "blessed" troops and prayed for victory, sometimes with leaders of the same religion praying for victory on both sides.

"The chief motivation of war is no longer greed," Columnist H. Gordon Green said in *The Toronto Star*.

The gutters run with blood, he said, "because men are everlastingly convinced that the faith one has inherited from one's forefathers is the one true faith and all else is error and the work of Satan."

Is this view supported by the Bible? Ephesians 4: 5, 6 says there is, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all persons, who is over all and through all and in all."

There should only be one religion, a religion that unites people in the worship of the one God, the God who created heaven and earth. Revelation 4:11 says this God is worthy to receive the glory, honor and power because he created all things.

So, what has gone wrong? Genesis 11:1-9 tells us about a group of people who built a tower, the Tower of Babel, and sought to make a "celebrated name" for themselves. This tower and its purpose was in defiance of God's purpose for mankind to populate the entire earth.

As verse 4 says, the people said, "Let us build ourselves a city and also a tower with its top in the heavens. . . for fear we may be scattered over all the surface of the earth."

Organized false religion began in Babel, and the beliefs started there were spread throughout the earth when God confused the language to make the people scatter. Many of those false beliefs have survived and been adopted by today's religions and are a big part of the var-

ied religious beliefs around the world. These beliefs were started by people who were more concerned about what they wanted than about worshipping God in the way he has asked his people to. The same selfish desires cause people today to cling to these beliefs rather than learn from the Bible what God asks of us.

In Exodus 20: 4, 5 tells us that in the laws handed down to Moses, the most famous part being the 10 commandments, God told the nation of Israel they were not to make carved images to bow down to as part of their worship.

Many nations at that time were involved in such worship and fought wars in the name of their gods. The Israelites were to worship one God, the one who created the earth, the one who brought them through the Red Sea to escape slavery in Egypt.

The nation often did not obey this law from God and disobeyed his other laws as well. When God sent his son to re-establish true worship and to sacrifice his life for mankind, the nation of Israel as a whole rejected him. Those who did not become the Christian congregation, which would soon include Gentiles and by now has spread around the world.

Should Christians fight wars in the name of God or of Jesus? Jesus told his followers as recorded in Matthew 22:37-39 that the most important commandment was for them to love God with their whole heart, mind and soul, and the second commandment was, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Could someone who loves his neighbors all over the world shoot, bomb or otherwise unleash weapons, including chemical and biological weapons, on others?

Romans 12:17 tells Christians to "Return evil for evil to no one," eliminating any possi-

Letter Policy

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"These are the days when there is much in the showroom window but nothing in the stock room. These are days when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose to share this insight or just delete to the wastebasket!

"Remember to spend some time with your loved ones, because they're not gonna be around forever. Remember to say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in 'Ah,' because that little person will grow up and leave your side. Remember to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because it is the only treasure you can give with your heart, and it doesn't cost you a cent!

"Remember to say 'I love you' to your partner and to your loved ones, but most of all — mean it! A kiss and embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you. Remember to hold hands and to cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again. Give time to love, give time to speak, give time to listen and give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind."

Happy New Year to one and all!

bility it is acceptable to kill or deliberately harm someone you have a good reason to dislike.

People today, even many who claim to be Christians, do not obey these commandments from God. There is only one solution to this problem.

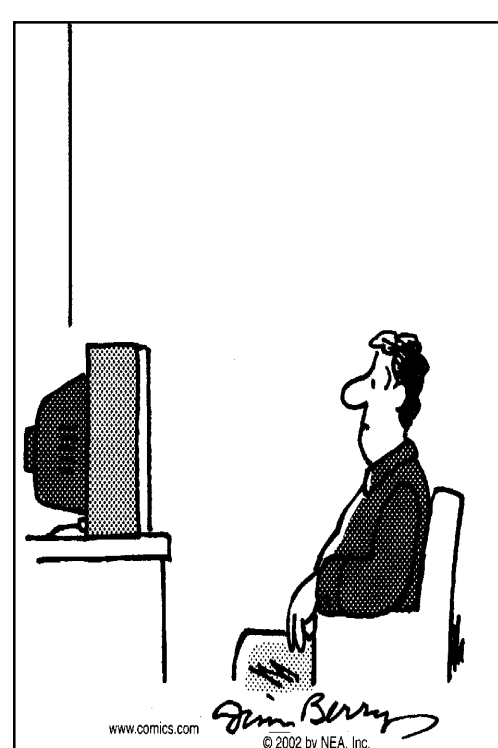
Revelation 16:14 says the kings of the earth will be gathered to the "war of the great day of God the Almighty."

The events of that war are described in the book of Revelation including chapter 9, verses 20, 21, which say, "But the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands, so that they should not worship the demons and the idols of gold and silver and copper and stone and wood. . . and they did not repent of their spiritistic practices nor of their fornication nor of their thefts."

God's anger unleashed on these disobedient people would destroy them. Following this war, the prophecy of Micah 4:3 will reach its complete fulfillment, "And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war anymore."

The only way world peace can exist is to eliminate all religions except one, worship of the one true God, the Creator.

berry's world



"WE CLOSE 'THE ELEVEN O'CLOCK NEWS' WITH A REPORT THAT PRESIDENT BUSH DID NOT SAY SADDAM HUSSEIN'S NAME ALL DAY LONG."

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