

from our viewpoint...

Iraq demonstrates price of freedom

What happens next in Iraq?
Oh, we'll track down Saddam Hussein. He's living on borrowed time.

There'll still be resistance. Terrorists are killing a couple of American boys — and a dozen Iraqis — every week. It's keeping up, may get worse, but the Army is a lot better at dealing with this stuff than it was in the last century.

One of the top American commanders, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, said the other day that U.S. troops will be in Iraq for two to three years while the country learns to govern itself.

More importantly, the Iraqis will have to develop their own police and military. The nation will need at least three modern divisions to protect its borders, he said.

And having taken on the responsibility of running Saddam out, we're stuck with the task of building up a reasonable alternative. We're just going to have to face that.

To leave quickly, as some would have us do, would throw Iraq into chaos far worse than what we saw right after the fall of Baghdad. Warlords would begin to fight, pitting Muslim sect against Muslim sect. Bloodshed might make the years of Saddam's rule look right peaceful by comparison.

So far, it seems that our forces are being selective and yet certain in enforcing their rule and tracking down holdovers from the old regime.

The next problem will be outside terrorists, who may already be operating in Iraq and may well have been behind the bombing outside the Jordanian embassy the other day.

The international terrorist brigade, led by al Qaida and friends, has to see a tremendous opening here, in a nation with no functioning government save the hated U.S. military.

It's not a burden that we particularly want, but it's a role we're stuck with right now.

It's easy to see the U.S. troops, with Kelvar helmets and M-16s, astride their Humvees, as the modern equivalent of the Roman centurion. There's some truth in that, but where the Romans conquered for the good of Rome, we at least like to think we're doing this to make the world a better place.

We should not forget that, as we've swept away repressive regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, we not only eliminated bases for terrorism and death, we've been welcomed with open arms by ordinary people glad to have us there and more than happy to see the thugs blown away.

We can't solve all the world's problems, but acting on our own and with other nations, the U.S. has done some good the last few years.

And as the world grows both closer and more complex, it's likely that the only remaining superpower will have to continue to play policeman. It's part of the duty that comes with wealth, power and good fortune.

Think of it as the price of freedom. — *Steve Haynes*

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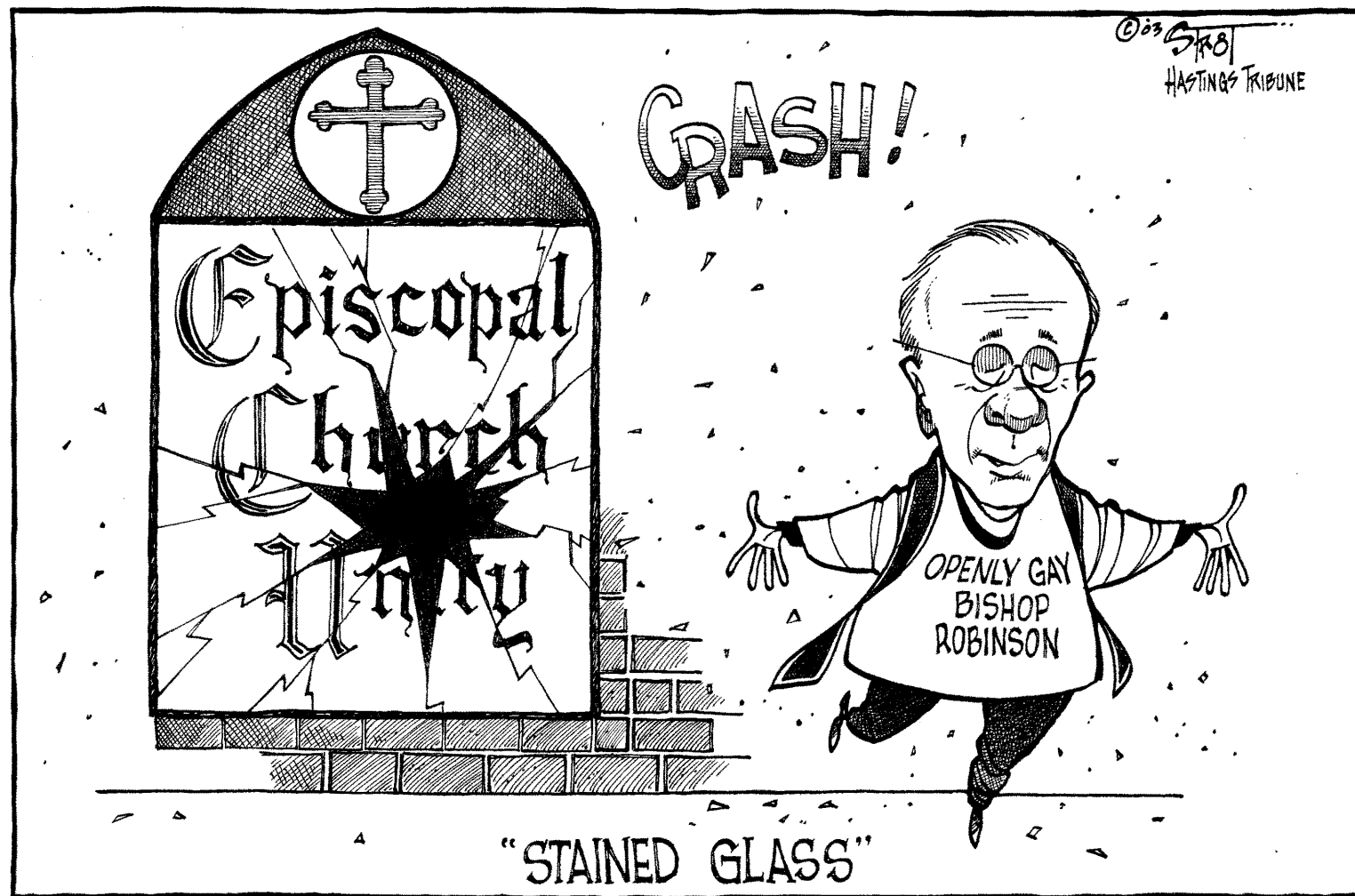
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My summer is slipping away

I don't know how your summer is going, but mine is slipping away quickly.

I thought for sure I would have time this summer to get my office cleaned out and thoroughly organized.

Yet there are still undone many of the projects I wanted to do. I sometimes think I just need some help to do them, but then I realize that a lot of my organization comes from the inspiration of the moment, and those inspiring ideas don't often come when I am talking with someone else.

I guess I've just been alone too long to work well with others.

It's the same with shopping. I can't have a fun day shopping with someone else.

I even travel alone, eat out in fancy restaurants, channel surf, and enjoy quiet — alone — a lot.



**lorna
gt**

• commentary

Aloneness has its good points and bad points.

I put off working in my yard because alone it seems like work; with someone else it is more fun.

I look forward to Bible study with a group, because shared insights are so — well — insightful.

I know God often speaks to us when we are quiet in God's presence, but it's great to share what God has said to other people's hearts too.

Today I am struggling to think of a topic for

this column, and here I'm halfway down the page, and I still don't have anything.

I'm thinking of several undertakings I should finish.

I'm thinking of my children and grandchildren, scattered all around the globe and how much I miss them.

I'm thinking of my church people and all their various illnesses and concerns.

I'm thinking of all I have to do when I go into the city today.

And all these thoughts are interspersed with prayers for those others and for myself to have a little of God's wisdom to help and inspire them.

I just can't concentrate on this column nor think of anything particularly clever to share.

All I can do is ask your indulgence and hope that you understand because sometimes you have a day like this too.

Appreciating God's instructions

In my last column, I wrote about a Catholic teaching, that Mary was immaculately conceived, showing that the Bible does not teach that she was. One reader was angry with my column, feeling I was picking on her church. That was not my intention.

No matter what religion a person belongs to, anyone who claims to serve God should appreciate His instructions to mankind, instructions that can only be found in the Bible. By teaching and believing something the Bible contradicts, many people show that they appreciate traditions more than God's word.

Jesus said that many in his day felt the same way. He said in Matthew 15:6b-9: "And so you have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition. You hypocrites, Isaiah aptly prophesied about you, when he said, 'This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines.'"

Many people hold their beliefs so dear, they don't want to hear that the Bible contradicts those teachings, showing them to be false. But does it make any sense to argue with God? That is a fight nobody could possibly win.

Adam and Eve began their lives as perfect people who had the hope of living forever on the earth that God had created for them and the family they were to have. They had to pass only one test in order to have everlasting life in perfect surroundings, with perfect health and in happiness. That test was obedience to God. He gave them one command, and by deciding they knew better than God what is good for them, Adam and Eve gave up that wonderful future and eventually died.

By refusing to obey even one commandment, Adam and Eve showed that they did not appreciate God's instructions. Do we feel the same way? Do we prefer to decide for ourselves what to believe, independent of the Bible's instructions?

Adam and Eve's decision in that regard was disastrous not only to them but also to all of mankind. But we have the opportunity to make



**sharon
corcoran**

• use it or lose it

a better choice.

1 Timothy 2:3-6a says, "This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all."

By allowing His son to die for mankind, God extended to all of us the opportunity Adam and Eve threw away — the opportunity to live forever in perfect conditions.

Among the commandments God expects us to obey is the one found at Deuteronomy 31:12: "Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law."

God commanded the Israelites to gather to learn the words of His law, the scriptures they had then. Christians are told at Hebrews 10:23-25 not to forsake gathering together with others who have hope through Christ to encourage each other and to learn about the Bible.

If we do not study the Bible and learn about God, we are disobeying at least one of His commandments. And for doing so, we will lose the opportunity to have an everlasting future.

When Jesus told people in his day they were making the word of God invalid by clinging to their traditions, he did not mean God's word was weak or that it no longer applied. He was telling them, they were making it ineffective in their lives.

A person who is paralyzed is often referred to as an invalid. This does not indicate that the person is worthless, but rather that the individual cannot effectively perform many tasks due to his disability. By rejecting God's word

when it conflicts with our long-held beliefs or pre-conceived notions, we don't make it weak and ineffective, we cripple its effectiveness in our own lives.

The apostle Paul referred to the scriptures as a powerful weapon. In 1 Corinthians 10:4, 5 he said, "For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things. For we are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God; and we are bringing every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ."

The Bible overturns false reasonings, digs out strongly entrenched beliefs, and it helps people to bring their beliefs into line with the teachings of Christ.

When we study the Bible honestly, looking for God's true message rather than ways to back up what we've always believed, it exerts power in our lives. And gaining knowledge of God gives us the opportunity to enjoy an everlasting future.

But the Bible only does these things if we read and study it. If we cling to false beliefs, no matter which church, philosopher or book taught them to us, we prevent the word of God from affecting us, and we lose out on a wonderful hope.

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