

from other pens...

## Pollsters miss mark reading new Pope

They're not about to cut him any slack. Pollsters, especially and sadly in this country, are testing the waters of the Catholic populace and its feelings about the new pope.

Pope Benedict XVI was barely into his first hours as the leader of the Catholic world when the numbers started rolling in, numbers that are, to any sane mind, faulty at best.

These polls supposedly took a look at U.S. Catholics. They didn't explain who they defined as Catholic.

Was it those who faithfully live daily the teachings and respect the traditions of the church? Those who faithfully participate in the mass on the weekends? Those who proclaim the title but rarely demonstrate any personal attachment? Those who moan and groan because the expectations of the religion might be in conflict with their acceptance of situations that would merit an out-of-bounds whistle if this were a game?

Such early polling serves no notable purpose other than giving fodder to those who thrive on negativity. The results cannot be measured with any degree of credibility.

Let the man serve. Study his performance. Pay close attention to what he says and how he puts his words into action. Then, and only then, test the waters of opinion of those who occupy the pews in the Catholic world's churches.

The polls being taken these few hours after Cardinal Ratzinger's election are showing, primarily, how Catholics graded the 26-year tenure of the beloved Pope John Paul II. Because of the closeness of John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger there is a feeling by some that the new pope will simply continue the drum beat set by his predecessor. Thus the results of this early polling.

None of us knows what twists and turns the life of the Catholic leader will take under the rule of Pope Benedict XVI. Some experts see no change. This writer, however, is of the opinion that Pope Benedict XVI will provide some surprises as he makes his way along the papal highway.

Each pope is his own person. Granted, they may look at the legacy of those who have gone before them, but each has his own vision, his own mission. Only time will provide us with what the new pope will expect of his flock.

Look for Pope Benedict XVI to travel the globe like Pope John Paul II. Look for him to reach out to all mankind. Look for him to be a force in gathering all of God's children under the spiritual tent, out of the storms of everyday life.

His work will be difficult. And despite his age — 78 — he will muster the energies and spiritual strength needed to carry on.

As he reaches out to those of you who are not of his faith, reach back in the form of a prayer. He can use that support. "Habemus papam" — "we have a pope."

— Tom (TD) Dreiling, Free Press Publisher



## I believe Jesus died for my sins

I don't know about you, but I'm a Christian. That means that I believe Jesus, the Christ, died for my sins.

Being a Christian certainly doesn't mean I'm perfect. I acknowledge my shortcomings and trust that God can use me in spite of them.

The down-side of claiming kinship to Jesus is that you are put under a microscope by other people. Everything you do is scrutinized to see if you live when you say you believe.

"A Christian isn't perfect, just forgiven," someone has philosophized.

Here are some things to consider about your own walk with God "Hell is the perfect recollection of every evil thing you've done in your life, every thoughtless word, every cruel, evil thought or action. It's knowing that you could have helped your brother and didn't. Hell is clarity. It's nothing more than clarity." Richard Paul Evans in A Perfect Day

"We shall rest and we shall see; we shall see



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• commentary

and we shall love; we shall love and we shall praise. Behold what will be in the end and will not end! For what is our end but to arrive in that Kingdom which has no end?" Augustine, The City of God

"Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty. If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this, I must believe" Kierkegaard. [If we fully understand something, it isn't faith. LGT]

"If you are lucky and reverent, and hush for a moment the voices of doubt in your head,

sometimes God will whisper in your ear." Kate Santich in Florida Magazine.

"Christianity is a 'come & go' affair. 'Come unto me...' 'Go into the world.'"

And here's one for all those who criticize their past "There'd be more power from the pulpit if there were more praise from the pews."

Christianity is a religion of life-giving hope. Even when things go badly in our lives, we cling to the assurance that God is working everything out, that God's plan is still in effect. Christianity is not an easy lifestyle, but it certainly is worthwhile. It allows you to hope even when you're in hopeless situations.

"The minister took one long, last look at his congregation and felt an overwhelming love for them. So many lost sheep. Tears filled his eyes. 'Beloved, hear the truth. Take it into your hearts and be at peace. In Christ, you have nothing to fear. Without Him, you have no hope.'" Francine Rivers in the book And the Shofar Blew.

## Religious columns informative, educational

To the Editor:

Although I disagree with the overtly erroneous conclusion to be drawn from the headline "Sin is really a learned behavior," I want to thank you for the space and time you give to the subjects of Christianity and religion

The various views presented are informative, and educational. They help us understand how others read and interpret the Bible. Even the contrasting readings and conclusions are of value.

Thank you for giving these topics, which are important to many people, your consideration.

I sent a response to the editor of a March 18 item written by Evangelist Kelly challenging his interpretation of Roman's 5:12 as proof for sin as a learned behavior.

In the April 8 issue, you published another item written by him with a headline that, your right and choice, supported his interpretation of sin as a learned behavior. However, in this item he didn't refer to Romans 5:12 but randomly picked verses from the Bible to support his understanding.

In fairness, allow me to do the same to challenge his hypothesis:

Consider Psalm 51:5: King David states, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Is David calling sex, a gift of God, a sin, or is he referring to an inherited nature?

Consider Mark 7:20-23. "And he said, 'What comes out of a man is what defiles, is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All of these come from within and defile a man.'" Is Christ speaking about learned behavior? He is talking about the will, mind, and soul of man.

Consider Romans chapter 7:14-20: "We know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So then it is

from our  
readers

• to the editor



no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me... Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells in me." Can you read that and make it mean that sin is a learned behavior?

To be fair, I ask you to publish this and let

your readers decide for themselves what to believe.

Earl Martell, retired pastor  
Goodland

**Editor's Note:** Headlines are intended to only describe the contents of an article or letter and guide the reader. They are not intended as expressions of opinion or endorsement by the newspaper. The editors do not profess to be learned in Biblical subjects, or most others, for that matter.

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"RESTRAINING ORDER" IS SUCH AN UGLY WORD, ELLEN



THAT'S TWO WORDS, DUMMY

