

from our viewpoint...

Islam, Christianity accused of violence

The coincidence of accusations of Christianity and Islam at about the same time is not near as powerful as the response of members from each faith.

Within the past couple of weeks, the Pope made reference to extremist Muslims being full of violence and hate. Days later, American actress, and television talk-show host, Rosie O'Donnell said extremist Christians are no different than those extremist Muslims. They, too, are full of violence and hate, she said.

The Pope's words were based on another's view of Islam written centuries ago. O'Donnell's comment was a polished, critical comment about the Iraq War, claiming that President Bush's second term was won because of the evangelistic, conservative Christians vote.

But the response is the real news.

Some Muslims upset at the leader of the Roman Catholic Church proved they were not really different from what the Pope said. Protests sprang up in heavily populated Muslim areas. Some of those protests included burning effigies of the Pope. Another Muslim group threatened violence against the Vatican and the West. Oh, the irony.

The Pope apologized, but noted that he was reciting someone else's work.

Meanwhile, Christians were calm after hearing about O'Donnell's statement. O'Donnell did not apologize. Christians, unfortunately, are probably used to those situations by now.

O'Donnell should have said something about how Christians are being unfairly outcast rather than labeling them as warmongers. Her argument is weak.

Earlier this year, a Nevada public high school pulled the plug on the microphone of a graduate after she began thanking God and her faith for her success in school. (The American Civil Liberties Union supported the school's actions by not doing anything about it.)

The NBC Network told the makers of "VeggieTales" to not include a Bible verse at the end of its cartoons, which are now aired on Saturday mornings. Supposedly, NBC did not want to upset any of its viewers. Does NBC think there is something wrong with telling kids to share, love their neighbor and, (gasp), don't kill anybody because God said so?

NBC must think its shows full of sex and violence are not offensive to anyone.

But the response is not done ... yet.

Those certain upset Muslims will probably continue to respond with hatred and violence when threatened by anything, because that is what they know. Christians, on the other hand, will take a different approach.

The makers of "VeggieTales" will continue their work and those little kids who watch "VeggieTales" may pick up on the themes in the show and get up Sunday morning to go to church to hear, and take to heart, the scriptures they couldn't hear on television.

That Nevada graduate may go on to discover the cure for AIDS or find the cheap and plentiful way to run our vehicles, all because of her faith.

Or better yet, she could teach the world, and O'Donnell, to give Christianity the respect it deserves.

— John Van Nostrand, Colby Free Press

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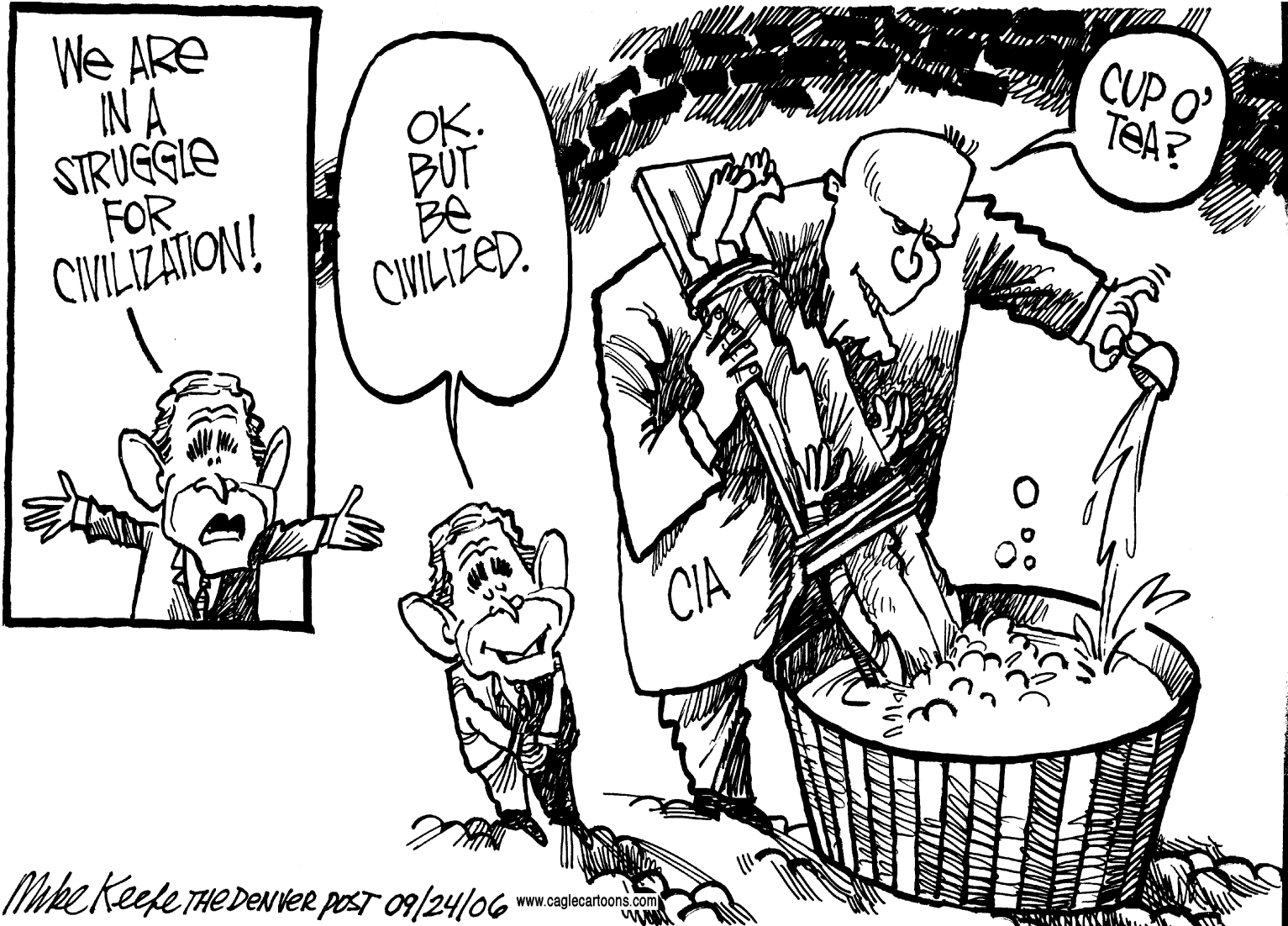
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Sterling has a new home in Missouri

We called him Sterling and he was the sweetest tiger you've ever seen.

I'm a sucker for cats and for stuffed animals, so when I saw the stuffed tiger — about half to two-thirds life size, in the bookstore in Durango, Colo., I was sold.

Not so Steve.

He's a fisherman.

I'm a hunter-gatherer.

He goes fishing and I go hunting for bargains and gather them in.

It took a bit of work, but eventually he saw something he wanted to buy and I smiled and said sure, but it's going to cost you a tiger.

Iran back to the bookstore just as it was ready to close and lugged Sterling back up the street as wasted college boys stepped back and said, "Cool!"

And he was.

He looked great lounging on the back of my sofa.

My cats weren't too happy about the newcomer. The back of the sofa is their territory —



cynthia haynes

● open season

but nobody argues with a tiger.

The cats are happier now.

Sterling has a new home.

We went the annual Missouri Press Association meeting at the Lake of the Ozarks last week.

Where better to take a tiger than into University of Missouri territory?

My tiger was even named after a popular Missouri fan — Scarf Man, also known as Jim Sterling, a rabid Tigers fan who sits under the basket and waves his long gold-and-black scarf whenever his team does something good. Or the other team wants to shoot a free throw.

Jim and his wife Nancy are friends of ours from many press association meetings, and naming a tiger after him just seemed right. He's

A comedy of errors



michael reagan

● making sense

As could be expected, on Wednesday *The New York Times* rushed into print with a story about the wonderful compassion Hezbollah is showing in helping those in Lebanon's civilian population who suffered enormous damage during the hostilities between the terrorist group and the Israelis.

Under the banner line, "Hezbollah Leads Work to Rebuild, Gaining Stature" *The Times* exuberantly described the extensive humanitarian efforts Hezbollah is exerting on behalf of the Lebanese people. Wrote *The Times*: "While the Israelis began their withdrawal, hundreds of Hezbollah members spread over dozens of villages across southern Lebanon began cleaning, organizing and surveying damage. Men on bulldozers were busy cutting lanes through giant piles of rubble. Roads blocked with the remnants of buildings are now, just a day after a cease-fire began, fully passable."

It's well known that the United States of America is the world's No. 1 provider of humanitarian aid, handing out billions to victims of wars and natural disasters in every corner of the globe, but you never see *The Times* going into spasms of adulation over our generosity. But let a declared enemy of the United States provide a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down to those suffering collateral damage as a result of their actions and *The Times* gets all gooey with worshipful admiration.

Hezbollah is a humanitarian organization in the same sense as the Mafia is a dispenser of charity and compassion. Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, sounded like the neighborhood Mafia don, offering money for "decent and suitable furniture" and a year's rent on a house to any Lebanese who lost his home in the month-long war. It was his way of telling the people who their real friends are. It's not the toothless Lebanese government, he was telling them, but your friendly neighborhood hit men who have your best interests at heart.

I think he may have learned the tactic from another mob boss, Al Capone, well known for handing out cash and other goodies to the folks in the neighborhood when he wasn't beating people to death with a baseball bat or celebrating St. Valentine's Day by having his enemies machine-gunned to death.

This "Hezbollah-the-good" business is just one aspect of a war that turned into a dark comedy, elevating the status of a group of murderous thugs while humiliating the leadership of what has always been seen as the most-feared military force in the Middle East — the IDF — the Israeli army, which nowadays parades un-

the biggest Tiger I know.

My idea was to put Sterling, the tiger, into the Missouri Press silent auction. Money raised at the auction goes into the Missouri Press Foundation, which uses it to give scholarships to students in journalism school at MU.

Now, I admit, I paid \$49.95 for the tiger in Durango.

One of the press association workers got him a black and gold scarf and he was ready for bids..

A Mizzou fan paid \$450 for him at the auction. (Steve said if they buy like that, he's moving to Missouri to sell real estate.)

The last I saw of Sterling, he was sitting on a luggage rack headed to his new home. And, I swear, he had a smile on his face.

That bookstore also had a lion, an ocelot, a penguin and a whole pack of dogs.

Hey Steve, how about another visit to Durango?

Editor's Note: Fine by me if you've got a market for 'em.

which in less politically correct times it could have done with dispatch.

And what could be more ludicrous than a cease fire whose conditions include the stipulation that the Lebanese army, or the United Nations, or a multi-national or just about anybody else around disarm Hezbollah. The Lebanese army says it has no intention of doing so, and the planned multi-national force can't because it doesn't exist, and as a result Hezbollah continues to bristle with arms and is probably being supplied with more ordnance from Iran and Syria.

In the meantime, the IDF meanders around the area south of the Litani River waiting for Hezbollah to get out of the area and disarm. I have a suggestion for them: they should take a page out of the Old Testament and march around Lebanon for the next six days and then on seventh day, march around it six more times and blow a horn.

It worked at Jericho, after all.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to mereagan@hotmail.com.

