

Blue eye, brown eye, Heaven, Hell

It's time for you to discover the truth behind the ever vocal Religious Right



It's time to see the truth behind the religious right

A couple of days ago, another columnist asked me about the Religious Right and its origin – just where this growing movement of conservative Americans sprung from.

As a non-member, I gave her some answer about it starting in Georgia, being rooted in strict Calvinism and the Christian Reconstruction – part of the reasoning behind why it's against abortion and gay rights, along with all this important information I looked up in 45 minutes online.

What a ridiculous, roundabout way of lying about the whole thing. I don't believe it, no matter what religious doctrine its members might quote.

I thought you ought to know where the religious right really comes from.

My real answer is this:

Your gut instinct. You see it. You know it. You can touch it. You can hear it.

There are certain words and phrases that trigger this "brainwashed" bell in your head – you know what they are, the words that is, not by classical definition, but because you know.

You also know its members are the saddest people there are. They are insecure, jumpy people. They are constantly toting around Bibles in their book bags, pulling them out before a math test, consulting them to see whether or not they should eat a chicken sandwich.

Because every decision they make is either for or against God, they have to take their little brown baby book with them wherever they go.

You know they consult their baby book to cross the street, to buy posters, to kiss other girls – which baby book won't let them do, because baby book says it's lesbianism, and it's against God's word. But baby book, they plead, why not? Because, baby book says, because.

Babies that they are, they'd still like to intimidate and impress you, make you think they're rich. They make you believe that with all their talk and the way they dress – because they're phony, too.

Actually, they are middle-class jesters, scammed by politicians into foolish voting rituals that rob them of more money every single year. They're so insecure about their religion that they throw guilt votes toward Republicans the way fat people eat chocolate.

The truth about them is they are weak, insignificant people – people who don't trust themselves to be loyal to God, so they have to tell you at least 20 times a day how much they love him.

And they are so humble, aren't

they? They turn humility into an art form. They point their fingers inward and convince themselves they are awful, awful sinners. And then they have to tell everyone else. Because deep down inside, they know they don't really love God. But they're too stupid to think for themselves, so they go along with it, hoping and praying the Lord will show almighty mercy on them.

But he probably won't, because they're not even sure he really exists.

But don't tell them that, even though they really believe it, even though the real reason they're part of it is because nobody else wanted them. You know these people for what they are: the kids in school no one liked, the mouthy ones, the tattletales, the snitches, the little brats who were so afraid to ask any girls out because there had to be something wrong with them.

And there is something wrong with them. They're anti-social, over-zealous, jealous freaks. They try to con you into converting to their religion, cold-calling your faith like a telemarketer.

Some of them are chemically unbalanced. Others have become extremely skilled at hiding their real personas, covering them with a veneer of social responsibility. Below it is a dark, dark core.

The truth: These are the sickest people we have. At their core, they are miserable, spiteful, revenge-filled souls who like nothing more than hurting others. They are liars.

They have rules that won't allow girls and boys to talk to each other

about things like sex because when they were in high school, nobody ever talked to them about anything, and they never had boyfriends or girlfriends. So, they hide inside God's word and use that as a crutch to be social misfits.

They'd kill for their cause.

In fact, they already have.

They are the lunatics who line the sidewalks outside Westminster Church with doctored photos of plastic, chopped-up aborted babies covered in red syrup, which they call blood.

You know those photos aren't real, don't you? They're made up. Because that's the kind of thing they do.

They also scream and yell at young children, pointing at their posters, saying, "THIS COULD HAVE BEEN YOU!" What sick, twisted people they are.

These people will do this because they are such sad, miserable people.

They will lie to you and sell you God's lies.

They hate blacks. Remember, these are people who hearken back to the good old days, the 1950s, when blacks had to drink from the colored fountain and eat in the colored restaurant.

There are blacks among them, and they are all Uncle Toms. You know them to be the house slaves, so to speak, as compared to the ones who work out in the cotton fields.

You know they hate all other religions. They hate Buddhists, Hindus and Jews. Especially Jews.

If these people lived in 1942 Nazi Germany, they would have screamed "Achtung Juden."

Not only would they have flipped the switch on the gas chambers, they would have enjoyed it.

They are the classic cases of picked-on adolescents who decided to get back at all their bullies when they got older. But instead of getting a makeover, they became insane, attempting to legislate bodily fluids and social behavior, just like Adolf Hitler. And just like Hitler, these people were failures at everything else in life.

So maybe it isn't their fault. It doesn't matter. Your goal ought to be to make them feel as bad as they want to make you feel – worse, even.

It's time to give them a taste of their own intolerance.

Because in what world do Jew-hating, love-hating, segregation-loving, weak, insignificant liars need to be tolerated?

They aim to make America conform to their own miserable standards, because they themselves are sad, sorry, miserable human beings who deserve no decent treatment.

And they are all the same.

You believe all that, don't you? Don't you?

You do.

And so you know. Really, you do.

You know why the religious right might hate you. And if they do, you know who the hate began with in the first place.

Not us.

Not them.

Not me.

You.

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Other side of the fence

Visit with prison guards gives different view of the inside

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Walking into the State Penitentiary doesn't give you the most comfortable feeling in the world, even if you're only going to be there for an hour. I used to drive by the building off Highway 2 everyday when I lived on Pioneers Blvd.

It never really bothered me that I slept fewer than two miles away from convicted killers.

But I pay more attention to the place after I enter the barbed-wire fences and then get frisked.

I can't imagine coming here every day. Today I have an interview with a prison guard. John Rugess is my escort – an administrative assistant who used to be a guard. He hands me the reports I asked him for in an earlier phone call. He is an agreeable and helpful man, even though I'm a member of the press.

He tells me the penitentiary deals with the media on a pretty regular basis.

"Prisoners can call the media," he said. "If anything ever happens, expect the media to find out."

I am taken to a room with a long table on the "free" side of the prison. The other side is called the secure side. The secure side is where the prisoners are held in captivity. Only restrained prisoners are allowed on the free side. It's mainly used for administration.

Cpl. Matt Hinrichs is the first guard I interview. He is 5-foot-10 and stocky, with a nearly shaved head.

If I would give you a picture of what a stereotypical guard would look like, it would be a picture of Matt Hinrichs. He has been a member of the force for five and a half years.

He has a degree in criminal justice

from UNL and first had a job in community corrections. Then he got a job in state corrections because that was the next level.

He said he had an interest. That's why he's in here.

It's a fact that prison guards work with inmates who sometimes want to hurt or kill other inmates, or even the guards themselves.

Physical intervention is required. I ask Hinrichs about this.

He said, "You think about it, and you know it's around you. It's a responsibility of staff to protect other inmates and other guards."

But he points out that most situations aren't physical. Most of it is verbal intervention and talking aggressive prisoners down.

"Don't put yourself in situations," he said.

He said the smallest amount of force necessary is used.

I also interviewed a former guard who worked in the Pen for more than 10 years, but he asked that I change his name here. He will be referred to as Robert.

Hinrichs and Robert both gave me elements of the physical training required for guards. They use a system based on pressure points, which are not designed to injure.

"Their punishment is being here; they are not to be punished here. There are procedures for anyone who goes beyond those bounds," Rugess said.

The procedures may have been the result of widespread accusations lodged years ago against guards. The former prisoners' accusations have led to prisoners' rights organizations and basically an open-book policy in prisons.

"Fifty years ago, no one knew what went on inside prisons," Rugess said, "Reforms have been made."

Prison guards often are presented in negative light by movies and television alike. It's absurd to believe we will ever see a show called "The Happy Prison Guard." Instead we get a picture of guards more criminal than the crimi-

nals themselves.

Rugess said that old media stereotypes of guards are false.

It's nothing like "The Shawshank Redemption," or "Murder in the First," he said. "Regulations guard against that."

Robert said sometimes he felt threatened by administration.

"They watched us closely," he said. "They're scared of the legality issue."

While prisoners may need protections, it is also indisputable fact that the prisoners are violent themselves.

In 1997, only 11 guards were assaulted in Nebraska, but 14,359 guards were assaulted in U. S. prisons. Yet for the job, the average prison guard who has completed a probationary period makes less than \$24,000 a year. Gas station attendants can make more than this.

A National Public Radio report that came out of Texas said the state currently needed more than 1,200 guards to maintain its jail system. And Texas has the highest inmate-violence rate in the nation.

Rugess also said the demand for officers was high. Robert informed me that the state was now recruiting, which he said hasn't happened in 10 years.

I asked both guards what they thought of public perception.

Hinrichs was optimistic: "I would like to think that the public respects us; you'll always need jails and corrections."

Robert was less optimistic: "We are viewed right beside inmates."

They both may be right.

Robert and I discussed that rarely

does one hear about prison guards unless a prisoner escapes or the guards aren't doing their jobs.

I ask Cpl. Hinrichs if he has any lasting thoughts, and he tells me to write that his job is a good one. He said it's necessary because there will always be prisoners and there will always be jails. But he said it's not a job for everyone.

As I walk out the door, I take a look behind me at the inside of the barbed-wire gates of the Nebraska State Penitentiary. I am distanced from prisoners who walk behind a gate. I don't think I want to return to this place. I know that Matt Hinrich's job is not for me.

But as I drive off, I am sure as hell glad that it's good for him.



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