

New Bethel Christian Life Commission Report – May 2007

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Quote of Month

“Jesus’ Baptism anticipated his death on the Cross, and the heavenly voice proclaimed an anticipation of the Resurrection. These anticipations have now become reality.”

Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI

Excerpted from his new book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, translated into English by Adrian F. Walker (Doubleday, 2007), as quoted in *Newsweek* (May 21, 2007): 48.

No Casino with One Week Left in the 2007 Texas Legislature

Suzii Paynter, Christian Life Commission, BGCT

Indian Casino bill made it to the third reading, but failed in House by ONE vote, so it did not go the Senate. Close, but no cigar. There are about 150 Texas State Representatives that make up the House. I suppose we could have done more if each of us had pursued our friends and family around the state, and had gotten them to get in touch with *their* Representative on this. But we are safe for another two years, and in part because of the extensive work of the BGCT’s CLC in Austin.

Killing Disabled Babies—Acceptable?—Says Peter Singer

Edited from “Princeton prof Peter Singer says killing disabled babies acceptable” *Baptist Press*, reprinted in *Southern Baptist Texan* (Oct. 2, 2006): 16 – quotes from article, comments by M. G. Maness.

Princeton Professor Peter Singer founded the Great Ape Project to grant apes the same rights as humans, and his morals would allow the killing of disabled babies. The chief distinction comes with the human ability to make “distinctions between human beings he would consider normal and those he would consider not normal, thus he is deciding who is a person and who is not,” said Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (LifeSiteNews.com). Singer only believes in one moral absolute: “The only moral absolute is that we should do what will have the best consequences for all those affected by our actions.” Singer believes people have the right to end their life and even to end the life of their own loved ones, as with Terri Schiavo, and makes a distinction between “where people are competent to make their own decisions and cases where human beings are not competent, and who should then make those decisions. If it’s a newborn baby, it’s really the parents.”

I have written on Christian absolutes in my up-coming book, *Would You Lie to Save a Life*, and therein is a small section on absolutes regarding life and abortion. Most Christians would opt to save the life of the mother if her life was endangered in a pregnancy and a choice was forced, therein—as hard a choice as that is—a case for allowing death to take it’s natural course is not unreasonable, just as saving the mother at the expense of an unborn child seems reasonably Christian. We cannot save all life, and it is appointed unto humankind to once die.

Yet Professor Singer sings a sadder song inclined to slay all sanctity of life. So, we can kill disabled human babies, unborn human babies, and brain dead adults, claims Singer, *because* of the “best consequences for all affected”—and he is pretty talented to be able to determine the “consequences” for *all*. “All” is a big word, nearly divine in competence. And then he wishes to give human rights to monkeys and apes. What benefit is an ape? My dog knows more tricks than most apes and serves me better by keeping watch, but an ape—sheese, with all the trees? What is the difference between a monkey, a dog, a fish, and an insect? Can it be as simple as levels of consciousness? Hmmm ... seems to me, Singer has argued himself into being more of an ape than a human, but that is because I happen to think more of dogs than apes. My suggestion to Professor Singer is that we start with trying to give *all* humans *human* rights, like those currently pressed into slavery around the world, and admit that he who cannot distinguish between an ape and a human, certainly cannot distinguish which human is human enough to live or die.

God of Abraham the Same as Allah of Islam?—No, Sir!

Religion Professor Charles Kimball of Wake Forest University started a fire when he said that Islamic teaching about Allah claims their god is the “same God that Jews and Christians are talking about” at a February Christian Life Commission conference in Austin. Basin Baptist Network leaders approved a resolution that asked that BGCT Director Charles Wade and CLC Director Suzii Paynter to “formally distance themselves and our convention from, and publicly denounce such false doctrine and reaffirm the commitment to the doctrine of the triune God as clearly and correctly articulated in the *Baptist Faith & Message*.” BGCT Director Charles Wade wrote and referenced the Trinity and Jesus Christ’s divinity.

Ken Camp reported that Professor Kimball clarified that “acknowledging common ground between Christianity and Islam is ‘not the same as declaring they are equally valid paths to salvation’ ... ‘To say that Christians, Muslims and Jews are talking about the same God is one thing. To say that they are worshipping the same God, or that it doesn’t matter—that’s a whole different set of questions.’”¹

I think Kimball should have been more careful. Christians and Muslims both believe in one God—monotheism—but it is clear that there are absolute distinctions. For one, the Muslim Quran clearly corrects the Christian New Testament, and the Muslim believes the Quran as the final word of Allah. No Christian cannot accept the Quran as equal to the New Testament. If one believes the New Testament, then one cannot see the Allah of the Quran as the same God of the Christians. What seems to have been missed is that, still, *Islamic* teaching is that the Allah is the same God as that of the Christian Old Testament. That piece of Islamic teaching is just that—*Islamic* teaching and *not* Christian teaching.

From the Christian perspective, Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, who died and rose from the grave—a very clear absolute difference from Islam. What one believes about Jesus Christ is what usually separates the Christian from all the other religions of the world, including Islam.

Devotion

Oceans Lifted up their Voices and Deep Answered unto Deep

Charles H. Spurgeon, Sermon #2096, The Marriage of the Lamb, 7-21-1889, pp507-509, Vol. 35 – Revelation 19:7-8 – edited by M. G. Maness

The voice from the throne is a very remarkable one. The response to this voice, says John, “I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude.” John heard the mingled sound of an innumerable host joining in song: the redeemed are many. No man can count them. So loud was the sound of all those commingled voices—like “many waters”—like cataracts in their roar, or like oceans in their fullness. It was as though all the billows of the Atlantic, and the Pacific, and the Northern, and Southern oceans lifted up their voices, and deep answered unto deep. Nor was the figure too strong; for John heaps upon it another comparison, and says, “As the voice of mighty thunderings.” We have lately heard the thunder above the deafening din of our streets, and we have trembled at the dread artillery of heaven. Such was the sound of the mingled voices of the redeemed when they all united to give honor to God, because the marriage of the Lamb had come. Who can imagine the acclamations of that glorious day? In that day when her Lord is seen as the King of kings, and she is openly acknowledged as his spouse, what welcomes will be heard, what bursts of adoring praise unto the Lord God omnipotent! The joy of joys will be the delight of Christ in his perfectly gathered church.



BGCT Texas Christian Life Commission, www.christianlifecommission.org & www.bgct.org, 888-332-5870 — **Baptist Joint Committee**, Washington, DC — www.bjcpa.org — **SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission**, www.erlc.com — **American Center for Law and Justice**, www.aclj.org - **Christian polling**: www.grassfire.org & www.ethicsdaily.com ~ **Christian Coalition** www.cc.org

Congresspersons ~ 80th Texas Session begins January 2007

Todd Staples, Senator, Texas Senate District 3 – Capitol: 512-463-0103; District: 903-729-7717

Jim McReynolds, Representative, Texas House District 12 – Capitol: 512-463-0490; District: 936-634-9786

Texas Legislature www.capitol.state.tx.us - Who represents you: www.capitol.state.tx.us/fyi/fyi.htm

Kay Bailey Hutchinson, US Senator – <http://hutchinson.senate.gov/> 713-653-3456

John Cornyn, US Senator – <http://cornyn.senate.gov/> Tel: 713-572-3337 — **Kevin Brady**, U.S. Rep. Dist. 8 – 202-225-4901

www.Senate.gov
www.House.gov

¹ Ken Camp, “Professor’s comments about God & Allah spark controversy,” *Baptist Standard* (May 14, 2007): 2.