

St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church,
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Anne Hawkins

May 22nd, 2012

FROM THE RECTOR

Fear and loathing in the psychology department

THIS year's Presidential election is still six months away and, in line with time honored tradition, the political mud has long been flying in all directions. Naturally enough, nothing is sacred. Targets include the candidates' educational performances, their families, even their mental health.

In this context, it is worth remembering a study published not long before the 2004 Presidential election in the American Psychological Association's *Psychological Bulletin*. The study had been conducted by four university researchers into the psychological motivations of political conservatives.

The researchers were Associate Professor Jack Glaser and visiting Professor Frank Sulloway of the University of California Berkeley, Associate Professor John Jost of Stanford University's Graduate School of Business, and Professor Arie Kruglanski of the University of Maryland at College Park.

Their study concluded the motivations that mark political conservatives are "fear and aggression; dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity; uncertainty avoidance; need for cognitive closure; and terror management."

Hmmm. Actually, what is genuinely instructive about this study is not so much the researchers' findings, but rather the list of "conservatives" they selected for analysis.

The subjects of the study were Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, former President Ronald Reagan and radio commentator Rush Limbaugh. For good measure, the researchers threw in Joseph Stalin and Fidel Castro on the grounds that, in the context of the study, they might also be considered conservatives.

All this led one to wonder whether Glaser, Sulloway *et al* had entirely lost touch with the mother ship. Most people are surely capable of recognizing the vast moral and philosophical gulf between political thinkers who operate in the framework of American system of representative government and murderous tyrants like Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and Castro.

One might not unreasonably imagine that it is only folks suffering from "fear and aggression, dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity, uncertainty avoidance, need for cognitive closure, and terror management" who would so much as dream of lumping these six people together.

In the context of 21st Century American politics both President Reagan and Rush Limbaugh are clearly conservative. Both take a *laissez faire* approach to the economy and both appear to be constructionists in constitutional terms. Yet from the perspective of 19th and early 20th century, on the other hand, both would be seen as liberals. Political labels tend to be a movable feast.

In no period of history, however, would murderers and torturers like Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and Castro qualify as "conservative" in the American sense of the word. Nero and Caligula pale in comparison with the 20th Century monsters. Even Vlad the Impaler, Ivan the Terrible and the entire Borgia family notched up rather more modest tallies of victims.

But aside from being mass murderers and torturers, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin were ("are" in the case of Castro) radicals whose vision was to stand the social and economic order on its head. These men have nothing whatsoever in common with Reagan and Limbaugh, both of whom are plainly devoted to the American democratic process.

What's more, the researchers' apparent assumption that some vast ideological difference exists between Hitler and Mussolini on the one hand and Stalin and Castro on the other is very far from the mark.

The political terms "left" and "right" were coined by Stalin to differentiate his brand of totalitarianism from that of his Fascist rivals. In fact very little difference existed between the two. Both were in complete agreement that the state should control all economic, political and social activity. Against this, their points of difference were minor.

Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party held the state should exercise control of all economic political and social activity through its ownership of the means of production. Hitler and Mussolini declared it was unimportant who owned the means production when the state held a monopoly on power and dictated the nation's social, economic, industrial, commercial and production goals.

It is clear that, whatever their psychological qualifications, the researchers' lack any serious knowledge of political, economic and social history when they embarked on their project. Their assumptions about the conservative mindset was not merely bizarre. One might be forgiven for thinking, they were the product of fevered imaginations.

Far from being an objective academic exercise their report amounted to a hatchet job -- one that left them open to charges of attacking America's hallowed tradition of political debate and dialogue. After all, its implied contention was that folks who subscribe to politically incorrect ideas are, in effect, mentally unbalanced. Beliefs of this nature render and genuine form of political debate impossible.

The misuse of psychology has a sinister history. The Nazis, abused it to demonize and destroy classes of people they declared enemies of the state. The Soviets used psychiatric institutions as political prisons and psychiatric therapy as torture. The Castro regime still does so.

Its hard to imagine that the researchers seriously expected to their readers to believe President Reagan's followers and Rush Limbaugh's listeners to be the equivalent of Hitler *et al*. Their report was clearly psychological hyperbole. But aside from providing pseudo-intellectual fodder for the crazed and fanatical, it further debased the political process, inviting retaliation in kind as well as undermining the man in the street's trust in psychotherapy. **GPH**

FROM THE TREASURER

Please, we could use a little financial help

DESPITE the economic downturn – or perhaps because of it – our overheads have continued upwards. Thus the Vestry is asking each of our parishioners and friends prayerfully to consider increasing your financial support this year.

We are hoping for a modest increase in pledges for the short term. And with a view to the longer term, we are renewing

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WHITSUNDAY

Being the Feast of Pentecost, May 27th, 2012

8.00 AM, 9.00 AM & 11.15 AM

HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: Acts 2:1-11

The Gospel: St. John 14:15-31

FOR YOUR MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter: Psalm 68

The First Lesson: Wisdom 1:1-7

The Second Lesson: St. John 4:19-26

our appeal for contributions the parish Endowment Fund in order to secure the parish's future. Thanks to your past generosity, the fund currently stands at just under \$200,000. Our aim is to double that figure over the next couple of years.

The Vestry is also hoping to raise a little money to invest in the parish's future by building a children's play area behind the church. Every other church in the neighborhood has a play area, and the vestry believes that such a "child friendly" investment would be useful in attracting young families.

Now we come to a "it never rains but it pours" bit. On the morning of Bishop Vaughan's consecration our organ "gave up the ghost." The folks at the Ray Daffer organ company saved the day by loaning us a new instrument while they repair ours. That was the good news. The bad news is that the repairs will cost quite how much we don't yet know, but at least several thousand dollars. We would be most grateful if you would help us raise the money to cover these unexpected costs.

Please don't imagine the parish is teetering on the verge of bankruptcy. It's reasonably healthy all things considered. But we haven't begged for your increased financial support in quite a long time. We hope you listen to our needs sympathetically and give us a helping hand if you can afford it. **BILL HAWKINS**

✠ PARISH PRAYER LIST ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List and guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office at 410 560 6776.

RECOVERY: Hope, Richard, Scott, Leo, Riley, Mary-Ann, Linda Lou, Cynthia, Robert, Nancy, Judith, Deborah, Dorothy, Dr. Devadadson, Thelma, Mary, Adele, Linda, Jan, Liz, Bob, Wyatt, Jim, Reta, Sara, Tammy Sophie, Paula, Blair, Melvin, Heather, Laurie, Diane, Don, Lynn, Helen, Katherine, Hindra, Ravi, Elizabeth, Brian, Tracey, Edithann, Jay, Perry, Amelia, Shirley, Adrian, Kimberly, Dean, Barb, Tanya, Jane, Brook, Val, Joseph, Joshua, Rachel, Carl, Cal, Catherine, Sam, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, Patty, Antonio, Ray, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Jack, Grace, Fran, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt, Bobby, Alexander, Erline, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, William, Betty, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tom, Leliliah, Jennifer, Miriam, Karen, George, Eliza, Mel, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Linda, Suzanne, Steven, Jeanne, Tammy; Ellen, Patricia, Bonnie, Ann Ann, Christine, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, Bryan, Jason, Joan, Frances, Pat, Michael, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Laura, Stacey, Frank, Christine, John, Henry, Naomi, Pam, Ben, Kevin, Gwen, Gloria, Lee Emily, Bruce, Regina, Lewis, Madolin, Linda, Carol, Bernie, Charlene, Josephine, Margaret, Jody, Sheila, Jo Anne, John, Geradine, Thomas, Jeanne, Sister Catherine-Grace, Maxine, Ann Sharon, Dennis, Mae, Anita, Marilyn, Lawrence, Joanne, Albion, Martha, Jackie, Charles, Tony, Edward, Kim, Vivian, Doris, Carol, and Suzie.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Aaron, Tom, Jennifer, Brendan, Rosa, June, Anna, Jean, Garrett, Ned, Stephen, Rachel, Robert & Renee, Lydia; Richard, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis, Carolyn, Suzanne, Tony, Erik, Drake, Bobby, Kay & Emma, Gillian, Beverley, Adrienn, Jhana, Marla, Matthew, Joan, David, Laurie, Ellen, Lynn, Mildred, Sarah Lee, Susan, Kathy, Owen, Douglas, Amy, Jo Anne, Mary, Gregory, Isabel, Bobby, Dorothy, Darren, Scott, Rebecca, William, Charles, Joyce, Asfa, Eleanor, Kathy, Linda, James, Barry, Ann, Evelyn, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Virginia, Mildred, Chris, Stephen, Carol, Sandra, John, Mary, Michael and David

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: LTC R.J. Lytle, PFC Charles E. Heintz, IV, USA; Lt. Benjamin Schramm, USMC; Lt. Alex Bursi, Charles Watts, Capt. Charles Bursi, USN. Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, Major Benjamin Hawkins, British Army

✠ St Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

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VICAR: The Rev. Rhae E. Kelley

ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric

DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Anne Hawkins (410-308-2771)

WEDDING CO-ORDINATOR: Anne Hawkins (410-308-2771)

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00 am: Said Eucharist

9.00 am: Sung Eucharist (*with Nursery & Church School*)

11.15 am: Choral Mattins (*1st Sunday: Choral Eucharist*)

6.00 pm: Choral Evensong (*1st Sunday only*)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6.00 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday Noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5.00 pm: Family Eucharist.

COLLECTS FOR ASCENSION DAY & THE SUNDAY AFTER THE ASCENSION

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *AMEN.*

GOD the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven;

We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *AMEN.*

Book of Common Prayer, Pages 177 & 179

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