

STEVENS COUNTY TIMES EDITORIAL

There's something in the Alabama abortion law that's disturbing

The state of Alabama has passed one of the most restrictive abortion laws in U.S. history. There is a particular portion of the law that even those who are pro-life and supporters of this law should find at least somewhat disturbing. The law does not allow abortion in the case of rape or incest. Yes, there are those who will argue that every child is a gift from God, including pregnancies as a result of rape or incest. And if you are a firm believer that life begins at conception, then it may be difficult to say that aborting a life that is created by rape or incest is acceptable. But is forcing a victim of rape or incest to carry a child to full term really pro-life? Or is it dangerously close to

legitimizing a crime, or a sin, to use a term many pro-life advocates use? Certainly good things can happen from bad starts but getting pregnant by rape or incest can be so much more than a bad start. How humane is it to legally force a woman, teen, or child, to remember a crime each day for nine straight months? Would this not be re-victimizing the victim? Wouldn't it create more trauma? Abortion is a difficult topic, one that rarely results in civil dinner discussion or in congenial chats over coffee. But, in this case, discussion needs to happen. And it could start with what if it were my daughter, niece, sister, friend or neighbor who became pregnant through rape or incest?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

True Christians do not believe the Bible is full of errors

To the editor:
We live in a time when true Christians understand that evil is too often perceived as good and good too often perceived as evil. Christian truth is always counter cultural. Contrary to Michael Lackey's thinking in his recent letters to the editor, true Christians do not perceive the Bible as being full of errors. The catechism of the Catholic Church and (all true Christians believe) that "A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator...not to prefer their own judgment." "The word of God is a light for our path. We must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. This is how moral conscience is formed." The Bible is not a science book. That in itself negates Lackey's idea that science trumps everything and he does not even seem to acknowledge that without God's creation, there can be no science. God far transcends creation and science.

Defining normal isn't the point

To the editor:
On May 4, the paper published a letter to the editor challenging Michael Lackey's letter to the editor defending the transgender community; he used that article to take a typical swat at the Bible. I would like to correct him on certain points, so that he does not mislead the readers. Lackey, a professor, points to a request—"O sun, stand still" made by Joshua and a miracle performed by God, recorded in Joshua 10:12-14. It is an example, one of many, in which God speaks to mankind in familiar terms or has the writer put down their perspective. If that is a mistake, then we should sue every paper or radio station that tells us when "sunrise" and "sunset" occur on a given day. We understand what it means, though we don't know how God accomplished it. The professor's connecting this miracle to thinking the sun revolved around the earth is misleading. The Bible never says that; humans in their vaunted "wisdom" decreed it—just like the "fact" that the earth is flat. The professor also tries to blame slavery on the God of the Bible. God was dealing with people living in the world in that time. His goal transcends all this. Think of the gracious equality of the Gospel: "You are all sons of God (qualified to inherit heaven) through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:26-28.

Lackey's arguments so much reminds me of how the devil managed to deceive Eve in the Garden of Eden. He said to her, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?... God knows well that the moment you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad. The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes and desirable for gaining wisdom." In the New Testament Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit can lead us into all truth. He is the one who aids us in moving from our limited human intelligence into all truth. (If we follow His guidance rather than our own.) Science and mere human intelligence will necessarily misinterpret Joshua 10:13 as Lackey has, and will miss the meaning of the entire passage and falsely proclaim that it is an error. The main idea of the entire passage is that God was fighting for Joshua. With God all things are possible. If this was a literary tool that the writer was using to express the impression that the sun was halting in the sky, Lackey has missed that. On the other hand, since God the Creator is quite capable of changing the ordinary course of things anyway, which God actually did 101 years ago at Fatima, Portugal, in the miracle of the sun to prove to the people that the Blessed Virgin Mary did actually appear to three young children there and asked them to pray for the conversion of sinners etc.

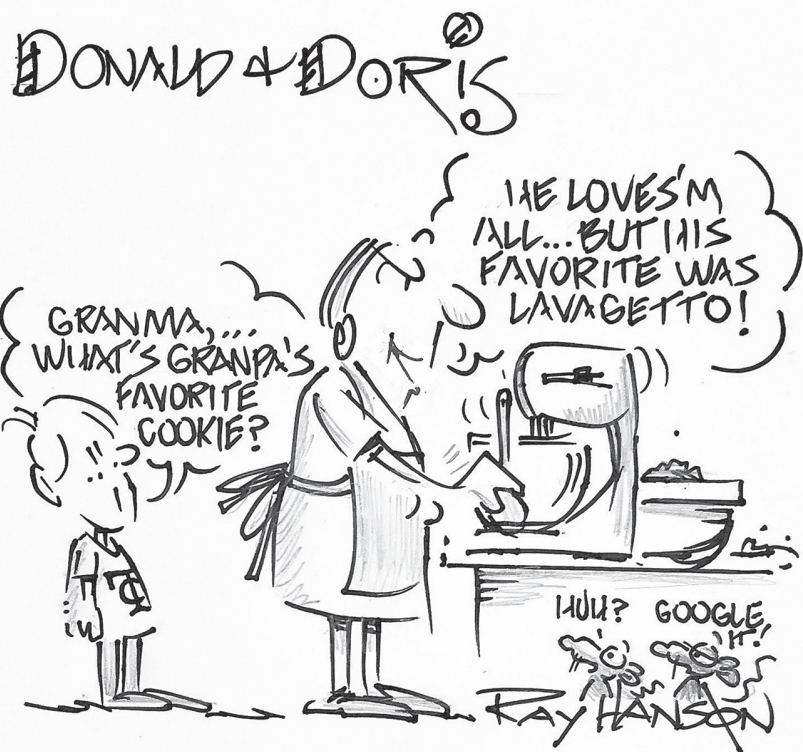
The most vehement attack on God's inspired and inerrant Word comes from his thrice-mentioned term, "Educated Christians". By that I can only conclude that he is referring to people who have made Science their new god, who as Humanists have deemed themselves so wise as to sit in judgment on God's Word. They discard any biblical teaching that challenges their human reason or the comfort zone of their sinful natures. Any claimed "mistakes" in the Bible are nothing more than "paradoxes": apparent errors that, upon further inspection, prove the Bible correct. So now, to the point: What is "normal"? From the Bible's viewpoint, Sin is normal. It has been since Adam and Eve; Eve disobeyed God. It shows itself in a rebellious breaking of all God's commandments on a regular basis. Regarding sexuality, God established marriage in the Garden— one man, and one woman, committed to one another. In the Ten Commandments, he protected that gift with the command, "Do not commit adultery". St. Paul, in Romans 1:18-32 describes the lot of those who deny God: "God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another". He warns in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 that departing from God's pattern for marriage is not a harmless thing: "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?" and mentions sexual sins in general and homosexuality in particular, along with other sins. But he also tells us these sins can be repented of and turned from: "And that is what some of you were [my emphasis]. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Lackey's claim that the Bible supports slavery is also blatantly false. God, again because of his love for his people uses Moses to free the Israelites from being enslaved by the Egyptians. Unfortunately it is not the educated who readily understand God's ways, which He tells us in Isaiah 55. "My ways are so high above your ways." The Scribes and Pharisees were the most educated ones in terms of religious issues, yet they totally missed the fact that Jesus was the Messiah sent by God the Father. Humble shepherds were given the news of his birth first and Jesus told us via his message to his disciples, that "Unless you become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." I agree with Lackey that history's lessons have something to teach us. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the fall of the Roman Empire teaches us that God will only tolerate evil for a limited time before his truth and justice must and will prevail in the final end.

The unbelieving world will always beckon to people to "Do what you will." The liberal church that abandons trust in God's word in general and tosses his commandment regarding his gift of sexuality becomes complicit in those sins (Romans 1:32), and does a disservice to society, calling sin "non-sin", and leading many to think their desires and experiments are harmless. They would do so much better to become students of God's word, and lead people to know Christ and walk with him by faith, making God-pleasing use of his gift of sexuality.

Evelyn A Guggisberg
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Donald Main
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COMMENTARY

Providing hope for Minnesotans with mental health issues

I've learned the lessons of depression the hard way. It's something I experienced first in my late teens, and then again in my thirties. Depression makes you feel so hopeless that you can't even see hope on the horizon. You can't feel joy or love or contentment, and you can't see a way you'll ever feel that way again. And at that point, what's the point?



U.S. SEN. TINA SMITH
D-Minnesota

The worst part about depression is how treacherously it saps your capacity to function. Treacherous because depression can feel like a personal weakness rather than what it is: a malfunction of our brain.

anxiety can upend anyone's life and need to be addressed.

First, I want to say that, if you or someone you know is feeling this way, there's help, and you deserve help. Each county in Minnesota has mental health resources available. In Stevens County, call: 1-701-364-0431. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is toll-free: 800-273-8255.

We are making progress. Last year, I worked with Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski to pass a law to bring mental health professionals from the National Health Service Corps into schools and community-based organizations.

Sometimes just getting up the courage to ask for help can be difficult. I was struck by the bravery of a Lake City woman who has been a dairy farmer for 33 years. With year after year of terrible markets putting her family's financial future on the ropes, she felt "hopeless." But after taking the chance to reach out to a counselor, she is speaking out publicly so more people understand that, while seeking help won't raise dairy prices, it can raise awareness that there's help for mental health issues.

And we need to do more. My bill to bring comprehensive mental health services to schools in Minnesota and across the country would expand access to care and help reduce the stigma that surrounds mental health care. We need to get it passed. And, as we take up the Older Americans Act this year, I'll focus on what we can do to help older adults deal with the social isolation they feel in their later years.

In my 30s, when my psychologist suggested that I take a diagnostic test, and then informed me that I clearly was suffering from depression, I rejected her diagnosis. What's wrong with me is me, I thought. But I listened. And thank God for her. I honestly don't know where I would be if not for her empathy, but most of all her medical and professional expertise, which helped me get better.

Minnesota senators have long worked to help the millions of Americans who suffer mental health issues, and I'm determined to carry on this work. Sen. Paul Wellstone was the first to champion mental health parity—the fundamental value that insurance coverage for mental health should be just like coverage for any other medical service. After Paul's death, Sen. Al Franken worked with Paul's son David to write the final rules for the law Paul pushed for.

I know how blessed I am to have had early help. Everyone should have the same access to mental health care, regardless of our insurance, our zip code, or our age. Yet too many people can't get the help they need.

Their work put us on the path toward true mental health parity, but we still have work to do to finish the job and to ensure all Minnesotans, and all Americans, have complete coverage for mental health services. So, I ask you to join with me. Speak out. If you or someone you love are struggling with mental health challenges, don't let anything get in the way of getting help, any more than you would resist getting help if you had the flu or a broken arm.

Recently, at schools in St. Paul and Rochester, I highlighted what thousands of Minnesota families and educators know to be a pressing need: expanding mental health services in our schools. I also discussed the growing understanding by Minnesotans - of all ages - that problems like depression, stress, and

My experience showed me how important getting help can be. Just as clearly as I remember the shock of my diagnosis, I also remember the sensation of slowly emerging from depression: a little more energy every day. A little more capacity to pay attention to the people and things I love. The colors of the world came back.

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