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As you well know, religion was a big factor in the recent presidential election. The exit polls found that 22 percent of voters cited "moral values" as the key to their vote. *Of course, I welcome the "moral values" discussion in politics, but the question we're raising is which values and whose values.*

Sojourners has been receiving daily opportunities to shape the national debate and to make sure that social and economic justice is named as a "moral and religious value," and that war and peace are "life" issues too. A longtime friend of Sojourners recently told me we are "the little magazine making a big difference." While we are much more than a magazine nowadays, I liked the image. *I am even scheduled to speak about "moral values" this coming Sunday on "Meet the Press."*

[Please consider giving a gift to help our "little organization" strengthen this progressive voice of faith.](#) With your help, we can make a big difference.

Together we have already made an unmistakable impact on the public discussion of "moral values" with more than 125 newspaper articles, 50 radio talk shows, many television appearances, and placement of our "God is not a Republican or a Democrat" ad in more than 50 college and national papers. It's our most successful campaign ever! We will not stop talking about these important issues! This discussion will continue far beyond this election and is now more important than ever.

[Click here to give \\$25, \\$50, \\$75, \\$100, or more today to help continue this momentum.](#)

Blessings,

Jim Wallis
Executive Director/Editor-in-Chief

P.S. After you donate, there will be a link to view a list of radio, television programs, newspapers, and other publications that have covered Sojourners' work this year. We hope you'll take time to check it out and be encouraged at the growth of the progressive voice!

Sojourners, established in 1971, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to offer a voice and vision for social change. Integrating social justice and spiritual renewal, Sojourners attracts a diverse group of evangelical, Catholic, and Protestant Christians, as well as others who are united on issues of justice and peace. Sojourners provides an alternative perspective on faith, politics, and culture through its monthly magazine, e-mail services, Web site, media commentaries, and public events. Sojourners also hosts an annual program of voluntary service now in its twenty-first year.

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Many Who Voted for 'Values' Still Like Their Television Sin

By **BILL CARTER**

Published: November 22, 2004



Ron Tom/ABC

ABC's "Desperate Housewives" is second only to "CSI" among shows on broadcast TV.

ARTICLE TOOLS

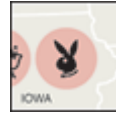
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[Chart: What's Being Watched](#)



[Map: Where Playboy and 'Will and Grace' Reign](#)

READERS' OPINIONS

■ [Forum: Join a Discussion on Television](#)



Robert Voets/CBS

A scene from an episode of the popular CBS series "CSI: Miami" depicts the investigation of murder, and no blood or cleavage is spared.



he results of the presidential election are still being parsed for what they say about the electorate's supposed closer embrace of traditional cultural values, but for the network television executives charged with finding programs that speak to tastes across the nation, one lesson is clear.

The supposed cultural divide is more like a cultural mind meld.

In interviews, representatives of the four big broadcast networks as well as Hollywood production studios said the nightly television ratings bore little relation to the message apparently sent by a significant percentage of voters.

The choices of viewers, whether in Los Angeles or Salt Lake City, New York or Birmingham, Ala., are remarkably similar. And that means the election will have little impact on which shows they decide to put on television, these executives say.

It is possible that some secondary characters on new television shows will exhibit strong religious beliefs, and an occasional plotline may examine the impact of faith on some characters' lives. But with "Desperate Housewives" and "C.S.I." leading the ratings, television shows are far more likely to keep pumping from the deep well of murder, mayhem and sexual transgression than seek diversion along the straight and narrow path.

"It's entertainment versus politics," said Steve McPherson, the president of ABC Entertainment. He dismissed the notion that program creators might be developing ideas specifically to chase voters who claimed moral values as an important issue in this election. "I have not heard an idea of that kind," Mr. McPherson said, "none whatsoever."

As much as network entertainment executives believe in taking note of trends, the rating figures from Nielsen Media Research remain their bible.

"They tell you more about creative values than anything that's in the political zeitgeist," said Dana Walden, the president of one of the largest production studios, Twentieth Century Fox Television, which produces shows like "The Simpsons" and "N.Y.P.D. Blue." "It's those values that are striking a chord with the American people," Ms. Walden said.

So if it is true that the public's electoral choices are a cry for more morally driven programming, the network executives ask, why are so many people, even in the markets surrounding the Bush bastions Atlanta and Salt Lake City, watching a sex-drenched television drama?

"Desperate Housewives" on ABC is the big new hit of the television season, ranked second over all in the country, behind only "C.S.I." on CBS. This satire of suburbia and modern relationships features, among other morally challenged characters, a married woman in her 30's having an affair with a high-school-age gardener, and has prompted several advertisers, including Lowe's, to pull their advertisements.

In the greater Atlanta market, reaching more than two million households, "Desperate Housewives" is the top-rated show. Nearly 58 percent of the voters in those counties voted for President Bush.

And in the Salt Lake City market, which takes in the whole state of Utah and parts of Nevada, Idaho and Wyoming, "Desperate Housewives" is fourth, after two editions of "C.S.I." and NBC's "E.R."; Mr. Bush rolled up 72.6 percent of the vote there.

"We say one thing and do another," said Kevin Reilly, the president of NBC Entertainment. "People compartmentalize about their lives and their entertainment choices."

Regional differences, of course, do exist in the country's entertainment choices. Mel Gibson's "Passion of the Christ" and Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" both took in staggering profits, but the busiest theaters for

Ratings for ABC's "Desperate Housewives" in selected television markets.

	RANK
National	2
Atlanta	1
Cleveland	2
New York	1
Orlando	4
Salt Lake City	4
Tulsa, Okla.	3

Rankings are for the period of Sept. 20 to Nov. 7

Source: Nielsen Media

The New York Times

"Fahrenheit" were in Democratic territory, like New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, while "The Passion" performed best in Republican states like Texas, Ohio and Florida.

But moviegoing requires active and out-of-home decision-making, and has a price attached, unlike broadcast television. Watching television has always been a passive activity, with people selecting their entertainment in the privacy of their homes.

Even on television there are modest discrepancies in the popularity of various shows. "Desperate Housewives" may make it into the top 10 in Birmingham, Ala., but in the eighth spot. And "Will and Grace," the NBC comedy with two gay main characters, ranks in the top 10 in New York but just 22nd nationally.

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God-talk and moral values

by David Batstone

Over the past week a bevy of pundits in the national media have sought to make sense of the "moral values" indicator that emerged as a crucial deciding factor in the election. No doubt about it, abortion and gay marriage were wedge issues that separated the sheep from the goats (or more accurately, the elephants from the donkeys) in the voting booth.

We would misunderstand the debate on faith and values, however, if we limit our gaze to specific moral issues. It's also critical to examine the theological worldviews that stand in conflict and guide people of faith in divergent directions.

Many evangelicals and Catholics, for instance, report that they voted for George Bush because they perceive he has a personal faith in Jesus Christ. John Kerry talks about faith; George Bush professes it. Kerry looks to faith to inform his perspective, Bush asks God to guide his steps.

Perhaps an example will help to further illustrate this point. I shared the podium at a conference in Switzerland recently with a man who works in the banking industry and identified himself publicly as a Christian. A week or so later I wrote to him, saying that it was wonderful to meet an individual who shares my engagement in the world of business and seeks to follow the path of Jesus. He responded by e-mail a few days later with the following: "On our commitments, just a clarification. My commitment is not merely to the 'path of Jesus' but also and primarily to Jesus Himself."

Why did he get nervous with my language? He is suspicious that a rational application of Jesus' teaching will take priority over a direct experience of the Almighty. In other words, Jesus is more than a great teacher, but the very presence of God.

Why, in turn, do I get nervous when I hear his response? All too often I have seen a "personal relationship with God" used to justify behavior that is a radical departure from the life of Jesus. Of course, I believe that a personal experience of God's grace is a foundation of the spiritual life. But I also believe as a Christian that I only deepen my own spiritual experience when I follow the path of Jesus.

Case in point: George Bush believes God told him to level a military strike against Iraq. Once such God-on-one directions are accepted, there is no common ground for moral discussion. After all, maybe God is speaking to him in a manner unique to his own mystical experience. That, to me, represents a dangerous theology. It places an individual's own God experience outside of the shadow of the cross.

On a different vector, it is now clear that both conservatives and liberals see morality as public. It is strange, though, how uniquely they apply their values. Conservatives tend to be economic libertarians - that is, individuals and corporations should be free to practice their economic lives without government intervention.

Hence, they revere tax cuts practically as a faith issue. Conservatives do not trust individuals to make moral decisions with their bodies - elevating same-sex marriage, abortion, euthanasia, and stem-cell research to be the central tenets of "family values."

Liberals are all in favor of regulating economic activity, on the other hand, in large part because they do not trust the avarice of either individuals or corporations. Yet they tend to be libertarians on social values, convinced that personal moral behavior that deals with sex/body is no one's business but their own. How do conservatives and liberals make sense of these contradictions in their own positions?

On yet a third vector, people of faith do not understand God operating in the world in the same way. The vast majority of fundamentalist and evangelical Christians see themselves embroiled in an apocalyptic battle against evil. They are on God's side, and they are fighting Satan's emissaries in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Hollywood.

Progressive Christians do not shy from a spiritual battle against those forces that do great damage to human dignity and the environment. But they do not see history as inevitable, nor is God hell-bent on bringing about the end of the world. While specific acts can be called evil - for instance, the massacres in the Sudan - they do not aim to color a map of the world into two hues, the children of light and the children of darkness.

All to say, Christians in the U.S. today do not simply disagree on a hierarchy of values. They read the Bible quite differently and express their faith in Jesus in radically distinct ways. I award Thomas Friedman, columnist of *The New York Times*, with the pithy phrase of the week past: We are "two nations under God."

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GWEN IFILL: Both President Bush and Senator Kerry appealed across party lines today for unity in the wake of another election that left the nation split in shades of blue and red. But in a year when gay marriage bans passed in 11 states, to what degree is the debate over values contributing to that split?

For more on that, we turn to: Rick Warren, founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, and author of the best-selling book, "The Purpose Driven Life"; author and essayist Barbara Ehrenreich-- her most recent book is "Nickel and Dimed: Surviving in Low-Wage America"; Jim Wallis, founder of Sojourners, a Christian ministry that advocates for social justice; and Morris Fiorina, a political science professor at Stanford's Hoover Institute and the author of "Culture War: The Myth of a Polarized America."

Rick Warren, we heard what the Kerry aides were saying to Margaret Warner last night about these people, we don't know who they are, and we heard what Andy Kohut just said to Ray about whether that's an overstated case. Do you believe that the country is split along values lines?

RICK WARREN: Well, Gwen, I think that in the first place, I am not at all surprised at these election results. There has been a conversation going on among churches and homes now for almost two years that the media is completely overlooking. And they missed it, and they're going

to miss it again. In fact, they're going to explain it away, just like Andy just tried to do.



The signs have all been there for at least two years that there is a cultural shift going on, and because the media is not in the churches, they don't see it. The three biggest surprises of this last year were the Passion, which was passed word of mouth through church networks, the Purpose Driven Life book, which was passed word of mouth through church network, and this election. And this was not a political election in my view. It was a cultural election.

GWEN IFILL: What do you think about that, Jim Wallis? Was it a cultural election in the way he defines it?

JIM WALLIS: I think there is a real debate and a good debate now happening in the churches about what the religious issues are, what the moral values issues really are. Is it just gay marriage and abortion? Can we shrink all of our Christian ethics and values down to one or two hot-button social issues or is poverty a moral issue, too? Is the war in Iraq, is the environment? And I think in churches, this campaign there was a broad, deeper, richer conversation.

The religious right wants to say there is only one or two issues that reflect our values, but as Rick would say, I'm sure, poverty, if there is 2000 verses in the Bible about the poor, that becomes a religious issue, as well. So I found this time a very good debate happening across the country about what the religious issues and values really are. And that will go well beyond the election.

Polarization of the electorate

GWEN IFILL: Barbara Ehrenreich, is this a debate which is properly being conducted on religion... along religious lines, this idea about whether there are values which drive the outcomes that we saw last night?

BARBARA EHRENREICH: Yes, that is part of it. I agree with what Jim just said, that we shouldn't frame this as moral values versus lack of moral values. I think most people who voted for Kerry were very much driven by a moral evaluation of the war, a moral evaluation of Bush's economic policies. There is nothing in the Bible that supports tax cuts for the wealthy along with social service cuts for the poor. That's an inversion of all those scriptural statements on poverty that Jim Wallis was just referring to.



And, yes, we do have a polarization here between a kind of religion, evangelical often fundamentalist Christianity and the notion of a more secular or at least ecumenical and tolerant society. But this kind of religious polarization is happening globally right now. Only in most places the so-called religious end of it is Islamic fundamentalists; here it is Christian fundamentalists.

GWEN IFILL: Morris Fiorina, is there polarization that exists? We looked at these numbers last night. We crunched through them. We saw that one in five people cited moral values as a major issue for their votes, and that eight out of ten of those people voted for President Bush, and then we look at that map with all those red states in the middle and the blue states on the end, does that mean that we're a hopelessly polarized nation?

MORRIS P. FIORINA: No. Not at all; I agree with Andy Kohut. There has been a lot of exaggeration here it is also true that people in the academy and the media are really missing the importance of religion and have for a long time in American politics.

But the point I want to make is it's not as if tens of millions of Americans woke up in the last two elections and decided economics doesn't matter anymore, it's all about values. Rather what's happened is the parties have become closer in economics.

They now argue about how big the tax cuts - how big the budget deficit, how big a prescription drug plan, and have gotten farther apart on values. The Republican Party has barely embraced the religious right. The Democratic Party has gotten quite secular.

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BARBARA
EHRENREICH
Author

But if you can imagine an alternative world in which John McCain was the Republican nominee and you recall he called various members of the religious right evil back in 2000 and a world in which Joe Lieberman was the Democratic nominee, a traditional values kind of guy, then I doubt we'd be having this discussion now. We have to pay attention to what elites are doing to make issues salient and to divide the population, not simply in what voters are doing.



I think the gap is greatly exaggerated. Most of the people I talked to today who were on the losing side just said, oh well, and went on about their business. I think there is a lot of room for a president to have a healing message to strike for a broader coalition.

MORRIS FIORINA
Professor

GWEN IFILL: What do you mean when you say elites?

MORRIS P. FIORINA: By elites I mean the candidates, the activists, the parties basically, the corporate parties out there, and right now the Republicans in particular have found it politically advantageous to fight on values issues. This is one of the ways in which they undermine the old New Deal economic coalition for the Democrats.

Deciding the direction of the nation's culture

GWEN IFILL: Rick Warren, I want to ask you about that. Is that what's happening here? Is this something that's been percolating all along but now the Republican Party has found a way to take advantage of it for political gain?

RICK WARREN: Well, Gwen, as Jim pointed out, the Bible talks about lots of values, and there are social values, which have to do with justice and poverty and equality and things like that, and then there are personal values, which have to do with personal morality. And, historically, liberals have championed the social values, and conservatives have championed the personal morality values.

Well, the truth is the Bible talks about both of them, and if ever there was a candidate that really espoused both he'd probably get 80 - 90 percent of the vote because what people don't understand is there are a lot of people in America who really do believe the Bible, and they're not just "religious right" or "evangelical." There are Catholics and there are main line Protestants and there are many who voted in this election.



I think the issue really was... one of the things that happened was when Judge Rehnquist got ill, it brought up the fact that presidents are only elected for four or eight years, but Supreme Court Justices serve for life, and this next president will now have between maybe two to four appointees, which will issue the future of the next 40 years.

I think a lot of people were concerned not about Iraq and the current issues. I think they were worried about where is the direction of the culture going in the next 40 years, plus I think character will always trump policy.

GWEN IFILL: But, Rick Warren, in your ministry toolbox that you send out to churches every week I imagine, you said there are five questions which every right-thinking Christian should be thinking about as they went into the voting booth.

The first one you said was: What does each candidate believe about abortion and protecting the lives of unborn children. That was your number one issue. Rick Warren says that shouldn't be the issue that necessarily exclusively that Christians should be voting on or people of conservative values.

RICK WARREN: Yeah, well, as you know, I don't endorse candidates. As I pointed out in my toolbox, which goes out to about 136,000 pastors, I said, you know, well-meaning believers, good believers can disagree on a lot of issues like Social Security, the war in Iraq, how terrorism is dealt with and things like that, but if you hold to the Bible

I am not at all surprised at these election results. There has been a conversation going on among churches and homes now for almost two years that the media is completely overlooking. And they missed it, and they're going to miss it again.

RICK WARREN
Author

as saying we do believe this Bible is actually God's word, there are some issues that for me are non-negotiable, like euthanasia and like abortion and some things like that.

Now, as it's pointed out, those aren't the only values that are out there, but they're important values, and they tend to be values that are being pressed on us right now. For instance, the issue of gay marriage, churches didn't bring up that issue. That was brought up by gays. And it was really more of a reaction than it was I think an initiation.

GWEN IFILL: Jim Wallis, a friend of mine told me that at her church last Sunday the minister got to the pulpit and without endorsing a candidate said go out and vote your values. What message does that send to the members of that congregation? Does that contribute to the church going versus non-church going divide that we saw in the exit polls, the churchgoers and regular churchgoers voting for George W. Bush and the non-churchgoers generally voting for John Kerry?

JIM WALLIS: What we said was vote all your values, not just one or two of them, particularly if they're made into partisan wedge issues. For example, what politics and the media don't often get is that religion doesn't just line up left and right.

The bishops on the Catholic side talk about a consistent ethic of life. Abortion is part of that, but the Pope opposed George Bush on Iraq. So the president of the United States defied the Holy Father on Iraq; 100,000 casualties last week were reported. That for many of us is a religious issue, too.

So what could happen here, I think Rick's right, if there was a candidate running with a strong set of personal values and then was very pro-poor, questioned, like many evangelical theologians did this time, a theology of war, they said, emanating from the highest circles of power in the country, these are evangelicals who said this, there could be a whole different kind of response to a vision that had personal ethics, very strong, but then a social justice and a commitment to peace, as well. So this doesn't go left or right. It begins to build bridges between two constituencies.



Whatever happened this time, we knew that half the population would feel crushed by the result. So maybe there is - it becomes a kind of finding common ground. How do you do political healing around what the moral values are, not just one or two, but all of our values.

[W]hat politics and the media don't often get is that religion doesn't just line up left and right. The bishops on the Catholic side talk about a consistent ethic of life. Abortion is part of that, but the Pope opposed George Bush on Iraq. So the president defied the Holy Father on Iraq; 100,000 casualties last week were reported. That for many of us is a religious issue, too.

JIM WALLIS
Christian Activist

Bridging the gap

GWEN IFILL: Barbara Ehrenreich, this wasn't only a religious split; we also saw in these polls a split between the married and the unmarried. What did you make of that?

BARBARA EHRENREICH: That's still something of a mystery. I think unfortunately one thing it speaks to, in the case of women, is that women continue to have less authority or influence within a marriage tend to be economically worn down person and accept the views of the male. I do want to add though to the question of the subject of religion. We're not just wondering, look at this politically, we're not just talking about beliefs and spirituality and faith and things like that.



We're also talking about the growth of a bureaucratic organization, a very highly organized system of churches that are not

denominational, that are evangelical, which provide services to people that government used to provide. I think people... a lot of people have lost their faith that government could actually change their economic situation. It's in church today where they're likely to get childcare or help when they're unemployed.

And, of course, the Bush policy of faith-based services fits right into that. So we're seeing something that is not just in the mystical realm of beliefs but a real infrastructure, what has become an infrastructure of the political right. And I don't think we're going to get out of this polarization very quickly. 48 percent of the population is very angry. A larger number of people than ever in history have voted against a sitting president is one way to look at it.

GWEN IFILL: Morris Fiorina, what about that? How do you begin to... if you think it's this, and you don't have to necessarily agree with Barbara Ehrenreich, but if you think it exists, how do you begin to bridge this gap that she sees?

MORRIS P. FIORINA: I think the gap is greatly exaggerated. Most of the people I talked to today who were on the losing side just said, oh well, and went on about their business. I think there is a lot of room for a president to have a healing message to strike for a broader coalition. I'm not at all sure from what we've seen in the first four years of the Bush administration that this administration plans to do any such thing. So we'll just have to wait and see.

GWEN IFILL: We heard them today, both candidates say we want to reach across the lines; we want to speak to each other, please come with me. You didn't believe that?

MORRIS P. FIORINA: No, look, talk's cheap. We heard in 2000 that I'm a unifier, not a divider. I'm a compassionate conservative. We didn't see four years of governing that way. I hope that there is a difference this time and we do see more of that side of President Bush. But I think we just have to wait and see, and I'm not really that optimistic.



GWEN IFILL: Jim Wallis, quickly.

JIM WALLIS: You know, some of those faith-based organizations who are providing services are the very ones who are now saying we can't keep pulling bodies out of the river and not send somebody upstream to see what or who is throwing them in. So they're talking about policy questions. So this is where the old left-right thing breaks down.

I think values are a good conversation for politics. It may be the future of our discussion. But it can't just be partisan values wedged in to divide people. But I think a broader sense of values, personal and social -- personal responsibility and social responsibility together are at the heart of religion. The two together will provide a powerful political vision for the future.

GWEN IFILL: Okay. Well, that was the beginning of a fascinating discussion. Thank you all very much.

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Readers write

Brad Shumate, pastor of Portland Community of Christ, Portland, Oregon, writes:

As pastor for a largely liberal congregation, I sat staring out my office window Wednesday morning, November 3, after the elections. Utterly stunned by the election outcomes and the obvious revelation that it had far more to do with "moral values" than the fact that Bush had waged an unjust war, was spending the country into the ground, and had effectively propogandized fear on so many other issues and fronts, I had absolutely no idea what I was going to say Sunday to my congregation. Jim Wallis' remarks ["Progressive faith did not lose this election," SojoMail 11/3/2004] lifted me out of my post-election stupor. His comments reminding us that it was Kerry and the Democratic Party running in this election, and not the vision of progressive, prophetic faith, helped me mobilize. "Moral values" has been hijacked for now. Kerry's vision and that of the Democratic party was indeed incomplete in this past campaign. A more complete and compelling understanding will emerge and, as Wallis counseled, people of progressive prophetic vision will be needed to fill in the missing pieces. To that end shall I be working.

Lyll Mercer, pastor of Twin City Church, Bloomington, Illinois, writes:

A number of my views conflict with yours and I have traditionally been in the "evangelical conservative Christian camp." However, in recent times God has been taking me on a journey and I wanted to thank you for the contribution of SojoMail to my faith journey. There are a number of issues where I am very much at odds with many of my conservative friends - including the death penalty and the Iraq war, simply because I cannot justify the support of these issues with scripture. I am confused as to why those who claim to believe in the sanctity of human life (and I am against abortion, by the way) do not extend this to the barbaric death penalty. Equally, I find the silence of my conservative Christian friends deafening when it comes to those innocent people in Iraq who are being killed. I have gained a great deal of compassion that has allowed me to influence those in my fellowship, and I believe that I present a balanced, biblical viewpoint of many issues to those in my congregation.

Your e-magazine helps provide me with this balance, and I wish that more conservative Christians would challenge their thinking and open their minds to the fact that hearing different views is not only healthy, but may be a way God uses to take us to new levels in our relationship with him.

Dale Perkins writes from Victoria, British Columbia:

I cannot believe the calmness of your commentary. Am I to understand it as an inflated sense of Christian fairness and balance, or do you really not believe that the future of this planet has been put in peril by the machinations

and extremism that have coalesced around President George W. Bush? To listen to his self-righteous pronouncements of being a "shining beacon of freedom" in the world is to make one wonder if there is no limit to U.S. chauvinism. And the remarkable thing is that there are so few Christians in the U.S. who are declaring that the emperor isn't wearing any clothes. Rather than balance we need to see moral outrage from our Christian brothers and sisters, and I had hoped to hear as much from Sojourners.

Greg Bilbrey writes from Robinson, Illinois:

Reading the blogs and other online comments posted by those on the losing side the day after the election, I was struck by the bitterness and rage directed toward evangelicals. If this mood is widespread, Sojourners' "God is not a Republican...or a Democrat" initiative is even more important after the election than before. People have to learn that evangelicals are not monolithic, and that we don't all conform to the caricatures and stereotypes that have often been all too close to reality. The poisonous reaction I've seen is even more evidence that the pursuit of political power by the evangelical church has done untold harm to the gospel.

Eric Getty writes from Springfield, Massachusetts:

I appreciate Jim Wallis' reminder that, as prophetic Christians, we cannot place our hope in any political party. However, I do not believe that Sojourners' perspective on the elections has been truly radical. In spite of your profession of political independence, it seems to me that you have hesitated to bring any strong criticism to bear on the Democrats or their candidate, John Kerry...until after his chances of winning the election were past. On the one hand, I believe the Democrats are the worse for your lack of boldness - if our prophetic voice is in any way redemptive, we should hope that our hearers would be challenged to act more in accordance with biblical values, and perhaps have a better chance of appealing to religious voters. On the other hand, we must never lose sight of our own vocation as Christians to be God's people - to model among ourselves an alternative to the world's way of power politics and violence. This is the calling that we are to live out as a challenge to both Republicans and Democrats, who are both, in the final analysis, cut from the same cloth of Western liberalism, nationalism, militarism, and consumerism.

Peter Barraclough writes from Sheffield, United Kingdom:

I listened with great joy to hear Jim Wallis make a truly Christian commentary on BBC Radio 4 this morning. It was so good to hear an American Christian champion the cause of peace, justice, and life on the British media when most of the attention is on the trigger-happy "religious right." The reputation of American evangelicals is detrimental to the cause of Christ here in the U.K. and I fear that we evangelicals over here will start getting tarred with the same brush, but Jim did a great service to the church here in the U.K. by what he said this morning.

Patti Flanagan writes from Cleveland Heights, Ohio:

It is disturbing that so many people look to the government to provide moral structure for the country through ever more restrictive laws, rather than understanding that the morality of the U.S. is comprised of the values and virtue of each individual and how those values and virtue are lived out in every community.

Frankly, I believe that the free market/corporate-defined culture is largely to blame for the degradation of U.S. society. I find it disturbing that citizens talk about moral values while enthusiastically supporting the very corporations that are in large part responsible for this social degradation. The steady diet of death, cheap sexuality, and coarse language pouring across our airwaves is not good for anyone. Yet every day, we Americans let these huge corporations determine, create, and spread an increasingly debased version of popular culture through our public airwaves, where it contributes to the cheapening of human life and the elimination of civil discourse.

If people want to vote their values, shouldn't they also vote with their pocketbooks? Turn off your TVs and radios,

go out into your community, and lead by example!

Elizabeth Entwistle writes from Oneonta, New York:

With abortion a divisive issue in this election and among the readers of Sojourners, I have some practical advice: those concerned about abortion should do something to address its root causes. In doing this, both pro-life and pro-choice advocates could unite to work for positive change that creates a woman- and child-friendly society. Both women's and children's lives are valuable and we cannot have a continual argument over which one of them is more important.

Boomerang is an open forum for all kinds of views that do not necessarily represent those of Sojourners. Want to make your voice heard? Include your name, hometown, and state/province/country in a concise e-mail to: boomerang@sojo.net. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

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Dear Laurie, Lyn, Eric, Steve and Friends

A few more observations on the election. This time I'll be more succinct.

First, unfortunately, the move-somewhere-else solution won't help if this admin drags us into world wide economic collapse - as is Bin Laden's goal. Nor does it help with increasing worldwide environmental disaster - or the fallout if there were any kind of nuclear attack.

The let-them-go-to-hell-and-burn- in-their-own-holocaust attitude doesn't help either. It only plays into their hands. But also it make you the moral equivalent of passive Germans during the rise of Nazism. I don't want that kind of morality on my conscience!!

I believe that the only moral choice is to be informed, join other like minded people and fight against this corruption. If you think you are beaten, you are!! We all will die someday, but when I go, I want to have a good conscience.

So here are several important things to note in the don't-overreact-but-become-informed department. I'll give the highlights of three articles. Also attached is the article about Bonhoeffer. If you want to read them in full, they are attached.:

1. From "Clinical Depression, Howard Kurtz of Wa Post, Analysis of the 2004 election"

<><> "I grew up in Missouri and most of my family voted for Bush, so I am going to be the one to say it: The election results reflect the decision of the right wing to cultivate and exploit ignorance in the citizenry. I suppose the good news is that 55 million Americans have evaded the ignorance-inducing machine. But 58 million have not."

<!--[if !supportEmptyParas]--> <!--[endif]--> "Democrats said President Bush's defeat of Senator John Kerry by three million votes....."

2. From "Liberal Christians Challenge 'Values Vote'" By Alan Cooperman Washtn. Post Staff Writer Wed Nov 10, 04 Battling the notion that "values voters" swept President Bush to victory because of opposition to gay marriage and abortion, three liberal groups released a post-election poll. in which 33 percent of voters said the nation's most urgent moral problem was "greed and materialism"

and 31 percent said it was "poverty and economic justice." Sixteen percent cited abortion, and 12 percent named same-sex marriage.

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The poll found that 42 percent of voters cited the war in Iraq as the "moral issue" that most influenced their choice of candidates, while 13 percent cited abortion and 9 percent same-sex marriage

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According to Perriello, liberal religious groups registered 500,000 new voters, made 400,000 get-out-the-vote phone calls, and raised \$1.75 million for newspaper and radio ads during the campaign. But he said the post-election poll found that 71 percent of voters had heard from the religious right while 38 percent said they had heard from the religious left.

3. from "Democrats Gaining a Foothold in Texas" Increasing Hispanic Population Is Credited With Diversifying Winners of Local Races" By Sylvia Moreno Wa Post Staff Writer, Nov 10, 2004

DALLAS, Nov. 9 -- Lupe Valdez is a woman, a Hispanic, a Democrat and a lesbian -- and, come Jan. 1, she's entering the ranks of Texas good ol' boys. Valdez is becoming Sheriff Lupe.

It speaks also of a political trend in one of Texas's largest urban counties: a growing Democratic and Latino electorate. In one of the most Republican states four years ago and this presidential election, President Bush's margin of victory was relatively small in Dallas County. In 2000 an unknown, under financed Democratic candidate for district judge lost by less than a percentage point, and in 2002 two female Hispanic Democratic candidates for district judge fell just short of winning. Then, last week, more than 600,000 voters turned out, electing Dallas County's first Hispanic district judge and its first Hispanic sheriff, both Democrats and both women.

"Dallas has been viewed as the beachhead, where we start turning the state back Democratic," said Susan Hays, chairwoman of the Dallas County Democratic Party.

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Clinical Depression Howard Kurtz of Wa Post Analysis of the 2004 election

By Howard Kurtz
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, November 9, 2004; 8:29 AM washingtonpost.com

"I grew up in Missouri and most of my family voted for Bush, so I am going to be the one to say it: The election results reflect the decision of the right wing to cultivate and exploit ignorance in the citizenry. I suppose the good news is that 55 million Americans have evaded the ignorance-inducing machine. But 58 million have not."

"Democrats said President Bush's defeat of Senator John Kerry by three million votes.....

I've been trying to figure out why liberal writers and true-blue-staters are so down in the dumps.

It's not just losing a close election (especially when the exit polls had you believing your guy was headed for victory). Democrats have lost five of the last seven White House races, except for Clinton's two runs, going back to 1980.

It's not just that so many of them can't stand Bush and can't believe that a president with his record won a second term.

It's not just that their nominee was a Vietnam war hero up against a guy who never saw combat and they still found themselves playing defense on national security and whether Kerry deserved his medals.

It's not just that the Democrats had plenty of money to spend (unlike the Gore campaign) and shattered their own turnout record (unlike Gore) and still lost.

It's not just that they control nothing in Washington at the moment, except for the mayor's office, and even he is having trouble getting his baseball-stadium plan through.

It's more visceral, a sense that the red states are now running the country and they are totally left out. A sense that their values (or lack thereof) are under fire. A sense that believing in abortion rights and gay rights is now seen as out of the mainstream. A sense that America is not the country they thought it was.

The LAT's Michael Kinsley got at this the other day:

"So yes, OK, fine. I'm a terrible person -- barely a person at all, really, and certainly not a real American -- because I voted for the losing candidate on Tuesday. If you insist -- and you do -- I will rethink my fundamental beliefs from scratch because they are shared by only 47% of the electorate.

"And please let me, or any other liberal, know if there is anything else we can do to abase ourselves. Abandon our core values? Pander to yours? Not a problem. Happy to do it. Anything, anything at all, to stop this shower of helpful advice. "There's just one little request I have. If it's not too much trouble, of course. Call me profoundly misguided if you want. Call me immoral if you must. **But could you please stop calling me arrogant and elitist?"**

Not that there aren't some arrogant and elitist people on the left (and the right, for that matter). **But what about the 51 million people who voted for Kerry? They don't all live in New York and California, you know. Some of them even live in Texas.** Liberals complain that there has almost been an attempt to marginalize them, to portray them as out-of-touch buffoons. Their guy lost the election, **but the media should resist the urge to paint the losing side in any election as cultural losers.**

Looks like we've left one name off the list of possible '08 contenders:

"While Senator John F. Kerry is 'profoundly disappointed' with losing his presidential race last week, it is 'conceivable' he will run again in four years, his brother and political confidant, Cameron F. Kerry, said yesterday," reports the Boston Globe.

"In the meantime, the former Democratic nominee will work through the Senate and perhaps a newly formed political action committee to ensure that Democrats have a superior ground organization in 2008, his younger brother said."

Since Adlai Stevenson, though, the Dems have not nominated losers a second time.

Another 2008 contender could be seeking a new job, notes the New York Post:

"Former presidential candidate Howard Dean -- the one-time front-runner for the Democratic nomination whose campaign went down in flames following his screaming concession speech in Iowa -- is considering a new job as party chairman.

"'He told me he was thinking about it,' said Steve Grossman, a former chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Grossman said he 'strongly urged' Dean to go for the job."

National Review Editor Rich Lowry sees the Dems in denial:

"It is extraordinary that liberals constantly forget about these voters, since their entire political strategy is based on them -- getting around them, that is. The liberal reliance on the courts to effect social change is entirely driven by the fact that most of the country is not keen on social liberalism. Indeed, last Tuesday's biggest loser was the Massachusetts supreme court. In its eagerness to slam gay marriage down the throats of Massachusetts -- and, by extension, the rest of the country -- it prompted a populist backlash that benefited President Bush.

"All eleven state constitutional amendments banning gay marriage passed last week. All but two passed with more than 60 percent of the vote. In the crucial swing state of Ohio, support for the anti-gay-marriage amendment juiced up turnout in the GOP south and west of the state, and nudged swing voters in the Appalachian southeast Bush's way. According to one estimate, one-fourth of Ohio voters identified themselves as born-again Christians, and they voted for Bush by a 3-1 margin.

"Liberals will try to dodge the import of these results. Already there are complaints about the supposed stupidity of voters concentrating on moral issues when there are so many more urgent concerns. What about global warming? The minimum wage? But for many people, faith is an existential commitment. Expecting them to put their religious convictions aside in the voting booth -- especially when they consider those convictions under assault by unelected judges -- is simply to misunderstand faith's power."

Lots of buzz about this NYT column by Bob Herbert on uninformed voters:

"I think a case could be made that ignorance played at least as big a role in the election's outcome as values. A recent survey by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland found that nearly 70 percent of President Bush's supporters believe the U.S. has come up with 'clear evidence' that Saddam Hussein was working closely with Al Qaeda. A third of the president's supporters believe weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq. And more than a third believe that a substantial majority of world opinion supported the U.S.-led invasion.

"This is scary. How do you make a rational political pitch to people who have put that part of their brain on hold? No wonder Bush won.

"The survey, and an accompanying report, showed that there's a fair amount of cluelessness in the ranks of the values crowd."

Novelist Jane Smiley, writing in Slate, also blames dummies:

"I grew up in Missouri and most of my family voted for Bush, so I am going to be the one to say it: The election results reflect the decision of the right wing to cultivate and exploit ignorance in the citizenry. I suppose the good news is that 55 million Americans have evaded the ignorance-inducing machine. But 58 million have not."

And then there's this radical solution, according to the Washington Times:

"Secession, which didn't work very well when it was tried once before, is suddenly red hot in the blue states. In certain precincts, anyway.

"One popular map circulating on the Internet shows the 19 blue states won by Sen. John Kerry -- Washington, Oregon, California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Maryland and the Northeastern states -- conjoined with Canada to form the 'United States of Canada.' The 31 red states carried by Mr. Bush are depicted as a separate nation dubbed 'Jesusland.'"

Citing MSNBC commentator and former Moynihan aide Lawrence O'Donnell, the paper says: "The idea isn't just a joke; one top Democrat says, 'The segment of the country that pays for the federal government is now being governed by the people who don't pay for the federal government.'"

A new civil war! Now there's a decent plot for the media to start hyping.

American Prospect's Michael Tomasky plumbs the meaning of "values":

"The great values debate has commenced.

"Four camps have emerged thus far. There's the camp that says, essentially, change the subject -- Democrats have to win back values voters by fighting the morals argument with economic populism. Second, there's the triangulation camp, which says Democrats have to win them back by closing the 'culture gap,' which would presumably entail taking a sterner line against, for example, gay marriage. Third, there's a hybrid camp, arguing that Democrats have to reach values voters by finding a way to couch populist messages in moral rhetoric. Finally, there's the values-were-overblown-by-the-media camp. All have a point, in their own way, but all have made the same mistake of assuming that values voters are monolithic.

"Before Democrats even start having this argument in earnest, they need to define its terms and be clear on a very important point. Values voters are not monolithic. They are, to coin a word, duolithic. There's the religious right, and then there are voters who are religious. They are not the same thing. The former are not persuadable; they want to extinguish modernity, they privilege mystical belief over physical evidence, and they will never vote Democratic. They are about a quarter of the population, and there's a similar quarter of the population who will never vote Republican, so they can at least be fought (and fighting is the proper concept with respect to this cohort) to a draw.

"But somewhere in the remaining 50 percent are voters who are deeply religious but not in any way members of the religious right. They can have qualms about gay marriage without wanting to go back

to Victorian morality. They can find themselves disturbed by the way Democratic politicians talk about abortion without wanting all women to be housewives. (Indeed, they can be disturbed by the rhetoric while still supporting the notion that abortion should remain an option.) These voters are the ones Democrats must try to reach."

Can Bush afford to be generous? The New Republic's Gregg Easterbrook poses the question:

"It is in the moment of victory when acting magnanimous makes the best impression. Bush needs to go on a magnanimous offensive, to earn good feelings and good relations that may prevent the knives-in-the-back that plagued the last two reelected incumbents. Bush needs to reach out to Democrats, and not just have a few to the White House for sandwiches--he needs to praise the people he defeated, and do so warmly. Because America's standing in the world is so low, Bush needs to go on a charm offensive with world leaders, praising them and praising other nations. I'd love to see Bush make a tour of European capitals, plus Moscow and Tokyo, giving speeches lauding other nations--including France!--and saying how much America respects and admires them.

"Bush will never run for office again, but the next few months may be the most important of his political life: They will determine whether his second term will be constructive and successful, or unravel as did the second terms of the last two reelected incumbents. Right now, when Bush is strong and basking in victory, is the best possible moment for him to be magnanimous to Democrats, to the 56 million Americans who voted for someone else, and to the larger world. Second terms are not easy: They are fraught with peril, and recently have all but consumed two master politicians, Reagan and Clinton. If Bush wishes to avoid being the third straight president to be consumed by a second term, he must do what the previous two did not--reach out with kindness, and mean it."

Josh Marshall examines the flap over Arlen Specter saying (whether as a warning or a recognition of reality) that anti-abortion judges are not going to be confirmed for the high court:

"Evidently, in the interim, Specter got a call letting him know that if he wanted the Judiciary Committee Chairmanship, he'd better recant. And quickly. And so he did.

"At this point, to use judicial jargon, the White House had already forced Specter to enter into a non-custodial relationship with his testicles. But now the ante is being upped.

"James Dobson, one of the most powerful leaders of the religious right, now says he doesn't want Specter as Chairman no matter what. 'He is a problem,' said Dobson, 'and he must be derailed.'

"I have a hard time believing that Specter will actually be turned aside while he is so loudly protesting his willingness to toe the party line. But it puts even more pressure on Specter to be a down-the-line supporter of every judicial nominee the president sends up to the Hill.

"This raises two issues. First, how much room will remain for the moderate GOP senators and how much freedom will they have to deviate from the White House line which, predictably, is now moving even more decisively to the right. Second, how much de facto control will the White House and the president have over the internal governance of the Senate under Bill Frist?"

Andrew Sullivan counsels restraint:

"We have all learned that this president's biggest mistakes have occurred when he was convinced he was invincible. Success in Afghanistan led him to construct a war-plan for Iraq that was far too optimistic. Success in the initial phases of the Iraq war led him to the 'Mission Accomplished' embarrassment. A clear victory in this election - but no landslide - has now apparently led him to contemplate Clarence Thomas as Supreme Court [chief] justice." This according to Drudge, at least.

"And we're also told by Karl Rove that 'if we want to have a hopeful and decent society, we ought to aim for the ideal, and the ideal is that marriage ought to be, and should be, a union of a man and a woman.' By inference, the hopes of gay couples to belong to their own family and society are somehow non-existent; and the commitment of one gay person to another is somehow 'indecent.' On 'Meet The Press,' Rove also argued that even civil unions backed by 'a few local elected officials' should be banned. Bill Bennett must be thrilled. I had hoped that this president might use his victory to unite. But he is dividing more aggressively than ever."

Ron Brownstein does the math and says the Dems need to widen the battlefield:

"The lesson seems unavoidable. Democrats need a nominee who can effectively compete for more of the country than Kerry did -- especially socially conservative regions such as the South and rural Midwest. That would give the Democrats more paths to an electoral college majority. A nominee with more appeal in the red states might also create a climate that enables the party to seriously contest more House and Senate seats.

"The red and blue map of electoral results vividly captures the point. If Bush, as is likely, holds his lead in New Mexico, Kerry would have been reduced to three enclaves: the Northeast and New England, the upper Midwest (where he held Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota) and the West Coast. . . .

"That imperative seems certain to raise the 2008 profile of Democrats who have won elections in regions the party needs to put back into play -- such as governors Tom Vilsack of Iowa (the rural Midwest), Bill Richardson of New Mexico (the desert Southwest) and especially Mark R. Warner of Virginia (the South)."

Sign of the times: An ad for ConservativeMatch.com orders: "Stop Dating Liberals!"

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Democratic Burial Rites

By Howard Kurtz

Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday, November 8, 2004; 8:30 AM

From every corner of the media empire, the explanations come fast and furious:

The Democrats were clueless on moral values. John Kerry was a lousy candidate. A northerner can't win anymore. The Bush team was better at manipulating the press. No one trusts the Democrats on national security. The gay marriage issue badly hurt the party. The Democrats need to move right, or left, or south, or undergo a personality transplant, or change the Constitution so Bill Clinton can run again.

But if 70,000 votes had shifted in Ohio, wouldn't journalists be floating similar theories about President Bush and the Republicans?

"We love doing the death of the parties and the death of great movements," says Roger Simon of U.S. News & World Report. "It's just a good, sexy story to say, 'Are the Democrats through?' If we didn't write about process, my God, we'd have to start writing about policy."

Jonah Goldberg of National Review says, "There are three or four days after every election where the clay is still malleable and everyone wants to pound it before it hardens into conventional wisdom. There's this furious battle for everyone to impose their own meaning on the election returns." The less glamorous reality, he says, is that "Bush got more people to the polls and no one thought he could."

Given Bush's comfortable popular-vote victory and the Democratic losses in both houses of Congress, it was inevitable that the media would shift into What It All Means mode after Kerry conceded. The search for cosmic meaning, ultimate truth and second-day headlines is encoded in the journalistic DNA.

What gets "overwritten," says Time's Karen Tumulty, "is whether it was this pollster's advice or that strategist's advice that sunk the guy. It's a story that's just impossible to resist. It is catnip to a political reporter. The gold standard in our business is the untold tale."

But although journalists differ on whether the post-election analyses are overblown, some believe they fell short in one key respect.

"Bush did a very good job of creating some wedge issues on the moral values front," says CBS correspondent John Roberts. "That was a real surprise, something we didn't catch on to until late in the game. We all kind of missed the boat on that."

Journalists "don't understand red-state America," says Newsweek's Howard Fineman. "I'm an indicted co-conspirator. . . . Most people in what is left of the big media live and work in blue-state America, and that shaped our view of the election."

The sudden focus on "family values" comes from the 22 percent of voters in exit polls who named that as their top issue, followed by 20 percent who chose the economy. But as Simon notes, "all that is based on the same flawed exit polls" that journalists are criticizing for a tilt toward Kerry. And how many are willing to tell pollsters that moral values *aren't* important?

Goldberg, a card-carrying conservative, says that since his side won, it's pundits on the left who are taking their hand-wringing to a higher level: "Liberals need to come up with grand theories. Their explanations are far more existential. They get to be very literary and metaphorical and Freudian and flowery."

Throughout the long season, journalists were viewed very differently by each campaign. The Bush team was a relentlessly disciplined outfit that excelled at returning phone calls but gave reporters little of the whispered sniping or backstage color on which the media thrive. The president did few interviews, in keeping with his record low number of televised news conferences, and advisers objected to fact-checking pieces by major news organizations. His operatives put out releases criticizing individual journalists. Vice President Cheney, who barred New York Times staffers from Air Force Two, called one Times report "outrageous" and said the press is "oftentimes lazy."

In the New Republic, Bush adviser Mark McKinnon likened the media to "dangerous zoo animals."

"We just didn't get the sense that the press was ever going to be our friends," McKinnon says in an interview. "We were not going to get more mileage out of going out to dinner with reporters, hanging out in bars and doing more schmoozing." Citing the botched CBS story on Bush's National Guard service and the Times report on missing Iraqi ammunition, McKinnon says they concluded "that we weren't going to get a lot of breaks."

The Kerry campaign was friendlier to reporters but, for months, more disorganized at responding to queries. Tensions simmered over the summer when the candidate went six weeks without answering questions from

his traveling press corps. Endless pieces were written about strategy debates and power struggles within the campaign, often fueled by unnamed aides.

"There was a presumption from August on that Bush would win the election," says Joe Lockhart, one of several Clinton White House veterans hired for the final stretch. "And what comes with that perception is a different way of looking at the candidate and how you cover him. If you think Kerry is going to lose, then if three or four new people are brought in, the story will be written as a staff shakeup out of weakness, as opposed to a strong campaign adding new talent. He was treated as someone who was a long shot."

When Kerry spoke to a group, Lockhart says, he would be depicted as trying to compensate for lack of support. "It's very important in a campaign not to be perceived as a loser," he says.

Now that Kerry is officially a loser, the can-Democrats-survive pieces will fill the headlines for some time, competing only with the Hillary-in-'08 speculation.

After Fox News called Ohio for President Bush on Election Night, John Kerry's aides began phoning top executives at the other networks to urge them to hold off, while White House adviser Karl Rove pressed them to join Fox in making the call. CBS, ABC and CNN made no projection in Ohio, and NBC had called Ohio before the Democrats reached the network.

"It's perfectly appropriate to call a network and make that case," says Kerry adviser Howard Wolfson, when "we have a set of facts and figures at our disposal to help them make the right call."

Rove, as first reported by the New York Times, urged Fox analyst Michael Barone after 2 a.m. to persuade Fox to call New Mexico for Bush, which would have given him enough electoral votes to win. "It had no effect at all," says Fox News Senior Vice President John Moody.

After NBC awarded Ohio to Bush, says political director Elizabeth Wilner, Kerry campaign manager Mary Beth Cahill called to say it was "a mistake," and Bush campaign chief Ken Mehlman called to say NBC shouldn't back off its projection. It didn't.

Spokesmen for the other networks say the lobbying changed no minds. "Both campaigns called, and we didn't pay attention to either of them," says CBS News Vice President Linda Mason, citing concern about 250,000 provisional ballots in Ohio.

Fox News anchor Neil Cavuto is showing no remorse for an on-air crack about Osama bin Laden wearing a Kerry button that infuriated John Kerry's campaign.

Cavuto told viewers last week that his "thin-skinned" and "humorless critics seem to have selective memory." Recalling all the Democrats he's had on his show, Cavuto dismissed "threats from Democrats who now say they will boycott my show. I say, go ahead. Boycott me. Fair and balanced, I'll continue to invite you, and I'll let my viewers know when you decline -- each and every time you do."

Jimmy Breslin, in his last regular column for Newsday on Nov. 2, on a Kerry victory: "I am so sure that I am not even going to bother to watch the results tonight. I am going to bed early."

Meanwhile, have you noticed that every day the papers have been writing some version of the same story: Are the Democrats brain-dead, or just dead?

"The Democratic Party emerged from this week's election struggling over what it stood for, anxious about its political future, and bewildered about how to compete with a Republican Party that some Democrats say may be headed for a period of electoral dominance," says the [New York Times](#).

"Democrats said President Bush's defeat of Senator John Kerry by three million votes had left the party facing its most difficult time in at least 20 years. Some Democrats said the situation was particularly worrisome because of the absence of any compelling Democratic leader prepared to steer the party back to power or carry its banner in 2008."

None of this is helping Hillary, says the [Los Angeles Times](#):

"Reeling from their party's loss in the presidential election, some key Democratic financiers and strategists say they have learned a clear lesson: Next time around, no Northeasterners need apply.

"The blue-state party needs a face from a red state if it is going to expand beyond its base on the two coasts and preserve its hold on the Upper Midwest, where its long-standing appeal to voters has become tenuous, these insiders say.

"Their voices -- if they become ascendant as the Democratic Party undertakes a round of soul-searching after Tuesday's losses by presidential nominee John F. Kerry and key Senate candidates -- could dampen prospects for Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), who has been frequently mentioned as a prominent White House contender in 2008.

"The concerns about the party's direction also could lift lesser-knowns such as Govs. Mark R. Warner of Virginia and Michael F. Easley of North Carolina, who are widely seen as effective communicators of a populist Democratic message in Republican-leaning states."

A few, like [the Boston Globe](#), are gaming the prospects for the second term:

"Bush's full-speed-ahead approach, despite his strong victory last Tuesday, has yet to take into account serious hurdles that may be beyond his control. The deficit is soaring. Some congressional Republicans are less eager to reorganize Social Security. The continuing combat in Iraq, not to mention the ongoing threat of terrorist attacks, threatens to consume much of the political oxygen he might need to push a bold agenda across Capitol Hill."

[The Philadelphia Inquirer](#) examines the new '04 shorthand:

"For the better part of a year, the presidential campaign of 2004 was all about Iraq, terrorism and jobs. Then came Election Day.

"Suddenly, it's all about the 'values voters.'"

"The conventional wisdom was transformed - and a new buzz phrase created - by a single exit-poll question.

"Voters were asked which of seven issues was most important to them. Twenty-two percent chose 'moral values,' more than any other option. And 79 percent of those people backed President Bush. Now comes the battle over how to interpret that result."

Weren't those the same exit polls that had Kerry by 3?

[The New Republic's Michelle Cottle](#) nails the hype factor:

"The bigger annoyance was the media's predictable, tedious insistence on painting Tuesday's events in the most earth-shattering terms imaginable.

"With media types, no event is self-contained or mundane. It must be a watershed moment or part of a burgeoning trend or the sign of something monumentally sinister to come. Even a truly seismic event like September 11 can't be allowed to stand on its own. It must signal 'the end of irony' or some incredible horse [feathers] like that. Thus, Tuesday's Very Bad Day for Democrats can't be just that. It must have some sort of historic, enduring import that will give the chattering class something to chatter about for at least another few weeks.

"By far the most annoying post-election line I'm hearing over and over again is how remarkable it is that George W. Bush managed to become the first presidential candidate since 1988 to win a majority of the popular vote. Oh my God! How remarkable! Let's see: This means that, with his 51 percent of the vote, W. managed to break the long, non-popular-majority string of exactly two presidents--Bill Clinton and himself. Of course, to make the comparison meaningful we need to factor in that, unlike 1992, 1996, and 2000, this

year there was no serious third-party challenger peeling away votes. But still, W. managed a better electoral margin than one whole president other than himself. How ever will he handle the burden of it all?

"Then there's all the gasping about the Republicans gaining seats in the House. How on earth did that happen? Well, since several of the seats were gained in Texas, it probably has something to do with Tom DeLay's spending the past couple of years bending laws in order to carve up the Lone Star State into congressional districts more twisted than Bill O'Reilly's fantasy life."

[Josh Marshall](#) says Bush will dictate the pace:

"For at least the next two years, the President can get passed almost anything he wants to. His congressional majorities are now sufficiently padded that he can even afford a few Republican defections. He simply doesn't need Democrats for anything.

"And that means approaching most legislative battles not with an eye toward preventing passage or significantly altering legislation, but placing alternatives on the table that the party will be able use as contrasts to frame the next two elections. In other words, their only remaining viable alternative is to be an actual party of opposition."

[Dan Kennedy](#) is on about Step 2 of a twelve-step process:

"For a while I kidded myself into thinking that George W. Bush wouldn't be able to nominate just any right-wing lunatic he pleases to the Supreme Court. After all, the Republicans' 55-44 edge in the Senate is short of the 60 votes it takes to end a Democratic filibuster. Besides, moderate Republican senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine, Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island (who may become a Democrat), and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania are presumably not going to stand by while Bush tries to use the courts to undo Roe v. Wade.

"Well, that was yesterday. Charlie Savage reports in the Boston Globe that Specter has backed off his earlier threat to block any anti-choice nominee after his fellow Republicans threatened to deny him the chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee...

"And Josh Marshall notes that the Bushies are already talking about getting rid of that little old 60-vote impediment. Marshall is way too easy on these thugs, writing that the 60-vote rule is 'subject to a lot of very valid criticism.' Come on, Josh. The rule is there for a reason: the idea is that neither side gets to do anything and everything it wants unless it has an overwhelming majority, which the Republicans clearly do not have. If the Republicans want to get rid of the filibuster, let them elect five or six more members in 2006. (I shouldn't have said that. Maybe they will!)

"We live in a constitutional system. The rights of the minority are supposed to be balanced with the will of the majority. If Bush is going to use his very real but very slim victory to take away our civil and personal liberties, it's up to the Democrats - and to the few remaining Republicans of conscience - to fight him and his allies like crazed weasels."

Think that anti-gay marriage amendment will fade with the election season over? Not so, reports the [Washington Times](#):

"The Bush administration and Republican leaders yesterday signaled that a domestic agenda including a constitutional amendment on marriage will dominate the congressional calendar, even though foreign policy and the war in Iraq dominated the presidential campaign. . . .

"Karl Rove, senior White House political adviser, said 'absolutely' Mr. Bush will continue to push for a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman. 'We cannot allow activist judges to overturn that,' Mr. Rove told 'Fox News Sunday.' 'We cannot allow activist local elected officials to thumb their nose at 5,000 years of human history and determine that marriage is something else.'"

[Slate's Tim Noah](#) strains for a touch of bipartisanship:

"Today is Say Something Nice About Bush Day. The American people have spoken, and today all must pay homage. (Tomorrow -- next week at the latest -- we can go back to insulting him.) Characteristics that grated throughout the election and much of his first term are today redefined in more positive ways. Is Bush ideological and stubborn? I saw Tom Brokaw on NBC praising Bush for his manly 'resolve.' I've thought hard all day about how I might contribute to this round-robin of reconciliation without completely sacrificing all self-respect. Here goes.

"I like the fact that Bush, whenever he has occasion to invoke America's tradition of religious tolerance, always has a kind word for atheists. I am an atheist. (Please, no e-mails in response trying to save my soul. I consider my atheism to be a personal matter between me and my nonexistent Creator). . . .

"If today weren't Say Something Nice About Bush Day, I might wonder how praising the patriotism of people who 'choose not to worship' became part of Bush's boilerplate. I might wonder whether Karl Rove slipped that in subtly to remind the Christian right that there are a lot of brie-eating, New York Times-reading non-churchgoers out there, and that they always vote for Democrats, and that that's a good reason to give your all for the God-fearing Republican you see before you."

And if you've OD'd on politics for awhile, the LAT has an amazingly detailed reconstruction of how the Kobe Bryant case fell apart.

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Liberal Christians Challenge 'Values Vote'

By Alan Cooperman Washington Post Staff Writer Wednesday, November 10, 2004; Page A07

Battling the notion that "values voters" swept President Bush to victory because of opposition to gay marriage and abortion, three liberal groups released a post-election poll...

The poll found that 42 percent of voters cited the war in Iraq as the "moral issue" that most influenced their choice of candidates, while 13 percent cited abortion and 9 percent same-sex marriage

According to Perriello, liberal religious groups registered 500,000 new voters, made 400,000 get-out-the-vote phone calls, and raised \$1.75 million for newspaper and radio ads during the campaign. But he said the post-election poll found that 71 percent of voters had heard from the religious right while 38 percent said they had heard from the religious left.

Liberal Christian leaders argued yesterday that the moral values held by most Americans are much broader than the handful of issues emphasized by religious conservatives in the 2004 presidential campaign.

Battling the notion that "values voters" swept President Bush to victory because of opposition to gay marriage and abortion, three liberal groups released a post-election poll in which 33 percent of voters said the nation's most urgent moral problem was "greed and materialism" and 31 percent said it was "poverty and economic justice." Sixteen percent cited abortion, and 12 percent named same-sex marriage.

But the religious leaders acknowledged that the Christian right had reached more voters than the Christian left. Some said it was time for "moderate and progressive" religious groups, as well as the Democratic Party, to rethink their positions.

"One of the things a few of us are talking about is a reassessment of how the Democrats deal with an issue like abortion -- could there be a more moderate ground, where even if they retained their pro-choice stance, they talked about uniting pro-choice people together to actually do something about the abortion rate?" said Jim Wallis, editor of the liberal evangelical journal Sojourners.

If the Democratic Party were to "welcome pro-life Democrats, Catholics and evangelicals and have a serious conversation with them" about ways to reduce teenage pregnancy, facilitate adoptions and improve conditions for low-income women, it would "work wonders" among centrist evangelicals and Catholics, Wallis said.

In a conference call with reporters to discuss the election and the new poll, Wallis and three other Christian leaders argued that many religious Americans do not fall neatly into liberal or conservative camps.

They contended that there is a vast religious middle, including "progressive evangelicals," "resurgent mainline Protestants" and "socially conservative African Americans," that could be attracted by biblically based "prophetic" appeals to make peace, fight poverty and spread social justice.

"The values that were promoted most within the conservative religious community were almost always tied to a fear factor, and that was not necessarily the case in the Democratic strategy, and I would say should not be the case," said the Rev. Welton Gaddy, head of the Interfaith Alliance.

The nationwide telephone poll of 10,689 voters was conducted by Zogby International for the Catholic peace group Pax Christi, the New York-based civic advocacy group Res Publica and the Washington-based Center for American Progress, a think tank allied with Democrats. It had a margin of error of plus or minus one percentage point.

The poll found that 42 percent of voters cited the war in Iraq as the "moral issue" that most influenced their choice of candidates, while 13 percent cited abortion and 9 percent same-sex marriage. Asked to name the greatest threat to marriage, 31 percent said "infidelity," 25 percent cited "rising financial burdens" and 22 percent named same-sex marriage.

Tom Perriello, an organizer at Res Publica, said the poll shows that "while there may be a solid 20 percent who are very focused on abortion and gay marriage, for most Americans of faith, there are other moral issues of greater urgency, and that's where the religious middle is."

Throughout the presidential campaign, opinion polls showed that frequent churchgoers were far more likely to support Bush than his Democratic rival, Sen. John F. Kerry. Exit polls on Election Day found that 22 percent of voters cited "moral values" as the key to their vote, and they tilted 4 to 1 toward Bush.

The answer to this "God gap," Perriello said, "is that progressives need to embrace the deep moral critique that people are looking for and make that case on poverty and Iraq, and not just try to talk more about God or outpace the Republicans on gay marriage or abortion."

According to Perriello, liberal religious groups registered 500,000 new voters, made 400,000 get-out-the-vote phone calls, and raised \$1.75 million for newspaper and radio ads during the campaign. But he said the post-election poll found that 71 percent of voters had heard from the religious right while 38 percent said they had heard from the religious left.

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from <http://www.ushmm.org/bonhoeffer/b1.htm> 11/5/04

(Web site for The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer	USHMM	Dietric h Bonhoe
Dietrich Bonhoeffer	USHMM	

ffer

text by Victoria Barnett

"The ultimate question for a responsible man to ask is not how he is to extricate himself heroically from the affair, but how the coming generation shall continue to live."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, After Ten Years (December 1942)



Bonhoeffer in the courtyard of Tegel prison (summer 1944)
source: *Christian Kaiser Verlag*

In the years since his death, the Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer has become widely known as one of the few Christian martyrs in a history otherwise stained by Christian complicity with Nazism. Executed in the Flossenbürg concentration camp on April 9, 1945 for his role in the resistance against Hitler, Bonhoeffer's letters and theological works still influence Christians throughout the world.

In many respects, however, Bonhoeffer's legacy is complex. His experience under Nazism thrust him into profound conflict with much of his religious tradition, raising questions that he was unable to resolve before his life was ended. These questions continue to confront those who explore Bonhoeffer's relevance today.

This is particularly true with regard to Bonhoeffer's understanding of the Christian-Jewish relationship. In his political insights and public opposition to the Nazi regime, Bonhoeffer certainly went beyond most of his colleagues and compatriots. Still, much of his theological work reflected traditional Christian attitudes toward Judaism. Like most Christians of his generation, Bonhoeffer believed that God's special destiny for the Jewish people included their eventual acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

As a result, Christian and Jewish scholars evaluate Bonhoeffer's legacy quite differently. For many Christians, his resistance against Nazism and the profound insights in his writings offer new ethical and theological models. Some Jewish scholars, however, contend that Bonhoeffer acted on behalf of his church and was driven by his own deep sense of patriotism, not for the sake of the European Jews. Because of this, and because the Christian tradition was his central point of reference, much of Bonhoeffer's thought seems irrelevant, at best, to the Jewish community.

How should we understand Dietrich Bonhoeffer's role? What were his motives? What is his legacy to us in the aftermath of the Holocaust?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau on February 4, 1906, the sixth child of Karl and Paula Bonhoeffer. His father was a prominent professor of psychiatry and neurology; his mother was one of the few women of her generation to obtain a university degree.

Paula Bonhoeffer



The Bonhoeffer family, March 1943, five days before Dietrich's arrest. Dietrich is on far left. Rüdiger Schleicher, Klaus Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Perels, also in the picture, were executed in 1945 as well.

source: *Christian Kaiser Verlag*

chose to educate her children in their early years at home, observing that "Germans have their backbones broken twice in life: first in the schools, secondly in the military."¹ Her emphasis on a strong moral and intellectual character was shared throughout the Bonhoeffer family. This became evident in the tragic aftermath of the failed attempt to kill Adolf Hitler, when four members of the immediate family were executed: two sons (Dietrich and Klaus) and two sons-in-law (Hans von Dohnanyi and Rüdiger Schleicher).

From the beginning, Bonhoeffer's interests took him beyond the traditional realm of German academia, and his intellect and theological achievements won him early renown. He completed his studies in Tübingen and Berlin

with a 1927 dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio* under Reinhold Seeberg. In 1928, he served as vicar in the German parish in Barcelona; in 1930, he completed his theological exams and studied at Union Seminary in New York. He also became active in the fledgling ecumenical movement,

making international contacts that would prove crucial to his work in the resistance. In 1931, Bonhoeffer began teaching at the theological faculty in Berlin.

With Hitler's ascent to power at the end of January 1933, Bonhoeffer's church entered the most difficult phase in its history. Since its inception, the German Evangelical Church (the main Protestant church in Germany) had been shaped by nationalism and obedience to state authority. Influenced by these traditions, and relieved that a strong new leader had emerged from the chaos of the Weimar years, many Protestants welcomed the rise of Nazism.

In particular, a group called the *Deutsche Christen* ("German Christians") became the voice of Nazi ideology within the Evangelical Church, even advocating the removal of the Old Testament from the Bible. In the summer of 1933, citing the state Aryan laws that barred all "non-Aryans" from the civil service, the *Deutsche Christen* proposed a church "Aryan paragraph" to prevent "non-Aryans" from becoming ministers or religious teachers.

The ensuing controversy almost split the German Evangelical Church. Despite widespread anti-Semitism and enthusiasm for Nazism, most church leaders steadfastly supported the "Judenmission" — the evangelization, conversion and baptism of Jews. But the *Deutsche Christen* were already claiming that Jews, as a "separate race," could not become members of an "Aryan" German church even through baptism — a clear repudiation of the validity of Gospel teachings.

Protestant opposition to the Aryan paragraph, then, was not based upon disagreement with Nazi racial policies, but upon an important element of Christian doctrine. Nonetheless, the issue led church leaders into a public debate about one of the most crucial aspects of Nazi ideology. In this initial battle to retain church independence, most church leaders avoided the deeper issue: that the civil rights of all German Jews had been attacked. Indeed, many who opposed the church Aryan paragraph otherwise supported the regime's restrictions on German Jews.

Bonhoeffer bitterly opposed the Aryan paragraph, arguing that its ratification surrendered Christian precepts to political ideology. If "non-Aryans" were banned from the ministry, he argued, then their colleagues should resign in solidarity, even if this meant the establishment of a new church — a "confessing" church that would remain free of Nazi influence. This was a minority view; most German bishops wanted to avoid antagonizing the Nazi regime and to keep their regional churches together.

The strongest opponents of Nazi interference in the churches, including Dietrich Bonhoeffer, eventually did form the "Confessing Church." But, while some Confessing Christians moved toward open resistance against the regime, more moderate Protestants (inside and outside the Confessing Church) made what they saw as necessary compromises. As the Nazi dictatorship tightened its hold, the Confessing Church itself became paralyzed.

In an April 1933 essay, "The Church and the Jewish Question," Dietrich Bonhoeffer was the first to address the new problems the church faced under the Nazi dictatorship. Despite some astonishing insights, this early essay poses many problems for contemporary readers. Although he called upon the church to defend the victims of state persecution, his defense of the Jews was marked by Christian supersessionism — the Christian belief that Christianity had superseded Judaism, in history and in the eyes of God. "The history of the suffering of this people, loved and punished by God, stands under the sign of the final homecoming of the people of Israel to its God," wrote Bonhoeffer. "And this homecoming happens in the conversion of Israel to Christ."²

But Bonhoeffer also realized that Nazism posed a very different challenge for the churches, and it was here that he broke new ground. The church was not just being called to clarify its attitudes toward Judaism and the people of Israel, he noted. The real question was how the church would judge and respond to the Nazi state's actions against the Jews.

On this point, Bonhoeffer was explicit about the church's obligations to fight political injustice. The church, he wrote, must fight evil in three stages: The first was to question state injustice and call the state to responsibility; the second was to help the victims of injustice, whether they were church members or not. Ultimately, however, the church might find itself called "not only to help the victims who have fallen under the wheel, but to fall into the spokes of the wheel itself" in order to halt the machinery of injustice.

The essay revealed the two levels that would shape Bonhoeffer's thought and action throughout the Third Reich. On the one level, he saw that the totalitarian doctrine of Nazism demanded a political response from the churches. Completed in the days following the April 1, 1933, boycott of Jewish businesses, *The Church and the Jewish Question* was an explicit ethical commitment to all those persecuted by Nazism. During the same week, he and his brother Klaus met with American theologian Paul Lehmann and drafted a message to U.S. Jewish leader Rabbi Stephen Wise.³ Bonhoeffer clearly viewed the measures against the Jews as a civil liberties issue (some scholars believe that he was influenced here by his close friendship at Union Seminary with an African American colleague, Frank Fisher, and his direct observation of Fisher's experiences under racism.)

On a theological level, however, Bonhoeffer still believed that the "Jewish question" would be resolved ultimately through the conversion of the Jews. He never explicitly abandoned this view, which was widespread throughout the Christian church — even in the ecumenical circles that became most active in helping the Jewish refugees of Nazism.



Bonhoeffer during the 1932 Gland ecumenical conference.
source: *Christian Kaiser Verlag*

By the fall of 1933, the *Deutsche Christen* had gained control of many Protestant church governments throughout Germany. Their policy of excluding those with "Jewish blood" from the ministry was approved, in September 1933, by the national church synod at Wittenberg. The next day, Bonhoeffer sent a telegram to an ecumenical organization in Switzerland: "Aryan paragraph now in effect, please work out memorandum against this and inform press at once."⁴

Bonhoeffer had realized immediately the importance of informing the international Christian community about what was occurring within Nazi Germany. Within the German Evangelical Church, a power struggle began over which faction would represent the church internationally. Bonhoeffer began to send regular messages to his ecumenical friends, who — not least because of their respect for Bonhoeffer — refused to accept the official church's version of events in Germany.

Bonhoeffer's activities on this front intensified rapidly. Several days before the Wittenberg Synod, he attended the ecumenical World Alliance meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, where he "spoke completely openly about the Jewish question, the Aryan paragraph in the church . . . and over the question of the future of minorities" in Germany. Prompted by Bonhoeffer, the delegates passed a resolution condemning the Nazi actions against the Jews:

We especially deplore the fact that the State measures against the Jews in Germany have had such an effect on public opinion that in some circles the Jewish race is considered a race of inferior status.⁵

Bonhoeffer took a copy of the resolution to the German consul in Sofia, to prove that Nazi policies toward the Jews were damaging Germany's image abroad. The leaders of the German Evangelical Church in Berlin angrily demanded that he withdraw from ecumenical activities; Bonhoeffer refused. The Sofia resolution even prompted a protest from the German Foreign Office:

Provocation against Germany because of the Jewish question has been taken into circles that were previously genuinely favorable to us, and has been expressed loudly and publicly at the very moment when Germany, because of the upcoming meeting of the League of Nations, will probably be viciously attacked because of the Jewish question. . . .⁶

The criticism only strengthened Bonhoeffer's resolve. Personally, too, he grew more decisive. In April of 1933, he had been asked by his sister and her husband, Gerhard Leibholz, to conduct the funeral of Leibholz's father. The Leibholzes, although converted Jews, were affected by the Nazi racial laws; Gerhard Leibholz had already lost his teaching position. The elder Leibholz had belonged to neither church nor synagogue, however, and Bonhoeffer, warned by his church superintendent not to conduct the funeral of a non-church member, refused.

By November, Bonhoeffer regretted this. In a moving letter to his sister and her husband, he apologized: "How could I have been so terribly afraid? . . . I must ask you both to forgive me my weakness. Today I know for certain that I should have done otherwise."⁷

In the fall of 1933, Bonhoeffer turned down a parish post in Berlin, saying that he could not accept at a time when his "non-Aryan" colleagues were barred from such positions. He decided to accept a position at one of the German-speaking congregations in London. In a letter to Karl Barth, Bonhoeffer wrote that he suddenly found himself in opposition to all of his friends and had decided that "it was time to go for a while into the desert."⁸ He left Germany despondent over his church's cowardice.

Bonhoeffer's London parish became a haven for Christian and Jewish refugees, and a close friendship grew between Bonhoeffer and Bishop George Bell of Chichester. Bonhoeffer continued his battle for ecumenical recognition of the Confessing Church, achieving victory at the August 1934 World Alliance conference in Fanö, Denmark, where the ecumenical organization decided, despite protests from the official German church, to recognize delegates from both German church factions. In late 1934, Bonhoeffer's London parish and several other German parishes in England withdrew from the official German Evangelical Church, declaring their support for the Confessing Church.

In April 1935, Bonhoeffer returned to Germany, where the Confessing Church was under increasing pressure from the Gestapo. Yet most church leaders, including some in the Confessing Church, not only refused to openly oppose the Nazi regime, but criticized their colleagues who did. As a result, more radical Confessing Christians found themselves embattled on all sides.

In September, 1935 — less than two weeks after the announcement of the Nuremberg Laws, which eliminated all remaining civil rights for Jews — Confessing Church leaders convened in the Berlin suburb of Steglitz. In their midst was a small group of activists who had already begun, in small ways, to help Jews. One was a Berlin deaconess, Marga Meusel. While most who sought her

help were Jewish Christians, Meusel was angered by the persecution of all those affected by Nazi racial laws.

In fact, Meusel had written a memo to church leaders about the plight of "non-Aryan" Christians in May 1935. But four months later, she rewrote it, referring no longer to "non-Aryan Christians," but to all Jews, and denouncing the church's silence on the matter. She particularly condemned those who saw the Nazi persecution of the Jews as God's will: "Since when has the evildoer the right to portray his evil deeds as the will of God?"² It was imperative, she continued, that the church publicly oppose these measures and help everyone — Christian or not — affected by them.

Berlin church superintendent Martin Albertz fought to put Meusel's statement on the Steglitz Synod agenda. But, most delegates wanted to avoid the issue entirely; several, in fact, threatened to leave the meeting if the "Jewish question" came up. Some even proposed a resolution explicitly supporting the state's right to regulate Jewish affairs; this, of course, would have given the Confessing Church's sanction to the Nuremberg Laws.

Bonhoeffer had just begun teaching at Finkenwalde, a Confessing Church seminary; now he received an urgent request from his friends in Berlin to come to Steglitz. Their efforts at the synod met with mixed success. Meusel's memorandum and the deeper issue of what was happening politically in Nazi Germany were avoided; the debate bogged down on the old issue of whether baptized Jews could remain in the church. The synod finally passed a statement supporting the baptism of Jews; Meusel and Bonhoeffer condemned its failure to move beyond a very limited concern for "non-Aryan" Christians.

Bonhoeffer returned to Finkenwalde and quietly continued to train young clergy in the Confessing Church. Most of his students were prevented by the official church from getting positions; their future was uncertain. Gestapo pressures culminated in the August 1937 Himmler Decree, which declared the education and examination of Confessing ministry candidates illegal. In September 1937, the Gestapo closed Finkenwalde; by November, 27 of Bonhoeffer's former students had been arrested.

Bonhoeffer spent the next two years secretly travelling from one eastern German village to another to supervise his students, most of whom were working illegally in small parishes. Under growing Gestapo observation, he limited his public pronouncements. The Gestapo banned him from Berlin in January 1938, and in September 1940 issued an order forbidding him from speaking in public.

During this period, Bonhoeffer's own theological views were deepening, even as he searched for what his practical role as a Christian in Nazi Germany should be. The relationship between Judaism and Christianity became a focal point in his teaching and own reflection. At a Confessing Church meeting in October 1938, he asked his colleagues whether, "instead of talking of the same old questions again and again, we can finally speak of that which truly is pressing on us: what the Confessing Church has to say to the question of church and synagogue?"¹⁰ Here, for the first time, he described Judaism using the same terminology as he did for Christianity: he spoke of the equivalence, in God's eyes, of "church and synagogue," of the Jews as "brothers of Christians" and "children of the covenant."¹¹ These were radical statements at a time when the leaders of the German Evangelical Church were denying all links between Christianity and Judaism (culminating in the establishment, in 1939, of the "Institute for the Research and Removal of Jewish Influence on the Religious Life of the German People.")

On November 9, 1938, when the synagogues burned throughout Germany, Bonhoeffer was with students in the hinterlands of Pomerania. Only a telephone call the next day alerted them to what had happened; Bonhoeffer immediately traveled to Berlin to learn more details. Upon his return, his students began debating the theological significance of the *Kristallnacht*. As one later recalled, several of the students "spoke of the curse which had haunted the Jews since Jesus' death on the

cross." Bonhoeffer rejected this vehemently, stating that the pogrom was a case of "sheer violence" that only revealed Nazism's "godless face."¹²

Bonhoeffer's response to the November 9 pogrom reflected his growing conviction of the significance, for Christians, of the persecution of the Jews. In the margin of his Bible, he wrote the date November 10, 1938 (it is the only date marked in his Bible) next to the words of Psalm 74, verse 8: "They said in their hearts, let us plunder their goods! They burn all the houses of God in the land . . . O God, how long is the foe to scoff? How long will the enemy revile your name?"

Outside of Germany, too, ecumenical leaders abroad were shifting their focus from the problems of the Confessing Church to the intensifying persecution of the Jews. After the November pogrom, the three leading ecumenical organizations in Geneva sent a joint letter to their member churches, stating:

At the moment when the terrible persecution of the Jewish population in Germany and in other Central European countries has come to a violent climax, it is our duty to remind ourselves of the stand which we have taken as an ecumenical movement against anti-Semitism in all its forms.¹³

The ecumenical movement had, until then, focused on the plight of "non-Aryan" Christian refugees; now this focus broadened. The letter urged churches to press their governments to take in more Jewish refugees. Both in Geneva and in New York, ecumenical leaders, for the first time working together with Jewish organizations, intensified their efforts on behalf of refugees.¹⁴ Contacts were established with the "Grüber Office," a Berlin organization led by Confessing pastor Heinrich Grüber, which eventually helped 2,000 refugees leave Germany. Several Confessing Christians who had been forced to leave Germany worked actively with their former colleagues in Germany.

One was Adolf Freudenberg, who had fled to Switzerland in 1939, and directed the World Council of Church's special office for church refugee work there. In New York, Henry Smith Leiper, Executive Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches, sought to establish a similar office on American soil. Leiper, who had visited Germany in 1932 because of his concerns about anti-Semitism, was an outspoken critic of Nazism. He had called for a boycott of the 1936 Olympics because of the Nuremberg Laws, and worked closely with Christian and Jewish groups in the U.S. to spread awareness about what was happening in Nazi Germany.

By 1939, then, the international ecumenical community was closely watching developments in Nazi Germany. At the same time, the first meetings among the German resistance were taking place. Among them was Hans von Dohnanyi, a lawyer married to Bonhoeffer's sister. Dohnanyi, a passionate enemy of Nazism, moved in 1939 from the Justice Department to the Armed Forces High Command office of Military Intelligence. This office, led by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris and Major-General Hans Oster, soon became a center of the conspiracy.

In early 1939, Dohnanyi approached Bonhoeffer about possible resistance against the regime. It was a time of personal uncertainty for Bonhoeffer, who was seriously considering leaving Germany. From Dohnanyi, he knew that war was imminent. He also knew that he could never fight in Hitler's army. Troubled, he wrote to friends in the ecumenical movement, who soon responded with a formal offer of a position at Union Seminary in New York. Bonhoeffer left for New York in June 1939.

Believing that Bonhoeffer wished to leave Germany permanently, Henry Smith Leiper asked him to lead the Federal Council's office to help refugees in the U.S. By the time he arrived in the U.S.,

however, Bonhoeffer had decided that his place was in Germany. His misgivings were confirmed by a letter he received from Freudenberg, who told him that the Federal Council position should be given to a permanent emigrant. Bonhoeffer wrote Reinhold Niebuhr:

I have come to the conclusion that I made a mistake in coming to America. . . I shall have no right to take part in the restoration of Christian life in Germany after the war unless I share the trials of this time with my people.¹⁵

His return to Germany in July 1939 marked a new stage in his life: active resistance. Virtually the only man in a position to do so, Bonhoeffer became the crucial link between international ecumenical efforts and the German conspiracy against Nazism.¹⁶

Even before the war, German opponents of Hitler had considered overthrowing the Nazi regime; the first unrealized plan to overthrow Hitler was during the Sudeten crisis in 1938. A successful coup, however, depended upon the support of key German military figures; their readiness to take such risks diminished with the German victories in Poland and on the western front. This was maddening to civilian conspirators like Dohnanyi, who distrusted the military leaders and condemned their reluctance to move decisively against Hitler.

German resistance groups hoped to convince their Allied contacts of their seriousness and win foreign support for the overthrow of the Nazi regime. In October 1940, Dietrich Bonhoeffer began work as an agent for Military Intelligence, supposedly using his ecumenical contacts to help the cause of the Reich.

In reality, he used his contacts to spread information about the resistance movement. In trips to Italy, Switzerland, and Scandinavia in 1941 and 1942, he informed them of resistance activities and tried, in turn, to gain foreign support for the German resistance.

Dohnanyi and others put great hopes in Bonhoeffer's foreign contacts, particularly in Bishop George Bell's ability to carry messages to the high levels of British government. In turn, Bonhoeffer tried to convince his foreign contacts that some Allied signal of support for the German conspiracy was crucial, since only this would convince the German military to move against Hitler.

The Allied governments greeted these peace feelers with distrust. The military members of the resistance wanted guarantees of German territorial integrity and of their own position as leaders of a postwar Germany. Allied diplomats and leaders found this demand unacceptable, and never seriously considered support for a German coup. In January 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt announced that only the unconditional military defeat of Germany would eradicate Nazism.

Despite these rebuffs, the conspirators continued to plan Hitler's downfall. But, as prospects for an early coup dimmed, some also searched for ways to help the victims of Nazism. On September 5, 1941, all Jews in the Reich were ordered to wear the yellow star; the first deportations to the East from Berlin occurred on October 15. On October 17 or 18, Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Perels, a Confessing Church lawyer, wrote a memo giving details of these first deportations.¹⁷ The memo was sent to trusted German military officials in the hope that it might move them to action, as well as to ecumenical contacts and the U.S. State Department.

In Dohnanyi's office, a plan was conceived to get Jews out of Germany by giving them papers as foreign agents. The plan was not that far-fetched: in several cases, Nazi intelligence offices had used Jewish agents as a cover. There was also a steady underground business that helped Jews emigrate in exchange for large sums of money.

The Dohnanyi/Canaris effort, termed "Operation Seven," eventually spirited fourteen Jews out to Switzerland (eleven had converted to Christianity; three had not).¹⁸ Bonhoeffer used his ecumenical contacts to arrange visas and sponsors for the group.¹⁹ At his instigation, one of those rescued was Charlotte Friedenthal, who had worked with Marga Meusel and with the Grüber office.

Friedenthal reached Switzerland in August 1942; the others arrived in September. Dohnanyi's office immediately began plans for a new rescue attempt; before anything could come of these, the Gestapo traced the vast amounts of money that the conspirators had sent abroad for the emigrants. The arrests of Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer followed in April 1943.

Initially, the Gestapo treated it as a corruption case, accusing Dohnanyi and his colleagues of lining their own pockets. They soon realized, however, that the rescue attempt was the tip of a larger iceberg. Bonhoeffer was charged with conspiring to rescue Jews; of using his travels abroad for non-intelligence matters; and of misusing his intelligence position to keep Confessing Church pastors out of the military and for his own ecumenical work.

The Gestapo report on Bonhoeffer described him as "completely in the opposition."²⁰ Still, even after the failure of the July 20, 1944, attempt to kill Hitler, it was months before the Nazis realized the extent of Bonhoeffer's involvement in resistance circles.



In October 1944, Bonhoeffer was moved to the dreaded Gestapo prison in Berlin; in February 1945, he was taken to Buchenwald. He was then moved to the Flossenbürg concentration camp where, on April 9, he was hanged, together with Canaris, Oster, and other conspirators. Hans von Dohnanyi and Klaus Bonhoeffer were executed days later.

The SS doctor who witnessed Bonhoeffer's death later recalled a man "devout . . . brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds . . . I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God." Bonhoeffer sent one final message, to George Bell in England: "This is the end, for me the beginning of life." ²¹

Bonhoeffer's cell in Tegel.
source: *Christian Kaiser Verlag*

