



FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

## Of Meat Axes and Purists

John E. Stoos  
January 1998

*The statues of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. (Psalms 19:8)*

*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure. (James 3:17a)*

Our legislative halls have become an "Alice in Wonderland" where purity is now a vice and anyone suggesting surgery for the patient with advanced cancer is a barbarian. As Christians, we have an obligation to be active in the political realm; however, proposing real Biblical solutions to the major problems facing our nation will provoke attacks from all sides.

In California, conservatives began the battle to reform welfare with the right agenda: restore the Biblical principle of valuing work and end government sponsored-dependency. Of course, the liberals put a former social worker in charge of the reform committee. The battle lines were drawn, and soon the state budget was weeks overdue. Finally, a few brave conservatives began running radio ads explaining what was going on and soon thereafter the liberals announced that they were willing to "compromise."

A conference committee drew up an agreed-on list of reforms, everyone shook on the deal and it appeared that conservatives had won an impressive victory. The conservative leadership still managed, however, to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

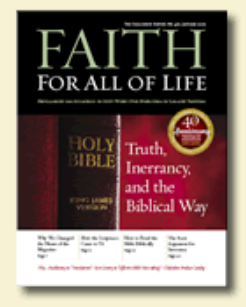
First, they sent liberal staff off to draft the details of the reforms, creating over four hundred pages of legal jargon to implement the few simple reforms. The final product actually moved California to the Left of the reforms signed by President Bill Clinton! When this was pointed out to the conservative leadership, they simply said it was the best they could get!

Next came their favorite legislative game: Announcing major reforms, while voting to do just the opposite. There were the obligatory debates, and when the dust had settled, only Senator Dick Mountjoy and Assemblyman Tom McClintock were willing to vote NO, after speaking against the phony reforms in the public debates.

What did these brave members get for their principled stand? As expected, they were vilified from the Left for being extremists, but the real surprise was the attack from fellow conservatives. When the Republican leader rose to defend the phony reforms, he proudly stated that they were good reforms supported by everyone but the "purists" in both parties. How far we have come from the principled, Biblical debates that used to fill our legislative halls! Saying that someone is pure is now a derogatory remark.

Heavy attacks will also be leveled on anyone who proposes eliminating counterproductive programs like bilingual education. In California some 23% of school children have a limited understanding of the English language. The educrats have designed a program only a bureaucrat could love. Teach children in their native language for subjects like math, history and science, with only a half-hour of English instruction each day. The result is what you would expect: about 95% of the children fail to learn English well enough to transition into regular classes.

For years, the educational industrial complex has blocked any efforts to reform these failed programs. A California businessman and an award-winning Hispanic teacher have teamed up to put an initiative on next June's ballot. Their "English for the Children" initiative would end these state-mandated programs and return control to the parents.



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So-called Hispanic leaders, and even some conservatives, have denounced the initiative, saying that while we need to fix the existing programs, that there is no need to use a "meat-ax" approach. The "meat-ax" attack has become the favorite of those who are unwilling, or simply afraid, to solve the problems caused by today's intrusive civil governments. It may have been liberal Republican Governor Wilson who began this tactic when he referred to the historic property tax reductions in Proposition 13 as a meat-ax approach.

This mode of attack is often effective because people usually picture using a meat cleaver to do brain surgery. However, it is important to remember that the imagery can cut (and cleave!) both ways. Would anyone care to try using a scalpel to butcher a 2,000 pound steer? Most problems caused by civil government like welfare dependency or bilingual education do not need minor adjustments, but rather major overhauls or outright elimination.

As Christians we need to ask ourselves, Does the Lord want us to be pure or to "cut deals"? Should we pretend that so-called reforms are not what they really are? The answers should be obvious, and I would encourage any activists or legislators to proudly wear the label of "purist" and to always boldly present a Biblical analysis.

How about engaging in the large battles and proposing comprehensive solutions? Again, I think the Bible is on the side of the real warriors. The next time someone raises a concern about meat axes, refer him to the story of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter four. The Lord's commandment was simple: "Hew down the tree and cut off his branches."

After King Nebuchadnezzar experienced the Lord's "axmanship," he was a disciplined and repentant King: "Now, I Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble." Sounds like good medicine for today's politicians, and our nation.

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