

## GOD'S WILL IS THAT THERE BE MORE OPTIONS & FEWER CHOICES

# 2192 27 Oct 87  
ELLIOTT THINKSHEETS  
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On the beam overhead between our livingdining area & the kitchen is the Hermes-Mercury statue that was on the livingroom mantel of the Wells-Fargo mansion (from which my Grandfather Volk, buying it, took it-- the statue, not the mantel, not the mansion). H.-M., you remember, spent his time lolling around Olympus except when the gods/goddesses dispatched him on various missions to humanity. Homer represents him as making so many trips that (my image) it was as if he were a needle stitching heaven & earth together (not a bad analogy for the work of saints, & of religious leaders in general).... The OT's complaint against the false prophets is that, having no word from the LORD, they pretend that they do....When you are an official prophet (a fearful oxymoron!), you announce God's will, hoping (1) that you've heard the appropriate word from the LORD & (2) that the LORD (a) will deliver you from pretending to have heard the word when you know you haven't & (b) will forgive you when you unwittingly announce, as the word, something that isn't....This Thinksheet, as you can see by its title, wears the mantle of prophecy: it announces God's will vis-a-vis options & choices. Further, the title looks like an oracle's dark saying: how can I lose? I'm covered either way, right? Wrong, as you'll see by my distinction between "options" & "choices."

1. "One's food is another's poison" (to inclusive-language an old, tolerance-promoting bromide). Well, as you can see by this letter (CAPE COD NEWS, 14 Oct 87), my revelation is another clergy's "opinion," & vice versa. Over & over the people inquire, "Is there any word from the LORD?" & the prophets, authentic & bogus, reply, "Yes, there is, & if you hold still, I'll lay it on you." And of course the prophets lay it on one another, as this Osterville pastor is laying it on me. (It takes me 20 minutes to bike to that town, which is, as America increasingly is, posh/povertous, Gold Coast + "slums," the middle class' term for itself in comparison with the filthy rich along the ocean horseshoe-beach which is continuous with Craigville. That pastor is responding to my published letter, reproduced in #2188.)

## A matter of opinion—not God's will

To the editor:

After reading Mr. Willis Elliott's letter to the editor of Sept. 30, I felt compelled to respond. Although Mr. Elliott refers to himself as a "Christian theologian" I feel it is extremely important that the community served by your newspaper be advised that Mr. Elliott's opinions are not in accordance with the will of God as expressed in the Bible nor are they indicative of a follower of Christ. Conversely, Mr. Elliott's opinions are in direct contrast to the teachings of God's word, the Bible.

While it is true, as Mr. Elliott suggests, that God has by design given individuals freedom of choice, it is completely erroneous

to assume that every choice one makes is therefore in accordance with the will of God (Proverbs 16:25). God's word does not condone the taking of a human life, developing or mature, simply because an individual has the ability to choose to do so (Exodus 20:13). Consequently, to choose abortion is undeniably out of the will of God. A fetus is a living, growing God-created human life which is precious to God (Psalm 139:13-16). Thus, to believe that God would condone abortion so that the earth might find "relief" from overpopulation is unquestionably wrong.

Furthermore, an unplanned pregnancy and subsequent birth of a child does not have to be the

"life crippling" experience or "burden to society" claimed by Mr. Elliott. Many couples have prayed for and found God's blessings fulfilled by a teenager or woman who chose to have their child adopted—a God-honoring solution (Psalm 27:10).

Mr. Elliott's position that the choice of abortion is for the good of the individual, the biosphere, and society and therefore is the will of God is unsubstantiated and in reality, totally false. If Mr. Elliott would like to truly discern the will of God, I suggest he open God's word, the Bible, and read it (Psalm 119:160).

Pastor Gary Coleman  
Faith Baptist Church  
Osterville

How wrong can you be? Read only the underlinings in this letter & you'll agree nobody could be wronger than I!

over

Yes, the cultural level of the letter is as low as its dudgeon is high. We have here an instance of the scribistic mentality that doomed Jesus. Also at a low cultural level, Hagar the Viking is unaware of the internal contradiction in his view of "peace"; our awareness is what makes it funny--then, as we think of our own betrayals, not so funny:

by Dik Browne

## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



2. Tom Wolfe celebrates his options as a rich American author. A current party-joke of his is "I'd like to move out of Manhattan and into Conn., but I'd have to live there." But in speaking at Brown U. a few days ago, at a "Weekend of Choice" at which the right to choose between drugs & sobriety was being debated, he said "I would like for my two young children not to have to face as many choices as you." ("People" syndicated, 27Oct87; my underlining). "The next century, I think, may be known as the 20th century's hangover" from having become overconfident in breaking the old rules of behavior, toppling the old assumptions within an order whose foundation was religious & whose superstructure was under the control of religion: "no temporal authority" can put this necessary ground-order "into your lives." "Only an ethic" can do that, and society is now being pressured to relearn the art of civilization--beginning with attention to the ethical foundation.

3. Here, now, is my published reply to the pastor whose published letter 14 days earlier beat me over the head with the Bible (CCN 28 Oct 87):

## The debate rages on

To the editor:

The letter in today's *Cape Cod News* attacking me for announcing God's will in my Sept. 30 letter to the editor has put me in a political-philosophical mood.

It's occupational. I'm always going around announcing God's will, because it's one aspect of my ordination. Anthropologically, people set aside, ordain, certain reps to discern and announce the will of heaven or of the gods or of God, as it's variously put. Finding out who these reps are is not difficult for cultural analysts. For example, Marx so serves the communist world; and, as one can see in NBC-TV's current "The Right to Die," Freud is at least one of these in the secular West.

Democracy is the political process and structure expressing the common conviction that you and I, in our judgments, are "under God" (as our Pledge of Allegiance has it), under a Wisdom beyond our claims and even our aims. This is the heart of "civil religion" and also of civility, of the respectful and hopeful treatment of one another in light of our common human limitations, perversities, and potential.

My attacker, who identifies himself as "Pastor," is also one of these. So we should expect that in his letter he's announcing God's will, and so he proves to be doing.

Naturally, he demotes my revelation to mere "opinion," to replace it with his revelation, which he--again, naturally--identifies as that of the Holy Book, the same Holy Book I claim as the literary source of my revelations. In his view, I'm no "follower of Christ. Elliott's opinions are not in accordance with the will of God" but "are in direct contrast to the teachings of God's word, the Bible."

Say I, abortion is often the will of God. Says he, "to choose abortion is undeniably out of the will of God," I am "unquestionably wrong," in my position, and "totally false."

Biblical interpretation, which is my central professional competence, is not what I'm about in this letter, so I'll not comment on my attacker's opinions thereon.

What I'm about here is twofold: (1) Noting both the necessity and the difficulties of the decisional process on high-tension, complex public issues that strike to the root of the human sense of right/wrong and sacred/profane; and, (2) Rejecting both cynical relativism and pious dogmatism. Since beings stand where they sit, let's try harder to sit together.

human

Willis Elliott  
Craigville