



Random Thoughts, Vol. 6

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If this "Random Thoughts" column is new to you, then here is a quick introduction. Below is a collection of my own observations, thoughts, and insights which may or may not prove to be a blessing to others. Each of these is not long enough to warrant an entire article on its own, but begged to be written down nonetheless.

The Allure Of Pursuing Other Means

1/23/2012

I do not believe that the task of the church in the world is to seek to bring the Kingdom of God to earth by legislation, or to seek to make culture, government, or the lives of unbelievers more moral. I do not believe that the answer for our nation's ills rests in electing the right candidates, or getting someone in office who shares our moral convictions.

The answer is the **gospel**. Hearts are changed not by convincing politicians to outlaw abortion, but by getting the gospel to those who would engage in premarital sex. We don't need laws defining marriage as between one man and one woman; we need God to do a sovereign work of grace in drawing homosexuals to Himself so that they will repent of their sexual immorality and have their hearts changed. The true answer is the **gospel!**

Yet, ironically, there is a move in our nation **away from** preaching the Word and contending for truth, and toward ecumenical activities and working for political change. Christian leaders are more interested in joining forces with imams, rabbis, priests, Mormons, and even atheists who adhere to conservative moral values, in order to effect political, cultural, legislative, or moral change. The only way to hold together such a diverse religious/political group is to avoid anything which might divide or dissolve it. That means that the **gospel** gets the short shrift. The moment that Jesus and His exclusive claims are introduced to the conversation,

men will run to the darkness.

So if the **gospel** is the answer, why is it being ignored by "Christian leaders" instead of being kept the central issue? Why are they more interested in political posturing than in powerful proclamation? What is the allure that draws men away from faithful proclamation and toward the emphasis on political/legislative activity?

I believe the explanation rests partly in the fact that involvement in these other things offers a sense of accomplishment that preaching the **gospel** does not.

The fruit that comes from faithful proclamation of the truth is not always instantly apparent. I can spend thirty hours a week preparing a message to preach on a Sunday morning. Once the message is preached, all I have to show for my efforts is a manuscript and an audio recording. On Monday morning I begin the process *all over again*. After several weeks of consistent effort, it's entirely possible that I can look at all of this and asked myself, "What have I done? What lasting effect is there for all my work?"

Encouraging words are welcome and appreciated, but what physical change, what lasting effect am I able to immediately see? Often, the answer is, "None."

On the other hand, many of these other activities offer an immediate, tangible result. As a result of hundreds of hours of work, one might be able to point to a petition with thousands of signatures, a piece of legislation sitting on a senator's desk, a new law, a new policy, an executive order, or a ballot initiative. People joining your cause, letters written to legislators, and protests all offer immediate, tangible results and thus a feeling of accomplishment.

Those results can deceive us into thinking that our time is well spent, our efforts are rewarded, and that our involvement is making a difference. Judged from a purely pragmatic standpoint, those efforts are far more effective than **merely** preaching the **gospel**.

That is the devilish allure of sidelining the **gospel** for the sake of involvement in a hundred lesser things.

Goals for a Grandpa

4/3/2012

Directly in front of my desk is a shelf full of theology books. There is one series that stands out more than the rest simply by virtue of its size--**The Works of John Owen**. This sixteen-volume set averages over five hundred pages of fine print each. John Owen was truly a gifted and prolific author!

Every time I glance above my computer monitor I see those books. They call out to me, begging to be read. For years I have put it off. As time went on, every glance at those rich theological tomes increased my guilt, which was the product of my neglect. This year I had had enough. I decided that I would pick up **Volume 1** and start reading.

I determined that the best way to make my way through such a massive body of work was to set a reasonable goal of one volume per year. That would enable me to read other books that I want to get to and still make my way through the complete works of John Owen.

Sixteen volumes. I started doing the math. By the time I have finished reading through the works of John Owen, I will be 55 years old! My youngest child will be 24. I will, in all likelihood, have **grandchildren** by then! Grandchildren! I could have grandchildren from my youngest child!

Maybe I won't read through those sixteen volumes after all. I'm not quite ready for grandchildren.

The "Evolution" of Barack Obama

By the time you read this, the fact that a sitting President of the United States has come out in favor of same-sex marriage will be old news.¹ On May 9, 2012, sitting President Barack Obama came out of the closet on the closet issue.² This should have come as no surprise to anyone. When running for the Senate in Illinois, Barack Obama was openly in favor of "gay marriage."³ Then, when

- 1 The transcript and some of the video of the interview with ABC reporter Robin Roberts can be seen at <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/transcript-robin-roberts-abc-news-interview-president-obama/story?id=16316043#.T75dA1KwXz0>.
- 2 The timing of this "revelation" could not have been more ironic - four days prior to Mother's Day, the day we celebrate motherhood and the unique and God-ordained role that mothers play in the bearing and rearing of children.
- 3 I will use the term "gay marriage" in this article from time to time only because it is the jargon of the President, media and political left. I prefer the term "same-sex marriage." No laws prohibit gays from getting married. Gays have the same rights to marriage that I do. They can marry people of the opposite sex. That is the same right that I have. They have no fewer rights. I don't have the right to marry

running for President, he affirmed that he favored "civil unions." In his own words, "*I had hesitated on gay marriage -- in part, because I thought civil unions would be sufficient.*"⁴ Now as President he has changed his position yet again. He calls this an "evolution." The media hails it as enlightened. If it were a Republican president changing his mind on such an historic issue that frequently, the media would call it "flip-flopping."

President Obama has proven to be the most radically pro-homosexual president in American history, doing more to force acceptance and endorsement of homosexual relationships into our culture than any of his predecessors. It should come as no surprise then, that he would finally "evolve" on this subject to the point of embracing gay marriage.

What was most disturbing to me was the reasoning that was offered for suddenly embracing this redefinition of marriage. I believe it is important that we work our way through the President's remarks and do some critical thinking on the logic and reasoning that led to his "evolution" on the subject. So let's take a look at what the President said, then use a little critical thinking and logic to see if his rationale holds water.

ROBIN ROBERTS: So, Mr. President, are you still opposed to same-sex marriage?

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well-- you know, I have to tell you, as I've said, I've-- I've been going through an evolution on this issue. I've always been adamant that-- gay and lesbian-- Americans should be treated fairly and equally. And that's why, in addition to everything we've done in this administration, rolling back Don't Ask, Don't Tell-- so that-- you know, outstanding Americans can serve our country. Whether it's no longer defending the Defense Against Marriage Act, which-- tried to federalize-- what has historically been state law.

[The President is opposed to federalizing a state issue? Since when?]

Part of the reason that I thought it was important-- to speak to this issue was the fact that-- you know, I've

anyone or anything. I have the right to marry someone of the opposite sex. It is "same-sex marriage" which is at issue. Gays do not have the right to marry someone of the same sex, and neither do I. Our rights are equal under the law. The notion, as you will read in the President's words, that gays are treated unequally or unfairly is a canard. Homosexual activists are not interested in equal treatment under the law - they already have it. They want their lifestyle endorsed by law, promoted by government, and enshrined in culture as morally equal to heterosexual relationships.

- 4 See the transcript mentioned above for all of the following quotes.

got an opponent on-- on the other side in the upcoming presidential election, who wants to-- re-federalize the issue and-- institute a constitutional amendment-- that would prohibit gay marriage. And, you know, I think it is a mistake to-- try to make what has traditionally been a state issue into a national issue.

We are asked to believe that suddenly this president is for minimizing the reach and power of the federal government? Since when?! He has no problem federalizing laws regarding abortion, telecommunications, prescription drugs, health care, and even the decision about what kind of toilet and light bulb you can buy, but he opposes federalizing the issue of same-sex marriage? Now we are to believe that Mitt Romney is the "big government nanny state" candidate, and President Obama is seeking to limit the reach of federal power and influence?

I've stood on the side of broader equality for-- the L.G.B.T. community. And I had hesitated on gay marriage-- in part, because I thought civil unions would be sufficient. That was something that would give people hospital visitation rights and-- other-- elements that we take for granted. And-- I was sensitive to the fact that-- for a lot of people, you know, the-- the word 'marriage' was something that evokes very powerful traditions, religious beliefs, and so forth.

Do homosexuals not have the right to visit people in the hospital? This is a canard! Gays are not prohibited from visiting their "partners" in hospitals. Nor are they kept from willing property or estates to them.

Further, there was a time when he was "sensitive to the fact that -- for a lot of people... the word 'marriage' was something that evokes powerful ...religious beliefs..." Apparently that time is no longer. If he withheld support for same-sex marriage because he was sensitive to people with religious beliefs, does the fact that he now supports same-sex marriage indicate that he is no longer sensitive to people with religious beliefs?

But I have to tell you that over the course of-- several years, as I talk to friends and family and neighbors. When I think about-- members of my own staff who are incredibly committed, in monogamous relationships, same-sex relationships, who are raising kids together. When I think about-- those soldiers or airmen or marines or-- sailors who are out there fighting on my behalf-- and yet, feel constrained, even now that Don't Ask, Don't Tell is gone, because-- they're not able to-- commit themselves in a marriage.

At a certain point, I've just concluded that-- for me personally, it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that-- I think same-sex couples should be able to get

married. Now-- I have to tell you that part of my hesitation on this has also been I didn't want to nationalize the issue. There's a tendency when I weigh in to think suddenly it becomes political and it becomes polarized.

Here we get a glimpse into what informs the moral worldview of our President. It turns out to be nothing more than "morality by consensus." His talk to "friends and family and neighbors... Members of my own staff who are incredibly committed, in monogamous relationships, same-sex relationships, raising kids together." Sometimes the lunacy of a moral argument is exposed when reasoning in one more arena is applied to another moral issue. Would he say the same thing about pedophiles, rapists, thieves, or even gay bashers?

Does the morality of an action depend upon what type of people participate in that action? If you knew an incredibly committed soldier or Marine who was also a pedophile, and raped women, would that inform your moral assessment of that action? Yet we are supposed to accept the fact that the morality of this issue does not go any further than the consideration of the conduct of people he regards as "friends and family and neighbors."

You'll notice that the President repeatedly used the phrase "for me," or "for me personally." That, in fact, indicates the source of President Obama's moral authority-- himself. He used those words no less than eight times during the course of the interview.

When someone says "For me, abortion is wrong," or, "For me, I have to support same-sex marriage," then you know you are hearing a moral framework that appeals to nothing higher than emotion, or one's own perspective.

When asked about the difficulty of discussing this issue:

ROBIN ROBERTS: And it's very-- a difficult conversation to have.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Absolutely. But-- but I think it's important for me-- to say to them that as much as I respect 'em, as much as I understand where they're comin' from-- when I meet gay and lesbian couples, when I meet same-sex couples, and I see-- how caring they are, how much love they have in their hearts-- how they're takin' care of their kids. When I hear from them the pain they feel that somehow they are still considered-- less than full citizens when it comes to-- their legal rights-- then-- for me, I think it-- it just has tipped the scales in that direction. ... But from the perspective of-- of the law and perspective of the state-- I think it's important-- to say that in this country we've always been about-- fairness. And-- and treatin' everybody-- as equals. Or at least that's been our

aspiration. And I think-- that applies here, as well.

Again, this is a canard. How is it that homosexuals are "treated as less than full citizens when it comes to their legal rights?" They have the same rights that I have. I can't marry someone of the same sex, my dog, my sister, my mother or more than one woman. There are all kinds of limitations on my freedom to marry whomever I want under whatever circumstances I want. Those same limitations are applied equally, without discrimination, across the board to both heterosexuals and homosexuals.

To the President, this country "has always been about-- fairness.... And - treatin' everyone - as equals." Really? Does everyone get treated equally? Does the man who wants to have twelve wives get treated the same as the man who is married to one? How about the man who wants to marry animals (bestiality)? Do they get "equal treatment" under the law by his definition of fairness? Do we treat pedophiles and rapists fairly? Or do we treat people differently depending upon their moral conduct? What about the man who wants to marry the six-year-old girl? Does he not have the right to marry whomever he wants? Shouldn't he be treated fairly, and have a civil right? The thinking which is being offered by our President is so convoluted, so inconsistent, and so morally vacuous as to border on insobriety!

President Obama then observed, "**And--you know, it's interesting. Some of this is also generational....**" And then pointed to how his two daughters influenced his moral conclusion:

PRESIDENT OBAMA: You know, Malia and Sasha, they've got friends whose parents are same-sex couples. And I-- you know, there have been times where Michelle and I have been sittin' around the dinner table. And we've been talkin' and-- about their friends and their parents. And Malia and Sasha would-- it wouldn't dawn on them that somehow their friends' parents would be treated differently. It doesn't make sense to them. And-- and frankly-- that's the kind of thing that prompts-- a change of perspective. You know, not wanting to somehow explain to your child why somebody should be treated-- differently, when it comes to-- the eyes of the law.

Might I suggest that his two daughters would never consider the morality of this sexual behavior because their parents have not done an adequate job of giving them the moral grounding necessary to appropriately think about this issue?

Of all the rationale that the President offered, this statement was the most disturbing. The fact that his thirteen-

and ten-year-old daughters⁵ do not have the moral ability to discern the difference between what is natural and what is unnatural, and cannot think clearly about moral issues, and is, for him, "**the kind of thing that prompts-- a change of perspective,**" is tragic.

Is it of any comfort to anyone that the leader of the free world is building his moral worldview and his ethical perspective on the understanding of his thirteen- and ten-year-old daughters? What does a ten-year-old know about life? What does a thirteen-year-old know about morality? What do a couple of preteens know about the institution of marriage, the role the husband, the needs of children, or the moral ramifications of redefining marriage? Nothing! NOTHING! Why should I think that a six-thousand-year-old institution should be redefined and altered, then enshrined in law, based upon the moral reasoning of a thirteen-year-old and a ten-year-old? Should the fact that they are unable to discern the moral implications of an issue make me redefine my entire perspective on that issue?

This is a disturbing trend. The wisdom of those who have gone before, the deep thinking of those who have thought through these issues prior to us, is being jettisoned in favor of the moral perspective of a current generation. No responsible adult would ever consider changing their moral worldview because they were "prompted" by the perspective of a couple of preteens.

A thirteen-year-old needs to be taught what is moral and what is immoral. She doesn't need to be made the standard upon which one's morality is built. Children are foolish, ignorant, and needing of instruction. It is disturbing to me that two children are informing the moral worldview of the leader of the free world!

What if the President were to find out that the parents of some of Malia and Sasha's friend were pedophiles, or wife beaters, or even gay bashers? Further, let's postulate that it would never occur to them that a wife beater should be treated any differently than non-wife beaters. Would this prompt a change of perspective on the morality of wife-beating for our President? Would he not want to explain to his child why somebody should be treated differently when it comes to the law? Would he not want to explain why pedophilia or polygamy is morally unacceptable? Does he not want to explain to his children that bestiality, rape, and adultery are wrong? I guess it is just easier to embrace a sexual practice that God condemns than it is to explain to your children why it is wrong. This is nothing short of

5 Malia Ann Obama was born on July 4, 1998 and Natasha (Sasha) Obama was born on June 10, 2001. (http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_are_the_ages_of_Barack_Obama's_daughters#ixzz1voOZmH8k)

cowardice.

Any man who is not willing to sit down with his children and explain moral issues and the basis of moral reasoning, to take a stand for what God clearly says is a sin, is nothing short of a coward who is abdicating his parental responsibility.

The interview ended with this amazing exchange:

ROBIN ROBERTS: Did you discuss this with Mrs. Obama, the same-sex marriage issue?

PRESIDENT OBAMA: No, no, this is somethin' that-- you know, we've talked about-- you know, over the years. And-- and she f-- you know, she feels the same way that-- she feels the same way that I do. And that is that-- in-- in-- in the end, the-- the values that I care most deeply about and she cares most deeply about is-- is how we treat other people.

And-- you know, I-- you know-- you know, we-- we're both-- practicing Christians. And-- and obviously-- this position may be considered to put as at odds with-- the views of-- of others. But-- you know, when we think about our faith, the-- the thing-- you know, at-- at root that we think about is not only-- Christ sacrificing himself on our behalf-- but it's also the golden rule, you know? Treat others the way you'd want to be treated. And-- and I think that's what we try to impart to our kids. And-- that's what motivates me as president. And-- I figure the more consistent I can be-- in being true-- to-- to those precepts-- the better I'll be as a dad and a husband, and-- hopefully the better I'll be as a president.

Practicing Christians? Who give no consideration to the authority of Scripture, the Word of God, Jesus' teaching on marriage in **Matthew 19**, or to the repeated condemnation of homosexual practice and those who approve of it (**Rom. 1:32**)? The President seems a little hesitant to offend people, unless they're Christians. Quite frankly, I'm offended that he would even drag the name of Christ into this profane discussion.

He knows that his moral viewpoint is not a Christian one, which is why he recognizes that this will "obviously" put him at odds with the views of others.

He is wrong to say that the Golden Rule is at the root of what we think about when we think about "our faith." For those on the political left who are intent upon justifying immoral behaviors, the Bible only seems to offer two principles that inform their moral worldview: 1) Treat others the way you want to be treated and 2) "Judge not."

President Obama's understanding of Christian truth is pathetically shallow if he thinks that the Golden Rule (law) is at the heart of the Christian gospel.

As you can see from the above quotation, the President

does apparently think that some things are worth imparting to his kids. He says that the Golden Rule is something he tries to impart to his children. Why does he cherry-pick what the Bible teaches when it comes to imparting truth to his children? Why does he view the Golden Rule as something worth imparting to his preteen daughters, but not the Bible's teachings on sexual purity, the purpose of sexual intimacy, and homosexuality? Why were those values not worth imparting to his children? I guess we are to conclude that he imparts the values of the Golden Rule, but when it comes to sexual ethics, he takes his cues from his ten- and thirteen-year-olds.

One final observation: I want you to imagine a rather far-fetched scenario. Imagine that a President of the United States who had historically favored same-sex marriage and promoted homosexual behavior as a morally equal practice to heterosexual relationships changed his position on the issue. Imagine he "evolved" on the issue and went on a national network to announce his changed position with the following reasoning:

Well, I have been evolving on this issue. For so long I have felt that homosexual behavior was morally equal to heterosexual behavior. But I have been giving this issue a lot of thought, and ... as you know, I am a practicing Christian, and I believe that the Bible has more to say about this issue than just "treat others as you want to be treated." This is a moral issue and though I've given no thought to what God has said before this, I have evolved in my position. . . I feel that Scripture is clear on this. It has not been easy to work through this, but I think that for me, personally, . . . I have to come out and say that I'm opposed to homosexual behavior.

And, you know, I was having a conversation with my ten-year-old and thirteen-year-old daughters at dinner one night and they asked me why I refuse to believe that homosexual conduct is morally wrong. They couldn't understand why I thought it was natural. They clearly felt that it was wrong. I really couldn't answer them as to why I would support a practice which was condemned in the Bible. I didn't want to explain to my daughters that our moral worldview should not be informed by Scripture, so, -- uh, that's the type of thing that brings about a change of perspective.

I know this is going to put me at odds with many people on the far left, and people who are pushing the homosexual agenda. As much as I respect them, and I love them, I just think, that for me, for me personally, I have to say that I am opposed to this behavior, and I cannot embrace same-sex marriage as morally

equivalent to heterosexual marriage. I don't believe we should redefine this historic institution, and trample all over the theological implications, just because there are some who want their conduct encouraged by our culture.

I don't want to make this a federal issue. I think the states should be free to define marriage as between one man and one woman, and pass laws prohibiting same-sex marriage, and condemning homosexual practice as immoral. I believe it is a states issue. I don't want to federalize something that is historically been a states issue.

Hard to imagine, eh? In such a scenario, would you think that the President would receive the type of pass that he received when he "evolved" the other direction? You see, when you "evolve" from opposition to same-sex marriage to endorsing same-sex marriage you are hailed as intellectual, relevant, contemporary, informed, tolerant, loving, compassionate, and gracious. But if he were to have "evolved" the other direction, can you imagine the media firestorm? Intolerant, unloving, oppressive, dictatorial, tyrannical, uninformed, unenlightened, religious fanatic, and ignorant rube, are all terms that would have been used to describe such a person.

Do you think he would've gotten away with basing his moral "evolution" on the perspective of his ten- and thirteen-year-olds? Do you think that he would've been allowed to make it a "states rights" issue? The left would be demanding federal action against the states to ensure "equal rights." Do you think he would have been allowed to appeal to an authority source higher than himself, and his own feelings? I think we all know the answer to these questions.

The times, they are a changin'!

Without Wax -

