

Perspectives:

Interview with

Katherine Black



*“‘Unity through diversity’ expresses my belief about the body of Christ.” –
Katherine Black*

Defining Moments

BW: What do you consider the defining moment of your generation and what event or experience has most shaped your life?

KB: I was born the youngest of five daughters on the tail end of the Baby Boomers (Late Boomers, if I may coin a phrase) ... a final hurrah by my parents, you might say. I was born into an era of sex, drugs and rock n’ roll, of war and strife, of social and political upheaval and polarization, of vast technological advances and accomplishments, of chaos, enmity, and spiritual enlightenment, of American Bandstand and Soul Train, of Psst and Dippity-Do. They say the human eye can distinguish 7 million colors, but I envy my parents’ black and white view of the world. It is so clean and simple when compared to the world in which I have matured. Their generation would never have come up with Formula 409 or Teflon because they never would have conceived of the need for those things in their clean and simple world.

It is next to impossible to choose a defining moment considering everything that has happened from 1960 to the present – man’s first walk on the moon, the assassinations of two Kennedys, MLK Jr. and Malcolm X, The Civil Rights Act, Roe v. Wade, ad infinitum. Nevertheless, if I must choose one moment of all the events in American history that has defined my generation, I think Watergate is the nexus. Everything in our nation converged in a serious attempt at implosion during the period from the June 1972 break-in to the pardon of Nixon in September 1974.

Just like every other kid in America, I learned about my country at school. The textbooks built a picture of America as solid and strong as The Queen Mary. I really should have paid more attention to the caption – “Here sails The Titanic.” What was once a sacrosanct, golden, heroic

leader called the President had suddenly become a tarnished, base metal felon. My beautiful fantasy of pristine democracy and freedom was dirtied and grimy. Someone had left my cake out in the rain, and I did not think I could take it!

I distinctly remember being a teenager during that period and wondering if the world was even going to exist by the time I became an adult. Was I ever going to get the chance to be a grown up with a career and family of my own? Was I ever going to get the chance to vote according to my convictions to change this country? Who cares if there will be Social Security when I am 65 – was I ever going to find out just what they meant by “the sexual revolution”? Or were the leaders of the world actually going to end the world in a conflagration of nuclear and social meltdown?

Oh, how I disliked and mistrusted politicians and still do to this day! We Late Boomers are a sarcastic and cynical lot, given to extremes in everything because we were born into an era of extremes. We all dislike and mistrust politicians and can trace it back to that one time. However, what happens to each of us individually has a much more profound effect on our day-to-day life than an event like Watergate. I would say that profound, life-changing moment happened for me only a few years ago, and it happened in church.

I am a born again Christian, a Baptist, a child of God, a daughter of the King. However you look at me and however you describe me, I am a Christian. I was baptized when I was 21, and I have always believed in God. For a large number of Christians, that is as far as it ever goes for them – a superficial attachment to the Church, a vague Sunday-only notion of Christianity, going thru the motions out of sheer habit. I am not one of those Christians.

Neither am I an extremist cut from the same Grand Inquisitor fabric as someone like Pat Robertson, nor am I a public Christian, prone to spouting scripture in perfect Pavlovian response at the mere mention of The Bible. Any fool can quote The Bible. Any speechwriter can make a politician sound like a devout Christian. The real question is does the fool know what he is saying? Does the politician live and breathe his faith?

In America’s current extreme, neo-conservative, quasi-Christian media circus, it is ironic to me that my faith in God has restored my faith in the future of the world. Scream and holler as they might, whine and cajole as they may, extremists like Ann Coulter and Michael Savage are not in control nor do they speak on behalf of genuine Christians. He is like a little yippy dog that barks at every noise, and she’s like a hungry chick that screeches continually for sustenance. Babies learn very quickly that they get attention when they cry. Ann and Michael are babies in that respect.

It has gone far enough. That is why I wrote Idiocy! I have had more than enough of their haranguing, hellfire lava flow of ridiculousness. Moreover, I believe the majority of Americans are like me. We believe in moderation, fairness, freedom and integrity. We believe in the basic right of every American to make fun of everyone else. We believe God has a sense of humor, even if everyone IS afraid to laugh.

Believe me, there are millions and millions of us out here. All we have to do is stop listening to extremists, stop watching their shows, stop buying their books, stop allowing them to hijack every radio station and publication in this country. Cut off the head and the body will die, folks! Register and actually vote. Read the Bible, the Torah, and the Koran for yourself. Do not take someone else’s word for it. Do not abdicate your basic freedoms in favor of blind apathy.

Frankly, I do not want to be standing anywhere near Ann Coulter on Judgment Day. I wonder how she is going to explain all the hateful, vicious and evil things she has said in His name. How are the extremists like her going to answer when God asks them to give an accounting of their lives? I would not want to have to explain how I could have possibly thought waging war, lying, cheating and misrepresenting facts was what Jesus would do.

There is one thing I would gladly answer for: throwing these fascist jerks out of the spotlight like Jesus did in throwing moneychangers out of the temple. Until that day comes, I will ridicule and lampoon Ann Coulter and those like her in print. And I will remember that God is in control.

Spectrum of Christian Beliefs

BW: As a born-again Christian who is moderate, how do you view the spectrum of political and religious beliefs within the body of Christ and where do your beliefs fall within that spectrum?

KB: “Unity through diversity” – I learned that phrase while working in an association office of the United Church of Christ some years ago. What an inspiring job, being surrounded by devoted Christians, lay and clergy alike, and knowing your work is furthering God’s kingdom! I grew so much as a Christian during that period, and “unity through diversity” expresses my belief about the body of Christ. We are one in the bonds of love and service, yet God created each of us as a unique person with unique gifts. He did not design us alike, and I think people overlay their own human need to conform when they assert false doctrines claiming we should all be and think and believe just one way. Would the God that formed about a zillion different species of roaches really fashion us, who are supposed to be his greatest creation, like mass produced Yugos? I think not.

I have attended a plethora of denominations and independent churches during my life – Wesleyan, Methodist, Baptist, UCC, Church of Christ, and several independents. Consequently, I do not possess a fervent denominational identity, preferring instead to consider myself a Christian who is a member of a Baptist congregation at present. Before the Protestant Reformation, if you asked the average European to describe himself, he might tell you from what town or country he hailed, but he would begin by proclaiming himself a Christian. People did not regard themselves as Catholics or Baptists or Methodists – they were Christians. Only after that 16th century divergence in doctrine did people identify themselves by different belief structures. They lost the emphasis on Christ when they lost the name of Christ. We have never recovered our sense of oneness. Nevertheless, here’s what I do believe ...

I believe in God, that Jesus Christ is his son and my savior, that the Holy Spirit endows us with the means to experience the touch of God through grace and inspiration, but I am willing to accept the diverse names (Yahweh, Abba, Adonai, etc.) people have for God. I am willing to accept that others use inclusive gender language when referring to God as the Creator instead of God the Father. When I admire a tiger lily, I think God must be a woman. When I remember giving birth, I *know* God must be a man. Then I remember that God created both male and female. Now what does that tell you?

I believe in baptism, but I am willing to accept the diverse way in which different churches practice that with everything from sprinkling and baby baptisms to full immersion in the “crick in the holler” in the middle of winter. My baptism was by immersion in a Baptist church that was so wealthy, they heated and softened the water in the baptismal with Calgon. God, take me away!

I believe in the sacrament of communion, but I am willing to accept the diverse way in which churches practice that too. Some use grape juice and Aunt Judy’s fresh baked bread. Some use wine and little wafers, both of which I personally cannot stand. The wine is more like vinegar, and the wafers are closer to college-ruled notebook paper. Those wafers always stick to the roof of my mouth. I draw the line at transubstantiation, which is a Catholic dogma whereby the elements of communion become the body and blood of Christ while keeping only the appearances of bread and wine. Way too creepy and gross for me! But hey, go for it!

I believe in the sacrament of marriage, that it is a sacred and natural state for man and woman. I do not entertain any private, personal thoughts of diversity here. The Bible specifies marriage as between one man and one woman – period. It also declares that homosexuality is an anathema to God. That is a VERY strong word – anathema. According to Webster’s anathema is a “ban or curse pronounced with religious solemnity by ecclesiastical authority, and accompanied by excommunication.” In legal dictionaries it is “a punishment by which a person is separated from the body of the church, and forbidden all intercourse with the faithful: it differs from excommunication, which simply forbids the person excommunicated from going into the church and communicating with the faithful. Gal. 1. 8, 9.” Like I said, a VERY strong word.

The issue of homosexuality and same-sex marriage spans the gulf between religion and politics and is so very volatile we could fulfill the electricity requirements of every nation on earth if we could bottle the energy we pour into our beliefs, both religious and political. We hear so much from both extremes that the din is quite overpowering to those of us in the middle. One extreme says kill all the homosexuals, put them in prison, brainwash them, take a lesson from India and create our own untouchable class, shoot them into outer space never to be seen or heard from again – just get rid of them. The other extreme says whatever feels good do it, the wants of the one always outweigh the needs of the whole, homosexuality is natural, we need more gays on TV, we need books in elementary schools with titles like Daddy, Why Is There A Man In Your Bed? or Are You My Two Mothers?

It is not surprising to me the extremists cannot stand each other. They are both vying for the same space. The far left wing and far right wing have gone so far that they have actually come back around full circle and met! No wonder they hate each other with such fervor and venom. There is not enough room for them to coexist in that tiny space surrounded by the rest of us who range anywhere from garden variety liberal to every day conservative! They strive to exist in direct opposition to the scientific principle that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. That would make me cranky, too, I guess.

So what do I believe? I believe we should love God and our neighbors as ourselves just as He commanded. The Bible says homosexuality is wrong, but it does not say to go out and persecute them. Vengeance belongs to God alone. Passing judgment belongs to God alone. We are to be a living example of the ideal of Jesus. That means praying for people who have chosen a lifestyle we believe is wrong. That means engaging in conversations with all humility and compassion when the opportunity arises to share our faith. That means the iron maidens and the racks and the guillotines must keep gathering dust.

Yes, Jesus did powerful things, and God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. However, that does not give *a few puny humans* the right, privilege or moral imperative to raze the entire earth and bend people to their one way. We are only humans, a bit of dust, a flutter of a moth wing in the grand scheme of God’s creation, and I do not remember God ever asking us for help. He wants our true, grateful, heartfelt, joyful everlasting worship, and I am going to keep offering praise every day with my every breath and thought. I might stumble, but I know how to get back up and keep going. That is something we Americans are good at – recovering and overcoming. Moreover, that strength is derived from the Christian principles of those people who founded this country, the very same principles still present in moderates like me.

I truly believe the vast majority of Americans are moderates, both spiritually and politically. We love winning but not if we have to cheat or beat someone down to do so. We love laughter, especially when we laugh at ourselves. We love freedom but not at the cost of oppression. We love the truth but not if it is leaked to the press. We love our country but not when our leaders do shameful things.

We are tired of listening to all the neo-conservatives *and* ultra-liberals screaming their own respective brands of fascism on Fox and Clear Channel and MSN in such rude and ridiculous manners that you cannot make out what any silly one of them is saying. By the way, they are ALL wrong, and that is the reason I watch old movies on TV and listen to my local contemporary Christian music radio station.

We are tired of seeing yet another mindless “reality” show parading across the screen in living, promiscuous, lascivious, debauchery. Can anyone answer the following question? If Rupert Murdoch is so very conservative, why does he create and air so many of these vapid shows on his TV and radio channels? Isn’t he ashamed he is making money from and encouraging sinful, exploitive and hateful behavior? Why doesn’t he just go all the way with something like Queer Eye vs. Straight Plan – Rumble in the Closet? Or maybe combining Fear Factor with The Bachelor – one guy having to choose from 12 angry divorcees? Call me up, Rupe, and we’ll do lunch!

We are tired of lying, injudicious presidents regardless of their party affiliation. I guess it just does not register with Bush that the last eight guys (except for Carter, a decent man, and Ford, a jovial jock) sitting in that oval office were nailed for doing something obtuse and just plain underhanded and terrible, including his own father! Let’s see ... Marilyn Monroe and the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam & Cambodia, Watergate, Iran-Contra, Clarence Thomas and Iraq, sexual addiction. Eventually, they all get busted! Duh!!! When the Bible says the sins of the father will be visited on the sons, I think about Big Bush leaving that mess in Iraq that has now sucked in Baby Bush with the fury of a Texas twister.

We moderates might be tired of all these things, but I for one will not give in to extremists just because they are louder or they get more airtime. I have hope and faith that they cannot squelch because it comes from God.

Idiocy! Taking Conservatives Behind the Woodshed

BW: Please encapsulate the thesis of your book and why you wrote it.

KB: *Idiocy!* is primarily a book of political satire for people who prefer to laugh at the idiocy of extreme politicians and media figures instead of ranting like those very same lunatics. “Never trust a man who can’t laugh at himself or take a joke.” That is something my dad told me. It is ever apparent to me that neo-conservatives like Ann Coulter are labeling folks as blasphemous heretics if they voice a dissenting opinion of any kind on any subject. If you require truth, honor and accountability from our current administration, then you are apparently a traitorous heathen and, worse yet, a liberal ... the foulest and most loathsome, debased creature in league with Satan. Simply put, I could not take it any longer. What intelligent Christian could?

Sometimes people feel called to do things they never dreamed they could. Writing a book is one of those things. Fortunately, I happen to have a wonderful writing partner who supplies imaginative ideas and inspired writing. He and I do not see eye to eye on religion or politics, but we collaborate quite well by respecting each other. We temper each other and balance each other. He is much more politically and religiously liberal than I am. I tend to be more esoteric and eccentric, and he tends to be a bit of a head banging wild man. We make it work. Now if the Democrats and Republicans could learn to do the same, America could probably get somewhere.

Extreme Left and Right

BW: How do the goals, techniques and impact of the extreme left compare with those of the extreme right?

KB: Over the centuries since the wondrous miracles of Christ, politicians and leaders have been performing all sorts of heinous acts against their fellow man all in Jesus' name! I have always been baffled by that. The Prince of Peace told you to send Europe's children to their deaths in a crusade? The Son of God told you to raze entire towns, to trap Jews in their homes and burn them alive? The Heavenly Father told you there was only one pope in Rome but then changed His mind and said Avignon was the true seat? And that was just by the Middle Ages! We have racked up all sorts of frequent sinner miles since then.

President Bush says God guides his decisions. If I understand the rules concerning jihad, God talks to you and tells you to go fight with someone because you have His blessing...He wants you to win. Funny, but Muslims believe the very same God is telling them the very same thing. People can squabble all they want but there is one immutable truth: The God of the Jews is the God of the Muslims is the God of Christians. Don't believe me? Read the Old Testament, especially the part about Abraham and his sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael's descendants are known as Arabs. Isaac's descendants are known as Jews. Abraham worshipped one god, as did his sons. Jesus was a Jew ... do you follow the genealogy and legacy here?

If God gives both sides their marching orders, does that mean He wants both sides to lose or to win? On the other hand, does He want to use one side to wipe out the other? Wouldn't it be simpler to just zap them or send some sort of plague? Oh, but I forgot! That is what extreme evangelicals (in West Virginia we call them holy rollers) think of AIDS.

As I have said before, I think there is very little difference between extreme left and extreme right. Both are beyond reason. Both dispense with any semblance of upholding personal or even corporate freedoms by demanding conformity. Both seem to think the ends justify the means of violence, intimidation, criminal activity, suborning perjury, falsification of documents, withholding and/or fabricating evidence and whatever other little nasties they think will get them what they want. Oh, but I forgot yet again! That is what we are supposed to be fighting in Iraq.

What is truly sad is that extremists either do not realize what they are doing or, worse yet, they do. Maybe they read Machiavelli's The Prince too many times and started to believe it is a manual for political success. Maybe they read Plato's Republic too many times and started to believe the natural political progression from aristocracy to timocracy to oligarchy to democracy and last to tyranny. I guess they think we are ready to degenerate from democracy to tyranny. How fortunate for them to be in power at just the right time! Oh, but I forgot a third time! God planned it just that way.

When you cannot justify your own actions through logic, morals, ethics or the standards of civilized society, say God wants it that way or God does not exist, depending on which side of the extreme you call home. When the entire world calls you on the carpet for outrageous behavior, claim they are persecuting you because you are a believer or because you are not. Do anything, say anything except step up to the microphone and claim responsibility for your own twisted goals and hidden agendas.

In the end, that's all the American public really wants – a leader they can trust and respect, a leader who puts their needs ahead of his own, a leader who takes responsibility for his actions. We do not want someone who is perfect. We have Christ, and we know perfection does not exist anywhere else. But do politicians and media figures all have to be so darn lousy? Heaven forbid we actually see a little honor and dignity! I just keep reminding myself altruism has no place in

politics or mass media, the very places that need it the most, and I will have to keep voting for the lesser of two evils until the Second Coming.

Jews, Christians and Muslims

BW: You say, “People can squabble all they want but there is one immutable truth: The God of the Jews is the God of the Muslims is the God of Christians.” Ironically, President Bush has said the same thing.

Yes, the God of the Bible is the God of all human beings – we are all His children created in His image – but whom we all worship is another matter. We shouldn’t conflate identity with behavior. While there is indeed a common ancestral heritage among Arabs and Jews (both are monotheistic Semites), the reality is that they – and Christians – worship different gods. Jews reject Jesus as God and wait for their Messiah’s first arrival; Christians worship Jesus as the incarnate God (the Jewish Christians of the first century recognized Him as their long-awaited Messiah); Muslims consider Jesus as only one of a series of prophets (and not the most important one at that).

What are your thoughts on this?

KB: I hate to naysay President Bush, but I think I will exercise my freedom of speech rights to do just that!

If “we shouldn’t conflate identity with behavior,” then we all might as well turn in our pens and go home. As humans, we are hard-wired to do that very thing. If I say I am a Christian, others expect me to exhibit certain behavior patterns. The Bible tells us we will be known by our deeds – not saved by our deeds alone but certainly known to be Christians by other men. Haven’t you ever sung that hymn that goes something like “And they’ll know we are Christians by our Love”? Just so, we rely on identification by behavior to form opinions and feelings concerning others. That’s why I have the opinion that the current administration is a group of fumbling liars.

Don’t we expect leather-wearing, helmet-less, long-haired motorcyclists zooming down the highway in large groups to be lawless and violent? Don’t we expect blue-haired, tattooed, multi-pierced teenagers moshing to head-banging rock to be godless anarchists? Don’t we expect neatly coifed white men in suits dining at a posh café to be upstanding executives? If we do, we would be undoubtedly shocked to find the motorcyclist is a member of a Chopper for Christ group, the teenager is the CEO of his own computer software company and the white man in a suit is a neo-Nazi bent on overthrowing the government. Or maybe that white man is Kenneth Lay.

I think the statement “While there is indeed a common heritage among Arabs and Jews (both are monotheistic Semites), the reality is that they – and Christians – worship different gods” is totally inaccurate. Common heritage goes beyond being monotheistic and Semitic. (As an interesting aside, the OMB definitions of race say Middle Easterners are as white as Doris Day. In fact, they are genetically correct. Did half of Michigan, Wyoming and Oregon just faint dead away?) Jews, Muslims and Christians all worship the very same god – we are brothers. I am certain of that because no one fights more than siblings do. As I said before, Abraham was called by God to be the father of nations, as countless as grains of sand. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. In Genesis 17:19-20, God speaks to Abraham. I quote from the King James Version:

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

It is apparent to me God does not intend to withdraw from Ishmael. In Genesis 18, God tells Abraham not to worry about banishing Hagar, Sarah's handmaiden, and their son Ishmael, that they will not die in the desert:

12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

God intervenes and tells Hagar of her son's future.

16 And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.

God made his covenant with Isaac but He also blessed Ishmael. That's one god for both the Jews and the Muslims. Whether they call him Yahweh or Allah, he created them both out of one earthly father, and they both worship Him. No Christian holds the belief that the Old Testament is meaningless or represents a relationship with a different god. The Book of Matthew Chapter 1 recounts Christ's lineage from Abraham to David to Jesus and links us inexorably to the same heritage.

I think the statement "Jews reject Jesus as God" is completely inaccurate. Yes, the Jews reject Jesus as their Messiah, but they pray to **God** for one. They have not rejected God, only the Messiah that Christians accept. And yes, the Muslims consider Jesus to be a prophet, but they consider him a prophet of **God**. I think the statement "Christians worship Jesus as the incarnate God" is somewhat inaccurate. As Christians, we worship God as well as the Messiah/Christ and the Holy Spirit. We worship the Holy Trinity, not just Jesus as the incarnate God. The same god for all three groups. Certainly, we all worship in different ways, but that does not change God. God changes us, not the other way around.

Dangers of Extremism

BW: Would you agree with a friend of mine that the far right is far, far more dangerous and hateful than the far left?

KB: No, I do not agree with your friend. Both are equally dangerous and hateful at the same time. Let's take a look at the dangers and hatefulness of both sides in just one area – the environment:

Right: Let's exploit every natural resource we have for corporate gain and for instant gratification of current stockholders' greed. Why should we worry about the coming generations having air or

water or food because we have dumped waste in every ounce of potable water and strip mined every inch of arable land? Why should we worry that coming generations will be overwhelmed by toxins in the environment? We won't be around to suffer, and our progeny will be so stinking rich they can move to another planet and start the fun all over again!

Left: Let's do away with fossil fuels and anything that uses them for power. Let's do away with nuclear power too. Remember to get rid of all petroleum products, all plastics and synthetic fabrics, all air conditioning, paints, pesticides, dyes and food additives. We can't forget fur, any products made from animals or parts of animals, all meat, fish and dairy foods. Why should we worry that the coming generations might need some medical aid or power source to keep their butts from freezing and frying? Why should we worry that the coming generations will be eating only the seeds and fruits that they can gather themselves out in the fields because they don't have refrigeration? Living like that, the world's population will fall within our projections, the hearty will survive, all the others will die of starvation and exposure. Then the earth will be clean once again!

Anything taken to extreme is dangerous and hateful. The further you stray from the foundational truths (which I believe reside in the middle), the more twisted, tangled, snarled, and mangled the vision becomes. In the extreme ends of the spectrum, that vision is warped beyond recognition, and the residents thereof are blind to those truths.

The Creative Process

BW: The tone, style and substance of your interview answers differ strikingly from your book. Please describe your creative process of getting into character for your parody.

KB: The creative process involves a collaborative effort with my writing partner, Mr. F.W. Contini, who resides in the Pacific Northwest and prefers not to be involved with interviews. We are from different sides of the country, cultural heritages, religious beliefs, political ideologies and educational backgrounds. We temper each other, and the tone and content of the book reflects that.

BW: Sorry for the delay in getting back to you. I've been working on a book of my own and some things cropped up which needed to be dealt with. Also, I've been hesitant to follow-up on your last answer because I fear it may be taken the wrong one. As one Christian to another, I trust that you will discern my sincerity. So, here it is:

Could you expand on your last answer? What would you say to those who might suggest that you are emulating rather than lampooning Coulter?

KB: A question asked in good faith should never be feared. Neither should the answer. Good luck with your book!

Someone once asked me a similar question: if I thought Ann Coulter is really just poking fun at liberals, that she really does not mean any of it to be serious – is she just engaging in parody? I have never seen anything about her to suggest it could be even remotely possible. If she is trying to be funny, she is failing miserably because neither side of the aisle is laughing.

Emulating Coulter? If I emulated Coulter, I would be calling for her head on a platter or better yet on a pike in front of the Capitol Building. I would demand zero political and religious tolerance, requiring everyone to follow the Administration without question. I would vote for a constitutional amendment to repeal the freedom of speech or perhaps amending it to exclude

political and religious freedom of speech. I would lobby the FCC to revoke any mass media license held by a liberal, and I would personally nuke Hollywood.

The Neocons' modus operandi is to hurl personal insults and name call rather than to engage in meaningful, thoughtful or respectful conversations or debates. To lampoon one of them, all you have to do is shine a very bright spotlight on them. Since they get more airtime than God does, there is plenty to bring to light.

What is it about her that I supposedly emulate? Nothing.

God's Spiritual Family

BW: Thanks for your patience, your candor and your graciousness. Here's one more – perhaps last – question.

Returning to an earlier issue, I am suggesting there is a distinction between God's *physical* family (mankind) and His *spiritual* family (Christians) and that distinction depends solely upon Jesus Christ and faith in Him. The context of the New Testament is faith in the risen Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:16-17). Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. who reject that sole requirement for salvation – faith in Jesus Christ – are not, by definition, part of the spiritual body of Christ (Galatians 3:26-29).

Jesus Himself said there would be people claiming to be His followers but He would tell them, "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:21-23). Even some professing Christians today deny Jesus' divinity (e.g., Jesus Seminar) even though scripture is quite clear on that doctrine (John 1:1-14;3:16-18, Colossians 1:14-19;2:8-10, 1st John 4:1-3). See also, Galatians 4:24-31 regarding Israel and Ishmael. Further, the seven "I Am" statements in the gospel of John clearly say that Jesus is the **only** path of salvation. See also Ephesians 1:17-23 and Philippians 2:9-11. Even the demons believe there is one God – and they tremble (James 2:19) because they haven't embraced Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Returning to my original point, if Jews and Muslims (or anyone else) don't embrace Jesus as their Savior then, by definition, they are not worshipping the same God as Christians. Jesus came as the incarnate God to give divinity a human face for us. Jesus said that to know the Father we must go through the Son and that if we have seen the Son we have seen the Father. Rejection of the Son is implicitly rejection of the Father (and the Holy Spirit). Any comments?

KB: I have attached the answer to your question below. Please remember I am no theologian. If the questions get much deeper into theology, my answers might start coming back "I don't know!"

In Galatians, Paul (a Jew) was speaking to the church in Galatia, trying to explain to them that faith in Jesus was the next step in the religious journey of Israel. No longer should they look to Mosaic Law as their link to God. Jesus was the new covenant, a covenant that was not available only to the children on Isaac by virtue of his being the child of God's promise to Abraham but also to the children of Ishmael, Gentiles, and anyone else who embraces Jesus. What Paul does not say is we are still able to exercise free will to choose whether to continue under Mosaic Law, Muslim beliefs, Buddhist rituals or nothing at all.

As a Christian, I believe Jesus is divine and is the only true path to salvation. However, that does not discount the significance of the religious, historical, cultural, societal and political ties that we share with Jews and Muslims through virtue of our God. It is those ties that are our only common ground on which to stand if we are to pursue peace and understanding – and, consequently, if we are to minister to and evangelize non-Christians. It is our duty to follow the Great Commission, to go and make disciples. It is not our duty to condemn Jews and Muslims for worshipping God

falsely because they have not accepted Jesus as their Savior. Frankly, I never want to make such a statement because that puts me in a position of judgment of their relationship with God, not my job!

The scripture in Matthew to which you refer is one warning us not to equate good works or good fruit to a good heart. It specifically exposes those who confess to be Christians but whom Jesus will reject. Only God knows what is in a man's heart. We certainly cannot even tell what is in the hearts of our presidential candidates who live very public lives! Even those who do good works can be as ferocious wolves in their hearts – the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing. Way too many baa-ing wolves in Washington! I would like to see them make the endangered species list.

BW: Thanks, Katherine, for your quick response. I did not intend to get deeply theological, it's just that you raised a point which I think it is important to be very clear about. There are many disputes within the body of Christ over a whole range of issues and doctrines – which Paul called doubtful matters – areas in which we have free will to choose: when to worship (days, seasons, times), how to worship (different sacraments, music styles, etc.), etc. – as you yourself know from the various denominations you've participated with. But that central issue of Jesus is one which even many of God's spiritual children have problems with at times, so for clarity's sake, I want to make sure that I publish the truth on that overarching doctrine.

Regarding your point on condemnation, when have I condemned anyone? All I have pointed out is that Jews and Muslims – and anyone else who denies that *Jesus* is the Christ – is not part of the *body* of Christ. The crucial part of the gospel – of the great commission – is to point to Jesus Christ as the only way and to point out that if a person does not accept Jesus in this life they won't be with Him in the next. Certainly it is our job to witness and it is God's job to open the eyes of their hearts to His truth. Meantime, we are to love all of God's children (physical and spiritual), without condemnation, but speaking the truth in love. And, as you point out – and as Paul used the Greek's altar to the unknown god to reveal the true God – we are indeed to use those “religious, historical, cultural, societal and political” connections “to go and make disciples.” Is that not so?

KB: You have not condemned anyone by asking your question regarding acknowledging Jesus as the one way. I was referring to those politicians and pundits who publicly condemn others who believe differently ... about anything. It doesn't have to be a central truth or belief in order to raise their cries of “Antichrist!” They are way too ready to hurl the first stones even in more peripheral “doubtful matters” such as denominational identity, immersion vs. sprinkling or “my presidential candidate is led by God and yours isn't.” That is the condemnation of which I spoke. They are not engaged in the Great Commission. For those narrow-minded, self-righteous individuals, the foundational stone of Christianity (Jesus' divine nature) is just a chopping block on which others, even other Christians, are doomed to eternal damnation by the sharp tongues of fools.

My Final Thoughts

This interview proved to be an enjoyable process. Katherine Black the person is far different from whom I envisioned the author of *Idiocy!* to be. I guess you can't always judge an author by her book.

Ms. Black articulated a comprehensive, commonsensical worldview which incorporates elements from the left and the right and is built upon a solid biblical foundation. She tackled a number of controversial issues in both sensible and sensitive ways. And she has exhibited a gracious and compassionate spirit worthy of emulation.

NOTE: To read the unpublished final chapter of *Idiocy!* go to <http://www.katherineblack.com/chapter19.php>.

Katherine Black is ...

BIOGRAPHY

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...D'OH! Wrong biography.

Perhaps it's best to introduce the people responsible for bringing this book into print. Although the authorship is held by Katherine Black, the primary inspiration, conception and writing is done by F.W. Contini, who lives in Redmond, Washington. Mr. Contini is a reclusive individual who does not make personal appearances or submit to interviews. Those responsibilities are held by another writing partner. Mr. Contini also served as the inspiration and primary writer for the first book written by Katherine Black, titled *Women may be from Venus...but Men are really from Uranus*. When not working on new content for the next book, Mr. Contini likes to write versatile comedy and explore meaningful screenplay ideas with other talented writers. He is also very active in supporting a local no-kill animal shelter.

Every primary author enjoys the company of gifted secondary writers. A contributing writer and front person for the publicity is Mrs. Julia Jones, who resides in West Virginia. Mrs. Jones enjoys the challenge of writing political humor. She works full-time in another field yet, in addition to writing political humor, also finds time to compose and record her own music, and is very active in her local church. Even though she is a moderate, her values are a blueprint for what a true compassionate conservative should exemplify.

Not only do these two talented people produce this type of humor, but it takes a special editor to put aside any preconceived political biases and just edit the work for spelling, grammar, punctuation and formatting corrections. Ms. Nancy Condy, who lives in Western Washington, is extremely interested in politics and active in her local community. She works part-time in the healthcare field when not editing.

Never say never. *Idiocy!* almost never made it off the ground, thanks to a fraudulent publisher named Billie Johnson. Her scam-of-a-company is called Oak Tree Books (Oak Tree Press). Avoid it at all costs or lose your hard-earned money. Ms. Johnson liked my first book *Women may be from Venus...but Men are really from Uranus* so much that she stole the book and published it herself! Incredible, but true. And I have the court judgment against her for copyright infringement to prove it. I could have given up and let crooks like her win or I could press on and try to make a name for myself. I chose the latter. Don't let the bastards (or in this case, the bitches) get you down.

After the heartbreak of having met Billie Johnson and being defrauded of thousands of dollars, I wondered if anything positive could have transpired from that brief (and expensive) relationship. Well something good did happen. Peter Welling, resident of Indianapolis, Indiana, is someone I met through Ms. Johnson. Peter and I hooked up and I have used his illustrative genius for *Idiocy!* He's an amazing writer and illustrator of children's books. If he were to receive even a fraction of well-deserved national publicity he would be a household name in a few short years. His work is that good.

Maybe, when all is said and done, liberals and conservatives can close the gap of hatred and distrust and work together to make the United States the beacon of hope and prosperity for the rest of the world, instead of the imperialistic society we have become under the reckless "leadership" of the Bush administration. Yeah, right. When pigs fly.

Each of us bears responsibility for our words and actions. If you find this humor offensive, read something else. If you find this humor pleasing, by all means stay and enjoy yourself. As long as there's a free press in this country, you'll find us making fun of someone or something.