

A letter of response and clarification

Dear Editor,

I am responding to Ms. Woodyard’s editorial, dated March 16, on “Mixing Religious and Constitutional Values”.

I recently had the great privilege of visiting Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where George Washington and his men suffered a very brutal winter of 1777-1778 in an unbelievable effort to procure our independence and freedoms as a nation, among those being “life”, “liberty” and the “pursuit of happiness”, the first two being the right to life and the right to freedom.

At Christmas, I was graced to receive from my daughter and family the painting by Arnold Friberg, “The Prayer at Valley Forge”. Depicted in this beautiful rendition is George Washington, beside his horse, humbly kneeling in prayer in the snow of this cruel winter. One can almost hear the wind moaning through the great trees, silent, lonely and cold. What inspiration comes from this piece of art!

Yes, these were the men and our founding fathers who fought to make all men ‘free’. That’s us! All of us, no matter what our religion. Our Constitution and Declaration of Independence were put into play by these profound thinkers with the guidance of a Supreme Being to include freedom of religion. Currently, there is a misconception that one of religious conviction cannot interfere in government policies or present his/herself’s thinking in the public square. The latter is totally erroneous. What was meant by our forefathers was to keep government out of religion, not vice-versa. To read the document in Williamsburg, Virginia will confirm this.

The sitting government is making every effort to take away our freedoms, our liberties as framed by our founding fathers, including freedom to be born and freedom to express truths of a Supreme Power.

I would like to make a few points regarding Ms. Woodyard’s commentary.

Mr. Santorum believes in a patriarchal church and family. Yes, as we need fathers, we also need mothers to provide the matriarchal attributes necessary to foster family life in its fullness. Mr. Santorum believes in leadership in the government and that does not exclude women or people of varying faiths. He is for liberty for all people. Very constitutional indeed! Perhaps the people in the south recognize this. Further, religious values can go hand in hand with constitutional values.

Also, perhaps, Mr. Santorum has been set up by the media for entrapment in their questioning. Perhaps people see the value in his honest replies. Perhaps some people do not understand that in his faith, being a true Catholic includes believing in the “infallible” words of the Pope. Please find out what “infallible word” in the Catholic Church means and read “Humanae Vitae”. And to understand the Catholic Church in its entirety, please read the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Do not take the word of one man, “Catholic”, according to Ms. Woodyard, and “a cultural historian and professor emeritas”, whom she did not mention as having disengaged himself from the teachings of the Catholic Church. What makes that gentleman any more of an expert on Catholic teaching than Mr. Santorum, who had not disengaged himself from Church teaching?

As far as the premise of Ms. Woodyard that “Mr. Santorum does not have a faithful following within his own church”, perhaps it bears consideration that some Catholics may think it’s more important to vote for a moderate Republican like Governor Romney, who, although he is pro-life, is more likely to appeal to independent voters, thus, maybe increasing his chances to defeat President Obama. And, furthermore, this does not determine the faithfulness of the individual Catholic voter.

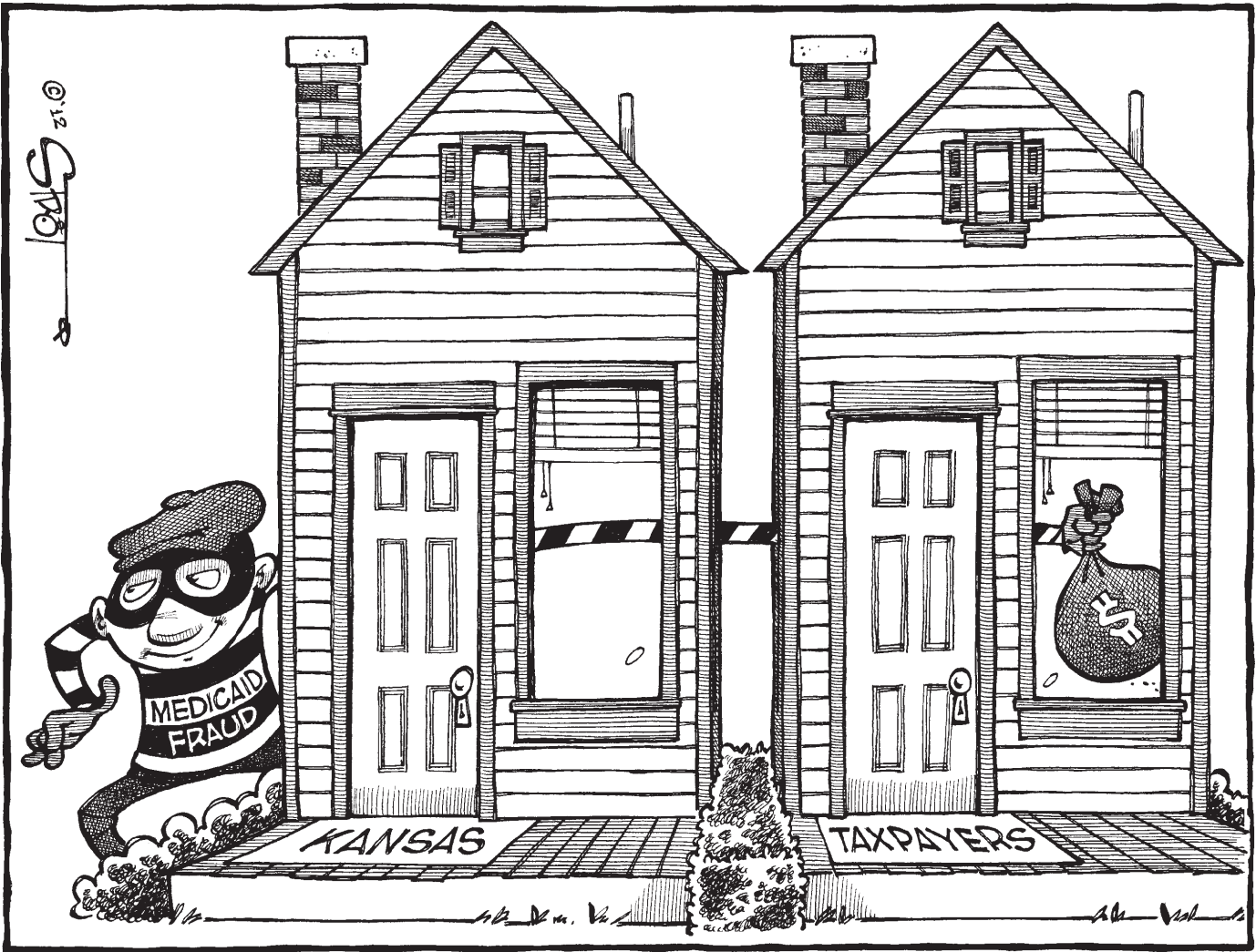
In Mr. Santorum’s 2002 essay that Ms. Woodyard was quoting, what he is really saying is that Catholics should be true to their faith, not practicing a watered down version, and to be dedicated to values which will enhance our families, communities, nation and world to get back to the principles laid out by our founding fathers in accord with Divine leadership and with foresight for future generations.

In the address at the end of George Washington’s presidency he said, “...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle”.

“For it is Washington’s own words that leave us no doubt of his deep and humble dependance upon whom he chose to call ‘that all wise and powerful Being on whom alone our success depends’.” (Arnold Friberg)

As did Mr. Washington, may we all get down on our knees!

Most respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Bethune



How Alzheimer’s affects an entire family

I don’t have a lot of memories of my grandmother, my dad’s mom. She suffered from what we would probably now label as Alzheimer’s, but then it was known simply as dementia or forgetfulness. I remember spending the night at their place when I was about five. I thought she was “strange”, but in retrospect I know she was in the beginning stages of Alzheimer’s... a time fraught with paranoia and worry. At that young age I never thought about the same fate befalling me, but now at the age of 65 and watching as others fall victim, I realize “there but for the grace of God goes any one of us.”

As we live longer, more and more children are becoming “parents” to their own parents, a role no one anticipates. Jack and I were incredibly lucky, none of our parents had to endure the insult of dementia. My dad and Jack’s dad both lived into their late 70’s, my mother was 100 when she died and Jack’s mother, 96.They, and we, were definitely blessed.

What about those who face this on a regular basis, the caregivers. I remember with my grandmother, how

Phase II  
Mary Kay Woodyard



difficult it was to find a place which would meet her needs. She ended up in a nursing home in Ellsworth which could give her the protection she needed. She “lived” there for nearly 20 years. Twenty years of not knowing anyone, twenty years mostly confined to bed, twenty years, most of us would agree, of hell. The sad fact is the toll during those years was not so much on her, but on my grandfather and my dad and his sisters. The caregivers are faced with difficult choices and certainly a sadness watching the gradual death of a loved one.

Although it is the most common form of dementia, Alzheimer’s is not a normal part of aging. No doubt, however aging is a risk factor for the disease. One in eight older Americans

have Alzheimer’s and, unfortunately there is an early onset of Alzheimer’s striking people in their 40s and 50s.The beginning can be so vague as to attribute it to fatigue, stress or medications, but although the onset can be slow it is also progressive. Having said that however it is imperative to work closely with a physician to help not only the patient, but the caregiver. An understanding of the stages and what we do know about the disease will help to plan for the future. The old adage, forewarned is forearmed, can help us make the most of life, regardless of the state it is in.

Having watched my grandmother from the age of five until my early twenties, I have a daily prayer of, “Please, dear God, spare me from this.”Most of us would agree it is not death we fear, but dying, and most would not choose Alzheimer’s. Unfortunately that is not ours to choose. A common theme of Hospice always reminds me to “live until I die” and rejoice in the moment. Probably not bad advice for life in general, Alzheimer’s or not. Mail to:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

How the social media impacts everyday life

The hubby pointed out a young couple in a restaurant. Perhaps they were dating. Lovingly they gazed at their I-phones! They caressed the keys. The rest of the world ceased to exist. Two people making a connection, though obviously not with each other. Or perhaps they were texting each other! Social media has taken over our lives, yet we don’t know how to socialize!

The rash of thunderstorms over the weekend presented a positive way electronic communication can impact our lives!

Late in the afternoon, Elizabeth called to let us know she was safe after spending the better part of an hour hunkered down in her bathtub, waiting for a tornado to pass through Norman.

Her report (via the phone and later on Facebook) was reassuring. And alarming: a massive severe weather outbreak was predicted for the next day!

Family and friends in Oklahoma, Wichita and Lincoln, NE were all in for a long day.

The next morning the boundaries of the storm changed. I placed my own tornado kit at the top of the stairs. Though with the remodeling going on it’s doubtful we could get in the storm shelter!

It’s helpful that among the many volunteer jobs Preacher Dave holds,

This Too Shall Pass  
Nancy Hagman



one is weather spotter. He called as he headed to his post, just to be certain we were aware. We were. The hubby watched KWCH, I the Weather Channel.

An hour or so later the rain seemed to be over and we heard a vehicle on the road; Preacher Dave going back to town. We relaxed a little.

In case you missed opening day--- baseball has started. I’m still patiently waiting for the Royals to fulfill their promise: “This is our time!” Time for what: to lose embarrassingly to Cleveland, who had the worst batting average in the young season until their series with the Royals? And now probably have the best??? (Okay maybe I’m not that patient!)

After the game was over I forgot about the weather and began watching a movie. The hubby (in the living room) comes back and asks if I was watching the progress of the tornado in Wichita. It was traveling right up 1-35 tracking towards McConnell then Eastborough. My sister lives right there: right

between McConnell and Eastborough, east of Oliver. What did they just say? Something about east of Oliver!

Sue doesn’t have a basement. I wanted to call but hoped she was somewhere she could not answer the phone! I frantically searched for her cell number. Then called Elizabeth because I knew she would have it.

Oh, Aunt Sue is fine, Elizabeth says. She’s in a closet with her laptop, posting on Facebook!

The tornado changed direction and did not end up going through Sue’s neighborhood. A few minutes later she reported she was out of the closet and headed to bed.

The next morning we saw via Facebook that Craig and Patricia also had to seek shelter about a little after midnight, but all was well.

You could argue if we did not have a plethora of instant communication we would never even know many of the perils we or our loved ones face.

But in this case I come in on the side of the media. What a great feeling to know for certain we are safe. To trust, in most cases, adequate warning will be given for those in harm’s way.

So check your phone if you are awaiting word on someone in peril. Otherwise, put it in your pocket and concentrate on the person who cares enough to spend time by your side.