

THE CRUSADERS VS. THE INFIDELS: MOSCOW'S MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY

Has "Trinitarian Skylarking" Turned into Godly Gang Warfare?

Read all about Douglas Wilson at www.home.roadrunner.com/~nickgier/Wilson.htm.

By Nick Gier

A long war is a small price to pay for eternal peace.

--found on a toilet stall wall

I don't often cruise the website of New St. Andrews College (www.nsa.edu), a small Christian college in Moscow, Idaho, so the new recruiting campaign gave me quite a jolt. The headline is "Yo, Secularism, Why Don't We Step into the Alley?" The blurb describes the NSA faculty as "not timid in a rumble," and they want to make the students "dangerous" so that they can "throw the lies of this age up against the wall, lifting wallets and the occasional gift card." It ends with "an invitation to a brawl." Is NSA a Christ-centered liberal arts college or a fighting club? If it is the latter, then its conditional use permit should be reviewed.

After the initial shock receded, my first thought was "How can they possibly recruit young women with this raw machismo"? Out of seven images (two with real tough guys) only one includes female students. Silly me, I forgot that some females might want to go to a college where they can meet "real" Christian men to whom they can be properly submissive. These religious brawlers would defend their honor in an alley or anywhere for that matter.

NSA men, however, would not defend their ladies' right to vote. According to NSA's founder, Douglas Wilson, misguided women might decide to cancel out their husband's wise choices in church and political matters. Wilson also believes that only propertied males should vote. Deliciously ironic, however, is the fact that Wilson encourages all of this congregates at Christ Church to vote for conservative candidates.

The phrase "muscular Christianity" came out of the Victorian Age, where Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes encouraged young men to combine Christian ideals with physical conditioning. Thanks to muscular Christianity, I built up some pretty nice biceps at the local gym of the Young Men's Christian Association, but I still ended up with the Unitarians, who of course cannot fight their way out of a wet paper bag.

NSA does have sports teams, but "pumpkin" rugby has replaced lacrosse (too feminine?), and there is a "girls" volleyball team. Some of the senior faculty, however, look like they have not been to a gym in ages.

I found a book on the web by R. W. Conant entitled *The Manly Christ* published in 1904. Just like Wilson, Conant bemoans the feminization of Christianity. He writes at great length about Christ and his male disciples being virile men. (I'm more in agreement with him when he called these manly disciples "stupid.") Joining in the anti-semitism of the age, Conant states that even though he was "born of a race" which is known for its "great excitability and volubility, Christ was more like the best type of the modern Anglo-Saxon."

A close scrutiny of the Gospels will show that Jesus respected his female associates far more than his male disciples. Women also accompanied Paul in his first missionary journeys as full equals. Many in the early church called Mary Magdelene the “Apostle of the Apostles.” The first churches services were held in women’s homes where women performed Communion. See *When Women Were Priests* by Karen Torjesen and my column on Mary Madgelene at www.home.roadrunner.com/~nickgier/MaryM.htm.

In 1964 Douglas’ father Jim Wilson wrote a small book entitled *Principles of War: A Handbook on Strategic Evangelism*. In an interview I told Wilson Pere that I thought that upraised sword on the front cover of the book was rather provocative, but he just shrugged his shoulders and said that it was only a symbol. Wilson assured me that this was spiritual, not physical warfare. Some may say that the NSA recruiting language is only metaphorical, but it is still violent rhetoric that every reasonable person should condemn.

Has Douglas Wilson’s “Trinitarian skylarking” now turned into godly gang warfare? An example of the former is an outrageous April Fool’s stunt. NSA students stole University of Idaho letterhead and used the English department’s FAX line to announce a feminist scholar who would lecture topless. Wilson later admitted encouraging his students to do the deed.

Douglas Wilson also established Logos School, whose K-12 students, I’m told, put on some very good plays. I would like to propose that they do an adaptation of *West Side Story*. Instead of the white working class Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks, the gangs should be renamed the Crusaders and the Infidels. In the original story, interestingly enough, the Jets were Catholic and the Sharks were Jews.

I foresee two snags in this version of the play. Although the killing of Maria’s brother by the Jet’s Tony could go ahead, the love story between Christian Tony and non-Christian Maria would be a real stretch. (NSA men must get the permission from a potential date’s father, or from Wilson *in loco parentis*.) Even more problematic is the fact that there can be no truce between the gangs at the end. For Wilson and other conservative evangelicals, there will be bitter warfare until Christ comes to smite the infidels. As I understand them, there will be nothing metaphorical about this violence.

As a “post-millennialist” Wilson believes that there will a 1,000 year Christian theocracy with strict enforcement of biblical law until Christ deigns to appear. I might prefer to get it over with more quickly in the “pre-millennial” Rapture. I’ll paraphrase Milton’s Satan: I would rather fry in the Rapture and take my chances in Hell rather than serve oppressive Christian masters.

Sometime in the late 1970s, I found a saying on a toilet stall wall near my campus office. Compared to most toilet graffiti, this one was quite sophisticated and a bit puzzling: “A long war is a small price to pay for eternal peace.” One might ask: What kind of peace is this when everyone who has not converted to your religion has been killed?

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