



"The nearer a lie to truth the more deceitful it is."  
—Anonymous

24-May-02

## **Give It to Us Straight!**

Throughout a normal day, we are constantly reminded just how little we can trust what we hear or read. Whether it is an advertisement on the radio or television or a mechanic's estimate to fix our car, we have to be cognizant of *caveat emptor*, "let the buyer beware." When salespeople ring our doorbells or our phones, we must take just about everything they say with a degree of skepticism because we know that thousands of people just like us have been conned out of millions of dollars by deals that really were too good to be true.

We know that lying in various forms—by omission, twist, spin, or through one's hat—is habitual, even institutionalized, in politics. The American people used to express shock when the President was caught in a lie (for instance, when Eisenhower lied about sending spy planes over Russia), but post-Clinton, we have become blasé about it. We almost expect it. Just as we never received a plain response about the White House travel office, Whitewater, Vince Foster, Monica Lewinsky, or Pardongate, we will never get a straight answer about Enron or what President Bush knew about the 9-11 attack and when. It is in the government's best interest to deceive us or keep us ignorant.

Of course, the fourth estate, the "independent" press, is supposed to be a watchdog on the government to keep it honest. Certainly, the media have in times past fulfilled this mission to a greater extent, but for the most part, they have failed. A cursory look into the leanings of news anchors, editors, reporters, and management reveals overwhelming support for things liberal. Few are even nominally Christian. As eminent New York journalist John Swinton said as far back as 1880: "The business of the journalist is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, to fawn at the feet of mammon, and to sell his country and his race for his daily bread. . . . We are intellectual prostitutes."

There are no signs ahead that this will change. Bill Kovach, chairman of the Committee of Concerned Journalists and a former editor of the *New York Times* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, recently gave a speech on "Journalism and Patriotism." After saying that journalists should fill the role of watchdog, he makes a comment that initially sounds good but after some thought causes one to yell, "Give it to us straight!":

The individual reporter may not be able to move much beyond a surface level of accuracy in a given story. But the first story builds to a second, in which the sources of news have responded to mistakes and missing elements in the first, and the second to a third, and so on. Context is added in each successive layer.

He is saying that when a story is first broken, it is perfectly all right for it to contain errors, omissions, mistakes, and misidentifications; it can even lack proper context. Those, we are assured, will be corrected in later stories. But by then, the damage is already done! Who reads the corrections, especially when they are buried deep in a story or on page E-27? How many people have already formed opinions based on these errors? Why can they not verify their facts before they run the story or run the story only with the facts they know are true?

The major media is a tough, cutthroat, deadline-driven business. Each outlet is trying to beat the other to the punch, to draw attention to their coverage,

and thus make the most money from their advertisers. None of them runs on altruism but on money, aggression, ambition, and politically and socially biased agendas. It is time we stopped thinking otherwise.

As Christians, we can trust only one source to give it to us straight: [God](#). He has chosen in these times to speak to us through His Word, the Bible. It lets us know what is right and wrong without equivocation, omission, spin, or deceit of any sort. How reassuring it is to know that we can rely on it and base our lives on its instruction! As [Proverbs 30:5](#) says, "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Truth \(Part 1\)](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Nothing is more important than the truth or the seeking after the truth. If we are going to be searching for truth, we should not be seeking it in the philosophies of men (a syncretic system of beliefs having its source in Babylon, a combination of human reason aided by demonic spirits and astrological prognostication - the weak and beggarly elements referred to by the apostle Paul in Galatians 4:9) but rather in the fullness of truth found in Christ with God's revelation as the final arbiter. There must be a continuous searching for more truth with the seeking of the kingdom of God as the highest priority to the end that we grow to full spiritual maturity.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Truth or Unity?](#)**

by Staff

We all want to be known as seekers of the truth. None of us would want to follow a lie! Yet oftentimes, searching for the truth brings us into conflict

with others' beliefs, causing separations between brethren in the church of God. How do we tell truth from lie?

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