

# Stones Are Being Cast By Everybody At Everybody Over Everthing

This material was written by Dr. Larry McGehee, vice president for development and professor of religion at Wofford College. It was provided free to newspapers by the Spartanburg, S.C. School.

The loss of public virtue is everywhere in evidence. One has only to read the daily headlines or watch the evening news.

Presidential candidate withdraws because of extramarital liaison accusations. Presidential candidate withdraws because of plagiarism controversy. Legislator caught in scam. Religious leader resigns because of sex allegations. Baseball

player dismissed from team after drug indictment. University penalized for alumni payments to football players. Marines admit to sexual affairs in embassy. Government officials charged with covert activity abuses. Contractors found in collusion with Pentagon officials in over-charging Defense Department.

If one digests daily such a diet of debility, small wonder that pessimism about the morals of the nation, skepticism about the decline of standards, and mistrust of those in power in institutions abound. Church, government, business, education, military — none seems exempt from the moral equivalent of AIDS. "Is nothing sacred?" is not a

cliche.

But there is a positive side-a redemptive aspect — to such news, too, too easily forgotten. Such stories still shock us, and one definition of public shock is that unworthy news is "newsworthy". Often public exposure leads to penalties and/or reforms; sometimes to self-improving.

Two beliefs bedded deep in our national religious heritage often elude us in our daily lives.

One is the impossibility of perfection, which Paul said is part of our nature, since all sin and fall short of the glory of God. Paul was not making excuses for us, nor was he freeing us from striving for perfection. He was just stating an

observable fact. No one can live up to the highest standards of godliness, and the higher some get the farther they fall.

Adam's weakness and eviction were portents and prophecies of the human race that would come after him. The universal nature of sin and weakness is a part of our upbringing. Madison and the other authors of the Constitution we celebrate this year knew that nature well and tried to check what they could of it.

Yet despite his propensity and almost certainty to err, Adam was the creation placed in charge of creation. That's the second heritage lesson we hold in common in this nation. We are responsible — or

charge to be responsible. "Responsibility" in this case means "responsive to by being responsible for". It is mankind's highest accolade and honor; it is also man's greatest burden and challenge.

The reason responsibility is such a challenge is precisely because it is both demanded of us and impossible of being fully attained. That means that politics and all other forms of human relationships usually become finite and proximate — in other words, "human" — compromises.

And when we say — as we so often do at our nominating conventions and in our corporate board meetings and on our playing fields — "May the best man win," we should keep in mind our history lessons: "sen-

ding our very best" requires evidence of striving to be highly responsible and involves knowing that even our very best is never completely good enough.

What matters most is the trying for our best. When we sit in judgment — headlines in front of us — we are dealing with judgment of how responsible are the private hearts which lie behind public words and deeds. The responsibility for good judgments is thereby as heavy

upon each of us as upon any sayer or doer out in the public eye, and not a matter to be taken lightly or ill-advisedly.

Finding the appropriate standards for judgment when we know all fall short, even we ourselves, is an awful responsibility. We expect standards from our standardbearers; and we ought to expect them first from ourselves, if we are to recognize them when we see them — or when we find them missing.

## To Your Health

The medical treatment a severely injured person receives during the first 60 minutes after an accident — the so-called "golden hour" — can determine whether the patient lives or dies.

But trauma centers and certain emergency medical services like air ambulances continue to be challenged.

"There are still many physicians, politicians and consumers who question whether transporting patients to designated trauma centers makes a difference in saving lives," said Dr. Joseph Moylan, a professor of surgery at Duke University Medical Center and medical director of the hospital's Life Flight air ambulance program.

A trauma surgeon for years, Moylan understandably believes in the need for designated trauma centers. And a recently completed study of more than 200 patients brought to Duke supports the view that the sooner a severely injured patient is stabilized and receives expert care — whether that occurs in a trauma center or on Life Flight — the greater the chances of survival and recovery. Moylan conducted the study with Dr. Gregory Georgiade, an associate professor of surgery, and Kenneth Fitzpatrick, a physician's assistant.

Although transportation by Life Flight costs about 40 percent more than by ambulance, the overall hospital bill is usually less, Moylan noted.

"The Life Flight patients had fewer complications, and they spend less time in the hospital," he said.

"From this study, it appears that Life Flight is 'cost effective,'" he noted. "Patients get expert care sooner, they have a shorter hospital stay, and most important, it saves lives."

The patients, with varying degrees of injury, were transported to Duke either by ambulance or by Life Flight. As a level I trauma center (qualified to handle all emergencies, including severe burns and limb replantation), Duke treats an average of 100 trauma patients a month. Life Flight transports about 160 patients each month; 30 percent of those are trauma patients being transferred from other hospitals.

"Although most people think of air ambulances going to the scenes of accidents, Life Flight is most often used for interhospital transport," Moylan said. "We fly to only one or two 'scenes' a month."

Each patient's injuries were ranked based on two commonly used scales. The trauma scale measures vital signs, such as pulse rate, respiration rate and blood pressure.

The Glasgow score rates the patient's mental function, ranging from conscious and alert to comatose.

Patients transported by air or ground had similar trauma scores on average, but Life Flight — transported patients had lower Glasgow scores, indicating more severe head and central nervous system injuries.

"Even so, the early survival for the air-transported group was significantly higher — 90 percent versus 80 percent for the ground-transported patients," Moylan noted.

Increased survival was most apparent among patients with mid-range trauma scores.

"It's understandable that these patients would benefit the most from early and aggressive treatment," Moylan said. "The most severely injured patients who did not have irreversible head injuries had the best survival rate and benefited the most from a systems approach to trauma care."

Life Flight patients probably fared better because they were stabilized sooner by an expert team of two trauma nurses, Moylan said. Life Flight nurses have at least five years experience in treating trauma victims, and during the flight they receive additional instructions by radio from a Duke physician.

Part of the treatment received on Life Flight reduced the patients' risk of severe shock, when insufficient amounts of blood reach the heart. Of the patients studied, a larger number of Life Flight patients were placed into MAST trousers, an inflatable garment that helps push blood back to the heart. Unlike emergency medical technicians on ambulances, Life Flight nurses can administer blood.

And the Life Flight patients reached Duke much sooner, arriving on average between 1.5 and 2.5 hours, compared with four to nine hours by ground transportation, Moylan said.

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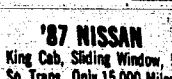


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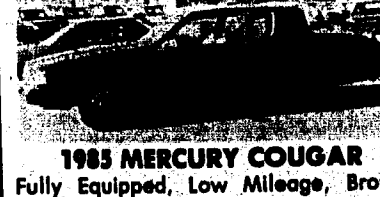
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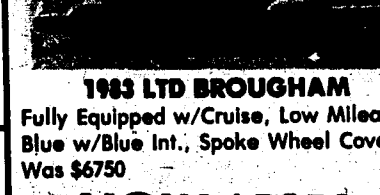
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