

**"You Say Apostate, I Say A Prostate,
Let's Call the Whole Thing Off"
This Week At Judson Sunday School
(9/10/10)**

Recently, a friend and fellow Judsonite forwarded an e-mail to me in which Judson Memorial Church was mentioned on the website of Trinity Bible Church in Powell, Wyoming, more or less calling us a bunch of apostates. (You might remember Michael Ellick referring to this in his sermon, "The Secret Spirituality of Judson Church" on August 29th. If you weren't at Judson that Sunday, be sure and pick up a copy. It's terrific!) "Apostate" is one of those words an old religion major like myself ought to know. I'm sure it ain't good, but as I went to the dictionary to double check, my mind began to wander to words of a similar sound, such as "prostrate," a good Biblical word if ever there was one, and, naturally, "prostate," because, well, you ought to know how my mind works by now. According to the dictionary, "apostate" is "a person who forsakes their religion."

Yikes! Hey, Powell, Wyoming, what did we ever do to you?! Perhaps you've forgotten what your mother taught you about not saying anything if you can't say something nice, particularly when it's directed at people you've never met.

I've been thinking about "apostates" lately, particularly as I watched the recent rally at the Lincoln Memorial on the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech. I'm not sure this is quite what Dr. King had in mind: a large group of angry white people, intolerant of views other than their own, whose God resembles and has all the depth of the faces mirrored in the reflecting pool. Oh, and who also wants a tax break. Yet, as far removed as the Becks and Palins and their supporters might be from Dr. King's original message, it hardly makes them apostates.

The evidence for Judson's apparent apostasy is, among other charges, basically three fold:

- 1) Our support for a woman's right to choose. Guilty. Shall we agree to disagree?

2) Our ministry to prostitutes. Um, have you read your New Testament lately? That wasn't exactly the mayor of Nazareth Jesus was palling around with.

3) "obscene exhibits defiling [an American] flag" which took place some FORTY YEARS AGO! How about a statute of limitations already?! I'm sure not everyone holds the same opinions they held in 1970, otherwise, today I would still be in love with Julia Glacken, my eighth grade sweetheart, and I'd probably be wearing purple bell bottoms. But even if we did hold those same opinions today, or any other opinions you might disagree with, that does not make one an apostate, it just means we hold different points of view, which is as American as apple or cherry pie. Besides, if it doesn't sound too snarky, I'd like to point out that even at Judson, we prefer to worship God, not the American flag.

Hey, speaking of God, why don't we get on with the business at hand. After a restful summer away, I'm happy to report God is back in the house at Judson Sunday School as we prepare to kick off another year beginning this Sunday. I'm not sure our curriculum is the kind of thing they would welcome in Powell, Wyoming, but I'm pretty excited about it and I hope you will be too.

For our preschoolers, we'll be offering "Images of God," a curriculum which each week, through Bible stories and secular children's books such as *Creation* by Alexandra Sangster, *Space Boy* by Leo Landry, and *Llama Llama Mad At Mama* by Anna Dewdney, will explore a different concept of what God might be like: God is like a parent, God is like the wind, God is like an artist, etc. Be sure and tune in November 7th when the kids will be learning about one of their five senses in a lesson entitled "God Is Like A Thousand Smells." The book accompanying this lesson is the classic, *Walter The Farting Dog*. I am very happy to welcome back Pilar Haile-Damato, Marisol Cabrera and Alex Mallett as our teachers for this class.

As for the rest of God's children, from elementary through our "yoots," I am thrilled to introduce our new curriculum, "A Joyful Path," which comes to us from - um, Trinity Bible, you are not going to like this. Best turn your head (and cough) - The Center For Progressive Christianity, an organization dedicated to "an understanding of Christian practice and teaching that leads to a greater concern for the way people treat each other than for the way people express their beliefs, the acceptance of all people, and a respect for other religious traditions." (Told you.) That sounds like us, doesn't it? For more on the good folk at TCPC, check out

their website: <http://progressivechristianity.org/template/index.cfm>.

Unfortunately, Gioia Marchese has chosen not to return to New York this fall, so we are going to shuffle the Joyful Path teaching deck, as it were. Lulu Fogarty moves from elementary school teacher to Yoot Leader, aka Rowe girl wrangler. As for the elementary kids, they are all mine. Advil, please! (We may bust this class in half later on. Let's see how it goes for a few weeks.)

Speaking of websites, have you seen our new Sunday School website? If not, go to <http://www.judson.org/SundaySchool>. You might recognize some of the pictures on display. Btw, if anyone objects to having their children's pics on the site, shoot me an e-mail and we will be happy to have them removed. And please be sure and thank Judson community minister Matthew Brown who put these pages together for us. Thanks again, Matthew!

Finally, Judson Sunday School has been invited to serve as one of the three Grand Marshals for this year's 20th Anniversary of the NYU/CB2 Children's Halloween Parade, which will take place on Sunday, October 31st, naturally, from 1 pm until 4 pm. We will start at the Washington Square arch and march around the park, led by the Lesbian and Gay Big Apple Corps Marching Band. (I know, I know, Trinity, it just keeps getting worse!) Lots of face painting, moon bouncing and other activities to follow the march. Does this sound like something we would like to do? Lemmeknow asap so I can give the parade people our yea or nay.

Also, I think it is probably too late to register for the Judson Weekend in Connecticut on September 24th - 26th, but if you are interested and haven't registered yet, you might check with the church office to see if there is still time.

Wow, three pages, that's a record even for moi. I think I'll conclude with an invitation to the good folk of Trinity Bible Church to come check us out next time you might be visiting New York City. We're good people and we won't even make you apologize for that apostasy crack. However, and I think I speak on behalf of millions, not just Judsonites, we would like an apology for your fellow Wyomingite, Dick Cheney, speaking of apostates - and prostates! (Okay, now *that* was snarky.)

See you in church!

Andy
Grand Poobah



Trinity Bible Church,
Wy, on Judson.doc