

Century Marks: Voices of 2006

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“Jesus was quite serious when he said that God was our father, that we belonged all to one family, because in this family all, not some, are insiders. Bush, bin Laden, all belong, gay, lesbian, so-called straight—all belong and are loved, are precious.”

—Retired Anglican archbishop **Desmond Tutu** of South Africa, addressing the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Brazil

“The most shocking thing for me was to work hard for several hours, raise up my head, look around and realize how little we accomplished. There is an awesome need for people to come to Louisiana as work teams. The need will go on for years.”

—United Methodist bishop **Tom Bickerton**, about the continuing needs in Louisiana after getting a firsthand view of hurricane damage

“It is certainly not in keeping with my understanding of the scriptures because this bill would literally criminalize the Good Samaritan and probably even Jesus himself.”

—Senator **Hillary Rodham Clinton** (D., N.Y.), speaking out against a House bill that would impose criminal penalties on those who assist undocumented immigrants

“Our Torah explicitly commands us, ‘Thou shall not stand idle while thy neighbor bleeds.’ This country must take the lead. Stopping genocide is not a Democratic or Republican issue. It is a moral issue.”

—Rabbi **Robert Levine**, president of the New York Board of Rabbis, urging stronger action to end genocide in Darfur, Sudan

“I have been told that Your Excellency follows the teachings of Jesus . . . and believes in the divine promise of the rule of the righteous on Earth. If Prophet Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ishmael, Joseph or Jesus Christ . . . were with us today, how would they have judged such behavior?”

—Iranian president **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad**, in a letter to President Bush challenging him to follow Jesus’ teachings more closely

“If some in this church feel wounded by recent decisions, then our salvation or health as a body is at some hazard, and it becomes the duty of all of us to seek healing and wholeness.”

—**Katharine Jefferts Schori**, the first woman chosen as Episcopal presiding bishop, referring to Episcopal controversies about the ordination of gay bishops and the blessing of same-sex unions

“Occasional drop-bys and clunky dropping of biblical references aren’t going to do the trick. These voters weren’t born again yesterday.”

—Washington Post editorial writer **Ruth Marcus**, discussing Democrats’ attempts to persuade evangelical Christian voters to consider becoming Democrats

“Even though there’s been this terrible thing happen, we don’t need to think about judgment, we need to think about forgiveness and going on.”

—Amishman in response to the schoolhouse shooting of Amish girls in Pennsylvania

“I’m praying for Haggard, as I hope he is praying for me and every sinner. But the lesson of this to the religious right surely is ‘go and sin no more.’ Stop the lies. Stop the bigotry. Deal with the reality of gay people, our souls, our wounded hearts, our humanity, our right to be treated equally by our own government. It’s what Jesus did. And it is your true calling now.”

*—Columnist and author **Andrew Sullivan**, reacting to the scandal surrounding Ted Haggard, former president of the National Association of Evangelicals, who resigned that post after a male escort said Haggard had paid him for sex and had bought drugs*

“It’s a shame that as an African American and a Muslim I have the double whammy of having to worry about driving while black and flying while Muslim.”

*—**Mahdi Bray**, executive director of the Washington-based Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation, reacting to the removal of six imams from a US Airways flight in November*

“Those are decisions only the Lord will make. It would be foolish for me to speculate on who will be there and who won’t. . . . I don’t want to speculate about all that. I believe the love of God is absolute. He said he gave his son for the whole world, and I think he loves everybody regardless of what label they have.”

*—Evangelist **Billy Graham**, when asked by Newsweek magazine if he thinks heaven is closed to good Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus or secular people*