



Real Men Have Character

By William A. Borst, Ph.D.

Ireland has experienced many changes in recent years. Its entry into the European Union has unleashed a high tech prosperity that has given the country its forty-first shade of green. It has not been without cost. Irish youth have discarded the bottle of their ancestors for the needle of their contemporaries.

A movie depicting the true story of journalist Veronica Guerin dramatizes the new Irish drug subculture. Distinguished Australian actress Cate Blanchett convincingly portrays the thirty-eight year old investigative reporter who summoned all of her skills and outrage against the nation's drug lords. For her troubles she was brutally murdered, leaving behind her husband and child. Her murder so angered the Dubliners that they drove the dealers, like so many snakes, out of Ireland, at least temporarily.

A Man's Birthright

Guerin's husband Graham Turley's response to her gruesome murder was bizarre. Though a good and decent husband, he stood idly by while Veronica was verbally abused, shot in the leg, savagely beaten and finally viciously murdered on the Naas Road in broad daylight. The cinema has come a long way from *the fighting Irishmen*, popularized by John Wayne in John Ford's epic, *The Quiet Man*. Wayne was quiet in his words but direct and physical in his actions. He would never have let his wife endanger herself the way Guerin did. As brawny as Wayne was, he met his match in the fiery tempered Maureen O'Hara, who shed nothing of her feminine dignity as his wife.

Turley's passivity in the face of bloody violence is reminiscent of 18th century Scottish novelist Henry Mackenzie's book, *Men of Feeling*, which depicted several men who were passive observers of several scenes of human pain and misery. Modern men of sensitivity and better known as *Beta Males* have instinctively defaulted on the troublesome questions of life. They no longer seem to heed the natural instinct to defend their women from violence.

The Jessica Lynch story rivals that of Veronica Guerin. Something is wrong with a culture that puts its daughters such as Lynch in harm's way of mortal combat. The feminist agitprop of Lynch's fictitious heroic response to her ambush would have been

risible if the situation had not been so deadly. Like Guerin's husband, few real men stepped up to protest this gross violation of America's respect for its women. Men have inexplicably forfeited their role as the protector of their women, or what renowned public servant Elihu Root once called the *birthright of man*.

On an intellectual plane this disturbing trend suggests that some men value the good and warm feelings of their emotions over the lasting truth of reason, morality, and good order. This has turned many American men into what prolife advocate Ellen Wilson has called a nation of *benevolent fence sitters*. Their dependency on their own inner feelings paralyze them from recognizing the more universal responses demanded of the big questions of life on female safety, abortion, euthanasia, and marital discord.

The Seat of Character

In his perceptive booklet, *The Abolition of Man*, the late Christian philosopher C. S. Lewis lamented that "we make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst." As Lewis so graphically put it, "The head rules the belly through the chest." A man's chest is where virtuous training takes place. It is the seat of character, a figurative connection between the cerebral and the visceral. Modern society is overburdened with men without chests, because it slavishly favors the belly over the chest.

C.S. Lewis was writing about the need for more virtue in public life. During the second Clinton administration when the President was found to have been a habitual philanderer and a perjurer, his apologists decried the necessity of moral character as a job requirement. They said it did not matter what Clinton did in his private life. As long as he favored abortion and women's rights, he was a great President in the eyes of his supporters.

Visions of Hell

Lewis wrote at about the same time that existentialists like Ernest Hemingway were sneering at the virtues of loyalty, honor, and other abstract notions, generally associated with warfare. While no one could question Hemingway's virility, he emerged from a generation of

writers who had lost their faith in the patriotic and religious virtues that had given sustenance and value to their fathers' lives. Their writings gave birth to subsequent generations whose literature was void of spiritual meaning. Hemingway's *code heroes* lived by an existential ethic. He was an introspective forerunner to the more recent pulp fiction of such moderns as Robert Ludlum. While Hemingway's heroes had some rudimentary semblance of integrity, Ludlum's heroes had a purely shallow grasp of their own alienation in a fierce and meaningless world. While Hemingway's characters projected a loss of faith and a rejection of God, Ludlum's heroes lived singularly by the laws of survival with a perceivable absence of God. Both heroes have a literary kinship with T. S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men*. Unlike Graham Turley, they were veritable action heroes, who could only focus on survival and sensual pleasure.

This same presence permeates three of the most highly acclaimed films of the last movie season. *Mystic River*, *21 Grams*, and *The House of Sand and Fog* dramatize the absolute frailty of human nature, beset by a litany of moral problems that resulted in murder, drug addiction, suicide, and adultery. None of the movies' protagonists saw the need for God's saving grace. The late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen once quipped that an "atheist was a man with no invisible means of support." The French existentialist John Paul Sartre defined Hell as *other people*. The atmosphere created by existential writers and film producers creates a modern vision of Hell, or simply put *life without God*.

The Rocking Hand

Some of the blame can be laid at the feet of the radical feminists who have turned men into spineless weaklings, devoid of character and self-discipline. There is no greater truism than the idea that *the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world*. Babies are virtual blank slates upon which the mother's nurturing influence can implant a host of virtues, and disciplines, as well as vices and neuroses that can result in sainthood or depravity. Many women have put their careers ahead of their children who have in turn become near wards of day care. Some female educators characterize every energetic boy as suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). These same educators want to eliminate competition, score keeping, and imaginary war games from the playground. All this fosters the deterioration of masculine symbols and rituals, stunting their manly development. The rocking hand of feminism has created an emasculated generation of men who do not know how to be men of strength in body and character. They woefully fear conflict, women, and social disapproval.

Modern women, such as Veronica Guerin, have wantonly accepted the philosophical underpinnings of Marx, Gramsci, and Betty Friedan. These kinds of women can only live with docile, passive men who support and encourage them to compete in the world of politics, law enforcement, and even investigative journalism. Phyllis Schlafly's book, *Feminist Fantasies*, has several examples of

men who could not stay married to women who were more determined to rule the board room than the home. These women have turned the volume up so loud on Helen Reddy's battle cry of *bear us roar*, that real men have gone deaf. A nation of strong, virile women and weak men cannot last long against the dedicated enemies of freedom, Christianity and private property.

A Logical Conclusion

Gender confusion has become a problem of epic proportions, especially for men. There are men who are not only empty on the inside but also suffer from an external disorder that has undermined their relationships with women. In the March 2004 issue of *Chronicles Magazine*, Thomas Fleming attributes much of this problem to *homosexuality* and the Renaissance's revival of the homoeroticism of ancient Greek culture as a weapon against the Catholic Church. While the Enlightenment catered to fornicators and adulterers, Voltaire felt that experiments with sodomy would accelerate the complete breakdown of the traditional barriers between normal behaviors and perverted pleasures in 18th century France.

French aristocrat the Marquis de Sade proudly became the personification of experiments in perversion. He took the Enlightenment to its logical conclusion. Since God did not exist, religion and morality were mere inventions to suppress mankind. Without God, de Sade was free to do anything to God's creatures his will dictated. Torture, rape, sodomy, and sexual orgies were part of being human. Sensual pleasure became the measure for the rest of his life. He was a sexual addict whose slavery to sin and perversion resulted in his spending most of his adult life in jail.

Metro Link

Many heterosexual males have eagerly enlisted in the Sadean Revolution. While still preferring women, these men have blurred the natural differences between male and female by adopting the physical characteristics and couture of the homosexual lifestyle. The hit TV show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* is illustrative of this trend.

In the same issue of *Chronicles Magazine*, Thomas Fleming laments "I cannot be the only older man in America who finds most young men unbearably epicene," that is partaking in the characteristics of both sexes. Fleming is disgusted that the leading men of the current film studios project a masculinity that is highly tempered, if not blurred by similar effeminate characteristics. He wonders out loud about the missing swagger of a John Wayne, the virility of a Sean Connery or the baritone machismo of a Gregory Peck.

Fleming has recognized a new social trend, called *the metrosexual*. A metrosexual is a man who likes women but spends as much time as they fluffing his hair, using perfume, and selecting the perfect outfit. Metrosexual is the code word used to destigmatize and celebrate the effeminate. Ann Coulter calls them *girlie boys*, who have invaded the culture like a pack of deviant body snatchers.

Metrosexuals are the missing link that inexorably bonds homosexuals to mainstream culture.

The feminization of the straight man in movies and politics is a more dangerous phenomenon than the great influx of homosexuality into American culture. Real men with chests of character and faith might be the last impediment to the decline and fall of Western civilization.

Men for All Seasons

Western culture has many examples of men who should be emulated. Brave men, such as St. Thomas More provide a stark contrast to Pontius Pilate who willingly shed the blood of an innocent man for his own political viability. Real men abound in the military, in sports arenas and in the pulpits of many churches. They have served admirably and even heroically in all the wars of the past and present centuries. Many remember the legendary heroics of the late actor Audie Murphy, who won the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II. Mel Gibson lionized the Vietnam War heroics of devout Catholic Lt. Colonel Hal Moore in his movie *We Were Soldiers*. The terrorist attacks on 9/11 produced countless examples of Judeo-Christian character shining through the blinding clouds of smoke and fire. Hundreds of firemen, policemen, rescue workers and chaplains laid down their lives in hope of saving the lives of their fellow human beings. The daily newspapers glitter with countless examples of uncelebrated people who have gladly risked their lives for their neighbors. Others have stood tall and walked long in the moral fight against abortion, euthanasia, and a culture that is adrift in a sea of disorder and self-destruction.

Pee Wee Reese and Hal Ripken, Jr. may have just been baseball players but over the years we have witnessed in them a dedicated character that could have illuminated the entire playing field during a night game. Their quiet moral presence reached beyond the human limitations of hits and errors. Like Simon of Cyrene, Reese helped carry the cross of racial persecution that afflicted Jackie Robinson in the late 1940s. As a player Ripken provided the stature of a real man with a moral chest that served as a bright beacon in a sport that has been rife with racism, drugs, promiscuity and gambling.

Men of great intellectual prowess have always been impressive. Bishop Sheen was a warm friendly man of normal proportions. When he spoke of God, the Catholic Church, and in opposition to atheistic Communism, he stood ten feet tall and had a chest the size of Manhattan. The burning presence of God's love exuded from his words like hot lava from an active volcano. In his classic manifesto, *The Conservative Mind*, Russell Kirk wrote volumes of truth that launched an overwhelming torrent of ideas against the liberal monopoly on American thinking. A nation that can produce men like these will always have hope.

Here are two shining examples for hope: Ex-NFL player Pat Tillman gave up a \$3.6 million football contract in order to enlist in the U.S. Army Rangers. The 27-year old was killed in action on April 22 in Iraq. His former Cardinals' coach Dave Mc Ginnis said: "Pat

Tillman made a decision based on real values; honor, dignity, integrity, commitment—these realities in his life came through very loud and clear." Another example for hope is high-school athlete Cpl. Jason Dunham whose quick action in the face of an Iraqi grenade saved the lives of fellow Marines on April 14, though Dunham was fatally wounded. His senior officer, Lt. Col. Matthew Lopez on May 13 sent a letter recommending Cpl. Dunham for the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for military valor. Dunham was 22 years old. There is still a critical need for everyday real men, and nowhere is the need greater for ordinary men of character than in the American family.

Pope John Paul II recognized this growing concern in his *Apostolic Exhortation, November 22, 1981 on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World, Familiaris Consortio*. As he wrote: "Above all where social and cultural conditions so easily encourage a father to be less concerned with his family . . . efforts must be made to restore socially the conviction that the place and task of the father in and for the family is of unique and irreplaceable importance." (25) This is the supreme challenge of real men everywhere.

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*James L. Hirsen accepting the Mel Gibson award for **The Passion of the Christ***



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News & Notes

ANAHEIM CONFERENCE - The 22nd Annual CMF Conference in Greater Los Angeles was considered our finest Conference by many loyal and enthusiastic friends who attended. It was also a great tribute to Chrm. Marge DeClue who by her constant prayers, skillful leadership and endless energy **again** provided a balanced, fresh and exciting program on the hot issues.

Cong. Tom Tancredo's facts on illegal immigration were stunning! Paul Lauer from the inside told why *The Passion* is the #1 movie of 2004. James Hirsen revealed the shenanigans of Hollywood's Leftist Elite whose negative influences permeate entertainment and politics. Hirsen received an award to be given to his friend Mel Gibson. It is a handsome stained glass icon from CMF-Southern California with the insignia **In Hoc Signo Vincens** (In This Sign You Will Conquer). Elaine Middendorf, CMF's Radio Director, produced this special gift for Mel Gibson.

Fr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., the priest-neuroscientist, gave the final superb presentation with gravity and eloquence on Embryos, Adult Stem Cells, Human Cloning. His talk was accompanied by excellent graphics on these burning issues that affect faith and morals in our society.

Present throughout the Conference with concelebrated Mass and the Rosary were Abbot L. K. Parker, Abbot E. Hayes, 8 priests, and 15 seminarians from the Norbertines' nearby magnificent St. Michael's Abbey and Prep School for Boys in Silverado.

May God bless all for the spiritually uplifting, educationally fulfilling Conference, and the opportunity to form lasting friendships with persons of like-minded concerns and goals.

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