

Dick Bernard

September 7, 1998

Dear Senator Lieberman:

Christian response to Clinton

Some years ago, some reporters heard a pretty fair teacher make a couple of statements to crowds of people.

He said, according to the news media of the time, "Judge not, lest you yourself be judged," and, another time, "Let the person who is without sin cast the first stone." He seems, from other statements attributed to him, to have had no time for sanctimonious hypocrites who were always raising new and additional questions, hoping to trip him up.

His messages have lasted for a couple of thousand years, so they must have some credibility. I wonder what this teacher would have said today, about the issue du jour, if a guest on "Meet the Press" or before a joint session of Congress.

- Dick Bernard, Apple Valley

MINNEAPOLIS STAR-TRIB

8/19/98

Voyeur and prosecutor

Thirty-seven years as a Lutheran minister taught me much about the dark side of human nature. For example, I learned that everyone has secrets they would rather not disclose. Moreover, in counseling I learned that whenever a client's defenses and denials increased it signaled that we were getting dangerously close to the truth.

If the same coercions were directed at you to thoroughly disclose details of your private life, past and present, as have been put on our president, how would you react? Many say we have a right to expect a higher standard of conduct from our elected leaders, yet when have we ever made sainthood a requisite for public office?

That we are talking about a case of bad judgment no one can dispute. Neither can I defend the morality of what our country's president has recently admitted doing. Yet the Starr investigation has assumed the qualities of voyeurism on a grand scale that reveals more about the investigators than the investigated. Someone has said that people generally get the kind of leadership they deserve. It is a premise worth pondering.

- Otto A. Sotnak, Aitken, Minn.

MINNEAPOLIS STAR-TRIB 8/13/98

I am not your constituent, but feel it is most appropriate to communicate, through you, to my Senators and Congressman from MN.

I generally applaud your comments regarding President Clinton made to the Senate and all of us last week. There was a profound sense of betrayal.

At the same time, speaking as an active Christian who supports this President now even more strongly than I did before, I want to urge great caution and prudence by Congress as it considers what actions to take against the President. I understand very well how political rhetoric works - I'm not naïve. There exists potential for a huge amount of hypocrisy and avoiding of responsibility by many members of Congress by beating up on the President. (If so convinced of their righteousness the move to impeach ought to come before the fall elections rather than after....)

I am 58 years old, a grandparent, pretty conservative and quite religious personally - but I can identify personally with the quandary faced by the President when he found himself living a lie. I can easily admit my own failings because I think all of us have failed similarly to the President at one time or another in our own lives. Sometimes we even convince ourselves that the lie is okay. The President was caught in his, and should be allowed to seek therapy or treatment or whatever, and be on with life.

I am most offended by the hypocrites who refuse to acknowledge their own failings for the most base of political motives. They know who they are....

I disagree that the President should be held to a higher standard than the rest of us. He is a human being, after all, subject to the same temptations as any others.

I wish you and your colleagues well as you attempt to find a fair and just resolution to this problem.

Sincerely,

