

Why We Are Bill and Hillary

I like Bill and Hillary.

Even though I disagree with everything they stand for, I like former President Bill and former Sen. Hillary Clinton.

In contrast to their public personas, they are kind, nice and so very different from the way they are so often portrayed.

I first met Bill Clinton in the strangest of places.

I was in New York for the yearly opening of the United Nations.

During that week, world leaders come to New York to attend the U.N. General Assembly; the important business happens at the nearby Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

While working on getting help for the Assyrian Christians in Iraq, I entered the exquisite restroom off the lobby.

I turned to my right and there, amazingly, stood Bill Clinton.

I stammered out, "President Clinton, we are trying to help the Christians in Iraq. Can you help us?"

He laughed heartily and said, "Can you wait until we finish?"

Embarrassed, I fumbled for an "of course."

He was laughing louder by then and said, "Good job—there is only one place in the world where the Secret Service leave me alone: the bathroom!"

By that time, I was really feeling stupid, but after we finished and washed up, he said, "Sit down and tell me what the situation for the Christians is."

There on the sofa in the beautiful restroom at the Waldorf

Astoria, he listened to the situation of the Christians and kindly offered to help in any way he could.

I met former Sen. Hillary Clinton in a much more civilized setting.

She then served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and having heard so much about what a terror she was, I hesitated, but I had to talk with her.

After the hearings were over I went up to her, prepared to be blown off and said, "Sen. Clinton, would you have a moment to talk about the Christians in Iraq?"

The moment she heard the word "Christians," she lit up.

"Sure, sit down and tell me what is going on."

I think we were there for nearly a half hour.

Just like her husband, she was kind, laid-back, almost sweet, and I was taken aback.

When we finished, she spoke to one of her staff and said, "Help them with whatever they need." We have met many times since, among them once in Baghdad where she courageously came at one of the most difficult times.

As I pondered the dramatic difference in how these two people come across personally—so out of line with all the wrong things they seem to consistently do, I began to understand.

I think Bill and Hillary Clinton are a good example to all of us of people who are "good" without faith.

Gen. William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, put it this way over a hundred years ago: "The chief danger of the 20th century will be religion without the Holy Spirit, forgiveness without repentance and heaven without hell."

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They were at one time people who loved God, saw the needs of the world and honestly wanted to make a difference.

Now looking back, I saw a wistfulness in both of them as we spoke. I think they were being taken back to the days when they were good, acted out of pure motives and wanted to make a difference.

“Religion without the Holy Spirit” happened to them.

In the midst of honestly trying to do good, they slowly began to compromise.

It seemed small at first.

A lie here, an unacceptable compromise there—all justified for the greater good.

One day, they realized they were in way over their heads. Here, the second of Booth’s points kicked in: “forgiveness without repentance.”

Realizing that they were now in over their heads with evil, knowing better and getting caught, they apologized, did all they could to cover up, but remained unable to stop the now seemingly unstoppable train without true repentance.

The wistfulness I see in their eyes as we talk is a stark reminder of from whence they came.

Heaven without hell” was Booth’s reference to the feeling that takes over when we have compromised so much that we feel we cannot go back anymore and forgotten that there is a “hell” to pay.

Before we all so loudly condemn the Clintons for their views on abortion, homosexual marriage and just about everything in between, we need to pause and realize that but for the grace of God, we would be there too.

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As their private personas so clearly show, they are both people who started out as believers, wanting to change the world for good.

They are simply believers just like us who, caught up in the "goodness," lost their way and woke up one morning realizing they had come to a place of seemingly no return.

They believe they have fallen so far there is no turning back.

It is never too late, though in God's kingdom.

Every time you see the Clintons on TV, instead of throwing something at the screen (as I have done many a time), take a moment to pray for them that God will lead them home.

At the same time let us examine ourselves, realizing that we too face the same challenges, and the only thing that will keep us pure is to remind ourselves of the wise words of General Booth: "The chief danger of the 20th century will be religion without the Holy Spirit, forgiveness without repentance and heaven without hell."

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