

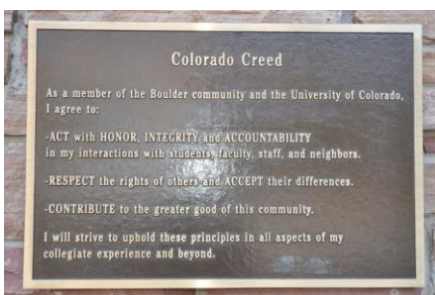
Last Saturday I took our family to see a stage production of *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens. Penelope and Nadia, now seven and five years old, were enthralled with the costumes, singing, dancing, and especially the ghosts. Enjoying *A Christmas Carol* is a Michener family tradition that goes back to when I was a child, but this year I saw it in a whole new light.

In the first act, two gentlemen enter Scrooge's counting-house soliciting donations to "make some slight provision for the poor and destitute." Scrooge asks them, "Are there no prisons? And the Union workhouses. Are they still in operation? The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?" The gentlemen answer that yes, all are in operation. However, the gentlemen explain that since these institutions do not necessarily provide any "Christian cheer of mind or body," they "are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth." Scrooge replies, "I help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there." Scrooge is told that many cannot, and besides, "many would rather die." Then comes Scrooge's famous retort: "If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population." He adds: "It's not my business. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's."



My jaw dropped as I heard these lines, a ghostly echo of the lines I had been hearing all year long in defense of abortion: *We have orphanages, foster care, adoption agencies, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Those who need help should go there. But those agencies are clumsy and inept. The choice to give up a child for adoption would be difficult and traumatic. No, we would rather our children die than go into these institutions; therefore, abortion should remain legal. Besides, the world is overpopulated anyway. And finally, let's all mind our own business and not tell other people what to do.*

This January 22, 2013, marks the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Forty years ago our nation crossed a bloody Red Sea into a spiritual wilderness. After two generations of wandering around lost, the warped thinking of Scrooge has become embedded in our culture. For example, during an outreach last year, we saw a bronze plaque mounted on a stone wall that read, "As a member of the Boulder community and the University of Colorado, I agree to RESPECT the rights of others and ACCEPT their differences." Respect the rights of others? Yes! But *accept* their differences? To accept means to receive with approval; to agree or consent to; to respond affirmatively to. While we can agree with the general principles on this plaque, before we can accept someone's differences, we need to know what those differences are. In my experience on campus, students these days think of differences not in the traditional sense of racial and gender differences, but strongly in terms of lifestyle choices and "reproductive rights." In other words, in the context of the modern collegiate community which created it, is not this plaque literally a graven image to fornication, homosexuality, and abortion?



Like the Israelites, we have raised up graven images, and like the pagans around them, we have practiced child sacrifice. Those who have grown up in this culture of extreme moral degradation have become our leaders. Those who stand up for the truth are now assailed by administrators, plagued by politicians, and pestered by protestors. We face ignorance, misinformation, and opposition on all sides. The forces of darkness are arrayed against the truth, intent on quieting dissent and quashing the struggle for human rights.

Scripture tells us that “the wages of sin is death” (Prov. 10:16, Rom. 6:23). The Spirit of Christmas Future delivered the same message to Ebenezer Scrooge, showing him that Scrooge’s unwillingness to care for his employee Bob Cratchit would lead to the untimely death of Bob’s crippled son Tim. And then the Spirit showed him another death.

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One... Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE...

“No, Spirit! Oh no, no! Spirit! hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope? ... Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life? I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year... Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!”

Can Scrooge, and can our nation, avert judgment? This is what God promised the Israelites in II Chronicles 7:14: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Scrooge did change his heart, valuing the lives of the poor and the crippled, rather than condemning them to death. *A Christmas Carol* ends with Tiny Tim perched upon the shoulders of Ebenezer Scrooge, his voice ringing across the audience, “God bless us, every one!” I know that God will...if we, like Scrooge and like the Israelites, will repent and leave the wilderness behind. After forty years, it is time.



Here are some examples of how your support is bringing about repentance. Stephen Buerger is a member of Cowboys For Life and helped to bring the JFA training program to Oklahoma State University. He writes:

One of the most valuable aspects of JFA's visits to OSU has been the conversation skills and strategies they teach. I have been able to use many of the things I've learned in conversations not only about abortion, but also about other dif-

ficult topics. I've also found that my conversations about abortion are great opportunities to address the gospel. The work that JFA does is a great resource for those wanting to know how to engage people with the truth.

Kinsey Smith, an Edmond, Oklahoma high school student, writes:

I was nervous during the first part of the outreach...but once I got started, it became easier and easier. I had many good conversations with students and was able to challenge their beliefs. Several conversations began with abortion but turned into talks about religion and Christianity. I was able to share the gospel and my faith a couple of times! ...

Thank you so much to everyone who makes Justice For All possible. You are training people to communicate in an effective way and saving lives every time you do an outreach. I look forward to working with you all again soon!

Thank you for helping us train and embolden students like Stephen and Kinsey. They are our future leaders, and they are already leading us in the right direction.

-John Michener