

The logo for "Cross Currents" features a stylized orange cross symbol to the left of the text. The word "Cross" is in a bold, dark brown font, and "Currents" is in a similar font below it.

Bible Bashing

Did you hear about that angry fellow who bashed his girlfriend with a Bible?

The *New York Post* reported that when some dude in the Bronx got into a hot argument with his 41-year-old lover, he grabbed her Bible and “smacked her in the head and shoulder with it.”

At least the Bible-basher picked the right day to do it. It was Sunday. But the cops arrested him anyway and charged him with felony assault.

During my almost eight decades, I’ve witnessed more than my share of Sunday Bible bashing. Sadly, it was done in pulpits by men of the cloth who claimed to represent the God of grace.

I’ll never forget the night when a revival evangelist in our little Kerrville church went berserk. I was only ten years old then, but that angry cleric’s behavior left scars on my soul that are still tender.

Instead of preaching about the Lamb who loved us enough to die for the worst of us, that angry, ugly-mouthed man embarrassed all of us. In the name of God and in defense of “the truth,” that hate-spouting preacher damned our dear Baptist neighbors who sat beside us that night. They had enough sense not to come back.

While reciting reams of Scripture, that red-faced, irate evangelist rudely insulted the congenial Catholic priest who had come to visit our church that night. It was the worst case of Bible-bashing I ever saw.

That one was extreme, to be sure. But Sunday after Sunday all across our land, those who believe the Bible the most have been the most guilty of using it to attack their neighbors.

It amazes me that in a jillion small towns jovial men gather in mom-and-pop cafes to swap jokes, tell tall tales, and laugh together. They thoroughly enjoy each other Monday through Saturday. They really are good friends. But, for an hour or two every Sunday, far too many of them retreat into their bastions of faith (called churches) and use Bible verses to bash each other.

The very Book the bashers use to abuse those who dare to differ with them says, “You must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience” (Col. 3:12).

And just a few verses later the apostle tells us, “Live wisely among those who are not believers. Let your conversation be gracious.” That doesn’t sound like Bible-bashing to me.

By Gene Shelburne