

# Good News By Vic Dove

## Seeking Approval

*“Nevertheless many even among the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”* John 12: 42-43

In this verse, Jesus has just made His triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem, with people waving palm branches. He is making His final appeal to the masses to believe in Him as the Messiah. Trying to make them understand that what He has said and done is from the Father, Jesus urges them to believe the truth.

Although some had not believed in Him, others had believed but were secret followers. Do you remember Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus? They were secret followers. They formed a secret society of

men and women who believed in the Son of God but were not ready to come forward and confess Him as Lord to their friends and neighbors.

Both of these men remained quiet about their belief for fear of being cast out of the synagogue. However, secretly Joseph did ask Pilate for Jesus' body after the Crucifixion. The Bible describes him as a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews. We also read about Nicodemus coming to Jesus in private during the night when everyone else was sleeping and asking, “How can a man be born again?” These men were like some believers today, confessing Christ in the privacy of their homes but never quite able to do so publicly, in fear of being rejected by others or being kicked out of the club...the socially accepted club.

What is it inside of us that longs for the approval of others? How and why does the approval of others influence our decision-making process?

People who constantly and fervently, seek the approval of others live with an identity crisis. They don't know who they are, so therefore they are defined by what others think of them. The sad part is, if your security is built on others, you are fragmented. You might get approval from one person for doing what makes them happy, but the next person you come into contact with will expect something different. You continue the cycle, trying to please everyone, until you reach a point of pleasing no one, especially God. You can't be a whole person and allow others to dictate who you are.

If your approval is built on what others think, your approval rating will always be swaying or changing, because you never know how you stand. How horrible to always be at the mercy of the opinions of others. When God approves of you, what others think does not make any difference.

Shoulder to Shoulder, Bro. Vic



**HISTORICALLY**  
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### You were always Mom's favorite: A historic tribute to Tommy Smothers

By James Finck, Ph. D.

When I was in college back in the 1990s, I like so many other students began getting my political commentary Monday through Thursday nights on Comedy Central with The Daily Show with John Stewart. While the show was not an official news show and Stewart, who had graduated from the same university a decade before, never claimed to be a legitimate news anchor, his brand of humor and take on politics was appealing. In fact, for the 2004 presidential election, male viewers between 18-34 got their news more from The Daily Show than any other news program. Considering this was a comedy show that is both funny and sad.

But The Daily Show was not the first to satirize the news. Starting in 1975, those “not ready for primetime players” roasted politicians every weekend on Saturday Night Live. Their political mocking was so popular that today, if you pay attention, when people impersonate George W. Bush, they are not actually doing Bush, but instead impersonating Will Ferrell doing Bush. While shows like SNL and The Daily Show have been called groundbreaking, they are not.

They are standing on the shoulders of two brothers who came before them. While not as famous today, the show that really kicked off political satire was The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour. Last month, half of the duo, Tommy Smothers died of cancer at the age of 86, but his legacy lives on in the many political shows that have aired in the decades since.

The Smothers Brothers began its run in 1967, a turbulent year. Vietnam was ramping up and that year saw over 10,000 killed as thousands took the streets to protest the war. Race riots occurred in several major cities all summer long and hippies flocked to San Francisco for the Summer of Love.

During all this, two new shows began, The Carol Burnett Show and The Smothers Brothers. Both shows put audiences in stitches from their comedy. While The Carol Burnett Show lasted for 11 seasons, due its controversial content, The Smothers Brothers was canceled after only three years.

Seeing them as controversial might be confusing as the brothers were clean cut and wore suits in a time where most protesters were hippies with long hair and beads. It was a sketch comedy show with plenty of music as the brothers were a folk musical act with Tommy playing the guitar and Dick playing the stand-up bass. While they

were skilled musicians, it was their lyrics and commentary between the songs that got them in hot water with censors and their network. Most of their work was subtle with lyrics that had different meanings and jokes that were cute. For example, “Tom: You can tell who's running the country by how much clothes people wear? Dick: Do you mean that some people can afford more clothes on, and some people have... less on? Is that what you mean? Tom: That's right. Dick: I don't understand. Tom: See, the ordinary people, you'd say that the ordinary people are the less-ons. Dick: So who's running the country? Tom: The morons.”

Yet at other times they lost their subtlety such as with jokes like, “Dick: It's a very difficult situation. People keep spending our money abroad and it's hurting our economy. People keep wanting to travel to other countries instead of staying in the good ol' United States. Tom: Yeah, well, the way I think is that, see, President Johnson should just come up with something positive as an inducement to keep the people here. Dick: But what could the president do to make people want to stay in this country? Tom: Well he could quit.”

Their biggest target was the Vietnam War which they sang about in songs like the Draft Dogger Rag. The chorus went like, “Sarge, I'm only 18, I got a ruptured spleen, And I always carry a purse, I've got eyes like a bat and my feet are flat, My asthma's getting worse.” The song went one for several more verses just the same.

Finally, President Johnson had had enough, especially after a skit where it turned out that Johnson's BBQ sauce was years behind the Russians secret BBQ sauce. Johnson began demanding the show be pulled from the air. When the network told the brothers to calm it down, they vamped it up instead. They brought on singers like Pete Seeger and Harry Belafonte who both sang strong antiwar songs. The network cut Seeger's song and replaced with a Nixon for President ad instead, infuriating the brothers.

With the election of Nixon, the show did not last long. The brothers promised to take it easy on the president-elect, but then did not live up to their promise.

Only three months into Nixon's term, the show was canceled. The network claimed Tommy did not get that week's show to the censors in time. The brothers claimed it was Nixon. While the show would be considered tame today, it was one of the first to call out politicians and it became an early victim of cancel culture. However, the Smothers Brothers did set the stage for programs like SNL which came out six years later.

The later time slot helped SNL, but the Smothers Brothers had broken down some of the barriers that allowed SNL and later programs to thrive. Even more, the brothers did it with class. Their jokes were funny and not crude making them suitable for an entire family to watch together. Tommy Smothers' humor should be remembered alongside some of the greats in entertainment and his show deserves to rank up there with the most groundbreaking of all time.

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## Is a public official working for the citizens when...?

- official doesn't update government's website and keep current
- official commonly uses derogatory 'pet' names for anyone who does not hold identical views or anyone perceived as questioning or challenging
- official limits information available on a government's website
- official offers solution which isn't a full solution, just to appear 'helpful'
- official tells staff to ignore Open Records requests instead of responding to them, hoping that the person will not pursue the request
- official doesn't look for ways to be transparent, particularly with online information, limiting citizens right to know
- official calls citizen by name and labels a liar during public meeting?
- official tells citizens to take care of matters themselves, instead of enforcing ordinances?
- official creates community budget and minimizes board/council or citizens their right to know in advance and give input?
- official changes meetings to accommodate employee creating attendance problems for board/council and citizens.
- official constructs narrative for citizen by saying official held public meetings about which board/council never were informed.
- official pits people against each other to make one feel right and the other one wrong.
- official controls all the decision-making about everything including the responsibilities of a board/council.
- official claims truth is what's being said at the moment, instead of information in accordance with fact or reality
- official tells citizens to follow the law, but privately doesn't do it him/herself.