

Book Review:
Standing for Christ in a Modern Babylon by Marvin Olasky
(Wheaton, Crossway, 2003), paperback, 160 pages. \$12.99

In post-9/11 America, evangelical Christians are increasingly becoming targets of the liberal media. In this new book from the pen of journalist Marvin Olasky (Editor-in-chief of *World* magazine), Christians will find a wealth of ammunition to defend themselves against media bias and misrepresentation.

Olasky begins by describing today's culture as a "liberty theme park" where the "god-words" of freedom, diversity and tolerance are the vocabulary of the masses. He helpfully debunks many media misunderstandings of evangelicalism, whilst conceding that many of us have invited valid press criticism by "over-the-top" reactions to issues and zeal without knowledge. Olasky contends that listening to our detractors may lead to healthy self-evaluation and a more loving and shrewd response.

Liberal journalists will hate this book. With surgical precision, Olasky unravels the clever rhetoric of dozens of syndicated columnists (whose quoted columns spitting venom at evangelicals as the "Christian Taliban" make for downright scary reading). He highlights some particular areas of contemporary journalistic ignorance – specifically, the positive impact of Christianity on American society, and the truth about the nature of Islam. In the former, the author cites many examples of "compassionate conservatism" in action; in the latter, he demolishes the notion that Islam is essentially a "religion of peace". There is much here to equip the culturally-engaged believer in responding to an increasingly hostile environment, which Olasky compares to Daniel in Babylon.

A better journalist than exegete, Olasky's biblical rationale will leave a few readers cold in places (e.g. using the Old Testament theocracy as an argument for strict separation of church and state), and his vision is certainly far removed from a traditional Covenanter understanding of how church and state should relate. On a practical note, the book's usefulness might be increased if sources were cited in endnotes to aid further research. That said, this is a book filled with up-to-date information and timeless wisdom for our age that will be of immense help to Christians "contending for the faith once for all entrusted to the saints" (*Jude* v3). Timely, insightful, and valuable. I heartily recommend it.

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