

CIVILITY IS A TWO-WAY STREET: CHRIST CHURCH AND HER DETRACTORS

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Click [here](#) all appropriate remarks from on on-line debate with Atwood

For all documents regarding Wilson & Co., see this [link](#)

See also Gier's [God, Reason, and the Evangelicals](#)

In a guest column in the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* (11/30/07), Roy Atwood, President of New St. Andrews College (NSA) and elder of Christ Church, mentions the boycott of Christ Church businesses as an example how deeply divided Moscow is. Atwood seems to forget that the name calling and trash talking—such as calling me a banshee, a God hater, and a terrorist sympathizer--started with Atwood and his colleagues.

On a regular basis Wilson leads his congregation in imprecatory prayers, which are requests that God punish or destroy his enemies. I don't know of any other church in the community that performs such hateful practices. Wilson says that he is just using some of the Psalms as they were intended, but that just shows you the great dangers of Biblical literalism. Do good Christians really want to transfer hatred expressed 3,000 years ago into the present?

With regard to the boycott list, I had nothing to do with it. I've not seen it and I don't want to see it. I don't eat at West of Paris primarily because of the snotty response the chef made about his right to serve anything he liked regardless of what people thought about stuffing geese with grain until they die. The chef's angry rhetoric was surprisingly like Wilson's, one that shows his "crawling over cut glass" total disregard for basic civil and academic standards.

The U.S. has a long tradition of harmonious and constructive relations between private and public education, but for many years Atwood's pastor Doug Wilson and members of his congregation have attacked public education in the most venomous ways. The mocking way in which one Christ Church member ran for the school board was particularly immature and uncivil.

Before the controversy about Wilson's slavery booklet broke in October, 2003, I was on cordial relations with Atwood, Wilson, and others in Christ Church. I spent at least 60 hours helping an NSA student on his thesis on Buddhism. At a talk I gave to NSA faculty and students in April, 2000, I congratulated Wilson on the success of his schools, and I offered to help NSA students on the topic of Christian virtue ethics. On several occasions I commended NSA and Logos School students for their achievements.

A recent letter to the editor described about how nice members of Christ Church are. Most of them are indeed, but I reserve the right to criticize their pastor if I believe he has done wrong. National condemnation of Rev. Ted Haggart in no way reflects the virtues or vices of his congregation.

In his response to me, after four years of refusing to, Atwood claims that I hold an animus against evangelical Christianity, but all he has to do is read [God, Reason, and the Evangelicals](#) and see how I have been very careful in distinguishing evangelical thinkers I respect and the ones that I do not. One does not become the president of a regional theological conference, which has many active evangelical schools, if one is perceived to have a prejudice against evangelical Christianity.

In 2003, the regional conference was held in Moscow and 40 percent of the papers were presented by faculty from conservative evangelical schools. Sadly, no NSA faculty or student was present, even though I extended an invitation to them. Atwood defended the decision with the uncivil comment: "We had better things to do." In the past faculty and students in the host institution's area always turned out in large numbers.

In one of my [internet essays](#), I have shown 15 differences between Wilsonian Christianity and conservative evangelical Christianity. Wilson has written an article claiming that most evangelical colleges are not truly Christian. Many other conservative Christians have condemned Wilson's theology (including every major conservative Presbyterian denomination), and I hear from them regularly praising my work of exposing Wilson for the theological fraud that he is.

Atwood praises newly elected City Councilman Tom Lamar for going directly to Wilson about his congregant Dave Glasebrook calling Lamar a bigot, one of the most hateful things I've experienced in my 35 years in Moscow. In *The Daily News* Wilson agreed

with Glasbrook's message but not his method, but if Lamar is still a bigot in Wilson's eyes, what good did the visit accomplish?

Atwood praises Lamar for following "Sunday School Ethics," but I submit that Wilson and Glasebrook do not follow any moral theory that I would support. Why should we, as Atwood urges, follow Lamar's example if the trash talking continues against us, who are, contrary to Atwood's insinuation, also people of conscience?

Atwood invites anyone to have coffee with him, but he says that he will talk to me only when I have stopped my ax-grinding. Hateful prayers, trash talking, denying women the right to vote, and executing or exiling gays are fundamental issues about which I refuse to be silent.

When community members criticized Christ Church member Paul Kimmel for infusing neo-Confederate ideas in a Chamber of Commerce presentation, Kimmel apologized. I challenge Wilson to repent for bringing these ugly ideas to Moscow in the first place.