

## **Forsaking Our Morality**

### **C. Welton Gaddy**

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### **How much longer?**

Four years of war in Iraq—a war in which President Bush dressed up like a soldier and claimed victory before the public had time to forget the massive, preemptive military bombardment of Iraq called “Shock and Awe.” Our troops entered that nation on a mission justified by lies. Brave men and women have fought there ill-equipped, not-well-armed and devoid of a strategy for winning, establishing peace and getting out. We owed them better, much better.

After four years, Saddam Hussein is gone. However, killing continues on a massive scale. U.S. soldiers now must defend themselves from attacks launched by the people they came to liberate as well as by terrorists who want only turmoil. Sectarian violence is out of control: Only this week did the Pentagon finally admit that a civil war is raging in Iraq. Our government is questioned about its citizenship and interest in cooperating with the international community. Hostility toward the United States from every part of the globe is complemented by impatience, anger and demands for a different course within the United States. The leaders of our government have clipped off most of what was left of the minuscule fuse that sits atop the powder keg called the Middle East.

Just prior to invading Iraq, saying he wanted a political solution to the challenge in that nation, President Bush promised that any U.S. military action in Iraq would be in the highest moral tradition of our nation. Where is the morality, Mr. President?

The war in Iraq is the war of the Bush administration. Clearly, the American people oppose it. Not even a ringing mandate issued through the democratic provision of a national election has been enough to get the attention of the White House. It seems that one man’s sense of being on a mission from God has compromised the moral integrity of our nation and threatened the democratic process.

Four years, now. I cry with the Hebrew prophet named Habakkuk—“How long, O Lord?” But, of course, this is not about religion. Better framed, the question is, “How long, Mr. President?”

A rabbi friend once told me of a comment attributed to Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meier. Though I do not know her exact words, reportedly Ms. Meier once said, "I can forgive those who kill our Jewish young people in the military, but I cannot forgive those who make our Jewish young people kill."

It is the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the anniversary of a bad decision justified by misinformation, an action that served as a summon to a concentration of terrorists, a conflict that has cost the needless loss of lives and a training ground for the kind of violence that is no longer a solution to the world's problems. How much longer, Mr. President?

God help us!