The Logic of Love
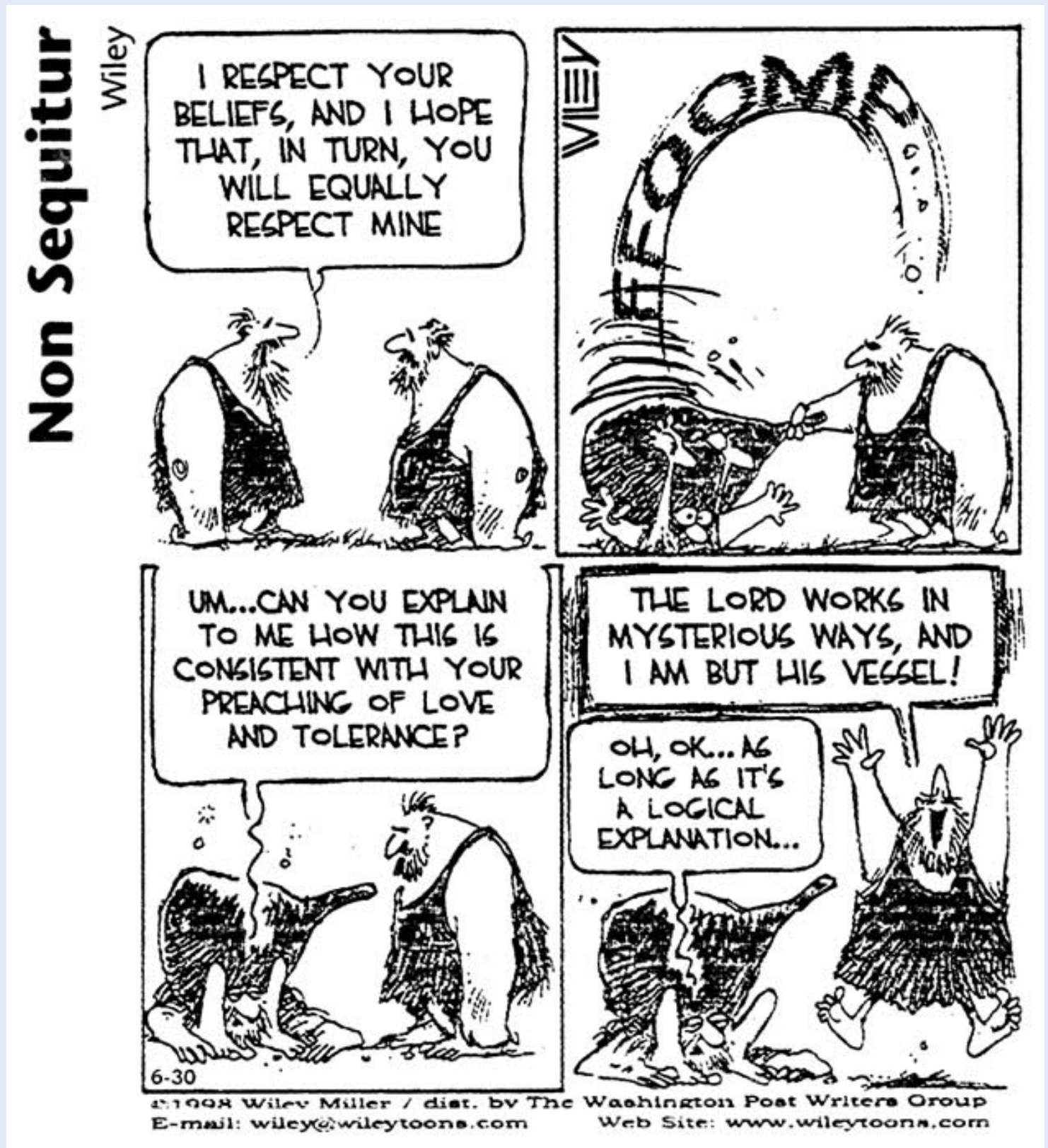### Chapter 23: The Integrity of Faith-Beliefs

Faith in God has the potential to unify all people. By allowing our faith identity to transcend political and religious identity, we can become better members of both of these institutions. Religious and political institutions have a certain criteria for membership. What defines membership eligibility is where the essence of humanity gets defined. Inasmuch as faith-beliefs define one's relationship to others, this issue directly effects our relationship to religious and political institutions.

Religious and political institutions engage the conflicts of disunity and build the blessings of culture

on the field of faith-beliefs. When religious or political disenfranchisement becomes an excuse for the mistreatment of others, then the battle over faith-beliefs has been waged. For instance, a democracy that tolerates the enslavement of a particular race has hardly provided humanity with the full blessings of government. Similarly, a religion so self-referential that it renounces spiritual kinship with anyone who is not a member has hardly provided humanity with the full blessings of spiritual life.

On an institutional level, when religious and political organizations minimize the criteria for membership, this fosters unity. When only adulthood and competency are required, then religious and political institutions have taken the first step toward unifying humanity. As individuals, we can work toward creating interpersonal unity by simplifying faith-beliefs so that love flows freely to all people. As individuals, we wield the power to define faith-beliefs. By our willingness to see all other persons as part of our spiritual family, we create spiritual unity.

Defining God as a creator, a spiritual parent, implies that we are the children of God. This is the first step in generating unifying faith-beliefs. Faith in a spiritual parent identifies one as a child of God. By so formulating our sense of spiritual identity, we can answer the question "Who are we?" with "We are children of God." This creates the universal connection through which the current of love can flow. By defining all of humanity as part of our spiritual family, we have the power, as individuals, to unify ourselves with everyone else. When the only sense of spiritual separation between a person with faith and one without is that they don't *share* a belief in spiritual kinship, then faith-beliefs have worked to maximize our experience of unity.

The integrity of faith-beliefs rests not only on the beauty of their unifying power, but also on their philosophic consistency. Some people, for instance, declare that we are all brothers and sisters, but they do not recognize a parental God. While the desire to express a sense of human unity in such touchingly familiar tones is certainly beautiful, the bastardization of terminology has no better example. It is having a common parent that makes us siblings. Wisdom must be married to love in order to procreate viable faith-beliefs. The sentiment that desires spiritual family must cooperate with the intellect that understands what the word *family* implies.

There is a real challenge in asserting that spiritual kinship is of a higher order than biological kinship, while simultaneously describing spiritual reality in terms of archetypal and idealized biological relationships. When words from our biological relationships are used to describe spiritual relationships, we must endeavor to be as precise and specific as possible. Talking about siblings who have no common parent is like saying someone is just a little bit pregnant. Analogies to biological relationships should not twist the words of biology beyond meaningful recognition, especially since the very existence of spiritual reality is an open question. The ability to appreciate what can only be experienced by faith is needlessly complicated by a poor choice of words.

Saying that we are all spiritual siblings without presuming the existence of a spiritual parent is just one example of how we must be careful not to let sentiment disintegrate the integrity of faith-beliefs. Other examples could be given. The point is simply to show that when faith-beliefs do not withstand critical analysis, they become obstacles to unity because they forsake the value of logic. Logical reasoning is one of our best tools for creating universally appealing faith-beliefs. It must not be abandoned when we need it the most.

Once we are committed to the value of preserving logical consistency, we can explore exactly which faith-beliefs best support the value of love and reflect the goodness of God. If faith is to liberate love, then those beliefs that have the distinction of being faith-beliefs ought to be those that are *minimally* necessary to *fully* liberate love. To accomplish this goal, we must examine the obstacles to love. The two core obstacles are selfishness and spiritual judgment. Selfishness is the antithesis of love, and spiritual judgment as a justification for withholding love.