

KATHLEEN PARKER'S PROBLEM

In one of the most infamous articles ever written about people of faith, Michael Weisskopf called evangelical Christians “largely poor, uneducated and easy to command.” He wrote that in the *Washington Post* in 1993. Fast forward 15 years to the Internet site of the same newspaper and what we had was another stab at evangelicals, only this time the goal was more wide ranging: Kathleen Parker wants to privatize religion.

Parker labeled conservative evangelicals “oogedy-boogedy” people with their “armband religion,” the kind of folks that “used to be relegated to wooden crates on street corners.” She wanted to know why anyone would pay attention to such slugs, or what she called the “lowest brows” among us. Then she set her sights higher by saying that religion must be “returned to the privacy of one’s heart where it belongs.”

When Pope Benedict XVI was in Washington in April, he said, “Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted.” He was right. That’s what they do in Castro’s Cuba—they privatize religion.

Traditional Catholics, evangelical Protestants and Orthodox Jews, as well as most Mormons and Muslims, are joined at the hip in the culture war. They will continue to fight the good fight and will not be deterred by those whose inflated perch sits above the “lowest brows,” including those raised on “wooden crates on street corners.” Not only will they not recede from public life, they will bring their religious values to bear in the public square with increased vigor.

Maureen Dowd has inspired a flock of female wannabes. Whatever might be said about Dowd, at least the woman knows how to write a cogent piece. Would that her imitators, i.e. Parker, at least aspire to her level.