



# THE COMME



# EDDIAN AS PUBLIC GUARDIAN

**Brad Stine's** righteous rants  
are raising the roof, raising  
some eyebrows and casting  
a spotlight on society's ills

*Warner Brothers has signed him as an artist and is placing his latest DVD, Tolerate This! in Wal-Mart and other national chains across the U.S. In February 2006, Penguin will publish his next book, Live, From Middle America: Rants From a Red-State Comedian. For comedian Brad Stine, it all comes somewhat as a surprise.*

*Stine had sensed God leading him from the secular comedy clubs where he had taken his consistently*

*clean act to a new focus on Christian venues. Soon, Promise Keepers began including Stine in its stadium rallies, and he was in demand at churches and Christian conventions across the country. But as he continued to redirect his act, God opened doors to an ever-widening nonreligious audience. Stine shared with Today's Pentecostal Evangel some of his thoughts on the impact he and other Christian comedians can have on 21st-century American culture.*

# THE COMEDIAN

**'I'VE BEEN UP HERE 45 MINUTES AND I HAVEN'T USED ONE CURSE WORD. THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE, BUT I DO IT EVERY NIGHT.'**

## **On the concept of "Christian comedian" ...**

Just because I'm a Christian and just because I choose not to use curse words in my show and don't use gratuitous sexual references doesn't mean that my routine is less funny or less intelligent or less insightful or that it can't be equally provocative. It just comes from a different point of view, as it should. Comedy with a Christian

point of view is really a genre, not a novelty.

I'll often conclude my show by telling audiences, "I've been up here 45 minutes and I haven't used one curse word. They said it couldn't be done, but I do it every night because I believe creativity is funnier than crude." It's kind of like throwing down the gauntlet to all the other comics who take the stage and curse and talk about

sex. I'm telling the audience, "I didn't curse and you didn't even recognize it until I pointed it out to you." And the response is interesting. People will clap every time.

I'm a comic. I'm not trying to be anything else. I'm not a preacher trying to be funny. I'm not an evangelist trying to sneak through the back door. I'm not a Republican spokesman. I'm a comic who wants to speak from a point of view that happens to represent most of America.

Christians are 71 percent of the population. I know that your claim to be Christian and your lifestyle don't always jive; but at least from their tradition and what they would relate to, the majority of Americans are still Christian in their point of view.

### **On the impact of the media ...**

Our kids are inundated by media that are so sexualized and so secularized and relativistic. Every time they turn on the TV or a movie or music, they're being preached to from that point of view. If you look at sit-coms, for example, they represent pretty much every type of lifestyle except a conservative, Christian one. Christians aren't represented in sit-coms unless they're the butt of the joke.

So I try to find something that can connect with young people, connect with the entertainment they're used to experiencing, and yet provoke some thought or help them be proud of their faith. Probably more than anything else at my concerts, I've had parents

come up to me and say, "Thanks for giving us something we can watch with our kids."

### **On the First Amendment ...**

Christians need to expect to be heard in America. From what I understand, the First Amendment still applies to Christians. There are people who want to outlaw that, and maybe they will, but until then I expect to be treated with the same dignity and respect as anyone else who exercises their First Amendment rights.

The First Amendment was written by people of my lineage, Christians. You're not going to take it from me without a fight. It's my privilege, not only as an American but as a Christian, to have intellectual discourse to defend my

the power of

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views. Not with guns, but with reason. Hopefully with grace and love, but also with righteous indignation.

### **On comedians as communicators ...**

Comics are kind of given a pass. People don't prejudge you as quickly. I think God is using Christian comedians at this point in our culture and our history because comedy is a vehicle that disseminates ideas no longer communicated by more traditional means.

But you can't get on television as an evangelical and be interviewed by secular media for a secular audience and use Christian phrases and spiritually discerned concepts and think you've done some kind of service for God.

Your audience won't even know what you're talking about. They don't live in that world, and the Bible says such things are spiritually discerned. That's why I bring up things like philosophy, that a secular audience will get.

### **On the church in America ...**

There is a battle for the soul of America. That's not a pious phrase to be thrown about loosely. America's moral structure is at stake.

I grew up in the church, in very conservative circles. But we have to watch out that we don't focus more on empty traditions than we do on who we really are. I need followers of Jesus of every variety to be on my team. I need charismatics on my team. I need Baptists. Because there are people in my country who want everything I believe in to be outlawed, to be turned on its head.

We can no longer play church and believe we are going to survive. Think of how many little issues have broken up churches. That's a disgrace. We need to cover each other's backs, not stab them.

We're blessed that our nation was formed by Christians and by people who at least used the Judeo/Christian model as their moral base. People understood what was expected from a moral, Judeo/Christian point of view.

The problem is, we have Christians who think that's the way things still are. This is a postmodern world. Our worldview won't disappear immediately. But there are so many efforts to eliminate it and build our culture on a more socialistic, European, humanistic model.

*Continued on page 30*

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# THE COMEDIAN



**'ONE MISCONCEPTION THE WORLD HAS OF CHRISTIANS IS THAT WE BELIEVE WE'RE BETTER THAN ANYBODY ELSE. AND I ALWAYS DENY THAT. "THE REASON I'M A CHRISTIAN," I'LL TELL PEOPLE, "IS BECAUSE I THINK I'M WORSE THAN EVERYBODY ELSE."'**

## **On the power of grace ...**

One misconception the world has of Christians is that we believe we're better than anybody else. And I always deny that. "The reason I'm a Christian," I'll tell people, "is because I think I'm worse than everybody else. I'm a Christian because it's the only religion that would have me." That's the greatness of Christianity. It allows you in just because God loves you. People will call me a jerk, or whatever. And I'll tell them, "You're right. That's what Christianity is for. People like me."

## **On eternal life ...**

My desire is to let people know that they need to think about eternity, because they're going to be there someday. But people don't want to do that. A doctor says to you, "You need to get your affairs in order. You've only got six months." And I say, "Hey, you should have had your affairs in order already because you didn't know you were going to be here this long." We need to live life prepared to go into eternity at any time.

I'm a seed planter. God has called me to plant seeds into a country that

is slowly but surely losing its moral heart. That heart is Jesus, the God Man who is the only One who said He was God and then proved it by coming back to life and having witnesses.

The things that Jesus said, on the surface, made no sense. "Love your enemy" sounds stupid. "Pray for those that despitefully use you" seems foolish. I could understand "Avoid those that despitefully use you." I could understand "Don't kill those who despitefully use you, just stay out of their way."

I could understand anything that fits my human nature. But then Someone says, "Love them and pray for them and wish good upon them."

God says to all of us through Jesus, "I love you in spite of yourself. I love you, but you don't deserve it. I love you, but you have been evil toward me. I love you, but you are trying to hurt Me and keep people from coming to know Me. But in the midst of all that ... I love you." ■

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*E-mail your comments to [pe@ag.org](mailto:pe@ag.org).*