

# Praying for Stephen Colbert (and Rick Scarborough)

During the Feb. 15 broadcast of “The Colbert Report,” comedian Stephen Colbert noted that on Feb. 22 “tens of thousands of people” would be praying for him.

The reason was because he had been named on Mastermedia International’s prayer [list](#) for the top 365 cultural influencers, with each individual given a day for which to be prayed.

Little did I realize how important it might be to pray for Colbert until I saw the inaccurate [attack](#) made on him by Vision America’s leader Rick Scarborough, who was upset about some recent jokes made by Colbert on the program.

Scarborough, who ran unsuccessfully as the fundamentalist candidate for the president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in 1996, was a staunch [defender](#) of then-Congressman Tom DeLay and continues to fight the “culture wars” wherever he can.

Scarborough was upset by Colbert’s reference to him on the HPV vaccine issue during a regular segment on the show called “The Word.” Colbert critiqued Scarborough for his comments about Texas [requiring](#) the HPV vaccine. Colbert [joked](#) that groups like Vision America were fighting Gov. Rick Perry’s “no cancer agenda.”

After reading a quotation by Scarborough about the issue, Colbert used exaggeration to mock Scarborough’s argument: “The message here is clear-if you have sex, God will give you cancer! This cancer immunization is against God’s will.” He went on to compare the idea that the vaccine would increase sex among teenagers to how when he got his tetanus shot that he “couldn’t stop chewing on rusty nails.”

In response, Scarborough claimed that he “wasn’t trying to play God or to misrepresent God’s Word, but rather to warn our governor and all Texans that it is risky business to entertain the thought that any vaccine can be taken to avoid the consequences of immoral behavior.”

Scarborough also attacked Colbert for supposed “radical left leaning views, vulgarity and constant sexual innuendoes.” Scarborough admits that he was simply channel-surfing and happened upon the show, so it seems that he is not a regular viewer. While there may be some truth in Scarborough critique, as a devoted fan of “The Colbert Report” I can confidently say that his attack is an exaggeration.

However, Scarborough went even further in his attack to claim that Colbert did not believe in the Bible or God. Scarborough declared that his heart was grieved “for [Colbert] and all those in our culture who refuse to consider that God’s Word is true and that our God, who has revealed Himself to be love, has also revealed Himself to be holy.”

Scarborough may believe that anyone who critiques him or anyone on TV must be a godless liberal, but his snap judgment of Colbert is incredibly inaccurate. As it turns out, Colbert not only attends a Catholic church but is a Sunday school teacher (now that would be a fun class to be in!). If Scarborough had been paying attention he would have heard Colbert talk openly about his religious beliefs.

“I love my church, and I’m a Catholic who was raised by intellectuals who were very devout,” Colbert [explained](#) while still on “The Daily Show.” “I was raised to believe that you could question the church and still be a Catholic. What is worthy of satire is the misuse of religion for destructive or political gains. That’s totally different from the Word, the blood, the body, and the Christ. His kingdom is not of this earth.”

In another interview, Colbert [explained](#) this point even further: “I don’t want to criticize anyone’s religions for the fact that it is a religion. What’s funny to me is what people do in the name of religion... Because who am I to say that what they

believe is wrong? But if they're doing things, using religion as a tool in some other behavior, ya'know, hypocritical or destructive, then it's fair game."

He is absolutely correct in noting that one can be a faithful Christian and still make fun of Christian leaders like Scarborough. Thus, when Scarborough takes a position that could result in the deaths of young women and couches it in religious terms, he deserves to be critiqued. When Scarborough claims to be pro-life but takes a decidedly pro-death opinion and states it in the name of God, he deserves to be critiqued.

When Jim Wallis appeared on "The Daily Show" in January of 2005, he stated that comedian Jon Stewart was similar to the Hebrew prophets, since he used humor and telling the truth to make his points. It seems that Colbert has [followed](#) in this unconventional but important prophetic role. His critique of Scarborough suggests as much.

So I will pray for Stephen Colbert, that he may continue to influence our culture and provide a much needed critique of religious leaders when they start preaching "[truthiness](#)" instead of the Truth.

And I will pray for Rich Scarborough that he will stop falsely attacking the faith of others and will start being a more positive influence for our culture. In essence, I will pray that Scarborough will be more like Colbert.

*[Brian Kaylor](#) is communications specialist with the Baptist General Convention of Missouri.*

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