

University of Chicago political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain argues that our world today is desperate for people to live their religious stories, which assumes, of course, one first knows those stories. But let me have her tell you herself:

"The psychiatrist Robert Coles likes to tell the story of a little girl named Ruby whom he met during the early days of desegregation. Coles became intrigued by the 7-year-old, who had to be escorted to school by federal marshals. She would get out of the car and be met by jeering mobs who shouted racial epithets at her. She would pause, bow her head for a moment, and then walk into the school, staring straight ahead. He got to know Ruby's family and finally felt comfortable asking Ruby why she always paused before she went into class. She said, 'I'm saying a little prayer. I'm saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."' This little girl had access to a religious story and tradition, and it gave her great strength.

"Where are the stories today? The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers won't do it: If you're being harassed in the schoolyard, just karate chop your way out of a jam! So many of the stories that our kids are being told or are watching on television are totally bizarre and otherworldly. They're made up of creatures that aren't human; they're made up of plots that don't speak to anything that's tethered to everyday life."

-Marilyn Berlin Snell, "Interview With Elshtain: Turn Down the Volume,"  
*Utne Reader* 95 (November-December 1995), 71.

*If we take the world's religions at their best,  
we discover the distilled wisdom of the human race. - Huston Smith 45*

NON SEQUITUR WILEY

