

America

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Benedict in America

*Also: Five Scholars
Confront the New Atheism*

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, Pope Benedict XVI reminded Americans in his homily at Yankee Stadium in April, are “not easy words to speak nowadays. Words like these represent a stumbling block for many of our contemporaries, especially in a society which rightly places a high value on personal freedom.”

Some of the contemporaries to whom Benedict referred in his celebrated visit have gained a certain amount of fame in recent years in their propagation of what is broadly termed the “new atheism.” A motley assortment of pundits, philosophers and pop-culture commentators, they have directed particular ire toward the established Christian churches and their adherents. This issue of **America** includes five essays by noted scholars on the “new atheists” and their self-invented creeds. Each essay addresses the central concerns and propositions of the new atheism and also offers critiques of some of the arguments put forth by the more prominent standard-bearers for the atheist cause.

Foremost among those voices is the

acerbic conservative and avowed atheist Christopher Hitchens, who after 9/11 also experienced a convenient conversion to American jingoism, less than a decade after he was denouncing American politicians as war criminals in his role as the *enfant terrible* of left-wing Anglo-American journalism. Despite his recent embrace of the glories of Western civilization, Hitchens continues to find no greater enemy than Christian believers, and several years ago delivered his personal coup de grace to Mother Teresa. “I wish there was a hell,” he said, “for [her] to go to.” This crowd, it seems, will not be known by their love.

The vitriol of Hitchens and his peers stands in remarkable contrast to the words and actions of Pope Benedict XVI during his joyful visit to Washington and New York in April. Who among us was not moved at the serene happiness that emanated from Benedict, a supposedly shy and retiring man, every time he came into contact with members of the Catholic faithful? Did he or the hundreds of thousands who turned out to greet him give the impression that their faith had harmed their lives or hindered their human development? “The Gospel,” Benedict reminded us, “teaches us that

true freedom, the freedom of the children of God, is found only in the self-surrender which is part of the mystery of love.... True freedom blossoms when we turn away from the burden of sin, which clouds our perceptions and weakens our resolve, and find the source of our ultimate happiness in Him who is infinite love, infinite freedom, infinite life.”

In seeking alternate sources for that ultimate happiness, Hitchens and his ilk are reminiscent of a central character in Graham Greene’s *The Power and the Glory*. In that novel, a priest on the run from an atheist regime in Mexico is finally captured by government soldiers. Late in the story, the lieutenant responsible for his capture has a conversation with the man he is planning to execute in order to deprive the local population of its last active priest. “You’re a danger,” the lieutenant tells him. “That’s why we kill you. I have nothing against you, you understand, as a man.”

“Of course not,” the priest replies.

“It’s God you’re up against.”

“No,” says the atheist, “I do

not fight against a fiction.”

What, then, is that angry soldier fighting against? If God is a fiction, how does he explain his rage? Like his real-life counterparts today, he seeks not the death of God, but the extermination of belief. As such, he can only fight against believers, and his strategy devolves into violence against the faithful. No one would accuse today’s prominent atheists of such thuggery, but their rhetorical violence is there in spades for all to see: arguments based on scorn, ridicule and clever bon mots pitched to a media culture hopelessly enamored of the sound bite.

American Catholics heard much more than sound bites and catch phrases from Benedict XVI last month. No single phrase has characterized his visit, unless it is perhaps the congratulations of our commander in chief: “Awesome speech, Your Holiness.” After following the pope through a busy week of important ceremonies, discussions, meetings and liturgical celebrations, many took away an enduring memory of a man whose faith has brought him real joy, a joy he wishes to share with his fellow believers, the children of God.

James T. Keane, S.J.

Of Many Things

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Cover art A young woman greets Pope Benedict XVI as he arrives for a youth rally at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., April 19. CNS photo/Bob Roller.

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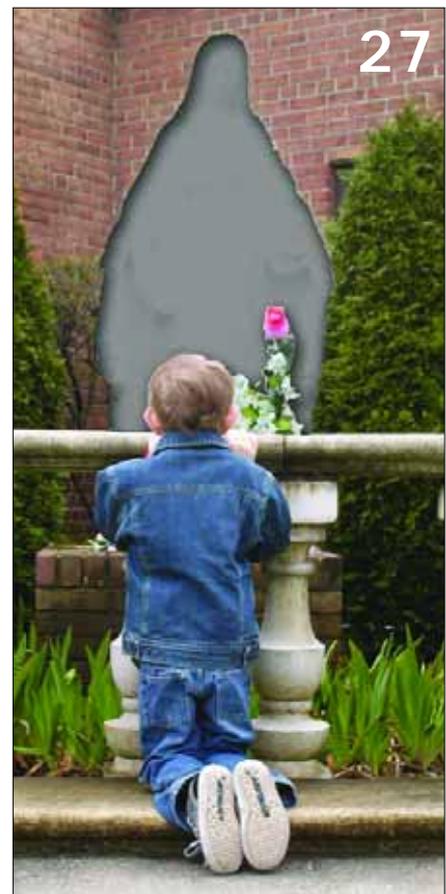
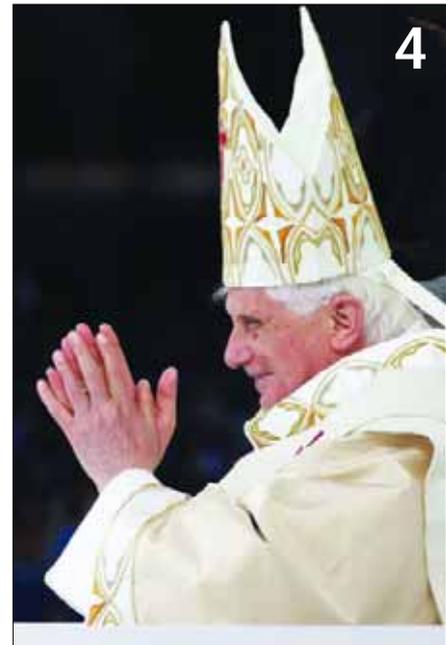
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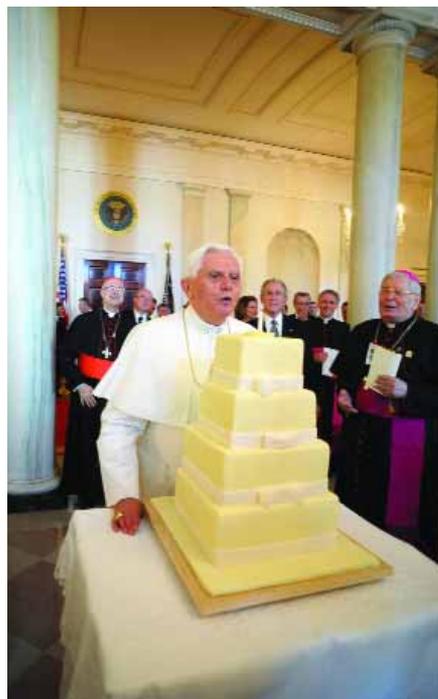
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White House Welcome



Pope Benedict XVI blows out a candle on a birthday cake presented to him at the White House on April 16.

Pope Benedict XVI, meeting at the White House with President George W. Bush, said it was important to preserve the traditional role of religion in American political and social life. Religious values helped forge “the soul of the nation” and should continue to inspire Americans as they face complex political and ethical issues today, he said. The pope spoke April 16, his 81st birthday, at a ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, where he was warmly welcomed by the president and thousands of cheering well-wishers. It was the pope’s first official encounter after arriving in Washington, D.C., the day before. The pope smiled and beamed as the crowd sang an impromptu “Happy Birthday.” The two leaders stood and listened to their respective national anthems, then a fife and drum corps played a medley of “Yankee Doodle” and other patriotic songs. The president greeted the pope with the Latin phrase *Pax tecum* (“Peace be with you”), and said the entire country was moved and honored to have the pope spend “this special day” with them.

Pope Meets Privately With Victims of Abuse

Pope Benedict XVI held an unannounced meeting with victims of sexual abuse by members of the Catholic clergy, shortly after pledging the church’s continued efforts to help heal the wounds caused by such acts. The Vatican said the pope met privately in a chapel at the apostolic nunciature with “a small group of persons who were sexually abused by members of the clergy.” The group was accompanied by Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley, O.F.M. Cap., of Boston, which was the center of the abuse scandal. “They prayed with the Holy Father, who afterward listened to their personal accounts and offered them words of encouragement and hope,” a Vatican statement said. “His Holiness assured them of his prayers for their intentions, for their families and for all victims of sexual abuse,” it said. Federico Lombardi, S.J., the Vatican press spokesman, told journalists the meeting involved five or six victims, men and women from the Archdiocese of Boston, and lasted about 25 minutes. During the encounter, each of the victims had a chance to speak personally to the pope, who spoke some “very affectionate words,” he said. According to Father Lombardi, it was a very emotional meeting; some were in tears.

Dialogue Leads to Truth

Pope Benedict XVI encouraged interreligious leaders to work not only for peace but for the discovery of truth. The pope urged about 200 representatives of Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington April 17 “to persevere in their collaboration” to serve society and enrich public life. “I have noticed a growing interest among governments to sponsor programs intended to promote interreligious dialogue and intercultural dialogue. These are praiseworthy initiatives,” Pope Benedict said. “At the same time, religious freedom, interreligious dialogue and faith-based education aim at something more than a consensus regarding ways to implement practical strategies for advancing peace....The broader purpose

of dialogue is to discover the truth,” he said. In a ceremony in the two-story main lobby of the cultural center, Milwaukee’s Auxiliary Bishop Richard J. Sklba, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, introduced the pope to the interreligious leaders, who wore traditional garments identifying their faiths.

At New York Synagogue, ‘Bridges of Friendship’



The pope stands with former New York Mayor Ed Koch, left, and Rabbi Arthur Schneier at the Park East Synagogue in New York.

In a brief and moving visit to a New York synagogue, Pope Benedict XVI expressed his respect for the city’s Jewish community and encouraged the building of “bridges of friendship” between religions. The encounter on April 18 marked the first time a pope has visited a Jewish place of worship in the United States, and occurred shortly before the start of the Jewish Passover. The pope said he felt especially close to Jews as they “prepare to celebrate the great deeds of the Almighty and to sing the praises of him who has worked such wonders for his people.” He was welcomed at the Park East Synagogue by Rabbi Arthur Schneier, 78, who called the visit historic and “a reaffirmation of your outreach, good will and commitment to enhancing Jewish-Catholic relations.” The rabbi also used the opportunity to wish the pope “mazel tov,” or best wishes on his 81st birthday two days earlier. A choir from the Park East Day School performed during the meeting, which was kept brief because the Jewish Sabbath observance was to begin at sunset.

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Human Rights Cannot Be Limited, Pope Tells U.N.



Pope Benedict XVI touches a United Nations flag at the U.N. headquarters in New York April 18. The flag was flying over the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, on Aug. 19, 2003, when a truck bomb killed 17 people.

Neither government nor religion has a right to change or limit human rights, because those rights flow from the dignity of each person created in God's image, Pope Benedict XVI said in his April 18 speech to the U.N. General Assembly. The pope insisted that human rights cannot be limited or

rewritten on the basis of national interests or majority rule. But he also said the role of religions is not to dictate government policy, but to help their members strive to find the truth, including the truth about the dignity of all people, even if their religious views are different. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the pope and met privately with him before the pope addressed the General Assembly. In his public welcoming remarks, the U.N. leader said: "The United Nations is a secular institution, composed of 192 states. We have six official languages but no official religion. We do not have a chapel—though we do have a meditation room. But if you ask those of us who work for the United Nations what motivates us, many of us reply in a language of faith.... We see what we do not only as a job, but as a mission." He added, "Your Holiness, in so many ways, our mission unites us with yours."

Young Adults Enjoy Impromptu Meeting

Several hundred young adults holding a vigil behind the security perimeter around the house in New York City where Pope Benedict XVI was staying were rewarded April 18 with a papal handshake. Helen Osman, director of communications for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said more than 1,000 people had gathered throughout the evening near the residence of the Vatican's permanent observer to the United Nations, where the pope was staying. "Some just came out of curiosity," but there were also others, playing guitars and drums. The young people from three New York parishes had been gathered by the Sisters of Life of New York, the order founded by the late Cardinal John O'Connor to promote the

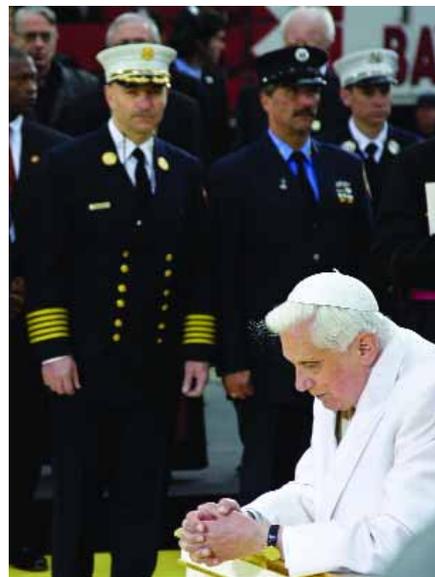
"Gospel of life." At about 8 p.m. the U.S. Secret Service began allowing small groups to pass the traffic blockade and approach the residence. Pope Benedict came outside "after dinner" at about 9 p.m., said Federico Lombardi, S.J., the Vatican spokesman. The pope spent about 10 minutes shaking hands with young religious and other young adults who got the Secret Service nod.

Americans Thanked for Their Love and Prayers

Describing himself as "the poor successor of St. Peter," Pope Benedict XVI thanked Americans for their prayers and love on the third anniversary of his election. The pope made the impromptu remarks at the end of a Mass April 19 in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York,

where some 3,000 bishops, priests, religious and seminarians gave him a standing ovation. The crowd broke into applause when the pope's secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, delivered a Spanish-language "happy anniversary" message and wished the pontiff many more years. The pope took the microphone and, looking out on the sea of faces in the neo-Gothic cathedral, smiled and spoke in a soft voice. "I can only thank you for your love of the church, for the love of our Lord and that you give also your love to the poor successor of St. Peter," he said. "I will do all that is possible to be a real successor of the great St. Peter, who also was a man with his faults and some sins, but he remains finally the rock for the church," he said.

At Ground Zero, Solemn Prayer and Comfort



Pope Benedict XVI offers prayers at ground zero in New York.

In the most somber moment of his six-day visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI knelt alone at ground zero and offered a silent prayer. The cheering crowds were far away as the pope blessed the ground where the World Trade Center stood until terrorists crashed airplanes into its twin towers on Sept. 11, 2001. While the extraordinary security measures that surrounded the

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pope's entire visit tangibly demonstrated how the attacks have changed the United States, the ground zero visit gave the pope an opportunity to speak to and console those whose lives were changed most directly that day. Twenty-four people stood around a candle, a plot of earth and a tiny pond as the pope knelt in prayer, including family members of those killed, some of the survivors and representatives of the first responders from the New York Port Authority, police and fire departments. At the bottom of the 70-foot crater where the towers had stood, surrounded by steel construction rods, forklifts and steel beams, Pope Benedict looked up past the skyscrapers shrouded in fog and read a prayer.

Pope Meets With Theologian Avery Dulles

During his whirlwind U.S. visit, Pope Benedict XVI took a few moments out for a private meeting with one of America's preeminent theologians, Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J. The wheelchair-bound scholar traveled from his residence at Jesuit-run Fordham University's Rose Hill campus in the Bronx to St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., April 19, for a prearranged private meeting with the pope, just after the pontiff met with disabled youths. "It was a lovely meeting," said Anne-Marie Kirmse, O.P., who has been the cardinal's executive assistant for the past 20 years. She was present to help facilitate the get-together, held at the seminary. "The pope literally bounded into the room with a big smile on his face," she told Catholic News Service on April 21. "He went directly to where Cardinal Dulles was sitting, saying, 'Eminenza, Eminenza, Eminenza, I recall the work you did for the International Theological Commission in the 1990s.'"

Faith of U.S. Catholics 'A Joy to Witness'

Thanking Americans for their hospitality, Pope Benedict XVI left the United

States amid a cheering crowd of 4,000 people who had come to see him off. "It has been a joy for me to witness the faith and devotion of the Catholic community here," the pope said April 20 in brief remarks to those gathered in Hanger 19 at John F. Kennedy International Airport. "It was heartwarming to spend time with leaders and representatives of other Christian communities and other religions," Pope Benedict added. Among those present were Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York; Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre; Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the U.S.; and Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn, whose diocese includes the airport. Also in attendance were Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York and Vice President Dick Cheney and his wife, Lynne. "It has been a memorable week, and Pope Benedict XVI has stepped into the history of our country in a special way," Cheney said.

Multicultural Mix of Ancient and Modern

The liturgical celebration of Mass by Pope Benedict XVI on April 17 in Nationals Park reflected the diversity of Catholic heritages and sensibilities found in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., where the Mass was held. It acknowledged both the roots of tradition and the branches that have sprouted from those roots. The prayer of the faithful was recited in six languages—English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Igbo. The sung response to the intentions incorporated three languages: English, Latin and Spanish. The first reading—the account of how the apostles started speaking in tongues unknown to them at Pentecost—was proclaimed in Spanish. Music composed in the 40 years since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council was included, as were ancient Latin texts set to chant—and a Latin-language Gloria written in the past decade.

Pope Reaches out to Disabled Children



Pope Benedict XVI greets a girl during a gathering with young people with disabilities at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., on April 19.

From CNS and other sources. CNS photos.

Pastor and Prophet

THE ENDURING IMPRESSION Pope Benedict XVI left with most Americans following his recent visit to Washington, D.C., and New York was of a pastor ministering to his flock. In repeated gestures, from meeting with the victims of sexual abuse to blessing the disabled and speaking with the survivors of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he showed his desire to heal those who are wounded and broken.

His numerous comments on sexual abuse by members of the clergy demonstrated awareness of the depth of the hurt to victims and their families as well as to the American Catholic Church as a whole. From his confession of shame to reporters during the flight to the United States to his spontaneous acknowledgment of his own human weakness at the Mass at New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral, he signaled that like Peter, he is an ordinary Christian who struggles to be a disciple.

Though commentators have often depicted his German heritage as a source of rigidity and heavyhandedness, Benedict's Bavarian *Gemütlichkeit* revealed itself with a relaxed smile, and it projected warm joy throughout his public appearances. His natural graciousness enabled him to look those he encountered in the eyes and to listen to them attentively. Though he is known to prefer more traditional liturgical styles himself, he appeared to relish the multilingual, multiethnic liturgical events prepared for him, which are so characteristic of the United States today. His prayer at ground zero was a gem of quiet commemoration, and the visit to the Park East Synagogue on the eve of Passover was a gesture of undiminished goodwill toward the Jewish community.

Just as he came to heal, Pope Benedict also came to unify. His homilies and addresses allowed no gloating by one church faction over another. In addressing the bishops, for instance, he balanced pro-life issues with social justice concerns. "Is it consistent," he asked, "to profess our beliefs in church on Sunday, and then during the week to promote business practices or medical procedures contrary to those beliefs? Is it consistent for practicing Catholics to ignore or exploit the poor and marginalized, to promote sexual behavior contrary to Catholic moral teaching, or to adopt positions that contradict the right to life of the human being from conception to natural death?" Though Pope Benedict's critique of American culture—of individualism, secularism, materialism and the

cult of untrammled freedom—was clear, his reproof was consistently gentle: questioning rather than condemning, edifying rather than hectoring.

With his gentle voice and peaceful demeanor, Benedict did not fail to offer a prophetic word to the world. At the United Nations General Assembly, he upheld the necessity of the organization for the defense of human rights and gave new prominence to "the duty to protect," that is, the responsibility of the international community to intervene when a government either fails to protect its own people or is itself guilty of violating their rights. He made clear that the United Nations serves human solidarity by making the strong responsible for defending the weak.

Pope Benedict also extrapolated a seldom discussed teaching of Pope John XXIII in the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*—that the legitimacy of governments depends on their respect for and defense of the rights of their people. It is not "intervention," he argued, that should be interpreted as "a limitation on sovereignty," but rather "nonintervention" that causes harm out of indifference to the victims of oppression. With international missions foundering in long-lasting conflicts like those in Congo and Sudan, however, the pope's remarks place the burden on the international community to build the capacity to deal with major humanitarian emergencies.

WHILE POPE BENEDICT SHOWED APPRECIATION for American culture, especially for the flowering of liberty, and for U.S. Catholics, he also laid bare our temptations and failings. He spoke to young people about the "callousness of heart" that leads to "drug and substance abuse, homelessness, poverty, racism, violence and degradation—especially of girls and women." He also warned against relativism, "which, in disregarding truth, pursues what is false and wrong," leading to "addiction, to moral or intellectual confusion, to hurt, to a loss of self-respect, even to despair..."

This portrait is unflattering. Americans may find it hard to look in the mirror Benedict held up to us. We may want to avert our eyes. But the challenge of the visit is to learn from Pope Benedict's criticism as well as his praise, take it to heart and find new ways to redeem the shadow side of our American character. For, as he reminded us, with our eyes fixed on the saints whose lives enable us to "soar freely along the limitless expanse of the horizon of Christian discipleship," we too can live the Gospel life in 21st-century America.



Against All Odds

‘In Eastern Congo, motherhood is still a risky business.’

MOTHERHOOD demands risk, personal danger and courage. When Mary said yes to life, to becoming the mother of God, she risked everything. As a young, unwed mother in a patriarchal society, she risked losing her family, her place in the community and thus her means of survival. Joseph’s first instinct to the news of her pregnancy was to break with her, until angels interceded and the Holy Family was begun.

As we celebrate the month of Mary and Mother’s Day, motherhood is still a risky business. For the women of Eastern Congo, where atrocities against women are routinely committed, motherhood requires great courage. In the past 10 years 5.4 million people have died from the war and violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo; 47 percent of these are children. In a huge country, the size of the United States east of the Mississippi, rebel groups supported by foreigners fight with each other and the government, largely over the D.R.C.’s rich natural resources.

“Conflict coltan” mines in Eastern Congo are particular targets, as coltan is used in our cell phones, laptops and computer chips. Rwanda’s *génocidères* remain in Eastern Congo, where they and others continue their brutality. The largely collapsed D.R.C. is at best unable to protect people; at worst the untrained and unpaid troops and police themselves prey on the people.

Women and children suffer most. Alan Goss, the U.N. special representative to the D.R.C., laments that the rates of infant and maternal mortality in Congo are among the worst in the world. In

MARYANN CUSIMANO LOVE serves on the advisory board of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network.

Eastern Congo, with its coltan mines and foreign fighters, violence continues long after peace accords have been signed.

Women are routinely raped and mutilated as an instrument of war, as documented by the U.N. special rapporteur on violence against women, Ms. Yakin Erturk. She notes, “The scale and brutality of the atrocities amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.” Girls as young as 5 and grandmothers as old as 80 are not immune to gang rapes, some of them committed with tree limbs, guns or machetes. Mothers are raped while their husbands and children are tied to trees and forced to watch. In many cases the victims are shunned, blamed for the attacks on them, because the rapes humiliate the family, or because they are infected by the attacks with H.I.V./AIDS and other diseases, or because many are impregnated with the children of these criminals and enemies.

Although the D.R.C. made rape and violence against women illegal in 2006, few perpetrators are ever arrested or prosecuted. The filmmaker Lisa Jackson shows in “The Greatest Silence,” a chilling recent HBO documentary, the impunity of these rapists, who brag on camera of their crimes.

What do women do in the midst of such horrible suffering? They try to raise their children and hold their families together, against all odds. They see these offspring of rape not as children of the enemy, but as children of God.

Archbishop Francois-Xavier Maroy grew up in these areas and now presides there. His three predecessors were murdered. He was recently in the United States to attend Catholic Peacebuilding Network conferences, and to urge action by the U.S. government, in particular by Senators Sam Brownback and Joseph Biden and Congressman Barney Frank, who are promoting legislation on these

issues. “All of humanity are attacked when women are attacked,” he said, and continued: “Women are sacred, the mothers of life, the pillars of the family, she that educates society through her children. These are attacks against the whole human family, aimed at the extermination of the Congolese people of the east.”

He explained that with the collapse of the state almost all social services are provided by the church, from trauma healing to health care. But this is difficult to do, and resources are scarce. For women with more severe injuries, there is only one doctor able to treat them, Dr. Mukwege of the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu. According to the archbishop:

We work on reintegration of the women back into families and societies, and in the reintegration of their children. The problem is that after rape they are marginalized by their own family members, evicted and their household goods stolen as well, so the church tries to give other means to establish lives and become useful again. We also work with the children who are born of these rapes, as they are innocent victims too.

What we would ask the American church is first, for your prayers. Prayer is the strongest force, and can change hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. Second, we ask American Catholics to tell the U.S. government, which is the first power of the world, to help us bring peace back to Congo, and to work to return the Rwandan fighters back to Rwanda. We ask that the U.S. government be a force for reconstruction, not destruction. And third, we ask for financial assistance as well.

Despite the suffering of the people to whom Archbishop Maroy ministers every day, he maintains a positive outlook and gentle smile. “As a church, we must always keep hope and never be discouraged.” This May, let us pray together with the people of Congo, “Deliver us Lord from every evil, and grant us peace in our day.”

Maryann Cusimano Love

T h e N e w A t h e i s m

In recent years religious fundamentalism and disputes over the relationship between faith and science have provoked a wave of publications known collectively as “the new atheism.” Following the Second Vatican Council’s observation that “believers can have more than a little to do with the rise of atheism,” the editors have asked five prominent theologians to explore which expressions of contemporary Christianity supply what the council called “the secret motives” of atheism. We also asked our experts to reflect on how Christians might respond to both the legitimate criticisms offered by the new atheism and the distortions of faith found within it.



Catholicism and The New Atheism

BY RICHARD R. GAILLARDETZ

ONE OF THE LESS NOTED contributions of the Second Vatican Council is its brief treatment of atheism in its “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.” In that groundbreaking document, the council avoided the shrill condemnations of atheism that were so common in pre-conciliar texts. Instead, the council acknowledged the diverse motives for modern atheism, from the overreach-

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ing claims of the positive sciences to modern atheism’s legitimate rejection of “a faulty notion of God” (No. 19). The bishops invited Christians to go beyond condemnation and “seek out the secret motives that lead the atheistic mind to deny God” (No. 20). By way of contrast, the so-called “new atheists”—figures like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris—engage in an aggressive and decidedly nondialogical attack on religion. They insist that religion is fundamentally toxic to human society and must be directly challenged and eradicated where possible. Consider the second part of the title of Hitchens’s volume, *God is Not*

ART BY STEPHANIE RATCLIFFE

Great: How Religion Poisons Everything.

Islamic and Christian fundamentalism receive the lion's share of criticism, but Catholicism does not escape attack. Harris skewers Catholicism for its anti-Semitic history, the evils perpetrated by the Spanish Inquisition and the Catholic leadership's scandalous protection of clerical child abusers. Hitchens joins Harris in mentioning the scandal of sexual abuse but also lampoons Catholicism for its supposed reliance on superstition and condemns its pursuit of power in order to control the lives of others. Almost all of these critics challenge Catholicism's dogmatism and overbearing exercise of authority, which they see as directly opposed to the use of human reason and the primacy of conscience.

The committed Catholic (indeed, the committed practitioner of any great religious tradition) is bound to bristle at the aggressive tone and the tendency toward caricature and sweeping generalization that runs through these works. It is tempting simply to dismiss these attacks. Yet the Second Vatican Council's mandate for respectful engagement with the critics of faith invites an alternative course of action. We must certainly defend the integrity and reasonableness of our deepest religious convictions, but an adequate Catholic response must go beyond traditional apologetics; we must also ask ourselves whether there is anything in our Catholic Christian culture that invites these attacks and might be avoided without abandoning what is essential to our faith. I focus on three elements in the Catholic faith that call for our attention: Catholic practices that suggest a naïve theism; the nature of Catholic truth claims; and the exercise of church authority.

Naïve Theism

As Michael Buckley, S.J., pointed out in his classic study of atheism (*At the Origins of Modern Atheism*), all forms of modern atheism are parasitic upon a particular form of theism. The proponents of the new atheism presuppose a naïve form of theism that perceives God, as Karl Rahner put it, as an individual being, albeit the Supreme Being, who is simply another "member of the larger household of reality" (*Foundations of Christian Faith*). Yet the god of this naïve theism more closely resembles a benevolent Zeus than the god of the Judeo-Christian tradition. One imagines a god stand-

ing on the sidelines of human history but occasionally intervening in the course of human events. Still, we should ask ourselves whether there are popular Catholic beliefs or practices that may, however unintentionally, support such naïve theism.

As one example, consider the procedures for the canonization of saints. Vatican regulations require that for beatification one verified miracle be attributable to the "servant of God"; for canonization two are required. In these rules, miracles are described as events attributed to the intercession of the servant of God and certified as inexplicable according to modern science. Without denying the possibility of such events, I wonder whether the emphasis on their scientifically inexplicable character risks giving the impression that God's action in the world cannot be reconciled with a scientific account of the workings of our physical universe. Does this interventionist view of divine action invite accusations of superstition and caricatures of divine activity by those outside the community of faith? It is vital that our religious beliefs and practices affirm a fundamental compatibility between divine action and scientific accounts of our world.

It may be opportune to consider revised procedures that would focus less on the scientifically inexplicable and more on diverse testimony to the continuing influence and impact of the servant of God on those who remain on their earthly pilgrimage. Pope Benedict's recent encyclical on hope makes effective use of the lives of select saints as moving embodiments of Christian hope. I suspect that it is this evangelical witness rather than the verification of miraculous interventions that the contemporary skeptic is more likely to find compelling.

Catholic Truth Claims

We have not been left on this earth to wander blindly in search of the divine. Catholics believe that God communicates the divine self to us in revelation. This revelation has been mediated in various forms throughout human history and has achieved its unsurpassable form in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Spirit-inspired testimony to this divine revelation is found in Holy Scripture and continues to unfold in the tradition of the church. Within that tradition, the revealed message of God's offer of salvation has

We must ask ourselves whether there is anything in our Catholic culture that invites these attacks and might be avoided without abandoning what is essential to our faith.

been given formal expression in dogma.

Unfortunately, the presentations of church teaching that one sometimes hears from catechists and clergy can succumb to what Juan Luis Segundo, S.J., has called a “digital” view of dogma (*The Liberation of Dogma*). This understanding divests dogma of its analogical, imaginative and transformative character and renders it strictly informational. One can easily get the impression that by learning church dogma one has somehow “mastered” God, much as a chemistry student masters the periodic table. Presentations based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the gift of infallibility can create the impression that Catholic dogma is static, as if the very language of dogmatic statements is immune to historical, philosophical or cultural influence.

For Catholics, dogmatic statements symbolically mediate revelation without exhausting our encounter with God. Although dogmas play a valid role by affirming the truth of our most central convictions, they are not the only, nor even necessarily the primary way in which we encounter divine revelation. The narrative power of Scripture, the symbolic efficacy of the liturgy, the moving testimony of the lives of saints and ordinary believers—all of these can mediate God’s word to us. Moreover, the charism of infallibility, which Catholics hold is active when the church believes and teaches that which is central to the divine offer, does not exempt church teaching from reasoned inquiry and critique.

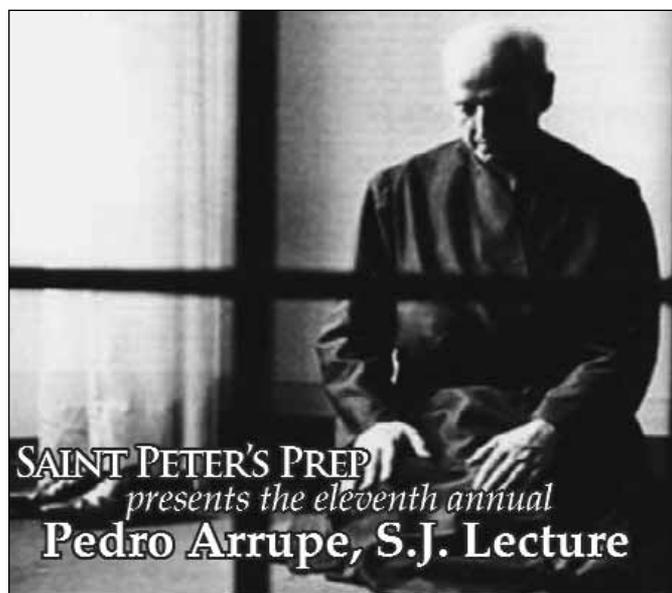
Catholic teaching on infallibility proceeds from our confidence that the Spirit of God so abides in the church that our most central convictions about God are utterly reliable and will not lead us away from God’s saving offer. Insofar as they remain human statements, subject to the limits of language and history, dogmatic pronouncements, although not erroneous, are always subject to reformulation. No human statement, however much its formulation may be assisted by the Spirit and protected from essential error, can capture the holy mystery of God. Religious authority figures should resist presenting dogma as if it brought all theological reflection to a close.

The church’s teachers should also continue to acknowledge, clearly and without apology, that not all official church teaching has the status of dogma. In many instances the teaching office of the church proposes as formal church teaching or binding church discipline its best insight, here and now, regarding the application of the faith to often complex issues, even as it acknowledges the possibility of error.

Pope Benedict has noted that in today’s world the possibility of revealed truth is itself under attack. If that is the case, then the church has a particularly pressing obligation to offer a credible account of divine revelation. For this account to be credible, it should include the following three points: the acknowledgment that church dogma does not exhaust the holy mystery of God; the recognition that church dogma, although not erroneous, is not exempt from the linguistic and philosophical limits to which all human statements are subject; and the unambiguous admission that not all church teaching is taught with the same degree of authority and that noninfallible teaching remains open to substantive revision. These steps might go a long way toward thwarting the tendency of the church’s critics to lump Roman Catholicism together with the various religious fundamentalisms that succumb to simplistic and seemingly irrational conceptions of divine truth.

Church Leadership

The Catholic Church is a human institution that has always embraced the need for authoritative church structures. Yet often it is not church authority itself, but the particular manner in which church authority is exercised that opens the Catholic Church to such harsh attacks from contemporary critics. Many who observe the Catholic Church from the “outside” see an institution prone to heavy-handed and arbitrary wielding of authority. They see ecclesiastical pronouncements on complex ethical issues and wonder how church officials can pronounce on them with such certitude. Some outside the church see an unwillingness on the part of church leadership to consider the wisdom of ordinary believers or to entertain the insights of contemporary scholarship when these insights



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might challenge official church positions. They also see too many church leaders obsessed with the trappings of rank and privilege, titles and prerogatives, leaders more at home in the court of a 19th-century monarch than in a modern institution. There are, of course, many Catholic leaders whose style of leadership is far removed from these stereotypes, but they are often better known to those inside the church than to those outside.

If truth be told, the deepest wisdom of our great tradition presents a vision of church authority often at odds with church practice. Scripture teaches that authentic church authority is always to be exercised as a service, not as an instrument for control (Mt 20:25-8). Voices within our tradition like St. Paulinus of Nola or Cardinal Newman have insisted that church leaders consult the faithful, not because it was politically correct to do so but because of an ancient conviction that the Spirit of God might speak through the whole people of God. We can appeal to great figures of the past like St. Augustine and Pope Gregory the Great or to the more recent teaching of Vatican II and find reminders that the exercise of church authority must be subject to humility. This humility presupposes that we belong to a pilgrim church that is being led by the Spirit but that has not yet arrived at its final destination and is therefore always in need of reform and renewal.

Can we afford to overlook the popularity of Pope John XXIII throughout the world, a popularity based largely on his humble and self-effacing style of leadership, the exercise of which was for that very reason all the more effective? Later, Pope John Paul II would exemplify authentic Christian authority in his resolute determination, often against the wishes of his closest advisers, to admit the mistakes and grievous sins perpetrated by Catholics past and present. In his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (Nos. 95-96), Pope John Paul II even invited other Christian leaders to explore with him new ways of exercising his papal ministry as a ministry of unity and not division. Is it a coincidence that these two figures were the most widely admired popes of the 20th century by those outside the Catholic Church? Theirs was an exercise of authority that seemed credible even to those who did not share the faith of the church.

Many of us become frustrated when we read atheists' attacks on religion, because we do not recognize ourselves and our religious communities in their scathing portraits. Yet we must resist channeling our frustration into equally vicious counterattacks. Instead, let us search our own faith traditions and purge them of all that obscures what is most precious to us. For we remain convinced that our deepest religious convictions do not "poison everything" but affirm all that is good and gently invite all into communion with that Holy Mystery "in whom we live and move and have our being." ▲



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True Believers

Have the new atheists adopted a faith of their own?

BY JOHN F. HAUGHT

The atheist, by merely being in touch with reality, appears shamefully out of touch with the fantasy life of his neighbors.
— Sam Harris

Just those who feel they are...most fully objective in their assessment of reality, are most in the power of deep unconscious fantasies.
— Robert Bellah

THE BESTSELLING BOOKS by Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens provide colorful portraits of the evils of religion. They appeal especially to the moral sensitivity of readers and easily awaken outrage at the “poison” associated with the various faith traditions, not least those that claim descent from Abraham. Ultimately, however, as our “new atheists” would surely agree, it is not in the name of morality alone, but especially in the name of reason that they must convince their readers of the wrongness of religious faith. In this essay I shall show how they fail to do so by posing three sets of questions to highlight the fundamental *beliefs*—that is the appropriate word—that underlie the worldview of Dawkins and company. Before doing so, however, let us look at the historical and scientific roots of the new atheism and how it has developed into its current insidious form.

The intellectual foundation of the new atheism is not new. It is the well-worn modern worldview known as “sci-

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entific naturalism,” a label first used by T. H. Huxley in the 19th century to emphasize the principle that science must never appeal to supernatural explanations. As understood today, however, scientific naturalism goes far beyond what Huxley intended. It decrees that the natural world, including human beings and our creations, is literally all that exists. There is no divine creator, no cosmic purpose, no soul and no possibility of life beyond death.

Most scientific naturalists are avowed materialists. They believe that lifeless and mindless physical stuff, evolving by impersonal natural processes over billions of years, is the



ultimate origin and destiny of everything, including living and thinking organisms. “According to the materialists,” the philosopher Daniel Dennett claims in his book *Consciousness Explained*, “we can (in principle!) account for every mental phenomenon using the same physical principles, laws and raw materials that suffice to explain radioactivity, continental drift, photosynthesis, reproduction, nutrition and growth.”

Since Darwin, scientific naturalists have increasingly alloyed their materialism with evolutionary accounts of life. Darwin’s notes reveal that he too was tempted occasionally

ART BY STEPHANIE RATCLIFFE

to make materialism the foundation of his own understanding of evolution. But where Darwin felt uneasy splicing biology onto such an inherently atheistic metaphysics, today many biologists and philosophers have no such hesitancy. Especially after it became possible in the last century to understand evolution in terms of genes migrating blindly from one generation to the next, the irresistible temptation

Scientism and scientific naturalism frame every page of the new atheistic tirades. These weary constraints on human thought have been around for a long time.

has arisen to resolve the entirety of life into a special instance of matter in motion.

This reduction is the basis of Dawkins's and Dennett's understanding of evolution, and both Harris and Hitchens go along with it. Dennett's *Breaking the Spell* and Dawkins's *The God Delusion* assume that all living phenomena, including our own ethical instincts and religious longings, can be adequately accounted for in an evolutionary and materialist manner. Theological explanation, therefore, is now utterly superfluous.

Scientism and the End of Faith

The materialist worldview espoused by the new atheists is itself the offspring of "scientism," the widely shared assumption that modern scientific method is the only way for reasonable, truth-seeking people to gain knowledge of the real world. Science, Harris insists, "has become the pre-eminent sphere for the demonstration of intellectual honesty." Dawkins is even more emphatic: "It may be that humanity will never reach the quietus of complete understanding, but if we do, I venture the confident prediction that it will be science, not religion, that brings us there. And if that sounds like scientism, so much the better for scientism."

For the new atheists science always trumps religious belief. Why? Because scientific method formulates hypotheses about phenomena on the basis of physical observations that can be tested over and over. Since religious ideas, by contrast, are not subject to publicly repeatable empirical verification (or falsification), rational inquiry requires that they disown them.

Religions, the new atheists complain, stem from "faith," that is, from irrational acts of what they call "belief without

evidence." This is far from being a theologically informed definition, but it supports the new atheists' declaration that faith is utterly opposed to science. "Pretending to know things you do not know is a great liability in science," says Harris, "and yet, it is the *sine qua non* of faith-based religion." Hitchens adds, "If one must have faith in order to believe in something, then the likelihood of that something having any truth or value is considerably diminished."

Since there is no scientifically accessible "evidence" to support the claims of religious faith, the authors classify them as "delusions." According to Dawkins, the methods a good theologian should use "in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods." Science alone can decide the question of God.

Scientism and scientific naturalism frame every page of the new atheistic tirades. These weary constraints on human thought have been around for a long time and still command a wide following in academic circles. What, then, is so new about the "new" atheism?

Aside from the heavy dose of Darwinian materialism in Dawkins's and Dennett's accounts of religion and morality (and even this is not peculiar to them), the only real novelty advanced by the four authors examined here is their astounding intolerance of faith in any form. Since they take faith to be the root cause of innumerable evils in the world, Dawkins, Harris and Hitchens instruct readers that it is time to erase every instance of "belief without evidence" from every human mind.

Our critics warn that this ideal will never be actualized as long as we keep nurturing the modern liberal tolerance of faith. In democratic societies most of us still assume uncritically that people have a right to believe whatever they want, but this leniency only makes the world ever more dangerous, the critics say. Most instances of faith may seem harmless enough, but permissiveness toward any beliefs for which evidence is lacking opens an abyss in human minds that will inevitably be colonized sooner or later by the most monstrous religious lunacy. Events such as the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, should be proof enough that by tolerating faith to any degree, religious and secular liberals alike become accomplices in evil.

Theologians are especially to blame for making space for faith in people's minds, according to the new atheists. That academic departments of theology still exist in an age of science is, to them, a nauseating anachronism. "Surely there must come a time," Harris remarks, "when we will acknowledge the obvious: theology is now little more than a branch of human ignorance. Indeed, it is ignorance with

wings.” Adopting the spirit of science, on the other hand, should help rid the world of theology and faith. Thereby it should also help dispel our liberal tolerance of all kinds of “belief without evidence.”

Three Questions for the New Atheists

What do the new atheists mean by evidence? They do not bother to clarify the term carefully, but undoubtedly it signifies for them whatever can be subject to scientific testing. To the new atheists, therefore, we must put the question whether the imperative to ground all claims to truth in scientific evidence is itself reasonable. We might begin by posing three sets of questions to all four authors.

Isn't your belief that science is the only reliable road to truth self-contradictory? Your scientism instructs you to take nothing on faith, and yet faith is required for you to embrace the creed of scientism. You have formally repudiated any ideas for which there is no tangible or empirical “evidence.” Yet where exactly is the visible evidence that supports your scientism? What are the scientific experiments that lead you to conclude that science alone can be trusted to lead you to truth? Wouldn't you have to believe—without evidence—in science's capacity to comprehend everything before setting up such experiments in the first place?

To undertake scientific research, don't you have to start out with several important beliefs? You must take it on faith, as Albert Einstein was perceptive enough to realize, that the universe you are exploring is intelligible or comprehensible. That the universe is intelligible at all is a great mystery that you cannot account for in scientific terms. Instead you must approach the cosmos with a sustained faith that it will continue to make sense as you probe deeper into it.

Next, you cannot commit yourself to a life of rational inquiry—or even write your atheistic manifestos—without believing constantly that truth is worth pursuing. Here again you cannot provide any scientific evidence to support this belief.

Moreover, to claim with such conviction that scientism is right and religion wrong, each of you must believe (since you cannot prove) that your own mind is of sufficient integrity to grasp meaning and decide what is true or false. Your evolutionist materialism, however, should, logically speaking, subvert your own intellectual swagger. As Charles Darwin himself observed, evolutionary explanations of the human mind, accurate though they may be historically speaking, are not enough to embolden us to trust our own thought processes.

Evolutionary accounts of your mind's origin are important and interesting as far as they go, but your need for logical consistency demands that you look for a more secure reason to trust your mental functioning. Evolutionary materialism, far from providing such a foundation, gives

you every reason to distrust your mind. A theological worldview, on the other hand, could conceivably ground and justify the trust you place in your capacity to understand and know the world without in any way contradicting the discoveries of Darwin's science.

How so? Theology's claim is that all of creation is everlastingly embraced by the mystery of God and is invited to enter ever more fully into that mystery. It is this invitation that accounts ultimately for both the world's evolutionary character and the human mind's own restlessness. A profound faith that your own mind somehow already participates in infinite being, meaning, truth and goodness can in principle justify your cognitional trust, explain your tireless search for deeper understanding, fortify your love of truth and ground your obedience to conscience. In this sense theology does not compete with science but provides essential support to its ongoing adventure of discovery.

Can you deny that there are avenues other than scientific method by which you experience, understand and know the world you inhabit? In your interpersonal knowledge, for example, the evidence that someone loves you is hard to measure scientifically, but is that love unreal? Have you arrived at your knowledge of another person by way of the objectifying road of scientific experimentation? Most reasonable and ethical people believe that such an approach to other human persons is both intellectually and morally wrong.

Do you truly believe that if a personal God actually exists, the evidence for this God's existence could be collected as cheaply as the evidence to support a scientific hypothesis, as Dawkins requires? Even in your ordinary experience, only a position of vulnerable trust can allow you to encounter the subjective depths of another person. How could it be otherwise with God, whom believers experience not merely as ordinary, but as a supreme “Thou”?

Remarkably, Dawkins insists that only science is qualified to decide the question of God's existence, even though science, with its impersonal objectivity, is not wired to detect subjectivity or personhood in any sense. Would not any effort to determine the existence of God primarily require an interpersonal kind of experience, one that could lead one to knowledge of God?

If the universe is encompassed by an infinite love, any conceivable encounter with this ultimate reality would require nothing less than a posture of receptivity, a readiness to surrender to its embrace. The new atheists believe that they can decide the question of God's existence without having opened themselves to the personal transformation essential to the formation of faith. One can only ask: what is the evidence for such a belief? **A**



From April 1909, the editors on “Darwinism and Popular Science,” at americamagazine.org.

An Evangelical Moment?

To combat the rise of atheism, Christians must first look to themselves.

BY RICHARD J. MOUW

ONE OF THE BEST HOMILIES I ever heard was based on the first chapter of the Book of Jonah. The preacher described the situation on board a ship that had run into a terrible storm on the way to Tarshish and a confrontation that ensued between some pagan sailors and a prophet of the true God. Surely, the preacher observed, we would all put our money on the prophet of God, but this prophet was running away from God, and the sailors had figured that out. In that confrontation, said the preacher, an unbelieving world preached an important message to the church.

I have often thought of those words as the writings on the new atheism have appeared. Many of my fellow evangelicals have joined Christians from other traditions in going into attack mode, responding to the case being made against religious belief and practice. On many key issues Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris and their like are fairly easy targets. Regardless of how other Christian groups might respond, however, evangelicals have much to think about, since we loom large in the new atheists' scenarios about the dangers of religious conviction. Specifically, they criticize the ways evangelicals have led the charge against the teaching of evolution in public schools and the larger influence of the religious right in public life.

Beyond Anti-Intellectualism

In both cases, the underlying problems have to do with a streak of anti-intellectualism that has long plagued the evangelical movement. Historically, we evangelicals have found good reasons to be worried about the intellectual life. Evangelicalism is a loose coalition of groups that have their origins in various branches of Protestant pietism, a movement that emphasized the experiential dimensions of the Christian faith. European pietism had its beginnings in a reaction against a highly intellectualized orthodoxy that had come to characterize many Lutheran and Reformed

churches in the century or so after the Reformation. The early pietists protested the way "head knowledge" often crowded out "heart knowledge." The present-day evangelical movement includes groups whose histories can be directly traced back to these pietists, as well as to Wesleyans, Pentecostals and sectarian primitivists, who emphasized similar experiential motifs.

The pietist project of taming the intellect took on a new significance in subsequent centuries, when a second battle was waged, this time not primarily against orthodox intellectualizers, but against the inroads of Enlightenment thought into the Christian community. The 20th-century evangelical struggle against modernism was a continuation of this second battle.

Indeed, evangelical worries about the intellectual life have had some legitimacy when they have aimed at keeping the intellectual quest in tune with a vibrant experiential faith, or when they have addressed the dangers of a world-

Popular evangelicalism is at a vulnerable point: many of our former heroes have embarrassed us. There may now be more receptivity to some new thoughts about what it means to work for the common good.

view that disparages religious convictions as such. But recent evangelicalism has also been influenced by a brand of anti-intellectualism fostered by frontier revivalism, a phenomenon chronicled in some detail in Richard Hofstadter's classic, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. Here a serious engagement with the important issues of life gives way to clichés, slogans and biblical proof texts.

During last year's controversies over Supreme Court

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appointments, Franklin Foer commented in *The New Republic* that we seldom hear about possible evangelical candidates for the nation's highest court. Evangelicals speak up loudly about the need for conservative justices, he wrote, but when conservative nominations are forthcoming the candidates are typically Catholics. On issues of public policy, Foer observed, Catholics have “intellectual heft” and evangelicals do not. Foer is right about evangelicalism as a popular movement. This lack of heft has made them an especially easy target for the new atheists. They would not attack evangelicals with such passion if it were not for the noise factor. As a force in the public square, evangelical Christians have been hard to ignore in recent years.

What has led us to be so noisy? It was not always so. In my youth it was not uncommon for the more liberal types to complain that evangelicals were much too quiet about issues of social concern. My guess is that nowadays those people—the ones who are still around—are looking back wistfully to the good old days.

Evolution played a big role in silencing us in earlier decades. The historian George Marsden once observed that moving from the 19th to the 20th century was for North American evangelicals an immigrant experience of

sorts. The migration was not geographic but cultural. Most of the 19th-century evangelicals were active in public life, even playing a key role in promoting abolition and women's suffrage. Entering into a new century, however, evangelicals found themselves defending the fundamentals of their faith against an emerging Protestant liberal movement. The battle did not go well for the evangelicals, who lost control of the major Northern denominations and theological faculties. Soon they lost again, in the battle against evolutionism that came to a head with the famous Scopes trial. This time their defeat brought with it much public ridicule. The evangelicals retreated to the margins of culture, adopting a theological perspective that emphasized their status as a “true remnant” and viewed the flow of history in apocalyptic terms.

From Minority to Majority Consciousness

A sense of cultural marginalization characterized American evangelicalism well into the 1970s. Then suddenly in 1979 a movement that had for a half-century defined itself as a cognitive minority in a society headed toward Armageddon now proclaimed itself to be the Moral Majority. Evangelicals had once again become a

noisy presence in the public square.

The shift from minority to majority status took place without much theological reflection. Not long after Jerry Falwell appeared on the public scene, for example, he confessed that he had once preached a sermon denouncing Martin Luther King Jr., on the grounds that preachers ought not to be involved in politics. Now he was ready to admit that King had been right. Unfortunately, Falwell never offered much of an explanation as to the theological basis for his change of heart. Had he now embraced a different understanding of “Bible prophecy” from the dispensationalism that had shaped his previous ministry? Did he have a new doctrine of the church? What was his theological grasp now of the common good, public justice and the relationship between church and state? Answers to these questions were not forthcoming.

My own take is that for the past two centuries evangelicals have gone back and forth between two eschatological perspectives. Typically we have done so without much theological awareness. Thus, in the late 1970s, when the prospects for cultural influence suddenly looked good, the evangelicals switched back to a more hopeful eschatology. Once again America was a chosen nation that could serve God’s revealed purposes, if only the faithful would restore the nation to its founding vision.

If this new activism was not generated by a new theological discovery, what did account for the enthusiasm for public policy issues? One factor was a shift in class. By the 1980s, many evangelical Pentecostal and holiness congregations, which had once resided on the wrong side of the tracks, had become flourishing megachurches sitting on the best real estate in town. This turnabout nurtured a sense of cultural leverage.

What motivated evangelicals to use their leverage aggressively to bring about change was a concern about the rearing of children. In large part the religious right has arisen as a response to the sexual revolution that was sparked in the 1960s. The increasing visibility of pornography, the gay rights movement, the promiscuity that came with the availability of the pill—all of these made evangelical parents very nervous about the introduction of sex education in the public schools. Many early initiatives by the religious right were directed against school boards.

That was also the case with creation science, a crusade that had much to do with parental concern about schools. While the “young earth” adherents have presented their views as an alternative science, there has not been much careful, give-and-take dialogue about the nature of scientific inquiry and the relationship between the Bible and science. Much of the rhetoric has been fueled by conspiracy theories, relying heavily on sloganeering and the use of biblical materials as proof-texts.

A New Openness Among Evangelicals

The irony is that while grass-roots evangelicals have been embarrassing themselves in public life, many of their sons and daughters have gained a significant voice in the American academy. The cover story of *The Atlantic* for October 2000 boldly announced, “The Opening of the Evangelical Mind.” Alan Wolfe, who wrote the story, not only chronicled the scholarly contributions of evangelical schools like Calvin College, Wheaton College and Fuller Seminary, but he also pointed out that the history and theology departments at the University of Notre Dame have become a home for many evangelical professors and graduate students. Just recently Mark Noll left Wheaton to assume the professorship at Notre Dame previously held by George Marsden, who had moved to Notre Dame from Calvin College after making his mark in American religious history there. Harvard Divinity School has established an endowed chair in evangelical thought. And evangelical scholars have been instrumental in forming an array of faith-based associations in several disciplines, like literature, history, philosophy and the natural and social sciences.

The problem is not that evangelical Christianity lacks the intellectual resources to remedy the much-publicized defects of popular evangelicalism. Rather, the challenge is to find some way of repairing the disconnection between grass-roots evangelicals and evangelical academics who have been making their marks in the scholarly disciplines.

Surely there is much to criticize in the freewheeling attacks on the faith that have been launched by the new atheists, and evangelical scholars have a contribution to make to those debates. It is also an opportune time for evangelicals to speak clearly to our own community of faith. Popular evangelicalism is at a vulnerable point: many of our former heroes have embarrassed us. There may be more receptivity now to new thoughts about what it means to work for the common good.

We academics will need pastoral support in making such a case to our own people. We can take encouragement from the fact that some wise evangelical pastors have emerged as public leaders during the past decade. Bill Hybels, Joel Hunter and Rick Warren, for example, have not only taken on different issues (AIDS, global warming, economic justice) than the religious right traditionally did, but have done so with a sense of kinship with the evangelical scholarly community and a spirit of civility toward those whom the religious right often identified as enemies of the faith.

This may be the right time for evangelicals to reflect on how people whom we have identified as our enemies may actually be speaking some truths to us. Perhaps in the mysterious ways of providence the new atheists have been raised up as unwitting servants of the Lord for such a time as this. **A**

Called to Love

Christian witness can be the best response to atheist polemics.

BY STEPHEN J. POPE

WHO ARE the “new atheists”? Broadly speaking, they are a collection of writers who have come together in recent years in their disdain for the very idea of God. They regard religion as the last bastion of superstition, obscurantism and fear and see the Christian churches as dedicated to inhibiting progress and human freedom. They regard biological evolution as providing the best overall account of who we are, where we have come from and where we might go as a species.

Religion “poisons everything,” proclaims the journalist Christopher Hitchens, and religious morality amounts to psychological abuse. The sociobiologist Richard Dawkins describes religion as a “virus,” and in *The God Delusion* proclaims that monotheism is “the great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture.” Dawkins regards theistic ethics as commanding obedience to a biblical God whose jealous and violent character is anything but morally admirable. The philosopher Daniel Dennett depicts religion as a willful attempt to pass on ignorance through promises that can never be kept. He asserts that religious morality based on sacred texts immunizes people from asking critical questions. And in *The End of Faith*, Sam Harris argues that faith only generates “solidarity born of tribal and tribalizing fictions.” Its promotion of irrationality dangerously sanctions a habit of acting out of religious conviction unrestrained by humility or compassion.

One can certainly raise questions about the accusations of the new atheism, but practical constraints narrow my

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focus to three issues: first, the relation between belief in God and morality; second, the relation between morality, reason and religion; and third, the relation between morality and the Christian ethic of love. The new atheist critique of Christian morality usually applies (if at all) only to a fundamentalist minority of Christians. Yet because this literature hits home with many readers, we Christians have to take seriously both its criticisms and our responsibility to present a better public witness to the truth of the Gospel.

Is God Necessary for Morality?

Much of the new atheist literature is reactive in that it begins by sharply criticizing what it

rejects. The new atheists react against a triple claim often advanced by religious people: that belief in a personal God is necessary for people to have moral knowledge, for people to do what is right and avoid wrong, and for people to justify moral absolutes.

First, some Christians claim that belief in a God who reveals the divine law presents the sole (or most reliable) basis for knowing right from wrong. Reason takes people all over the place, but only religious authority can settle things once and for all. Yet the value of a given moral authority does not prove either its legitimacy or reliability. Such an approach to moral security is made the more troublesome by the fact that Christians who rely on the same scriptural authority, as well as Catholic Christians who profess loyalty to a single hierarchy, often disagree on moral issues. Belief in God does not exempt one from the difficult work of interpreting the significance of specific biblical texts or church teachings for our own day. On the contrary, it can make moral reasoning at least as complex as anything one finds in texts of moral philosophy.

ART BY STEPHANIE RATCLIFFE

The Catholic tradition walks a middle way between the religious positivist, who says we ought to rely only on religious authority, and the new atheist, who claims reason to be self-sufficient. Catholics affirm the need for community and the value of the accumulated wisdom of the past; Catholics also hold that each person is created with a conscience and has access to the natural law through the exercise of his or her moral intelligence. God teaches us through the exercise of our reason within the church and the broader social world within which we act.

Christian ethics is based on the belief that the purpose of human existence is neither the ‘replication of genes’ nor the ‘survival of the fittest,’ but the development of our capacity to understand and to love.

Second, some Christians assert that belief in God supplies a necessary motive for doing right and avoiding wrong. The so-called sanction argument holds that fear of divine wrath keeps people on the narrow path; without it people are capable of anything. The new atheists properly target those who take this deeply pessimistic view of the human person, curbed from evil only by threat of eternal punishment. As Harris puts it, our “common humanity is reason enough to protect our fellow human beings from coming to harm.”

On this point, Catholic moral anthropology is closer to the new atheists than to Christian fear-mongers. It regards each person’s conscience as capable of being moved by an innate “connaturality” with the good. God does not inspire in us a servile fear, which, as David Hume noted long ago, is an essentially egocentric position. Rather, Christian life calls us toward authentic love of God, neighbor and self and teaches us that we ought to fear sin and love God as our savior and redeemer.

Third, the new atheists reject the claim that only belief in God provides the basis for exceptionless moral prohibitions. Harris regards moral absolutism as proposing a “certainty without evidence” that “is necessarily divisive and dehumanizing.” Even Christian critics see the question-begging nature of an apologetic tack that takes for granted the legitimacy of moral absolutes. It also ignores the fact that some atheists display a very strong moral code, justified by reasons independent of belief in God. The new atheists recognize the wrongfulness of murder, rape and the like. Yet one might argue that this thin concession does not provide a sufficiently detailed ethic regarding morally complex and contentious cases, especially concerning the most vulnera-

ble among us. Moral absolutes against abortion, embryonic stem cell research and physician-assisted suicide can be maintained, Christians might argue, only by reliance on divinely mandated or church-endorsed morality.

Yet the fact that Christians themselves are sharply divided over the ethics of life indicates that belief in God does not necessarily guarantee consensus over the content of particular moral absolutes. The significant gap between the small minority of Christians who accept the absolute prohibition on artificial contraception and the vast majority who differ-

entiate between its proper and improper uses illustrates this point. The Catholic natural law tradition does not teach that we come to know the strictly binding character of these norms only through divine revelation or ecclesial instruction. It affirms that one can

attain knowledge of moral norms through the use of human moral intelligence.

Is Christian Ethics Irrational?

A major issue raised by the new atheists concerns the relation between Christian morality and reason. The new atheists want us to reject Christianity for the sake of moral progress, then to draw an antinomy between two massive domains of human agency—reason and religion—in order to promote the dominance of the former and the destruction of the latter. At times they concede that the Christian tradition has made some important historical contributions to human well-being (including universities and hospitals), but they argue that everything good in the Christian tradition is because of the operation of reason within it. Conversely, everything bad in the tradition is because of religion, not reason. This line of argumentation is arbitrary, tendentious and viciously circular. It ignores the fact that the global (and ill-defined) categories of “reason” and “religion” are not alternatives but rather two forms of human activity that can be related variously: competitively, cooperatively or in other ways. From a Christian standpoint, the cause of evil can be attributed neither to religion nor reason, but to human sin—the willful decision to put what is essentially good to evil uses out of greed, pride or other twisted motivations.

There is no question that sometimes evil-doing has been pursued under the guise of religion, but the same can be said of science. The new atheists display their innocence of the complexity of historical causation when they simply point to “religion” as the prime cause of the wrongdoing of

Christians, ranging from Augustine's defense of using violence to repress heretics to the "silence" of Pius XII during the Holocaust. One could just as easily (and cheaply) blame reason for similar horrors. If the Nazis had not been so intelligently organized, they could not have managed their factories of death so efficiently. I say this facetiously, but the writings of the new atheists are replete with such simple-minded rhetoric from self-appointed champions of reason.

Is the Christian Ethic of Love Unrealistic?

Some of the new atheists, informed by sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, hold that Christian morality proposes an impossibly high norm of love; meanwhile, the actual conduct of Christians tends to conform to neo-Darwinian expectations that we care for "our own" and not others. In their view, what we need is a more realistic ethic, less lofty but more effective.

Dawkins regards morality as a set of normative standards that rewards good acts with social approval and punishes bad acts with social disapproval, and within which an individual promotes his or her evolutionary self-interest through morality. Altruism typically takes one of four forms: "kin altruism" toward relatives and especially our own children; "reciprocal altruism," which trades benefits with friends in mutually beneficial relationships; generous acts, which accrue "reputational benefits"; and acts of assistance, which enhance an individual's own social status. In every society morality promotes individual conformity to socially agreed-upon patterns of reciprocity that allow communities to function with some degree of order, regularity and peace. Christian morality does the same.

The new atheists regard Christian love as a completely unrealistic form of altruism. Despite high-flown sentiments, most Christians channel their resources to their own loved ones rather than to the poor. A small degree of altruism can be taught by culture, but instructing human beings to be altruistic is, to use Dawkins's metaphor, like training a bear to ride a unicycle. Altruism toward a stranger is an "evolutionary mistake," and those who regu-

larly practice indiscriminate altruism can expect to be evolutionary failures as well as impoverished.

Advocates of Christian morality can respond to this position in several ways.

First, it is important to admit that the actual conduct of Christians often leaves a great deal to be desired. In-group favoritism and out-group oppression, sometimes against one another's subgroups and more often against outsiders, can do more damage to the Christian community than any new atheist tract ever could. The new atheists echo Freud's denunciation of the contradiction between the universal ethic of the Gospel and the history

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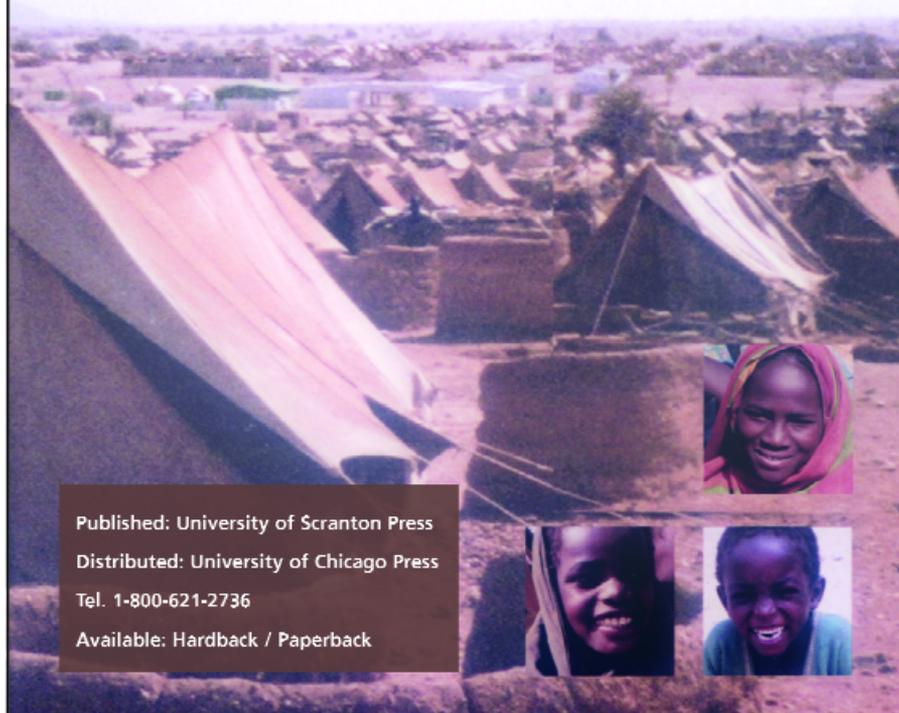
A Jesuit's Efforts in Chad

by Patrick Samway, S.J.

In an unforgettable journal that he kept while working for nine months in the Sudanese refugee camps in Chad, Patrick Samway, S.J., professor of English at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, provides a behind-the-scene, eyewitness account of the greatest refugee tragedy of our time.

Charged with the task of setting up schools for over 5,000 refugee children, Father Samway recounts his experiences in coping with life in the African desert as he built 65 classrooms out of locally made brick, organized a large teaching staff in three of the 11 camps (the curriculum was in Arabic), and cooperated with a host of other humanitarian workers.

A first-hand account of assisting the victims of the genocidal war in Sudan.



of Christian brutality toward the Jews.

Second, the new atheists' moral critique replicates the Christian tradition's own internal criticisms of religious hypocrisy, apathy and self-deception. The prophetic tradition, for example, launched its sharpest criticisms against those who practiced liturgical correctness while being indifferent to the suffering of the poor. And it is clear that we have yet to grasp fully the implications of Jesus' mission to save sinners, not the righteous. Christian prophets have recognized, as Dorothy Day once observed, that the Christian must live in a state of "permanent dissatisfaction with the church."

Third, the critique applies to sectarian Christians who suggest that the Christian ethic constitutes a completely radical way of life that transcends all normal human needs and limitations and to those who interpret discipleship as an ethic for saints and heroes, but not for ordinary people. Yet Catholic ethics regards grace as the perfection of human nature, not its enemy. The church acknowledges that divine grace enables people like Oscar Romero to lead heroically self-giving lives. The church also understands that grace calls most of us to follow the Gospel in everyday life as we take care of our families, friends and neighbors. Even the most demanding Christian ideals, such as the preferential option for the poor, are sustained when they are pursued within life-

giving personal relationships and communities.

Learning From the New Atheists

The anti-religious polemics offered by the new atheists are often unfair, uninformed and hysterical. Yet their body of work offers us a salutary reminder of the importance of two dimensions of moral integrity: the intellectual and the practical. Christian ethics is based on the belief that the purpose of human existence is neither the "replication of genes" nor the "survival of the fittest," but the development of our capacity to understand and to love.

The new atheists rightly complain about the unreflective and ill-informed nature of much Christian belief. Harris laments, for example, the pervasive superficiality and anti-intellectualism of popular Christianity; Dawkins criticizes the "distressingly little curiosity" that religious people show regarding their own faith. It is no consolation that secular people in our society display similar weaknesses. While the attacks of the new atheists reveal their ignorance of the Christian faith, their call for greater intellectual honesty within the Christian community is appropriate and ought to be heeded.

The new atheists also consistently point to a gap between Christian beliefs and Christian conduct. But if the flawed conduct adds fuel to the new atheists' fire, does not the highest Christian witness snuff out at least some of the flames? Beliefs begin to make sense only when they are embodied in real lives. True Christians exemplify the love of God and neighbor in everyday life in work, family and community life; and the examples of Christians who selflessly serve the poor and neglected are worth more than 1,000 books on moral theology.

For most of us, belief or unbelief has little to do with proofs for God's existence or the intellectual cogency of Trinitarian theology. Most people are attracted (or repelled) by the quality of the lives of the individual Christians they encounter, rather than by the intellectual appeal of Christian beliefs. The primary response of Christians to the new atheism, then, should not be to marshal better moral counterarguments, but to engage in concrete actions that show that Christian beliefs are not sentimental illusions. As the author of 1 John put it, "let us love not with word or with tongue but in deed and in truth" (3:18). **A**



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The Madman And the Crowd

For the new atheists, God is not worth a decent argument.

BY MICHAEL J. BUCKLEY

GERTRUDE STEIN LAY DYING. Stomach cancer had finally forced her to undergo surgery in an American hospital on the fringes of Paris. Preparing for the operation, she asked her lifelong companion, Alice B. Toklas, “What is the answer?”

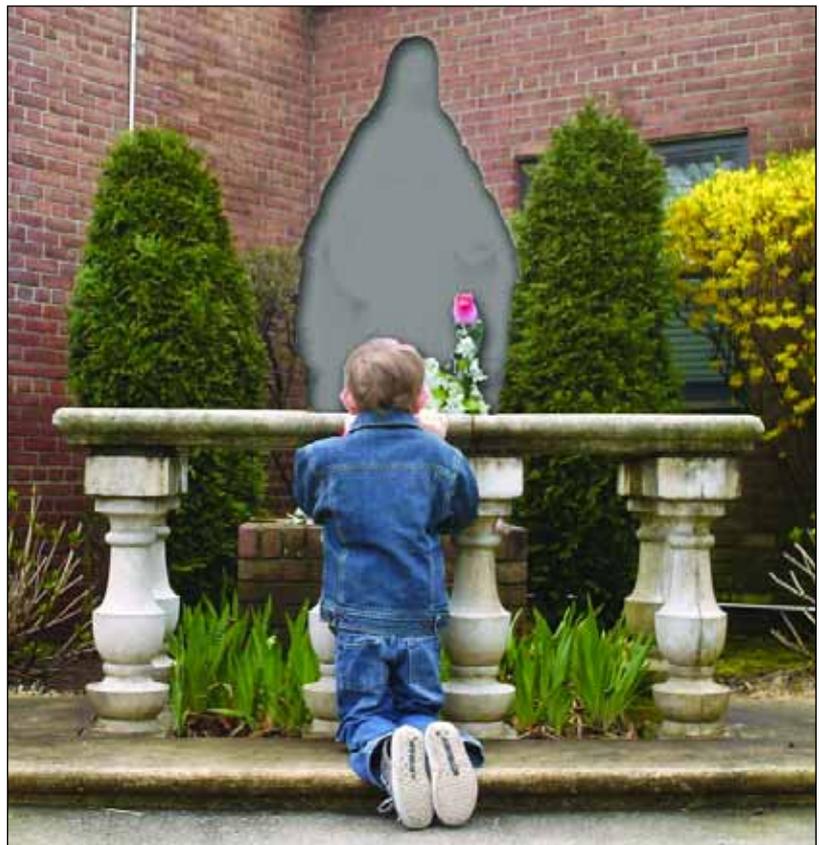
Alice said nothing. Time passed. Gertrude spoke again: “In that case, what is the question?” Attendants came to move her cot into the operating room. Alice never saw her again.

Professor Herbert Lamm loved to repeat the story. He thought her last words a triumph: “That’s the smartest thing that woman ever said.”

Over the centuries, questions have shaped the development of human beings and their culture. Latent or confused, they have opened up new lines of inquiry and spurred progress. Most human enterprises recognize themselves to be as vital as their questions.

The Pre-eminence of the Question

The absence of probing questions may well warrant a sweeping indictment of the “new atheism.” It is an astonishing world, one with clever moments but with none of the searching, troubled inquiry in which human beings must “wrestle with the concept,” as Hegel put it. Christopher Hitchens once promised that his questions would be resolved by evidence in contrast to religious faith, but there seems little attempt to secure adequate evidence or to present it cogently. Much of his argument amounts to zingers. His new atheist peers use similar strategies. “We know,” writes Sam Harris, “that *no* [italics in original] evidence would be sufficient to authenticate many of the pope’s core beliefs. How could anyone born in the twen-



tieth century come to know that Jesus was actually born of a virgin?” So much for the facile weighing of religious literary forms and the happy hegemony of evidence. A literalist reading of the Christian story of creation, or of the ages of the earth, or of the genealogies of the infancy narratives or of the reconstruction of the passion and resurrection of Christ easily sets the stage for ridicule through shallow and clumsy commentary.

Many of these attempts confront the question with the answers already in hand. Seldom do they rise to a painstaking examination of a serious problem, one that in history or ethics or religion has for centuries driven philosophical struggles into the unknown. Little discussion can emerge out of Sam Harris’s judgment (which Christopher Hitchens reports with approval): “While religious people are not gen-

MICHAEL J. BUCKLEY, S.J., the Augustine Cardinal Bea, S.J., Professor of Theology at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, Calif., is the author of *At the Origins of Modern Atheism*.

ART BY STEPHANIE RATCLIFFE

erally mad, their core beliefs absolutely are.” The question is lost. Unfortunately, comprehensive invective does not supply a serious substitute.

Even here, however, the religious intellect may still find significant engagement. Until this current spate of books made its appearance in popular culture, was the reality of God taken as an admissible question in popular circles? As noted by *The Wall Street Journal*, the new champions of atheism have sold close to a million books. The question of God has seldom been argued more publicly than in these latter decades. It is being raised in the strength of its denial. Do honest convictions deepen if they are forced to pursue one of the problems with which St. Thomas opens the *Summa Theologiae*, “Whether God exists”?

What must figure in this matter is the commitment to the absolute in an intellectual honesty that is itself an unqualified subservience to truth. If these claims of the non-negotiable in human experience are not in some oblique way an experience of God, then do human beings have some experiences that are more demanding than the experience of God? Does the question of God itself in its absolute quality bear the evidence for its own resolution?

The Failure in Method

Closely allied to the new atheists’ weakness in questioning is a cognate failure in arguments and method. Atheism has historically favored the contradictions of debate. As in Roman rhetoric, so it is today. The spate of books carrying the water for the new atheism begins not with a question to be explored but with the conclusions to be sustained. One begins with the answer: that God does not exist. The task of the author is to collect or construct evidence to support this thesis. Anything can be made to serve, so the contemporary arguments inevitably wander across the pages and often lack simple coherence. Hitchens’s argument from metaphysics runs the gamut from naming scientists who happened to be religious to medieval arguments about the length of angels’ wings to quarrels between the papacy and the emperor, finishing with a grand finale on the notion of a leap of faith. All of this is placed within a single chapter on “the metaphysical claims of ‘religion.’”

Serious inquiry, by contrast, moves in the opposite direction: it begins with the question and then looks for the evidence or arguments that can resolve it. Concern about

question and method in the discussion of the existence of God is not a pedantic nicety. It is required if one is to think carefully through the great issues raised by contemporary atheism, and it urges the directive primacy of the question and its care. The central challenge is not that someone has denied the existence of God. In one form or another that denial has been with us for millennia. The central challenge is that much of the eristic manner of interchange has so corrupted the question and the method as to make discussion impossible.

Dawkins transmutes the question of God into the question of religion, but seems to think the question of religion comprises not

the beginning of universities and hospitals, nor the cathedral of Florence and the music of Palestrina, nor a pervasive care for the poor and the suffering, but instead an index of evil events and stupid choices throughout history. His selection of “examples,” however overstated, instantiates what the history of rhetoric has asserted over thousands of years: that the choice and marshaling of examples is the induction of the sophist. A thesis can be asserted, or a list constructed and examples selected to prove anything.

Care for the Subject Matter

The inadequacies of the new atheism lie not only in its failure to keep the integrity and depth of its question or to sustain an effective methodology with which the question of God could be credibly pursued. There is also an astonishing theological illiteracy that runs through all of these works, an illiteracy that invites comparison with the great atheistic thinkers of the 19th century, such as Ludwig Feuerbach, Arthur Schopenhauer or George Eliot. One representative will have to suffice. The most serious and paradigmatic of the great atheisms of the past century was that of Friedrich Nietzsche; probably his most celebrated advancement of the atheistic option was his parable of the madman in the marketplace, which I relay here with comment.

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the marketplace, and cried incessantly: “I seek God! I seek God!” The people in the marketplace convulsed with laughter and screamed mocking questions after the madman: “Has he got lost?” asked one. “Did he lose his way like a child?” asks another. “Or is he hiding?”

An astonishing theological illiteracy runs through these works and invites comparison with the great atheistic thinkers of the 19th century.

Only the madman can answer this question: “I will tell you. We have killed Him—you and I. All of us are his murderers.” The full enormity of the deed and of their loss breaks in upon them. “But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns.... God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed Him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives.... Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us?”

The people in the marketplace did not believe that God exists; they thought the search absurd. But for Nietzsche, the determining factor was that they had no understanding of what they had done and what they had lost. They took their disbelief for granted, held faith in contempt and had no sensible awareness of the new emptiness. The death of God existed among them, but it was an epistemological reality, not an ontological one; Hitchens misses this point completely. The death of God in Nietzsche means that Christian belief was no longer believable. Only the madman knew the unspeakable value of what had been destroyed.

It is here in the marketplace that the new atheism both resembles and differs from the old. The new atheists possess contempt for religious belief, but theirs is the contempt of the crowd in the marketplace, not the agony of the madman, who held what was destroyed in awe and reverence. The new atheism does not think the subject worth a decent argument. In the old atheism, only the madman knew what had taken place. The crowd, nameless and strident, had simply accepted the impossibility of belief: “The greatest recent event,” Nietzsche wrote, “that God is dead, that belief in the Christian god has become unbelievable—is already beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe.” As those shadows lengthened over what had once been Christian faith, atheism became a more commonplace conviction.

This became not the heroic disbelief of the prophetic voices of the 19th century, but rather the bourgeois indifference to transcendence and the superficially secured contempt of the crowd. Feuerbach, Marx, George Eliot, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Freud yielded place to Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, Peter Atkins and Richard Dawkins. It seems painfully obvious that the second string is of lesser caliber than the first; indeed, they should not besport themselves on the same field. Harsh but warranted is the judgment of the Oxford mathematician and author John Lennox: “On matters of theology, their arguments are a dis-

grace: assertion without substance, demanding evidence, while offering none, staggeringly un scholarly.”

Lennox is not alone in discounting the attainments of the new atheism. The impoverished argument advanced by some recent atheist authors reveals, as perhaps nothing else, its weary and pervasive ignorance of what was regarded by their adversaries as “[w]hat was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned.” If one stays with the parable of Nietzsche, the frame of the marketplace can remain the same. The new atheism has simply given recent and celebrated names to the faces in the crowd. They have become the crowd, but the superficiality and self-assurance remain.

The Advance of Atheism

Criticism of the new atheism cannot take up each one of its charges against religion and respond. The procedure of the new atheists has made such a reply impossible. What is lacking in the attacks is a fundamental evenhandedness and balance. The argument and discussion require a pervasive and fundamental presence of the liberal arts tradition, the grammar, rhetoric and logic that would discipline language and thought into reasoned conversations and arguments.

It is evident that recent attacks on religion do not issue from a profound knowledge of theology, history, philosophy and disciplined intellectual capacities. One will often look in vain for a cogent argument or a sober appeal to history. Even more disappointing is the ignorance of Christian fundamentals. In *The London Review of Books*, Terry Eagleton begins his review of Dawkins’s *The God Delusion*: “Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the *Book of British Birds*, and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology.” What one comes across are “vulgar caricatures of religious faith that would make a first-year theology student wince.”

Criticisms leveled at religion and at religious practices can be of immeasurable service to the purification of religion from pretense and facility, but what is one to do with this confused mass of imprecisions and travesties? One certainly cannot take the statements one by one, or the process would never end. Perhaps one should do nothing at all, insisting that real argumentation demands care, skill and honesty, and that the alternatives are a waste of time. But this is little more than cultural submission. Perhaps the best strategy is to adopt the procedures of the Mississippi River pilots: take soundings. Select a particular region on the fast-moving river, drop in a lead line to test out the depth and the shallows of the water, register the findings and compare them with the results of similar explorations. The knowledge gained could be of incomparable value in navigating the waters. **A**

Book Reviews

Their Return to Grace

The Party Faithful How and Why Democrats Are Closing the God Gap

By Amy Sullivan
Scribner. 272p \$25
ISBN 9780743297868

Attention, all Democratic candidates, campaign managers, media consultants and constituency organizers: If there is not a dog-eared, frequently underlined copy of Amy Sullivan's *The Party Faithful* on your bookshelf soon, please quit. Sullivan, who is the nation editor at Time magazine, writes an incisive analysis of the Democratic Party's inability to cultivate religious voters and how, in a nation of churchgoers, this has led to their frequent exile from the halls of political power. She critiques the strategies that failed and sketches the outreach that has worked. This is a must read.

Sullivan shows how Democrats actively lost religious voters. She describes in detail the shifting cultural forces, going back to the Scopes trial through the counterculture of the 1960s, that created a wall between a devout America and the increasingly secular, liberal elites that shape the culture, including the culture of politics. She recalls the squeamishness of Jimmy Carter's advisors whenever he spoke of his evangelical religion. And she chronicles the refusal to let Pennsylvania Governor Bob Casey address the Democratic National Convention in 1992 because of his pro-life views. This history is well known to most students of politics, but it is very well told in Sullivan's account.

Less well known is the history of efforts by left-leaning evangelicals and Catholics to fight secularizing trends within the Democratic Party. Sullivan pens an especially vivid account of the 1973 meeting of evangelicals in Chicago that published the *Chicago Declaration on Evangelical Social Concern*. These religiously motivated activists were "brimming with optimism" when they left Chicago;

but by the end of the decade, the emergence of evangelicals as a political power came not from the left but from the right. "We wanted to get evangelicals politically engaged," Sullivan quotes one of the Chicago meeting's organizers. "We never expected that the Moral Majority would be the result."

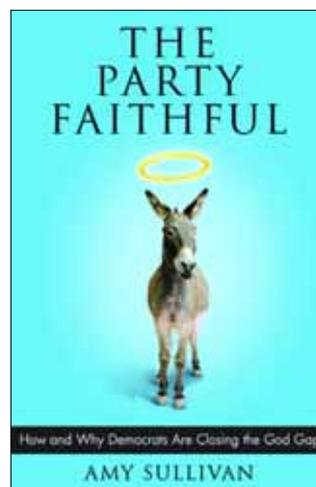
In discussing the loss of ethnic Catholics from Democratic ranks, Sullivan acknowledges the centrality of the abortion issue in alienating many Catholic voters. She is correct in writing that "abortion rights supporters assumed that ordinary Catholics would reject the Church's teaching on abortion the same way they had with contraception" and that this assumption proved incorrect. The anti-Catholic bigotry of some abortion rights supporters is also covered; and while Sullivan does not probe more deeply into the philosophic differences between the emerging libertarian ethic of secular liberals and the traditional ethics of the Catholic Church, her treatment of those fraught debates in the 1970s is evenhanded. And her conclusion is spot-on: You can't insult people's religion and then wonder why they aren't voting for you.

One mistake Sullivan makes is to place undue emphasis on the differences between the pre- and post-Vatican II Church. This is, sadly, a mistake made by many Catholic historians as well but, increasingly, the continuities between the two are receiving the attention they deserve. This is especially relevant when looking at the cultural expressions of faith and how Catholics view the world, including the world of politics, differently from their Protestant brethren. The central act of Catholic worship, the Mass, suggests a more communal view of the world than that of a congregation listening to a sermon. The increased frequency of reception of Communion that developed in the 20th century dates back not to Vatican II, but to the liturgical renewal of the otherwise reactionary Pope Pius X in the first decade of the 20th century. Similarly, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults has

brought new life to countless parishes and increased the degree of participation by lay Catholics in a variety of apostolates. It was Pius XII's decision to rehabilitate the Easter Vigil liturgy that led to this renewed emphasis on baptism, which in turn has allowed many Catholics to live out the words of President Kennedy: "Here on earth, God's work must truly be our own." The pre-Vatican II church had all the seeds of a religiously motivated cultural life that is very different from the consumerist, hyper-individualistic culture that we call the American mainstream.

The most depressing reading for liberal Catholics is the author's recapitulation of the clumsy way the John Kerry campaign dealt with the religion issue. Sullivan's reporting skills shine in this section as she gets deep inside the

Kerry campaign to discover the decisions that led to the defensive, inarticulate public posture the rest of us saw. Compared with the aggressive and sophisticated outreach efforts of the Republicans, the lingering anti-religious bias of Democratic Party operatives frustrated even grass-roots efforts to enlist Catholics and others for Kerry. Eric McFadden started one such grass-roots effort in the swing state of Ohio, but his effort to get help from the official campaign was met with the dismissive, and racist, rebuttal from Kerry officialdom,



The Reviewers

Michael Sean Winters has written about politics and Catholicism for The New Republic, Slate, The New York Times, The Washington Post and **America**. He is the author of *Left at the Altar: How the Democrats Lost the Catholics and How the Catholics Can Save the Democrats* (Perseus Books Group, 2008).

Harry S. Stout is Jonathan Edwards Professor of American Religious History and chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Yale University.

Peter McDermott, a Dublin-born journalist, is associate editor of The Irish Echo in New York City.

“We don’t do white churches.”

Looking ahead, Sullivan believes the alienation between religiously motivated voters and the Democratic Party need not be permanent or total. She points to the gubernatorial campaigns of Tim Kaine in Virginia and Bill Ritter in Colorado, two pro-life Democrats who won election in 2005 and 2006, respectively. She discusses the successful effort of Representatives Tim Ryan and Rosa DeLauro to hammer out and pass the Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Families Act, which sought to decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies in the first place, and offer financial assistance to pregnant women who decided to carry their children to term. The bill passed in 2007 despite a below-the-radar opposition effort by pro-choice groups.

There is hope the Democrats have learned their lesson. And, lucky for them, the emergence of the religiously fluent Barack Obama as a leader of the party can only facilitate the dialogue Democrats need to have with those who consider religion a principal source of their ideas about culture, economics and politics. *The Party Faithful* points the direction toward a more humane and tolerant Democratic Party that can also be more successful on Election Day.

Michael Sean Winters

Bipolar Disorder

Head and Heart American Christianities

By Garry Wills

The Penguin Press. 640p \$29.95
ISBN 9781594201462

Over a distinguished career spanning four decades, Garry Wills has been a veritable prodigy of journalistic and historical accomplishments ranging from works on St. Augustine and medieval philosophy to *Nixon Agonistes* and *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (for which he won a Pulitzer Prize). In his most recent Big Book, *Head and Heart*, we see flashes of the earlier brilliance, but on balance the work fails to measure up to his high standards of depth and originality (to say nothing of arresting prose).

The premise of *Head and Heart* is clearly stated in the introduction. From



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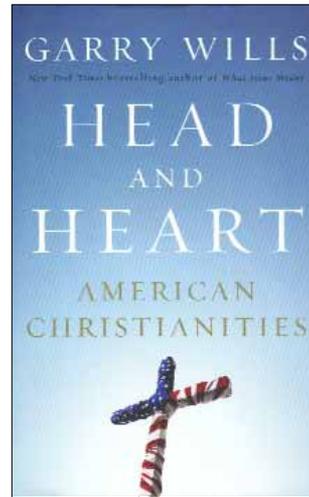
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colonial origins to the present, American thought and values have oscillated between the poles of “head” and “heart.” Sometimes one is dominant, sometimes the other. But regardless of which happens to prevail at any given time, the other never goes entirely away. This leads in the best cases to a creative dialectic in which each needs the other in order to sustain what we now call the United States of America. At worst, the tension between head and heart emerges in witch hunts, violent nativism and racist hatred. Although these tendencies are primarily identified with Protestantism, Wills argues that they can be found in many churches and, in fact, are better thought of as “force fields” or strands that figure in all the major Judeo-Christian traditions. Assessing the two poles, Wills concedes some positive achievements of the heart impulse (usually labeled “evangelicalism”), but *his* heart lies clearly with the head tradition (usually labeled “enlightened religion”).

The idea of organizing American intellectual history around the dichotomy of head and heart has a long ancestry that extends all the way back to America’s first

historians. Its most impressive articulation appeared in Perry Miller’s posthumously published *The Life of the Mind in America From the Revolution to the Civil War*, which posited a fundamental “disjunction” in American thought “of the head versus the heart, of intellect versus emotion.” It is one of the many curiosities of *Head and Heart* that many of Miller’s works are cited, but not one of the most relevant.

Having set the context in terms of the head and heart “force fields,” Wills begins his narrative by pitting the “pre-Enlightenment” Puritans and the Great Awakening against the “enlightened religion” of Quakers, Deists and Unitarians. As Puritanism wanes and the new republic is created “without the protection of an official cult” (which Wills rightly sees as “the only original part of the Constitution”), the Deists and Unitarians



remain firmly centered in their Enlightenment force fields, while the Puritans are replaced by the heart-centered revivalists, especially Methodists.

Along the way Wills takes pot shots at Jonathan Edwards and, by extension, Perry Miller and Alan Heimert, who had the temerity to suggest that Edwards was a product of the Enlightenment. For Wills, nothing could be further from the truth. He dismisses Edwards as a

“pre-Enlightenment” dinosaur who “fought off the coming of the Enlightenment.” If this is accurate, a large number of scholars have wasted a lot of time studying Edwards and the Great Awakening. But happily it is far from accurate. Whatever his interpretive faults, Miller was spot-on in recognizing that, first among colonial intellectuals, Edwards read and really understood the looming Enlightenment figures Newton and Locke, while his “Old Light” rationalist, anti-trinitarian critics were still immersed in an essentially medieval world of scholasticism and a psychology that divided the self into various “faculties.” Indeed, Edwards understood them so well that he could take their terminology and insights and turn them on their heads.

Throughout Wills’s narrative, one group of historians dominates, namely the self-proclaimed “evangelical” historians, George Marsden, Nathan Hatch and, above all, Mark Noll. Certainly one can choose far worse historians to depend upon, but it is one of the more curious anomalies in this book that Wills makes strong claims for these historians’ support of Unitarianism and “enlightened religion” as America’s religion, while in fact they claim the opposite. For Marsden, Noll and Hatch, America’s religion is not the Unitarian religion nor Deism, but, in Noll’s formulation, a unique amalgam of “republican-evangelical-common sense” religion not found anywhere else in the world in quite the same symbiotic (and ultimately tragic) combination. For this reason, Noll concludes in *America’s God* that “Deism never succeeded in establishing itself as

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an American theology.” Instead, “by the early nineteenth century, evangelicalism was the unofficially established religion in a nation that had forsworn religious establishment.” In like manner, E. Brooks Holifield, author of the comprehensive history *Theology in America*, identifies Princeton Theological Seminary’s Charles Hodge as the most influential American theologian—a name that does not even appear in Wills’s narrative.

The greatest problems with *Head and Heart* appear in the early chapters dealing with the colonial and 19th-century periods. In a manner reminiscent of the old intellectual histories written in the 1950s, Wills ignores ordinary people and, in effect, effectively renders ideas as uncaused actors and change agents. They appear from nowhere in terms of social location. Wills consistently misses social and demographic realities that would render his ideas, such as separation of church and state, not so much miraculous or surprising as simply inevitable. By ignoring what might be termed the social origins of ideas, Wills is able to tell the story of America’s “head and heart” religion with hardly a woman’s voice to be heard. African-American voices appear only slightly more often, while ordinary day laborers, union workers or civil servants are virtually mute. By the late 20th and early 21st century, as waves of Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu immigrants reshaped the religious landscape of modern America, they too remain invisible. Where do they fit under the comprehensive umbrella of head and heart?

Turning from substance to style, this book stands in stark contrast to the tight style and economical prose that characterize such earlier Wills classics as *Lincoln at Gettysburg* or *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment*. In the present work, Wills does the reader no favors. At many points the book simply offers a series of vignettes, sometimes literally “by the numbers.” Even more irritating, the author relies on so many extended quotations from primary and secondary sources (sometimes spanning two pages) that the reader is forced to treat the book almost as a source book, mining through page after page of quotations for whatever nuggets there are to be found.

As the book moves forward in time, Wills’s comfort level clearly rises, and he

speaks with greater originality. The last chapters are the strongest. By the Nixon years and beyond, the journalist in Wills takes over and produces some extremely clever and well-written snippets about key players and events. Though decrying the “futile acrimony” that neo-conservatives and Republicans employ to gain their dominance, Wills is hardly immune to his own slashing criticisms in pursuit of his liberal agenda. As one who shares much of that agenda, I found many opportunities to chuckle at the witty takedowns of the likes of Philip Hamburger, Michael Novak or Karl Rove. And Wills’s withering critique of anti-abortion arguments is as good as I have seen. But on deeper reflection the ultimate disrespect of all things right is so pervasive that it confirms how both sides in the “culture wars” stoke the fires of suspicion and hostility that flare into open contempt.

If this book does not represent Wills’s finest literary hour, it still contains interesting insights that save it from disaster. That being the case, one can hope for a return to the higher quality of his past publications in his subsequent writing.

Harry S. Stout

A Grueling Test

Intern

A Doctor's Initiation

By Sandeep Jauhar

Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 320p \$25

ISBN 9780374146597

There are millions of immigrant stories in the naked city. *Intern* is one of them—the story of the New York cardiologist and author Sandeep Jauhar. Born in India in 1968, he came to the United States nine years later with his parents and siblings. His father was a plant geneticist who did not get many breaks in American academia and blamed that on racism. His mother was a lab technician; and her family, which settled in southern California after two years in Kentucky, often had to rely on her salary to stay afloat. Given that their background was solidly middle class in its values and expectations—her father was an army doctor before going into private practice in New Delhi—Jauhar’s parents were far from living out their American dream. Yet they never seemed to doubt for a second that their children,

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their sons in particular, were destined for great things. That at Indian social functions the Jauhar children felt looked down upon by the families of doctors, who had fancy cars and designer clothes, could only have acted as a spur. That the embittered plant geneticist had had childhood dreams of a medical career, which were pushed beyond his reach by the early death of his own father, must have been part of the equation, too.

Jauhar, though, is not very interested in ruminating on family dynamics or psychological motivation. He does concede that his charming and easygoing if less academically gifted brother Rajiv “knew the privileges of being the eldest son in a traditional Indian family and he guarded them closely, like a trust fund.” So it is not a surprise that Rajiv unambiguously and unquestioningly chose a career in medicine. Sandeep, always more interested in subjects like philosophy and ethics, fantasized for a time about being a lawyer just like Atticus Finch. He liked history and he shared his father’s passion for current affairs, and so toyed with journalism, too. The elder Jauhar would dismiss such notions with maxims like “nonscience is nonsense.” In any case, he had envisioned his second son as a Stanford-educated neurosurgeon.

Sandeep nonetheless marched off to college with the humanities still in mind. A persuasive roommate influenced a switch to physics, which he pursued all the way to a Ph.D. at Berkeley. His second U-turn led him to begin medical school at Washington University, in St. Louis, the day after he handed in his thesis on quantum dots on the west coast.

His parents were upset at this rebellion in reverse (“Don’t switch horses in the middle of the stream,” his father said), but he speculates near the book’s end that pleasing them may have been his motivation all along.

The book begins with his arrival on the first day at Manhattan’s New York Hospital for the orientation lecture given by the grouchy residency director. You know the drill—in at the deep end. The formula has worked on the big and the small screen alike, from “Doctor in the House” to a doctor called “House.” The problem is that the author doesn’t stick to it. Once the director’s introductory lecture to new interns is dealt with, the



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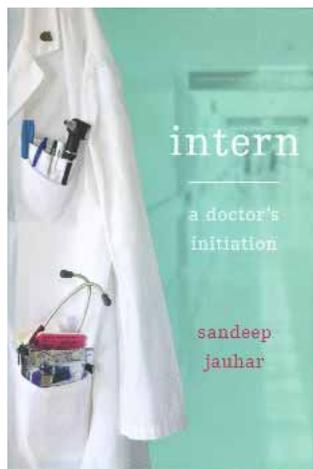
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author doubles back and tells the story of his life up to that point.

Finally, on page 45, the new doctor meets his first patient, an eccentric 71-year-old African-American woman named Jimmie Washington. The tone of the scene is pitch perfect. And such episodes, usually lasting three or four pages apiece and occupying much of the book thereafter, are *Intern's* great strength.

The trend nowadays favors memoir, but the portrait of a doctor as a boy, a youth and a student in various disciplines is not very compelling. And the description of his personal struggles as an intern, particularly concerning his self-doubt, works best in small doses.

Jauhar's early biography should have been the back story, using a flashback technique where necessary. Not that there aren't a few lively moments in the first chapters. The author's affectionate sketch



of the patriarch and his frequently batty opinions provide most of them. "The irony of all this is that my father hated doctors," he writes at one point. They were money-grubbers, set apart from shopkeepers only by their higher education.

The episode with Jimmie Washington, underlining the doctor's squeamishness, also shows his light touch. Because she insists on making an appointment for two months later and not three as he suggested, we fully expect her to return, much like one of those Yorkshire farmers in James Herriot's vet books, each of them defined by his idiosyncrasies.

But there are no recurring characters other than Rajiv, a cardiologist in the same hospital. Meanwhile, the mood becomes gloomy and generally stays that way. The outcome is happy, though, for this is presented as the story of how one reluctant

intern, after a horrendous first year, learned to love being a doctor.

If you feel, however, that there is no good reason why a young immigrant can not follow his own dream to be an Atticus Finch or a Carl Bernstein, then an alternative interpretation suggests itself: *Intern* is the tale of someone who has rebelled often, in his own nerdish way, but who has always knuckled under eventually. In the end, the dutiful son, brother, husband and son-in-law emerges from the "waking hell" that almost broke him to embrace fully the elitist worldview of the top doctor.

"I often worry," Jauhar writes, "that the current crop of interns, mandated to leave the hospital after a 24-hour shift, is missing out on valuable lessons and is learning a mentality of moderation that is incompatible with the highest ideals of doctoring."

At its best, though, this insider's account of life on the ward forces us to contemplate our own mortality. And we emerge from it all with a greater respect for medical professionals and their patients.

Peter McDermott

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Letters

The Hardest Word

As an Australian, I want to add to Margaret Silf's "Sorry Business" (4/21): The apology given by our prime minister was extremely significant because it was delivered on behalf of the government to the indigenous peoples wronged by government policy. Because the wrong was a collective one (i.e., a social sin), it needed a response from no less than our national leader. The country had been waiting for many years for the apology to be given, and the feeling was one of great relief as well as understanding by many who had previously failed to understand the hurt.

*Julie Purdey
Kyabram, Vic., Australia*

Mobilize the Troops

Your observations about Zimbabwe (Current Comment, 4/21) present a tragic situation in which a proud and prosperous nation has been brought to its knees by a corrupt thug who maintains his power by rigging elections, torturing and killing those who oppose him, starving children as a political tactic and laughing at the halfhearted protests of ineffectual international agencies. If only there were a way to remove such a tyrant and establish a freely elected government that would willingly cooperate with the international community to create a civil society! Wait: we did that in Iraq, and **America** considered it a crime.

*James Belna
Claremont, Calif.*

Northern Exposure

I read and reread "Northern Light," by Sheryl Frances Chen, O.C.S.O. (4/21), and delighted in the way she experiences her monastery and its surrounding environs. The photos are lovely and the prose sheer poetry. It reinforced for me the notion that deep prayer is a sinking into oneself, deeper and deeper until one reaches the place of organic unity with God and all of creation.

*Patricia Melesco
Rockingham, Vt.*

From the Pews

"Lessons from an Extraordinary Era," by Roger Haight, S.J. (3/17), brings up a disturbing paradox in the Catholic

Church today. While Catholic academic theology has flourished over the past 40 years in ways unheard of before the Second Vatican Council, the church is also experiencing a startling demographic decline in Europe. It is also losing members to other denominations in South and Central America; and in the United States, its youngest generation is for all intents and purposes non-practicing.

This is not to imply a causal relationship between the flourishing of theology as an academic subject and the loss of popular faith. But most religious people are only vaguely interested in academic theology, and religions that flourish are those that offer their faithful some kind of affective connection with the transcendent, the heavenly and the otherworldly. Catholicism once had a rich tradition of popular devotions and piety, and many Catholics in a former era were drawn to our high level of ritualism in worship. Academics may scoff, but can we really afford to allow these dimensions of our faith to wither away?

*James Quigley
Montclair, N.J.*

Aiding and Abetting

One has to marvel at the chutzpah of **America** in running full-page ads recruiting military chaplains, paid for by the

U.S. Army. Your commentary on your centennial year (Of Many Things, 4/21) notes that "**America** begins its 100th year of publication, rounding out service to Catholic intellectual life in the United States." It might accurately also have stated that you are "aiding and abetting the most criminal enterprise in the history of mankind."

*Anthony F. Flaherty
Boston, Mass.*

Lukewarm Faith

Your editorial "Abuse of Office" (4/28), could not be more correct. Unfortunately, it falls on deaf ears in the United States. Part of the problem was illustrated by Pope Benedict XVI's visit: he had a lovely time with George W. Bush and never publicly criticized him for Iraq. He went to the United Nations to tout human rights, but never mentioned the use of torture by the United States. Where is a statement from the U.S. bishops to Catholics and Christians calling for a national response to these issues in the name of Christ? In what church on Sundays is there a Christian witness to the victims of our war in Iraq? Because such actions would "divide the church," we all go along to get along. This was not the path of Christ, who did not come to

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Letters

bring a wishy-washy, lukewarm faith.

*Patrick Hughes
St. Augustine, Fla.*

Quantity, Not Quality

Re “Abuse of Office”: Despite what the critics may say or believe, there was nothing “benign” about the way previous presidents used signing statements on legislation, including Bill Clinton. Under Clinton, the Justice Department went on record twice defending the president’s

obligation to use signing statements to refuse to enforce constitutionally repugnant provisions of new laws. The only difference between George W. Bush’s use of signing statements and Clinton’s is quantity; Bush has issued nearly 1,200 challenges since 2001—a record, to be sure.

You rightly note that the real culprit in the president’s use (or abuse) of power is Congress, and to a lesser extent the courts. From 2001 to 2006, the

Republican-controlled Congress gave the president whatever he desired, essentially declaring itself a junior partner to the president. We must continue to support Democrats in Congress, who have increased the number of oversight hearings and issued direct challenges to the Bush administration.

*Christopher Kelley
Cincinnati, Ohio*

The Blame Game

In “Bishop Encourages Catholic Educators” (Signs of the Times, 4/14), the problems of the church community are blamed on “a lack of knowledge about the faith,” a cheap shot at catechetics. Talk about “Round up the usual suspects”! Sometimes I think the only reason bishops keep catechists around at all is to have people to blame for their failures.

The causes of the current membership loss in the church are varied and complex, and call for further in-depth study. To the extent that catechetics may be partly at fault, the bishops (our chief catechists) need to examine their own lack of ecclesial leadership and support for catechetics. I’m tired of business as usual except when there’s an opportunity to place blame.

*Kristeen Bruun
North Richland Hills, Tex.*

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The Challenge of Pentecost

Pentecost (A), May 11, 2008

Readings: Acts 2:1-11; Ps 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34; 1 Cor 12:3-7, 12-13; Jn 20:19-23

“Each one heard them speaking in his own language” (Acts 2:6)



THE WORD “PENTECOST” derives from the Greek word for “fifty.” It marks 50 days after Passover on the Jewish calendar and 50 days after Easter on the Christian calendar. Among Jews it is known as *Shavuot* or “Weeks” and celebrates the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. For Christians it commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus’ disciples (including the mother of Jesus) gathered in Jerusalem after his ascension.

In John 20, however, the gift of the Holy Spirit takes place earlier, on the evening of Easter Sunday. The risen Jesus invites his disciples to carry on the mission given him by his heavenly Father and empowers them to do so by breathing upon them and saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 reminds us that every day is Pentecost in the sense that “to each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.” All baptized Christians are privileged and empowered to be members of the body of Christ, and so they can and should use their spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ.

Luke’s version of the first Pentecost is the biblical account that has most captured the Christian imagination. Fifty days after Easter, the disciples of Jesus gather for prayer in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit comes upon them in dramatic fashion, with a strong wind and “tongues of fire.” They begin to speak in different languages, and miraculously their proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is heard and understood by Jewish pilgrims from different countries with different

native languages.

Pentecost is often called the birthday of the church. In Luke’s narrative in Acts, the good news of Jesus moves from Jerusalem through Samaria, Syria, Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) and Greece to Rome. The first phase in this amazing story takes place on the first Pentecost, when the Gospel is preached at Jerusalem to Jews and converts to Judaism from various places outside the land of Israel. The miracle of the first Pentecost is that Diaspora Jews from Parthia, Media, Elam

Praying With Scripture

- Do you ever pray to the Holy Spirit? Where does the Spirit figure in your piety?
- What do you regard as your spiritual gifts? How do you use them?
- How might the church be more effective in the process of inculturation? What dangers might inculturation pose?

and all those other exotic places hear and understand the preaching of the apostles in their own languages.

There is some tension in the text as to whether the apostles spoke Aramaic (or Hebrew) and were understood by the foreigners, or whether they spoke in all those different languages. In either case, the point is that the miracle of the first Pentecost reverses the episode of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. In that story, in response to human arrogance, God “confused” the languages of humankind and scattered them over the face of the earth. Now the good news of Jesus Christ is the language that unites all these different peoples.

The rest of Acts traces the spread of the Gospel all over the Mediterranean

world. It moves first among Jews and then fans out to non-Jews. Paul appears as the great missionary to the Gentiles. By the narrow standards of Mediterranean society in the first century, the Gospel reached the ends of the earth with Paul’s arrival in Rome.

The miracle of the first Pentecost, according to Luke, was that “each one heard them [the apostles] speaking in his own language.” Now, almost 2,000 years later, the church’s missionary activity continues, and the Gospel has been proclaimed far beyond the Mediterranean world. The memory of Jesus has been kept alive, and the movement he began has been carried on. Nevertheless, Luke’s Pentecost narrative challenges the church today to find even more effective ways of communicating the Gospel to peoples in every land on earth. Karl Rahner, S.J., thought that the greatest challenge facing our church today is to become a truly catholic, or world church. Just as the early Christians moved beyond the land of Israel and the Jewish people, so we must help all the peoples in our world hear and express the Gospel in their own languages and according to their own cultural patterns.

The miracle of the “tongues” at the first Pentecost was the initial step in the process that is sometimes called the inculturation of the Gospel. The challenge that faced the first Christians gathered in Jerusalem at the birth of the church still faces the church today. That challenge involves remaining faithful to the substance of the Gospel, while translating and applying it in all the languages and cultures of the world. For that we too need the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. And so on this Pentecost we must say, “Come, Holy Spirit, come!”

Daniel J. Harrington

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