

HOLLYWOOD'S PORTRAYAL OF RELIGION

Peter E. Dans

***Christians in the Movies: A Century of Saints and Sinners* by Peter E. Dans (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers)**

This book documents the changing portrayal of Christians in film from 1905 through 2008. Films respectful of Christianity such as "Lilies of the Field," "The Greatest Story Ever Told," "The Sound of Music," and "A Man for All Seasons," were made well into the 1960s. This changed to disparagement and outright ridicule around 1970. The principal reasons were the abolition of the Motion Picture Production Code (the Code was replaced in 1968 by a weaker Motion Picture Association of America film ratings system), the elimination of the Legion of Decency, and a radical change in American culture.

In 1922, reacting to complaints by predominantly Protestant groups about Hollywood sex and drug scandals as well as the proliferation of movie censorship boards, filmmakers established the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America with Will Hays, a Presbyterian, as director. Hays' efforts to reconcile disparate censorship criteria led to the 1930 Motion Picture Production Code aimed at maintaining good taste, especially when filming scenes that involved sex, violence, religion, and other sensitive subjects. The "Hays Code" required that "the sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home should be upheld" and that no picture should glorify "crime, wrongdoing, evil, or sin." It also stated that "No film or episode should throw ridicule on any religious faith. Ministers of religion in their character as ministers of religion should not be used as comic characters or as villains. Ceremonies of any definite religion should be carefully and respectfully handled." Hays hired as his deputy

the devout Catholic, Joseph I. Breen, who became the face of the Production Code Administration Office to the industry.

In 1933, partly in response to films flouting the Code, like "Sign of the Cross," American bishops established the Catholic Legion of Decency. Because many Protestant and Jewish clergymen signed on, the name was changed to the National Legion of Decency in 1934. The Legion rated films from "acceptable for all" to "condemned" and wielded great influence because the economic clout of the large Catholic population could be harnessed through the extensive network of Catholic schools and churches. Breen and Legion director Martin Quigley were often consulted about scripts and final cuts in enforcing the Production Code. Although many critics denigrate the Code as censorship, the inconvenient truth is that its enforcement coincided with "Hollywood's Golden Age," with 1939 recognized as the "Golden Year."

In the 1940s and 1950s, Howard Hughes, Otto Preminger and others challenged the Code's strictures. The importation of critically acclaimed, sexually explicit foreign films, which were not subject to the Code, added pressure to modify or abolish it. The official end came in the legal challenge to Dallas banning the French movie, "Viva Maria!", starring Brigitte Bardot and Jeanne Moreau. In April 1968, the Supreme Court upheld the First Amendment rights of filmmakers to show their films, but ordered the Motion Picture Industry to develop a self-policing system promptly, which it did.

In the mid-60s, the Legion of Decency was replaced by the National Catholic Office of Motion Pictures' much more permissive advisory rating system. At the same time, the decrees of Vatican II led to sweeping changes in distinctive practices, many of which were used as convenient shorthand for depicting Catholicism in films. These included the abandonment of the proscription against eating meat on Friday, the need to fast overnight before receiving Communion, the requirement that nuns wear distinctive habits, and the use of Latin in the

Mass. These changes sent shock waves through Catholic circles, polarizing many believers. The next few decades saw a sharp drop in vocations to the religious life, the release of many priests and nuns from their vows, a decrease in attendance at Sunday Mass, and the marked diminution of regular confessions, which had also been a favorite staple in movies with Catholic themes. After Vatican II, catechetics and liturgies were watered down and an increasing number of those identifying themselves as Catholics began to reject Church teaching beginning with birth control, premarital sex, divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and later in vitro fertilization, embryonic stem-cell research, assisted suicide, and, in rare instances, cloning.

Protestant and Jewish denominations attempting to hold on to orthodox dogma that codified right and wrong with regard to abortion, premarital sex, and homosexuality, also saw declines in membership. By the 1970s, the so-called "Me Generation," began to turn more inward, placing more emphasis on self-actualization and self-fulfillment. As Americans became more affluent and secure, there seemed to be less of a need for regular Church attendance and practicing a faith whose God demanded behaviors that restricted lifestyle choices. This was replaced by widespread attitudes of cultural relativism and the philosophy of secular humanism.

This philosophy was reinforced by Supreme Court rulings beginning in the 1940s regarding various "church-state" issues. The result is that, as Yale Law professor Stephen L. Carter noted in his 1993 book *The Culture of Disbelief*, a wall of separation has been erected between church and state such that believers are encouraged "to act publicly, and sometimes privately as well, as though their faith doesn't matter." Indeed, the courts have increasingly become the principal venues for adjudicating contentious and complex moral issues. This has led to an escalation in the conflict between the orthodoxy of religious believers and that of secular non-

believers as Princeton professor Robert George pointed out in his 1999 book *The Clash of Orthodoxies*.

That such a gulf in orthodoxies exists between filmmakers and their audiences was shown in a 1998 University of Texas survey of a representative sample of Hollywood writers, actors, producers, and executives in that only 2 to 3 percent attended religious services weekly compared to about 41 percent of the public at that time. This cultural disconnect was reflected in their movies and the reaction to "The Passion of the Christ" (2004). Although many believers and nonbelievers were moved by the film, most critics seemed both incredulous and seemingly threatened by its broad popularity. However, that the film went on to earn over \$700 million did not escape Hollywood's notice.

Fundamentalist Christians have been almost uniformly portrayed negatively as charlatan preachers, unenlightened dupes, and mean-spirited hypocrites, the only saving grace being their appearance in relatively few films. Mainstream Protestant sects, once prevalent in movies, have virtually disappeared from the screen. Catholics turn out to be the most ubiquitous in film, both favorably early on and disparagingly after 1970. In part, this is due to Roman Catholicism being the largest Christian sect in America, and because of the Church's role in the strict enforcement of the Hays Code and its adherence to politically incorrect dogma. Anti-Catholicism, which Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr. called "the deepest bias in the history of the American people," persists. As Philip Jenkins describes in his 2003 book, *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Respectable Prejudice*, the animus against the Catholic Church is now most evident in academic circles and those media outlets which seek out dissident Catholics whenever reporting on controversial moral issues.

Ironically, though, many of the contemporary films that ridicule Catholicism most severely have been made by "cradle Catholics" who attended Catholic schools. These directors have

either become “fallen-away Catholics” (or “recovering Catholics” as some prefer to be called) or “liberal” Catholics who reject much Catholic dogma. Prominent examples include Robert Altman, who aimed some of his sharpest barbs at Christianity in “M*A*S*H,” and Kevin Smith, who considers himself a devout Catholic while not buying into Church dogma on abortion, homosexuality, etc. His disdain for dogma and the institutional church permeated his 1999 film “Dogma.”

By contrast, the only unalloyed encomia Hollywood has recently bestowed on believers seem to be reserved for those who practice Eastern religions like Buddhism, as in the 1997 films “Kundun” and “Seven Years in Tibet,” or forms of New Age spirituality as in the 1996 film “Phenomenon” and the numerous “angel” films. The major distinction here is that unlike Christianity and Orthodox Judaism, they are more personal in nature and can be embraced without requiring any commitment to specific dogmas, especially those related to sexual and reproductive matters.

Why should Christians care about how film and the other media portray them? The simple answer is that feature films remain, as they have been since their inception, powerful tools for framing public opinion. Admittedly, Christians, including Catholics, may not have been as good as they were depicted in their glory days, but they are certainly nothing like the hateful stereotypes in today’s movies. In short, it’s time to restore balance. Constant negativity is not only detrimental to institutions and professions, but has a polarizing and corrosive effect on society.

My wish is that this book will stimulate readers to take another look at films they once enjoyed and to discover hidden gems that they have never seen before. I also hope it will encourage orthodox Christian believers who have stopped going to movies to get more involved in helping to reshape this important industry, which all agree has badly lost its way. As the Christopher movement points out, if one of us lights a

candle, we can illuminate our space but if each of us does, we can illuminate the world.

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CULTURE AT WAR

L. Brent Bozell III

In my line of work you can be on the receiving end of some pretty interesting mail. When it's a manila envelope without a return address, if it isn't anthrax, it's some nut's compilation of faded newspaper articles dating back to the 60s allegedly proving some bizarre point; or even worse, it's a manuscript; or worse still, it's a printed (as opposed to published) manuscript: that nut spent his life savings writing some tract no one will ever read. Invariably it's about some sort of conspiracy, and if it's deep enough, you'll find the papists in Rome behind it all. The other day one of those books hit my desk. "The United States must soon face the most deadly enemy it will ever face," it begins. Thinking about this article I perused it to satisfy an itch: How long would it be before the author fingered the Catholic Church as the villain out to destroy America? Would you believe page 2? "Russia, Prussia, Austria and Pope Pius VII, king of the Papal States, entered into a secret treaty to do so." There you have it.

The attack on Christianity, particularly Catholicism is broad, dangerous and, indeed, in some ways already successful. It is the believers against the unbelievers, except the

unbelievers are nihilists out to destroy the West. And it's all captured by The Catholic League's president, Bill Donohue, in his new book, *Secular Sabotage: How Liberals are Destroying Religion and Culture in America*.

But first, full disclosure. I am a Roman Catholic. I like saying that. A few years ago I was invited to speak at a fundamentalist Christian convention. Good people though they were, they couldn't understand why I was offended when they insisted that as a condition of my appearance (on a weekend, no honorarium, paying my own travel), I had to first submit a written statement of personal faith. No, I said, if you can't accept at face value my faith, then best to cancel me. No, they implored, don't cancel. Please speak. But this is a requirement for all our speakers. Back and forth we went, all the way to the eve of the convention, with all sorts of high officials intervening. Finally we reached an accord. I would, indeed, provide a written statement of personal faith, but they would accept whatever it was I wrote. I am a Roman Catholic. That's all they got, because that's all they needed.

Second disclaimer: I'm on the Board of Advisors of the Catholic League. I've been involved with this terrific organization for many years, dating back to my participation in a colloquium in 1993, later published, and exploring the extent to which the news media have an anti-Catholic bias. I serve on this board because Bill Donohue invited me, and I've never been able to refuse Bill Donohue anything.

Which naturally leads to the third disclaimer: Bill Donohue is a friend, and I like him. There are an awful lot of people I know in the world of public policy, many of whom I respect and admire. But beyond respecting his wisdom and admiring his courage, I just plain like Bill Donohue. I like his Irish feistiness. I like his sense of loyalty. I like his sense of humor. Most of all, I like how he drives his opponents mad. And with *Secular Sabotage* he could be expected to be stricken from all manner of Christmas card lists except the people he

skewers don't believe in Christmas.

Secular Sabotage is serious business. Donohue insists the United States should be considered unequivocally a Christian country. Eight out of ten Americans consider themselves as such. Indeed— and I didn't realize this—the United States is the most Christian country, in quantitative terms, in the world. “In fact,” states the author, “the U.S. is more Christian than Israel is Jewish.” And yet if this is so, why can't we celebrate Christmas? Why can't our children pray in school? How did we just elect a president who insisted the United States ought not to be considered a Christian nation?

The popular culture's hesitation to acknowledge the truth of this country's Christian identity is a direct measure of the success a tiny minority of Americans has enjoyed in thoroughly intimidating the majority. While Donohue discusses secular sabotage he is clear that these ought not to be considered simple secularists existing alongside the faithful. They are nihilists out to expel Christianity not just from the public square but from the public conversation entirely. And they are powerful enough to be succeeding.

The Christian nation has at its core the nuclear family. Erase the notion of the nuclear family and you've destroyed the Judeo-Christian identity of America. The secular saboteurs know this, which is why the author writes they “not only seek to destroy the public role of Christianity, they seek to sabotage the Judeo-Christian understanding of sexuality.” The sexual revolution of the 60s, no matter how morally improper, at least believed itself to be governed by the goal of love. The sexual revolution today has no such illusions. As Donohue documents, it is about instant self-gratification; and rather than build a separate societal structure, the nihilists simply want to tear down existing norms. How else to explain the radical feminists' zealous obsession with abortion?

How else to explain the radical gays' overt hatred of the

Catholic Church? Several years ago I attended an early morning Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. It was celebrated by the late John Cardinal O'Connor. I noted a large battery of uniformed police guarding the door and lining the aisles. When I raised this issue later at breakfast with Cardinal O'Connor, he just smiled rather sadly. An aide pointed out that the size of the daily police presence was in direct relation to the number of death threats aimed at him.

Secular Sabotage documents this hatred in a far more prescient manner. Donohue is an eyewitness and retells, with a riveting first hand narrative, the horrific attacks on St. Patrick's by gay radicals in 1994 and again in 1995. If Catholics who read these passages are shocked and infuriated once more, then Donohue has succeeded. He insists we not forget.

Perhaps nowhere is the anti-Catholicism more prevalent than in the arts and Donohue exposes the bigotry with a surgeon's precision. He reminds us of the ugliness of Andres Serrano and Robert Mapplethorpe, men who took taxpayers' money (grants from the woefully incompetent National Endowment for the Arts) only to produce repugnant "art" aimed at offending Christians. He introduces us to others like Robert Goober, an ex-Catholic gay man, whose "art" exhibition in Los Angeles in 1997 included a sculpture of Our Blessed Mother, pierced with a phallic culvert pipe. There's Garilyn Brune who was awarded the grand prize in a L.A. art festival the year prior. His drawing depicted a priest performing fellatio on Jesus Christ. There's John Santerineross, whose photograph featured a woman with her genitals cut and bleeding unto a crucifix. There is...well, enough. As Donohue tells us, obscenity and blasphemy are joined at the cultural hip of the nihilists.

Donohue travels to Hollywood to document the attacks on Christianity by an artistic community that insists it only reflects reality yet constantly paints a picture that is the antithesis of reality ("The Last Temptation of Christ"); insists it only follows market impulses, yet produces anti-

Catholic fare when there is zero market demand for it ("Dogma," "The DaVinci Code," "Priest," "Angels and Demons") and claims to respect its audience yet sneaks anti-Christian bigotry into even children's movies ("The Golden Compass").

The anti-Christian, anti-Catholic agenda of the nihilistic secularists is not confined to the cultural. It is now in the open, very political, and absolutely determined to crush the Judeo-Christian identity in America. For Donohue 1972 is a pivotal year, the year he believes that religious conservatives chose the Republican Party and secular liberals the Democratic Party for their respective homes. But it's one thing to promote a secular political agenda, it's quite another to come out with a pronounced anti-Christian one. Donohue documents that emergence during the Clinton years with the likes of Dr. Jocelyn Elders, the Surgeon General-designate who believed it was government's job to teach teenaged girls how to have proper illicit sex. He tracks the increasingly shrill attacks against Christians in general and the Catholic League in particular by the radicals at the Democratic National Committee; he exposes how in 2004 Sen. John Kerry, a self-described "devout Catholic," hired a spokeswoman for ACT-UP, the gay group that attacked St. Patrick's Cathedral, as his Director of Religious Outreach; and how in 2007 presidential candidate John Edwards hired religious bigots to organize his Internet presence.

The evidence will show that in all these cases there was overreach and the subsequent backlash. So why do it? That is the strength of the militant Democratic Party base: strong and wealthy and uncompromising and impatient. It was also another demonstration of the superior political acumen of Team Obama. Though arguably even more radical than his predecessors, Obama showed tremendous discipline in muting his radical agenda during the campaign. So vague was he on the issues that 54 percent of the voters believed the disciple of the hateful Rev. Wright was "friendly" to religion.

Bill Donohue saves his best for last. He believes there are some positive signs. Young people seem not to be as radical as their parents. (How 'bout them apples?) There are new alliances being created among conservative Catholics, Protestants and Jews. And then there's this nugget: "But not all agnostics and atheists are secularists at heart." At first blush this doesn't seem to make sense.

The late great Steve Allen didn't make sense, either. A fallen-away Catholic, Steve as a self-proclaimed agnostic who openly championed all manner of liberal political causes. But few were as upset and outspoken as he against the left's attacks on Christianity and Catholicism.

In the final analysis it may be liberals who are trying to destroy religion and culture in America, but it's not all liberals, as Steve Allen, Sen. Joe Lieberman and others have shown. And it's not just liberals. The libertarians' refusal to defend the Judeo-Christian tradition indicts them as well. But no matter who it is attacking the Christian faith, there's one thing for certain: that fellow will have to face Bill Donohue.

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ENGAGING AN ALIEN WORLD

Kathryn Jean Lopez

American Babylon: Notes of a Christian Exile by Richard John

Neuhaus (New York: Basic Books, 2009) To order call 1-800-343-4499 or order online at www.perseusbooksgroup.com

In the late Father Richard John Neuhaus's *American Babylon*, the author cites his friend, the late Avery Cardinal Dulles, whose funeral at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fr. Neuhaus, suffering his last battle with cancer, barely made in December. The Dulles story was about the cardinal once speaking at a Catholic parish which had a huge banner outside that read "God Is Other People." Cardinal Dulles had wished he had a black marker because he very much wanted to add a comma after "Other."

Someone at that Catholic church was "mistaking the creature for the Creator," Fr. Neuhaus explains. God, for them, "is *useful* for achieving other purposes." (The good news is that even with more than a few bestselling atheist tracts, there is a lot of religiosity in the air. The bad news is it's not always all quite right.)

I don't know if that banner is still up there but I do know that these men of truth are now gone. They're not the only ones we've lost. And they won't be the only ones.

We're left without these wise men to call for advice, whatever's going on in the news today. But, this is, of course, exactly what's supposed to happen. They weren't living to be in this world forever. They were living for Someone and somewhere else. With His truth.

That's what *American Babylon: Notes of a Christian Exile* is all about. It's an acknowledgement that we live in a flawed world. But it's a world to be actively engaged in, on our road to eternal salvation. We won't spend eternity here, but we have work here before we go.

Neuhaus belonged in this world for his 72 years, always with another destination in mind. (Friends tell how, in his last days, if he couldn't do much, praying the Office would be his

priority; when a mutual friend told me he would wake up in the morning and read, among other things, *National Review Online*, another friend, a priest, quickly corrected my pride: Fr. Neuhaus's breviary was his beginning and end.) And it is fitting then that Fr. Neuhaus's parting work is written for those who belong; "for those who accept, and accept with gratitude, their creaturely existence within the scandal of particularity that is their place in a world far short of the best of all possible worlds. This world, for all its well-earned dissatisfactions, is worthy of our love and allegiance. It is a self-flattering conceit to think we deserve a better world. What's wrong with this one begins with us. And yet we are dissatisfied. Our restless discontent takes the form not of a complaint but of hope. There is a promise not yet fulfilled. One lives in discontented gratitude for the promise, which is to say one lives in hope."

That, of course, is a "hope" of another world, not that which we hear so much about in the political sphere.

American Babylon—and living with that hope—is about "a way of being in a world that is not yet the world for which we hope. This means exploring the possibilities and temptations one confronts as a citizen of a country that is prone to mistaking itself for the destination. It means also a cultivated skepticism about the idea of historical progress, especially moral progress, when that idea defies or denies the limits of history upon which our humanity depends." It also means not moving into a ghetto. Engagement is a crucial ingredient in this world; "engagement with some of the more troublesome, and more interesting, citizens of this present Babylon."

At the same time, Neuhaus is an avowed fan of both his adopted country (he was born in Canada) and city (he confesses to "being something of a chauvinist about" New York City, something this New York native can appreciate!). "America," he says, "is the most successful political experiment in human history." It's "our homeland, and, as the prophet Jeremiah

says, in its welfare is our welfare. America is also—and history testifies that this is too easily forgotten—a foreign country.” The U.S. is “for better and worse, the place of our pilgrimage through time toward home.” Just remember, “it is still for the time being.”

So how do we live as Christian Americans, never forgetting while we’re full citizens of one, we’re aiming for another? For one, “through our tears, sing the songs of Zion in a foreign land.” Because there will be tears.

Neuhaus warns: “We should at least be open to the possibility that we are today witnessing not moral progress but a dramatic moral regression. While, as we have seen, practitioners in the hard sciences express a new humility about the limits of their knowledge and control, many who work in the field of ethical theory and practice exhibit an extraordinary self-confidence, bordering on and sometimes crossing the line into the vice of hubris.”

By hubris he means, for instance, Peter Singer, the infanticide defender on the faculty of Princeton University. The most important thing to realize about Singer—and Neuhaus reminds us of this—is that he is “no marginal figure in our intellectual culture.” For one thing, he authored the main piece on the history of ethics—15 pages worth of “ethics” (scare quotes are mine not Father’s)—in the 15th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Neuhaus writes, “From Confucius and Aristotle, to Maimonides and Aquinas, through David Hume and Kant to Peter Singer, the article traces the liberation of moral theory and practice from any truths that pose an obstacle to our will to power and control. The gist of it is caught in the title of Singer’s 1995 book, *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics*.” Singer welcomes the collapse and the Brave New World he’s rushing us toward, one impressionable young mind at a time.

Considering Fr. Neuhaus died not long after Christmas, the

timing of the book is perfect for us. He demonstrates some prescience, writing: "Among the most glaring indications that we are in exile is the necessity of contending for the most basic truth of the dignity of the human person. If we don't get that right, we are unlikely to get right many other questions...."

His book was released around the same time that President Barack Obama lifted the ban on federal funding of embryo-destroying stem-cell research. And here we are, in the month of President Barack Obama's commencement address at the University of Notre Dame. Notre Dame struggles with the "American Babylon" dilemma as much as any individual. The nation's most prominent Catholic university should consider itself a South Bend exile, a training ground in being good citizens on the road to the City of God. Instead, they're flirting with becoming just any other institution, one where truth is a debate, rather than a reality.

Notre Dame should exist to live in communion with the truth. That's "the life of the Church," living "in communion with Christ, who says of himself, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'" There, "we experience a foretaste, a prolepsis, of the community that is to be." The Eucharist is the key to that, in which "we experience the genuinely 'new politics' of the new polis that is the City of God. But, still surrounded by "the ruins of Babel," that is "only a foretaste that whets our appetite for, and sacramentally sustains us on the way toward, that final destination."

The solution to the Notre Dame problem is in *American Babylon*. They have the Eucharist. "As Christians and as Americans, in this our awkward duality of citizenship, we seek to be faithful in a time not of our choosing but of our testing...never tiring in proposing to the world a more excellent way...[as] through our laughter and tears, we see and hail from afar the New Jerusalem and know that it is all time toward home."

As dual citizens, we aspire to excellence, but not at the expense of the most excellent. At the end of the semester, Notre Dame must ask itself, "what is our final destination?" Is it White House affirmation or the New Jerusalem? There's nothing wrong with the former, but it can never be at the expense of our quest for the latter.

Shortly after *American Babylon* hit bookshelves, New York's new archbishop, Timothy Dolan, was installed. An Associated Press write-up of an interview declared that Dolan "will challenge the idea that the Roman Catholic Church is unenlightened because it opposes gay marriage and abortion." He, in other words, won't change his values because of what a court, party, or even consensus has decided is their truth. To these developments, believers must remain firm. As Neuhaus puts it, "There is considerable truth in the observation that politics is primarily a function of culture, that at the heart of culture is morality, and that at the heart of morality are those commanding truths typically associated with religion. I expect it is true in every society, but it is certainly true in this society, that politics and religion can be distinguished but never separated."

Or, as Dolan put it to the Associated Press: "Periodically, we Catholics have to stand up and say, 'Enough,'" he said. "The church as a whole still calls out to what is noble in us."

One imagines Fr. Neuhaus, a former Lutheran pastor who came to love the Catholic Church, warmly greeting Archbishop Dolan, offering him a drink, and applauding his call to humble nobility. It's the call Neuhaus answered in his journey through this world. Neuhaus can't offer the new archbishop a drink, but the existence of *American Babylon* will make Dolan's job just a little bit easier.

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PSYCHOLOGY'S RELIGION PROBLEM

Pauline Magee-Egan

Psychology's War on Religion, edited by Nicholas Cummings, et al. (Phoenix, Arizona: Zeig, Tucker & Theisen, 2009) Order online at www.zeigtucker.com or call 1-800-666-2211

The editors of this important volume have assembled the writings of various experts to comment on several religions and the impact of psychology's stand on religious beliefs. The collection maintains that psychology has systematically attacked all religions, without exception.

In the introductory chapter, the editors offer an accurate account of the movement within the profession, as exhibited by the American Psychological Association (APA), and the way religious values and beliefs have been attacked. The statements made by the APA have been influential in the resignation of psychologists who practice their religion. The APA does not speak for all psychologists, and in recent years it has introduced outrageous positions when it comes to abortion and homosexuality. A supposedly professional organization has been enlisted in the anti-religious movement evident in our culture. Indeed, years ago I resigned from this once professional organization since their professed beliefs were directly antithetical to mine, and to my training as a Catholic psychologist.

This professional organization, controlled by leftists, lacks sensitivity towards its membership and the patients who are subjected to their anti-religious viewpoints. The chapter titled, "The Culture Wars and Psychology's Alliance," written by William T. O'Donohue, offers a great summary of the ways

the profession has been politicized. Psychology, because it is a social science, requires sensitivity and objectivity, but too often it not only lacks understanding, it demonstrates a belligerence that typifies our culture.

In setting the stage for the very title of the book, the editors have emphasized that our culture today is in turmoil, especially with regards to ethics. Psychology has literally declared war on religion. They wisely point to the specific issues which are continually being fought: abortion; homosexuality; gay rights; the status of women; ethical absolutism versus ethical relativity; the definition of normative sexual behavior; the definition of mental health; bioethics/stem cell research; the death penalty; creationism, intelligent design and evolution. These issues are cause for concern because they affect everything from law to education.

Why the attack on religion? Logically, they maintain, if standards of morality are attacked, then we can live in a world which knows no barrier or parameters. We can throw out the golden rule, values, commandments and any laws which we don't like. No wonder ethics is viewed with askance. Indeed, ethical relativism has crept into business and politics, contaminating our thinking. Such "erudite" thinking is exactly what is happening in our professions and particularly the psychology profession.

In the chapter on paradoxical relationships, Nicholas and Janet Cummings (father and daughter) illustrate the historical beginnings of the founders of psychology. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, we had G. Stanley Hall and William James, both of whom had deep spiritual roots. Together with Hugo Munsterberg, a physician who taught philosophy, they viewed religion as part of psychology. Those familiar with the history of psychology in the United States know that many graduate programs grew out of philosophy departments. Little was anticipated regarding the tremendous upheaval that was about to take place in the APA.

In the 1950s many Catholic psychologists felt that the divide between the professional organization, and what they ascribed to, was widening. Various schools of thought regarding psychoanalysis injected thoughts of abandoning religion and its tenets, finding them “infantile and neurotic.” It was around this time that the Reverend Father Bier, S.J. formed the American Catholic Psychological Association. Meetings were held at its national conference on issues regarding values, ethics and religion. It was a safe haven for those of us who did not agree with many of the positions the APA was taking.

It wasn't until the 1970s that the APA moved to attack “faith-based” programs in clinical psychology. A subtle but effective movement was launched. Since then psychology as a social science has struggled to identify itself. Abandoning its philosophical and spiritual roots, and trying to represent itself as the scientific study of human beings, psychology has become a conflicted field of study. In fact, psychology has had an identity crisis and it is still persisting in its endeavors to emulate science. The key element here is that science deals with objective truth, whereas psychology deals with aspects of it.

There are several chapters on the conflict between religion and psychology. For example, homosexuality was eliminated as an official “psychiatric disorder” by the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. An informative chapter on the problem of religious gays written by Michael Lavin clearly wrestles with the problem of the dictates of the APA on homosexuality and the subsequent counseling and treatment of people who are inclined towards this behavior. The difference lies in the belief that homosexuality is a “behavioral” issue.

Transformational counseling has entered the field in the past few years. Not content with stating that homosexuality is not a disorder, the leftists have damned the idea of anyone who serves as a counselor who might support the transformation of a homosexual to switch to a heterosexual life. Lavin stresses

that good counseling is predicated on sensitivity and respect for the religious beliefs of patients; the therapist should not impose his beliefs but rather respect the patient's beliefs and help him in dealing with whatever conflicts that he may have. The Catholic Church recognizes that homosexuality exists but emphasizes the need for chastity in regulating one's life: All human beings possess the free will to change their behavior. Other religions have different judgment calls but the essential thought is to recognize what part religion plays in one's life and support a change in behavior if it is disrupting to the person.

The chapter reviewing the battle regarding sexuality by Mark Yarhouse is a marvelous treatise on the impact of policy throughout the psychological profession. The line has been drawn on anyone talking about abstinence; the counseling of post-abortion women; the discussion of alternatives to leading a "gay" lifestyle, etc. Even the discussion of child abuse is now called "adult-sex" relations. The policies made by working groups, or "task forces," within the APA and the American Psychiatric Association, evince an almost total neglect of religion and its impact on behavior. Furthermore, graduate and undergraduate students today are exposed to derogatory commentaries about religious beliefs. Some might even be denied entrance into a graduate program if an investigation suggests they are "too religious." The pomposity and general bias of the left has invaded the ivy halls so much so that the normal candidate who belongs to an authentic religion feels alien to what is being taught.

A scholarly and serious treatment on the subject of "Judaism and Psychotherapy" by Dr. Isaschar Eshet introduces the reader to a contrast to what he refers to as two "world views," i.e. the Jewish worldview and the worldview of psychotherapy. In Israel, he says, most of the psychotherapists belong to the secular leftist intellectual group. He then launches into a discussion of the basic beliefs of Judaism. To his credit, he

emphasizes the need for mutual respect of the two worldviews. Dr. Eshet hopes that the "evolving psychotherapy can also provide one with tools to unravel hints from the divine worldview."

In the chapter on the "War on Catholicism," William Donohue of the Catholic League gives a very well researched synopsis of the history of psychology and the evolution of the distrust that it shows for Catholicism. Occasionally injecting his usual humor and insights, he points to the very people responsible for such chaos in the 1950s and 60s (which I well remember). He spares no one in his ridicule regarding the research that was done, misinterpreted and taken as solid truth, taking particular aim at the work of Maslow and Rogers. Unsuspecting priests and nuns welcomed the views of these two psychologists with open arms, much to the detriment of their religious orders (some no longer exist).

Fear not, however, because Donohue always sees the bright side and illustrates all the positives that are present in what the Catholic Church has effected in our present culture. The aid that is given to the sick, troubled and least among us is endless and reflective of the generosity of those who believe in our faith. This is well stated and worthy of note despite the trashing the Church receives on a daily basis; the author is well situated to see this happen every day.

The chapter on Protestantism, by Cummings and Cummings, shows that "one size fits none." What they mean is that there is a "buffet" of different beliefs, tenets, and values among the various denominations. Disarray is evident, and liberal thought has been injected into all the different churches.

Subsequent chapters dealing with Mormonism which has been attacked by the APA as a religion, exposes the outright trashing of the beliefs which some 13 million people follow. The bigotry of the APA which is fully documented in this chapter is as provocative as the injustice is blatant. Dr. A.

Dean Byrd does an admirable job with his research and fact finding here.

Subsequent chapters dealing with a thorough synopsis of Islam and Buddhism illustrates some interesting concepts. Psychology has been kind to Islam perhaps out of political correctness. Islamic beliefs differ in terms of two perspectives, namely the fundamentalist and the extremist. Both viewed, psychology students may very well open up an interesting area for scholarly study in the future.

For the general reader who relishes information on all religions and their basic beliefs this book is invaluable. It is well organized and the contributors are obviously scholars in their respective fields. This is a "must read"!

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Treason of the Intellectuals

By: Joseph Varacalli

Anne Hendershott, *Status Envy: The Politics of Catholic Higher Education*, Transaction Publishers

In a recent e-mail sent to me, a distinguished Catholic priest and well-known mover and shaker in Catholic circles made reference to "the forty years war (1965-2005) for the Catholic Church in America that was concluded with a definite victory in 2005 with the election of Pope Benedict XVI." Father C. John McCloskey followed, "The years ahead are just mop-up

operations." I hope, of course, that my friend and colleague is correct. However, after reading Anne Hendershott's superb *Status Envy: The Politics of Catholic Higher Education*, I'm convinced that, at least in the realm of Catholic higher education, something stronger than mops will be necessary to clean up the spiritual and intellectual mess.

In her lucidly written, intellectually rigorous, and compelling narrative, sociologist Hendershott objectively documents and brilliantly analyzes a fundamental shift, most prominent since the mid-1960s, in the frame of reference and subsequent activities of most Catholic scholars and administrators involved in Catholic higher education in the United States. Promoted by vested political, prestige, and economic interests and inextricably intertwined with the mutually influencing realities of status envy, a crisis of faith, and the (illusory) quest for an autonomous individualism, this shift has entailed a rejection of Catholic informed social thought with its application to the broader world to the reduction and cutting down of the Catholic intellectual heritage to secular and politically correct modes of thought. That this rejection of the riches of the Catholic heritage continues mostly unabated in the face of a growing recognition on the part of even the non-Catholic community of the intellectual and moral bankruptcy of what passes for formal education in the society-at-large only adds incredulity as a response and the proverbial salt to the wound. Ironically, at this most perilous time in the history of the American Republic, when Catholic education could have been expected to have articulated a reasoned and empirically based response and critique to the degenerative developments in the larger culture, all that one sees and hears is a Catholic fifth rank marching to the drumbeat of secularists against the Catholic Church and the remnants of Western civilization. As Father Benedict Groeschel of the Cardinal Newman Society has recently stated, for serious Catholics devoted to the pursuit of truth and sound scholarship, "it's time to take off the

gloves; we can't endure another decade of phony Catholic education."

What are just a few of the issues broached in Hendershott's magisterial treatise? She analyzes such topics as the nature of the culture war raging within the Church; the general progressive Catholic misinterpretation of the documents of the Second Vatican Council; the claim of progressive theologians that they represent an "alternative magisterium"; the impact of Monsignor John Tracy Ellis' now (in)famous 1955 article, "Catholics and the Intellectual Life"; the 1967 Land O'Lakes Declaration demanding an unrestricted "institutional autonomy" (save from government authorities) and "academic freedom" (save from the "politically correct"); the large scale rejection and ignoring of both the spirit and law of *Ex corde Ecclesiae*; the defining down of authentic Catholic identity in part through widespread changes in the wording of mission statements; the discrimination against orthodox Catholic scholars in hiring practices at Catholic colleges; the reduction of the overall Catholic vision to the institutionalization of a this-worldly social justice, as defined by differing secular interest groups through variations of the "theology of liberation" (socialist, feminist, homosexualist); the de-catholicization of the Jesuit community in the U.S.; the impact of now dominant secular feminist and active homosexual movements within Catholic colleges pushing for support on such issues as legalized abortion, women's ordination, and same sex marriage; the role of secular accrediting agencies in fostering the assimilation of Catholic colleges along lines acceptable to the current cultural gatekeepers and the need, conversely, to develop authentically Catholic accrediting agencies; the perceived (and artificially contrived) need to officially secularize colleges in order to receive government subsidies; the ineffective role played by most college trustees in guaranteeing an authentic Catholic education; the palpable animus of progressives against the pontificates of John Paul

II and Benedict XVI and, conversely, Benedict XVI's call for the "evangelical pruning" of dissenting and overtly nominal Catholic colleges; among many more.

Professor Hendershott is quite upfront in "naming names," but is always honest and objective in discussing the key actors who played such a major role in the revolt of Catholic higher education against the Magisterial authority of the Catholic Church. She accurately recounts the words and actions of the dissidents that speak volumes in terms of their philosophies and programs promoted. Readers will find her volume replete with the names, among seemingly countless others, of such progressives as Father Theodore Hesburgh, Rosemary Radford Reuther, Father Robert Drinan, Mary Daly, Charles Curran, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Father Richard McBrien, Monika Hellwig, Bernard Cooke, Father Roger Haight, Francis Kissling, Daniel McGuire, and Sister Jacqueline Grennan.

One very important part of Professor Hendershott's analysis is her incorporation of the "actionist" and "social movement" perspectives found within the corpus of sociological thought. Hendershott is *not* arguing that the secularizing movement within Catholic higher education is merely the result of large scale, anonymous, supposedly inexorable external forces of social change. Rather she makes the case that what has transpired in Catholic higher education is largely the result of the quite conscious and calculating plans and actions on the part of active dissenters who promote, in sociologist Peter L. Berger's phrase, "an internal secularization from within." (For more on this theme, see my own books, *Bright Promise, Failed Community: Catholics and the American Public Order*, and *The Catholic Experience in America*.) The Catholic Left has successfully executed its long march through many of the organizations of the Church, none more so than in her educational institutions.

Professor Hendershott, as such, offers serious Catholics some hope for the future of both the Church and American

civilization through her discussion of the Catholic educational counter-reformation now starting to make its presence felt. As the author points out, just as dissenters have brought Catholic institutions of Catholic higher education down, the concerted planning and activities of orthodox Catholics can and are involved in a form of “counter-insurgency,” i.e., with the grace of God, building up from the ashes. Encouraged, in part, through singular individuals stepping up to the plate in the Church’s time of need and by such Catholic academic groups as the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, the Cardinal Newman Society, and the Society of Catholic Social Scientists, this orthodox Catholic counter-reformation has involved the recapturing of some long-established Catholic colleges, the creation of new ones, and the relative strengthening of others. These colleges, counter to the typical progressive caricature, are retreating neither from the world nor from non-Catholic ideas. What they are doing, however, is engaging in the evangelization of the broader culture and providing articulate Catholic and natural law responses to, and critiques of, the cognitive and normative claims of secular and non-Catholic worldviews. An excellent resource on the topic of the turn back to orthodoxy in Catholic higher education is the *Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College*.

One particular vignette in the volume deserves special attention. It involves the following claim made by Monsignor George A. Kelly regarding the attitude and response of Father Theodore Hesburgh to the non-compliance by Catholic progressives to *Ex corde Ecclesiae*. Hendershott recounts the story: “A prominent Notre Dame official went to Father Hesburgh as to a mentor, worrying that the implementation of the Vatican document *Ex corde Ecclesiae* might bring the American bishops into the governance of the University. The retired president consoled his worried friend, ending his counsel with this message: ‘What is the worst thing that can happen to us? John Paul II will tell the world that Notre Dame

is not a Catholic University. Who will believe him?'"

In one of his many classic books, *Battle for the American Church Revisited*, Monsignor Kelly gives what should be the standard orthodox Catholic response to Father Hesburgh's arrogance and religious disobedience. For Monsignor Kelly, "(Catholic) college and university presidents should be given a fixed time to indicate their acceptance of the norms (associated with *Ex corde Ecclesiae*) and a reasonable period to adjust their catalogs and operating procedures accordingly... Institutions that do not choose these ordinances are to be denied use of the name *Catholic*. The faithful are entitled to know the names of those institutions accredited by bishops as Catholic. The Church may lose a goodly number of colleges in the process. Let them go." In other words, the Bishops of Catholic America should call the bluffs of many in the progressive Catholic educational establishment and willingly accept any subsequent institutional losses. The Bishops and all concerned Catholics then should proceed unabated with the resurrection of Catholic higher education—for the sake of individual souls, the health of the Church, and the welfare of civilization.

May the publication of this book give substantial hope and inspiration to the remaining and future defenders of the Catholic ideals of the integration of faith and reason and orthodoxy in religious commitment with true academic excellence. I end this review, as does Professor Hendershott, with reference to the vision of John Henry Newman, who, in his *Idea of the University*, stated that the University must be "the seat of wisdom, the light of the world, and the minister of the faith."

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THE TRAGEDY OF POPULATION CONTROL

By: Susan A. Fani

Steven Mosher, *Population Control: Real Costs, Illusory Benefits*, Transaction Publishers

Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

Steven W. Mosher's book explains the tragedy of the population control movement and the need to prevent depopulation as a result of the mass conversion of the West into believing that the world is dangerously overpopulated. Matthew Connelly's book addresses the "politics of population" by exploring the history of the movement, its coercive methods and the groups, primarily the Catholic Church, that challenged the movement's ideas. Both men expose the terrible things done by those claiming to improve the world through population control. Both authors oppose coercive reproductive measures used to compel people to reduce fertility. Where Mosher explores the personal, economic and demographic disaster the population control movement has wrought, Connelly attempts to equate the pro-life and pro-choice factions as equally reprehensible, thus missing the lesson to be learned from the failures of the population control movement.

Mosher, the leading expert on population issues, sets the record straight about alleged overpopulation. In his well-researched book, he makes the important point that, due to decreasing death rates as a result of improved healthcare around the world, there are more people around because we are

living longer. At the same time, the birth rate has steadily declined. As he points out: "Our numbers didn't double because we suddenly started breeding like rabbits. They doubled because *we stopped dying like flies*. Fertility was falling...from an average of 6 children per woman in 1960 to only 2.6 by 2002."

As a result of the brainwashing that people have undergone, what awaits society is depopulation, which will result in many older people being supported by increasingly fewer young people. And the baby boomers and their children will have no one to blame but themselves. Women are putting off marriage and children and in many Western countries the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman is not being met. The fertility rates are even going down in many developing countries, according to research by the United Nations. With people living longer and fewer children being born to take care of their elders, a preventable disaster is coming.

Whereas the developed world chose to be largely barren, the developing world had it forced upon them. "The United States and other developed countries consciously set out in the 1960s to engineer a radical decline in Third World fertility. Weak nations, dependent...for financial aid, military security, or access to markets, were bullied or suborned into mandating anti-natal measures." Providing financial and other aid to developing countries in exchange for controlling birthrates via contraception, sterilization and abortion not only shows the dangerous priorities of the population controllers, but has also led to coercive measures by the recipient nations to insure that the aid keeps coming from the West.

The focus on preventing births also led to misappropriation of aid that would be better spent on improving healthcare for the poor. A case in point is money spent on malaria. This is a treatable disease that is devastating to those who cannot afford the medicine that could save their lives. But money that is poured into reproductive health measures dwarfs the

amount spent on treatment of malaria. The United States Agency for International Development, which spends so much time and money on working with developing countries to get their citizens sterilized or on contraception, decreased its funds for malaria treatment from \$50 million in 1985 to \$10 million in 1994. However, over \$400 million was provided in 1994 alone for "fertility reduction" programs.

Mosher points out that overpopulation has often been blamed for widespread societal ills, and those problems are considered by those in the movement as sufficient justification for pushing this agenda, at the expense of much needed basic healthcare. The population controllers have also justified their massive funding for reducing fertility by hiding behind lofty goals such as advancing women's rights, improving the environment, and raising the standard of living for the poor. However, these claims are belied by the fact that the movement measures success by the amount of people, called acceptors, using contraceptives and sterilization with the result of fewer babies being born in developing nations. Those on the receiving end of these programs, Mosher observes, are justifiably upset that the Western world is targeting them for elimination. Many people have rebelled only to be forced to have their most basic rights violated, most notably in China and India.

Mosher's justifiably negative view of population control measures is shared by Michael Connelly who agrees that many countries have participated in coercive population control programs instead of addressing underlying political and economic problems. Unlike Mosher, he objects to the actions of the Catholic Church, which he accuses of promoting patriarchy at the expense of the faithful. In doing so, his detailed history goes off track but he nevertheless manages to show the leading role the Church has had in promoting the sanctity of life.

While Connelly challenges the claims of the population

controllers, he sympathizes with their intentions. He argues that population did seem to be growing out of control in the twentieth century and those who were concerned tried to alleviate the problem in ways that often were coercive and ultimately unnecessary. Fertility was decreasing despite the expensive programs that showed no evidence of success. He concludes that birthrates were falling because it was individual women who decided the number of children they wanted. "It is therefore the emancipation of women, not population control, that has remade humanity." Thus, he credits education for reduced birthrates and he advocates that women and men individually should decide whether or not to have children.

An obvious objection by Connelly through his thorough documentation of the population control movement is how racist it has been. Particularly in the early and mid-twentieth century, white liberals fought for population control measures against non-white people for fear they would overwhelm the West with their numbers. In a short time span, the idea that non-whites were breeding and had to be stopped for the sake of mankind took hold. Unlike the Catholic Church, which values every human life, these zealots devalued those who did not look or act like they did. The family planning movement increasingly became coercive when the population controllers did not see the results they wanted. Connelly states, "The atmosphere of alarm, even hysteria, surrounding the population issue made coercive policies seem inevitable."

Connelly labels as a "fatal misconception" the idea that the population controllers know the interests of the people better than they do themselves. He rightly chides them for sponsoring coercive measures, but his charge that the Catholic Church—because it is opposed to abortion—is no better, makes for a strained analogy. It is one thing to champion a reduction in the non-white population; it is quite another to champion the rights of the unborn.

He is concerned that a new wave of population control measures may be implemented in light of the fact that populations are rapidly falling. He is also worried about the effect of sex selection abortions, particularly in India and China, because they may promote patriarchy since girls are targeted for elimination. His solution to these problems is what he considers true reproductive freedom for the individual. "Those who consider themselves pro-life must eventually realize that making people breed at *any* price cheapens all of our lives. And those who consider themselves pro-choice would be in a stronger position if they were at the forefront in opposing all manipulative and coercive policies designed to control populations." Connelly's false comparisons between the Roman Catholic Church and the militant population controllers is what undermines his otherwise well-documented history of the fertility reduction movement.

Connelly fails to appreciate that the Catholic Church teaches human life is sacred and must be respected. Understanding the worth of each child of God, Pope Paul VI, in his prescient 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, called married people to be open to human life:

"Responsible parenthood, as we use the term here, has one further essential aspect of paramount importance. It concerns the objective moral order which was established by God, and of which a right conscience is the true interpreter. In a word, the exercise of responsible parenthood requires that husband and wife, keeping a right order of priorities, recognize their own duties toward God, themselves, their families and human society."

What Connelly calls true reproductive freedom is just the opposite; it is the Catholic Church that points out that freedom is achieved by living in accord with God's will. Connelly is advocating exchanging coercive population control measures for family planning as a result of decisions made by individuals. However, those decisions can only be moral if the

choices people make are in accord with God's law. Roman Catholics are instructed to have properly formed consciences to enable them to make these vital decisions.

In summary, Mosher's book is an eye-opening, informative educational tool that is worth a close examination by those who want to learn what is needed to reverse the rapid decline in population. Mosher argues that the United States government must stop funding population control measures. What the West needs to focus on is reversing the demographic suicide now taking place. Connelly's book, with its unfair and defective comparisons between population controllers and the Catholic Church, is one to skip. His inability to see that the Catholic Church is trying to help humanity and not hurt it smacks of political correctness.

Susan A. Fani is the Director of Communications for the Catholic League.

HITLER'S REAL RELIGIOUS ADVISOR

By: William Doyno, Jr.

***Icon of Evil: Hitler's Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam* by David G. Dalin and John F. Rothmann (Random House)**

Two years ago, Pope Benedict XVI delivered an address in Regensburg, Germany on the relationship between faith and reason. That speech, which challenged elements of the Islamic world, created a firestorm of controversy, subjecting the pope to insults, abuse and even threats. But a considerable number of people—and not just Catholics—rose to the pontiff's

defense. When the dust settled, even some who had rushed to criticize Benedict realized that he had actually done something important—and brave—opening up a long-overdue debate.

What the pope did, at Regensburg, was spark a public dialogue on a very touchy, even taboo subject: what happens to a religion—in this case, Islam—when it detaches itself from reason, and succumbs to intolerance and violence.

Since 9/11, the danger of a militant, irrational, hyper-politicized Islam has taken center stage; but the history of that radical ideology remains largely unknown. Lawrence Wright's *The Looming Tower* is an excellent primer; but there have been subsequent, more focused studies on the people who brought this plague into the modern world. Among the best is *Icon of Evil: Hitler's Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam*. Written by Rabbi David Dalin (author of the bestselling book *The Myth of Hitler's Pope*) and John Rothmann, a teacher and political commentator in San Francisco, it is a powerful and unforgettable portrait of Haj Amin al-Husseini.

Though unknown to many, al-Husseini was one of the most influential Arab figures of the twentieth century—and not for the good. Born in 1895, he grew up in Jerusalem and Egypt, where he attended the prestigious Al-Azhar University before dropping out. Though undereducated, he was a skilled self-promoter, cultivating an image of himself as a leading spiritual thinker. Dalin and Rothmann write:

“Al-Husseini never completed his academic studies at Al-Azhar University, a fact that would remain a source of controversy for his Muslim critics over the years. Since he'd dropped out of Al-Azhar without completing a degree, or the course of study necessary for ordination for a Muslim cleric and legal scholar, his Muslim opponents were able to belittle his academic credentials and maintain that he did not have sufficient accreditation to hold the position of mufti and

spiritual leader in the Muslim religious community. Throughout his public career, al-Husseini tended to reinvent his own autobiography, claiming credentials and professional experience that he did not in fact possess.”

It is to the credit of the Muslim intellectual community that they were the first to recognize al-Husseini as a con man. Alas, before any of this criticism could take hold, geopolitical events intervened. World War I broke out, and al-Husseini became an officer in the Turkish army, enabling him to build up his thin resume, then parlay that into an ambitious political career. After the war, he returned to his native Jerusalem and began agitating against the British Empire (which then controlled Palestine), developing an intense brand of Arab nationalism.

“A charismatic and spellbinding orator,” write Dalin and Rothmann, “he [al-Husseini] mesmerized crowds on the street corners and outside the mosques of his native city and soon attracted a significant political following.” A frequent contributor to influential Arab journals, he developed a hostility toward Englishmen and Jews—the former, because he thought them imperialists; the latter, because of their desire for a Jewish state in Palestine. Al-Husseini was not the only Arab leader who held such views, but he was certainly among the most militant: unlike moderate nationalists, who were ready to accept a Jewish state, al-Husseini rejected all such compromise, and maintained that “any cooperation with the Jews was out of the question.”

Despite his reputation for militancy, the British appointed al-Husseini the new mufti of Jerusalem, in hopes of appeasing Palestinian activists. It was a move they would come to regret.

In the interwar years, the mufti, far from serving the interests of the Middle East, fanned the flames of hatred against anyone who opposed his militant designs. His rhetoric

became Hitlerian. The Jewish community was the mufti's prime target—he even sponsored pogroms against them—but he didn't hesitate to persecute mainstream Muslims if they got in his path, either. By the late 1930's, al-Husseini had become such an incendiary figure that the British moved to quarantine him, but he fled, eventually ending up in Nazi Germany, where he embraced Adolf Hitler.

The heart of this book concerns the mufti's relations with the Third Reich, and how he helped lay the groundwork for the toxic ideologies that still haunt the Arab world. Dalin and Rothmann argue that al-Husseini not only fell under the spell of Nazism, but influenced it as well. When al-Husseini finally met Hitler in person, in late 1941, all differences between the two were put aside for a common cause: the elimination of the Jewish race. The details that emerged from that fateful meeting, as documented in this book, are chilling. The authors observe that the two unlikely allies eventually became "partners in genocide."

Icon of Evil is not the first work to expose the Nazi-al-Husseini connection, but it is the most accessible and convincing. Over the years, a number of commentators have tried to cast doubt about the closeness of the mufti's relationship with Hitler, and/or his involvement in the Holocaust. But the evidence laid out in *Icon of Evil*—shocking wartime photographs, al-Husseini's correspondence with leading Nazis, and newly released archives—prove he was hardly a passing acquaintance. Al-Husseini was more deeply involved with the Third Reich's war crimes than any comparable non-German figure. And the evidence of his guilt continues to mount.

In 2006, for example, two German scholars published a study revealing a Nazi plan to slaughter half a million Jews living in wartime Palestine—a project that was to be carried out with the enthusiastic cooperation of al-Husseini: "The grand mufti of Jerusalem," concluded the study, "was the most important

collaborator with the Nazis on the Arab side and an uncompromising anti-Semite.” Only the military successes of the Allies prevented the Holocaust from moving to the Holy Land. But al-Husseini’s evil succeeded elsewhere. At the invitation of Nazi henchman Heinrich Himmler, al-Husseini actually helped establish a Muslim Waffen SS unit that slaughtered 90 percent of Bosnian Jewry; and it was the mufti who, advising the Germans, nixed a 1943 plan that could have transferred 4,000 Jewish children to safety.

How, you might ask, could a spiritual leader, one supposedly devoted to a religion of peace, possibly collaborate with mass-murderers? He did it with an ease that frightens. Al-Husseini simply twisted his faith and read into it everything he wanted, much like the politically-driven jihadists do today, distorting Islam.

Despite his collaboration with Nazi war crimes, al-Husseini escaped justice after World War II, and continued to influence other Arab leaders—among them the Islamist Sayyid Qutb (a forerunner of Osama bin Laden); Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO; and Iraq’s General Khairallah Talfah, an uncle of Saddam Hussein. In one of the book’s most gripping sections, Dalin and Rothmann show how Talfah conveyed the mufti’s teachings and techniques to his nephew, poisoning the future Iraqi dictator with Nazi-like tendencies, which he made extensive use of later on.

By the time he died in 1974, al-Husseini had left behind a legacy of prejudice and bloodshed like few others. His life and writings continue to motivate the leaders of Hamas, Hezbollah and al-Qaeda, and his followers continue to read and reprint two of al-Husseini’s favorite books: Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, and the notorious anti-Semitic fabrication, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. That his modern followers often deny the reality of the Holocaust—which al-Husseini actually participated in—is another irony to the mufti’s dark story.

The book's conclusion is striking and direct: "As the founding father of radical Islamic anti-Semitism in the twentieth century, al-Husseini remains the inextricable and enduring link between the old anti-Semitism of pre-Holocaust Europe and the Jew hatred and Holocaust denial that now permeates the Muslim world."

Icon of Evil will doubtlessly be assailed by the "politically correct" community for bringing this story to light. Some will say its conclusions are too sweeping and harsh. But such accusations will be unfair—as misguided as those launched against Benedict's Regensburg address. Dalin and Rothmann abhor prejudice of every kind; and are careful about focusing exclusively on al-Husseini and those who share his militant mindset: in no way do they seek to impugn all Muslims, many of whom reject Islamic radicalism—and often fall victim to it. In fact, properly understood, *Icon of Evil* is a plea to reject fanatical ideologies of every sort—not just those which pervert Islam—and as such, is very much in harmony with Pope Benedict's efforts to unite the world's religions against evil.

"In a world threatened by sinister and indiscriminate forms of violence," said the pope recently, speaking to an Islamic group, "the unified voice of religious people urges nations and communities to resolve conflict through peaceful means and with full regard for human dignity." In response, Sheik Mohamadu Saleem, executive member of the Australian National Imams Council, replied: "Muslims should become more inclusive and universal in their understanding of their religions. At the same time, significant segments of the Christian and other religious communities should overcome their misconceptions and prejudices of Islam and Muslims. If Muslims, Christians and other faith communities reach out to one another and build bridges rather than erect barriers, the whole of humanity will rejoice forever."

I am sure the authors of this important book would

wholeheartedly agree.

William Doyno, Jr. prepared the "Annotated Bibliography of Works on Pope Pius XII, the Second World War and the Holocaust" that appears in The Pius War: Response to the Critics of Pius XII, edited by Joseph Bottum and David Dalin. He is also a contributing editor to Inside the Vatican.

A CATHOLIC BISHOP SHOWS THE WAY

By: Kenneth D. Whitehead

Chaput, Charles J., O.F.M. Cap., Render Unto Caesar: Catholic Witness and American Public Life, New York: Doubleday, 2008.

Denver Archbishop Charles J. Chaput is one of the American Catholic bishops today who most nearly approximates the ideal of what the Second Vatican Council said that a Catholic bishop ought to be, namely, one who presides "in God's stead over the flock of which they are the shepherds in that they are teachers of doctrine, ministers of sacred worship and holders of office in government" (*Lumen Gentium*, 20). In the Church, it is "in the person of the bishop," the Council further taught, "that the Lord Jesus Christ, supreme high priest, is present in the midst of the faithful" (*Ibid.*). That's "in God's stead" and Jesus Christ *present* "in the person of the bishop"—obviously, a very tall order!

Archbishop Chaput was originally a religious order priest, a Capuchin, and he has admirably filled, in a distinctly Franciscan fashion, the multiple roles that his episcopal office lays upon him. His tenure in Denver has been marked by

intelligence, vigor, and zeal. He has emerged not only unscathed, but with his reputation enhanced from the unfortunate vicissitudes of the past few years in the Church. But it is the difficult situation in which the Church in the United States finds herself today—in which a secular culture openly hostile to Christianity now finds ample justification for sidelining the Church and questioning the competence of Catholics to pronounce on the great questions of the day—that has motivated Archbishop Chaput to write this book underlining the importance of applying authentic Catholic teaching and witness to American public life.

Archbishop Chaput believes that “the Church has the duty to teach the world.” This book very ably sets forth a fair amount of what the Church specifically does have to teach the world in the conditions that Catholics in America face today. For if the Catholic Church is not without her own problems, an increasingly wayward and morally decadent America is surely in much worse shape; and, moreover, often seems incapable of even identifying what has gone wrong, much less being able to do anything about it.

Our bishop-author provides a brief summary of the current situation that characterizes America today as follows:

“Traces of our country’s Christian origins remain visible. Americans are broadly a people of faith who value religion, fair play and common decency...Yet there is another America, a kind of dark mirror image of our ideals and self-understanding. This is an America of ethnic and racial injustice, selfishness, consumer greed, and careerism, where popular culture grows increasingly brutish and vulgar. This is an America where half of all marriages end in divorce, where four of every ten children are born out of wedlock, and roughly a million more children are killed each year in the womb. Millions are forgotten and left behind in poverty in this America. Religion is increasingly belittled in the political conversation in this America, and the conversation

itself has grown uncivil, indifferent, and unreasoned. Finally, in this America, ordinary citizens show a growing cynicism about the future of our common life together..."

Archbishop Chaput worries that America, increasingly detached from its Christian roots, has become secularized to the point where the country no longer possesses within itself the capacity to distinguish what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. A radically de-Christianized America now regularly denies in various ways what yesterday was a generally accepted common morality based on the Ten Commandments. Today the traditional morality that was once taken for granted is today explicitly rejected on secularist grounds. One is reminded of the once famous saying of the World War I French premier, the radical Socialist Georges Clemenceau: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's—and everything is Caesar's"!

Things may not quite have reached that point in America today, although we are surely not far from it. Hence nothing is more important to the future of America than the Catholic witness which Archbishop Chaput thinks is urgently necessary—and which he believes must come about through a renewal of the Catholic faith and a revitalization of Catholic practice that can and must lead to a re-evangelization of the culture. In his view, Christianity originally arose and took hold primarily because Christians believed and lived their faith, and were seen by the world to do so.

This book pursues this theme in the American context. The archbishop finds no incompatibility between Catholicism and the American system, properly understood. One problem has been, however, that too many Catholics have wrongly imagined that they had to cut and trim in order to accommodate their Catholicism to their Americanism. This is a problem that urgently has to be overcome by a return to the authentic sources of the faith.

The book contains a brief survey of Catholicism in America, along with an examination of how the American democratic system should be viewed from a Catholic point of view, and of what American Catholics should be doing to help revitalize their Church as well as American society and culture (very briefly, they should be more publicly *professing* and *living* their faith, and not allowing themselves to be deterred from bringing it frankly into the public square).

Archbishop Chaput is well versed in recent thought on church and state issues, as exemplified in the work on religious liberty by the late Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., for example, as well as in Vatican Council II's Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*. As Pope Benedict XVI remarked during his recent visit to the United States, America can consider itself to be "the homeland of religious liberty," and so it is both pertinent and timely that a knowledgeable American prelate should address this issue among others in this book.

Nevertheless, the challenge facing Catholics in America today is formidable. We need think only of the continuing tragedy and scandal of legalized abortion—which the Denver archbishop flatly declares "must be changed."

If you have not read a good solid account of where Catholics publicly stand in America today, this is a book for you. Nobody has written a better account of the main public issues that must concern and engage American Catholics. Even if you have read other books along these lines, you will be interested in Archbishop Chaput's "take" on issues that must inevitably concern us all. It is exhilarating to find an American Catholic bishop thinking and writing in the vein he has adopted.

On the much publicized and vexed question of whether the Eucharist should be denied to pro-abortion Catholic

politicians, Archbishop Chaput notes how “one of the ironies of the 2004 elections was the number of non-Catholics, ex-Catholics, lax Catholics, and anti-Catholics who developed a sudden interest in who should receive Communion and when.” Although he defends the policy of the American bishops that the decision about this question must be left to the individual bishop, he himself quite admirably describes how he would handle the question in his own archdiocese. He writes:

“As a bishop, *what would I do* if a Catholic public official—a person publicly acting against Catholic teaching on a grave moral issue like abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, or embryonic stem-cell research—presented himself for Communion? If the official is not from my local church (that is, the diocese I serve as bishop), and I receive no contrary guidance from his own bishop, I would not refuse him Communion. I would assume his honesty and goodwill. And I would advise my brother priests in the diocese to do the same.

“But what if he *does* belong to my diocese? As a bishop, I have a duty in charity to help Catholic officials to understand and support church teaching on vital issues. That’s never a matter for public theater; it’s always a matter of direct, private discussion. If that failed, I would ask the official to refrain from receiving Communion. If he still presented himself, I would publicly ask him not to take Communion, and publicly explain why to my people and brother priests. If he still persisted, then and only then, I would withhold Communion from him—because of his deliberate disregard of the right of other Catholics and the unity of the church.”

This is precisely the policy that Cardinal Ratzinger, before his election as Pope Benedict XVI, outlined for the American bishops. (Although it applies in the case of the individual bishop, it does *not* explain how some of the most notorious pro-choice Catholic politicians in America were apparently *invited* to receive Communion at Pope Benedict’s Mass in Washington, D.C.!)

On the question of whether Catholics could in genuinely good conscience vote for “pro-choice” candidates, Archbishop Chaput frankly says, “The answer is: I couldn’t. Supporting a ‘right’ to choose abortion simply masks and evades what abortion really is, the deliberate killing of innocent life. I know of nothing that can morally offset that kind of evil.”

Archbishop Chaput grants that, faced with two “pro-choice” candidates, the Catholic might make a judgment to support one of them as “the lesser evil.” Any such vote, however, would always in his view have to have a proportionate reason “grave enough to outweigh our obligation to end the killing of the unborn.” He asks: “What would such a ‘proportionate’ reason look like? It would be a reason,” he says, “that we could with an honest heart, expect the unborn victims of abortion to accept when we meet them and need to explain our actions—as we someday will.”

There is more of this, much more, in *Render Unto Caesar*. It is accessible to all, and it is to be hoped it will be widely read and taken to heart.

Kenneth D. Whitehead’s new book, Mass Misunderstandings: The Mixed Legacy of the Vatican II Liturgical Reform is soon to be published by St. Augustine’s Press. Mr. Whitehead is a member of the Board of Directors of the Catholic League.

THE THREAT OF THE NEW ATHEISM BY MIKE SULLIVAN

Scott Hahn & Benjamin Wiker: *Answering the New Atheism: Dismantling Dawkins’ Case Against God*, Emmaus Road Publishing

Is it time to crack down on religion?

After all, religion is responsible for all the trouble in the world, isn't it? The September 11 attacks were in the name of religion. Galileo was silenced in the name of religion. Everywhere you look in the world, you see riots, and massacres, and wars—all in the name of religion. It's not just one religion, either—it's all religions.

Religion is at the root of every problem in the world. It's time we got rid of religion.

Now, if all that seems like a shallow argument to you, it's probably because you spent half a minute thinking about it. Many of the conflicts in the world today are religious, that's true. But it wasn't too long ago that the great danger facing the world was institutional atheism. Half the world was officially Communist and anti-religious. We can imagine that religion is the root of all evil only if we forget Stalin and Mao and Pol Pot.

Nevertheless, some of the brightest minds in the English-speaking world right now argue that religion is the problem. And we know they're the brightest minds because they keep telling us they are.

Atheism is certainly nothing new. Long before the time of Christ, the ancient Athenians were charging inconvenient philosophers with "atheism." So there was a word for people who didn't believe in any gods—the same word we use today, in fact.

We hear charges of "atheism" at least as far back as the 6th century B.C. Plato talks about people who say that the universe arose "not through intelligence...nor through some god, nor through art, but...by nature and chance." Plato's own teacher Socrates was accused of atheism, although the Socrates who appears in Plato's dialogues is far from an atheist.

Most of the ancient philosophers whose works have survived are not explicitly atheist, but some are close. Epicurus and Lucretius, for example, allowed for gods in their system, but not gods who cared at all about humanity. The universe was created by random collisions of atoms, not by an almighty Creator. Whatever gods there might be were indifferent to what we did.

These ancient atheists grew out of a pagan culture, so if they were rebels, they were naturally rebelling against the colorful stories of pagan mythology. The Middle Ages didn't have time for atheist philosophy, so atheism died with the ancients.

Modern atheism arose about five hundred years ago in the midst of a Christian culture, and hence defined itself by an explicit rejection of Christianity. Some religious philosophers, like the Deists, rejected the Triune God of Christian doctrine, but accepted that there was a God. But there were others—pure atheists—who completely rejected belief in any deity at all. Both groups rejected and rebelled against Christianity.

The French Revolution showed what atheism is capable of when it combined theory with unchecked power. Bishops and priests were executed, religious rounded up, churches desecrated, all in the name of liberating the people from tyranny. Never mind that the people themselves were tenaciously religious. The people must be liberated in spite of themselves.

In the 1800s, Karl Marx and other thinkers systematized this anti-religious hostility. When the followers of Marx gained power in Russia, they were even more ruthless than the French revolutionaries in their suppression of religion. Similar horrors followed dogmatic Communism wherever it came to power.

But most of the English-speaking world was spared this excessive institutional atheism. The United States, in

particular, has always zealously guarded the freedom of anyone to practice any religion that does not seriously interfere with public order.

That's why we're so surprised and baffled by what we call the New Atheism. For the first time in our relatively tranquil history, we're facing a determined attempt not just to keep organized religion out of government (which most religious Americans agree is a good idea), but to suppress religion completely.

Led by the Four Horsemen, as they like to call themselves—Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett—these New Atheists argue that religion, is simply delusion and at the root of all our problems. They have websites and well-orchestrated media events, and collectively they sell millions of books. Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* has been on the bestseller list since its release in 2006.

The New Atheists are positively evangelical. They want to make a convert out of you, although if you're a "dyed-in-the-wool faith-head" they'll settle for peppering you with insults and sarcasm instead.

But if atheists have always been with us, why are we worrying now? After all, the Church has engaged non-believers for over two thousand years.

What we call the "New Atheism" is a bit different than its predecessor. It's more aggressive, and it has more power. The leaders of the sect are well placed in the academic world, and they have a strong determination to mold government policy.

And you wouldn't like the government if the New Atheists molded its policy. Richard Dawkins has asserted that teaching your religion to your child is a form of child abuse and should be criminalized. Other New Atheists have argued that churches should have to post a sign reading "for entertainment

purposes only," since after all they're no less a fraud than telephone psychics.

The New Atheists see religion as a disease to be exterminated. Their dream, in short, is not a government neutral to religion, but a government actively hostile to religion.

What is most worrying is that the New Atheists seem to gain the most followers precisely among the most ambitious and intelligent young people—the people who will be actively shaping government policy in the years to come. Attracted by the intellectual rebelliousness of the movement, young people fall for its insidious message: join us and you can be one of the *smart* people.

How do we counter the New Atheists where they're doing the most damage?

First, we need to be polite. That's all the more important when our opponents descend to the level of playground taunts. If a New Atheist joins our discussion, we need to be welcoming, not hostile. We need to act like Christians, which is all the harder when our opponents have no such limitations. But we must remember that, with truth there is strength. We Christians don't need to resort to playground taunts, cheap shots, or to hostile defensiveness. We have the truth and we are called to share it.

Once we've determined to be polite, we need to answer reasoned arguments with reason. There's a real need for good resources to counter the atheists' favorite arguments. Scott Hahn and Benjamin Wiker have blazed the trail in *Answering the New Atheism*, in which they counter Richard Dawkins' surprisingly feeble arguments in *The God Delusion*.

This is a good way to start. Hahn and Wiker are never afraid to meet Dawkins head-on. They take his favorite arguments and show us where the holes are, meeting reason with reason. The New Atheists thrive on the impression that religion and reason

are antithetical; we should never give them that ground. We need to demonstrate to the undecided that reason is on religion's side.

We should also realize that, in many things, the aggressive atheists are on our side. We, the reasonable Christians who value freedom and stand up for the oppressed, should be their natural allies. They see the rabid fundamentalism that infects so much of the world with endless violence, and they deplore it. We deplore it, too. They see the poor oppressed by the rich, and they demand justice. We demand justice, too.

In many areas, our fight is not against the atheists, but against the mistaken perceptions of Christianity they promote. The evangelical atheists assume that religion must inevitably breed mindless fanaticism. Countering that image means not just answering the atheists' arguments against God, but also correcting their false impressions of religion.

People who are most attracted to the New Atheism are likely to be people who think of themselves as good and reasonable. They genuinely care about people as human beings. When they see suffering, they want to help. If they think religion is the cause of the suffering, they turn against religion. And, after all, if they see Christians beating up Muslims, Muslims beating up Hindus, Hindus beating up Christians—well, what are they supposed to think? If they don't know anything about our religion, then that's what they think our religion is about.

But whose fault is it if they don't know anything about our religion? True, they haven't bothered to find out about it. But it's just as true that we too often haven't bothered to tell anyone about it.

Is the New Atheism a danger to the Church? Yes, it is. By substituting secularity with secularism—neutrality toward religion with hostility toward religion—New Atheists can make the world difficult for Christians to live in.

But the real danger is not from the fanatical atheists themselves, but from our own indifference. If we don't make the effort to reach out to the people who are most ambitious, who are most intelligent, who care most about the shape of the world around them, then we deserve the punishment in Christ's parable of the worthless servant (Matthew 25:14-30). What little we have should be taken away and given to someone who will make something of it.

We need to confront the New Atheism on its own turf, candidly admitting where we agree with the atheists, and explaining our differences patiently and reasonably. But beyond the argument of words, there is another, even better argument.

The Christian life has always been the most compelling argument for Christianity. Living like a Christian—loving our enemies and letting everyone see our joy in the truth—is the most convincing way of spreading the Gospel. When we face the New Atheists, we should look like Christians: not shouting, angry fanatics, but charitable, intelligent people who are willing to listen as well as to make pronouncements.

We have the power to guide what the people around us think about religion. What we say is important, but what we do is even more important. Even when right reason doesn't prevail, living the Christian life will win the argument.

Mike Sullivan is president of Catholics United for the Faith and Emmaus Road Publishing.

ROOT CAUSES OF HAPPINESS

Bill Donohue

Q: "Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall, Who is the Happiest of Them All?"

A: You are.

That's right, in general, those who are the most likely to be reading this article are the happiest of them all. The obverse is also true: The odds are that those who would never read anything associated the with Catholic League are the most unhappy of them all. This isn't poppycock, and it isn't being said to make you happy. It just happens to be true.

Happily, Arthur C. Brooks provides us with all the evidence we need to make these assertions. The Syracuse professor of Business and Government Policy has given us another brilliant book, *Gross National Happiness*, that is as enlightening as it is fun to read. It is worth noting, too, that Brooks is a proud Roman Catholic.

Brooks is one of those rare birds in academia—he actually draws his conclusions from the data. And data he has: Brooks has scoured the social science research on the subject of happiness and has turned up some extraordinary findings.

To be sure, there is nothing extraordinary about learning that optimists are happier than pessimists, or that those who have many friends are happier than those who do not. But it may come as a surprise to find out that money by itself doesn't buy happiness (success and peer recognition do matter). What is truly surprising is the extent to which at least half of our happiness stock is genetic: Nature plays at least as big a part as nurture in determining our level of happiness.

These findings are interesting, but what really makes Brooks' volume so important, especially for Catholic League members, is his sociological insights: he identifies a constellation of social attributes, as well as ideological predilections, that are clearly linked to happiness.

It is hardly a risky bet to claim that the typical Catholic

League member is a religious person of conservative values who prizes his family. Nor is it a risk to say that he enjoys working hard (or did so before retirement) and is known to be generous. Well, it is precisely those characteristics that Brooks identifies as being integrally related to happiness.

This would seem to suggest that our secular brethren who espouse a liberal ideology are nowhere near as likely to be as happy as we are. This is exactly what Brooks found. Moreover, secularists are also much less likely to be generous—both with their money and their time. Married persons are happier than singles, and the former make for much better parents than do cohabiting couples. And as critical as any variable, those who ascribe to a traditionalist understanding of morality are happier than those who reject it.

So here we have it: religious people are happier than secularists; conservatives are happier than liberals; those who volunteer are happier than those who don't; those who are charitable are happier than those who aren't; married persons are happier than single persons; those who work the hardest are happier than everyone else; and traditionalists are happier than the "free spirits."

Brooks lays all of this out in great detail, and he explores the public policy implications of his findings, e.g, it is in everyone's interests that we protect our religious heritage. Why? Quite simply, religious persons make for better citizens: they give more and are much more likely to be happy.

As Brooks writes, "it is not just in the interest of religious folks to protect our religious traditions, but also in the interest of *secularists*." (His italics.) That's a hard nut for secularists to swallow, but the fact is that they are benefiting from the moral capital (and its ensuing happiness quotient) of the faithful.

A question that Brooks does not directly address, but is worth

considering, is whether there is a commonality that runs through the “happiness” variables? To simplify this matter, consider the following bipolar variables: married v. single; religious v. secular; giver v. non-giver; conservative v. liberal; traditionalist v. postmodernist. Why are the former variables associated with happiness and not the latter?

There is a mountain of psychological and sociological evidence that suggests that fully atomized individuals are positively dysfunctional. Put differently, those for whom the unencumbered self is the end all and be all of liberty are sick. It cannot be said too forcefully: The lone individual is a nightmare. Why? Because part of being human is the ability to connect ourselves to something greater than ourselves, which is why those who find communion with God, family and friends are freer than those who refuse to submit to moral codes.

The idea of surrendering oneself to God and loved ones is not something which resonates well with those for whom submission is a dirty word. Religious persons, especially Catholics, know exactly what Pope John Paul II meant when he said that the Ten Commandments were the foundation of liberty. But to the tin ear of the secularists, such notions are incomprehensible at best and downright dangerous at worst.

In any event, Brooks gives us much to think about, and he does so in a style that is as entertaining as it is educational.

Please see below for some of Professor Brooks’s most insightful comments:

- “Your state of mind is due in significant part to the wiring you get from your parents.”
- “Happy people treat others better than unhappy people do. They are more charitable than unhappy people, have better marriages, are better parents, act with greater integrity, and are better

citizens. Happy people not only work harder than unhappy people, but volunteer more, too—meaning that they increase our nation’s prosperity and strengthen our communities. In short, happy citizens are *better* citizens.”

- “Religious people of all faiths are much, much happier than secularists, on average. In 2004, 43 percent of religious folks said they were ‘very happy’ with their lives, versus 23 percent of secularists.”
- “People who live in religious communities—even correcting for other cultural factors in these communities—do better financially than those who live in secular communities.”
- “Traditionally religious people do not tend to be ignorant or uneducated. Religious individuals today are actually better educated and less ignorant of the world around them than secularists. In 2004, religious adults—those who attended a house of worship every week—were a third less likely to be without a high school diploma, and a third more likely to hold a college degree or higher, than those secularists who never attended a house of worship.”
- “Religious people are 38 percent more likely than secularists to give money to charity and give about four times more money away each year (even holding incomes constant). They are 52 percent more likely than nonreligious people to volunteer. Religious people are even 16 percent more likely than secularists to give money to explicitly *nonreligious* charities, and 54 percent more likely to volunteer for these causes.”
- “Religious Americans create much larger families than secular Americans do, and religious parents

tend to have religious kids.”

- “In 2004, 42 percent of married Americans said they were very happy. Only 23 percent of never-married people said this, as well as 20 percent of those who were widowed, 17 percent of divorced people, and 11 percent of those who were separated (but not divorced) from their spouses. Married people were six times more likely to say they were very happy than they were to say they were not too happy.”
- “The evidence is overwhelming that unmarried, cohabiting adults give children a worse home life than married parents do, on average.”
- “Secular liberals are about eight times likelier than religious conservatives to support abortion on demand, which may indicate a greater willingness to terminate an inconvenient pregnancy.”
- “Religious people feel freer than secularists.”
- “Those who favor less government intervention in our economic affairs are happier than those who favor more.”
- “More than just enjoying the freedom to worship as they choose, many of the happiest people in America achieve their happiness *through* their faith.”
- “Premarital sex, drug use, you name it—the moral traditionalists have it all over the moral modernists when it comes to happiness.”
- “The recipe for happiness is a combination of individual liberty, personal morality, and moderation. This age-old formula is overwhelmingly supported by the data.”
- “‘Very happy’ people work more hours each week than those who are ‘pretty happy,’ who in turn work more hours than people who are ‘not happy.’”
- “Job satisfaction actually *increases* life

happiness.”

- “Work also brings happiness because it gives our lives meaning—and meaning brings happiness, sooner or later.”
- “People who give charitably are happier than people who don’t.”
- “America was built as a nation of givers. Religious pilgrims were some of our earliest ancestors. Thousands of miles away from their homes and governments, they were confronted by a vast frontier that could only be managed if private individuals took the needs of their community into their own hands. This has led to the simple and enduring fact that no country gives and volunteers privately like America does. This fact is more than just a curiosity or source of national pride. It is part of the reason we are generally happier than people in other developed countries.