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LETTERS

The essence of marriage, funeral customs

CONSENTING ADULTS

Thanks for your editorial "The Truth About Marriage" and the three views on "The Court and Marriage" in the August 15 issue. For most of us—Jews and Christians alike—marriage has been shaped by our ancient religious culture, a culture largely founded on the biblical mandate to "increase and multiply," and has developed over centuries of tradition. Yet marriage has also been shaped by a Roman culture and domestic world where true marriage—*matrimonium*—was a partnership in which a couple consented to live together as equals with mutual affection and respect: *affectio maritalis*. To raise a family, so central to thinking about marriage, was one of the benefits (*bona*) of marriage, but not its essence. Whether for Jew, Christian, or Pagan, the heart of the matter was consent to live together with marital affection. As that world became increasingly Christian, marriage remained a domestic partnership based on consent; indeed, Christian leaders like Augustine (the only church father to write extensively about sex and marriage) were faced with childless marriages and infidelities that severed the sacred bond. To be sure, infidelity or infertility could and often did destroy marriages, but neither fidelity nor fertility *made* a marriage.

Consent alone made marriage matrimony in Christendom, be it ancient or medieval. With the rise of the universities in the late twelfth century, their masters—the early Scholastics—sought to determine how marriage in the secular world fit into their sacramental world. A sharp debate arose among them about what constituted true marriage. One group argued that marriage truly exists at the moment of consummation, because consummation embodied that union between Christ and the church addressed in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church" (5:31–32). A second group argued that it was consent given by a couple to one another to live together as equal partners with mutual affection and respect, because mutual consent embodied the Word who became flesh and "to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the power to become the children of God" (John 1:12–14). By the end of the century the "consentists" had won the debate, largely through the work of their leader, the prominent Parisian theologian Peter Lombard. So, for some sixteen hundred years what made a marriage a true marriage was consent, from which the benefits of fidelity, children, and sacred bond flowed. If it is consent to live together as equals with mutual affection and respect that creates a marriage, then consent makes marriage true for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. Now, some same- and opposite-sex couples cannot have children. Yet each can have and raise children and live faithfully in a sacred Christian bond because it embodies the consent of the Word to become flesh and dwell among us.

THOMAS M. FINN
Norfolk, Va.

WHO ARE WE TO JUDGE?

Tradition has held that marriage is defined as the union of a man with a woman for the purposes of conjugal love and procreation. Yet recently we have come to realize that some people are born with homosexual desires. What if procreation is impossible—as in the case of an older man and a woman beyond childbearing age? Certainly they can marry on the

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CNS PHOTO / KIMBERLY WHITE, REUTERS

An antiwar demonstration in San Francisco on March 19, 2007

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basis of conjugal love and share in the sacramental grace of matrimony. Scripture refers to celibacy as a higher state that is not for everyone. After all, following air, hunger, and thirst, sex is our most powerful drive. In other words, the practice of celibacy takes heroic virtue. According to traditional thinking, however, gay people, unlike the rest of us, are required to exercise not just virtue, but heroic virtue and remain celibate. Why? Because they are God's mistakes and not deserving of the graces available to the rest of us? Not likely. As the gay community's needs have become better understood and more public, we find beautiful examples of gay couples in life-long monogamous relationships—many adopt children. Why should they be denied the sacramental grace of matrimony? Some argue that a child needs a mother and father. But in a world populated with so many orphans, isn't a loving home preferable to life in an orphanage or on the streets? It's time for fresh thinking. More love, less anger.

PHILIP V. G. WALLACE
Larchmont, N.Y.

FUNERAL DIRECTIONS

Paul J. Schaefer's article "Looking Away" (August 16) provided an opportunity to think about my own disappointment with funeral services. Like Schaefer, I am "reasonably healthy, but in my late seventies."

My dad was a funeral director. I remember the familiar Sunday mornings, hurrying from church to be sure that all was in order for a visitation. The mourning family would arrive at 11 a.m. and remain for eleven hours. My mom would cook a meal so nobody had to leave for fear that they would miss any visitors. This was our normal. I recall families asking to have the body in state for a night or two or three. People walked to funeral homes in those days and stayed to share stories and have a drink in the back room. People took their time. Today it is common for grievers to have but a minute or two to express sympathy because there are so many in line—scheduled events intervene. Now people spend more time watching football than they do greeting friends at the viewing of their loved ones.

My mom's funeral was very special. She lived all her married life in the funeral home upstairs, and outdid all of us by dying after a hundred and a half years. She could joke about not needing a hearse for the "pickup." It was doleful to see her laid out just downstairs from where she lived and cooked all those meals for others.

My funeral: I'm thinking "green." No embalming, no casket, no hearse, wrapped in dry ice for a short time for people to view and then buried in a shroud. Five years later, rototilled.

DONALD E. SASS
Milwaukee, Wisc.

From the Editors

Known Unknowns

In the early morning of August 21, hundreds of Syrian civilians, including many children, died in a chemical-weapons attack near Damascus. The Obama administration claims that Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, is responsible for the attack, and—despite Assad's strenuous denials and the resolute agnosticism of some of his allies—the available evidence is damning. According to U.S. intelligence reports, the Assad regime's technicians had been preparing chemical weapons in the three days leading up to the attack. The rockets that carried the nerve gas were all launched from areas known to be held by the Assad regime toward areas known to be held by opposition forces. By the time the rockets landed, the regime's personnel had reportedly prepared for it by putting on gas masks. The unprepared suffered horribly. Hospitals in Damascus received 3,600 patients presenting symptoms associated with exposure to nerve gas. By the end of the day, terrible images of people choking and foaming at the mouth had reached every corner of the world.

Among the bitter fruits of the Arab Spring—the chaos in Libya, the coup in Egypt—the conflict in Syria has turned out to be the bitterest. More than a hundred thousand Syrians have died; 2 million have fled the country. Until now, President Barack Obama has avoided getting drawn into what has become a civil war, offering only modest support to those elements of the opposition he thinks the United States can trust. (There are elements he knows it *cannot* trust, including Jabhat al-Nusra, a terrorist organization allied to Al Qaeda.)

But in August 2012 the president announced that the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime would be a "red line" for the United States. This line is not arbitrary. Like nuclear and biological weapons, poison gas is indiscriminate, affecting combatants and noncombatants alike. That's why the Geneva Protocol, to which Syria is a signatory, has banned the use of chemical weapons since 1928. The president has argued that the international community cannot allow anyone to violate this important international norm with impunity. Assad must therefore be punished for what he's already done and deterred from doing it again. If we fail to respond with force, Obama argues, other rogue regimes may decide they, too, can get away with using such weapons against their own people.

To his credit, the president has put the question to Congress, so that our elected representatives can vote on what would be, by any ordinary definition, an act of war. If lawmakers refuse to authorize the use of force against Syria, the president should not press ahead. To do so, in defiance of Congress, would be to reduce democratic deliberation to theater. To his even greater credit, the president has asked Congress to delay its vote so that his administration can explore a last-minute diplomatic solution sponsored by Russia. But this new proposal may not work out. What should Congress do in that case?

If we had reason to be confident that bombing a few of Assad's assets would save more Syrians than it would kill, then an armed intervention might be warranted. We don't. Nor can we be confident that the military action the president has proposed would keep the Syrian government from using chemical weapons again. Everything we know about Assad suggests that he will do whatever he can to remain in power; if he thought his survival depended on it, he probably wouldn't hesitate to use whatever chemical weapons he had left. For all anyone knows, a U.S. airstrike might even provoke him to use such weapons again sooner, either in desperation or in a show of defiance. Of one thing, though, we can be confident: However carefully we target our missiles, they will end up killing innocent Syrians. A head of state who is willing to gas his own people is not above using them as human shields.

But even if a U.S. strike does succeed in getting Assad to stop using chemical weapons, he will likely continue killing indiscriminately with conventional weapons. And what will we do then—allow him to go ahead as long as he keeps the nerve gas locked up? What kind of message would *that* send? And what will happen to Assad's chemical-weapons stockpile if our military action leads to victory for the rebels, as it may? After all, we can't hurt Assad without helping his enemies, and some of his enemies are ours too.

In short, good intentions are necessary but not sufficient. We must also consider, insofar as we can, the likelihood of the various possible outcomes. And insofar as we *can't* do this, for lack of enough information, we ought to exercise extreme caution. To borrow the language of a failed interventionist, when the known unknowns greatly outnumber the knowns, the United States should hold its fire—especially when there's no immediate threat to our national security. The administration's experts are insisting that they've already considered all the risks and that the rest of us should trust their judgment. After the misadventure in Iraq, we nonexperts have every reason to be skeptical. ■

September 11, 2013

Paul Baumann

Limited & Proportionate

Contrary to the speculation in some quarters, there exists a spectrum of views on political as well as theological questions among *Commonweal* editors. In writing the magazine's editorials, we strive for consensus, seeking to practice the habits of moral deliberation we urge on others. As the magazine's very name connotes, one of our principal goals is to help forge a greater sense of the common good, both within the church and the larger culture. In presenting a variety of opinions on the pressing issues of the day in each issue, we hope to show that as Catholics and as Americans we can reason through our differences in order to act in concert.

On rare occasions the editors fail to reach consensus, and that is the case on the question of whether Congress should pass a resolution endorsing President Barack Obama's call to strike military targets in Syria. Obama has shown great restraint when it comes to involving the United States in Syria's brutal civil war. He has been right to do so. As the invasion of Iraq and the war in Afghanistan have shown, there are serious limits to what the United States can accomplish by inserting itself into the internal conflicts of other countries. But that doesn't mean the United States or the world community can stand by and watch great crimes being committed. Where the United States has the ability to stop or deter such crimes, it should—provided military action is proportionate and has a reasonable prospect of achieving its stated goals. As the political philosopher Michael Walzer has written, "Active opposition to massacre and massive deportation is morally necessary; its risks must be accepted."

As Obama stated in his address to the nation on September 10, his objective is to conduct a limited and carefully targeted attack to punish Bashar al-Assad and to degrade his military capabilities, especially his ability to use poison gas. The president argues that such an attack is morally necessary to uphold the international norm against the use of such weapons. If there are no consequences for his actions, Assad will be emboldened to use chemical weapons yet again and other rogue regimes will follow suit, eventually threatening basic U.S. security interests. It is hard to see how the UN's inability to enforce one of the few restraints on war-making that has been observed more in fact than in the breach will strengthen international law or global stability. UN dysfunction cannot be an excuse for inaction.

My editorial colleagues and I agree that the Assad regime has almost certainly used chemical weapons, that military action would be justified if it were likely to be effective, and that Obama is right to seek congressional approval for such strikes. We especially welcome the president's willingness to place this decision before Congress, thus restoring a crucial aspect of the Constitution's balance of powers regarding the use of military force. We all furthermore urge the president to abide by Congress's decision. Where we disagree is in how to measure the risks and benefits of military action.

The risks my colleagues have outlined are real; they certainly give me the greatest apprehension. Yet I do not believe those risks outweigh the need to enforce what has been the remarkably successful international prohibition on the use of weapons of mass destruction. Will more Syrians be saved than killed as a result of an attack? If the strikes diminish Assad's war-making capability, the likely answer is yes. Will there be unintended casualties? Unavoidably, just as there were in Bosnia and Kosovo. Those limited attacks, however, did bring an end to the larger slaughter, saving tens of thousands of lives. Will Assad use chemical weapons again even if attacked? He well might. On the other hand, if past behavior is any guide, he will certainly use them again if no action is taken against him. Why don't we stop Assad's use of conventional weapons to kill indiscriminately? Because there is simply not the political will to intervene in Syria on a large scale. More important, neither is there a plausible military solution to the current conflict. That does not mean, however, that failing to stop one kind of mass killing obliges us to turn away from every mass killing. Assad obviously thinks chemical weapons give him a tactical advantage. If at all possible, he should be deprived of that advantage.

As Obama noted in his September 10 speech, there is now a proposal from Russia for dismantling and transferring Syria's chemical weapons to the control of the international community. Assad's principal allies may now think he has badly miscalculated the world's tolerance for crimes against humanity. If the Russian initiative bears fruit, there will be little doubt that the threat of U.S. military action moved all parties toward a recalibration of what is in their best interests. If the Russian initiative fails, Congress will again be asked to endorse a limited U.S. strike. It should do so. Despite the paranoia on both the left and the right, this president has shown no inclination to prolong or widen America's wars. That record should count for more than it seems to among Democrats and Republicans alike. Congress must recognize that diplomacy is a mere charade unless international norms can be enforced. ■ *September 11, 2013*

Paul Baumann *is the editor of* Commonweal.

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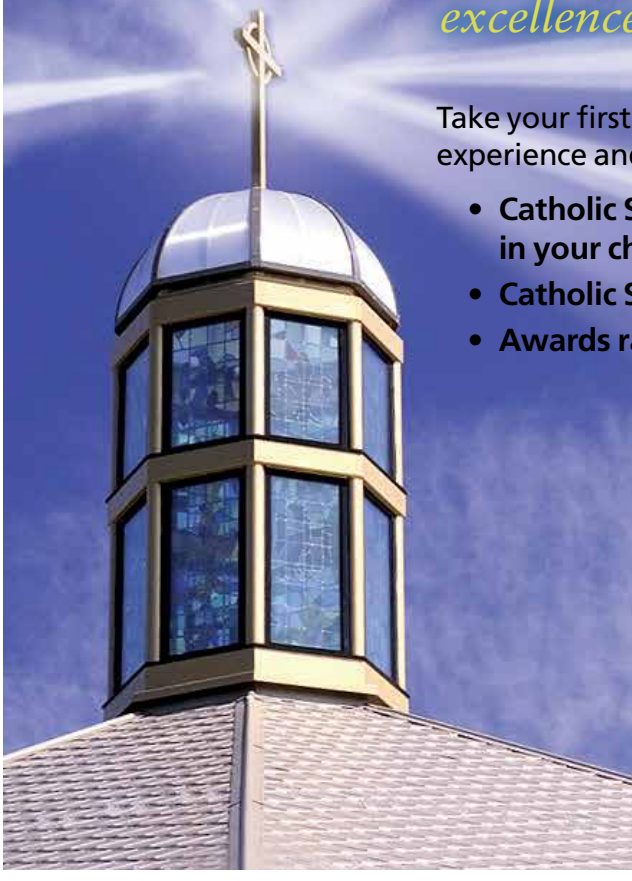

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Nicholas Clifford

Historical Amnesia

WHEN CATHOLIC LEADERS MISREAD THE PAST

In a review some years ago of John Noonan's *A Church That Can and Cannot Change* (1993), my neighbor Dennis O'Brien remarked that the Roman Catholic Church has a strong sense of tradition and no sense of history. He's a philosopher and former university president, and I'm a historian, but his bon mot sums up the church's worrisome habit of ignoring all too often the tangled skeins of the past underlying its public pronouncements.

Think, for instance, of Benedict XVI's May 2007 letter to the church in China, which noted Matteo Ricci's assurances to the Ming emperor that the church had no political aims in his country. "As Pope John Paul II stated," Benedict wrote, "recalling what Fr. Matteo Ricci wrote from Beijing, 'So too today the Catholic Church seeks no privilege from China and its leaders but solely the resumption of a dialogue'" based on mutual respect and understanding. True enough, but few historians would recognize that as a complete picture, overlooking as it does the four centuries since Ricci's death in Beijing and the ways in which missionaries and their home governments built up for themselves positions of entrenched privilege that ended only in the mid-twentieth century.

No doubt Vatican diplomats would argue that this sort of historical forgetfulness has its uses as Rome seeks to build bridges to the People's Republic. Maybe so, but in any case Benedict's letter is simply one example of the kinds of memory loss that one sees all too often—and let's not even get into the question of Francis's views on gay priests, already engaging the usual suspects on both sides of the issue. Take instead, a recent article in *America* by Archbishop William Lori ("Beyond the Fortnight"), dealing not with China but with the United States, which seems a particularly egregious example of ignoring the past.

Lori points out that religious freedom is (or at least should be) a fundamental right, not only here at home but everywhere. He praises the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty (which he chairs) and its Fortnight for Freedom for "planting the seeds of a move for religious freedom," which will eventually "bear fruit among the laity." Yet surely that sounds a bit odd, at least if we are talking about the American laity. However we may argue over the First Amendment, most of us know, after all, that religious freedom has been enshrined in the Constitution for over two centuries. Could it be that rather than the bishops' "planting the seed" of religious liberty, so that it would bear fruit among the laity, it might actually be the laity (Catholic and otherwise) who did the planting, so that one day it would bear fruit among the bishops, as it finally did when Vatican II issued *Dignitatis humanae* in 1965? Comforting though it might seem to posit episcopal leadership in such matters, the American laity, rightly or wrongly, did not wait until the twenty-first century for the bishops to plant such a seed. In fact they have been out in front, while over the centuries, whatever their private beliefs, the bishops were held in check by Rome.

Portrait of Thomas More by Hans Holbein the Younger, 1527

Now, it's true that a year ago, the same Committee's statement, "Our First, Most Cherished Liberty" (April 12, 2012) pays somewhat more attention to history, referring to colonial Maryland's brief experiment with limited religious toleration, to Cardinal James Gibbons's praise for religious freedom in 1887, and so forth. But it is a highly selective attention, completely ignoring nineteenth-century papal condemnations of this "cherished liberty." It's thus rather like extolling the long history of American freedom while averting one's eyes from the realities of slavery.

It's worth reflecting on this, because these misreadings of history exemplify why such appeals are likely to have little resonance among Americans, Catholic or otherwise. Yet these misreadings are all too common among Catholic leaders (and by no means restricted to them alone—think of the EU's recent battle over the Christian role in Europe's "heritage"). Part of the error stems, no doubt, from an ignorance of history or, more likely, from history badly taught. Take, for instance, the role of St. Thomas More, cited by the USCCB in "Our First, Most Cherished Liberty." More, surely, was a great man, and indeed a saint, who died for his beliefs. But in no sense was he the exemplar of religious freedom that the bishops would have us believe. As King Henry's chancellor after 1529, he was engaged in the persecution of heretics—it was, after all, in his job description (as indeed More's chancellerian successors under Elizabeth and others were charged with persecuting Catholics, and for that matter, Dissenters of various sorts).

But leave More to one side. The greater question implicitly raised by Lori, but never answered, has to do with the Catholic Church's recent conversion to a view of religious freedom as a "fundamental right." When and why did it happen? Here, Lori's historical account carries us back no further than *Dignitatis humanae* forty-eight years ago. Again he's perfectly accurate when he says that "successive popes have reaffirmed the church's commitment to this principle," and though he rather surprisingly ignores John XXIII's role in planting seeds, he cites John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and now Francis I in support of religious freedom. Yet isn't this a bit like saying that ever since the Voting Rights Act—also of 1965—successive U.S. presidents have upheld the ideal of racial equality? Case closed, in short; and there's no longer any need to delve into America's murky past from 1789 to 1964, and to have to explain the difficult contradictions that crop up.

Or is there? And if, since 1965, "successive" popes have upheld religious freedom, what can we say about "predecessive" popes, those who earlier presided over the governance of the church and its teachings for almost two millennia? Should we simply ignore them? There's no need to return to the problems and the corruptions of the medieval and renaissance papacies, or Nicholas V's authorization of slavery in *Romanus pontifex* (1455), which sits awkwardly with John Paul II's condemnation of it in *Veritatis splendor* (1993). All you have to do is look at some of the leaders of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Read, say, Gregory XVI's *Mirari vos* (1832), or Pius IX's *Quanta cura* and its annexed Syllabus of Errors (1864), whose teachings were later reaffirmed by Leo XIII, Pius X, and Pius XI. Are those pontiffs spinning in their graves today as they see their ideas overridden by later generations? Or are they (as we may prefer to believe) laughing in heaven, joyful that the truth has at last been understood?

Now, this "cherished freedom," of course, was never particularly high on the agenda of any of the world's great religions before modern times (in Japan, for instance, even Buddhists fought one another). Still, the fact remains that the earthly historical teachings of these earlier popes would seem to contradict *Dignitatis humanae*. What to do?

There are three possible answers to this conundrum. First: We can simply elbow Clio and her complications aside, and ignore the question. That is the way church leaders often seem to behave, and it is the way the European Union behaves over the question of the continent's Christian heritage. A second answer is to say that the teachings of Gregory XVI or Pius IX, authoritative though they may sound, are not in fact part of the church's magisterium. This might seem a difficult argument to make, but one should never underestimate the power of spritely lawyers, both civil and canon, to talk themselves out of tight spots.

The third answer, and the one that most historians would favor, is simply that times change and teachings change, so that (in the words of *Lumen fidei* in 2013) "everything in the patrimony of faith comes to be more deeply understood," or, as we might say, historicized. That is essentially the argument of John Noonan's book, which in fact deals both with slavery and religious freedom (though not with historical amnesia). It is also the argument of Patrick O'Neil, one of Noonan's critics, faced with the problem of explaining how mere religious tolerance, once grudgingly permitted at particular times in particular places for prudential reasons, became metamorphosed into an obligatory universal religious freedom. But does this mean that our predecessors were in fact unwitting heretics? Or that those who favored religious liberty were heretics until the church announced its own conversion?

Hence O'Brien's comment about the strength of tradition and the weakness of history. Some might see such historical amnesia as deceptive. I should prefer to put it down instead to defective education, particularly defective historical education. But then we historians are always fond of lamenting that these days no one seems to know or care anything about the past and its importance. Like it or not, we are creatures of history, and must face up to the difficulties of our heritage—at least if we expect our pronouncements to be taken seriously. ■

Nicholas Clifford, *a professor emeritus of Middlebury College, has written about Shanghai history in the early twentieth century.*

Paul Moses

Here To Stay

HOW LATINOS ARE CHANGING THE COUNTRY & THE CHURCH

At the height of the 2012 presidential campaign, the dashing Mexican actor Eduardo Verástegui appeared in a series of web videos aimed at Latino Catholics in battleground states. "Our values today are under attack by President Barack Obama," intoned Verástegui, who starred in *Bella*, a film with a prolife message. "He is working hard to promote unlimited abortion and undermine traditional marriage. He has unleashed an unprecedented attack on the church and its freedom." The camera then cut to a close-up of a statue of the Virgin Mary, a tear rolling down her cheek.

Obama, meanwhile, was working the same demographic. Last October, just weeks before Election Day, the president unveiled the César Chávez National Monument at Nuestra Señora Reina de La Paz in Keene, California, where Chávez is buried. Dedicating the site, Obama concluded his remarks with a prayer Chávez wrote for farm workers: "Help us to love even those who hate, so we can change the world."

These competing appeals signaled the arrival of Latinos—and Latino Catholics in particular—as a pivotal force in American politics. In the election Obama won three-quarters of the Latino Catholic vote, countering Romney's strength among white Catholics and helping the president push to victory in a string of closely contested states. Indeed, Latino Catholics went for Obama so overwhelmingly that he won the total Catholic vote. The "Catholic Moment" identified by Richard John Neuhaus in 1987 may have come and gone, but it seems that a new, Latino Catholic moment is on the way.

What this moment will mean for the identity of the Catholic Church in the United States—and its civic influence—is hard to say. Though Latino Catholics broke heavily for Obama, it would be a mistake for liberals to be complacent about their political affiliation. While recent data challenge the assumption that most Latino Catholics are socially conservative—a Pew survey found that a plurality of churchgoing Latino Catholics favored legalizing same-sex marriage—polls also show that Latino Catholics with a conservative ideology tend to vote Democratic more than other conservatives. "Hispanics are already Republicans; they just don't know it yet," Reagan himself reportedly once quipped.

Whichever way Latino Catholics go, they will likely take the Catholic vote with them. "It is fairly dramatic how the ratio of white Catholics to Hispanic Catholics has shifted really since the early 1990s," says Robert Jones of the Public Religion Research Institute. Jones notes that a five-to-one ratio among Catholic voters in the 1992 election narrowed to a two-to-one ratio in 2012—"a fairly big sea change," he says, "in a short amount of time." This mirrors changes within the church. In *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, social scientists David Campbell and Robert Putnam point out that nearly three out of every five Catholics aged eighteen to thirty-four—and two out of every three regular churchgoers—are Latino. And "Anglo" Catholics are leaving the church at twice the rate of Latino Catholics.

CNS PHOTO / OCTAVIO DURAN

A Palm Sunday procession outside St. Anthony of Padua Church in Camden, New Jersey

Where will these trends—along with continued immigration—lead American Catholicism? The short term will likely see a shift to the left on politics, especially regarding social welfare and economic issues. For example, Putnam and Campbell found a sharp contrast between white and Latino Catholics on the question of government aid to the poor: some 40 percent of white Catholics supported spending more, compared to 87 percent of Latino Catholics. A 2006 Pew survey found that churchgoing Latino Catholics were much more likely to consider themselves liberal than white Catholics were (26 percent to 11 percent). As Latinos become dominant in the U.S. Catholic Church, they could bring with them a stronger interest in social-justice activism.

At the same time, Putnam and Campbell found that Latino Catholics have a more orthodox perspective on social issues such as abortion, divorce, and birth control, and that they are less likely than white Catholics to support married priests or the ordination of women. Latino Catholics are more likely to express confidence in the Catholic hierarchy, and to believe that one must agree with the pope on abortion and birth control in order to be a good Catholic. Carlos Vargas-Ramos, co-editor of *Blessing La Politica: The Latino Religious Experience and Political Engagement in the United States*, traces this apparent conservatism to the 38 percent of Latino Catholics who see themselves as born-again or charismatic. "They are the most faithful of the faithful," he says, noting that they are more likely than other Latino Catholics to be persuaded by religious-liberty or prolife arguments.

And yet—Eduardo Verástegui's efforts notwithstanding—Latinos did not vote on social issues in 2012 but rather on the economy and on immigration. "Those have trumped issues of morality, consistently and over time," Vargas-Ramos observes. "Precisely because Latinos are still struggling economically, those issues still predominate." Poverty is the overriding fact of life for many Latino Catholics in the United States. Close to half have an annual household income under $30,000, according to the 2007 Pew study *Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion*. "People care more about those social issues when their material interests are taken care of," notes Campbell, a University of Notre Dame political scientist who co-authored *American Grace*. What's more, Republican alliances with the anti-immigration movement have left Latino voters feeling insulted. "For Latinos in general, the issue of immigration is the prism through which they see how all Americans look at Latinos," says Vargas-Ramos. Romney's proposal for "self-deportation"—that undocumented immigrants would leave voluntarily when they found they couldn't get work—was widely ridiculed, and it certainly didn't win him Latino votes.

Longer term, it's unclear how Latino voters will respond as their incomes rise—and as they are assimilated into American culture. Will they follow the path of other once-impoverished immigrant communities, such as Italians? Another open question is how many Latino Catholics in this country will remain Catholic. Young Latinos are not immune to the effects of

secularism. Nor will they be unaffected by Protestant efforts to win them over—a trend across Latin America (see "The Church in Latin America," *Commonweal*, April 12, 2013).

What is clear, as the Pew Research Hispanic Center predicted in 2007, is that "Latinos will bring about important changes in the nation's largest religious institution." Like politicians, Catholic bishops are learning that they can't succeed if Latino Catholics don't share their priorities. The bishops' campaign against the Obama administration's contraception-coverage mandate may have helped Mitt Romney take 59 percent of the white Catholic vote, but the Latino-Catholic vote overrode it to deliver the overall Catholic vote to Obama. The bishops' new, more activist approach to seeking citizenship for undocumented immigrants—urging priests to give homilies on the subject, targeting members of Congress with phone calls, parish pilgrimages, and Masses dedicated to immigration reform—seems to reflect an awareness of the 2012 election's demographic lesson. This new approach is similar to the one often taken to abortion or same-sex marriage. In June, when Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, sent a letter to all parishes of the Archdiocese of New York asking Catholics to support the bishops on "two important issues," immigration reform and abortion, he mentioned immigration first.

The Latino journey in the U.S. Catholic Church has not been an easy one. "It has taken a very painful process to be integrated," says Mario Paredes, the American Bible Society's presidential liaison for Hispanic/Latino projects and Roman Catholic ministry. A Chilean immigrant, Paredes recalls the 1970 ordination of the first Mexican-American auxiliary bishop, now Archbishop Patrick Flores, who spoke of traveling with his farmworker parents through the South, where signs outside churches warned that Mexicans were not welcome. Against this backdrop, Paredes finds the changes in the church over the past fifty years "remarkable," and points to outreach programs the bishops run to Latino Catholics, and to an emerging Hispanic leadership within the U.S. church itself, which now includes sixteen diocesan bishops of Hispanic ancestry and two archbishops.

Challenges remain. Paredes notes that recent financial constraints have forced the bishops to cut back on services to Latinos; eight regional centers for ministry training have been shut down. And Latinos continue to be underrepresented in the hierarchy and priesthood of the U.S. church—though they are thriving in lay ministry. Lay leadership developed through the Cursillo and Jornada movements plays a vital role for the church in its work with Latino Catholics, according to sociologist Anthony Stevens-Arroyo, co-editor of *Blessing La Politica*. Pastors hoping to connect with Latino congregations often rely on lay leaders—"the great strength of the Hispanic church," says Stevens-Arroyo.

Historians have long noted the Catholic Church's importance in Americanizing immigrants. In 1950, Henry Steele Commager wrote that the church in the 1880s and 1890s was "one of the most effective of all agencies for democracy and Americanization." But the big-city parish could often be hostile to newcomers. Popular piety among Italians at the turn of last century—processions in the streets and boisterous festivals in honor of favored saints—embarrassed Irish-American prelates before their Protestant detractors, and pastors were upset that Italian immigrants put so little money into collection baskets. And so New York's archbishop forbade street processions in honor of saints; and in 1891 a wealthy German-Catholic layman, Peter Paul Cahensly, brought before Pope Leo XIII a proposal to build parishes and name bishops for specific ethnicities. Things got so bad for Italian immigrants that Pope Leo issued an encyclical reminding U.S. bishops that the Italians flooding into their parishes "spring from the same race as ourselves."

Today the pope is Latin American—and Francis's combination of theological traditionalism and advocacy for the downtrodden should sit particularly well with Latino Catholics. The tensions that roiled the hierarchy over the question of assimilation a century ago are evident today more on the parish level, as pastors try to figure out how to minister to congregations divided by multiple languages and nationalities. "There is a challenge on the part of Catholic leadership to navigate it," David Campbell says. It may be good theology to emphasize a parish community's oneness, but the practical reality is that there must be Mass in Spanish and other languages, priests who appeal to specific ethnic communities, and devotions to saints prized by various nationalities. Many a pastor who would prefer a church with no more than a few discreetly placed statues—thus focusing attention on the altar and Eucharist—has acceded to the wishes of immigrant parishioners and prominently featured statues important to them. If Campbell and Putnam are right, it would be a mistake to take steps that would dissolve the attachment to ethnic roots in the name of assimilation into the larger church community. Their study in *American Grace* found a convincing link between firm religious identity and strong ethnic ties.

Campbell says that while differences exist between Anglo and Latino Catholics, the church in the United States is "leading the way" when it comes to acclimating immigrant communities to American life. He attributes this success to the efforts of "good-hearted people, especially priests, on the front lines, trying to make this work." This effort is a time-honored and valuable contribution to American democracy, one that will assist today's Latinos as it did Irish, Italians, and other European ethnic groups before them. "If the Catholic Church didn't exist," says Campbell, "we would probably have to invent it." ■

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The Current of Creation

The Jewish Sources of Christian Charity

Gary A. Anderson

Imagine yourself in an airplane flying over the ruins of a large Roman city. What will first strike your eye are the public theater, baths, and various basilicas devoted to civic functions. All of these buildings were funded by wealthy patrons of the city. If we change directions and fly over a medieval city, the picture will alter considerably. Instead of theaters and baths, we see the roofs of convents, hospices, hospitals, orphanages, and soup kitchens. Charity to the poor and suffering has left an enormous, visible footprint on the design of the evolving Christian city.

Though the social scientist might be tempted to understand the buildings of the two towns as serving one purpose—the redistribution of wealth—this conclusion would be false. Generosity in a Christian context differs considerably from its pagan counterpart. What makes the charitable works of the church distinctive is their religious grounding and their singular focus on the poor. In contrast, Greco-Roman benefaction has little interest in helping the lower social classes and does not think of such donations as having a religious function. Homes for the elderly, orphanages, and hospitals are institutions that appear suddenly in the late Roman era and always in the wake of the expansion of the Christian church. New words, in fact, had to be invented in both Latin and Greek to identify these charitable organizations—a sure sign that they had no precedent. They are the fruits of this new religion.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. The profound transformation of public life wrought by Christian charity did not come out of nowhere; it was an inheritance the church received from the synagogue. It would be difficult, in fact, to overemphasize the status of charitable deeds in the Jewish tradition. One way to gauge its evolving importance is simply to consult a Hebrew dictionary. As any student of biblical languages will know, the word for commandment in Hebrew is *mitsva*. During the biblical period the meaning of this word was centered on the idea that God had given a set of rules to Moses at Mount Sinai that Israel was expected to observe. Each one of the rules—whether it concerned matters of ritual purity, kosher regulations, or instructions regarding ethics and morals—could be identified as a *mitsva*. In postbiblical Jewish texts, however, the term undergoes a radical transformation. It develops the secondary meaning of "charity." Thus the well-known expression *bar mitzvah*, whose primary meaning is "one obligated to keep the commandments," could also mean "a generous person." Charity toward the poor had become the commandment that towered above all others. One rabbinic text puts it succinctly: Giving alms is equal to keeping all the commandments in the Torah.

THE WALTER ART GALLERY, BALTIMORE

Detail from a Book of Hours with Paris Calendar, 1450–60

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Naturally the question should arise: What accounts for this extraordinary interest in and commitment to charity? The answer is startlingly simple: Charity achieved the prominence it did because it had become the favored means of worshipping God. In Jewish terms charity was a form of *avodah*, that is, cultic service. Putting a coin in the hand of a beggar was like dedicating a fatted calf to the altar. The sacramental character of charity cannot be overstated. Charity to the poor was not simply a kind thing to do. Nor was it to be reduced to a program aimed at a more equitable distribution of wealth (though this element was not lacking).

This point is worth underscoring. Most religious persons consider charity to the poor a natural outgrowth of their faith, something like the correlation between a good education and success in a career. In both cases what is primary (service to God or service to mind) has some beneficial but still secondary effects (love for the poor or advancement in society). But this is precisely what I *don't* mean when I say that providing for the poor is *avodah*. By the close of the biblical period, service to the poor had become *the* privileged way to serve God.

The comparison of almsgiving to a sacrificial offering is basic to the religious worldview of Ben Sira, the author of the biblical book of Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus as it sometimes is known). This second-century-B.C. Jewish sage teaches us that

> The one who keeps the law makes many offerings;
> one who heeds the commandments makes an offering of well-being.
> The one who returns a kindness offers choice flour,
> and one who gives alms sacrifices a thank offering. (35:1–2)

It is worth noting that a thank offering is simply a special type of an offering of well-being, and that choice flour, because it is the most inexpensive of the sacrificial objects one can bring, is something that can be brought *many* times. What Ben Sira teaches us is that acts of charity toward the poor became the equivalent of temple sacrifice, the most prestigious form of religious obedience in the Torah.

The theology that begins in Sirach has an extraordinary afterlife in both the church and the synagogue. One visible testimony to its longevity can be seen in medieval art. Consider, for example, a painting from about 1400 by Andrea de Bartolo of Siena. This painting is now on display at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and has been slightly mislabeled *Joachim and the Beggars* (see cover). One can, indeed, see Joachim (father of the Virgin Mary) distributing goods to the poor. Nonetheless, the labeling is incomplete because it fails to mention that Joachim's wife, Anna, who is standing right beside him, is donating a jar of grain to the priest. Through the hands of this couple, God is served in two ways: by a direct gift to the temple and by the giving of alms. Service to the altar and the poor are correlative activities.

Though Joachim and Anna lived in biblical times, their piety is not just of antiquarian interest. We find the correlation between almsgiving and service of the altar to be a standard theme in other medieval paintings that depict contemporary Christian life. Take, for example, an image from a Book of Hours in the collection at the Walters Art Gallery (see page 13). The central thematic concern of this painting is the freeing of souls from purgatory. Yet at the center of this image, we see a priest who has ascended the steps of an altar in order to offer the eucharistic sacrifice, while immediately to the right a man distributes goods to the poor. The point is clear: You can't understand one action apart from the other. They constitute a metaphysical unity.

There is a clear connection between such images and a well-known homily of St. John Chrysostom (fourth century A.D.), in which he begins by acknowledging the honor that his congregation shows toward the altar in his church. The altar is worthy of such veneration, he explains, "because it receives Christ's body." But this is not the only altar to be found in Antioch. "Whenever you see a poor believer," out on the streets of Antioch after Mass has ended, "imagine that you behold an altar. Whenever you meet a beggar, don't insult him, but reverence him."

It is easy to miss the punch of what Chrysostom is trying to communicate here. Recall that in the same century Julian "the Apostate" wrote an oft-cited letter urging his pagan priests in Galatia to be charitable to the poor. "It is disgraceful," he observed, "that the impious Galileans [i.e. Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well." But in spite of Julian's herculean efforts, the program never got off the ground. This is because the concept of being kind to the poor had no grounding in pagan religion. Not even an imperial decree could make up for this deficit. Charity flourished in the church, on the other hand, because it had a deep sacramental foundation. Chrysostom's words are not merely rhetorical; they describe the place occupied by the poor in the early church.

In order to appreciate the church's position on charity we need to consider the concept of the altar. Though most of us have been raised to think that God is beyond any sort of material need, the concept of an altar requires that we temporarily suspend these assumptions in order to understand the anthropomorphic language of the Bible's authors. If the temple is the place where God "dwells," then the altar is where his savory food is prepared. At the altar one can "send" meat, grain, and oil to the divine realm.

So what happens when we take this anthropomorphic image and carry it over to almsgiving? If the altar is able to convey food to God, then the hand of the poor, similarly, must be able to transfer funds from earth to heaven. Jewish beggars in late antiquity used to address their potential patrons with the words *zeki bi*—literally, "acquire a merit through me," or, more periphrastically, "make a deposit to your heavenly treasury through me." In speaking this way they were simply repeating a common wisdom tradition that had already appeared in the books of Sirach and Tobit. The

idea of a "heavenly bank" was born, and along with it the idea that making a deposit to this bank was like making a loan to God.

This image was popular among early Jews and Christians because of its close correlation with the religious life itself. To be obedient to the covenant obviously requires a high degree of faith in God. As every creditor knows, to give someone a loan also requires a high degree of trust ("creditor" comes from the Latin word *credere*, "to believe"). Ben Sira was not naïve about such matters when he informed his students that "many will regard their loan as a windfall and cause trouble to those who help them" (29:4). Though they speak deferentially when requesting money, they become indignant when repayment is due. As a result, Ben Sira concluded, "many refuse to lend, not because of meanness, but from fear of being defrauded" (29:7).

If these warnings are true of borrowers even in the best of circumstances, then one would expect Ben Sira to be even sterner about making loans to the truly down-and-out. But his stance is just the opposite. He advises his students to disburse their funds without a moment's forethought. "Lose your silver for the sake of [the poor]," he exhorts, and "lay up your treasure [in heaven]," for there "it will profit you more than gold" (29:10–11). A puzzling piece of advice from someone so sober-minded about the risks that attend a loan. Whence this confidence?

The answer lies in what the Jewish tradition calls a midrash—that is, a commentary on a portion of the scriptural text. In this particular tradition, Rabbi Gamaliel is approached by a Roman citizen and questioned about the rationality of his holy book. Can it be true, this gentile asks (quoting Deuteronomy 15:7, "loan liberally and be ungrudging when you do so"), that your God commands you to give to the poor without a moment's hesitation? Someone who conducted his affairs in this fashion would be out of money within days and in need of assistance himself! To which Rabbi Gamaliel responds:

> "What if a man appeared out of nowhere and asked you for money, would you give him it?"
> He replied, "No!"
> "But what if he brought you a deposit?"
> He replied, "Of course!"
> "Okay, but what if he brought you a commoner to cosign [literally, to stand surety]?"
> He replied, "No."
> "But what if the governor himself cosigned?"
> He replied, "By all means!"
> "Well then, isn't the scriptural commandment logical: If you will issue the loan when the governor cosigns, how much more willing should you be when 'He who spoke and made the world' agrees to cosign. For Scripture says, 'Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full' [Proverbs 19:17]."

It would be difficult to exaggerate how important this verse

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Everywhere at once, aimless
though the day lilies
no longer make a sound

are used to how the sun
can still be found in moonlight
that has no rain left to comfort

with warm stones and the mist
that is now your heart
is circling night over night

as some giant red cloud
listening for the scent
from when a flower held your hand

too long and the calm
that has its fragrance: your echo
faint from waving goodbye

—Simon Perchik

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from the book of Proverbs was for Judaism and Christianity (and eventually Islam). Among early Christian writers, this saying became one of the most cited sources in support of charitable giving. Indeed, the references are so numerous and diverse in approach that one could write a dissertation on the history of the interpretation of this one verse. Though I can't do justice to all the evidence here, one text deserves special mention because it is a near contemporary to our rabbinic tale. It originates from the pen of St. Basil (fourth century A.D.), one of the most formidable theologians of the early church and a man who spent a good part of his life in Caesarea, the great Roman port just north of modern-day Tel Aviv.

Basil begins by observing that when one assists the poor, one both offers a gift and issues a loan. It is a gift, Basil explains, "because of the expectation of no repayment, but a loan because of the great gift of the Master who pays in his place." Basil goes on to say that though God has received mere "trifling things through a poor man," he will, in the end, "give great things in return." This is a remarkable text, for it underscores the *sacrificial* character of charity. One might think that the poor man alone benefits from charity and that God, residing in heaven, takes note of the good deed done to another and prepares the appropriate reward. But Basil says something quite different. It is not merely the poor but God himself who receives these "trifling things." God resides—even becomes incarnate—in the destitute. The vertical nature of this exchange recalls what we learned earlier from the words of the Jewish beggar: "Acquire a merit in heaven through a gift to me."

It is precisely the portrayal of the poor man as a point of linkage between heaven and earth that leads Basil to cite Proverbs 19:17 and to echo the words of Rabbi Gamaliel. Basil puts this question to his congregation: "If one of the rich men in the city would promise you payment on behalf of another, wouldn't you accept his pledge?" The implied answer, as in the midrash, is undoubtedly "Yes!" Who wouldn't make a loan that was guaranteed by man of means? This leads Basil to his main point: "Yet you don't accept God as surety for the gift you would give to the poor." In exasperation over this lack of faith, Basil urges his audience to show faith in God and open up their pocket books: "Give the money, since it is lying idle, without weighing it down with additional charges, and it will be good for both of you. There will be for you [the donor] the assurance of the money's safety because of [God's] custody; for [the poor] who receives it, there is the advantage of its use. And, if you are seeking additional payment, be satisfied with that from the Lord. He Himself will pay the interest for the poor. Expect kindly acts from Him who is truly kind."

Rabbi Gamaliel and St. Basil were well aware of the counterintuitive nature of the claims they were making. For ancient persons did not instinctively view the world as ordered to the flourishing of those who were generous. For them, the world often manifested itself as "red in tooth and claw." It took a considerable amount of faith to act as though things were different. Jews and Christians took such an interest in charity because of what it implied about the nature of the created order.

This brings us to a concern that many will share: Does the church revere the practice of charity solely because of the reward that God has promised? This sounds disturbingly close to the "prosperity gospel," which preys on the gullible by claiming that tithing will allow one to buy a BMW and pay off one's mortgage all at the same time. Most people are far more comfortable with the teaching of the ancient Jewish sage Antigonus of Socho (second century B.C.): "Be not like servants who serve their master on condition of receiving a gift."

Here it is helpful to examine the scriptural bases of this tradition. They derive for the most part from the book of

Proverbs, a central pillar in what biblical scholars often refer to as ancient Israel's "wisdom" literature. To interpret any proverb well, one must be sensitive to the context in which it is to be applied. The challenge for the reader of these wisdom sayings is to determine the specific dimension of human life that they are trying to address. For our purposes, the most important proverb could be paraphrased: "Treasures gained by hoarding provide no benefit, but generosity to the poor delivers from death" (Proverbs 10:2).

The question that stands behind this proverb is: What's the best way to save for the future?—a question that has concerned human beings for centuries. Imagine that you have somehow come into an enormous fortune. Rather than giving in to the urge to spend it all immediately, you ponder how it might be invested to provide an endowment for the future. In front of you are two advisers: one a conventional financial analyst who urges you to invest in a broadly diversified set of index funds that would stand an excellent chance of providing you with a secure retirement at the age of sixty-five; the other a saint or *tsaddiq* who argues that God created the world out of charity and as a result true prosperity depends on finding a way to follow God's own example—to ride, as it were, with the current of creation. Fund your heavenly treasury by being generous to the poor, he advises. Though it is technically correct that this religious person would be appealing to your natural inclination for self-preservation, the act of funding such a treasury could hardly be considered self-interested in the simple sense of the term. Compared with following the financial analyst's advice, imitating the generosity of God would seem to be fraught with far greater risk. Lending to God in this fashion might better be conceived of as a means for the religious believer to enact what he professes, a way for him to put his money where his mouth is.

The notion of a heavenly treasury discloses to us something about the character of God and the sort of world he has created. Human beings have a deep desire to know and believe that the world is a place formed and guided by charity. The notion of a heavenly treasury teaches us that giving to one's neighbor is not reducible to a Kantian "duty." It is a declaration about the metaphysical structure of the world. Charitable works are not just a good deeds; they are a proclamation of the gospel. If one swims with the currents of the world God has ordered providentially, one will be rewarded a hundred fold (see Mark 10:30).

Why is it, one might ask, that the life of Mother Teresa moved so many people?—and not just Christians, but also Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and even nonbelievers. I would suggest that her popularity rests in the fact that she enacted the sort of faith embodied in our proverb. But I would also want to contend that it is not just her faith that attracts our admiration, but the statement that her life makes about the nature of the world. Though all appearances would suggest that it is the financial markets that make the world go round, saints like Mother Teresa make a powerful counterclaim. In serving the poor, they not only provide concrete material help to the down-and-out; they also reveal to us the hidden structure of the universe.

Steven Pinker, a professor of psychology at Harvard, wrote an article in the *New York Times Magazine* lamenting that the world showers such esteem on Mother Teresa in light of the far greater good that Bill and Melinda Gates have done. Gates, Pinker writes, "crunched the numbers and determined that he could alleviate the most misery by fighting everyday scourges in the developing world like malaria, diarrhea, and parasites."

Pinker never explains how he knows that the Gateses established their foundation according to such utilitarian considerations. Be that as it may, utilitarian value is not the only index for measuring the effects of charity. However much the Gateses might give away, their daily life remains, by and large, unaffected. They remain, in spite of this enormous donation, one of the wealthiest couples in the world. Mother Teresa, on the other hand, gave up all she had to serve the poorest of the poor.

Pinker wisely concedes that it is unlikely that his praise for the Gateses will win them more admirers than Mother Teresa has. This, he claims, is not because of the profundity of her sacrifice but because "our heads can be turned by an *aura* of sanctity, distracting us from a more *objective* reckoning of the actions that make people suffer or flourish" (emphasis mine). Mother Teresa, he asserts, "was the very embodiment of saintliness: white-clad, sad-eyed, ascetic and often photographed with the wretched of the earth." In Pinker's eyes, the world has been taken in by mere appearances: her simple white vestments and the "photo-ops" in which she appeared with the poorest of the poor.

This is an amazing reduction of what Mother Teresa offered to her followers and admirers. When she started her religious order, the entire premise of the organization was the gift of one's *total self* to the poor. She refused on principle to establish any kind of endowment that would have relieved the sisters of having to rely entirely on God, or made it harder for them to identify completely with the poor whom they served. Every day she and her sisters put the success of their work in the hands of God. One well-educated Indian professor of sciences, when asked about her admiration for Mother Teresa, said: "I am an unbeliever, but I feel I need an anchor. Mother Teresa is an anchor."

Whether we are believers or unbelievers, I think it is fair to say that most of us want an account of human goodness that goes deeper than purely utilitarian measures of success. We want to believe that the world itself is good and, at least in the long run, rewards a life of charity. And that is the deep reason why the financial metaphor of funding a treasury in heaven became so significant for ancient Jews and Christians. The important point was not so much what they would gain from charity but what acts of charity say about the character of the world God has created. ■

Peace Activism

What Is It Good For?

Andrew J. Bacevich & R. Scott Appleby

Andrew J. Bacevich

From time to time over the past decade, I've visited precincts that I might once have considered alien territory. More specifically, I've spoken to any number of antiwar groups.

Recently I visited with one such group in Maine. Those in attendance reflected the standard "peace & justice" demographic. For starters, they were almost entirely white. More or less evenly balanced in terms of gender, they were also long in the tooth. The mean age of the audience had to be well above sixty. If they exuded a faintly countercultural sensibility, it was gentle and polite rather than in-your-face. Whatever the proportion of aging hippies to straight-laced citizens, they came across as earnest, well-informed, and articulate. They listened intently, asked good questions, and did not hesitate to express opinions, which were invariably thoughtful. They were, in short, admirable in every way.

This time, however, the evening concluded with an unexpected twist. After we adjourned, a member of the audience approached and asked me to respond to something that had troubled him for quite some time. Wasn't it the case, he asked, that peace activists were actually "enablers"? However well-intentioned, didn't the puniness of their protest serve inadvertently to lend a simulacrum of legitimacy to the very policies to which they objected?

My instinctive reaction was to disagree. Not so, I replied. Bearing witness to truth is itself a worthy act. Whether or not truth prevails as a consequence is not the issue. The main thing is to keep faith with principle.

However vaguely, I had in mind the position staked out by Dorothy Day in charging Catholic Workers to remain steadfast in the face of disappointment. "Success, as the world determines it," she wrote in May 1972, "is not the criterion by which a movement should be judged." For Day, what mattered most was fidelity. "We must be prepared and ready to face seeming failure," she continued.

> The most important thing is that we adhere to [Christian] values, which transcend time and for which we will be asked a personal accounting, not as to whether they succeeded...but as to whether we remained true to them even though the whole world go otherwise.

So too, even if making little apparent headway, present-day peace activists ought to persevere. Constancy satisfies the demands of honor and duty. Do your utmost and leave the rest to Fate or Providence or God. So at least, as I hastily gathered my things, I tried to persuade my interlocutor.

Yet throughout the long drive home, his question nagged. And the more I reflected on my own response, the less convincing it became.

For Dorothy Day, the unfolding of salvation history may have provided an appropriate context in which to situate the Catholic Worker movement (or Christianity as a whole). In that context, the timetable may be unknown, but the outcome is predetermined. The Good News ultimately culminates in good news. Hence Day's counsel of patience.

For the peace movement, however, it's what happens in the meantime that counts. Whatever may await humanity at the end of time, afflictions endured in the here-and-now matter a great deal. Peace activists cannot state with confidence that history will ultimately yield a happy verdict. The persistence of large-scale political violence suggests grimmer possibilities.

Viewed from this perspective, does the present-day peace movement serve any practical purpose? In terms of influencing U. S. policy, not that I can see.

Evidence that grassroots agitation against war is making the United States any less warlike is hard to come by. The militarization of American statecraft, an outgrowth of the Cold War, continues apace. In the decades since the collapse of communism, the nation's infatuation with military power and its penchant for military intervention have become, if anything, more pronounced. In Washington, "All options remain on the table" is a common refrain. As peace activists see it, a critical evaluation of basic U.S. national-security

policies might deserve a place on that metaphorical piece of furniture. But that's one option that seemingly qualifies as too heretical even to consider as far as the nation's political leaders are concerned.

Division and dysfunction pervade our political system. Yet in the realm of national security, if nowhere else, consensus prevails—indeed, is taken for granted. Purportedly favoring small government, Republicans love a big Pentagon and reject suggestions that its budget might be trimmed a wee bit. A once-dovish Democratic Party has long since become a nesting place for hawks. (My favorite recent news story recounts the vigorous efforts by Vermont's Bernie Sanders, the U.S. Senate's one and only socialist, to cajole the Air Force into stationing a batch of new F35s not far from downtown Burlington; sure the noisy, expensive F35 shows signs of being a gold-plated dud, but fighter jets mean jobs.)

The women finally finding employment in the upper echelons of the national-security establishment nevertheless further cement this consensus. Today, Washington's power elite accommodates and even welcomes members of the sisterhood, a development widely hailed as indicative of "progress."

Arguably, however, this much-celebrated empowerment of women has produced results other than those inspiring Jane Addams back in 1915 to found the Women's Peace Party. "As women," the party platform declared, "we feel a peculiar passion of revolt against both the cruelty and the waste of war. As women, we are especially the custodians of the life of the ages." Observers may differ in their assessment of how effectively Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton, and Susan Rice have performed their duties, but no one will charge them with translating the goals of the Women's Peace Party into public policy. Among the priorities to which politically active women subscribe today, removing barriers to women serving in combat rates higher than promoting alternatives to war. To share Addams's conviction that women might have an innate aversion to war now qualifies as a form of sexism.

Not inconsequentially, the agenda-setting press validates and supports this consensus. The editorial pages of the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* are reliably bellicose. Although editors of the *New York Times* expressed regret for the paper's part in promoting the bogus case for toppling Saddam Hussein, they have long ceased crying over milk spilt a whole decade ago. As *Times* columnist Bill Keller, now keen to topple Bashar al-Assad, recently wrote, "Getting Syria right starts with getting over Iraq." Peace activists might think it a tad premature to confer a general grant of absolution on all those implicated in that prior debacle. Keller replies, in effect, "Who asked you?"

Why does the mainstream media collude with the state in propping up the reigning national-security paradigm? Why is the peace movement's critique of that paradigm so easily brushed aside? Not because that paradigm works, as least not if we tally up the costs and consequences stemming from U.S. policy.

Anti-war protesters march through downtown San Francisco on January 27, 2007.

CNS PHOTO/GREG TARCZYNSKI

Of course, the national-security apparatus seldom bothers to assess costs and consequences. By comparison, the Catholic Church represents the very model of accountability. Members of the church hierarchy have repeatedly apologized for the clergy sexual-abuse scandal. When will the military hierarchy apologize for bungling the Iraq War? Bishops at least have the decency to express contrition. Admirals and generals acknowledge no comparable obligation—nor are they expected to.

The manifest shortcomings of existing U. S. national security arrangements—too many wars fought at too high a cost with too little to show in terms of results—would doom any "real world" enterprise to failure and collapse. These arrangements persist for one overriding reason: Among the majority of Americans, they command broad, tacit assent. By and large, Americans are pretty much OK with how the Pentagon spends its money and what it does. Peace activists might get all hot and bothered by evidence of ineptitude, malfeasance, and morally dubious undertakings, but most of their fellow citizens do not.

Peace activists want fundamental change: fewer interventions, leaner military budgets, greater attention to fostering peace instead of fomenting wars. Yet they've not succeeded in persuading others to endorse those propositions. Taken together, the worldview shared by those granted access to elite policy circles, the public's casual acceptance of hitherto proscribed practices such as assassination and preventive war, and the widespread belief that civic duty extends no further than offering vapid expressions of support for "the troops" constitute a rolling verdict of sorts. It's democracy in action, with the warmongers rather than the peaceniks claiming a clear majority of the vote. Sure, the activists are out there making their case—organizing, protesting, signing petitions, holding meetings—but what they have on offer isn't selling.

In that regard, peace activists *do*, even if unintentionally, function as enablers. Democracy needs losers who accept outcomes they deem unfavorable, their acceptance bestowing on the system the appearance of being licit. This describes the de facto function of the present-day peace movement. By their very actions, its members sustain the pretense of a functioning democracy that in matters involving war and peace actively invites people to choose between distinct alternatives. In reality, alternatives are ignored or suppressed. What'll you have? Coke or Pepsi? Missile-firing drones or SEAL Team 6?

Whatever its relevance to individuals, Dorothy Day's charge to remain steadfast even though "the whole world go otherwise" cannot provide the peace movement with an adequate basis for self-evaluation. A movement accepting such a definition of purpose will languish as little more than a fading symbol of futility, tainted with complicity while being simultaneously ignored.

As things stand now, if the peace movement ceased to exist, how long would it be before anyone noticed? Who would care?

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R. Scott Appleby

Andrew Bacevich's essay is confused—theologically, conceptually, and factually. As a result, it delivers half-truths, not least regarding "the peace movement." Let's begin with the theological. Dorothy Day is not our only option for gauging the impact of peacebuilding. Indeed, Bacevich's version of Day is not even a *recognizable* theological option. Contra Bacevich, Kingdom of God theology—what he refers to as "salvation history"—hardly ignores "afflictions endured in the here-and-now"; nor does it pospone the pursuit of justice and the repair of the earth until "the end of time." The reason Day and her followers concentrated on the works of mercy, prophetic witness, and solidarity with the victims of structural, cultural, and physical violence is that such actions constitute participation in God's redemptive presence *now, here, on this earth*. Living as the poor and among the homeless, eschewing all forms of violence, railing against militarism—these were not futile acts or hollow metaphors but primary symbols, fully participating in the reality to which they refer. People are *really* fed, housed, clothed, stuck up for—in a word, loved. When the followers of John the Baptist asked Jesus if he was the Messiah, he did not reply: Just wait until the end of time and see. Rather, he pointed to the restoration of wholeness in the here-and-now: the blind see, the lame walk, the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

And yet...while on earth, they are loved "in the ruins." The world continues to groan under the weight of sin. The signs Jesus invoked were eschatological—anticipatory of the time of fulfillment, glimmerings of the "already but not yet" paradox in which we Christians find ourselves embedded.

Bacevich is understandably restless; he wants more, as do we all. By focusing exclusively on the "not yet," however, he mistakes the part for the whole. God's will is done on earth (by the meek, the pure of heart, the merciful and, yes, the peacemakers), if not quite "as it is in heaven." In heaven, presumably, the unjust structures and the evil in men's hearts are no longer obstacles to realizing the profound and enduring peace we seek.

And so the prophet's question, which is also the hopeful theme undergirding Bacevich's eloquent jeremiads, remains central: How do we transform the sinful structures of earth into the righteous society of heaven, or at least nudge them in that direction? Certainly not by caricaturing the peace-and-justice-oriented generations emerging from universities, faith communities, civil-society organizations, and conflict zones. Herein lies Bacevich's second confusion—presenting the good and "admirable" burghers of Camden, Maine, as representatives of "the peace movement." Bacevich knows better. He has met the dedicated young professionals with expertise in conflict mediation, human rights and international law, economic development and, yes, grassroots political activism. He has taught and mentored some of the young men and women who now serve in government, in nongovernmental organizations and in the private sector, crafting alternatives to military intervention. Like so many of our colleagues in the academy, he knows firsthand that a vital, moral, imaginative, and relentless cohort is being unleashed on unsuspecting colleagues and superiors. Conceptualizing "the peace movement" as a band of aging hippies simply won't do.

Is this generation of professional peacebuilders what Bacevich call "the peace movement"? No, although one might trace familial, religious, and some ideological continuities across generations. The peace movement to which he refers, I suspect, has a long and varied heritage, from the conscientious objectors and "draft dodgers" of the 1960s to the antinuke activists of the Reagan era and beyond. Widespread opposition to the Vietnam War limited U.S. war-making options and ultimately forced the withdrawal of American troops. The disarmament campaigns of the 1980s created a climate of support for arms control that contributed to the end of the Cold War.

While these activists did not succeed in eliminating nuclear weapons or stifling our political leadership's appetite for war, they did raise awareness and provided Americans and Europeans with a vocabulary and a vision of international cooperation, trade, and arms reduction with which presidents, including the current occupant of the Oval Office, have been forced to grapple. Change comes slowly to a people steeped in war; the impact of social moments is measured only after decades, and "prevention" is impossible to prove (the bomb that didn't explode).

And, not least, seeds sown by Cold War peace activists may be bearing fruit in today's proliferation of human-rights organizations, relief and development agencies, and peacebuilding NGOs. Indeed, the facts point in the direction of progress. Obama was elected with a mandate to end the Iraq War, and the withdrawal from Afghanistan is welcomed by a majority of Americans. The Defense budget remains a sacred cow, but these creatures are being sacrificed, left and right, in our era of fiscal austerity. Restore the draft and watch the bandwagon against war roll; even nationalism ain't what it used to be. Role models abound, from Pope Francis to the Dalai Lama, Bill Gates to, well, Andrew Bacevich. The globalizing world is no picnic, especially for the underclasses. But from my glass-half-full perspective, a new generation offers genuine promise for rebooting the national and global moral imagination.

This emergent "already" is also part of the big picture, along with the persistence of unbridled militarism; let's keep working on the "not yet." In doing so, why dismiss those who share the vision and who kindle young and old imaginations? In this battle for alternatives to constant war, we need all the friends we can find. ■

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Through a Glass Darkly

How We Came to Blame the Jews

John Connelly

In this monumental and brilliantly argued intellectual history David Nirenberg asks how influential figures in the Western tradition have thought about Judaism over nearly three thousand years. What "work" have the Jews done for others seeking to make sense of their place in the cosmos? As the book's title suggests, that work has been mostly negative, even destructive.

Though Nirenberg tells of hostility toward Judaism in ancient Egypt, it was Christianity that played the central role in generating poisonous ideas about Jews, and Nirenberg emphasizes St. Paul, who associated Judaism with the "flesh" and all that it stood for: the terrestrial, the literal, the material, the enslaved. Nirenberg knows that this flesh-spirit dichotomy has roots in Hellenistic philosophy and that Paul "did not intend his letter [to the Galatians] as an attack on Judaism." Yet generations of Gentile Christians used this dichotomy as a means of exclusion, wielding it against Jewish communities in their midst. More fundamentally, by using Judaism to justify their existence as the "True Israel"—the realization of Jewish prophecy—Christians from the start cast Jews as exemplars of hypocrisy and Jewish claims to piety as dissimulation, a denial of genuine knowledge of the truth. Like the feigned holiness of the Pharisees in the Gospels, Jewish faithfulness was an act designed to distract others from real faith. Both Christianity and Islam depicted Jews as those who resist God, and projected "Jewish attributes"—lying, envy, enmity, greed, cowardice, materialism—as the equivalent of infections, requiring "powerful diagnostics."

Anti-Judaism
The Western Tradition
David Nirenberg
W. W. Norton, $35, 579 pp.

Over the centuries a worldview emerged by which virtually any menacing danger could be explained through Judaism. "Jewish duplicity and enmity," writes Nirenberg, "would become a basic axiom" of both Islamic and Christian worldviews, with "the Jews cast as confounders of truth, master hypocrites, and even agents of the devil." Each generation found itself building on older tropes, routinely associating Jews with legalism and materialism. Jews did not even have to be present for these ideas to continue: any time tyranny, private interest, or a focus on "flesh" over "spirit" was perceived to exist, somehow Judaism was at work. These ideas were reinforced by a tendency to channel Jews into specific economic activities, such as money-lending, and to associate them with the princes who gave them protection, making Jews a kind of "hyper-subject." In medieval times, citizens of towns like Toulouse demanded the expulsion of Jews as a form of liberation from subjection, associating Jews with the monarch's power.

The Enlightenment, Nirenberg explains, did not overthrow Christian ideas about Jews, but merely translated them into new terms. Obsessive concern about the "Jewishness" of persons or policies accompanied Europeans into the seventeenth century and beyond. Nirenberg catalogues the manifold uses to which the French *philosophes* put Judaism in constructing their worldview; demonstrates that such major figures as Locke and Kant deployed Jews negatively in fashioning their arguments on tolerance and freedom; and discovers that such idealist and romantic philosophers as Hegel, Heine, and Fichte all looked upon Judaism as a problem to be overcome. Nirenberg then makes a huge leap to the early twentieth century and to debates among German philosophers who stigmatized all abstract, logical, or supposedly hyperrational thought as "Jewish." During the 1920s this stigmatizing tendency stretched across academic disciplines, involving not only racialized biology but also mathematics and physics. Nirenberg makes clear that the long history of thinking he traces did not "cause" the Holocaust. The worldview he describes was "broadly shared," he points out, which may explain "why the Germans found so many willing collaborators for their projects of extermination in many of the lands they occupied." But he states, convincingly I think, that without this history of thought the Holocaust would have been inconceivable.

Nirenberg is not interested simply in hatred. The subject is vaster than that. His massive research across a wide range of sources—some of them in Arabic—makes clear that anti-Judaism was not simply bigotry, but rather a consuming

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concern, shaping how we think about questions deep and mundane. No one has demonstrated with such penetrating focus the extent to which ideas about Jews have filtered into every crack of thought we call Western. Yet basic contours of this plot will seem familiar to those versed in the literature; scholars such as Leon Poliakov, Abraham Sachar, and Robert Wistrich have told how theological ideas were translated into ever new forms of contempt over the ages.

Why did this contempt focus on the Jews? How could a tiny minority "come to represent for so many the evolving evils of the capitalist world order?" With inspiration from Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Nirenberg writes that "the liquidation of the Jews of Europe was not grounded in 'reality.' It took place in the vast gap between an explanatory framework (anti-Semitism) that made satisfying sense of the world to a significant portion of its citizens, and the complexity of the world itself." This explanatory framework gave people "cognitive comfort." Yet why people adopt one such framework and not another is a mystery.

The purpose of Nirenberg's book is moral: to "encourage reflection about our 'projective behavior,' that is, about the ways in which our deployment of concepts into and onto the world might generate 'pathological' fantasies of Judaism." But why would a person in the grip of fantasy turn to a work of scholarship? And what exactly does it mean to examine one's "explanatory framework"? If such a thing exists, how does one get outside it to scrutinize it? This is especially challenging when such a framework is grounded in sacred texts—which for believers are divinely inspired.

Compounding these difficulties is the author's skepticism about his own field. Despite (or perhaps because of) his decades of work as a historian, Nirenberg has little faith in the powers of historical explanation. Though he analyzes ideas expressed by intellectuals over many centuries, he cautions readers wondering how "the ideas of these thinkers influenced and were influenced by the ideologies of their age" to "remember that these questions are in some sense unanswerable even at the level of an individual, let alone a complex society of tens of millions." To make his case Nirenberg takes us to an evident mystery: what motivated a man such as Joseph Goebbels, taught in his youth by Jesuits, to become Hitler's propaganda minister, a man deeply complicit in genocide? In a provocative passage, Nirenberg asserts that the directive to burn "un-German" books in 1934—an event marking, in the words of Goebbels, the end of an "age of rampant Jewish intellectualism"—had some connection to the Gospels, which according to Nirenberg "characterize Jewish sects like the Pharisees as desiring empty wisdom and striving for reputation and titles, and indeed condemn the Jewish 'scribbling classes' more generally: 'I bless you father...for hiding these things from the learned and clever and revealing them to little children'" (Matthew 11: 25).

Yet here we encounter a problem of method. It is one thing

Woodcut of Jews being burned alive in Deggendorf, Bavaria, for alleged desecration of the host, 1492

to depict how the Gospels have been read, another to make claims about what they actually say. In fact the canonical Gospels do not denigrate "Jewish scribbling classes." True, Jesus is depicted as having heaped scorn on hypocrites, Pharisees, and scribes; but he and his followers were as Jewish as the scribes and Pharisees. Indeed the entire world in which Jesus operated was Jewish. It is therefore inaccurate to claim, as Nirenberg does, that Jesus and Paul presented their truths as "both a fulfillment and an overcoming of Judaism." Although that is indeed how the relationship between Christianity and Judaism was understood by Christians for almost two millennia, a careful reading of the New Testament (especially in the shadow of the Holocaust) shows that neither Jesus nor Paul considered their missions in such terms. The passage from Matthew cited by Nirenberg makes no reference to Jews or Pharisees, but rather reflects on the mysterious ways in which the Father makes wisdom known to humanity. It is also inaccurate to accuse the synoptics of the "alignment of figures of Judaism with Satan." Matthew, for instance, mentions Satan three times, and the only Jew Matthew's Jesus associates Satan with is Peter. Are we to understand Christ's invectives against his Jewish disciples as anti-Judaic?

Nirenberg reads the synoptics through the anti-Judaic lenses used by Gentile Christians of later generations, who assumed for example that Christ's invectives against the Pharisees in Matthew 23 are a reproach of Israel. The unfortunate result of this method is to make Jesus anti-Judaic.

Nirenberg's reading of Paul's epistles raises questions along similar lines. He makes much of Galatians 2:14, a passage in which Paul reprimands his fellow Jew Cephas for the hypocrisy of having shared table with gentiles yet then (under the influence of James) requiring that gentiles follow Jewish customs. "Follow Jewish customs" is the English equivalent of the Greek verb *ἰουδαΐζω* (which Nirenberg translates as "Judaize"). Citing no evidence, Nirenberg writes that Paul had "coined" this word "to describe slippage from the saving to the killing side of his table of antimonies." Whether or not Paul coined "Judaize" (Nirenberg himself shows it was used in the Septuagint) he never used it again, and in Galatians he did not use the word to negative effect. Any reader of this fragment can easily discern that Paul is criticizing hypocrisy and not Jews or Judaism. Nirenberg

HARTMANN SCHEDEL, 1440–1514

absolves Paul of condemning "observance of Jewish law" by Jews, yet later he associates Paul (with Jerome, Luther, and Marx) with the view that Judaism and Judaizing constitute a "danger." However, readers of the Pauline letters will find no instance where the apostle projects Judaism in such terms.

The point here is not to dispute that Paul propagated harmful antimonies (none more so than the idea that Israel of the spirit stood against Israel of the flesh). The point is that Christian Scripture is troubling enough without being saddled with additional problems, especially in a time when general knowledge of that Scripture is reaching new lows. Encountering Nirenberg's claim that Martin Luther in 1532 was "presumably inspired" by Matthew 18:6 when he announced, outrageously, that if asked to baptize a Jew, he would put a millstone around that Jew's neck and push him from a bridge into the Elbe river, a reader not knowledgeable of Matthew might assume that Christ spoke of throwing Jews into water. At another point Nirenberg says that the "Gospels use Jewish enmity to narrate the life and death of Jesus." That is true of John but not the synoptics.

Having scrutinized hundreds of years of rhetorical abuse of Jews by Christians, Nirenberg knows that Christianity has authorized many different attitudes toward Judaism. At a talk I attended in Berkeley, Nirenberg noted that all three Abrahamic traditions have the potential to produce intolerance; the crucial question is the context within which they are used—context as synonym for "explanatory framework," "cognitive frame," "habits of thought," or "worldview," things people put on or take off for reasons that are beyond the concern of intellectual historians. The example he gave of Christianity's potential to produce intolerance was Luke 19:27, which features the following: "But as for the enemies of mine who did not want me for their king, bring them here and slaughter them in my presence."

After the talk I rushed home and ascertained that these words were in fact not a directive of Christ to anyone. The words of the "king" appeared in a parable. Nirenberg acknowledges this in his book, but issues a caution. "Since these words appear in a parable, many modern readers prefer to separate them from Jesus," yet "some ancient ones understood them as instructions, and applied them to the Jews." But are not modern readers—that is, the readers or our day—in a better position to interpret Scripture than those of earlier generations? Nirenberg is skeptical. How, he asks, can we tell "whether we are being adequately reflective in our 'projective behavior?'" He laments the "difficulty" of finding a "platform for perspective."

Roman Catholic readers will object that they have a secure platform for perspective on Christian-Jewish relations, namely the interpretation authorized at the Second Vatican Council, where the church refuted the idea that Jews were simply "Israel of the flesh," along with better known and

arguably more destructive elements of theological anti-Judaism. Chapter 4 of *Nostra aetate* speaks of the Jews as "Stock of Abraham," making clear that the historical Jewish people is the Israel that Paul speaks of in Romans 9–11, toward whom the promises of God remain in force. Again echoing St. Paul in Romans, *Nostra aetate* says that God holds the Jews "most dear."

These are teachings one does not have to take on faith alone, or out of respect for the magisterium. They reflect a consensus that has grown among theologians of many backgrounds about new readings of any number of New Testament texts. Take, for example, the growing agreement that the parable of the wicked vintners in Matthew 21 does not signal a transfer of promises from the people of Israel to another nation, but rather from the leaders with whom Jesus conducted his polemic. There is no need to identify these leaders with the whole Jewish people; simple logic tells us that criticism of an elite does not imply criticism of an entire people. Recent interpretations also show that Paul, despite his argument with other Jewish Christians about circumcision and dietary habits, remained faithful to the Torah, and held it appropriate for other Jews to do so as well.

This turn from anti-Judaism emerged from something not possible before World War II—a dialogue of Christians with the other—and reflects decades of conversations between Christians and Jews in which both sides have shaped the emerging Christian view. The Catholic view is Catholic but not simply Catholic. One intellectual who rejected any imputation of anti-Judaism to Jesus was the French-Jewish historian Jules Isaac, who lost his wife and daughter in the Holocaust, and while in hiding from the Nazis wrote *Jesus and Israel*, a deeply engaged study showing that anti-Judaic readings of the New Testament were not necessary. Looking at the Gospels he ascertained that "with rare exceptions, wherever Jesus went the Jewish people took him to their hearts"—and Jesus, he wrote further, heaped "signs of love and compassion on them in return." Nothing could contrast more starkly to Nirenberg's belief that the Gospels "represent Jewish resistance to Jesus." On Christ's polemic with the Pharisees—which Nirenberg takes as essentially anti-Judaic—Isaac wrote as follows:

> Christ is said to have pronounced a sentence of condemnation and alienation on the Jewish people. But why, in contradiction of his own Gospel of love and forgiveness, should he have condemned his own people, the only people to whom he chose to speak—his own people, among whom he found not only bitter enemies but fervent disciples and adoring followers? We have every reason to believe that the real object of his condemnation is the real subject of guilt, a certain pharisaism to be found in all times and in all peoples, in every religion and in every church.

Nirenberg is a medievalist, but his intuition that scriptural texts are read according to context is shaped inevitably by a modern reality—namely, that scholars read these texts in the shadow of the Holocaust. That is far from saying that new readings are merely a "matter of preference." As the Yale theologian John Gager and others have argued, our current context shows that earlier readings were not only unnecessary, but that they were *wrong*.

Which brings us back to the question of whether scholars operating in a secular context can possibly reach out to—and convince—people of belief on questions grounded in revelation. Before such an outreach begins, those attempting it should clear away one common misconception about religion: that it necessarily involves a jump from reason to blind faith. The striking thing about refutations of supposed New Testament anti-Judaism is how securely they are based in carefully reasoned argument proceeding from critical-historical analysis that was not possible in the premodern period (indeed for Catholic exegetes it was forbidden until the 1940s). Such analyses have brought us to an awareness that anti-Judaism was produced by the interests and uncritical assumptions of previous ages. One does not need to be an adherent of any faith tradition to accede to this. Regardless of their background, historians can ascertain movement in the history of theological ideas, just as they might in economic thought. And just as virtually no serious economist today would invoke ideas from the 1920s to fight recession, so no one today need treat approaches to Matthew or Paul from earlier centuries as equal to readings of our own day. Sometimes humans learn from the past—even intellectuals.

Progress in ideas is always questionable, and there can be reversals. Beyond the question of whether any particular intellectual is secular or religious lies the crucial and more interesting one of whether he or she is engaged with the moral concerns of the modern world. David Nirenberg is certainly that. Putting aside all the methodological doubts that plague the social sciences in our day, one can safely assert, as he does, that the sources of anti-Semitism originally lie in theological ideas. What theologians have taught us is that anti-Judaic readings grew out of a cognitive framework we call supersessionism, the belief that Christianity had displaced Judaism and become the New Israel. In the shadow of the Holocaust we recognize such a view not only as unnecessary—not generated by the texts—but mistaken.

Still, Nirenberg's timely, erudite, and coolly passionate intervention cautions against complacency. The recent row over Pope Benedict's Good Friday Prayer for the Jews reminds us that the history of Christian anti-Judaism has deep, still vital sources, and that Christian triumphalism remains a temptation: even one of our time's leading theologians did not see the contradiction between praying that Jews "acknowledge Jesus Christ is the Savior of all men" and the teaching of Vatican II. Nineteen centuries of supersessionism were not simply a "misunderstanding" that can now be comfortably forgotten, and the newly authoritative church teaching is not a definitive, final word but rather a set of ideas to be actively contemplated and widely taught. ■

Celia Wren

Failure, Succession, Success

PBS'S 'GREAT PERFORMANCES: THE HOLLOW CROWN'

Political leaders often seem like an alien breed of humanity. They voluntarily give up privacy. They willingly fritter away their lives at fundraisers. They abandon sincerity and logic in favor of expedient posturing. They usually have an overactive schmooze gland.

But the truly successful statesman is not a breed apart—or so one might conclude after watching *The Hollow Crown*, the marvelous quartet of new Shakespeare films airing through October 11 on PBS, as part of the *Great Performances* series. A suspenseful and lyrical dovetailing of four of the Bard's history plays—*Richard II; Henry IV, Part 1; Henry IV, Part 2*; and *Henry V*, which tell a single story—this de facto miniseries is fast-paced, accessible, gorgeously cinematic, and packed with riveting performances. Through bold visual choices and some subtle textual editing, the series foregrounds Shakespeare's musings about populism and the qualities that make a great leader.

These themes gain resonance in the miniseries format, as parts of the overarching story amplify and contextualize each other. To begin with, we get the decidedly not-great leader. In *Richard II* (which aired on September 20), Ben Whishaw plays the king as the epitome of flaky, decadent elitism: he dresses in gold robes, travels with a pet monkey, and—disdainful of justice and public opinion—breezily gives an order to seize the estate of his cousin, Henry Bolingbroke (Rory Kinnear). Prompted by that and other unseemly acts—like Richard's overspending—Bolingbroke and other nobles depose the king.

Richard's brooding observation that bluebloods, too, are mortal ("Within the hollow crown / That rounds the mortal temples of a king / Keeps Death his court") gives the series its title. And with the flamboyant highs and wretched lows of his career, *Richard II* becomes a study in contrasts. Here is King Richard on a battlement, so decked out in gilt he looks like the golden calf; there he is, deposed, flinching as people fling mud at him.

The contrasts increase in *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2*, airing on September 27 and October 4 (check local listings). Set during the reign of Bolingbroke, who has been crowned Henry IV (now played by a poignantly haggard Jeremy Irons), these two films chronicle military rebellions led by aristocratic malcontents like Hotspur (the terrific Joe Armstrong). But they focus more on Henry IV's son, Prince Hal (the charismatic Tom Hiddleston), who's brainy and determined, but loves carousing with Falstaff (the superb Simon Russell Beale, mixing wit, vulgarity, and pathos).

Richard Eyre, who directs the *Henry IV*s, has adapted the scripts in such a way as to emphasize the disparity between environments—the crowded tavern and the cavernous throne room; the muddy, chaotic battlefields (filmed in gray tones) and the palace corridors, with stained-glass windows—and highlight how comfortable Hal is in all of them. For instance, rather than kick off with Henry IV's deliberative speech about peace and civil war—Shakespeare's original opening—this *Henry IV, Part 1* opens with shots of meat being chopped up outside a tavern. Inside the tavern, Hal rouses Falstaff from drunken sleep and lovingly mocks his licentious ways. Only after this lively scene has accustomed us to Hal as part-time plebian do we flash to the court, where Henry IV is fretting about his son's seeming dissipation.

Joe Armstrong as Hotspur in Henry IV Part 1

JOSS BARRATT

Relax, Henry: Hal isn't a wastrel. The prince enjoys boozing with Falstaff, but he is also teaching himself how to relate to commoners. That's a skill that serves him well when he ascends the throne and proceeds to invade France, an effort that involves repeatedly rallying troops. *Henry V*, directed by Thea Sharrock and airing on October 11, underscores this king's populist appeal by beginning with a flash-forward: a shot of the hoi polloi lined up to mourn at Henry V's funeral. A grubby child picks a flower and tosses it at the procession. The king's popularity demonstrated (and any glorification of war forestalled), the film launches into the play's familiar prologue ("O for a Muse of fire…").

Above all, *The Hollow Crown* depicts Hal-turned-Henry as a political leader who's emotionally whole. In one of the most moving moments in the series, in *Henry IV, Part 1*, Hal and Falstaff take turns jokingly impersonating Hal's scolding father. (Hiddleston's imitation of Irons's monarch is hilarious.) When Hal, playing the king, denigrates Falstaff, Falstaff—playing Hal—counters with a spirited defense: "Sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff…. Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world!"

The camera lingers on Hal's face. The prince's merriment falls away; his eyes slowly tear up. You know that Hal is looking into the future, seeing all the friends and activities he will have to abandon when he becomes a ruler. He will make the transition, but it will cost him—as it would cost any of us. ■

Lucja Swiatkowski Cannon

Forsaken Ally

Home Army soldiers fighting during the Warsaw Uprising.

The Eagle Unbowed
Poland and the Poles in the Second World War
Halik Kochanski
Harvard University Press, $35, 784 pp.

Poland's experience of World War II was unique. Invaded by both Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939, it was the only country occupied by foreign armies from the first day of the war to the last—and the only Allied country left behind the Iron Curtain afterward. Of all European nations Poland suffered the harshest occupation policies, witnessing genocide and suffering deportations, executions and starvation. The West's friendly image of "Uncle Joe" Stalin obscured Soviet persecution, not only during the war but also long into the Cold War, and enabled the cover-up of the Katyn Massacre. For this and other reasons, the real history of wartime Poland has gone largely untold in the West. But the end of the Communist era and its outright falsifications, along with the opening of long-closed archives, has allowed a fresh, comprehensive look; and now Halik Kochanski's *The Eagle Unbowed* presents this history in all its complexity. The book alters the perception of the war and challenges long-held Western assumptions.

One underappreciated aspect of the story is the military one. Poland made a significant contribution to Allied victory, fighting on virtually all fronts in Europe and North Africa. The various armies it fielded combined remnants of the defeated Polish Army; Polish exiles, including those deported to the Gulag in 1940–41 and released once the USSR aligned itself with the West; and the Home Army in occupied Poland itself, which constituted the largest resistance movement in Europe—not only a guerilla force, but an underground government that performed many of its functions under foreign occupation and maintained a readiness to take over at the moment of liberation. Aside from direct military manpower, the nation also contributed vast amounts of vital intelligence. On the eve of the war, the Polish government gave the British and French their first copies of Enigma, the German military coding machine, and the key to decoding its messages. Later, the Poles supplied the original V2 rocket and its full documentation. Throughout the war, the Home Army was providing comprehensive intelligence on the German Army as it struggled on the Eastern Front.

The Eagle Unbowed displays an impressive command of facts and a deep, nuanced understanding of terror and suffering in occupied Poland. Kochanski emphasizes the shock and disbelief experienced by both Jews and Poles, and later the West, at the fast-moving German extermination machine. She describes the Polish underground's efforts to help Jews, providing money to Jews in hiding and rescuing children from the ghettos to place in orphanages, private homes, and monasteries. (The Catholic Church supplied fake baptismal certificates.) An accomplished historian, the author traces strands of Polish and European history to their legacy in wartime attitudes and policies. But her book's most moving passages relate the haunting stories of survival contained in personal interviews and fragments of memoirs. Those stories illustrate that war is not only a military endeavor but a maelstrom with a lifelong impact on all caught up in it.

Kochanski divides the war in Poland into three periods: the 1939–41 Soviet-German collaboration under the Stalin-Hitler Pact; the 1941–43 German invasion of the Soviet Union; and the 1943-45 Soviet offensive on Berlin. These periods marked differing occupation policies. The first established the system of terror in which both occupiers cooperated in the destruction of Polish elites, culminating in the Katyn Massacre, the crowding of Jews into ghettoes, and the construction of the concentration camp in Auschwitz—built initially in 1940 to destroy Polish resistance, and subsequently enlarged into an extermination camp complex. The second period saw Poland become strategically critical to Germany, and its citizens suffer increased terror under the 1942 *Generalplan Ost*, which envisaged not only the Final Solution to the so-called Jewish question but also the starvation of 80 percent of the local non-German population.

The third period (1943–45), when the German Army failed to defeat the Soviets, saw a still greater economic exploitation of Poland, with food rations reduced to starvation levels. Germans established concentration and labor camps in Germany and forcibly sent more than a million Polish laborers there, replacing them with German settlers. The first region to be cleared was Lublin Province, a third of whose residents were murdered or deported to the camps; all in all, six-hundred-fifty

villages across Poland were destroyed in collective reprisals for acts of sabotage. During this phase the Home Army had to contend not only with murderous German policies but also with hostile Soviet partisans—including those from the revived Polish Communist party, parachuted into Poland by the Soviets in 1943, who denounced the Home Army to the Gestapo. Soviet policies were fully manifest during the Warsaw Uprising, when the Red Army stood by on the other side of the Vistula River while the uprising raged, and in the routine persecutions of the Home Army in areas under Soviet jurisdiction. Though the Western Allies were slow to grasp the malicious nature of the Soviet regime, Polish fears about Stalin's intentions proved justified.

The Eagle Unbowed is an almost uniformly excellent treatment of the overwhelming devastation the Polish people suffered in the bloodlands of Central Europe. It shows a nation persistently struggling in the face of terror and remaining unbowed. The book's richness of facts and themes, amplified over many hundreds of pages, can make for difficult reading at times. Nevertheless, it is a great achievement to present so complicated a story, much of it unknown in the West, in such a clear and balanced way. Kochanski's look at the Soviet killings and Siberian exile, following the dark years of the German occupation and Holocaust, counters the image of "the good war" prevalent in the West. As her vivid descriptions of war make all too clear, both Germany and the Soviet Union engaged in terror against the population of occupied Poland. And this terror did not stop with the end of the war but continued in the totalitarian system the Soviets imposed afterward. This enormous and emphatic book will have a shattering impact on our understanding of the war. ■

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Cyril O'Regan

A Doomed Project?

Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit

The Idealist Logic of Modern Theology

Gary Dorrien

Oxford University Press, $174.95, 605 pp.

This very large and truly significant book by Gary Dorrien offers both more and less than the title promises. More in that it has as much to say about the theological legacies of Kant and Hegel as it does about Kant and Hegel themselves. More, too, in that Schleiermacher also receives a fairly developed treatment, as do Kierkegaard and Barth, both of whom contested the Idealism of Kant, Hegel, and Schleiermacher. And more, finally, in that Dorrien covers key aspects of English theological thought from Coleridge to William Temple. The book offers less than promised in that it speaks only to the German and the English situations (and much more to the former than to the latter); and, above all, in that it leaves unexamined the Idealist legacy in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Dorrien casts the net very broadly in his treatment of liberal theology. But, roughly speaking, he has in mind that broad band of high-culture Protestantism that, over a period of about a hundred years, attempted a rapprochement with modern culture in self-consciously apologetic forms of theology. Kant, Hegel, and to a lesser extent even Schleiermacher had provided the templates for mediation with modern rational culture. In his insistence on rational autonomy and moral responsibility, Kant influenced almost all late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century liberal theologians, but especially Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack, and Wilhelm Hermann. So too, Hegel's sanctification of historical consciousness influenced all the major Protestant theologians who saw the value of updating the message of Christianity. Ernst Troeltsch's insistence on the variability of expressions of Christianity was

Friedrich Schleiermacher, 1854

particularly indebted to Hegel. As for Schleiermacher, his view of the human subject as irreducible to critical and speculative reason and morality had a significant influence on Protestant thought throughout the twentieth century—notably on Paul Tillich and Hermann, against whom Karl Barth was to react so strongly.

Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit is distinguished by both its intellectual competence and it narrative power. One might have been content with a general overview of all the figures Dorrien covers here, but this is not that kind of book. Dorrien's extraordinarily detailed portraits of several major religious thinkers demonstrate mastery of their entire oeuvre. He seems conversant with the bulk of the interpretive and commentary material on these thinkers, but he doesn't let it distract him (or us) from the primary texts, from which he quotes generously but not slavishly. With regard to Kant, he not only provides analyses of all three Critiques, but also has intelligent things to say about the pre-Critical writings, and offers an insightful analysis of *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Likewise with Hegel: Dorrien provides a nice overview of his early "theological" writings, and provides a thorough engagement with the *Phenomenology*, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, and *Philosophy of Right*. What is arguably the most impressive feature of the book is its treatment of secondary figures belonging to the Idealist tradition—for example, the late nineteenth-century English Hegelian theologian, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison.

If Dorrien has heard the postmodern rumblings against metanarratives, he has chosen to ignore them. Here, ideas relate to one another as episodes in a story. In the early chapters of this story, post-Enlightenment theology is fed by Kant's transcendental Idealism and Hegel's speculative Idealism. Later, Barth revolts against this Idealism, leading to a paradigm shift in modern Protestant theology. In one sense, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit* is a kind of obituary for a specifically modern form of theology. Dorrien thinks that liberal theology's day came to an end in the middle of the twentieth century—the efforts of Tillich notwithstanding—but he doesn't just tell the reader how and when the end came; he also argues that liberal theology was all along bedeviled by incoherence and a lack of contact with historical reality.

Although Dorrien thinks Barth's work made possible more realistic, and politically aware, forms of theology, he is careful not to tie the fate of post-idealist or post-liberal theology too tightly to Barth. Other radical departures from liberal theology, including liberation theologies, look very different. Dorrien finally agrees with Barth's critics that, despite its rhetorical and prophetic power, Barth's theology suffers from a constitutional narrowness. His sustained antifeminist views are one notable example of this narrowness. Dorrien's own rejection of Idealist and liberal theologies is much more calibrated than Barth's. He acknowledges that Idealist and liberal theologies have offered important insights into the relationship between individual freedom and communal belonging, but he also believes they have sometimes proved illiberal and profoundly unselfcritical when it comes to thinking through the nature of ethical obligations to all members of the community. Theologies within the Idealist tradition have found it all too easy to connive with state totalitarianism. And despite its universalistic pretensions, liberal theology has often functioned as a support to colonialism and racism, favoring those groups that evince the intellectual, affective, and ethical virtues it prescribes—which are, not coincidentally, the groups to which liberal theologians themselves belong.

With each of the major figures he discusses, Dorrien follows a fairly uniform procedure, interlacing an examination of the author's work with significant biographical details. The conviction underlying this method is that philosophy and theology are the products of real human beings, who live real lives, and find themselves in certain historical situations that present both

opportunities and limits. It's certainly true that a bit of biographical detail can help the reader through extremely difficult philosophical and theological material. In this case, however, the results are mixed.

Among the successes is Dorrien's treatment of Kierkegaard. He is very good on the parvenue culture in which Kierkegaard found himself in Copenhagen. He is also good on Kierkegaard's renunciation of marriage and on his tormented relationship with his father. Dorrien seamlessly weaves these elements into an outstanding treatment of Kierkegaard's main texts. For different reasons, the treatments of both Kant and Hegel are also successful. Dorrien provides less context and biography for Kant and Hegel, but this seems appropriate, since their work was not as psychologically motivated as Kierkegaard's. Dorrien's treatment of Coleridge is far less successful. This isn't for any lack of knowledge or sympathy. The problem in this case is that all the biographical details matter if and only if Dorrien establishes that the later Coleridge was an important religious thinker in his own right and not just a translator and popularizer of German Idealism. The same problem arises, though not to the same degree, in the section about Tillich, which is more than serviceable but not especially inspiring.

One can only marvel at the breadth of Dorrien's competence. I know of no one who knows so much about both German and English theology in the modern period. But this raises a second problem with the book. Dorrien wants to tell one unified story rather than two parallel stories, and this means that he takes on the difficulties of trying to link the German and the English traditions, with the latter obviously depending on the former. Yet, as he tells the story, there is little evidence of direct influence. Only Pringle-Pattison had read Hegel or any of the other major German thinkers. The other English religious thinkers discussed in this book—Hastings Rashdall, Charles Gore, and William Temple—had not. Here Dorrien seems to be reaching too far in his effort to bring to our attention forms of nineteenth and twentieth-century English theology that, with all their faults, suggested an alternative to the tradition of Locke.

But these are cavils. Is there any current historian of ideas who could master the trajectory of modern theology the way Dorrien has here? In its lucidity, comprehensiveness, and narrative power, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit* is without equal. ■

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Desert Hospitality

Mary Frances Coady

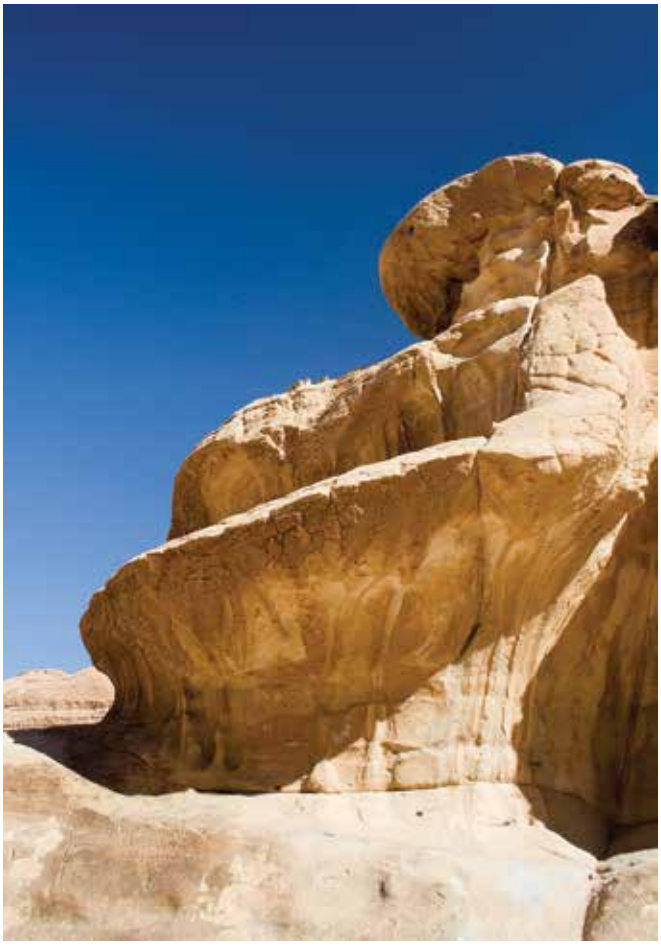
I'm sitting on the hotel step with today's Scripture readings in front of me when Salah, the Bedouin guide, arrives. It's Sunday, and there are no churches in the town of Wadi Mousa, in southern Jordan. These readings are the nearest I'll get to Mass today. Salah is taking me on a day's tour of the Wadi Rum, the vast area of mountains and sand that runs between Aqaba and the ancient city of Petra. He wears traditional Bedouin garb: red and white *keffiyeh* wound around the crown of his head, and a long black garment with loose white trousers underneath. He sports a thick black moustache.

We start off in a jeep. Soon Salah pulls in at a roadside establishment and gets out, explaining, "Bread for lunch." Shortly before, he had uttered a wet sneeze into his hand, and something lurches inside when I realize that hand will hold the bread I'll be eating. It won't come in cellophane. As I grope through my fanny pack for hand sanitizer, he returns, swinging a bag with a round flatbread inside. He tears off a chunk, breaks it into two, and passes one piece to me through the driver's window. The bread is still warm, and it's crusty and chewy. "Not made in bakery," he says. "Made in fire. In the ground." My day has begun with the breaking of the bread after all.

The vehicle turns abruptly from the four-lane Desert Highway and onto a sand dune. Far ahead are misty blue mountains, and nearer, giant mounds of jumbled rocks. This is Wadi Rum, a twelve-kilometer-square expanse of jagged rock and sand. It is also the ancient route over which caravans of camels carried spices from the east through the Negev Desert to the port of Gaza. Salah, who was born in a cave near Petra, now makes a living as a tour guide in this stretch of land.

The jeep shakes us across ridges and bounces us up and down dimpled sand dunes. Midway through the morning we stop for tea. In the cool shadow of a mountain, Salah sets down three rocks, in the center of which he places dried bush branches and lights a fire. Cross-legged and unhurried, he pours water from a bottle into a small black pot, which he balances on the rocks. When it boils he adds tea leaves and sugar. "That's how our father teach us to make the tea," he tells me. This is the hospitality of the desert, extending back generations. I think of Abraham, who received three strangers in a similar barren setting. Salah brings another hunk of bread, which he sets on one of the rocks. When it becomes crisp, he breaks it and hands a piece to me. Only afterward do I realize I haven't given hand sanitizer a thought.

Like a bouncing ball, we continue across the ridges and up and down the dunes. Salah stops the car at the side of a mountain and points out white etchings, thousands of years old, depicting camels and horses. At another stop, where camel men are awaiting tourists, he encourages me to take a ride. All I can offer is a five-dollar bill. After my jaunt astride the camel, Salah says, "For this ride you make the man a living."



The Wadi Rum

DAVID BJORGEN

Lunch takes place in an open cave, and the rock hangs over us like a tent awning. Salah again makes a fire and then brings out food. He spears onions and tomatoes and sets them over the rocks that contain the flames. He pulls a knife from its scabbard and cuts chicken into pieces, then places the pieces to cook inside a wire basket. With a deft hand he cuts up tomato and cucumber, pours tahini, squeezes lemon juice. Again, I think of Abraham and his guests: fire is prepared, bread is baked and meat cooked. And Sarah will become fertile...

As we continue jiggety-jogging through the sand, among the craggy rocks, the centuries seem to vanish. I ask Salah how he knows his way around the immense barrenness of this land. "By the mountain," he replies. I think of the Magi who came from the east, perhaps across this very land. But it is Abraham, Sarah, and their progeny who remain with me: I think of the Word made flesh, who, not too far away, pitched his tent among us. ■

Mary Frances Coady*'s most recent book is* Georges and Pauline Vanier: Portrait of a Couple *(McGill-Queen's University Press).*

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2013-2014 Annual Lecture Series
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Daniel Finn – College of St. Benedict / St. John's University
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Mary Hirschfeld – Villanova University
January 30, 2014 – Driscoll Hall Auditorium – 4:30 PM

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