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In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth.
—Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I like to read Dennis Prager. I like to watch him on Fox News defend the West's moral order. His recent column "Blaming God for mostly man-made problems" is classic Prager.

Before turning him loose on our Summit family, however, let me say that our two-week summer seminars are going exceptionally well with talented Christian young people studying and praying hard to find their place in God's universe. Few could match the quality of our faculty or staff, and for that I am thankful.

Since we are running at capacity with students this summer, I need to caution parents and grandparents about space this year. However, please call 719.685.9103 for the most up-to-date application information.

With that minor caution, read and enjoy Prager's take on God, secularism, moral evil, and our children.

Blaming God for Mostly Man-Made Problems

God is not doing very well these days. Here are four reasons: The first is that increasingly large numbers of men and women attend university, and Western universities have become essentially secular (and leftist) seminaries. Just as the agenda of traditional Christian and Jewish seminaries is to produce religious Christians and religious Jews, the agenda of Western universities is to produce (left-wing) secularists. The difference is that Christian and Jewish seminaries are honest about their agenda, while the universities still claim they have neither a secularist nor a political agenda.

The more university education a person receives, the more he is likely to hold secular and left-wing views. The secular left argues that this correlation is due to the fact that a college graduate knows more and thinks more clearly and therefore gravitates leftward and toward secularism. But if you believe that the average college graduate is a clear and knowledgeable thinker as a result of his or her time at university, I have more than one bridge to sell you.

A radio talk show host for 29 years, I long ago began asking callers who made foolish comments what graduate school they had attended. It takes higher education to learn to believe that America and Israel are villains, that men and women have essentially the same natures, that human nature is good, that ever-larger governments create wealth, etc.

A second reason God is not doing well among Westerners these days is that many members of the Jewish and Christian clergy decided that their

primary role was not to advocate their religion's moral and religious standards, but rather (1) to make congregates comfortable ("Don't call me 'Pastor' [or 'Rabbi' or 'Father'], call me Jerry") and (2) to promulgate the values they learned at their secular left-wing universities.

A third reason God is not doing well is that most of the men and women who are products of this secular left-wing education (meaning a large majority of Western men and women) are theologically, intellectually, and emotionally ill prepared to deal with all the unjust suffering in the world. I will never forget a Swedish pastor's reaction to the 1994 capsizing of the Estonia, a ferry that sank in the Baltic between Estonia and Sweden, leaving 852 passengers and crew dead. He said he could not believe in a God who allowed such injustice to take place.

This pastor spoke for vast numbers of modern Western men and women. The existence of so much unjust suffering in the world has strongly contributed to their rejecting belief in God. And undoubtedly, the devastation caused by the Japanese earthquake and tsunami has further reinforced many individuals' rejection of God.

Of course, none of us has a fully coherent solution to the problem of theodicy. But the problem is not exactly new—every great religion has dealt with it, and most of the brilliant minds in history retained their faith in God despite all the unjust suffering they saw.

The difference today is that life has been so good for most Westerners that suffering is no longer regarded as part of life, but as an aberration that can be done away with. Meanwhile, the liberal wings of Christianity and Judaism are too influenced by secularism to make an effective religious case for God, whom the religious left has largely rendered a celestial buddy.

The fourth reason is Islamic violence and the tepid response to it by the liberal churches and synagogues. It would seem pretty clear that a major, albeit almost never acknowledged, reason for the huge audiences for recent books advocating atheism has been the massive amount of evil in God's name committed by radical Muslims. Nothing creates atheism as much as evil done in God's name.

That is why the pathetically weak responses from within mainstream — i.e., liberal — Christianity, and Judaism have only added to the contempt for God and religion sown by beheadings and suicide bombings in Allah's



name. The liberal Christian and Jewish responses have been to attack fellow Christians and Jews who have focused on Islamist terror. Instead of drawing attention to the damage radical Islam does to the name of God, liberal Christians and Jews focus their anger on co-religionists who do speak out on this issue and label them “Islamophobes.”

That God is not doing well in the Western world may trouble God. But it is we humans who should be most troubled. The moral, intellectual, artistic, and demographic decline in Western Europe (people in secular countries don’t even have the will to reproduce themselves) is only gaining momentum. And the consequences of that decline will be far more devastating than all the tsunamis and all the earthquakes that may come our way.

—Dennis Prager, *Washington Times*, Apr 11, 2011, p. 32

BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Then God said, “Let there be light;” and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear;” and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth;” and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day.

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on

the earth;” and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.” So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind;” and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food;” and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

—Genesis 1:1–31 (NKJV)

No philosophical theory which I have yet come across is a radical improvement on the words of Genesis, that “in the beginning God made Heaven and Earth.”

—C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*

A LOOK AT OUR WORLD

ENERGY AND ECONOMICS

How many people appreciate the technology behind a piece of copper wire? This is so “low-tech” that it is certainly beneath the notice of our high-stepping ruling elite. Copper ore needs to be located and dug out of the ground by men and heavy machines. Then copper must be extracted from the ore and the extracted copper refined—by methods not one American in 100,000 know or could even learn without years of hard work and apprenticeship. This is all done for about \$4 per pound of pure copper—60 cents per pound before the money printing frenzy in Washington accelerated.

Then the copper wire must be drawn from copper bars, insulated, shipped to wholesalers and then retailers, purchased, and installed. Electricity carried by that wire makes modern civilization possible.

Without it or an equivalent, we would be living in very poor circumstances. Of course, most of our electricity is now politically incorrect, generated in hydrocarbon or nuclear-fueled factories—that antiquated word “factories” again—which now, our rulers insist, must be replaced by methods so costly that only those endowed with the magic ability to create money out of thin air can afford.

There is probably not a single individual in the US Congress who could talk intelligently for even a few minutes about copper or electricity. Yet the US Congress is using government power to gradually deprive us of both by means of tyrannical regulations and numerous anti-technology laws.

—*Access to Energy*, July 2010

A recent Congressional Research Service (CRS) report found American fossil-fuel reserves exceed those of Saudi Arabia, China, and Canada combined. Only Russia possesses resources that come close to America's.

The O Force wants you to think we've run out of oil at home, but it's just not so. According to CRS, the United States possesses 135 billion barrels of recoverable oil.

That's enough, at the current rate of consumption, to replace Persian Gulf oil for the next 50 years.

Our country also has 262 billion tons of recoverable coal—28 percent of the world's total and enough to last several centuries.

Natural gas deposits are pegged at about 2,047 trillion cubic feet, or enough to last about a hundred years. With technological advances, it may be possible to access other energy sources such as methane hydrate, which is methane locked in ice, unlocking a supply that would last 400 years.

As a result of the phony shortage scare, Uncle Sam bought 23,000 supposedly fuel-efficient vehicles in 2010, yet the *Federal Times* reported the government's gas consumption increased 7 percent over the previous year. That hasn't stopped the administration from continuing down the same path. Mr. Obama announced last week that starting in 2015, all vehicles purchased on the federal tab will be hybrids and electric-plug-ins. Plug-ins don't generate their own energy. They run on batteries charged by tapping into the electric grid, which is powered primarily by good old-fashioned—and economical—coal.

Exempted from the hybrid/electric-car order, however, are the president's vehicles, which will remain gas-guzzling Cadillacs. For a select few, functionality trumps sustainability. The rest of us will be stuck in the silly “Smart” cars regulators are foisting on the public.

In this bountiful land, the choice between being a consumer and an environmentalist is a false one. Most people are both, balancing an appreciation of nature's beauty with the economic necessities of raising a family. Unencumbered of White House dictates, American business would reflect that balance by providing energy products that are sustainable and affordable. If Mr. Obama refuses to believe that, voters should recycle him next year.

—*The Washington Times*, April 11, 2011, p. 38

Last month a Japanese nuclear power station was hit by the largest earthquake in that region in a thousand years and a wall of sea water variously reported as 30 to 50 feet high. So far, it has not been reported that any person has received a dangerous dose of nuclear radiation from this “nuclear accident.” Accident?

This was not an “accident.” It was a spectacular act of nature.

Working in a fish bowl of media scrutiny, including seemingly endless false reports intended to engender fear—fear of the incident and fear of nuclear energy, the Japanese have done very well. They have lost some valuable equipment, and they have prevented any serious radiation injuries.

The only specific injury reported has been beta burns on the skin of the legs and feet of several workers, who labored without adequate rubber boots in water at the plant site. One may ask why they were not provided with proper boots, but then recall that the entire region for miles around was devastated by the earthquake and ocean tsunami, with thousands of dead bodies still unrecovered. This is not exactly an envi-

ronment in which you run down to the local store for a better set of boots.

Beta radiation, as opposed to the more commonly thought of gamma radiation, is only slightly penetrating. It can be stopped by a sheet of paper. Burns occur if the radioisotopes are directly in contact with the skin, as they were when contaminated water came in contact with the feet and legs of these workers. Suffering mild burns, these people will undoubtedly recover.

Culturally apologetic and polite, the Japanese have issued statements that made them easy targets for the media. They have also taken very careful precautions regarding evacuation and worker safety at the nuclear reactor site, which have been distorted and blown up into further fearmongering by the press.

The world-wide antinuclear scare thus created has driven uranium producer Cameco stock down sharply, so we are tempted to recommend it again. On the other hand, the stock market at present is such a schizophrenic affair—pushed upward by government manipulation and by speculators seeking inflation hedges and yet downward as a result of the economic calamity—that I am reticent to suggest anything along these lines.

One thing is certain: Nuclear electric energy is the greatest single technological advance in human history. This will be obvious to future historians, but how far in the future depends on human foibles.

—*Access to Energy*, April 2011

ETHICS

North Koreans may be starving again this spring, and Jimmy Carter knows who's at fault. Hint: It's not Kim Jong Il. After his swing through Pyongyang last week, the former President blamed the US and South Korea for refusing to send the hermit kingdom food aid without conditions.

"There are human rights issues that relate to the policies of the North Korean government, which I don't think any of us on the outside can change," Mr. Carter said. "But one of the most important human rights is to have food to eat. For the South Koreans and the Americans and others to deliberately withhold food aid to the North Korean people because of political or military issues not related is really a human rights violation."

So let's see. Kim Jong Il runs a dungeon of a nation whose policies cause repeated famines, but the US and South Korea are morally obliged to alleviate the consequences of those policies even if this means helping the dungeon masters maintain control so they can cause more famines.

Wouldn't it make more moral sense to try to depose the dungeon masters, or at least speak out against them? But Mr. Carter says he can't do anything about the North Koreans, so he denounces his own country in sharper language than he dares to use against a regime that murders and imprisons its own people.

This is a familiar stand for Mr. Carter, who has been trying to help the Kim regime since 1994 when he freelanced a deal to pay North Korea billions in return for a promise to halt its nuclear program. The US and South Korea sent the aid, but Kim cheated from the start and still has his nuclear weapons. The US and South Korea sent food as recently as 2009, reputedly with safeguards so it wasn't diverted to the military. The North Koreans soon refused to abide by the safeguards, siphoning off as much as a third to the military, and aid stopped.

Now the UN World Food Program is sending more food to meet what it calls the "urgent hunger needs among 3.5 million vulnerable people." Some of it may even reach the suffering North Korean people, as opposed to the political prison wardens favored with visits by the morally discerning Mr. Carter.

—*Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 2011, p. A 14



Many Iraqi Christians celebrated Easter from home, watching church services on television. They feared attacks, like the ten coordinated bombings that left dozens of casualties on Christmas Eve 2009. Our Lady of Salvation, the Baghdad cathedral where militants for the al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamic State of Iraq murdered 52 Christians in October, was on lock-down. Parishioners said it was "more like a museum than a church." Throughout the capital, security guards with metal detectors, pat-downs, and barbed wire foregrounding stained-glass windows greeted celebrants of the Resurrection. To some avail: Gunmen attacked one Baghdad church, but were fought off by security officers, who became the only innocent casualties. Nearby, a bomb exploded outside another church, but again no congregants were killed. Iraq's remaining Christians are marvelously brave. The population has already fallen from some 1.5 million in the 1990s to about half that today. Of those, many have left the cities for Kurdistan, which, to give you an idea of how hard things are, they find comparatively friendlier. The pope has urged Iraqi Christians "to resist the temptation to emigrate." But if they can't, who would blame them? The Iraqi government is still too ramshackled to deliver them from this evil.

—*National Review*, May 16, 2011, p. 12

A LOOK AT OUR WORLD

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Strongly influenced by Wahhabi teachings, the Salafists [in Egypt] have tended to follow local sheikhs rather than have a countrywide organization, and under Mubarak they were usually quiescent or else inclined to a violent extremism that led to rapid and severe repression by the regime’s efficient security apparatus. But many Salafists are now trying to take advantage of the widespread chaos in Egypt in order to impose their repressive version of Islam on their neighbors and ultimately on the country.

One Salafist target is Egypt’s Christians, the Copts, the largest non-Muslim minority in the Middle East. On March 20, in Qena, Salafists, including an off-duty policeman, accused a Copt named Ayman Mitri of renting an apartment to a prostitute, cut off one of his ears, mutilated his other ear, and slashed his neck. The attackers then informed the police that they had carried out the punishment required by Islamic law. As was usual under Mubarak, the police refrained from pressing charges and called for a “reconciliation” meeting between the religious communities.

Also as under Mubarak, the authorities’ refusal to punish attacks on Christians has led to more attacks. On March 23, Salafists surrounded St. George’s church in Beni Ahmad and successfully demanded that a church expansion approved by the government be stopped. On March 27, they blockaded St. Mary’s church in Giza, saying it did not have a permit. After yet another “reconciliation” meeting between Copts and Muslims, services at the church were forbidden until it acquired a new permit.

On March 28, Salafists attacked a liquor store in Kasr El-Bassil owned by a Copt, destroyed other stores, and demanded that coffee shops be closed. One villager was killed and eight others injured. On April 5, hundreds occupied St. John the Beloved church in Kamadeer, stopping repairs after heavy rain, and told Copts that they were not allowed to pray there any more. After yet another “reconciliation,” Copts were told to build a church 200 meters away, one without a dome, cross, bell, or any other external feature marking it as a church.

Beginning on April 15, over 10,000 demonstrators, mostly Salafists, protested in the southern province of Qena against the appointment of a new governor, Emad Mikhail, who is a Christian (the previous governor, Magdy Ayoub, was also Christian). Protesters blocked main roads, stopped buses to

separate men and women passengers, and disrupted the main rail route in Upper Egypt for eight days. There were threats to bar Mikhail from the province and even to kill him.

—Paul Marshall, *The Weekly Standard*, May 16, 2011, p. 18

Bashar Assad’s regime has murdered at least 500 Syrians, and perhaps hundreds more, in putting down its democratic uprising. So what does the United Nations do? Nothing, except hold out the prospect of a seat on its Human Rights Council for the Syrian regime.

Welcome back to the looking glass moral world of Turtle Bay. The Security Council this week couldn’t muster the votes to issue a mild press release—the weakest of tools in a meager tool box—about the bloody crackdown in Syria. The Russians, Chinese, and Indians blocked the way. Instead we were treated to the sight of the Syrian ambassador, Bashar Jaafari, grandstanding about America’s alleged role in arming the obviously unarmed demonstrators being slaughtered by his regime’s security forces.

The UN’s admirers at the White House consider the Security Council to be the supreme decision-making body in international affairs, and last month US Ambassador Susan Rice hailed the council for “taking swift and meaningful action to try to halt the killing on the ground” in Libya. She should have added that the action, which came barely in time to stop the annihilation of Benghazi, was an aberration. Moammar Gadhafi had lost enough friends in the club of dictators to allow the no fly zone resolution to pass. Mr. Assad remains a rogue in good standing with Moscow and Beijing, and he has nothing to fear from the Security Council.

Meanwhile, Yukiya Amano, chief of the UN’s nuclear watchdog agency, admitted for the first time this week that a Syrian site bombed by Israel in 2007 was a secret “nuclear reactor under construction.” Syria has long denied any nuclear plans at the site, and it hasn’t cooperated with the UN nuclear agency since June 2008.

No matter. Syria’s stature at the UN hasn’t suffered. The Arab League last week supported Syria’s bid to join the Human Rights Council, following the UN’s Asia group. A General Assembly vote is due next month, and on current trend Syria will take its seat on the body that purports to monitor the depredations of the world’s rogues. If the regime kills more Syrians, maybe it’ll become chairman.

—*Wall Street Journal*, April 30, 2011, p. A14

In March 2006, Crystal Gail Mangum accused three members of the Duke lacrosse team of raping her, after she had been hired to strip at a team party. For months a nationwide gale of odium battered the accused players, college athletes, and white males generally. (Houston Baker, then a Duke English professor, fulminated about “young white, violent drunken men among us.”) Then, in April 2007, North Carolina’s attorney general dropped all charges and declared the accused players innocent. He added that Mangum “may actually believe” her own false accusations, and that it was not “in the best interest of justice” to prosecute her. Mangum has now been indicted for the stabbing death of her boyfriend, Reginald Dye. May she be tried fairly, enjoying all the safe-guards of a system that she tried to undermine when she bore false witness five years ago.

—*National Review*, May 16, 2011, p. 14

Politics

Although virtually all Americans would agree that the idea of the separation of church and state is a good thing, what exactly it means is a hotly contested question.

For some, it means that the government and religious bodies are autonomous entities that ought not to exert power over each other in the areas over which each has appropriate authority. Others extend the idea of separation to include not only institutional limits but also a severance between the government’s lawmaking powers and religiously informed policy proposals.

In fact, contends Robert Benne in his *Good and Bad Ways to Think About Religion and Politics* the separation of church and state, so famously penned by President Jefferson in his Letter to the Danbury Baptists, was a call for separating the state from the institutional church, not sequestering religion from politics. Contemporary separationists, moreover, are notoriously selective when they lament the mixing of religion and politics. For they rarely if ever decry the political activism of liberal Christians in mainline denominations who almost always walk lockstep with the left wing of the Democratic party.

The other sort of separationist is usually a devout Christian who believes that his church’s (or its members’) involvement in politics will corrupt its character and thus undermine or make more difficult its duty to save and nurture souls. Benne sees this as a legitimate concern, and one that he returns to several times. Nevertheless, he argues that because Christianity teaches that God is sovereign over all creation, including political and social institutions, and because the Gospel requires us to love our neighbors and to will their good, we

cannot capriciously exclude the political realm without undermining our belief that Christianity is a knowledge tradition that properly informs us about the good, the true, and the beautiful in every facet of human existence.

—Francis J. Beckwith, *The Weekly Standard*, May 16, 2011, p. 34

The federal government has no strategy to counter the Muslim Brotherhood at home or abroad, according to the chairwoman of the House panel that oversees counterintelligence and terrorism.

“The federal government does not have a comprehensive or consistent strategy for dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliated groups in America,” Rep. Sue Wilkins Myrick said during a hearing Wednesday. “Nor does it have a strategy for dealing with the Brotherhood in Egypt or the greater Middle East.”

The North Carolina Republican is chairwoman of the House Intelligence subcommittee on terrorism, human intelligence, analysis, and counterintelligence. Mrs. Myrick said at the hearing that she planned on scheduling closed classified hearings on the Muslim Brotherhood this session with government officials.

Established in 1928 in Cairo, the Muslim Brotherhood is widely considered the first organization to push for political Islam or Islamism, a movement that seeks to replace civil law with Islamic or Shariah law.

Mrs. Myrick was particularly concerned about the role the Muslim Brotherhood plays in the United States.

Documents that emerged from the FBI investigation and US prosecution of a charity known as the Holy Land Foundation suggest that some US-based Muslim groups sought to advance the goals of the Muslim Brotherhood in the United States.

“There are no buildings on K Street with ‘Muslim Brotherhood’ in the lobby directory. Instead, the group spreads its influence through a large number of affiliated organizations throughout the country,” Mrs. Myrick said.

“This allows the Muslim Brotherhood to muddy the water when it comes to foreign funding and influence and to hide behind groups that have plausible deniability of their involvement with the Brotherhood when necessary,” she added.

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Lorenzo Vidino, a visiting fellow at the Rand Corp. who wrote *The New Muslim Brotherhood* in the West, said the group has affiliates in more than 80 countries.

But Mr. Vidino warned that there is no monolithic international Muslim Brotherhood that controls each affiliate. He said that Brotherhood affiliates in the West have not sought to turn their host countries into Islamic republics, for now.

Instead, the goal of Western groups is “preserving Islamic identity among Western Muslims,” he said.

—*The Washington Times*, Apr 18, 2011, p. 27

EDITOR’S NOTE: For an in depth look at the radical Muslim influence in our government see *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld* by P. David Gaubatz and Paul Sperry. There you will discover the Muslim Brotherhood’s influence reaches into the highest offices of government including the Pentagon and even the FBI.

The 2012 election, and the existence of a free health-care market in this country, could well depend on a little-known agency called IPAB. Remember that acronym. It stands for the Independent Payment Advisory Board, a vastly powerful but too often overlooked component of the president’s health-care-reform law. IPAB has not yet come into existence, but when Obamacare goes into full effect, it will be an unelected and unaccountable bureaucratic entity with nearly limitless power over federal Medicare spending. IPAB will have the power to effectively ration health care through price controls—which may not even be the scariest thing about it. That distinction arguably falls to its unprecedented overriding of congressional sovereignty, in flagrant violation of the constitutional separation of powers.

President Obama won’t admit to any of this, of course, but his nationally televised April 13 speech in response to Paul Ryan’s deficit-reduction plan did push IPAB out of the shadows and into public view. Obama made clear in that speech that IPAB’s authority over Medicare pricing would be a central component of his deficit-reduction plan, and he used the occasion to call for a substantial expansion of IPAB’s already unprecedented powers.

For the GOP, that spells political opportunity. Obama can’t begin to match Ryan’s deficit-reduction program without massive, IPAB-imposed health-care controls that would amount to rationing. That means the best Republican defense against the inevitable avalanche of Democratic attacks on the Ryan plan is a good offense against IPAB.

The IPAB controversy raises anew longstanding concerns about President Obama’s political convictions and methods: his radicalism, ideological stealth, and long-term intentions. An emerging bipartisan movement to abolish IPAB highlights the fact that many moderate Democrats have been uncomfortable with this board from the start. IPAB’s central role in Obama’s plans suggests that, despite his denials, the president has never truly surrendered his aim of driving America toward a socialized, British-style single-payer model, in which our entire health-care system would be government-run.

—Stanley Kurtz, *National Review*, May 16, 2011, p. 30

ECONOMICS

“Entitlements” are unrepugnant: They are contemptuous of the most basic principle of responsible government—that a parliament cannot bind its successor. Which is what entitlements do, to catastrophic effect. Recently, in the *London Telegraph*, Liam Halligan bemoaned the way commentators focus on America’s \$14 trillion of debt—i.e., the “debt ceiling” debt—without factoring in the entitlement liabilities of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. That makes America’s real debt some \$75 trillion, or five times GDP. Our own Kevin D. Williamson puts the FDR/LBJ entitlement liabilities a little north of \$100 trillion. Once you add in state and municipal debt, you need to add a zero to that reassuringly familiar \$14 trillion hole. The real hold goes ten times deeper: \$140 trillion—or about twice as much as America’s total “worth.”

Million, billion, trillion...and now we’re going to need a word for the unit that comes after “trillion”? Oh, wait, how about “abyss”? I was struck by reader Dolores Proctor’s observation that, until spendaholic government showed up, 140,000,000,000,000 was the kind of number one would find only in a book about astronomy, and even then it would be pretty cosmic. In other words, our spending has literally burst the bounds of the planet. Ms. Proctor says that if you take \$140 trillion and spend a thousand bucks every second from right now going backwards through time, you’ll run out of money in 2400 B.C., just in time for the invention of the abacus, which as a bankrupt time-traveler you happily won’t require. In other words, we have outspent human history.

—Mark Steyn, *National Review*, May 16, 2011, p. 50

A May Day rally in Los Angeles, co-sponsored by the SEIU and various communist groups, as well as other unions, reflected yet another step in the normalization of self-identi-

A LOOK AT OUR WORLD

fied communist and socialist ideologies in the Obama era. Not only did the SEIU help to organize the rally in conjunction with communists, they marched side-by-side with communists, while union members carried communist flags, communists carried union signs, and altogether there was no real way to tell the two apart.

Southern California citizen journalist and photographer “Ringo” was on hand to record the day’s events, and posted a full-length photo essay on his site Ringo’s Pictures.

When I tell people that public political rallies are more and more being led by communists and socialists, most folks simply don’t believe me. Aw, come on, you’re just giving decent protesters an extreme label, they say. No, actually, I’m not: The communists freely and proudly declare their affiliation. And the SEIU has no problem marching arm-in-arm with them.

“Smash Capitalism” is a slogan the SEIU apparently endorses—or at least doesn’t mind marching behind.

In case you think the SEIU is some peripheral out-of-the-mainstream organization: The SEIU devoted \$28 million to Obama’s campaign, making the SEIU “the organization that spent the most to help Barack Obama get elected president.” Furthermore, who is Obama’s favorite White House guest and one of his closest confidants?

The individual who has visited the Obama White House the most: SEIU President Andy Stern, who has visited 53 times.

Obama is closely linked with the SEIU.

The SEIU is closely linked with communists.

You do the math.

—Pajamasmedia.com/zombie, May 6, 2011

On the heels of President Obama’s recess appointment of radical SEIU lawyer Craig Becker to the National Labor Relations Board comes an outrageous NLRB attack on Boeing’s plan to expand its operations in South Carolina. Boeing, like any business that wants to remain in business, is keen on shifting its resources beyond the reach of the unions and the jurisdictions they dominate, and therefore seeks to expand in right-to-work states such as South Carolina.

—National Review, May 16, 2011 p. 6

The government of the United States is currently borrowing over \$4 billion a day. The Republicans recently se-

cured an alleged landmark victory over Democrats that cut 38-point-something billion dollars from the budget. How many weeks of clenched-teeth high-stakes brinkmanship did it take to negotiate about ten days’ worth of cuts?

Did I say ten days’ worth? Oh, wait. That was on Friday night. By the following Tuesday afternoon, over half of the \$38.5 billion had been exposed as various meaningless sleights of hand of which government, unlike Walmart, can avail itself very easily—for example, counting money in the Justice Department’s crime victims’ reserve fund that was never scheduled to be spent this year as a “savings” of \$4.9 billion. Real savings—that’s to say, the kind that would pass muster according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles—were around \$14 billion—or, in other words, less than the US government borrowed in the four days between the announcing of the “historic cuts” and their exposure as utterly fraudulent.

If it takes four days to agree on two and a half days’ worth of “cuts,” how much time and energy and political capital would the Republicans have to expend to negotiate a budget reduction of, say, \$300 billion? Whoa, steady on, man. That’s big bucks, a third of a trillion: We’d be tagged as “extremists.” Whereas borrowing \$300 billion isn’t in the least bit “extreme”: It takes two and a half months, and it’s business as usual.

But somehow cutting it is beyond the bounds of political reality. And so as the ship fills up with water we congratulate ourselves on agreeing to pass out the thimbles.

The sheer variety of ingenious accounting wheezes used to dream up that \$38.5 billion illustrates what we’re up against. I quote from National Journal: “White House officials said throughout the process that the composition of the cuts was more important than the top-line number, and that including mandatory cuts allowed that top line to grow while limiting the immediate impact of the cuts.”

(My italics. Also my rolled eyeballs. And my mirthless guffaw.)

Do you know what that means? Hey, don’t bother: The “top line” is growing, while the baseline is also up. As they say in the small ads in the alternative weekly, are you a top or a base? Neither of the above? Don’t worry, I’m sure somewhere in between there’s a mid-line (the waterline?) where various “extremist” “cuts” are being enacted.

The first developed nation to get clobbered by the downturn was Iceland. It has 300,000 people. America has 300 million. If you have big government in a nation of 300,000 or even 10 million (Portugal), it’s relatively easy to figure out how much money you’re spending and on what. But, as that mythical \$38.5 billion “cut” illustrates, in an ever more

centralized, de-federalized nation of 300 million, meaningful oversight is all but impossible.

Meanwhile, USA Today reports that even a third of Republican voters say “the government should not try to control the costs of Medicare.”

Oh. Okay.

Where do this third of Republican voters live? Iowa? New Hampshire? And if you were a second-tier candidate trying to break out from the rest of the also-rans, mightn’t you be tempted to position yourself as their champion?

What happens if the government follows the advice of that third of Republicans and declines to “control the costs of Medicare”? The dollar dies as global currency, followed by inflation, the wiping out of your savings, widespread social unrest, huge increases in crime and violence, Mad Max on I-95 . . .

The question is whether enough Americans are willing to grow up — and fast: That’s to say, will they mature before the debt does? Forget the top line and the baseline: The bottom line is that it’s the end of the line.

—Mark Steyn, *National Review*, May 2, 2011, p. 56

ENTERTAINMENT

Like all iconic figures, Oprah Winfrey has been different things to different people. By dint of her book club, she was an arbiter of taste, a creator of bestsellers and, single-handedly, the savior of the publishing industry. She was a sob sister; a scold (see: James Frey, Sarah Ferguson, Jonathan Franzen, and myriad others); and a survivor (of sexual abuse). She’s also been a sermonizer; a saintly bearer of gifts (the cars she famously bestowed on an entire studio audience); and a builder of schools. She’s a best friend, an actor, a producer, a magazine editor and cover girl, a forgiver-in-chief, diva, and billionaire.

What has helped make her all the things she is? It’s the two things she’s not: a wife and mother. A lot of ambitious women will say they had to make a choice: They could be a CEO or get married and have kids but most assuredly not both. With Oprah it seemed a whole other matter entirely. She’s like the religious leader who forswears marriage and children to better serve her flock. Perhaps she made a sage choice. Unlike many wives, she tended to get the last word. Unlike many mothers, she had countless followers always willing to take her suggestions—be your best self, find your own power—as commandments.

Oprah’s final show made it difficult to avoid ecclesiastical comparisons. “Amazing Grace,” she told her rapturous audience, “is the song of my life.” “This was what I was

called to do,” she said at another point. She also referenced the hand of God and the presence of God, offering prayers of gratitude “for the privilege of doing the show,” talking about her “yellow-brick-road of blessings,” and signing off for the last time with hands raised in benediction and fervent “God be the Glory.” Even the heavenly host might find this host a tough act to follow.

—Joanne Kaufman, *Wall Street Journal*, May 27, 2011, p. A

She’s the queen of daytime TV, and one of the richest women in the world, but is Oprah Winfrey starting her own religion?

The Kosciusko native is under fire for talking up some controversial beliefs on her show. Winfrey said that she doesn’t believe there is one God, and is now promoting a book that says man made God.

So far, more than 3 million people have watched a YouTube video warning Christians about a growing movement it claims is led by Winfrey.

Winfrey’s latest book club selection is by new age author Eckart Tolle, who claims God could be anything or anyone.

It’s a controversial belief, but it isn’t new.

Rev. Fred Hammond leads the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jackson. Winfrey’s new idea that there are many paths to God is one of the cornerstones of universalism.

“We are not focused on the doctrine, but rather the character and how that person lives their life as being the true test of their faith,” Hammond said.

Hammond said that his congregation is made up of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Christians, and Pagans. They are bound together not by a book or creed, but by an agreement to follow seven principles, which include compassion and respect for others.

Hammond says Universalists believe how you act on earth is the cornerstone of their faith.

Some Universalists don’t believe in a heaven per say. “We try to say, ‘I don’t know if there’s heaven but if there is one, that would be great and if there isn’t a heaven, that’s okay. I’ve had a wonderful life,’” Hammond said.

Hammond, like Winfrey, came to Universalism after questioning Christianity. He grew up Methodist. Winfrey was raised as a Baptist.

Hammond said he welcomes the debate Winfrey brings.

“It opens the doorway for people to start to think and engage their faith. Why do I believe this? Is it because I am

told, or because I have really wrestled with a question and came up and said I believe it's true for me," Hammond said.
—WAPT.com, May 5, 2008

MILITARY

Add Wiccans and Druids to the list of faiths that have their own chapel at the Air Force Academy.

A circle of stones around an altar was dedicated on a hilltop above the campus Tuesday with earth-centered prayer and speeches about religious liberty at the academy, a school that has long faced criticism as a bastion for evangelical Christianity.

"This outdoor worship space is something we have created to help people of all religions," Lt. Gen. Michael Gould, the academy's superintendent, said before a ribbon-cutting on the site.

The academy is home to about 10 cadets who regularly attend "earth centered" worship groups. Earth-centered is a catch-all phrase for groups including New Age religion, paganism, Wicca, Druids, and ancient Norse beliefs.

"This is very important for us, we didn't have a place to call our own, to be outside in nature," said cadet Nicole Johnson, a member of the earth-centered group.

Johnson and others used to meet in an engineering classroom to worship before construction of Cadet Chapel Falcon Circle, on a 7,200-foot hill top that overlooks the main cadet chapel.

Maj. Joshua Narrowe, a rabbi at the academy, said chaplains signed off on the earth-centered chapel and pushed for its construction.

"I think its great," Narrowe said. "It's not a big group, but is a religious need."

The site will be open for use by any religious group at the academy, but earth-centered groups will have priority.

Controversy sparked at the academy last year when a cross made from railroad ties was erected at another outdoor site that was used for Wiccan rites on the 18,500-acre base.

It's clear that the academy is worried about security at the site. The circle of stones is surrounded by metal poles containing video cameras and signs on the trail that leads to the site warn that the area is under electronic surveillance.

The Rev. David Oringdreff, who heads a Wiccan congregation in Texas, offered prayers at Tuesday's ceremony.

He said cadets will use the circle of stones to "commune with the divine in this beautiful, natural setting."

He praised the openness of academy leaders for nontraditional faiths.

—Tom Roeder, *The Colorado Springs Gazette*,

May 4, 2011, p. 1

Rep. Allen B. West: "We used to conform behavior to the military. Now we're conforming the military to behavior."

The Florida Republican, belled the cat neatly during a hearing last Friday on the military's breakneck pace in implementing the new lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) law.

Mr. West, whose 20-plus years in the US Army included combat commands, noted that he and others at Fort Bragg had to endure "sensitivity training" in the 1990s. It didn't enhance the "warrior ethos," he recalled.

What became clear at the hearing of the House Armed Services Committee's Personnel Subcommittee chaired by Joe Wilson, South Carolina Republican, is that the Pentagon is forging into unknown territory, driven by political correctness, not military need.

Mr. Wilson, Mr. West, and Rep. Mike Coffman, Colorado Republican, were openly skeptical about how honest the process has been. Mr. West noted that political correctness can prove costly, as when commanders ignored Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan's plunge into radical Islam before the Fort Hood shootings. Likewise, people are afraid to share qualms over the LGBT law, Mr. West said.

Let's pause. To come right to the point, I'm going to summarize in a voice adapted from a Tom Clancy novel: "Here's the skinny. Two Pentagon pukers showed up and dodged every important question about whether it's a good idea to have open homosexuality in the armed forces. Republican reps nailed them several times, but didn't go in for the kill. However, they landed heavy ordnance and got plenty on the record to show how stupid, immoral, and (expletive) reckless this is."

The deal was supposed to be that forcing soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen to accept homosexuality would not begin until 60 days after three men—President Obama, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Mike Mullen—"certify" that it won't hurt military readiness.

Neither witness—Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel Clifford L. Stanley nor Navy Vice Admiral William B. Gortney—would say that implementing the LGBT law that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Rep. Barney Frank, both Democrats, rammed through the lame-duck Congress would make the military stronger, just that problems can be, well, "mitigated." Wars? What wars?

What they should have said was: "We're rushing to do what Mr. Obama wants before the country awakens from its

fiscal nightmare and realizes we're trashing the moral culture of the only military we've got."

The Pentagon began "sensitizing" personnel on March 1, starting with chaplains. They have already "trained" 9 percent of the troops and hope to finish by midsummer. The subcommittee's liberals ordered the military to move even faster. Rep. Chellie Pingree, Maine Democrat, urged "a rapid pace" to overturn a "horrendous" and "morally reprehensible policy." Likewise, Rep. Niki Tsongas, Massachusetts Democrat, wanted to make sure that "diversity" training will be "an ongoing, ever-present element" and that the service academies would not escape. Adm. Gortney told her that training would be ongoing and "no different" at West Point and Annapolis.

On the other side, Mr. Wilson, joined by Rep. Vicky Hartzler, Missouri Republican, Rep. Austin Scott, Georgia Republican, Mr. Coffman and Mr. West asked questions that revealed the military is clueless about how much this will hurt readiness, retention, morale, and recruitment.

Ms. Hartzler asked why, if the military won't put men and women together in barracks and showers, would we force them into intimate conditions with those who may be sexually attracted to them? "Sexual orientation," after all, is really sexual attraction.

Adm. Gortney responded that the two sexes differ by "gender," while sexual orientation is "personal and private." Really? It was already "personal and private" under the law and the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

The whole purpose of the LGBT law is to make volitional homosexual behavior public, not private. As for the previous law, in a written response to Mr. Wilson, Mr. Stanley accepted 12 of the 15 findings that anchored passage of the legislation in 1993. Those findings still indicate it would be madness to revoke the law.

Over and over, the two witnesses gave PC mush and asserted that other nations had done this, so we can, too. After all, we're just like Holland. For one lucid moment, however, Mr. Stanley left the PC bubble and pointed out, "We are the United States. We're a little different" from other militaries. Yes. We have the entire free world depending on us.

Both Mr. Stanley and Adm. Gortney insisted that chaplains and others troubled by the new policy will face no repercussions. Sure they won't. Adm. Mullen has already invited anyone who disagrees to leave the military.

"We're not asking anyone to change their beliefs, just treat everyone with respect," Adm. Gortney said. What if you don't respect your (male) commander for having sex with other men or wearing a dress and pumps while on leave?

How about the cost of the training? Mr. Stanley said the Pentagon has spent \$10,000. Mr. Scott noted wryly that

it would be a miracle if anything came out of the Pentagon costing only \$10,000. Mr. Stanley did not address how much time and treasure it's really costing taxpayers to retrain nearly 2 million people in New Age notions about sex.

If the GOP members occupy the ground that the subcommittee established and ask more tough questions, it will be hard for Mr. Obama, Mr. Gates and Adm. Mullen to "certify" with a straight face that this won't harm the military.

For liberals, letting the facts get out is the sum of all fears.

—Robert Knight, *The Washington Times*,

Apr 11, 2011, p. 35

SOCIOLOGY

Long ago, when in high school, I watched a "Playhouse 90" performance directed by John Frankenheimer of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* on our family black and white television set. Hemingway begins the book with a poem written by John Donne, and Frankenheimer scrolled the poem down the screen at the beginning of the performance.

For some reason, this scrolled text caught my interest. I memorized it from the television screen and have never forgotten it. Donne wrote:

No man is an island, entire of itself.

Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as the promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were.

Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind.

And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls.

It tolls for thee.

Three centuries after Donne wrote these words, when asked how the Communists had managed to subdue Russia when there were so few of them and so many other Russians, Alexander Solzhenitsyn replied, "They came for us one at a time." Also when they came, almost everyone hid in their homes hoping that this would not be their time, and relieved when someone else was taken away.

The men of the mind who make the world work have not forgotten us. If, however, in our self-possession, we forget them—if we continue to allow them to be suppressed and harassed—if we read stories of the impediments that have been erected to the work and liberty of others, but searching and finding in each new action with relief that this new impediment does not affect us—we will reap a terrible reward.

—*Access To Energy*, July 2010

A LOOK AT OUR WORLD

ABORTION

The Left has been pounding Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona for saying that Planned Parenthood devotes “well over 90 percent” of its resources to providing abortions. When an aide said that his remark was not meant to be “a factual statement,” Colbert and Stewart and many lesser wits were off to the races. News reports duly corrected the senator, saying that abortion accounts for only 3 percent of Planned Parenthood’s activity. But who will correct the corrections? The truth is that 98 percent of the organization’s “services” to pregnant women are abortions. It is the country’s largest abortion provider. The 3 percent statistic is culpably misleading. (Give a woman a pregnancy test, abort her child, and then hand her some birth control on the way out: Abortion accounts for only 33 percent of what you’ve done.) Kyl, and especially his aide, erred. But the senator was closer to the truth than his critics are.

—*National Review*, May 16, 2011, p. 4