

What Do We Make of Radical Islamicism?



Cover Story

Americans continue to want answers to questions surrounding the September 11, 2012, attacks in Benghazi, Libya. Though many legitimate questions about the attack remain, the perpetrators are, in fact, known: Islamic terrorists with ties to al Qaeda. Once again, Americans are drawn to the turmoil in the Middle East and the tension of two different narratives: one of violent, jihad-driven Islamists and one of Muslim neighbors simply trying to make a good life for themselves.

So how do we make sense of the images we see on network news each night and the snapshots many of us observe in our neighborhoods, towns, and communities? What are the worldwide implications of these competing narratives, and how do we engage Muslims in light of that?

A Story of Two Islams: Traditional and Reformed

Although similarities do exist between Christianity and Islam, there are myriad differences. One similarity is that

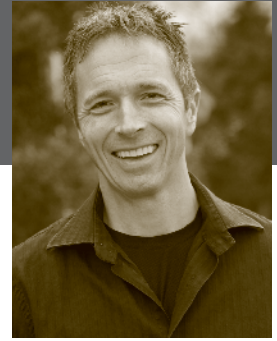
there are “denominational differences” in Islam just as there are in Christianity. Varying interpretations of the Qur’an, Hadith, and Sunnah — the three authoritative texts of Islam — have produced different forms of Islam, according to Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, a Summit lecturer and former Muslim. Broadly speaking, some Muslims adhere to a traditionalist Islam, which takes all the material in the three sources literally. Others, meanwhile, adhere to a reformed Islam, which dismisses the abusive aspects of Islam by claiming they are no longer culturally relevant, especially when they are violent and mistreat women.

Qureshi’s theory is that the worldwide rise in violence among Muslims in recent years is due to the spread of information. More Muslims are now able to see the original texts for themselves, including calls to violence. This rising awareness, though, has also fueled the growth of reformed Islam. “All [of reformed Islam’s] teachings don’t jive with original sources,” Qureshi said. As far as Islam’s ability to assimilate into other cultures, Muslim rejection of Islam’s violent teachings is a good thing.

Abdu Murray, also a former Muslim and another Summit lecturer, agreed that many Muslims — particularly those in the West — simply don’t adhere to many of the commands of Islamic scripture. “I can’t tell you how many Muslims are nominal at best,” he said. “They are [only] cultural Muslims. If it were a crime to be an orthodox Muslim, they

from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers



By God's faithfulness the year 2012 was another banner year for Summit: 1,500 students came through our 12-day programs and 20,000 in all were equipped through Summit's intensive worldview training curriculum.

But here's the hard news: there are millions of young people who haven't learned how to understand the times in which they live. The future of America hinges on whether we can turn the tide for these young people.

We have not a moment to lose. This time in history is decisive. Every move we make is of critical importance. In 2013 Summit is taking unprecedented steps to mobilize our alumni, expand our events, and exponentially grow the reach of our curriculum courses for churches and Christian schools. Summit intends to play a role in turning the tide.

This summer a raging wildfire crept within one mile of our Summit headquarters, threatening to engulf the town of Manitou Springs. A handful of brave firefighters battled the blaze throughout the night. In the morning the wind shifted and our town was spared.

We all know the Lord protected us and one of His means was the

courageous first responders. Their resourcefulness and bravery turned the tide.

Summit is in the business of preparing cultural first responders to turn the tide threatening to engulf our culture. Imagine hundreds of thousands of emerging adults equipped to be articulate, persuasive, and effective change agents for a Christian worldview.

The first step in turning the tide is understanding the times in which we live. This issue of *The Journal* prepares you to understand the heart of the Islamic worldview, but even more important the true threat, which is not Islam itself but a well-organized, well-funded and determined effort inside the Muslim community called Islamicism.

America seems unwilling to understand Islam itself and pathologically incapable of dealing realistically with the threat of Islamicism.

Our current secretary of state would have us believe that that Islamists are primarily concerned about "freedom of worship." President Obama seems to think that Islamists can be pacified if we bow down and apologize to them.

As we will see, Islamicism is a

totalizing, winner-takes-all worldview. Ali A. Allawi, author of the acclaimed *Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, argues that there are only two options: "Islamists will force society to conform to Islam or 'the dominant civilizational order' will 'fatally undermine whatever is left of Muslims' basic identity and autonomy."

The molten core of the Islamist propensity for violence and mistreatment is a flawed theology, a worldview that sees humans as slaves of God, not as sons and daughters made in God's image. The Christian doctrine of imago dei — the doctrine that more than any other has promoted humane advancements such as hospitals, civil rights, education, and the abolition of slavery — is a foreign concept to Islamists.

In the midst of out-of-control government spending, a lackluster economy and threats to life, marriage, and religious freedom, we must clearly understand the Islamic worldview and the Islamist agenda. The tension between loving our Muslim neighbors and refusing to permit a foothold to Islamist legal or governmental influence must be acknowledged.

So, invite your Muslim neighbors over for a meal. Love their kids. Ask questions. Explain how Jesus revealed himself to you and ask them to pray that He will do the same for them. But at the same time, educate yourself on the threat that doctrines such as Sharia law pose to a Constitutional republic, and stand firm.

“In 2013 Summit is taking unprecedented steps to mobilize our alumni, expand our events, and exponentially grow the reach of our curriculum courses ...”

Dr. Jeff Myers

couldn't be convicted of it." That's why he says it's important for non-Muslims to note well the difference between Islam — the actual religion left by Muhammad, which calls for violence toward nonbelievers and a full political ideology — and Muslims — those who say they follow Islam. "We have to understand there's a spectrum of Muslims," he said. "They hold their worldview with a varying degree of tightness."

Even the Islamic scriptures themselves are conflicting. At various places within the Qur'an (the Islamic holy book, written by Muhammad), the Hadith (sayings of Muhammad), and the Sunnah (doctrines of practice lived out or advocated by Muhammad) violence is in fact a flagstone (see surah 9 of the Qur'an, for example). Other passages advocate for peace. Alan Shlemon, another Summit lecturer, said the explanation for the texts' discrepancies is pretty simple. Muhammad wrote different parts of the Qur'an during two different times of his life: his time in Mecca and the last half of his life after fleeing to Medina. Muhammad's time in Mecca was peaceful, while his time in Medina, as his popularity grew, was much more violent. Thus, the discrepancies in the Qur'an, his sayings, and the practices he advocated.

Islam Plays a Strong Part on the World Stage

As David Noebel outlined in *Understanding the Times*, all worldviews speak into ten specific disciplines, one of them being politics, and Islam is no different. Islamic governments, like Muslims themselves, vary in scope in

their adherence to Islamic scriptures. Many enforce Islamic law — sharia — on their citizens. According to Abdu Murray, an example of that end of the spectrum is what we're seeing in Egypt as the Muslim Brotherhood, adherents of traditional Islam, wrest control from what had been a mostly secular Islamic regime.

One implication of the growth of traditional Islam is that non-Muslims in countries like Egypt may be treated as second-class citizens. According to the Qur'an, Islamic countries have a right to charge non-Muslims a special tax (called *jizya*) in order to live under the protection of the state. In other Islamic nations, such as Iran, sharia law is heavily enforced.

The violence that we see in the Middle East can be used to point toward Christ, though. Murray says that as with all conflict, violence in and around Islamic countries is usually followed by three reactions:

- 1 Sorrow of loss
- 2 Demand for justice
- 3 Cry for love

The Christian worldview addresses all three of these needs in unique ways, says Murray. "A Gospel-centered answer to these questions is there, as opposed to a political solution," he said. So even amongst the conflicts we see in headlines, opportunities abound to point out to Muslims the power of the Gospel. "There's a way to use the conflict," Murray exhorted.

One of the dangers of the cur-

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Further Resources

» William Kilpatrick's new book *Christianity, Islam, and Atheism* helps explain Islam in relation to the overall battle of worldviews in America today.

» Creed 2:6 (www.creed26.com) — Nabeel Qureshi's ministry aims to help Christians better share Christ with their Muslim friends.

» Aletheia International (www.embracetruth.org) — The ministry founded by Abdu Murray that exists to help Muslims, Jews, cult members, and skeptics embrace the Gospel.

» Stand to Reason (www.str.org) — One of the top apologetics ministries in the country, Stand to Reason is the organization for which Alan Shlemon speaks. His book, *The Ambassador's Guide to Islam*, is available there.

rent political landscape is that many Western leaders are so influenced by secularism, they fail to see the far-reaching implications Islam has in the political sphere, potentially putting more people at risk.

Secularism posits that all things religious are relegated to private life and shouldn't

affect the public square. "As a matter of definition, secularists will never understand Muslims and never understand the Middle East," Murray said. "That's the complete opposite of Islam." Such misunderstandings can lead to an underestimation of the willingness of Islamists to use state power to coerce others or carry out jihad. It's a mistake that, as we saw in Benghazi, can end tragically.

How Do We Engage Islam in the Public Square at Home?

Ironically, secularism can also be an unwitting friend to Islamists in non-Islamic countries. The secular belief that religion is innocuous if kept private, combined with an obsession for a political correctness that disallows the critiquing of any religion other than Christianity — can actually give way to a minority religion like Islam having more sway in the public sphere. "Secularism is, in fact, a pushover," Murray said. "It almost sounds like we're being thoughtful [to not criticize others' religion]. And it sounds very nice. But I think, frankly, it's not truly thought-

ful. If America were a more Christian culture, you'd find a more informed, thoughtful response to the things that speak to the Muslim mind."

After seeing examples of sharia law take hold in pockets of Western Europe, some in the U.S. worry the same thing

will happen here. Nabeel Qureshi was actually arrested and jailed in Dearborn, Michigan, just for engaging in Christian evangelism with Muslims at an Islamic festival. Even so, he says we cannot afford to take a merely defensive posture. "We're far too reactionary," he said. "We tend to react to things that happen and pull away from the culture." Damage control in this sense is sometimes necessary, but it is often too little, too late. "Culture is what controls the mindset of the next generation," he continued. "We need to [proactively] engage culture from a Christian mindset."

If there are places where the Muslim/secularist worldview — or other worldviews, for that matter — begin to coerce non-Muslims, fighting to maintain freedom of expression is paramount, Qureshi said. "We definitely need to stand up for our ability to speak freely. But it's still not enough; it's like putting a Band-Aid on a hemorrhage."

Advice for Day-to-Day Interactions with Muslims

Even in spite of political, cultural,

and legal differences, Shlemon encouraged Christians not to fear monger. Most Muslims we encounter day-to-day in the West seek merely to live peacefully and support themselves and their families; they're not violent jihadists. "Even if they were, it doesn't really matter. It's not like God's called us to be ambassadors to only peaceful people."

Qureshi, Murray, and Shlemon all had practical advice for Christians engaging more intentionally with Muslims:

1 Ask honest questions. Because of the diversity of thought within Islam, Qureshi encourages Christians to ask questions in order to get to know their Muslim friends and their beliefs. Don't assume you know all the particulars of their beliefs.

2 Ask about Jesus. Muslims love talking about their faith. "It's not like secularism, where politics and religion are taboo," Murray said.

3 Be sensitive to Muslim sensitivities. Shlemon advises Christians to avoid things that are automatically off-putting to Muslims. Don't approach a Muslim of the opposite sex alone; don't bring up controversial claims about Muhammad being a pedophile, for example, while still building a relationship.

If the tide of culture is to be turned, Christians ought to interact with and love Muslims of all stripes. "God is making his appeal through us," Shlemon said. "Our mandate is to go out and speak to people about Jesus so that they can be reconciled to God. It doesn't matter whether nominal, reformed, or radical."

"... secularists will never understand Muslims and never understand the Middle East."

Abdu Murray

a look at our world

news and commentary



Editor's Note: Our President Emeritus, Dr. David Noebel, helps us with research by sending 20-30 pages of clippings of each month's news. To see the complete list of Doc's clippings, go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/, open the PDF, and scroll to page 9, or call us at 866.786.6483.

Islam

Egypt has now a modern pharaoh, named Muhammad Morsi, and with him as the sole ruler, the country will ultimately become an official Sharia state. Sharia is already enforced to some degree, but now that the Muslim Brotherhood is expanding its power, it will implement the edicts of its constitution, the Koran, to its fullest capacity.

This was foreshadowed months ago when counter-revolutionaries were crucified in front of the presidential palace, since these type of executions are demanded in the Koran where it states that:

The punishment of anyone who fights against Allah and His apostle and do mischief in the land is to be killed or crucified or to have their hands and feet cut off from opposite ends or be banished from the land. (Quran: The table spread)

That Egypt will become a Sharia state is most clearly shown in Egyptian politics itself. In September of this year, Egypt's justice Hossam Ghariani, President of the Supreme Judicial Council, said in a video that the Egyptian people were demanding Sharia, and that to enforce it would be the correct choice:

The country did not have a desire to

enforce Islamic Sharia, ok you want Islamic Sharia then elect the ones who will enforce it. Do the Egyptian people want the law man to enforce Islamic Sharia? Yes, the majority of the Egyptian people want to enforce Islamic Sharia. There were conferences that were held to put into the law [Sharia] edicts. The previous government was foreign to us, it did not want to enforce Sharia. Why? Do the enforcers of Sharia want

to rob the country?

This is not correct.

Let us then fix the Egyptian Constitution without worry. We trust the

Egyptian people to do

the right thing, Allah willing.

Dr. Mohamed Yousry Salameh, the Executive Member of the Al-Dostur, founded by Mohamed El Baradei, the father of the Egyptian Revolution, stated that the party needed to push the Muslim Brotherhood to begin an implementation of Sharia in Egypt:

So who is now stopping us from enforcing Sharia, including all its edicts as you all want? Answer: it's the president, and his party [the Muslim Brotherhood]. It is he, after all who is in power... so what do they have to stop this [Sharia]?

Answer: nothing. ... They are some

who say that the society is not ready for this [Sharia], but this is a statement if I said it, or so and so said it, they will peel his skin alive, while if others [the Muslim Brotherhood] say it is alright.

The statement implies that the only thing keeping Egypt from being a Sharia state was the Muslim

Brotherhood itself. Now that Morsi has taken the position of dictator, it is now quite clear that the full enforcement of Sharia is on its way soon. The Christians will be massacred by

orders from the state itself, and it will be happily done not only by government officers and soldiers, but by the Egyptian people themselves. Egypt will not be ruled under full dictatorship, but also by mob rule.

Tyranny is founded in the masses, and it is the great majority of the Egyptian people who want Sharia, and therefore it will be them who will take part greatly in killing Christians or any moderate Egyptians.

The people are to blame for this coming tyranny in Egypt; they wanted the ousting of Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafist

“That Egypt will become a Sharia state is most clearly shown in Egyptian politics itself.”

Theodore Shoebat

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to rule, and Sharia to become the rule of the land. The current protest being done by Morsi's rivals are irrelevant at this point, since there is nothing that can be done once Islamism seizes a nation. Most of the people wanted Sharia, and now they are going to taste it.

— Theodore Shoebat
FrontPage Magazine
November 26, 2012

Religious Liberty

A civil liberties group is getting ready to take legal action against the town of Brentwood, Md., for reciting the Lord's Prayer in council meetings — a practice the group says is unconstitutional.

The Washington-based group, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said the invocation violates the First Amendment by giving Christianity preference over other religions.

Brentwood Mayor Roger E. Rudder said that the prayer is a time-honored tradition in his town of roughly 3,000 people.

"As far as I can remember being in this town, we've always started our council sessions with a prayer," he said. "We don't question anyone of what faith they are."

Americans United has sent three letters asking the Town Council to stop the prayer this year. They have not received a response.

"I'm very offended by the fact that they even sent me a letter," Mr. Rudder said.

The first letter was sent in April after a complaint received from a

Brentwood resident. The letter asked the five-member council to end the practice or revise it to allow other religions' prayers.

Earlier this year, the council incorporated a moment of silence into the sessions.

"When we begin our meetings, those who wish to pray can say a short prayer," Mr. Rudder said. "Others can observe a moment of silence."

In a follow-up letter sent in September, Americans United said despite the moment of silence, the Lord's Prayer was still recited. The group threatened to take legal action.

"That is still imposing a Christian prayer on the audience and that's improper whether they couple it with a moment of silence or not," said Ayesha Khan, legal director at Americans United.

After two months of no change, Americans United sent a third letter Wednesday asking the town for public records — including council agendas and minutes, legal opinions, complaints and correspondence — relating to the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Ms. Khan said the group will use this information to build a lawsuit. If there are no changes, she said a lawsuit will be filed early next year. She said she hopes the conflict can be resolved without a lawsuit, which would be both divisive and expensive.

"I don't care if they respond," Ms. Khan said. "I care if they change the practice."

The practice is unwelcoming to non-Christians and could lead them

to "easily conclude that their interests aren't represented by the council," she said.

Mr. Rudder said he has not received complaints from community members.

"The residents called me and told me they hope I would not stop opening all meetings with a prayer," he said. "It's tradition. We've continued to do what we have always done."

Ms. Khan said the lack of complaints to City Hall is not surprising.

"A person in the minority feels intimidated about speaking up," she said.

— Shivan Sarna
Washington Times
November 19, 2012, p. 11

Economics

And what would the old-timers think of our government debt? The unpaid liabilities and obligations, expressed as though they had to be paid today, come to about \$44 trillion, depending on the source you choose to believe.

— Bill Bonner & Addison Wiggin
Empire of Debt: The Rise of the Epic Financial Crisis (2006)
p. 29

The actual liabilities of the federal government — including Social Security, Medicare, and federal employees' retirement benefits — already exceed \$86.8 trillion.

— Chris Cox & Bill Archer
Wall Street Journal
November 27, 2012, p. A 17

Cairo Native Yacoub Plans Long Ministry Career in Egypt



Youssef Yacoub

Adapting to a foreign culture may be a barrier to success for some people. But it hasn't stopped Youssef Yacoub, and it doesn't look like it will any time soon.

Born and raised in Cairo, Egypt, the 24-year-old Summit grad is preparing for an intense ministry in his native Egypt — a major hub of the rapidly changing and unstable Arab Spring. Youssef plans to support himself as a dentist, but for the next few months he'll be studying at the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics, learning under such heavyweights as Ravi Zacharias, Os Guinness, and Alister McGrath among others. "In a sense I owe Summit for being [at Oxford] today," Yacoub reflected. "If it wasn't for the passion Summit planted in my heart, I wouldn't be here getting the privilege of being taught by the best."

Yacoub has been involved in ministry work in Cairo his whole life. His father was once an itinerant evangelist

who ten years ago started carrying Focus on the Family materials in addition to the resources he was already providing Christians in Egypt. Eight years ago he added a printing press to his office, so Yacoub has helped translate, edit, and print materials intended for Christians in Cairo. He and his family also facilitate some programs and studies they think are applicable to Christians in Egypt.

Yacoub heard about Summit through Focus on the Family, and he attended his first Summit program in 2004 when he was 15 years old. He admits his first week in Colorado was difficult, as he acclimated to a whole new culture, and one that didn't necessarily fit the American stereotype he had seen in Egypt. But his second week in Manitou Springs changed his life. "I was blessed both by the learning there and the privilege to meet a lot of teachers, especially Michael Bauman," he said. "He would crush us in debates. And then I would go back for a whole year and try to research the questions I failed to answer."

Yacoub returned to Summit two more summers as both a student and staffer. After returning to Cairo, he practiced the teaching techniques he learned at Summit with a youth group he led there.

Equipped with his Summit experi-

ence, he earned a university degree in Cairo and began his apologetics study at Oxford earlier this fall. Once he finishes that program in the spring, he plans to earn a master's degree in dentistry either from a school in the U.S. or back in Egypt. Then, he hopes to combine Christian ministry with his dental profession. "In Egypt, the concept of full-time ministry isn't as common as in the West," he explained. "It's seen as a cop-out. You need a career to support yourself financially."

With so much instability in the Middle East as the Arab Spring continues, political, social, and economic conditions for Egypt's future remain cloudy, Yacoub said. It's still unclear how Egypt's new President Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood will govern the country, though recent news indicates it may be more totalitarian than not.

Even so, Yacoub encouraged Western Christians not to be pessimistic about the work of the Gospel there. "Christians in Egypt need to put themselves in the mindset that the years to come will offer a great challenge on the one hand, but great opportunity on the other," he said. "It might require some sacrifice. I'm driven by a passion now to be even more committed to my country and not just run away."

"If it wasn't for the passion Summit planted in my heart, I wouldn't be here ..."

Youssef Yacoub



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a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel

Secularism

An atheist organization is suing the Internal Revenue Service for failing to take action against churches that the group says have violated the tax code for nonprofits by engaging in politics.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation, a watchdog group based in Madison, Wis., filed a federal lawsuit this week that cited the Oct. 7 actions of 1,600 pastors who violated the tax code on “Pulpit Freedom Sunday” – a nationwide display of free speech. After weeks of silence from the IRS, the Freedom From Religion Foundation took the matter to court.

“This looks like the only way to get some action out of the IRS,” said Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of the foundation.

She said the foundation has written to the IRS about the issue for years, but Pulpit Freedom Sunday was the last straw.

“The tipping point would have been the braggadocio of [1,600] pastors claiming they endorsed from the pulpit. The number of complaints we’ve received has been escalating, and we have no explanation from the IRS. This is our way of finding out what is going on.”

The IRS media relations office declined to comment, saying it does not comment on court cases.

Erik Stanley, legal counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, said a lawsuit is exactly what his group was looking for when it launched the Pulpit Freedom Sunday initiative in 2008 to challenge the Johnson Amendment, the part of the tax code that requires nonprofit groups not to engage in political speech as a condition of that status.

Still, he doesn’t think this particular case will go far.

“I think the lawsuit itself really borders on frivolous. I don’t know how the FFRF can claim they’ve been harmed by the IRS’ refusal to enforce the Johnson Amendment,” Mr. Stanley said. “But, on the chance it does, then we will seek to protect those churches.”

The complaint from the Freedom From Religion Foundation says churches are getting “preferential treatment” over other nonprofits, including the foundation itself. The group pointed to other examples of political involvement from religious groups, such as full-page political newspaper ads placed by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

If allowed to ignore the ban, Ms. Gaylor said, churches may become funnels for tax-deductible, unreported campaign money.

“If churches are allowed to keep their tax-exempt status and electioneer, it will be the downfall of our republic,” she said. “It isn’t just the power of the pastor; it’s the implication of the whole system.”

The Alliance Defending Freedom started Pulpit Freedom Sunday in order to provoke a response from the IRS. The initiative encouraged pastors to make candidate endorsements from the pulpit, record their sermons and send the tapes to the IRS. Churches can and often do speak out on public issues, host government officials and distribute voter guides, but these activities have not been considered as Johnson Amendment violations unless the church says “vote for Candidate X.”

“It’s basically in the hopes of generating a test case on the constitutionality of the Johnson Amendment itself,” Mr. Stanley said. “We seek to get the government out of the pulpits of America. When the chance comes to argue it in court, regardless of how or if, we’ll be ready.”

Weeks after the October demonstration, IRS spokesman Russell Renwick said the tax agency had put a halt on all church audits. Although the IRS later repudiated that statement, there was speculation of a stalemate within the organization as a result of another lawsuit.

“In a recent case [it was argued] that the IRS was not proceeding properly,” said John Pomeranz, a Washington-based lawyer who specializes in election-related activities by tax-exempt organizations. “The court ruled against the IRS and blew up their process for auditing churches.”

This could explain the IRS inaction.

“We have wondered whether or not the IRS is hamstrung at the moment – if they are even able to audit churches right now,” Mr. Pomeranz said. “I think there is a fundamental question about the ability of the IRS to audit churches, and they need to address that before they can get to the question of whether they’re going to audit these Pulpit Freedom Sunday pastors.”

— Keely Brazil

The Washington Times
November 19, 2012, p. A 18

Cultural Engagement

The second book of Kings in the Old Testament is a usefully depressing history on national decline. It starts

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with fire coming down from heaven to convince a king, and Elijah ascending to heaven via chariots of fire. It ends with the former king of Judah taken into captivity and dependent on the ruler of Babylon, who condescends to give him an allowance.

Not all kings were part of the descent. Jehoash, Amaziah, and Azariah, for example, all “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord,” except for one thing: “The high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places” (2 Kings 12:2-3, 14:3-4, 15:3-4). Many who gave lip service to Yahweh hedged their bets by visiting a “high place” (in Hebrew, *bamah*) that was usually but not always on a hill or mountain.

A *bamah*, in short, was a cultural security blanket: High places could make people feel like far-seeing gods possessing gnostic wisdom. Question: What are the high places in our culture? Answer: Academia and media. See how people donate to their alma maters even when professors teach doctrines that label the contributors as little more than criminals. See how millions reverently give to PBS and NPR, and how ABC, CBS, and NBC still have the power to insinuate liberal messages. See how hundreds of thousands read the Sunday New York Times and email its sermons.

I saw the power of the high places not only teaching at The University of Texas for two decades, but through my failure to convince one king to attack them. During the 1990s, when I very occasionally advised Texas Gov. George W. Bush, we talked about how academically totalitarian UT was becoming. He sympathized but said he was not strong

enough to take it on. Unions, sure. Later, al Qaeda, sure. *Bamah*, no.

Our academic high places are hives of the left. The Daily Princetonian says 155 members of Princeton University’s faculty or staff donated to Barack Obama, and only two (one visiting lecturer in engineering, one janitor) to Mitt Romney. I’ve seen similar stats from other schools. When taxpayers and parents pay tens of thousands of dollars to require students to listen to leftist propaganda from generally persuasive individuals, should we be surprised that young people vote left?

Our media high places cover up misdeeds. For six weeks this fall CBS concealed information it had that showed President Obama confused at best and, more probably, lying concerning the Libya attack that killed four Americans. Had CBS released that footage after the second presidential debate, the course of the campaign could have changed.

More basically, though, the media problem is not what’s omitted but what’s been presented for decades as the new normal: marriage as dull and readily breakable, singleness as sexy and independent. This propaganda-fueled drive toward singleness hurts millions of individuals who learn the downside of no one to depend on. It also has a political kick, as the increasing number of never-married and divorced women depend more on government and vote overwhelmingly for more of it.

What’s next? Democrats’ pro-abortion rhetoric this year was not forward but backward to the time of Judah’s King Ahaz, who “did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord.... He even

burned his son as an offering, according to the despicable practices of the nations.” The good news is that after Ahaz came Hezekiah, who “removed the high places and broke the pillars” (2 Kings 16:2-4, 18:3-4).

Ronald Reagan and the Bushes did not remove the high places. We need a Hezekiah, but we need more: America is not ancient Israel, and the president does not have the power to remove high places. We fall for the blandishments of big media and academia because we are ready to fall: If we concentrate solely on their sin we won’t come to grip with ours.

This all means that breaking *bamah* pillars is the work of every generation, but providential technology—online courses and publications—is opening wide a door in our day for Christian education and Christian publications. I’ll discuss in my next column how we can run through that door.

— Marvin Olasky
WORLD Magazine
December 1, 2012, p. 80

Politics

Republicans have now lost four of the six presidential elections since the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. A season of soul-searching will be healthy, and it is needed to retool and rebrand the party.

Yet despite the stinging defeat and a post-electoral narrative that suggests otherwise, Republicans need not abandon their principles. They must resist the temptation to form a circular firing squad, especially one with evangelicals and their social-conservative allies in the middle.

a look at our world

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The media trope that the Grand Old Party resembles a Star Wars bar scene of theocrats and religious zealots has by now become a cliché. A Huffington Post columnist recently alleged that the Republican Party is “a rump parliament of Caucasian traditionalism: white, married, churchgoing—to oversimplify only slightly.” New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd claimed that Republicans lost in 2012 because they “tried to force chastity belts on women and made Hispanics, blacks and gays feel like the help,” leading voters to “give white male domination the boot.” Juan Williams of Fox News concluded that demography is destiny and “the cycles of history have turned against the GOP.”

We’ve seen this movie before. In 1992, when George H.W. Bush lost the White House, the political cognoscenti blamed the convention speeches of Patrick Buchanan and Pat Robertson and what one commentator called the “hate-fest in Houston.” A similar pattern prevailed after losses in 1996 and 2008. When Republicans lose, the chattering class always blames religious folk.

Conservative evangelicals are arguably the largest single constituency in the electorate. According to a postelection survey by Public Opinion Strategies, self-identified conservative evangelicals made up 27% of voters in 2012, voting 80% for Mitt Romney compared with 19% for Barack Obama. This represented a net swing of 14 points toward the GOP ticket since 2008 and made up 48% of the entire Romney vote. Mr. Romney, a lifelong Mormon, actually received more evangelical votes than George W. Bush did in 2004.

White Catholic voters, meanwhile,

went to Mr. Romney by 19 points, the largest margin among that constituency for a GOP presidential candidate since Richard Nixon in 1972. This was no doubt due in part to their revulsion over the Obama administration’s harsh mandate on religious charities to pay for health services, such as contraception, that assault their conscience and compel them to violate their faith. Catholics who frequently attend Mass (about one in 10 voters) broke two-to-one for Romney.

Contrary to the prevailing stereotype, evangelicals and Catholics aren’t single-issue voters. They care about jobs, taxes and the deficit, and their support for Israel rivals that of the Jewish community. They played an indispensable role in re-electing the Republican House majority, and in electing 30 Republican governors and hundreds of state legislators and local officeholders in recent years. Jettisoning these voters and their issues would be like a football coach responding to a big loss by cutting the team’s leading rusher.

To be sure, the Republicans need to build bridges to Hispanics and minorities, women and younger voters. But unlike the conventional wisdom, social issues properly framed are one of the keys to a stronger, more diverse Republican coalition.

According to Gallup, a majority of Americans now consider themselves pro-life, including one-third of Democrats. Younger voters are one of the most pro-life segments of the electorate, with 51% of college-age “millennials” stating that having an abortion is morally wrong. A 2012 survey of voters 30 years or younger by Nara Pro-Choice

America found that pro-life voters were twice as likely as their pro-choice peers to say abortion is an important issue in determining their vote.

Despite the Obama campaign’s accusation of a Republican “war on women,” Mr. Obama actually won women by a narrower margin than he did in 2008; he lost married women by seven points. Nor did single women—who went heavily Mr. Obama’s way—vote on reproductive issues. Forty-five percent of single women voters listed jobs and the economy as their most important issues, while only 8% said abortion.

If the GOP is serious about reaching out to minorities, social issues are rich soil for finding common ground. Most minority voters are either evangelicals or Catholics. In Ohio in 2004, George W. Bush won 16% of the African-American vote, in part due to his support for traditional marriage. When California voters ratified a traditional-marriage amendment in 2008, support from African-American and Hispanic voters provided the margin of victory.

U.S. Hispanics aren’t monolithic. There are Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Venezuelans and Hondurans, among others. But one of the most reliable predictors of Hispanic voting behavior is religiosity. Roughly 20% of Hispanics are evangelicals (their number increases by 600,000 per year), and 37% of Hispanic voters self-identify as social conservatives. These voters made up a disproportionate share when George W. Bush won 44% of the Hispanic vote in 2004.

To win their support, Republicans must favor a secure border without sounding anti-immigrant. They should

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welcome those who come to this country legally and play by the rules, while stressing education reform, economic opportunity and lower taxes and regulation on minority-owned businesses.

Republicans were once accused of using “wedge issues” to divide voters based on race, gender and religion. In 2012 it was the Democrats’ turn, and they did so with the hearty applause of the mainstream-media chorus. When Mr. Obama announced his support for same-sex marriage, Daily Beast blogger Andrew Sullivan approvingly noted the “cold politics behind it,” aimed at winning young voters and re-engaging disaffected gay fundraisers.

This is the new world. Even in an election about the economy, social issues won’t go away, and denial isn’t a strategy.

Therefore, Republicans should resist the catcalls urging them to give the cold shoulder to evangelicals and other voters of faith who make up the overwhelming majority of their voters. Instead, they must do more: They must practice the politics of addition by reaching out to Hispanics, Asians, women and young people, millions of whom share these same time-honored values.

— Ralph Reed
The Wall Street Journal
November 26, 2012, p. A17

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For many of us, the unthinkable has happened.

America has decisively turned the corner away from the constitutional principles of limited government and self-government with the re-election of Barack Obama.

There may be no way home for us.

For those of us who fundamentally reject Obama’s policies, things are going to get very rough for the next four years. We have allowed our fellow Americans to pronounce judgment on the nation.

That’s what Obama represents to me – God’s judgment on a people who have turned away from Him and His ways and from everything for which our founders sacrificed their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.

The nation is divided like never before – intentionally so. That has been Obama’s game plan from the beginning – to build a constituency of special-interest groups that truly believe their salvation is found in bigger government, more programs, irresponsible spending and unconstitutional policies.

This election could very well represent the beginning of the end of the American Dream, American exceptionalism, the American way.

But it’s no time to give up – to throw up our hands in disgust and walk away from politics. Neither is it time to surrender to the radical social agenda

Obama has championed to win his victory.

It’s time to change tactics.

It’s time to double-down and fight harder.

It’s time to raise our collective voices of outrage.

It’s time to form new alliances.

It’s time to form new communities of people who understand just how much Americans have been disenfranchised from our God-given rights and responsibilities.

But, at the end of the day, people generally get the kind of government they deserve.

When you turn away from the ways of God Almighty, this is what you should expect, if you are a student of the Bible and history.

I’m not going to lie to you.

I think things are going to get very tough in America over the next four years.

I expect more division, more stratification, maybe even the disintegration of the constitutional republic that was the envy of the world for so long.

It’s time to hunker down.

It’s time to prepare for the worst – economically, militarily, socially, culturally.

The revolutionaries have won a major political victory.

The America haters are running the country for another four years.

That is not a pretty prospect.

But it’s not time to retreat. It’s time for those of us who love what America has been for most of its history to gather our wits and begin the long march back.

Most of all, it’s time for collective repentance.

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Only a miracle can save us – and we need to humble ourselves before God and pray hard for one.

Can we find our way home? Is the political system even viable for us anymore? Has our heritage of representative government been permanently robbed from us? Are our cultural institutions – from the press to the schools and universities to the major foundations and even our churches – let us down so badly that there is no hope of restoring the America we once knew and loved?

I don't know the answers to these questions.

But we must not retreat. We must not hide. We must not be intimidated. We must not stop fighting for truth, justice and the American way.

Maybe we deserve this punishment for taking our lifestyles for granted. Maybe we deserve this judgment for our own individual and collective sins. Maybe there's still time to turn things around because we serve a Creator of second and third chances.

One thing is for certain: Our national condition is going to get much worse before it gets better.

— Joseph Farah
The Washington Times
November 12, 2012, p. 20

Marriage

The U.S. Supreme Court decides next week whether to hear challenges to laws defining marriage as the conjugal union of a man and a woman. It does so after two different electoral outcomes. In May, North Carolinians voted to amend their state constitution to protect the conjugal definition of marriage,

a definition that 41 states retain. But on Nov. 6, voters in Maine, Maryland and Washington state endorsed a revisionist view of marriage as the union of any two adults.

How should the Supreme Court decide? How should voters?

We can't move one inch toward an answer simply by appealing to equality. Every marriage policy draws lines, leaving out some types of relationships. Equality forbids arbitrary line-drawing. But we cannot know which lines are arbitrary without answering two questions: What is marriage, and why does it matter for policy?

The conjugal and revisionist views are two rival answers; neither is morally neutral. Each is supported by some religious and secular worldviews but rejected by others. Nothing in the Constitution bans or favors either. The Supreme Court therefore has no basis to impose either view of marriage. So voters must decide: Which view is right?

As we argue in our book "What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense," marriage is a uniquely comprehensive union. It involves a union of hearts and minds; but also—and distinctively—a bodily union made possible by sexual-reproductive complementarity. Hence marriage is inherently extended and enriched by procreation and family life and objectively calls for similarly all-encompassing commitment, permanent and exclusive.

In short, marriage unites a man and woman holistically—emotionally and bodily, in acts of conjugal love and in the children such love brings forth—for the whole of life.

These insights require no particular theology. Ancient thinkers untouched by Judaism or Christianity—including Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Musonius Rufus, Xenophanes and Plutarch—also distinguished conjugal unions from all others. Nor did animus against any group produce this conclusion, which arose everywhere quite apart from debates about same-sex unions. The conjugal view best fits our social practices and judgments about what marriage is.

After all, if two men can marry, or two women, then what sets marriage apart from other bonds must be emotional intensity or priority. But nothing about emotional union requires it to be permanent. Or limited to two. Or sexual, much less sexually exclusive. Or inherently oriented to family life and shaped by its demands. Yet as most people see, bonds that lack these features aren't marriages.

Far from being "slippery slope" predictions, these points show that the revisionist view gets marriage wrong: It conflates marriage and companionship, an obviously broader category. That conflation has consequences. Marriage law shapes behavior by promoting a vision of what marriage is and requires. Redefinition will deepen the social distortion of marriage—and consequent harms—begun by policies such as "no-fault" divorce. As marital norms make less sense, adherence to them erodes.

Conservative scaremongering? No. Same-sex marriage activist Victoria Brownworth, like other candid revisionists, says that redefinition "almost certainly will weaken the institution of marriage," and she welcomes that result.

Yet weakening marital norms will

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hurt children and spouses, especially the poorest. Rewriting the parenting ideal will also undermine in our mores and practice the special value of biological mothers and fathers. By marking support for the conjugal view as bigotry, it will curb freedoms of religion and conscience. Redefinition will do all this in the name of a basic error about what marriage is.

Some bonds remain unrecognized, and some people unmarried, under any marriage policy. If simply sharing a home creates certain needs, we can and should meet them outside civil marriage.

Moreover, if we reject the revisionist's bare equation of marriage with companionship—and the equation of marriage licenses with all-purpose personal approval—we'll see that conjugal marriage laws deprive no one of companionship or its joys, and mark no one as less worthy of fulfillment. (Indeed, using marriage law to express social inclusion might further marginalize whoever remains single.)

True compassion means extending authentic community to everyone, especially the marginalized, while using marriage law for the social goal that it serves best: to ensure that children know the committed love of the mother and father whose union brought them into being. Indeed, only that goal justifies regulating such intimate bonds in the first place.

Just as compassion for those attracted to the same sex doesn't require redefining marriage, neither does preserving the conjugal view mean blaming them for its erosion. What separated the various goods that conjugal mar-

riage joins—sex, commitment, family life—was a sexual revolution among opposite-sex partners, with harmful rises in extramarital sex and nonmarital childbearing, pornography and easy divorce.

Only when sex and marriage were seen mainly as means to emotional satisfaction and expression did a more thorough and explicit redefinition of marriage become thinkable—for the first time in human history. The current debate just confronts us with the choice to entrench these trends—or to begin reversing them.

That debate certainly isn't about legalizing (or criminalizing) anything. In all 50 states, two men or women may have a wedding and share a life. Their employers and religious communities may recognize their unions. At issue here is whether government will effectively coerce other actors in the public square to do the same.

Also at issue is government expansion. Marital norms serve children, spouses, and hence our whole economy, especially the poor. Family breakdown thrusts the state into roles for which it is ill-suited: provider and discipliner to the orphaned and neglected, and arbiter of custody and paternity disputes.

For all these reasons, conservatives would be ill-advised to abandon support for conjugal marriage even if it hadn't won more support than Mitt Romney in every state where marriage was on the ballot.

They certainly shouldn't be duped into surrender by the circular argument that they've already lost. The ash-heap of history is filled with "inevitabilities."

Conservatives—triumphant against once-unstoppable social tides like Marxism—should know this best. "History" has no mind. The future isn't fixed. It's chosen. The Supreme Court should let the people choose; and we should choose marriage, conjugal marriage.

— Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson,
and Robert P. George
The Wall Street Journal
November 21, 2012, p. A17

Four states approved same-sex marriage by referendum—the first time any state had done so—albeit by narrow margins and in blue states. Public opinion has been moving rapidly in favor of the idea. It's still not a good one. The only good reason for public policy to take an interest in marriage is that the institution channels the behavior that creates children into responsible child-rearing. (Channels it imperfectly, of course, and more and more imperfectly in recent decades.) We have already moved too far away from that understanding of marriage, and same-sex marriage moves us farther. The shift in opinion makes a federal constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman a pipe dream. Conservatives should, however, continue to resist judicial attempts to force governments to accept the new progressive definition of marriage, to defend the rights of the dissenters from the new orthodoxy, and to make the case, both firmly and charitably, for marriage properly understood.

— *National Review*
December 3, 2012, p. 8

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Bio-Ethics

The voters of Massachusetts narrowly rejected a ballot initiative to legalize physician-assisted suicide. Proponents of the measure, which would have allowed doctors to prescribe lethal drugs to patients diagnosed as terminally ill, argued that individuals should be able to choose “death with dignity.” A coalition of disability-rights groups, medical professionals, and religious leaders pointed out that it is almost impossible to ensure that such a choice would be free from coercion, and that allowing doctors to help their patients end their lives turns the Hippocratic Oath on its head. Sean Cardinal O’Malley expressed the hope that “the citizens of the commonwealth will not be seduced by the language ‘dignity, mercy, compassion,’ which [is] used to disguise the sheer brutality of helping someone to kill themselves.” That they were not was a hopeful sign in a bleak election season.

— *National Review*
December 3, 2012, p. 8

Environmentalism

The case for being worried about climate change, formerly known as global warming, begins with the unobjectionable and escalates to the absurd. The least plausible claim is that specific events, such as the damage inflicted by Hurricane Sandy, are attributable to specific U.S. public-policy decisions. That this assertion stands in contravention of the best scientific analysis has not stopped the most unhinged climate alarmists from making it. The more reasonable argument holds that warmer oceans lead to more-intense hurricanes

and other extreme weather events. But Sandy was not an unusually powerful hurricane—it inflicted so much damage because it arrived at the confluence of a nor’easter and a high-pressure system and plowed into densely populated urban areas at high tide. In fact, the arrival of powerful hurricanes on our shores is somewhat diminished of late: The last Category 3 hurricane to make landfall was seven years ago, the longest such interval in a century. As Professor Roger Pielke Jr. of the University of Colorado points out, 1954–55 saw three back-to-back hurricanes more destructive than Sandy—two in the same month—crashing onto our shores. As so often, the science is complex while the politics are simpleminded. Global-warming hysteria is a fashion, and it is exciting to some people. It would not be accurate to say that it serves no one, but Al Gore’s fortune is not in obvious need of supplementation, and we did not believe Barack Obama’s promise of halting the oceans’ rise the first time around.

— *National Review*
December 3, 2012, p. 10, 12

Theology

The troubled Anglican Communion will soon have a new leader. The Right Reverend Justin Welby, current bishop of Durham, will take office as archbishop of Canterbury in March 2013, succeeding Rowan Williams, whose unfortunate excursions into left-wing politics have caused much heartburn to conservatives both in England and abroad. On strictly religious matters, Welby is from the Church of England’s evangelical (as opposed to high-church) wing. On the current

hot-button issues, he is something of a mixed bag (or, perhaps more appropriately in this context, a curate’s egg): against same-sex marriage, in favor of women bishops. He inherits a global Communion that is ferociously divided on these and other issues — always seemingly on the brink of schism, never quite getting there. We wish him well; as Americans, we find the idea of a “Dr. Welby” being in charge during a tough situation rather reassuring.

— *National Review*
December 3, 2012, p. 12, 13

Origins

An ongoing debate over whether cellular material can be preserved within fossils for long periods of time got a fresh round of ammunition in October. Two new studies of DNA and proteins offered support for opposite perspectives.

In the first, published in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, Australian scientists drilled into 158 semifossilized leg bones from extinct, flightless moa birds and extracted DNA samples. Relying on carbon dating, the researchers measured the bones to be between 600 and 8,000 years old. They calculated how much DNA had degraded in the older and younger fossils, and by comparing those amounts, estimated that DNA has a half-life of 521 years—meaning about half of DNA breaks apart every 521 years. The upshot is that little readable DNA should be able to survive in a fossil beyond 1.5 million years, and none beyond 6.8 million.

In the second study, published in *Bone*, a team led by North Carolina State University researcher Mary H.

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Schweitzer used mass spectrometry to show evidence for the existence of dinosaur proteins inside *Tyrannosaurus rex* and duck-billed hadrosaur fossils, both purported to be more than 60 million years old. The team also found evidence of material within the fossils that behaved, chemically, like DNA.

Schweitzer is famous for discovering soft tissue inside a fossilized *T. rex* femur in 2004. Although subsequent studies have backed up her findings, critics who can't swallow the idea of 67-million-year-old dinosaur protein argue the *T. rex* proteins actually came from a "biofilm" deposited by microbes that invaded the fossils in more recent years. In defense, Schweitzer contends that a previously unknown chemical mechanism allows cellular matter to be preserved over geologic time. An apparent solution to the dispute—that dinosaurs may be considerably younger than current theory dictates—is unlikely to get much consideration, given the commitment to Darwinian evolution in mainstream science.

Thus, the riddle remains scientifically unsolved. According to Scientific American reporter Kate Wong, Schweitzer poked fun at her opponents during a talk at an Oct. 17 paleontology conference in North Carolina. "Here's the data in support of a biofilm origin," she said, showing everyone a blank slide. "We haven't found any yet."

— Daniel James Devine
WORLD Magazine
November 17, 2012, p. 66

Marxism-Leninism

As an immigrant to the best country in the world and coming from Com-

munist Cuba, I really understand what freedom is all about. After watching this election, I am extremely disappointed with what I see as a takeover of this great country by progressive socialists. I believe the voters are going to find out what freedom really is. One doesn't seem to appreciate what they have until they lose it.

The number of takers have now surpassed the number of Producers in the United States. What I heard on the radio today is very true... you can't run against Santa Claus; you will lose every time.

In Cuba 80% of the people work for the government; and as you can see, everything is falling apart. There are shortages of food for the common people but not for the tourists and the Communist party elites.

When you go to the grocery store to buy groceries, don't think for a minute that it is like in the USA. In Cuba, you must have a "libreta" or book of the items that you are allowed to purchase (which you hope they will have when you get there). For example, you are allowed to purchase 8 oz. of oil and 10 oz. of beans per person for a month; one package of pasta every 3 months; and you are only able to purchase milk if you have children in your home. (You can check these facts in the Nov. 2012 edition of the National Geographic.) The government is also able to come to your house and break any incandescent light bulb you have right in front of you and your family,

The 80% of state workers in Cuba have a saying that goes like this: "They pretend to pay us and we pretend to work." To give you an example of salary wages emergency physicians makes ap-

proximately \$32.72 a month.

So, for those people that voted for four more years of more debt, more food stamps, more regulations, a weaker dollar, poorer people, a smaller work force, higher energy and food prices, and a weaker military, you are about to find out what losing your freedom is all about.

We have definitely gotten to the point where there are more people in the wagon than there are pulling it.

Our only hope is for America to return to its Christian roots, repent, and ask God to heal this beautiful country.

— Alberto Araoz
The Washington Times
November 12, 2012, p. 2

Ethics

Thomas Nagel is one of the world's outstanding living philosophers in the Anglo-American analytical tradition: He publishes his books with the Oxford and

Cambridge university presses and writes for *The New York Review of Books* and the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS). Yet since 1996, he has grown increasingly worried about what he then called "Darwinist imperialism." In the same essay, "Evolutionary Naturalism and the Fear of Religion," he criticized "the scientism and reductionism of our time." Though an atheist, he doggedly adheres to what Matthew Arnold called "the old but true Socratic thesis of the interdependence of knowledge and virtue"—that is, the ultimate indispensability and inseparability of epistemology and ethics, of the true and the good. He rightly credits such a view to philosophers from Plato and Aristotle, across the Middle Ages, through

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Descartes and Kant, down to Charles Sanders Peirce, and to the contemporary Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga—and himself.

His short, tightly argued, exacting new book is a work of considerable courage and importance. Nagel is worried, about Darwinism largely because he believes that its aggressive philosophical naturalism ultimately undermines the bases of both reason and ethics. And far from scorning even-popular, religiously based antagonism to Darwinism as a sign of backward ignorance, Nagel has the temerity to defend it as a form of common sense fighting “learned foolishness” and imperialistic but suicidally self-contradictory reductionism. “I would like to defend the untutored reaction of incredulity to the reductionist neo-Darwinian account of the origin and evolution of life,” he writes. “It is *prima facie* highly implausible that life as we know it is the result of a sequence of physical accidents together with the mechanism of natural selection.” He resents the strong-arm, in-your-face atheism of Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett as a kind of bluff, and boldfaced cheek: “What is lacking ... is a credible argument” that the full-throttle Darwinian “story has a [real] probability of being true.” This is plain speaking, and it has gotten the courteous, judicious Nagel in trouble with our dominant boffins. To compound Nagel’s effrontery, he has also defended the scientific “intelligent design” critics of Darwinism such as Michael Behe, David Berlinski, and Stephen C. Meyer, all associated with the Discovery Institute. He elicited outrage from the Darwinian thought

police with his praise of Meyer’s *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, which he chose as one of the books of the year for the TLS in 2009. The “problems that these iconoclasts pose for the orthodox [Darwinian] scientific consensus should be taken seriously,” he writes. “They do not deserve the scorn with which they are commonly met. It is manifestly unfair.”

Deeply rooted in the history of philosophical speculation and argument, Nagel is animated by two loyalties: first, an obstinate rationalist insistence on the indispensability of non-contradiction and logical consistency in argument; and second, the residual momentum of a kind of cosmic piety, first articulated by Socrates, that has always seen reason and logic as having an irreducibly non-natural element. It was the great Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) who noted that scientific reasoning itself must be premised on the presupposition that mental functionings are not completely explained or determined by natural processes, because otherwise we would have no warrant for believing that they are true. To this epistemological argument Whitehead added an ethical one equally apparent to Nagel: What reason could naturalistic skeptics such as Hume or T. H. Huxley (or Dawkins or Dennett) give for any moral views they held, Whitehead asked, “apart from their own psychological inheritance from the Platonic religious tradition?”

Nagel seems unaware that C. S. Lewis also made these arguments three-quarters of a century ago, a fact documented in detail in the recent volume *The Magician’s Twin: C. S. Lewis on*

Science, Scientism, and Society. But of course Nagel has already risked enough bad company without associating with Lewis. And we should be grateful that while Nagel ultimately dissents from “the design alternative,” he provocatively adds: “I believe the defenders of intelligent design deserve our gratitude for challenging a scientific world view that owes some of the passion displayed by its adherents to the fact that it is thought to liberate us from religion.” And: “That world view is ripe for displacement.”

Though Nagel cannot subscribe to what we may call capitalized Intelligent Design, he is dogged in defending what we may call lowercase intelligent design, or the fundamental rationality of the universe in its major enduring features: “Science is driven by the assumption that the world is intelligible,” he says, a fact noted in a famous 1960 essay by the Nobel-laureate physicist Eugene Wigner. Empiricism is ludicrously inadequate for an explanation or understanding of either the natural world or the mind and rational procedures that investigate and can to a large extent understand and manipulate it. Nagel agrees with Whitehead, Lewis, and Plantinga that “the application of evolutionary theory to the understanding of our own cognitive capacities” undermines “our confidence in them,” a lethal self-contradiction.

— M.D. Aeschliman

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