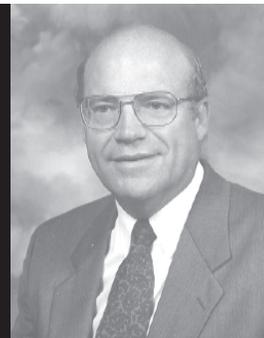




Dr. Fred Schwarz

The Schwarz Report



Dr. David Noebel

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Inside

The Atheist Assault

by Marvin Olasky Page 4

Anti-religion and anti-Christian books of the past year make something out of, well, nothing.



What do we call this?

by Don Feder, Page 7

Don Feder says good bye to Jerry Falwell.



Summit...Semester

Page 8

Look for the announcement about a semester program offered by Summit Ministries.

Chris is not Great: How Hitchens Poisons Everything

by Michael Bauman

The following article by Dr. Michael Bauamn is a review of Christopher Hitchens' *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007) —The Editor

In an already old collection of her lectures and addresses, the ever humane and decorous Helen Darbishire, former principal of Somerville College, Oxford, remarked that we all wish to be remembered and assessed on the basis of "the best qualities we possess, by the good and strong strands that run all through our characters, by our best actions rather than our worst" (*Somerville College Chapel Addresses and Other Papers*, London: 1962, p. 45). She is right; and when it comes to assessing others, we ought to extend to them the same good will and charity for which we hope.

Not so Christopher Hitchens, who unabashedly renders the harshest and most withering critique of his ideological opponents, uncharitable and false though it might be. In this book, indeed, is very much that is uncharitable and false. His volume is an ideological Potemkin village—mostly façade and chicanery, designed to look like what it is not, designed to fool and to obfuscate—behind which stands very little of substance, almost nothing at all. Hitchens offers turns of phrase as argument, tendentious reconstruction as fact, and sneering condemnation as insight and critique.

But it will not do. For his book to be successful, Hitchens needed to come to grips with the arguments of the best thinkers on the other side, and refute them. But he did not—not once. He does not mention, address, or refute either William Lane Craig's Kalam cosmological argument for the existence of God, or Craig's explanation of middle knowledge in defense of God's goodness. He does not mention, address or refute Alvin Plantinga's argument for justified belief. He does not mention, address or refute N. T. Wright's, Gary Habermas', or William Lane Craig's defense of the resurrection, or Kenneth Kitchen's impressive research in support of the Old Testament's historical reliability. Jonathan Wells' case against Darwin isn't refuted; it's simply dismissed as "laughable" and "unlikely even to rate a footnote in the history of piffle" (p.249). In the same regard, Michael Behe rates not even a mention, let alone an insult. Rather than engaging and refuting the best the other side has to offer, Hitchens dismisses and ridicules it, often in contorted and surrealistic ways, as when he talks about that portion of Christian apologetics he considers "dreary and absurd." "[H]ere," he says, "one cannot avoid naming C.

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead expose them. Ephesians 5:11

"Dwell on the past and you'll lose an eye; forget the past and you'll lose both eyes." Old Russian Proverb

S. Lewis” (p. 7). One could fairly say many things about Lewis, but “dreary and absurd” are not among them.

Or to put it differently, in his case against religion, Hitchens cites exactly one religious thinker born in the last two hundred years: C. S. Lewis, whom he quotes twice, both times to undermine religion. Naturally, I find this tactic unconvincing in the extreme. I’m trying hard to imagine how atheists would respond to a Christian who wrote a book about how evolution spoiled everything, and managed to quote only one scientist born since 1800, and who quoted that scientist (say, Stephen J. Gould), simply to show that evolution was false and could not be believed.

In a similar flight from reality, Hitchens declares that in Dietrich Bonhoeffer Christianity “mutated into an admirable but nebulous humanism” But not even the most careless reader would conclude that Bonhoeffer’s *The Cost of Discipleship* (or his *Ethics*) was merely nebulous humanism. Few twentieth century theologians were as intentionally Christocentric as Bonhoeffer. Further, according to Hitchens, Bonhoeffer was hanged “for his refusal to collude” with the Nazis. No: He was hanged because he aided Jews in their escape to Switzerland and because he plotted to assassinate Hitler after returning to Germany from a safe haven in America, because, as Bonhoeffer himself said, “I will have no right to assist with the restoration of Christian life after the war in Germany if I do not share the tests of this period with my people”—hardly the act of a nebulous humanist (Renata Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Brief Life*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004, p. 54). Indeed, according to Bonhoeffer biographer Renata Bethge, “His political resistance derived solely from his church resistance” (ibid), and not from nebulous humanism. But for whatever psychological or ideological reason, Hitchens cannot give proper credit to religion, to religious persons, or to religious motivations, as he would if truth were his quest. Only someone as untutored in theology as he would suggest that Arianism has anything at all to do with “two incarnations of the same person” (p. 248). Arianism refused to recognize even the incarnation of one divine person, let alone two. In other words, this volume is long on verbal veneer and short on scholarship. It is long on bravado and short on fact. It is a book-length pose. Posing and superficial cleverness are no substitute for fact checking, much less for serious

argument or authentic expertise.

Some of Hitchens’ defenders try to stave off criticisms like the one above by saying that he was writing an historical account of religion’s failures, not a theological account. But that defense is weak sauce indeed. You can no more write a non-theological critique of religion than you can write a non-political critique of monarchy, a non-economic critique of Marxism, or a non-scientific critique of geology.

I am not saying anything so benign or banal as that Hitchens mistakes rhetoric for argument. That would be to discredit both argument and rhetoric. Hitchens doesn’t so much argue as sneer, and sneering is no more authentic rhetoric than a belch is music. Something other than rhetoric leads him to say such silly and contradictory things about himself and his fellow anti-theists as “Our belief is not a belief,” or to utter such patent falsehoods as that he and they “do not hold [their] convictions dogmatically” (p. 5). He insists that “Literature, not scripture, sustains the mind,” apparently ignoring the great portion of Western literature sustained by Scripture. Arrogance, not rhetoric, leads him to boast that even before he reached puberty he had recognized the “four irreducible objections to religious faith.” He claims that he discovered these and other damaging facts about religion even “before [his] boyish voice had broken,” a claim that (in unintended and delicious irony) he arrogantly asserts is not arrogant (p.4). For his many false and baseless assertions, and for his self-deluded and chest-beating braggadocio, rhetoric is not to blame.

Perhaps you’ll notice that most of the failings I have cited so far occur in but the first few pages of Hitchens’ book. They are not the worst, just the first. Given their excess and overstatement, you might be surprised to learn that they come from a chapter called “Putting it Mildly.”

To return to Helen Darbishire for comparison: While she finds ways and reasons for extolling the Jews and their deep sense of human dignity (pp. 49, 58-59), rooted as it is in the image of God, and while she finds ways and reasons for extolling the supremacy of the moral law in texts like the Ten Commandments, Hitchens considers the religion of the Jews—as well as the God and Hebrew scriptures from which it springs—a nightmarish Hell hole of murderous iniquity and insufferable arrogance (ch. 7,

The Schwarz Report Bookshelf

To see a complete list of books recommended by the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade please check out our website at www.schwarzreport.org. This site also has back issues of *The Schwarz Report* as well as other great resources.

passim), an evil superceded not by Lenin or Stalin (whom he inexplicably sometimes seems to admire), but by Jesus and the New Testament (ch. 8, passim)—a conclusion he bolsters by quoting C.S. Lewis (pp. 118-120). His misreading (and misapplication) of Lewis here is as egregious as his misreading of the Bible, a penchant he displays without embarrassment time and again. For example, he insists that even as a child he “would read all the chapters that led up to the verse, and all the ones that followed it, to be sure that [he] had got the point. I can still do this” (p.2), but then demonstrates that indeed he does not get the point and cannot do it because, on the very next page, he demonstrates a deep misunderstanding both of Jesus healing a man born blind and of Jesus casting demons out of a possessed man and into a herd of nearby pigs. In other words, just as Hitchens does not bother himself to deal with the best Christian or Jewish apologists, he does not bother himself with the best Biblical exegetes, whose careful work corrects his neophytish hermeneutical blunders at nearly every point.

Read Hitchens’ statement again: He says he read “all the chapters that led up to the verse, and all the ones that followed it.” If by “all” he means one or two, then his word choice is singularly inept and radically overdrawn—as is much of his book. If by his unqualified “all” he means all, then we are to understand that he read the entire Bible every time he interpreted a single verse, and that is simply false—as is much of his book. He vacillates erratically between excess and error. But he has no choice. If you want to prove religion poisons simply everything, you must make frequent recourse to fiction.

Some of Hitchens’ fictions beggar the imagination, as when he declares as that the four gospel writers “cannot agree on anything of importance” (p. 111), or as when, in reference to those he labels “the Orthodox Jews,” he insists that “by claiming to be ‘chosen’ in a special exclusive covenant with the Almighty, they invited hatred and suspicion and evinced their own form of racism” (p.250). The anti-Semitism of this volume is jaw-droppingly wicked. Despite his defamatory assertions, the Jews did not “invite” persecution, and they are not racists. In short, while I have occasionally found myself in sincere agreement with Christopher Hitchens on some issues, and in some contexts, his view of the Jews, their history,

their religion, their Scriptures, and their motives, is simply shameful, which is why, to me at least, his outrage at Mel Gibson’s anti-Semitism rings hollow (p. 110).

Hitchens also disingenuously declares that secular totalitarian regimes like Stalin’s and Kim Il Sung’s went badly wrong partly because they pursued their programs religiously, and sometimes in overtly religious words and ways. For more on Hitchens’ assessment of tyrants like Stalin, see *Koba the Dread*, a book about Stalin’s massive evils written by Hitchens’ long time friend Martin Amis, a book in which Hitchens’ views are eloquently and memorably refuted by reason and by fact. Amis’ book is a serious and successful attempt to debunk Stalin and Stalinism. By comparison, Hitchens’ book is not serious, and in its wake religion stands unvanquished, almost unassailed. You might as well attack Gibraltar with a popgun as try to undercut 20 centuries of Christianity with a sneer.

Unlike Hitchens’ volume, serious books and serious arguments make careful note not only of their opponent’s weaknesses, but also of their successes, their virtues. But in a book like this, which foolishly offers to explain how religion poisons *everything*, one must search both long and carefully for anything beyond the most reluctant, niggardly, and understated acknowledgment of religion’s contribution to human life and the amelioration of suffering and evil. In other words, this volume is radically truth-deficient. Missing is the more fair and balanced way that scholars like theologian Harold O. J. Brown (whose book I happened to be reading when Hitchens’ came across my desk) summarize the checkered history of the faith: “Christianity tolerated slavery for hundreds of years, after a Christian emperor had come to power. But it was Christians who began the abolition of slavery and put an end to the slave trade. The beginnings of hospitals, orphanages, and countless other works of human compassion go back, in large measure, to Christian impulses. The missionaries to Africa and Asia went with the colonizers—but for all of that, they took schools, and medicine, and a new concept of human dignity, along with the news of the Son of God who was not ashamed to call men his brethren” (*The Protest of a Troubled Protestant*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970, p. 67).

Hitchens is reluctant to tell the truth, reluctant to be fair to the other side, reluctant to be respectful, and

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reluctant to give credit where credit is due. (Indeed, he cannot even bring himself to capitalize the word “god.”) In this twisted volume, you’ll not find Hitchens carefully acknowledging about religion and about religious people what serious scholars acknowledge about them. For example, with reference to the way religion makes people more loving and more generous than their secular counterparts, Arthur C. Brooks writes, “When we look only at gifts of time and money to explicitly secular causes, how do religious and nonreligious compare? . . . Religious people are more charitable in every measurable nonreligious way—including secular donations, informal giving, and even acts of kindness and honesty—than secularists” (*Who Really Cares?: The Surprising Truth about Compassionate Conservatism*, New York: Basic Books, 2006, p. 38). But rather than playing fairly and arguing even-handedly, telling both the good and the bad about religion, Hitchens invests an entire chapter implausibly arguing that religious instruction for the young is child abuse.

The mere mention of that scurrilous absurdity brings to mind both its refutation and its antidote: The first time I heard Dennis Prager speak, he addressed the L’Chaim Society at its facility in central Oxford. He spoke about the good effects of religion, especially on young persons. I paraphrase:

“Imagine yourself,” he said, “walking alone down a dark alley in south central Los Angeles, when a gang of about 10 young men suddenly and loudly emerge into the alley from between two garages, and walk directly toward you. Each one is holding something in his hand, but because of the darkness you can’t tell what it is. Your heart beats faster; your breathing gets shallower and more rapid; your eyes dilate; your mind races. You wonder fearfully what they will do.”

“Wouldn’t you feel better, Prager asked his audience, “if you knew they had just come from a Bible study?”

Not Christopher Hitchens (p. 18), if we are to believe him.

I do not.

According to Prager, the account Hitchens gives here of Prager’s question and of Hitchens’ answer to it during their debate is both self-serving and untrue. In other words, it’s of a piece with the rest of this book.

Note: For an in depth analysis and refutation of certain chapters in *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, see www.markroberts.com.

The Atheist Assault

by Marvin Olasky

Nineteenth-century novelist Gustave Flaubert used to joke about archaeologists discovering a stone tablet signed “God” and reading, “I do not exist.” His punch line had an atheist then exclaiming, “See! I told you so!”

These days, nothing stops atheistic caissons from rolling along the bookstore aisles. Maybe that’s because atheists on average have small families and lots of discretionary doubloons jingling in their pockets. Sam Harris’ *Letter to a Christian Nation* (Knopf), Daniel Dennett’s *Breaking the Spell* (Penguin), and Richard Dawkins’ *The God Delusion* (Houghton Mifflin) all hit bestseller lists during 2006—and a new book, Christopher Hitchens’ *God Is Not Great* (Twelve), has ascended this year.

Last year’s trio emerged alongside anti-Christian books purportedly based on hard reporting. Michelle Goldberg’s *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism* (Norton) typified the genre’s misreporting when she wrote that Christian pregnancy centers “usually” present false or exaggerated information—but there’s no indication that she visited even one center, let alone the 3,000 or so that exist throughout the country. (Here’s some evidentiary trivia: In four pages about me she makes five clear factual errors along with many questionable interpretations.)

This year it’s the same: a new screed by Chris Hedges has as its title not “Mistaken People” or even “Lying Liars,” but *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America* (Free Press). The genre is old, with new villains appearing as necessary. Ten years ago Frederick Clarkson’s *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy* stated that the sky was falling, with Promise Keepers as the spearhead of Christian dictatorship.

The ferocity of these books is sometimes astounding. Here, for example, is Dawkins’ view of God: “arguably the most unpleasant character in fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynist, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sado-masochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”

Even *Publishers Weekly* noted concerning *The God Delusion*, “For a scientist who criticizes religion for its intolerance, Dawkins has written a surprisingly intolerant book, full of scorn for religion and those who believe. . . . Even confirmed atheists who agree with his advocacy of science and vigorous rationalism may have trouble stomaching some of the rhetoric: “The biblical Yahweh is “psychotic,”

Aquinas' proofs of God's existence are "fatuous" and religion generally is "nonsense."

Happily, Alister and Joanna Collicutt McGrath have just come out with an effective response, *The Dawkins Delusion? Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine* (IVP). The McGraths note, "Until recently, Western atheism had waited patiently, believing that belief in God would simply die out. But now a whiff of panic is evident. Far from dying out, belief in God has rebounded."

The McGraths also point out the folly of believing that if religion were eliminated wars would cease: After all, conflicts often reflect human desires to declare some people as "in" and others as "out," sometimes on the basis of religion, but at other times on the basis of race, ethnicity, tribe, class gender, or whatever.

Christianity is above all others the religion that seeks kindness to those in the out-group: Jesus told us to love our neighbors and even to love our enemies. When Christians fail to live up to His teachings it's because of sin, not Christianity—and scapegoating religion delays efforts to deal with the real problems of social division.

Scapegoating is also evident in the writing of Sam Harris, who frequently forgets to use reason and instead falls back on words like "preposterous." He asserts certainty about what he admits not knowing: "How the process of evolution got started is still a mystery, but that does not in the least suggest that a deity is likely to be lurking at the bottom of it all."

He complains not only about ignorance but about moral failings: "An average Christian, in an average church, listening to an average Sunday sermon has achieved a level of arrogance simply unimaginable in scientific discourse."

Yet Harris, for all his attacks on Intelligent Design, does not even understand the distinction between macro-evolution—one kind of creature changing into another—and micro-evolution. One of his proofs of theistic obtuseness is that "viruses like HIV, as well as a wide range of harmful bacteria, can be seen evolving right under our noses, developing resistance to antiviral and antibiotic drugs."

The one good aspect of Harris' work is his understanding that theology has consequences: "There is no escaping the fact that a person's religious beliefs uniquely determine what he thinks peace is good for, as well as what he means by a term like 'compassion.'" Harris at least understands that the biblical theology he hates makes

obnoxious sense in a way that liberalism does not; given a suffering world, "liberal theology must stand revealed for what it is: the sheerest of moral pretenses."

Harris also criticizes the niceties of political rhetoric concerning Islam: "The idea that Islam is 'a peaceful religion hijacked by extremists' is a fantasy." Too bad he and other atheistic authors are determined to believe that Christianity is inevitably hijacked by hate, and that they pick up support from reviewers like Natalie Angier, who wrote in *The New York Times* that "Harris writes what a sizeable number of us think, but few are willing to say."

Harris' work has also engendered several Christian responses this year. Doug Wilson's *Letter from a Christian Citizen* (American Vision) points out that Harris uses morally loaded words like "should" and "ought"; Wilson rightly asks Harris, "What is the difference between an imposed morality, an imposed religion, or an imposed secular ought? Why is your imposition to be preferred to any other?"

Wilson notes Harris' fondness for Eastern religion, and in particular the "utter non-violence" of Jains in India. *Letter from a Christian Citizen* correctly notes that "Devout Jains will wear a mask to avoid breathing in and thereby killing any insect," and then asks whether Harris would commend evangelicals who "forsook the use of antibiotics because of the genocidal devastation it was causing to the microbes within."

Wilson also points out that the litany of religious folks fighting each other that Harris recites "is beside the point. We don't believe religion is the answer. We believe that Christ is the answer." Harris' list of religious messes merely confirms "one of the basic tents of the Christian faith, which is that the human race is all screwed up."

And what about this year's champion screed, offered by Christopher Hitchens? His scorn—"monotheistic religion is a plagiarism of a plagiarism of hearsay of a hearsay, of an illusion of an illusion, extending all the way back to a fabrication of a few nonevents"—oozes off every page of *God Is Not Great*, with its extraordinary subtitle, *How Religion Poisons Everything*.

"Everything"? That sounds improbable. Are 1.3 billion Muslims all murderers? Might Christianity have produced 50 percent evil and 50 percent good? If not, how about 40 percent good? Thirty percent? Twenty percent? Ten percent? Will not Hitchens relent from his anger if we can find 5 percent that's good?

God Is Not Great has received extraordinary publicity, including an adulatory review in *The New York Times*,

so it's worth going page by page to see what Hitchens is selling and many atheists are buying:

On Page 4 he writes that religion produces a “maximum of servility.” Islam, maybe, but were Abraham, Moses, and Job servile when they argued with God?

On Page 5 he writes, “No statistic will ever find that without [religious] blandishments and threats [atheists] commit more crimes of greed or violence than the faithful.” Prison Fellowship and other organizations can show that prisoners who go through evangelical programs have much lower recidivism—committing new crimes after release from prison, leading to new sentences—than others.

On Page 7 he writes, “Religion spoke its last intelligible or noble or inspiring words a long time ago.” Leaving aside the inspiration millions get from daily Bible reading, what about Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches, with all their biblical imagery? Or Pope John Paul II, whose words inspired many people to rise up against Communism in Eastern Europe?

On Page 17 he writes that religion “does not have the confidence in its own various preachings even to allow co-existence between different faiths.” At the annual March for Life in Washington tens of thousands of Catholics and Protestants walk side by side along with individuals from Jews for Life, Buddhists for Life, and so on.

On Page 32 he writes, “The nineteen suicide murderers of New York and Washington and Pennsylvania were beyond any doubt the most sincere believers on those planes.” Todd Beamer, the man who said “Let's roll” on United Flight 93, and made sure it didn't crash into the U.S. Capitol, was a strong Christian believer. So were others who died, stopping the terrorists, when Flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania.

Hitchens of course thinks the Bible is nonsense. On Page 103 he writes, “It goes without saying that none of the gruesome, disordered events described in Exodus ever took place.” Without saying. A slam dunk. On Page 103: “All the Mosaic myths can be safely and easily discarded.” On Page 104: All five books of Moses are “an ill-carpentered fiction.”

Such pronouncements were repeatedly made in the 19th century, but again and again biblical accounts considered mythical back then have gained new archeological support. For example, scholars at one point said that the Hittites described in the Bible did not exist, nor did rulers such as Belshazzar of Babylon or Sargon of Assyria. Archeologists now have records of all those civilizations and reigns.

Many brilliant people have spent lifetimes studying these writings that Hitchens so blithely dismisses. Princeton's Robert Wilson, who knew 26 ancient languages and dialects and so could read just about all that remains from the ancient Near East, was impressed with the accuracy of those accounts that Hitchens wishes to discard.

Coming to the present, Hitchens on Page 160 calls “the whole racket of American evangelism... a heartless con.” Hmm. WORLD for two decades has reported stories around this country of compassionate evangelicals who must be dumb, because they've spent their lives in a racket that's yielded them almost no money. They've adopted hard-to-place children, built AIDS orphanages in Africa, helped addicts and alcoholics to turn their lives around, transformed the lives of teens who were heading into drugs and crime, and much besides.

In responding to Hitchens and mini-Hitchenses, it's also worth noting the leadership of Christians over the centuries in setting up hospitals and schools. Historians such as Jonathan Hill of Oxford, Alvin Schmidt of Illinois College, and Rodney Stark of Baylor have described the long-term effect of Jesus telling his followers to love their neighbors as themselves.

The evangelical tendency to help others, not poison them, has even attracted the attention of *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, who calls America's evangelicals “the newest internationalists” for fighting sexual trafficking in Eastern Europe and slavery in Sudan. As Jewish leader Michael Horowitz has put it, evangelicals, “led the way in taking on the slavery issue of our time—the annual trafficking of millions of women and children into lives of sexual bondage...led the way in organizing a campaign to end a growing epidemic of prison rape.”

Horowitz concluded his message to evangelicals this way: “As you define your human rights successes as central to who you are and what you've done, it will no longer be possible for those who fear your faith to crudely caricature you or to ignore the virtue that Christian activism brings to American life and the world at large.” Spoken too soon, because authors like Harris, Dennett, Dawkins, and especially Hitchens, despite all the evidence, still proclaim that religion, or Christianity in particular, poisons everything.

—*World* magazine, July 30/July 7, 2007, p. 58-60

What do we call this?

by Don Feder

Because religious conservatives are hateful, the left has given itself permission to hate us.

In death, even the bitterest rivalries are softened. Speak no ill of the dead is an admonition nearly universally observed. For the sake of decency, there's a tendency to go easy on a fallen foe—at least temporarily.

Not for the left. Not when the foe was Falwell.

On May 15, Rev. Jerry Falwell—preacher, university chancellor, Moral Majority founder—departed this earthly existence at age 73. Many on the left could not contain their glee, which passed the border of the obscene and drove deep into the territory of ugly.

In a Sunday column, the predictable Frank Rich—political commissar at *The New York Times*—wrote, “Mr. Falwell was always on the wrong, intolerant side of history.”

Not satisfied with attacking his views, Rich (whose existence demonstrates that God is not without a sense of humor), felt compelled to ridicule the man.

“Mr. Falwell had long been an embarrassment and laughingstock to many, including a new generation of Christian leaders, typified by Mr. Kuo,” Rich declared. David Kuo is the former head of Bush's office of faith-based initiatives who wrote a book savaging the program. This qualifies him as an emerging Christian leader over at *The New York Times*.

But the piece de slime was a May 18 column by Cathleen Falsani, religion writer for *The Chicago Sun Times*. Religion writers for the establishment media make their bones by attacking the religion of 70% of the American people.

Falsani (a charmer, to be sure) begins by disclosing that on hearing of Falwell's demise, “My first thought was not sympathy for his grieving family and friends, or for the students at Liberty University who surely were shocked by the sudden passing of the school's founder in his office on campus.”

Rather, “my initial reaction to the Rev. Falwell's death was, and remains, relief—not unlike the ease I felt when a particularly nasty bully who used to spit at me on the playground and threaten to beat me up after school moved to another town. The Rev. Falwell was a spiritual bully. He was Tony Soprano to Pat Robertson's Paulie Walnuts.”

Having tired of comparing Christian conservatives to Hitler or Genghis Khan, liberal commentators are reduced

to reaching for the closest bad-guy culture reference.

To the observation of many who knew him that Falwell was affable and generous, Falsani retorted, “Tony Soprano would also make a charming dinner companion, sharing his lasagna and an expensive bottle of Orvieto while telling great stories and asking how your grandmother's doing in the home. And then he'd have you whacked and thrown over the side of his deep-sea fishing boat. But he'd send flowers to the funeral.”

For the left, opposing abortion and same-sex marriage is the moral equivalent of having people whacked and thrown over the side of a fishing boat.

Just to be sure we didn't miss the point (at this point, hardly anyone could), Falsani elaborated: “I won't miss having to apologize for the insensitive, mean-spirited, sometimes downright hateful things the Rev. Falwell said in the name of Christ. I won't miss having to explain that not all evangelicals are like the Rev. Falwell, that not all of us are self-righteous, judgmental and holier than thou.” The realization that she herself is “self-righteous, judgmental and holier than thou,” is as far from Falsani's thinking as an original idea.

At last we come to the heart of the matter: “The Rev. Falwell's absence from this realm will mean one less voice telling my gay and lesbian friends that they are somehow less loved by God...”

To the best of my knowledge, Reverend Falwell never said that God doesn't love homosexuals, rather that He's less than thrilled about homosexual acts. The Rev. would also say that God loves adulterers and pedophiles—but not their sexual behavior.

Poor, Falsani. Even with Falwell gone, she will still have to apologize to her gay and lesbian (and bisexual and transgendered?) friends for Leviticus 18:22 and Romans 1:26, 27, Marine Corps General and Joint Chiefs Chairman Peter Pace (who said homosexuals shouldn't serve openly because the military must not “condone immorality”), the overwhelming majorities of American voters who consistently approve prohibitions on same-sex marriage, and Orthodox Jews, evangelicals and traditional Catholics who take the Bible seriously (as opposed to following the Oprah-annotated version) Falsani reads:

Nearly all of the indictments of Falwell occasioned by his passing included the following:

1. He outed Teletubby Tinky-Winky. Actually, gay publications were chortling about it (the fact that a “gay role model”—with masculine voice, purse and reverse triangle—had been foisted on pre-schoolers) for better than a year before Falwell wrote a piece for Liberty Journal, quoting a *Washington Post* story. By the way, isn't it time

for a hate crimes law to end the bashing of Teletubbies based on their sexual orientation?

2. Initially, Falwell blamed 9/11 on feminists, abortion and homosexual activism—whereas all good progressives know that American imperialism, U.S. support for Israel and sanctions on Iraq were really responsible for the deaths of 3,000 Americans at the World Trade Center.

3. The Reverend once described Mohammed as “the original terrorist.” Oh, how unfair—just because he killed captured enemies, condoned the assassination of those who had offended him, and founded a religion based on jihad. To protest this absurd slander, the Prophet’s Indian followers rioted, killing a number of Hindus, and Iran’s supreme religion-of-peace council called for Falwell’s death.

4. Falwell once said the anti-Christ was alive and a Jewish male. (A man? Well, okay. But where did he get the idea that Hillary is Jewish?) Weigh this against the fact that he was the follower of another Jewish male, and made Benjamin Netanyahu look like the head of Hamas, in his support for Israel.

Above all, the left’s goon squad loathed Falwell for standing up to it. Being the famous advocates of diversity that they are, liberals become unhinged when they encounter divergent views.

Prior to the Moral Majority in the late 1970s, the left had a monopoly on political expressions of faith. Clerics from the mainline churches loudly insisted that God: 1) hated white Southerners, 2) favored communist liberation movements, 3) demanded income leveling, and 4) thought Americans were greedy and unfeeling.

Then along came Jerry Falwell, Dr. James Dobson, Pat

Robertson, Don Wildmon and others with a different message: 1) The annual slaughter of 1.3 million unborn children is displeasing to the Almighty, 2) America was founded on Judeo-Christian values and the further we stray from those principles, the worse things will get, and 3) that God wasn’t doing stand-up comedy when he said that it’s an abomination for a man to lie with a man as he would with a woman.

Worse, from the left’s perspective, Falwell was effective. His words may have been jarring to the mainstream media, but struck a responsive chord with millions of evangelical Christians. At its high tide, the Moral Majority had 6.5 million members, raised \$69 million for political causes and played a key role in the election of Ronald Reagan.

Falwell took his Lynchburg, Virginia church from 36 members to more than 22,000, preached to millions on the “Old Time Gospel Hour,” founded Liberty University (approaching its 4th decade, with 20,000-plus students) and established elementary schools, homes for unwed mothers and rehab centers—thus demonstrating his misanthropy.

It’s not surprising that Falwell should reduce the left to sputtering rage. In a way, I imagine they’ll miss having him around to hate.

There are haters on the left and right—and everywhere in between. But at least those on the right don’t have the cheek to proclaim their love for humanity while sticking in the knife and twisting it.

Like the leaders of the Spanish Inquisition—who had their victims burned alive, allegedly to save their souls—leftists spew their venom in the name of humanity, humility and love.

—*DonFeder.com*, May 30, 2007

Summit Semester

Summit Ministries recently launched a gap-year training program called Summit Semester. This three-month course will equip twenty bright, young, Christian students to be thoughtful leaders of their generation. They live and learn together under the tutelage of Schwarz Report assistant editor Michael Bauman, who along with the staff, immerse these high school graduates and college students in a broad and demanding range of studies, including The History of Christian Theology, English Literature, Christian Political Thought, Arts and Culture, and Philosophy, all in the context of a well-informed Christian worldview. Our home is a beautiful facility located in the majestic Rocky Mountains of southwestern Colorado. In that unforgettable and inspiring setting students work, play, study, explore, pray, read and simply relax.

Summit Semester alumni have the opportunity to attend an exclusive three-week study course at Oxford University in England. This course focuses on the lives and works of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Students will live on campus at Oxford, integrating and extending their Semester courses in Theology and English Literature.

Matching Grant Opportunity

Summit Semester was recently offered \$40,000 toward scholarships for students this fall in the form of a matching grant. Every dollar donated toward Summit Semester will be matched, up to \$40,000. These donations will make it possible for future leaders to attend Summit Semester who otherwise could not afford it. If you’re interested in helping, please designate donations to Summit Ministries with “Summit Semester Matching Grant” or call 719-685-9103 or 719-685-2858.