

# OPEN HOUSE

Issue No. 193 £2

*Duns Scotus Seminary  
- set for closure.*

**A SCOTTISH RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE OF COMMENT, OPINION AND REFLECTION**

## Penal Times Again.

Page 1

## Edinburgh 1910 - The Birth of Catholic Ecumenism.

Page 2

## Bad Times Come Again.

Page 3

## The Cafeteria Culture.

Page 5

## Modus Vivendi.

Page 6

## Market Speculation, World Order and The Bible (Part 1).

Page 7

## The Gonzaga Lectures 2009 - Part 2.

Page 9

## A Reflective Rant.

Page 10

## Publisher's Notes.

Page 11

## Reviews

Page 12

## Your Letters:

Page 15

## Contact Details:

Page 16

## EDITORIAL

# Penal Times Again

The Scottish Bishops appear to show no sense of accountability for the closure of the last seminary in Scotland. Rather than have a phased closure and a planned move to more practical facilities, allowing the present students to complete their studies, no reason is given for the hastiness of their decision. The Bishop of Paisley is credited with the immediate move to Rome. If training of priests at home is not important then why have we been doing it for hundreds of years? Apparently even troubled Iraq

How did the post-Vatican II Church (the People of God!) consult the laity, formation staff and seminarians in the process? A lack of vision has ensured that the Catholic Church in Scotland continues to live in the past rather than to read the signs of the times and respond to the needs of the Church in the modern world. The same short-sightedness and lack of imagination has blinded us from seeing the obvious. It is not the national seminary that has had its day. Rather it is the seminary



*Interior of the new Scotus College chapel which was built and opened in 1997.*

has a home seminary with more seminarians than Scotus and Rome's Scots College put together!

That the reasons for closure were not financial will comfort some. That it is due to staff being required in the parishes doesn't square with Scotland still being one of the best in the world in terms of proportion of priests to people, outstripping many traditionally Catholic countries with about 750 priests to 750,000 Catholics. It is the present intake that is poor and the hierarchy must look at their role in this and consider how they prioritise their ministry. Parishes must also promote vocations rather than adopt an attitude of 'leave it to others and hope for the best.'

system that is now and has been for years defunct, archaic and as such must be confined to history. It is not fit for purpose. It does not equip student priests for parish life. Putting them in parishes, as the Archbishop of Paris did, would do so. At least the home formation process at Scotus had a strong and effective pastoral and ecumenical bent.

The students who are coming to seminary are not staying and it's not difficult to see why. It may be worth bearing in mind that when the Royal Scots College in Salamanca closed all the students who were transferred to Rome left within one year of arrival. To close the Scots College in Rome would seem

the more obvious option. If for whatever reason, other than prestige, students should train abroad then this could be facilitated by one the many half empty seminaries in Rome.

The bishops should either reverse their decision to close Scotus College and allow priests to train at home or, better still, admit that the cobwebbed seminary formation system is a dinosaur of the past that is incapable of meeting the demands of the modern world. The 'it was good enough for us, so it's good enough for you' attitude is no longer a tenable position. The most suitable place to train priests for parish life is and always has been in parish life - the original

plan for priestly formation before the creation of monster seminaries 450 years ago. St Charles Borromeo believed that student priests should undergo proper formation in small numbers in houses with their bishop. It is time for reform. Only fans of H. G. Wells could applaud this decision as the hierarchy have made time travel possible and taken the Church back to Penal times. It is time we wakened up.



MICHAEL T R B TURNBULL

## Edinburgh 1910 - The Birth of Catholic Ecumenism

Next year, from 14 to 23 June, Edinburgh's Assembly Hall will host *Edinburgh 2010* in celebration of the first World Missionary Conference held at the same venue exactly a century before. Like the 1910 original, it will consist of discussions on reports written by eight appointed commissions on a number of key themes: Foundation for Mission; Christian Mission among other Faiths; Mission and Post-Modernity; Mission and Power; Forms of Missionary Engagement; Theological education and formation; Christian communities in contemporary contexts; Mission and unity - ecclesiology and mission; Mission spirituality and authentic discipleship.

This Edinburgh 2010 project (see: <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/>) is based at New College, Edinburgh and headed by International Director, South African Dr Daryl Balia, an ordained minister of the Methodist Church, who taught missiology for ten years, worked in



Dr Daryl Balia

Nelson Mandela's government for seven years promoting public ethics and national integrity and is the author of a number of books, including *Christian*

*Resistance to Apartheid* (Skotaville: Johannesburg, 1989) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Encyclopaedia of Public Administration and Public Policy* (Marcel Dekker: New York, 2004).

In the first quarter of the twentieth century the Catholic Church deliberately shunned joint ventures with other churches. On 2 November 1914, for example, Robert Gardner, Secretary of the Commission of the Episcopal Church in the United States, wrote to Secretary of State Cardinal Gasparri asking for an audience with the Pope for the purpose of discussing the proposed Conference of all Christian Communions to discuss 'Faith and Order' questions. This audience was granted and in May 1919, a delegation of five Episcopalians visited Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922).

In spite of such polite diplomatic overtures, after the Stockholm Life and Work Conference (1925) and the Faith and Order Conference in Lausanne (1927), Pius XI issued *Mortalium animos* (6 Jan 1928) 'On Religious Unity', which declared that doctrinal compromise for the purpose of union was unacceptable. After the formation of the World Council of Churches (1948), the Holy Office issued *An Instruction on the Ecumenical Movement* (1949) to summarise and consolidate this position.

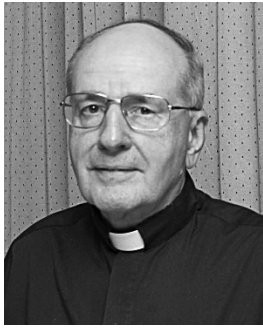
In the face of this official aloofness, it is all the more remarkable that one far-sighted Catholic priest, Bishop Geremias

Bonomelli (1831-1914) of Cremona took a personal initiative to send the World Missionary Conference a strong message of support. This intervention, although not sanctioned by higher authority, marks the tentative beginning of the Catholic Church's eventual involvement in the Ecumenical Movement. In recent years, Cardinal Walter Kasper, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has described Bishop Bonomelli's intervention as 'a prophetic sign of the Catholic Church's entry into the ecumenical movement.'

In his letter Bishop Bonomelli foresaw the tentative beginnings of a movement towards Christian unity:

....from the various Churches and religious denominations into which you Christians are divided there arises a new unifying element, a noble aspiration, restraining too great impulsiveness, levelling dividing barriers, and working for the realisation of the one Holy Church through all the children of redemption.

Msgr. John A. Radano, an American who served on the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity for more than 23 years, points out that, 'while ecumenical initiatives took place before, nonetheless in a special way Edinburgh 1910 marks the twentieth-century beginning of several very representative embodiments of the Ecumenical Movement.' These



Msgr John A. Radano

establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1948.

Bonomelli did not himself conceive the idea of writing a letter. He was invited to do so by the American Episcopalian layman, Silas McBee, who had visited Bonomelli in Cremona a few months before the World Missionary Conference opened. Although he suspected that the Vatican authorities would not openly support him and might even strongly disapprove, Bonomelli was keen to make this statement as the divisions in the Christian family preoccupied him deeply. In June 1908, his friend Don Roncalli (the future Pope John XXIII) had spent three days with him in Cremona and suggested an ecumenical council as a way of dealing with the intellectual crisis then challenging the Catholic Church (see: Joan Delaney, 'From Cremona to Edinburgh, *The Ecumenical Review*, July 2000).

include the International Missionary Council (1921), the Faith and Order movement, the Universal Council of Life and Work and ultimately to

Bonomelli had a strong sense of social justice. In 1896 appalled by the plight of Italian migrant workers whom he had met during his travels throughout Europe, he issued a pastoral letter on Emigration. Three years later he founded the 'Opera Bonomelli', an agency to provide migrant Italian workers with material and spiritual assistance.

While Bonomelli's courage and independence of mind (developed by his studies at the Gregorian University) can only be admired, some of his initiatives fell foul of the Vatican. An anonymous pamphlet he wrote in 1889, aimed at suggesting to the Vatican a way of reaching an accommodation with the new Italian state, was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books. An unguarded reference to the possibility of reconciling Christianity and Darwinism, incurred the disapproval of the Sacred Congregation and, although they did not condemn him, he quickly retracted his opinions. In *Negotiating Darwin The Vatican Confronts Evolution, 1877-1902* (The John Hopkins University Press, 2006) Mariano Artigas, Thomas F. Glick, and Rafael A. Martinez have examined the cases of Bonomelli and a number of other similar cases. Barry Brundell in 'Catholic Church politics and evolution theory, 1894-1902' (*British Journal for the History of Science* (2001) concludes that the failure of the Catholic Church to take

on board the historical-critical methods in biblical studies and other disciplines, was partly due to the influence of a group of Roman Jesuits who forced a change in the more liberal attitude adopted by Pope Leo XIII.

Subsequent Popes, however, affirmed the work of Bishop Bonomelli. In his apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia Nazarethana* (1952), Pope Pius XII praised Bonomelli's apostolate to Italian migrant workers in Switzerland, Austria, Germany and France and the agency he founded for their relief. Then, in 1994, in a letter marking the eightieth anniversary of Bonomelli's death, Pope John Paul II wrote what must be Bishop Bonomelli's most fitting epitaph (recently translated into English by Annette Brydone). 'With the passions of the past buried, today what remains alive is the teaching of the Pastor, which did its best to emphasise the harmony between Christian witness and the obligation to civil society, and also the open dialogue of faith with science and culture ... Monsignor Bonomelli, thanks to an attentive reading of the present and to a masterly evaluation of every appearance of good, had a surprising ability to see far ahead, from a perspective which was always illuminated by a deep and courageous faith.'

## MICHAEL O'NEILL

# Bad Times Come Again

As the 'Great Recession' continues it would take Karl Marx himself to do full justice to the obvious historical comparisons and contrasts with the Great Depression of the 1930s. Even if one were to accept that all that capitalists wanted was a free market and unbridled competition, one would have to be really stupid not to know that this ideology has now been tried on a grand scale at least three times in the last century on this side of the ocean, and found spectacularly wrong. John D. Rockefeller Jr, who spent his final years over in Ormond Beach, thirty miles from where I am writing this, changed capitalism for ever by recognizing the futility and ruination of such

competition and created Standard Oil, now Exxon Mobil.



This has not prevented Republican idolaters from continuing to peddle their snake oil and, excepting their three schismatic senators, voting against Barack Obama's 'stimulus bill', even after they had been granted a ridiculous one-third amount of tax cuts as part of it. Accepting the merits of

Obama's attempts to gain Republican support in Congress and with a view to his long-term strategy to reform health care as well as the economy, I remain unconvinced that he can avoid consistently, not just occasionally, pointing out that this ideology is his principal obstacle, without sacrificing his goals of ending the economic recession/depression, and reforming the whole financial system, as well as delivering national health care insurance.

The McCarthy era of the 1950s demonised the word 'socialism' and even the word 'liberal' - hence, the recent spectacle of Obama feeling compelled to

call back a *New York Times* reporter and insist that he is 'not a socialist', as if most Americans would know the difference between a socialist and the game of cricket, far less the different versions of socialism, or indeed capitalism. Perhaps the biggest obstacle to a sensible resolution of the economic crisis, including the necessary and total reform of the whole financial system, is this dead weight of history, the triumph of economic ideology over economic intelligence, and its continued use by those who profited most from its recent *débauché*.



Larry Summers

speculative credit derivative swaps, unregulated hedge funds and private equity schemes taking advantage of unfair tax systems and offshore financial piracy. The whole panoply of that brilliant financial system has now imploded. Until all this is cleared up, no one should give any credibility to what has been discredited and governments should be funding alternatives.



Tim Geithner

This has been most evident in the floundering attempts to solve the collapse of the financial system and the credit crisis. It is almost unbelievable that President Obama's economic team, led by Larry Summers and Tim Geithner, are still cautious about taking on the class of Wall Street operators who created the collapse and the crisis. One realizes that they themselves have been part of that same circle, as have many members of Congress beholden to them for campaign money. If only Obama had appointed as his advisors the likes of Paul Krugman of Princeton, Joseph Stiglitz of Columbia, Simon Johnson of MIT (truly independent economists), then Wall Street would have been put on notice that the game was over. The major banks and other large financial institutions dependent on public money for their continued existence would have been nationalized and recapitalized, such as happens at least twice a week to smaller banks the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) has to take over to save people's deposits up to \$250 thousand. Now that financial capitalism has self-destructed, we shouldn't need anything else to allow creative alternatives to be publicly capitalized. Credit Unions and cooperatives already flourish. Only the lack of imagination created by the triumph of capitalist ideology's 'false consciousness', especially in the past thirty years, prevents alternative financial systems and practices being fostered by the only game in town, *public money*. Because of the combo of predatory lending in the housing market, out-of-control speculation/casino gambling, the alchemy of changing mortgages into securities, followed by shell games of bundling and dicing, no one knows what was being traded and where it landed up. Insurance companies like AIG gambled on the unregulated insuring of

and her system's definitive self-immolation! Such irony - the union movement historically has been the main and sometimes only countervailing power to that of the corporations and financial capitalists, so its weakening if not demise in many places, has removed any balance in the system and aided the unrestricted power of the corporations and financial operators to create a depression. 'New Labour', which appears to be constructing its own demise, far from fostering a renewal of the union movement, accepted the Thatcher and Reagan consensus, and cast its lot with the financial services industry. The same was true of all too many Democrats in Congress. Naturally, economic inequality grew, the median income fell, poverty rates became worse in this country, and the lack of a national health service here forced more people into bankruptcy and poverty, even before the recession/depression hit.

One can only hope another potential countervailing power, religion (and in particular Catholics with their social teaching tradition) will find in the present crisis a new opportunity to learn and promote the principles of social justice and basic economic literacy to be found in our scriptures and tradition. As it turned out, once again, and with all its limitations and deficiencies, those of us formed in that tradition were wiser in these matters than the 'cultured despisers' of religion who turned to 'the Market' for their idol and guide. Catholic social teaching has a healthy scepticism not only for Soviet communism but also Western capitalism. Catholics who did not know that or had forgotten it have been ill served by clergy and teachers, to say nothing of their own negligence in not checking out the older tradition.

## Contributors to Open House

**John Cooney**; Author of many books; Professional Journalist with Irish Independent; Historian; Open House Committee.

**Paul Fitzpatrick**; Lecturer in Theology and Philosophy in Scunthorpe; Reviewer and Writer.

**Dr. Ian Fraser**; Retired Minister of Church of Scotland, Author of ten books, Member of the Iona Community; Committee Member of Open House.

**Willy Slavin**; Parish Priest; An Editor of Open House; Writer and Reviewer.

**Michael Turnbull**; Historian; Author of many books. Recent Books: *St. Peter's Church Edinburgh*, (2006); *Rosslyn Chapel Revealed*, (2007); *Life of Cardinal Gray* (St Andrew Press 1994); An Editor of Open House.

**James McGarry**; Retired Doctor; Freelance Writer; Reviewer; Author.

**Ian Willock**; Retired Professor from Law Faculty of Dundee University; An Open House Editor.

**Jimmy Kelly**; Retired Teacher; Freelance Writer; Reviewer.

**Michael O'Neill**; American Lawyer (Born in Scotland); Writer; Reviewer; Member of the Democrat Party; Frequent Writer for Open House.

**Austin MacCawley**; Scots Qualified Medical Doctor; Retired Professor of Psychiatry, Connecticut USA; Adviser to Hierarchy in Connecticut on Abuse Issues for many years.

**Jim V. Isaacs**; Contributor to and Writer for Open House for many years.

*It is confirmed that the opinions and ideas expressed by all our Contributors are their own and not accepted as those of Open House.*

---

AUSTIN McCAWLEY

# The Cafeteria Conscience

As Catholics, we are told we should not pick and choose which of the Church's teachings we accept and which we reject. Matters of conscience are not items on a cafeteria menu, to be selected at random. Questioning the teaching authority of the Church is the equivalent of a 'cafeteria conscience.'

This comparison is misleading. The exercise of conscience necessarily involves decision making, either selection or rejection, before any truly informed, responsible belief takes shape. The automatic acceptance of all teaching supposes that the Church never makes a mistake, and that is inconsistent with the historical record.

In the course of history, the Church has taught that the earth was the centre of the Universe, that Jews deserve persecution, that heretics and witches, many of whom were mentally ill, should be burned at the stake, that mental illness was caused by demonic possession and that torture, as practiced by the Inquisition or by the various Kings and Princes whom the Church supported, was justifiable and even in the best interests of the hapless victims, whose souls would be saved by the most dreadful agony. Would it have been wrong to question all that?

The record of the Church might not be exceptional when judged against other human institutions that have been in existence for any length of time, but that is the point: although the Church was founded by Christ and is guided by the Holy Spirit, it is composed of fallible human beings and administered by them. Christ did not change the human nature of his ministers. On the contrary he embraced humanity, with all its faults. One characteristic of human beings is that they make mistakes.

It is, of course, particularly tragic that the violence implicit in the list of abuses above was committed by the Church that speaks the Word of God, the Church that introduced the nations of the world to the ideas of charity, love and the value of the individual life and has done far more for the poor and suffering than any other human institution. That paradox, however, makes the Church even more human.



The Vatican made some major mistakes in the last century. Before World War II, they ignored the menace of the Nazis and the Far Right. They signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler, the Concordat which promised Catholic parties in Germany would stay out of politics, and they said nothing about the Holocaust. They did not support the Nazis, but neither did they oppose them.

---

*The record of the Church  
might not be exceptional  
when judged against  
other human institutions  
that have been  
in existence for any  
length of time.*

---

In fact, the Vatican supported causes that were aligned with the Nazis. They enthusiastically backed Franco, who was heavily supported by Hitler and Mussolini, and who turned out to be another mass murderer. Pope Pius XI blessed Mussolini's troops on the way to Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), and there were Fascist supporters in the hierarchy, some of them still around during Vatican II.

I know that many Catholics in Europe protected the Jews and many, from all over the world, including members of my own

family, fought the Nazis and Fascists. That does not excuse the silence of the Vatican.

The Church has never fully acknowledged the mistakes of that period. It is not clear that they recognize that there were mistakes or how serious they were.

This failure of leadership by the Vatican before the war is one of the reasons the Church lost credibility in Europe, one of the reasons for the increasing secularization. Not the only one, by any means, but for some of the Catholics who grew up with me it was highly significant.

Another reason for disaffection has been the teaching on sexuality. There are many areas of disagreement; many Catholics can only live their lives by reaching the kind of compromise that repudiates part of the catechism while retaining a core faith.

The scandal of child abuse by priests might have occasioned a reassessment of the teaching about sexuality, not just in seminaries but in regard to the whole doctrine. This has not happened. The Bishops have done everything possible to prevent further abuse; applicants to the seminary are screened carefully, complaints are investigated very thoroughly, and there is zero tolerance for offenders. But they do not feel the Church has any special problem with this kind of behaviour in priests. Their explanation is that these abusers are present everywhere in society, and we were unfortunate in admitting some of them to the priesthood. It is society's problem, and we have our share of it.

Anyone who looks at the numbers, or even reads the newspapers knows that this is a rationalization. The abusive behaviour is so opposed to everything the Church stands for, and there were so many abusers, that clearly something is fundamentally wrong. The disfunction between the strict morality of Catholicism and the enormity of the abuses is so striking that there has to be a relationship - obviously a negative relationship, but still significant. There will be different opinions about what is wrong and where the boundaries between morality, pathology and normal sexual experience lie, but the problem needs to be looked at by people who can speak freely.

---

Although the investigations by the Bishops' Conference of the United States have been remarkably frank in describing the extent of the abuses and effective in their recommendations for a rigorous program of prevention, they avoided some of the really embarrassing questions about why this happened in the first place.

It took the Bishops a long time to realize the need for action. For years, they ignored the problem, reassigned abusive priests and exposed children to risk. There has never been any accounting. Cardinal Law, who was one of the most egregious offenders, had to leave Boston, but he now holds high office in Rome. That does not suggest the Church has taken the matter seriously.

It is not just a question of being able to look at mistakes. Is it not also a matter of adjusting to changes in the human condition and some of the discoveries by Science that have radically altered our understanding of the Universe?

These discoveries are quite compatible with religious faith, but they may require a change in our understanding of the Creator, as well as the Universe that He created. Perhaps this will lead not to a fresh understanding but to an increased awareness of how little we can ever understand about God. If that were to be the outcome, a little humility would not be a bad thing. Are we prepared to take the kind of hard look that these issues will require in the near future?

The Church does not see the need for change. The Word of God does not change. Although that is true, the world in which we live by that Word changes all the time, and that changes the way in which we live our faith. Also the effects of our mistakes accumulate and that demands a corrective change. At present, we are unable to make the necessary adjustments because debate is forbidden.

We need debate by those theologians

whose strength of mind and intellect is one of the unused resources of the Church. At present, their voices are silenced. Also, debate by the priests from diocesan clergy and religious orders who understand the issues better than anyone else but do not speak out, for a variety of reasons: they don't think it will do any good, they fear retaliation, they are ambitious and do not wish to damage their chances, they are conditioned to obey - the list is long, but the basic reason is the official sanction. Finally debate by the laity who, at present, are not listened to.

I remember after Vatican II there was an excitement in the Church, a ferment of ideas and an enthusiasm among the priests that promised wonderful things. Then the attitude of the hierarchy and the Vatican changed. Debate was discouraged, and several prominent voices silenced. If only the spirit of those times could be recaptured. Was Vatican II only an aberration?

---

JOHN COONEY

## Modus Vivendi

It's a mystery tale involving the Vatican, the White House and Camelot, with the principal characters starring Pope Benedict, President Barack Obama and Caroline Kennedy, daughter of the late JFK. But none of the central characters are enlightening us on the plot.

The shadowy story began when *Il Giornale*, the Milan daily newspaper, reported that the appointment to succeed Mary Ann Glendon, the ambassador appointed by George W. Bush, to the Holy See had run into difficulties, because of the 'strained' relations between the White House and the Holy See over the President's public support for abortion and stem cell research. It said that three candidates including Ms Kennedy had been turned down.

During last year's campaign between Obama and Republican John McCain a Vatican official branded the Democratic Party as 'the party of death' because of its pro-choice stand on abortion. But millions of Catholics cast their vote for Obama. When Obama was elected as the country's first black President, the Vatican appeared to be reconciled to

dealing with the first pro-choice U.S. administration since Bill Clinton. Pope Benedict sent a private message to Obama, hoping God would 'enlighten him and help him in his great responsibility.'

However, the season of good will has not lasted long. One of Obama's first acts was to end a ban on Federal funding to international groups that perform or promote abortions. The Vatican was not happy at all.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the American media avidly picked up the Italian report suggesting that Caroline Kennedy had been proposed to Obama for the job by Democratic senator John Kerry, a Catholic who lost the race for the presidency to Bush in 2004, as a reward for her support (and that of her uncle, the ailing Ted Kennedy) of Obama for the presidency.

Vatican spokesman, Fr. Federico Lombardi, told the U.S. Catholic News Service that no proposals for the job had yet been made to the Vatican. However, this denial did not 'kill' the story for veteran Vatican watchers who were



*President Obama with Caroline Kennedy*

convinced that tensions had emerged in informal contacts among officials of the world's top two temporal and spiritual powers.

The story took on a new dimension when it was linked to a controversy over the invitation by Notre Dame, Indiana (America's premier Catholic university) for President Obama to deliver the

---

commencement address this month and receive an honorary degree.

Conservative Catholic right to life groups and some bishops damned the president of Notre Dame, Fr. John Jenkins, for endorsing Obama's pro-choice views on abortion and his support of stem cell research. The ugly tone of their protests was embodied in a poison pen e-mail carrying a picture of a prisoner behind bars under the spoof headline of 'Jenkins arrested for impersonating a Catholic.'



*Fr. John Jenkins*

Although Fr Jenkins pleaded that the invitation did not imply approval of Obama's positions on abortion and stem cell research, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago condemned Notre Dame in no uncertain terms. 'It is clear that Notre Dame didn't understand what it means to be Catholic', George thundered. Pointing out that the bishops did not control Notre Dame, he urged conservative Catholics to send their angry e-mails to the university rather than clog up episcopal administration.

Writing in the liberal National Catholic Reporter, John L. Allen appealed for charity and perspective. 'In a nutshell, my hope is that American Catholics will manage their disagreements over the Obama appearance without turning this into yet another nasty front in our version of the culture wars,' he wrote. 'Inviting a pro-choice president of the United States to speak at the country's premier Catholic university may be highly charged at the level of symbolism and political fallout, but that does not make its advisability a matter of dogma.'

This cultural civil war within the Catholic Church runs deep because of the emphasis placed by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI on the defence of human life from conception to natural death as core Catholic values. The papal view is

zealously championed as a badge of authentic Catholic identity by conservative American Catholics, even though a recent Gallup poll showed that American Catholics are more liberal than their non-Catholic compatriots on issues like sex (non-marital and gay) and gambling, but are split over abortion and embryonic stem cell research. Not surprisingly, Gallup also found that 'committed Catholics,' those who go to church regularly, are more in line with Church teachings on these issues.

This debate, therefore, is more than a storm in a chalice. It relates to the wider question of how Catholics engage public figures who hold pro-choice views without seeming to approve those views, rather than denouncing and boycotting them. It is essentially a struggle between intellectual freedom and doctrinal isolationist certitude.

Nor is the controversy likely to go away quickly. Obama was due to appear at Notre Dame on 17 May, only two days after Pope Benedict will have completed his visit to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Territories. On that trip the German Pontiff will engage on critical issues relating to Catholic-Muslim and Catholic-Jewish relations, and will call for peace in the Middle East. But it is the United States, not the Vatican, which holds the key to unlocking the Middle East conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. This reality poses the acute problem for Pope Benedict to temper his stand by returning to the traditional realpolitik of accepting the American ambassadorial nomination regardless of the personal beliefs of its candidate.

To insist that an American ambassador should be in line with official Catholic belief amounts to confessional blackmail against a nation which prides itself on the separation of Church and State. In his approach to the Obama administration, it would seem that Pope Benedict has taken the cultural war too far in his fight against 'aggressive secularism'. As Pope and as head of the Holy See, he needs to be more diplomatic and accept a *modus vivendi* between moral authoritarianism and respect for the secular world.

---

REV IAN FRASER

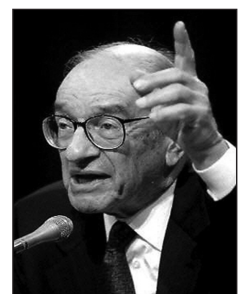
## Market Speculation, World Order and The Bible *Part 1*

One result of the global financial meltdown of 2008 was that Alan Greenspan experienced a conversion. A former chairman of the USA Federal Reserve, he had directed it for 18 years under four Presidents, and had been the most trusted of financial gurus. On the 23 October he had confessed to the House of Representatives Oversight Committee that he was in a state of 'shocked disbelief' ... 'I found a flaw in the model ... that defines how the world works.' He was not talking of some tinkering with a system, but speaking of a profound change in his understanding of the basis of world order.

He was on theological territory but he did not seem to realise it. True, the word 'conversion' was not used but the marks were all there. He had been brought up sharp, compelled to face a reality which questioned deeply-held assumptions he had affirmed up to that point. His eyes had been opened. He looked on what he had previously believed and lived by, and found it wanting. He had turned in his tracks. He looked for a new way, based on alternative assumptions concerning 'how the world works'. There had been consequences for others, whom he had encouraged to adopt the understanding of

world order which he now rejected. These were basic features which also marked St Paul's conversion!

What he had believed in, what he now discarded, was expressed thus by Jeremy Warner in 'The Independent' of 24 October 2008: 'faith in the ability of the free market system to protect and heal



*Alan Greenspan*

itself had gone up in smoke.' Self-regulation by Wall Street had failed.

The chairman of the Oversight Committee, Henry Waxman, pressed home the consequences of this false world view -'The Federal Reserve had the authority to stop the irresponsible lending practices that fuelled the sub-prime mortgage market, but its long-time chairman rejected pleas that he intervene. The Securities and Exchange Commission had the authority to insist on tighter standards for credit rating agencies but it did nothing. The Treasury Department could have led the charge for responsible oversight of financial derivatives, but instead it joined the opposition. The list of regulatory mistakes and misjudgements is long, and the cost to tax-payers and our country is staggering.'

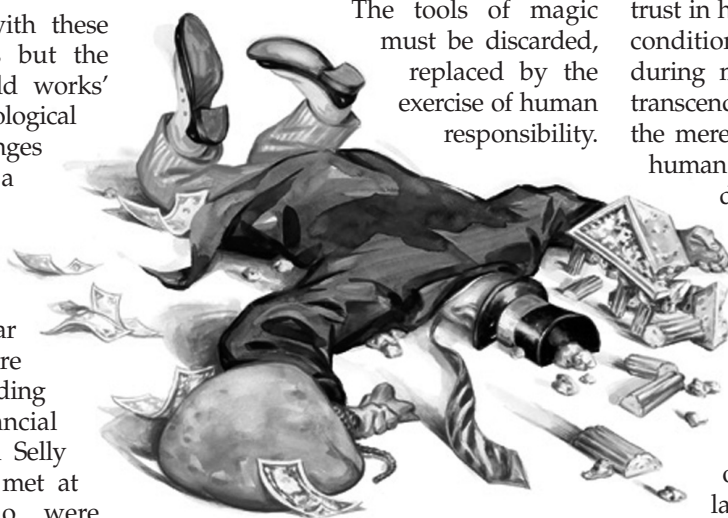
It is well to list and deal with these mistakes and misjudgements but the concern about 'how the world works' drives deeper. It requires theological perceptions and language. Changes in practice must be based on a realistic perception: human nature can be the seat of sinful pretensions as well as hopeful stirrings. The concept of sin, absent from these debates as far as I can see, should feature significantly in our understanding and response to the financial meltdown. When I worked in Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, I met at times with colleagues who were industrial chaplains. On one occasion they puzzled over ways of getting an understanding of sin across to basic workers. In the end they saw the need to express it as the 'buggering-up factor in life.' The relevance today should be obvious.

Sin is expressed in at least these two significant ways: a belief in magic, and a trust in unregenerate human nature.

'The magic of the market', belief in its self-regulatory powers, is really based on the thesis that, whatever devilment speculators get up to, some hidden force will iron out consequences. They will get away with their loot if they gamble well, and no one will lose. Those who hold to this view project no real credible world. As St Paul says: 'Make no mistake about this: God is not to be fooled; everyone reaps what he sows.' (Galatians 6:7)

Play is made of the 'invisible hand' to which Adam Smith refers. But he gives it

no credence. Rather he identifies manipulative forces thus: 'The interest of dealers is always in some respect different from and even opposed to that of the public. The proposal of any new law or regulation of commerce which comes from that order (i.e. dealers) ought always to be listened to with great precaution, ought never to be adopted till after having been long and carefully examined, not only with the most scrupulous but with the most suspicious attention. It comes from an order of men whose interest is never the same with that of the public, who have generally an interest to deceive and even oppress the public, and who, accordingly, have upon many occasions both deceived and oppressed it.' (see Penguin Classics edition of 'The Wealth of Nations', p 358)



The tools of magic must be discarded, replaced by the exercise of human responsibility.

In his inaugural address as U.S.A. President, Roosevelt stated: '... we require two safeguards against a return to the evils of the old order; there must be a strict supervision of all banking credits and investments; there must be an end to speculation with other people's money ...' This accords with the biblical conviction that God made human beings, women and men together, to be responsible stewards of creation, to manage it as trustees so that 'the way it works' fulfils his good intentions for it. Ways of fantasy and deception are ruled out of court. They are evil.

The early Church ruled out magic as a sinful delusion which withdrew people from trusting God in their exercise of human responsibilities. Simon, a Jewish Magus, wanted to buy the Spirit-power of the disciples. Peter gave him short shrift: 'May your silver perish with you ... Repent therefore of this wickedness ... for

I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness.' (Acts 8:18-24). Paul tongue-lashed the magus Elymas in Cyprus: 'You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?' Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, saw in the birth of the Christ child a death-sentence to the power of magic. Writing to the Ephesians on the way to martyrdom in Rome, somewhere around 107 to 110 AD, he stated: 'A star, brighter than all the other stars, shone in the sky... Thereupon all magic was dissolved ...'

Trust in magic is an alternative to trust in the living God. It can offer cover for the greed-is-good brigade. The Creator of the world invites us in partnership to create a world order which works. The alternative, trust in human nature in its unregenerate condition, had had clear dissuasives during my lifetime. The elimination of transcendence ('that which goes beyond the merely earthly') in the evaluation of human life, brought not freedom but

different forms of subjugation to powers-that-be. As a young man Karl Marx had a religious phase which he outgrew, and Stalin, destined for the priesthood, kicked over the religious traces. Marx later found in the idea of a creator God an insufferable limitation on collective man. Stalin both lauded collective human achievement and dealt pitilessly with actual human beings -both kulaks and colleagues were liquidated on a massive scale. After Stalin's death in 1953 this discrepancy between theory and actuality produced a new search into the nature of humanity in Russia and Eastern Europe. Attempts were made to see whether the element of transcendence could be accommodated to Marxist theory. They had found it to provide an essential ingredient in giving value to human life.

When relationship to God is eliminated from the human, there is no restriction on powers-that-be identifying human nature on their own terms and acting accordingly. For Stalin, the truly human person would be the faithful Party member (though he eliminated plenty); for Hitler, those of Aryan race; for Mao, aficionados of the Red Book. The dimensions of human life were thus woefully reduced where there was no transcendent reference.



---

Theology is needed to correct this skewed understanding of human nature. It is the most practical of disciplines. It addresses the actual terms provided by life on earth, asks what sense we can make of that life and what is required of each of us. It sees in Jesus Christ's life an acceptance of these terms and a manifestation of ways of self-giving and sacrifice which make the world work. He often expressed his own theology in parables, using the story form to enable hearers to face deep questions of life and gain perceptions on how to live truly in a struggle for light. He showed that there is a theology which meets people where they are, those rejected by society, illiterates, the downtrodden as well as those who find social acceptance.

Human beings, male and female together, are made in God's likeness and invited to manage the world in partnership with God, as trustees of the Creator's intention for it and stewards of all that has been made. Marx thought that this downgraded humanity. The apprentice who learns his craft from the master craftsman is not downgraded but equipped for the job.

All through the bible there are encouragements to rejoice in and share God's generous provision for human life and at the same time be wary of destructive sinful pretensions in human nature. Jesus Christ came announcing the Kingdom, the whole fabric of created life

being transformed so that it is marked by justice, truth and peace. He presented himself as the way, the truth, the life. That life could be shared; with followers he could work in double harness.

Senator Salonga of the Philippines understood that when he spoke to me of the evangelical necessity of research into multinational corporations, lest the world get into a powerful grip which is other than God's. Institutions, corporations, banks, stock-exchanges need to turn from self-seeking, self-rewarding ways to servant ways. Great institutions will find their true role and get their true reward when they accept servant status.

---

**JIMMY KELLY**

Gonzaga Lecture 17th March 2009

# How Liberal is Labour? Liberalism, New Conservatism and New Labour

**Baroness Shirley Williams of Crosby**

Baroness Williams began by pointing out that the word 'liberal' rarely appears before the Enlightenment, then later as an individual's freedom of thought, then in economics - in the sense of free market competition. Adam Smith, she reminded us, was not a prophet of modern capitalism, his being deeply rooted in the ethical society of 18th century Edinburgh, and in Protestant moral principles.

As the concept of universal rights developed, Ruskin used it to mean a wider responsibility to the citizen. Later it included views encompassing the widening of the franchise with Gladstone. Through trade unionism and democratic socialism the Labour Government of 1945 helped to complete the process. As late as 1948 university graduates had two votes, one for 'University seats' until the Representation of the People Act (1949). Voting on class lines lasted only until about 1960, which then produced left-voting professionals and Tory-voting workers.

John Smith's four points of 1983 were important in the evolution of Labour.

What was needed was devolution through referenda, freedom of information, and a Human Rights Act, all of which came in with Tony Blair. What did not come in was Smith's fourth point, proportional representation, which, Baroness Williams found, left us with a skewed and strange voting system. Regrettably, lecture regulations prevented her from consulting the audience (now Holyrood-governed), about life under a skewed and strange voting system.

For Dame Shirley, a golden period of Liberalism ended after 1997, thanks to two things: the devastation of 9/11, she felt, could not have happened in a worse place from the perspective of attracting skewed media coverage. From the point of view of casualties, Rwanda was much worse, but 9/11 produced in Britain 460 Acts of Parliament, 38,000 statutory instruments and 3,000 new criminal offences. While undoubtedly statistically accurate, this may have been a new perspective on skewed media coverage for some of the audience.

Another new challenge as Liberalism



developed was seen in her conviction that racism had moved out of society, which she found to be much less prejudiced than it used to be. Baroness Williams did not appear to make a connection of any kind between this development and the 460 Acts of Parliament, 38,000 statutory instruments and 3000 new criminal offences. Another benefit of new legislation was gender equality, with proper age equality in the wings.

She concluded that there had been a substantial advance in liberal thought and action, but that civil liberties were in danger, for which the Executive must always be held to account, and that the price of liberty was constant vigilance, from all perspectives.

---

Gonzaga Lecture 24th March 2009

# The Virtuous Astronomer: How Studying the Stars is Shaped by Faith, Hope and Love

Bro Guy Consolmagno sj,

Curator of Meteorites at the Vatican Observatory

Making his first appearance in a pulpit, as he pointed out, Brother Guy Consolmagno lectured on 'The Virtuous Astronomer: How studying the stars is shaped by Faith, Hope and Love,' being his contribution to 'Faith and Politics in the 21st century'. He expounded his subject effortlessly, joining Fr Nicholas King sj and Professor Tom Devine at the top of a long list of memorable Gonzaga lecturers, now 60 in number.

The first of many intriguing insights was his demonstration that politics and astronomy had much more in common than one could have imagined. His elegant dissection of the relationship between Science and Religion, inevitably touched, charitably, on, creationism and atheism, the former giving science too much credit, while the theist or agnostic scientist is more common than the atheist. 'Even an atheist scientist must still worship at the altar of Truth ... Recall how the God of Genesis remarks on Creation, judging it good. Likewise, even the most atheistic scientists experience that sense of joy, that simple happiness, that sense of rightness, when they uncover the elegance in nature reflected in the laws of science. To study science, you must accept articles of faith, hope and love that are quite frankly religious in nature.'

There must be a faith in objective reality, he continued, a faith that the universe

operates according to laws, at least partly acceptable by human reason. Both science and religion are concerned with creation, with the nature of reality and the origin of things, and both are involved with issues of truth. It is a sterile and dishonest solution to separate them 'into watertight boxes.' 'Religion starts with Truth , ' he added, 'but only begins to approach Understanding and Science consists of human-made theories to describe that Truth. We spend out lives on the road linking Truth and Understanding. Scientists travel in one direction, believers the other; those of us who are both get to experience both. It is, after all, a two-way street. And Faith is both the starting point and the goal.'

Hope gives us the confidence to proceed down that street, to see that the universe is not an accidental chaos, a hope, in astronomy, which has to be supported by an enormous amount of human effort, and expense. But 'we are invited to learn about God by studying His wonderful universe' by what Chesterton called the 'mystic materialism' of Christianity, and to become technologists, engineers, doctors, psychiatrists. 'We are invited to become astronomers. It is because that invitation comes from God that we have the certain expectation — the hope that in the beauty of the Stars and the Laws that govern them, we will encounter Him who is the



source of all law and beauty and truth.' St Athanasius suggested by implication that the honour and duty of one who knows and loves God is to know and love his creation. 'In other words,' he concluded, 'God calls us to be scientists.'

Brother Guy outlined the spectacular contribution of the Society of Jesus to astronomy, prefigured by Ignatius whose 'greatest consolation came from the contemplation of the heavens and the stars, which he would gaze at long and often, because from them was born in him the strongest impulse to serve Our Saviour.' The prophet Baruch spoke of 'the stars at their posts [which] shine and rejoice. When He calls them, they answer 'Here we are!' shining with joy for their maker ... call it consolation, call it joy; call it love.' It is in season every year. It is the study of the universe, the 'all things', where one finds God. It is the work of the Vatican Observatory. It is the work of every observatory. We call it astronomy.' The grateful thanks of the Catholic community go to St Aloysius College, the Headmaster, Mr John Stoer, and the organiser Mr Hugh Campbell for a most stimulating series of Gonzaga Lectures.

---

J. V. ISAACS

## A Reflective Rant

A chap came into the office, red-faced and out of breath, 'I've just run all the way behind a bus and saved myself a pound. A voice from the far corner piped up and said 'you should have run behind a taxi and saved yourself a fiver.' It's a very old joke but it crossed my mind as I listened to Bankers, Politicians and Financial Commentators

explaining and analysing the current crisis.

What also crossed my mind was a timely and apt quotation used by Pope Benedict in his first Encyclical 'Deus Caritas Est'. He quotes thus, 'The just ordering of Society and the State is the responsibility of Politicians. As Augustine once



said, a State which is not governed according to justice would be just a bunch of thieves.'

Perhaps we should all reflect a little more deeply on that brief statement in the 1 Tim: 6, 'the love of money is the root of all evil'? And there is much evil in the world.

But we have built a consumer society, and a service economy which demands that we spend, spend, spend. The financial system itself is bankrupt so where will we go from here? While the financial framework has been decaying, so too has the framework of our Society and culture.

An attribute of old age is that you can view what to many is history, from the perspective of personal experience. One of the gravest of depletions we have experienced is the loss of that sense of community. How has it happened? There are several reasons, but there is one at whose root lies that love of money which turns so easily to greed.

Go back to the 1950s when among the many buzz words used by the 'efficiency experts' we had 'centralization', then we had mergers for economy of scale, and takeovers. One by one factories closed until whole industries disappeared. So did the centres of wealth creation. Each time a community lifestyle, both inside and outside the factory, developed over a century and more, was lost, destroyed.

This was done for profit, but the price paid is yet to be calculated.

Some people ask, 'What does the Church say about all this?' The Church has said a great deal. From *Rerum Novarum* (1891) to *Centesimus Annus* (1991) there has been a steady stream of documents culminating in the publication in 2004 of 'The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church'.

Unfortunately it acquired the name of 'our best kept secret', the reason being obvious. To paraphrase a well known saying, if the clergy were in Court, charged with spreading or promoting the social teaching of the Church, would there be enough evidence to convict them?

Added to the documents referred to above, we have had many others which should have touched the lives of all the faithful.

Had the words of the Fathers of the Church, crystallised by Pope John Paul in *Christifideles Laici* (1988), been heeded we may well be in a position to brave the storm which is before us. Twenty-one years of building communities and giving a lead and example to all.

There is a saying in the Church that it is never too late. Perhaps now is the time to prove it. Especially as I remember the words written by one European writer several decades ago. He said 'The 21st Century will be a Christian one or not at all'.

Another item which seems to cause some people much bother is the old British custom of giving people nicknames. I remember many years ago being in billets with groups of chaps who lived and worked together in harmony. I can see their faces as I remember Jock Taff and Paddy, Scouse Brum Geordie and Jan from Devon. Then there was Chalky White, Dusty Miller, Jumper Collins and Nobby Clark. Who could forget Tiny who stood 6 feet 4 inches in his stocking feet and Lofty who just managed 5 feet 2 inches, and then there was Darky Knight. I wonder what we would have affectingly called a gentleman from Pakistan?

But language as well has been under attack and assisting in cultural change. New words have come into use and old ones changed in meaning.

The greatest commandment is to Love God and Neighbour, the operative word being Love. What a pity for the younger generations that love is now synonymous with sex. Love, which is 'the heart of the Christian faith', is devalued every time we say love when we mean sex. The description of love in 1 Cor 13 seems to have been forgotten.

I liked the chap who said that sex and love were like two chemicals. Each had it own properties and characteristics, but when mixed together the result was unpredictable.

Society and the world are changing. Those who are responsible for the direction of the Church have to make up their minds whether we are to be part of that change or sit on the sidelines and live with the consequences. Rome has spoken, it is up to us to respond.

## PUBLISHER'S NOTES

The credit crunch has adversely affected our costs. Whilst our printing and design costs have remained constant our postal costs and other production costs have risen. We are grateful to many of you who have made donations and we hope you will continue to do so. The new design of Open House has increased the number of our subscribers. We are applying to become a Registered Charity but this takes time. As a Charity our income should increase. In the meantime to reduce our costs we have decided to produce Double Issues for June/July and August/September. As the number of subscribers continues to increase and the effects of being a Registered Charity produces more income then we will lessen the number of double issues. Our aim is to continue to publish Open House as a voice for the ordinary members of the Christian Churches in Scotland in spite of the credit crunch. We know that you will also understand that printing double Issues from time to time enables us to keep the price of Open House at £2.00 for each copy.

James Armstrong,  
Publisher. MAY 2009.

## ROBERT MCLAUGHLAN BOOK CLUB SUMMER MEETINGS 2009

**WEDNESDAY, 27 May 2009 at 7.15p.m.**

Monsignor Henry Docherty will talk on the book  
**'Turmoil & Truth': The Historical Roots of the Modern Crisis in the Catholic Church**  
by Philip Trower (Family Publications, £10.95)  
ISBN 1-871217-40-7

**TUESDAY, 23 June 2009 at 7.15p.m.**

James McGarry will talk on the book  
**'Culture Counts': Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged**

by Rodger Scruton (Brief Encounters, £11.99)  
[www.encounterbooks.com](http://www.encounterbooks.com)

**Meetings are held at the Western Club  
32 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow.**

**Cost per meeting - £6.00.**

**To book:** Contact James Armstrong by phoning 0141 427 2222 or writing to 26 Torridon Ave., Glasgow G41 5AU  
E-mail: [armstrj567@aol.com](mailto:armstrj567@aol.com)

**Pre-meeting drinks at 6.45.**

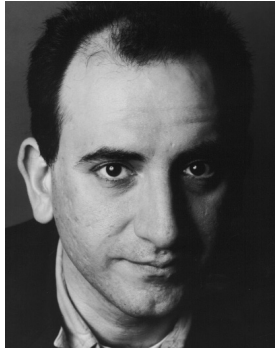
---

# Film Review

IAN D. WILLOCK

## In the Loop

'The Finest Satire in Years', 'Impossibly Hilarious', 'Sheer Genius', 'Deliriously Funny'. Allowing for the traditional hyperbole, it might be worth a laugh or two. And so it delivers, but no more.



Director Armando Iannucci

As most people will now know, this film purports to be a satire on British and USA international relations. And they will bring some kind of assumptions to the cinema. But how do they link them with

the satire? The principal characters are never introduced. Nor do the two official internet trailers help in any way. Without being too ponderous successful satire surely demands some shared knowledge about what is being satirised. We never meet the US President or the UK Prime Minister. It would not be reasonable at this time to portray, say, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, but some hint as to whether they are right or left wing and what country they are contemplating unleashing war upon would have injected a little more reality.

However, we become boringly familiar with their underlings. There is a nervous shy little man, Simon Foster, who is a Cabinet Minister, though what his portfolio is remains obscure. He is haunted by a

statement to the media that 'war is unforeseeable' and spends much of the film trying to explain what he meant. He is overshadowed by Peter Capaldi as Malcolm Tucker who gives his own sickening flavour to the whole film. But who is Malcolm Tucker? He seems to be a figure of power who can shriek at a Cabinet Minister and is in contact with the Prime Minister and yet has no title or function. He is also a sufferer from what the psychiatrists call Tourette's Syndrome, having in abundance the two characteristics of facial jerks and relentless swearing. It has been suggested that he is inspired by Alistair Campbell (Blair's Press Spokesman), but on that we could not possibly comment. He is highly unoriginal in his swearing only rarely proceeding beyond the 'f\*\*\*' word to an occasional 'Jesus Christ'. Late in the film an equally crude Scots journalist, James MacDonald, makes a brief and ineffective appearance, leading one to think, surely Gordon Ramsay must have been unavailable.

There is also a shadowy young man who on little evidence might just be a non-swearing political adviser. The Americans are fairly colourless with one gross exception, a General who hangs around the politicians in a green uniform bedecked with ribbons and medals. Surprisingly he is anti-war: as he observes 'civilians want to go to war. Once you have been there, you don't want to go back. It's like France.' His most memorable scene is when he grabs a fax machine whose output he disapproves of

and stamps it to disintegration on the floor.

The film moves on to two contrasting settings. Simon is sent by the Prime Minister to Washington for 48 hours to find



Peter Capaldi and Chris Addison in a scene from the film

out what is going on. He takes the political adviser, if such he is, and not surprisingly Malcolm turns up too. Most people ignore them. But when Simon is asked to contribute to a meeting of what is officially the Planning Committee but known to insiders as the War Committee, he fluffs the opportunity. Not a chance our urbane Foreign Secretary would miss.

The most satisfying touch is when the United Kingdom representatives return from their jaunt to Washington and the UN at New York and they are at once plunged into Simon's constituency affairs in Northampton, looking into a septic tank and a constituents collapsing wall. Suddenly one thinks, yes this is the way it is. High flyers have to come down to earth.

---

# Theatre Review

WILLY SLAVIN

## Be Near Me

Priests may be flattered to know that their image, at least in the fallen state, is still a box office attraction. Andrew O'Hagan's latest novel, *Be Near Me*,

having been adapted for the stage, has been chosen by the recently founded National Theatre of Scotland as its latest production. Not a ticket was to be had for

its opening week in The Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock. After an extended run in London it has played in the main Scottish cities before returning to England.

The title is from the opening line of the 50th canto of Tennyson's poem *In Memoriam* A.H.H. Tennyson's close friend, Arthur Hallam, died suddenly at 24 putting the poet's conventional Anglican faith into long doubt. The hero of O'Hagan's book is a Catholic priest, David Anderton, whose closest friend Conor was killed in an accident. Thereafter Conor remains near to him in all his subsequent struggles and temptations.

In his first novel, *Our Fathers*, O'Hagan recalls his family origins in the East End of Glasgow and his upbringing in Irvine new town. Following his success with *Personality* based on the life of Lena Zavaroni he places Fr Anderton in St John Ogilvie's, Dalgarnock, clearly Bourtreehill housing estate. An unsettled priest of Lancaster Diocese for 20 years he has come to Scotland because of a friendship he had

the influence of drink and drugs. It is clear O'Hagan sees Bourtreehill from the point of view of London where he now lives: there is nothing of human history on the estate, just an immoderate acceptance of life's low standards and a desire for state benefits and babies. This is a contrast with Scottish based writers like McIlvanney for whom the history, often in old industries, is very much alive.

The other social feature is sectarianism which, as here, is often described as a West of Scotland phenomenon but which is much more in your face in deprived areas of Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Inverclyde and West Lothian than it is in a city of relative opportunity like Glasgow. In the Glasgow Citizens Theatre it was much enjoyed by the young audience, as was the constant foul language. As an Englishman Fr Anderton is further marginalised.

the play is better than the book. Certainly the four main actors brought a zest to their parts which lent focus to the story.

The main thrust of O'Hagan's book is the plight of the homosexual vowed to celibacy. Although Larkin had his tongue in his cheek when he said sex had been invented in 1964 it is true that it is from about then that sex has become the common idiom of the media, arts and eventually ordinary conversation to the extent that it is now in the vocabulary of pre-school children. This has, amongst other things, obliterated the difference between homosexual relations (which can be as discreet as heterosexual ones) and, on the other hand, camp behaviour which needs a public forum.

There's an interesting passage in the book (p179) about the previous illegality of homosexual relations: *privacy was not just a survival requirement but something quite central to what we had. I've seen men holding hands in the years since and wondered if something wasn't lost by what they gained (by legalisation). We found it easy to outwit the law because our own law called for caution.* It is this caution that Fr Anderton throws to the wind in drink.

There's also an interesting comment on priests as *boys who never grow up* (p203): *one lives like an orphan in a beautiful paternalistic dream.* During the trial this is Fr Anderton's defence. He genuinely thought of himself as an equal with the 15 year old hooligan. Although there has long been a desire to conduct a witch hunt of priests in Scotland there has been little evidence of priests behaving as boys in this sense. For many of them, and for some still, 'the boys' are the other priests with whom they had to live in large presbyteries with little of the licence afforded to Fr Anderton.



Author Andrew O'Hagan



Ian McDiarmid, Richard Madden, Helen Mallon in *Be Near Me*

during studies in Rome with the Bishop of Galloway, not entirely fanciful since St John Ogilvie is still run by non-Scottish Sacred Heart Fathers.

The climax of the story is the priest's trial for sexual assault on a 15 year old boy whom he admits to kissing while both were under

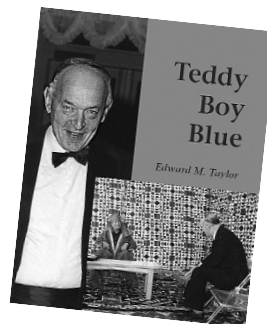
Critics have thought that the efforts of the priest to contact what are now described as feral youngsters is the least successful part of the book. There are a couple of cringeworthy pages as the author tries to offer middle class readers a pharmacopoeia of current street usage. This is Irvine Welsh territory. Opinion is divided as to whether

# Book Review

PAUL FITZPATRICK

## Teddy Boy Blue

by Edward M. Taylor, (Glasgow: Kennedy and Boyd, 2008)  
(Also available at Amazon Books) 269 pages £14.95.



Teddy Taylor was the Conservative MP for Glasgow Cathcart between 1964 and 1979, famously losing his seat, against the national swing, in the very year which swept Mrs Thatcher to power. After a brief absence from Parliament, he was elected MP for

Southend East in a bye-election in 1980 with a majority of 400, a majority which he restored to its 'rightful' level of 10000 in the next General Election. When first elected, he was the youngest member of the House; when he retired in 2005, he had completed

41 years as a Member of Parliament. This autobiography is dedicated to the other members of the 'group of eight' - the eight Tory MPs who lost the Party whip under John Major for voting against the Government on the subject of Europe - and

the threat of Europe to the British traditions of Parliamentary democracy forms the backdrop to Taylor's reflections. It is perhaps typical of the man that he has included in an appendix a profile of him entitled 'Natty but Nice' first published in *The Observer* in August 1996 by the political journalist Andrew Billen, which alludes to various features of his career passed over by the man himself, including his knighthood.

So, is he indeed 'nice' (a favourite Taylor term) or is he dangerous? Is he an innocent at large in the vicious world of Westminster politics or himself a fomenter of that viciousness? Even the title of his memoir highlights the uncertainty - is it a playful and ironic juxtaposition of conservative identity and modern culture, or a provocative allusion to a deeply entrenched association between Scottish Conservatism and Protestantism which will set on edge the teeth of all those Glaswegians who are neither conservative nor Rangers supporters? Is he better thought of as a maverick with interesting views on unfashionable foreign policy topics like Iran and Libya, or as a Monday club member who regrets the passing of capital punishment and for whom Mrs Thatcher was too liberal? Is he a Tory ideologue or an old-fashioned independent?

The book reinforces the reader's puzzlement without providing a clear answer to any of these questions. More detail is provided on his early forays into local government in Glasgow than on his parliamentary career. He became involved in representational politics from a young age, first standing for Glasgow City Council in 1958 while still a student, as the Progressive candidate in the Townhead ward, and yet his motivation for doing so remains unclear. Why was he so keen to be a young conservative? Growing

up during the Second World War, he admired the political leadership of Churchill as the embodiment of all that was right and admirable. He describes such leaders, without a hint of irony, as 'inspired and faultless visionaries whose qualities were unique and wonderful' (p3). Politics certainly appeared to the young Taylor as an honourable occupation. He sat on the Conservative benches of the Glasgow Parliamentary Debating Society largely because 'it seemed the respectable thing to do and not because, at the time, I had any great knowledge of party policies' and because it might have distressed his parents had he joined another political group (p13). When he first stood for Parliament in 1959, he stood as a Unionist. In fact he regrets the decision of the Conservative Party in the early 1960s to move into local government in Scotland. Until then a variety of Progressives, Moderates and Independents had generally upheld basic Conservative ideas. 'Many people who were perfectly willing to vote for local non-socialist parties were simply not willing to support Conservative candidates' (p 75). No further analysis of the nature of Scottish Conservatism is found in this book. Much of its sensibility, like its author's, seems to belong to an earlier age, marked by a lower middle class sense of deference combined with a commitment to civic duty, an age whose passing Taylor, unsurprisingly, regrets.

Yet he made his mark as a hard working constituency MP who paid close attention to the 'grass roots' and who cherished the roles played by countless local activists. This is where he seems happiest, in helping individuals through his weekly surgeries. He was an assiduous attender of meetings, who remained keenly aware of the limitations of the power both of MPs and of

Government Ministers, who rely heavily on the work of their civil servants. His is a 'Yes Minister' approach to politics, without the laughs. Yet he remains a stout defender of Parliamentary practices and pays close attention to the work of its committees and the law-making process. It is not his purpose to reveal secrets or report gossip: he allows himself a story about the dining arrangements which had to be introduced in the House of Commons to accommodate the presence of both Ian Paisley and Bernadette Devlin - solution: a staggered lunch hour, just like at school! Little information is provided about his voting record in Parliament and little analysis is offered of the issues of the day. He is content with remarks like 'I gained the impression during a visit to Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia that none of these countries would do well with self government and I gained the impression that Iain Smith had a great deal of genuine support amongst the African majority' (p232).

Teddy Taylor comes over as a man of decency and honesty, self deprecating - 'my life has been haunted with luck' (p 186) - sceptical about the pretensions of power, an accidental politician, responsible, conventional, careful, prudent, loyal, eager to help, decent. He is a social conservative unsure how to deal with the myriad problems of a Castlemilk, yet willing to try. But is all the effort spent in getting elected worth it, when his achievements are apparently meagre and the treasured democratic freedoms of Britain are in danger of being lost to Brussels? He seems burdened by self-doubt, but he manages to conclude on an optimistic note: people can work together to solve common problems and telling the truth is the most powerful means for engaging people. These reminders are undoubtedly timely.

JAMES MCGARRY

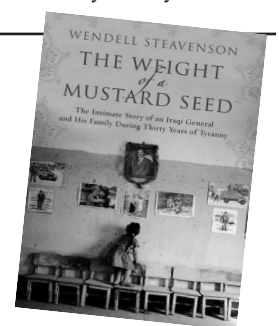
## The Weight of a Mustard Seed

by Wendell Steavenson (Atlantic Books) £14.99.

Iraq is a country but not a nation. Its population of eighteen million has been ruled by Arab conquerors, then by the Ottoman Empire until 1918, when it was established as a kingdom, administered by Great Britain until 1932, after which date it was sovereign. A coup in 1958

produced a republic, which became a tyranny in 1979 under Saddam Hussein. A wasteful war with Iran lasted from 1980 to 1988. In 1990, conquest of Kuwait in pursuit of oil-wealth and access to the Persian Gulf was reversed by United Nations forces. Saddam Hussein sought

international power by developing nuclear weaponry and chemical and biological means of terror. He used poisons in his assaults on the minority Kurdish people of Iraq. He was deposed by invasion in 2003, captured, tried and hanged.



---

Iraq has a long history of disorder, dissension, tribalism, lethal enforcement of power, felt in every family. It has no history of democracy, civil society, justice or peace. It has had universities, scholarship, medical expertise technology, international travel, television and radio: all of these aspects of modern life are there, but all dominated by central power: all conditional, insecure, controlled. Wendell Steavenson seeks to illustrate the plight of Iraqis by recounting the life story of Kamel Sachet, a clever boy, who worked hard at school, took one of the limited range of chances for a career by entering the Police Force then the Army. He was a brave and effective soldier, and, in time was promoted by Saddam Hussein to the rank of General. The year was 1979, and for nearly twenty years Sachet served his leader and his country. He was a good father to his large family, but the terrible

strain of trying to reconcile his conscience with the horrific policies of Saddam Hussein needed some relief, which he sought in Islamic faith and practice. He imposed strict dress and behaviour on his wife and children, and became a divided man, trying to resist excesses of cruelty from his leader, but in the process falling under suspicion. In the end, in 1998 he was executed.

Wendell Steavenson went to Iraq in 2003, her contact was a Dr. Hassan, a psychiatrist who led her to the home of Kamel Sachet, to interview and befriend his widow and children. The story is presented in a series of flashbacks, which make it rather difficult to follow. There is no originality here but dismay and sadness, almost despair at the state of the country. A measure of the awfulness is the comment of an Iraqi Administrator, 'the only solution is imposed Order. The

Government must have a monopoly of violence. Guns in other hands means chaos, feuds, and revenge for ever.' That sentence covers the national scene. The writer's attempt to express the struggle of one man reduced to the status of agent by tyranny certainly excites the sympathy of the reader.

It could be considered that most of us in Britain look at Iraq through a telescope: we are preoccupied by regret and guilt that in 2003 the defence of the West by removing Saddam Hussein from power was at least a proximate cause of the present chaos of Iraq. This book, by contrast, could be said to look through a microscope, to detail the human reality. Nothing that we learn changes that reality. The harrowing tale may leave the reader feeling that he has been invited to look through a keyhole into a darkened room.

---

## YOUR LETTERS

# Dear Editors...



Dear Editors,

You assert in your April 09 Editorial that the young Catholics who have arrived in recent years from Eastern Europe, Africa, India, etc., did not receive a warm welcome in our Parishes. If one accepts the assertion as factual (I would take it with a pinch of salt) it presents only one side of a coin. The other side of the same coin is that many of these new arrivals have shown little interest in becoming part of ordinary day to day Parish life. The relationship between 'us' and 'them' often reduces to we will supply the venue (i.e. empty Church building) and you supply everything else (i.e. Priest and Congregation).

The retiring Archbishop of Westminster raised a few eyebrows some time back when he warned against the creation of parallel Churches. More recently and nearer home the Bishop of Aberdeen wondered if perhaps we have been too accommodating in our approach.

The issue of integration is a debate whose time has come in the Scottish Church. Diversity is a vital ingredient of Roman Catholicism but so too is unity.

Yours sincerely  
Rev John Lyons  
Glasgow

Dear Editors,

I am rather puzzled that Lynn Jolly read my film review of *Doubt* 'with growing bewilderment'. She acknowledges 'about some things we agree' - many I would say.

But I do disagree that 'the Council is everywhere here'. The docile Parishioners pack the Church in silence. Sister Aloysius pounces on any inattentive children. No sign of the dialogue mass which, in Aberdeen Cathedral at least, was encouraged from 1961 and prepared the congregation for the coming of English in 1967.

I did ponder as to whether Sister's preoccupation with closing the window that kept blowing open had a symbolic significance, that it showed her anxiety that her position would not be undermined by what was happening in Rome. But after 45 years knowledge of that cannot be assumed in any audience.

As I see it, the year 1964 is insignificant. The film is about the authoritarian system which is the Catholic Church. Within it there are rival power systems, here the diocesan priesthood and the teaching sisterhood, in each of which power can be abused.

However, I am glad that someone was watching a fascinating film with thoughtful attention.

Ian D Willock,  
Dundee.

## REPRESENTING RELIGION IN HOLOCAUST EXHIBITIONS

West of Scotland Council  
of Christians and Jews



### Representing Religion in Holocaust Exhibitions

With Hannah Holtschneider

Lecturer in Modern Judaism at the  
University of Edinburgh

**Tuesday 12th May at 7.30 pm**

Newlands South Church  
Corner of Langside Drive and  
Riverside Road G43  
(Opposite Langside Station)

AGM at 7.15 Tea will be served

## THE GONZAGA LECTURES 2009

Recordings of the 2009 Gonzaga Lectures  
are now available at the price of  
£6.00 each lecture including p&p

The complete series is available for  
£16.00 including p&p

Recordings of all the 2008 Gonzaga Lectures are  
also available at the price of £12.00 inc p&p

Two suppliers from which to obtain the recordings are:

Frank Trias,

33 Eskdale Road, Bearsden, G61 1JZ.

Mobile: 0750 768 3364

E-mail: [info@frank-t.co.uk](mailto:info@frank-t.co.uk)

AND

Pauline Books & Media

5a-7 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow, G1 3AH

Tel: 0141 226 3391

E-mail [glasgow@pauline-uk.org](mailto:glasgow@pauline-uk.org)

Full list of recordings can be obtained from the suppliers.

## OPEN HOUSE

Web Site: [www.open-house-scot.co.uk](http://www.open-house-scot.co.uk)

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE DONATIONS SENT IN THE PAST MONTHS.

Please continue to send donations. With them we are able to survive in our present form.

Please accept our apologies for not acknowledging gifts individually due to lack of staff.

FOR OUR FUTURE PLANS WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE EMAIL NUMBERS FROM AS MANY OF YOU AS POSSIBLE.

PLEASE SEND THEM TO JAMES ARMSTRONG'S E-mail no: [armstrj567@aol.com](mailto:armstrj567@aol.com)

### CONTACTING OPEN HOUSE.

Please contact any of the following team with articles news, reviews and letters.

IAN WILLOCK Phone 01382 646957. [i.d.willock@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:i.d.willock@dundee.ac.uk) 11 Norwood Crescent, Dundee DD2 1PD

WILLY SLAVIN [willyslavin@gmail.com](mailto:willyslavin@gmail.com) • MICHAEL TURNBULL [corbie41@hotmail.com](mailto:corbie41@hotmail.com)

JAMES ARMSTRONG Phone 0141 427 2222. [armstrj567@aol.com](mailto:armstrj567@aol.com) Fax: 0141 427 0500

Address: 26 Torridon Ave., Glasgow G41 5AU. *Publisher (phone Publisher on any issue re Open House)*

### SUBSCRIBE/RENEW FOR ONE YEAR

Send cheque for £20 made payable to Open House to Alison Whitton, Administrative Secretary, Clematis Cottage, William Street, Carnoustie, DD7 6DG [o-house@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:o-house@hotmail.co.uk) One monthly edition of Open house costs just over £900 to produce and post.

Please also send donations by cheque payable to Open House to Alison Whitton at the aforesaid address.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Jim McManus; Rev. Ian Fraser; Michael O'Donnell; Elizabeth Kearney; Maeve McGlynn; Jennifer Stark; John Cooney.