THE FAITHANGLEFORUM

TRANSCRIPT

Four Decades as a Worldwide Religion Reporter: Observations and Lessons Learned

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MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Ken Woodward was Religion Editor of *Newsweek* Magazine for almost 40 years. He has a brand new book out called *Getting Religion: Faith, Culture, and Politics From the Age of Eisenhower to the Era of Obama*. Ken Woodward has done many, many, many cover stories for *Newsweek*. I'll call your attention to one he wrote back in 1976. I still have, as my wife says, every magazine that ever existed in my basement. This was written by Ken Woodward called "The Year of the Evangelicals," which was a lot about the rise of evangelical Christians to political importance with emergence of public figures like Jimmy Carter and Charles Colson.

Some of you don't know that my first job out of college, I was the research assistant to the infamous Watergate felon, Chuck Colson. Colson, as you all know, had a Christian conversion experience while in prison, and came out and founded a group called Prison Fellowship, which is a prison ministry to prisoners.

He got so interested in the subject of revivals and awakenings in America, and the fact that America needed one, that he brought down an historian from the Boston area every Monday to speak to about 12 of us about the history of awakenings in American culture and society. Chuck Colson was riveted by these lectures and was hoping it was happening in America.

I was a little skeptical about the prospect of an awakening occurring in America, and one day, he came bounding in my office. And he said, "Mike, look, look, cover *of Newsweek*. I told you revival's breaking out in the land."

I said Chuck, "The cover of *Newsweek* does not a revival make. Just because *Newsweek* has discovered American evangelicals does not mean that they're taking over the country."

"Oh, you're too cynical."

I told that story to Ken, and he had never heard it before. But it's a true story. Chuck thought that a cover story on *Newsweek* meant revival is breaking out in the land, when, actually, it was just a story about what does Jimmy Carter believe as a Southern Baptist and all those people like him.

Ken Woodward has covered everybody from Billy Graham to Jerry Falwell to various popes to the Dalai Lama to liberal Protestants and conservative Catholics. One of the great benefits of his book is Ken emphasizes that the way to do a story is you had to be there. He always would get on the road and go meet with people personally. And that's what makes the book so entertaining and insightful.

So we're delighted. I asked Ken to come and tell us the things he learned, the lessons he learned and observations from his 40 years' experience, and then we're going to hear from Grant Wacker.

Ken, you're on.

KENNETH WOODWARD: All right. A propos of talking about instrumentalizing your jobs,

I was at *Newsweek* 38 years. So you can realize why I don't understand how they have to move every five years. I'm going to talk a little bit about *Newsweek* because it doesn't exist anymore, at least not the Newsweek I knew, and I want to make all of you younger journalists jealous.

I walked in off the street and got that job as a religion editor right off the bat. I got hired because, not in spite of, the fact that I'm Catholic. No one on staff knew much about religion or cared to write about it. It was toward the end of Vatican Council II. *TIME* Magazine was out-reporting us on the biggest religion story in at least 50 years us. They had way more people in their Rome bureau to cover the Council, and to wine and dine the *periti* while pumping them for information.

My opposite number at *TIME*, oddly enough, was a John Elson who had graduated, as I did, from Notre Dame, only five years earlier. He and I were both influenced by an English professor named Frank O'Malley on the relationship of religion to culture and I wanted to do the kind of pieces Elson had been doing for *Time* before I got to Newsweek.

Time founder [Henry] Luce was in very interested in religion and because religion was in the air they breathed at *TIME* the editors did Reinhold Niebuhr on the cover, Paul Tillich on the cover, and John Courtney Murray, who played golf with Luce, on the cover. And I thought I'd be doing the same, doing profiles of famous thinkers and theologians – but I never did.

That was the "age of the giants." By the time I got the job, the "age of the giants" was over. I ended up doing more sociology of religion and I had hated sociology in college.

In that vein we did accomplish a couple of firsts. Shortly after the Council, I did a cover story called "How U.S. Catholics View Their Church" for which *Newsweek* then hired the pollster for Kennedy. I've forgotten his name. He's famous.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Lou Harris.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Lou Harris. Yeah, Lou Harris -- I would say Lou Holtz because I went to Notre Dame, but you're right.

Nobody -- no institution, least of all the Catholic Church -- had ever asked Catholics what they think about their church. So that was a first, and then after the Six-Day War, we put "The American Jews: New Pride, New Problems" on the cover. American Jews had never been on the cover of any magazine before that. American Jews have never been on the cover of any magazine since, at least to my knowledge.

There was a lot of nervousness. The editorial department was top-heavy with Jewish editors and writers. The managing editor came in and said to me, "You know, Ken, as they used to say in the shtetl, 'Can this be good for the Jews?'"

And I said, "You don't ask me that about the Catholics. You don't ask me that about Protestants. What's going on here?"

Well, there was nervousness. Ed Kosner -- some of you might remember him -- was editing the "Nation" section, and the cover image was a Star of David in red, white, and blue, which he had his Jewish colleagues in the "Nation" department cut out and hang around their necks. Now, that was rather grim humor, but it tells you a bit of the nervousness about doing that cover story.

I also wrote the "Ideas" section for 10 years, which was really important because it forced me to read more psychology than I ever wanted to read and more sociology and the rest, but it was great relief from writing only about religion. And that way, I could see, particularly in things like transpersonal psychology -- you know, patients going out of body

and things like that -- were really trying answer the same questions that religion addresses.

I also got to travel. I wrote cover stories from Africa and England, and I got to the Soviet Union, Israel and all over Europe. If you were a, you got to go places to report even though we had bureaus with correspondents there.

Just one quick example because I'm going to be talking about American religion today. Newsweek sent me to the Soviet Union, and one of the stories I did was on the teaching of atheism, which was a required course in high school and university.

I didn't know I was going to meet the board of the Communist Youth League but there I was sitting alone across a long table from a dozen of them in uniform, the women burly with close-cropped hair—just like in the old Cold-War movies I saw as a kid. They really dressed that way.

And one said, "So you're a believer, right?"

And I said, "Well, yes, I think we're all believers here. We just believe in different things."

I followed a teacher of atheism around, and you could see his students weren't interested in his classes. Either they never met a believer or were secret believers. Either way they didn't give a damn – "Why do I need to know this sort of thing?"

But that evening at a bar the teacher cried in his vodka and said, "I get no respect. The Academy of Social Sciences doesn't respect me, and the kids don't respect me, and I thought, "Oh my God. That sounds like every Sunday School teacher I'd ever heard of."

(Laughter)

KENNETH WOODWARD: Probably a worse job.

Then when I retired from *Newsweek*, interestingly enough, there still wasn't anyone who knew much about religion, except one guy, the editor in chief, Jon Meacham, which is why Meacham wrote all the cover stories on religion after I left.

To be a specialist there meant you were an expert, so people would go to the medicine editor and tell him about their aches and pains, go to the law editor and try to find out something about a legal problem they had, and they'd come to me and say, you know, "I'm a such-and-such. Do we believe in this?"

For example, I was hired by the legendary editor Oz Elliott. One cay he he came into my office, shooed my assistant out and closed the door. He sat down and looked me in the eye. I thought I was going to be fired. He said, "You know, I'm an Episcopalian, and I just got divorced." Actually,
I didn't know either of those things. He said, "You know, they won't let you marry in my church for a year after divorcing. Can you find me a minister to marry me?"

So you had all kinds of extracurricular chores that were expected of you as religion editor.

(Laughter)

KENNETH WOODWARD: Newsweek was very generous I got 90 publications coming into me -- from *Playboy* to *The Hawkeye Methodist*, I remember. I used to read the state denominational papers for the Baptists and so forth to learn how they talked among themselves because I was on a steep learning curve Because I was from Notre Dame, they figured I knew all about Catholicism, but I had to learn about everybody else.

By the way, we also got free books; we could buy any book we wanted, and in those days, Doubleday bookstores would take back any new books. If I got a book I didn't want, I'd take it back and get one that I did. Within two years, I had a library which I sustained at 4,000 volumes. I have to tell you greed never felt so virtuous.

I knew things were coming to an end when *TIME* and *Newsweek* started cutting back on their bureau systems around the world. You really can't have a newsmagazine without your own correspondents around the world. It was wonderful to be able to press a button and have the bureaus from around the world send you files. We had much more information coming into us than could ever go out into the magazine. I think at one time I did a cover story on death and dying, and we had a wonderful quote from Martin Heidegger from the Bonn bureau, and it was actually understandable. The trouble was it was too long. So Martin Heidegger never made the cut getting into *Newsweek* magazine.

We were allowed to write for other magazines, which is verboten at *TIME* Magazine. My nom de plume was what I drank. It was James Michael Beam. So if you run across a piece by that name, I'm the one that wrote it.

Today, we have 700 *Newsweek* alumni who still stay in contact with each other on Facebook. It's a very homey, chummy group – we've even had two reunions in Manhattan.

Okay. Now, Michael's asked me to tell what I've learned. Since I was on a steep learning curve, I learned a lot in the beginning. I had never met a bishop who had a wife; I didn't think that was possible in my Catholic world. I had never run across a denomination--in this case, the Presbyterians -- that would rewrite its creed, update it from time to time. I thought creeds were forever.

I learned that most Protestants could no longer recall which doctrines distinguished

Presbyterians from Lutherans or Methodists or Congregationalists. It seemed to me that the Presbyterians did the thinking for the Methodists and the Methodists did the feeling for the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians did the drinking for both of them. These were the real distinctions.

I also found out -- and this is rather more serious -- when Protestants talked about church, whether it's evangelical or a mainline, and Catholics talked about church, they really were talking about two different things. Correct me if I'm wrong, Michael, but the Protestant will talk about church as the congregation that he or she belongs to. Catholics always talk about the church as the whole world institution from pope on down.

Albert Outler, a great Methodist historian I met after Vatican Council II, put the difference another way: "Ken, you've got to learn something here, man." He was from Texas. "Deep down, Protestants distrust the structures they've created," meaning their denominations because they were fashioned in this coutry to compete in the new emerging religion market.

And he said, "Deep down, Catholics, even liberal Catholics, for them, Holy Mother the Church is, damn it all, Holy-Mother-the- Church."

I learned Judaism from Rabbi Abraham Heschel, who became a mentor to me, a close friend. I profile him lovingly in the book. He had this little tiny office no bigger than the bathroom in Jewish Theological Seminary because he was looked down upon by the people who ran the seminary who were your basic post- Enlightenment Jewish scholars.

Heschel was a blueblood Hasid. I would walk in there, and, you know, the books were stacked like stalagmites on his desk and spilling out of shelves behind him. He was a very small man, and you felt these books might someday fall on him and he'd be buried underneath his beloved books.

But he always started out by saying, "My friend, let me tell you a story." Well, that's what I'm doing today, is telling you a story.

Late is his life he came back from Rome and he was so so agitated. He called me up breathless, could hardly get the words out. He says, "It's terrible. You've got to write about it. It's awful."

"What are you talking about, Rabbi?"

"They're selling their statues in Rome." I pictured *La Dolce Vita*. Remember the opening scene where a religious statue's being ferried by helicopter across the city?

Point is that as an orthodox Jew Heschel came from a strictly a-conic tradition "a there shall be no graven images tradition," but he felt what that selling of statues meant for a tradition that was invested in sacred images. So from him I learned that people who are deeply formed by one religious tradition are in a better position, better able to understand people from a tradition not their own.

I can imagine when Heschel met Merton. Well, I know what happened because they talked pleasantries for about exactly four seconds, and then they just got right down to deep I spiritual matters in the back of a taxi on the way back to Merton's monastery.

The other related principle, I think, is you never really know your own religion well, assuming you have one, until you immerse yourself in at least one other with sympathetic understanding. I think that's something Billy Graham never understood and that most evangelists never learn. If you're out to convert people, you're not listening to them.

Most of what I learned I have put in this book, and the reason I wrote it is the same reason

that most journalists and historians write books. It's because I had a lot of stories that needed telling. It is full of anecdotes, but it is a history.

I view it as a social history that takes religion and moves it from the periphery, where most social historians put it, to the center of the narrative.

I think for example of David Halberstam's book on the 50's. That was the most religious period in the history of America s (which, by the way, I take to mean a 20-year period from 1945 to 1965, and yet he never mentioned religion even once.

The stories are arranged along a double helixed plotline. One line traces out the decline of institutional religion from that post-war era to the end of the century and beyond. I talk about how, at that time, not only was religion strong, but it had, if you will, civic and political and cultural support; to be religious was to be patriotic. We were in a war of liberation, long before they had liberation theology talk, and we were to liberate the captive nations of Central Europe from the yoke of communism.

My university's motto – "For God, country, and Notre Dame" -- expressed it very well, indeed. It's now, I think, "For Notre Dame, God, and country" the aggressive way they raise money.

(Laughter)

KENNETH WOODWARD: By the end of the century, we had what we've been talking about, the Nones—25 percent of the population. I would suggest from what I've read of polls maybe another 24-25 percent of Americans put religion somewhere near the center of their lives. A lot of the rest is, you know, are watching Osteen on television and things like that. So I see one in four Americans being seriously religious.

The other plot line, running through the second half of the 20th century, follows an outburst of religious enthusiasm and volatility not seen since the Great Awakening in the middle of the 19th century, an era which brought us the Mormons, the Disciples of Christ, and all these good things that Grant Wacker teaches.

That outburst wasn't expected. Hence, my title for the book: *Getting Religion*, which is a line from Mencken, and it refers to the various ways and forms in which Americans got or acquired religion, including important alternatives to religion like Werner Erhard's "est," Oprah's vaporous spirituality, and movements like transpersonal psychology, which centered on engineered out-of-body experiences.

There was a Virginia businessman named Monroe in the 1980s who claimed he had sent 1,400 licensed psychologists out of body and back. One of them was Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. I had an interview with her for a cover story on death and dying, and she described for me her out-of-body trips, during which she found, she said, other beings. It was she said so nice to know that there were other beings out there to help us get to the other side after death.

She said to me, it's so nice in this work--the hard work sitting at the edge of the bed with the dying. I think it got to her, but in any case, she told me this story. "You know, one of them came back and thanked me."

I said, "Really?"

"Yes, and she left a note for the Unitarian minister who also helped out."

So I got the note it from the Unitarian minister, and instead of a picture Newsweek used the note as art in my cover story--a letter from someone beyond the grave thanking her

for her aid. Guess what? We had 4-or 500 letters to the editor on that story and not one of them questioned the authenticity of that letter.

That anecdote speaks to the tenor of the times in which I was writing. That's when universities like Columbia and Minnesota had departments of thanatology, when high schools would try to get high school kids used to the idea of death by taking them down to the local mortuary so they could lay in coffins. The whole preoccupation with death was one of the dimensions of American culture in the 1980s.

Now, if you look (when you get the book) at the table of contents, the words Protestant, Catholic, or Jew do not appear in any of the chapter titles. What you're going to see are categories that I created like embedded religion, movement religion, entrepreneurial religion and so on. I did this as a way to show how religion in that era was connected to social change, social migrations, movements, culture, politics. Together, they represent how I have come to think about America and religion as I experienced it both personally and professionally.

For example, there's a chapter called "Sacred Families." J. Gordon Melton, who studied cults, listed some 370 new religious movements in the '80s. Some of them were resurrected from previous times, others brand new, many imports.

Well, that's a way a lot of kids got religion, sometimes pretty dangerous religion. If you were a parent and you couldn't see your kid because he or she was in a cult, you were sorely wrought. But what I did was connect this phenomenon up with the breakdown of the family and traditional marriage and family structures beginning in the '60s with the Moynihan Report on the Black family structures-- for which by the way Black leaders gave him holy hell, except for Kenneth Clark, as I remember.

The feminists went after him because, after all, weren't these single mothers, you know,

battling patriarchy? Well, no, they weren't, as a matter of fact. So how do we connect the one with the other? Well, 20 years later, the indices of what Moynihan called "social pathology" were now true of White American families, and of course, the Black family got even worse.

He wrote a wonderful essay called "Defining Deviancy Down" because once the Whites were doing it, then it was okay and it became acceptable.

Changes in the family structure, changes in the cultural attitudes toward marriage and family had a lot to do with the rise of the cults because a million kids a year were running away from home. Now, these were not Huck Finns going down the Mississippi. These were not poor kids, by and large. These were kids from junior/senior high school, freshman/sophomore college, and nearly all were from middle class and better homes.

The Unification Church is a good example. It featured Dr. and Mrs. Moon who were revered as divine parents. Another couple, Bo and Peep, ran another cult. Some were matriarchal or patriarchal. There were any number of these people, constructing cults as sacred families.

This analysis of cults as sacred and surrogate families is one of the ways that I try to connect up what's going on in this society as a whole with the emergence of different forms of getting religion. That was also the time (Bill Galston will remember) when Jimmy Carter hosted a White House conference on the family. Then there was a White House conference on the children. There was tremendous academic and governmental preoccupation with the transformation of American families.

What we had, then, were various forms of religion that I present as a kind of palimpsest in which a new form is laid over the earlier ones without erasing what came earlier.

The basic form of religion, the way most people get religion, is what I call embedded religion. By that, I mean religion acquired through communal formation. It's the kind of religion that one is born into, religion that is handed down and, therefore, tied to ethnicity and extended families and sustained by local institutions, neighborhoods, as well as, obviously, churches and synagogues and now mosques.

Religion so embedded "goes with the territory." It's embedded in the landscape. Think of Wisconsin. If you live in Wisconsin, your background, maybe even your foreground, is either going to be Lutheran or Catholic. Think of all those towns in the South where it seems like there's more Baptists than there are people. That's what I'm talking about, and that's why I put this map out for you to see. If you've never seen it, it's pretty startling. I used to keep it on my wall because people in New York didn't see this religious dimension of America. The map's from the Historical Atlas of American Religion, which is a wonderful book in itself.

As you can see, where one tradition like Catholic or Lutheran or Mormon has 50 percent or more of the people in a county that is colored a deep shade of a corresponding color, and where that tradition is a quarter to a half of the population, the color is shaded lighter..

Now, if you had to do this map today, it seems to me it would resemble a mound of ice cream in the summertime – religion still strong in the middle and along the southern base, but melting, melting, melting on the edges. Today there would have lots of white space on the map to account for the 24 per cent of the population who are "Nones."

Okay. I'm going to read you a little something from my book about embedded religion as I experienced it in the '50s. If you were a Catholic child growing up in the '50s, you felt yourself "at the center of concentric circles of belonging. There were the people you saw at church on Sunday or the kids at the parochial school. There were the Catholics at the

other churches you went to on the weekend if you were traveling. There were all the Catholics on the earth, all the Catholics who ever existed, plus those saints who were looking down on us like grandparents from high front porches." So it was a deeply connected world.

Catholics, as I write here, constituted the largest parallel culture at that time in the United States, and my experience of it was that we were separated by a membrane, not a wall. Now, Orthodox Jews, Mormons of the time, were separated by a wall more than a membrane. But the membrane allowed a lot of things to come in, and it kept a lot of things out. I think that pretty well describes the way Catholic assimilation took place, and it was completed by the time of Vatican Council II.

But Catholics like everybody else also belonged to neighborhoods. To me, a neighborhood is a place where the people down the street, over on the next block, know your name, can call your parents (or threaten to) if they see you doing something you shouldn't be doing.

In the 50s we knew people down the block because we cut their lawns. We delivered their newspapers. We saw them if you worked at the local gas station or at the store. Kids were everywhere. As I said, in my community, which was a suburb about 15 miles west of downtown Cleveland, we kids felt we owned the town more than the town owned us.

Think of John Updike's hometown that he fictionalized in his work. He was a product of the same period, and that was the feeling we all had. That means we were in touch with lots of adults. We saw them, and they saw us. Today, you find whole swaths of America that have no real neighborhoods. Why? Because nobody's at home during the week. Both parents , they're both out working. You've got to have somebody in those houses if you want a real neighborhood.

There was a sense of safety, too. I ran away from home twice before I was eight years old, not because there was a problem at home, but because my buddy and I, we got our toys and we got some sandwiches and we set out to see the rest of the town. We went down the railroad tracks, and we were perfectly confident that we would be safe wherever we went. You wouldn't let your kids do that today. You wouldn't let your grandchildren do that today. But we could do it then.

Fifties kids felt safe not only in the suburbs but in the cities as well. In New York 12 year olds took the train and the subway to the Bronx and saw the Yankees playing and came back again by themselves. Parents thought nothing of it.

Obviously, at this time, culture supported the practice of religion. One telltale sign: when Eisenhower ran for president the second time around, the Republican National Committee declared that Ike was not only the president of the United States, not only the commander in chief, but he was also "the spiritual leader of our country."

Now, imagine if they had said something like that about George W. Bush or Barak Obama. It was that kind of time.

There's one other dimension of connection that I want to talk about here. And pardon me, but I'm going to read. It's called "Growing up on the home front." And --

Am I getting long in the tooth?

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Almost. Go ahead.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Well, I'll just mention that kids during World War II were well aware of the fighting overseas—not the least because food was rationed and we created

victory gardens to grow vegetables. During the war 40 percent of the nation's vegetables came from these backyard or rooftop gardens.

At home, my father was an air raid warden. So one evening a month, he put on a yellow helmet and made sure that everybody turned off their houselights, lest the enemy airplanes invade from the southern shores of Canada. So we knew a war was going on. My brother and I kept a scrapbook of newspaper headlines from the war front. We got patches that the men wore from inside cereal boxes, and we made airplanes out of balsa wood and glue we fashioned models of the planes our pilots flew.

So even as children we were well aware that that was a war on and where it was being fought. That is not true today.

Experiential religion is another form that getting religion took. It emerged out of the counterculture and the drug culture at a time when students were open to any religion except the one they were raised in.

The phrase comes from William James, but I use it narrowly to refer to the use of meditation and such in order to experience your inner self as sacred and the cosmos as sacred.

How did this come about? Well, it couldn't have come about without the change in immigration laws in 1965, which allowed Asians and Indians to come here in large numbers. The impetus came from the drug culture -- no question about it -- because the thought was, through meditation, yogic and other practices, you could reach certain levels of consciousness without using the drugs.

Timothy Leary, whom I saw a lot of in those days, did both. At one party, he drank water

from the Ganges with his LSD, and, as he later recounted everyone was transformed into Hindu gods and goddesses. Of course, Leary was Shiva with the erect phallus, and he had his, you know, consorts to accommodated him.

Movement religion is the opposite of Experiential religion and was focused on transforming society rather than the self. With the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-'50s, we witnessed a new way that Americans got religion. Unlike Embedded Religion it didn't matter where you come from in movement religion. It didn't matter what your ethnic background was. It didn't matter who your parents were or whether you were religious or not. All that mattered, really, was the movement.

Here I do want to read something here because I want to give you the flavor of it, a very short paragraph.

"So by this movement religion, I mean the forms that religious activism took once Civil Rights movement became the new and accepted model for expressing and mobilizing religious conscience and commitment. I also mean the correlative impulse of secular movements to assume the trappings of a religious crusade or quest. In either form, and often in combination, movement religion was directed as much against the religious institutions as it was against secular establishment.

"To become part of a movement was to adopt a new group identity – 'we in the movement' -- that often assumed precedence over all other previous identities. Regardless of the cause movement, people all spoke the same idiom. To be in the movement was to support 'the struggle,' to fight for 'liberation,' to resist 'oppression', to 'bear witness,' to 'speak truth to power' -- in a word, to be 'prophetic.'

"The 'evil,' that movements hurled themselves against were never merely personal. It was always 'systemic.' The military, the government, the university, the church, the

Bourgeois family -- these and other institutions oppressed by their very structures because they were corrupt. Movements, on the other hand, created brotherhoods and sisterhoods, purer bonds of human solidarity. Whatever the cause, history and righteousness were aligned with the movement."

In the book I follow movement religion in the forms it took as liberation theology, the women's movement, and such.

Another form is Entrepreneurial Religion, which is my language for evangelical Protestantism. Why do I call it that? First, because evangelicalism it is very entrepreneurial in creating new ministries and movements in response to changing social and cultural landscape. If there's a man's movement going on or a woman's movement, they'll have a Christian woman's movement or an evangelical men's movement. We saw a number of these.

Secondly, because traditionally graduates of evangelical seminaries are expected to plant new churches, not go to work for one that's already there. Am I right, Michael? Pretty much? Yeah.

The third reason is that, historically, free enterprise capitalism and evangelicalism grew up together in Great Britain. In short, evangelicalism *is* free enterprise in religion. There would have been no religious right without first having free-enterprising Fundamentalists and Evangelicals who created their own radio and television programs. These in turn provided both the money and the outreach that made the later turn to politics possible.

Of course, the most successful entrepreneur of them all was Billy Graham. He was chairman of the board. He was friend to presidents, and like that other chairman of the board, Frank Sinatra, Billy Graham was a brilliant stage performer.

The Billy tory I like to tell is this. I went out to Los Angeles to interview Graham for a cover story on Billy in 1972, I think it was, and pegged to Honor America Day, the 4th of July that year, at the Lincoln Memorial. It was a patriotic rally engineered by Chuck Colson and the rest in the Nixon White House. Billy was to preside along with Fulton Sheen and a bunch of others.

When I met up with him in Los Angeles, Billy was there with his evangelistic team, and his team members were all wearing matching green sport coats—like football coaches do. Billy said he spent more time with his team on the road than with his family at home. That was his team, and he was with them more than half the year -- poor wife. The car he had was green, too. And he says, "Ken, you know, this comes from a car dealer friend of mine who every time I come to Las Angeles, he gives me a car to use."

When we got out of the car at the television studio, Billy pulls out his wallet, and says" I want you to see this." He shows me a credit card from Willard Marriott, head of the Marriott hotel chai, that says in raised letters: "Billy Graham World Evangelist." "Ken, you know, with this card," he says, "I can stay free at any Marriott hotel or motel in the world."

Now, I come from a family of salesmen, and I know that salesmen love their perks. But here is the world's best known evangelist telling me how much he values a credit card that gets him freebies.

The I said, "Billy, you been to church today?"

And he says no. "I don't go to church when I'm on the road." I could imagine if you're Pastor Jones and in walks Billy Graham and sits down in the front pew, you get a little bit nervous. So it occurred that maybe that was the reason, so I let the issue go.

Later I watched him watching himself on a tv monitor. He was reviewing film of a crusade

that he had given in the University of Tennessee and that he had invited President Richard Nixon to attend..

I said, "Billy, what do you think about -- what do you see when you see yourself on television preaching?"

And he says, "I don't think of it as myself at all. I just think that the spirit of God is speaking through that person we are watching."

So it occurred to me that just by watching himself, Billy Graham had been to church after all.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Ken, I fear you're going to go through every chapter, and I do want to get into our response and our dialogue.

KENNETH WOODWARD: You're like my mother.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Just a little more, and then I'm going to cut you off.

KENNETH WOODWARD: First, the GOP and the Religious Right. E.J. has already talking about some of the events and issues that prompted the rise of the Christian Right. But I would say that in the strictest sense it was created by two Catholics and a Jew:

Paul Weyrich of Committee for the Survival of Free Congress; Richard Viguerie, a conservative direct-mail whiz; and Howard Phillips of the Conservative Caucus. These men thought up the idea of forming the Moral Majority after they saw how Democrat Jimmy Carter had won over Evangelical voters. They thought Carter was really too liberal and so they wanted to create an organization that would draw fundamentalists and evangelicals away from Carter.

So they picked Jerry Falwell to lead the new movement—in part because he had a huge direct mailing list himself, as well as a sturdy television ministry. Up until that time, evangelicals and fundamentalists tended not identify with either party and for the most part shunned party politics. In short, the Religious Right was initially created by three conservative political operatives, not by religious leaders themselves

Now, the last thing that I want to mention is the Democrats and their pursuit of religion as politics. We often think of the GOP as the party of religion, and not only because the largest bloc within the Democratic party are the religiously non-affiliated—the "Nones." Yet the Democrats have given us the most religiously observant president we ever had in Jimmy Carter, and, you know, Bill Clinton never saw a pew that he couldn't sit in or a hymn he couldn't sing.

In 1992 I did an interview in the White House. Because I couldn't get the president, the Democrats gave me Hillary instead. We talked about Methodism and about her youth minister back in Chicago. In an interview with him the minister said with a smile, "we Methodists know what's good for you"—a reference not only to Prohibition but to the ingrained convictions have that they not only know what is good for other people but are called to turn that knowledge into social—and governmental—practice.

I thought—bingo—that's a very apt description of the Democratic Party's ethos after it changed in 1972 under another Methodist, George McGovern. It became a high-minded party that wants to discipline the country and preach political righteousness. McGovern, you may recall, was raised in a Methodist manse, went to a Methodist college, studied for the Methodist ministry before deciding to become a history professor, went back to his Methodist alma mater and taught there until he was asked to build up the Democratic party in South Dakota.

As Mark Stricherz has pointed out in his book, [Why The Democrats are Blue] under McGovern and the commission he headed on party restructure after the 1968 convention, the party moved away from the New Deal coalition to a new coalition of moral concern—a "coalition of conscience." He called it.

To make the connection between Methodism and the post-McGovern Democratic party I studied the 1972 Methodist Book of Resolutions, which lists all the resolutions on social reform passed that year at the church's quadrennial convention held three months before the Democrats' national convention. Then I read the 1972 Democratic Party platform and found amazing congruence between the two documents, even done to the same phrases.

Now, I'm not suggesting that the party's platform writers stole the language and ideas of the Methodists, only that by looking at the platform through Methodist eyes you can see the outline of what I call the Democrats' politics of righteousness, which was discernable in the rhetoric of Hillary Clinton when she was First Lady, and again in both of her Presidential campaigns. From this we can learn how a particular religious tradition can inform the rhetoric and outlook of a political party.

That's all I am going to say. And thank you very much.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Thank you, Ken. About five minutes before we end our session, we're going to hand out copies of Ken's book. We just didn't want you leafing through it during the session. During the Q&A, Ken, I want to be sure we get in a question. I read Ken's book, and one of the most insightful pieces of the book, which you left out, Ken, was the constant resistance you ran into from editors higher up. The best-selling issues of *Newsweek* were always the cover stories at Easter and Christmas written by Ken Woodward. But it seemed like even that didn't convince them that religion was a really important story. So I want you to explain some of those dialogues you had with some of

your editors to convince them that what you were doing is actually so important.

Now, Grant Wacker is an American religious historian. He has written a very important book two years ago called *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation*, which was published by Harvard University Press -- we like to promote books here -- It's to defend the biography of Billy Graham. We asked Professor Wacker to respond to Ken because the area that Ken deals with in the book, which is the last 40 or 50 years, is one of Grant's specialties. So I thought he would be ideally suited to look at Ken's book and tell us what he thinks.

Thank you, Professor Wacker, for joining us.

DR. GRANT WACKER: I want to begin by thanking Michael for the extraordinary job he has done in putting these forums together. We heard these words of gratitude this morning, and I wanted to reiterate them. As Michael said, I came to this Faith Angle Forum 19 years ago, and then again a few years ago. Both of them have just been invigorating. You go home with a lot of friends and meet people that you have always been reading and hearing about. So thank you, Michael, for doing it.

I'll say a word about Ken. My first job was at University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. And that was back in 1977. We had a journalist program, Rockefeller Foundation, fund the journalists to come in for a semester. Ken came down, and we met at that time. I'd say the highlight of the semester for me was a debate between Ken and Pat Robertson. You can't really imagine -- as we say in the South, you can't hardly imagine -- people who are more different. And people are still talking about this debate after all these years, Ken.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Is it on YouTube?

GRANT WACKER: It should be. I doubt if YouTube was invented back then.

So what I'm going to do now is in two parts, and the first part will be a little longer. I will respond to the book. This is what Michael had asked me to do here. I retired last June. I'm not teaching. If I were teaching, I would most definitely assign the book for a Religion in America class.

Sometime during the first Iraq War, I remember seeing a photo with a caption on the front page of my hometown newspaper. The photo showed an American sailor in the galley of a naval vessel sitting at a table with a food tray in front of him. His elbows were resting on the table. His hands were clasped under his chin, head was bowed, his eyes were closed. The caption under the photo read "Weary Sailor Rests Head on Hands Before Eating."

(Laughter)

GRANT WACKER: Now, this is Chapel Hill, North Carolina. It's a university town, and that may explain some of it. But what I thought about then is the tremendous disconnect between journalism -- not you all, but much of journalism -- and religion.

Ken has spent nearly four decades trying to repair that disconnect. As he mentioned -- and I'll summarize again -- as the religion editor of *Newsweek*, he wrote more than 1,000 articles, essays, and book reviews, including 70 covers, and I'm going to talk about the covers a little later.

His senior editors were supportive but often baffled by the religious culture and leaders he tracked down west of the Hudson and then described with determined sympathy. I think that's an important point, is the geographic isolation, or parochialization, of, in this case, Ken's case, the *Newsweek* editors. We can turn it around and say Middle America

as well.

For most of the post-war period, *Newsweek*, *TIME*, and, I would add, *U.S. News & World Report* were the news magazines of record. Each week, they told millions of Americans what the most important events were and, more important, what they meant.

Now, I want to emphasize that point. When I was a kid, an adolescent, we would get *TIME* and *Newsweek*. It would sit on the coffee table in the living room, and you'd open it up, and there's the "Religion" column, and, by definition, that's what's important. I think we need to think more about the enormous power that these magazines exercised in, first, choosing what was important and then interpreting them.

So I go on to say each week they told millions of Americans not only what the events were, but what they meant. Woodward's stories shaped readers' perception of what was going on in the religious world, especially in traditions not their own. I grew up in a very parochial religious tradition. I knew nothing about Catholics except what I read in Ken's columns.

In a nutshell, this book, *Getting Religion*, is a social history of the second half of the 20th century. It puts religion at the center of the story. Ken uses personal memoir as well as portraits of key figures to make the history come alive. He rightly suggests that being there on the scene, personally interacting with the protagonists, offered an immediacy and, thus, a distinct perspective that more distant academic studies often missed.

I hope later, Ken, you'll talk more about the role of the leaders and your interaction with them because it's a whole dimension of the story of religion in America that, I would say, most academics simply have no access to. Ken's main argument is that the conditions in which people get religion strongly influence the kinds of religion they get. Faith cannot be reduced to those trends, but it cannot be divorced from them either.

For example, one chapter that Ken has talked about, about the decline of the family, he contrasts with the sudden appearance of more than 300 new religious cults, as he calls them, most of which take the form of sacred families. These emerged in the late 1970s, a time when a million kids, mostly from White middle-class families, ran away from home. So we see a kind of compensatory effect. They're running away, but, also, they're compensating by replicating the structures that they ran away from.

I found the chapter on entrepreneurial religion extremely perceptive, the stuff I had worked on, and I found many of Ken's ideas very useful -- not all of them, but many of them. He shows how evangelicalism rolls with its embrace of free enterprise capitalism, or to put another way, how evangelical religion was free enterprise religion.

By Ken's telling, the extraordinary pace and intensity of social change running from Eisenhower to Obama released two forms of religion -- embedded and movement. These are key terms -- embedded religion and movement religion. These two forms, broadly conceived, might be conceived as a double helix, as Ken has told us. Let me say a little bit more about embedded religion. Embedded religion was tied to churches and synagogues, schools, regions, ethnic, and racial groups, and families, nuclear and extended.

One of the most intriguing parts of the book is how Ken uses his own Catholic boyhood in Ohio as a case study of how embedded religion emerged from its social setting, what it looked like, and how it worked to shape believers' lives. He tells us his father came to Christ in a Billy Sunday revival. His mother and her extended family were devoutly Catholic, and that is how he was reared. Catholic schools, Catholic friends, priests, and nuns formed his world. A cultural ecosphere capped off with four years of Notre Dame where he met his wife, Betty, who was a student at neighboring Saint Mary's College.

This embedded religion was a cultural universe. It was separated from mainstream

Protestant culture by a membrane. It's not a solid membrane. It's a porous membrane. But nonetheless, it's a membrane, and it forms a cultural universe.

Now, I want to turn to the second strand of the helix, and that is what he calls the extraordinary and unexpected sunburst of religious enthusiasm that paralleled the first strand. It's not unique in American history. In the 19th century, we see this. I think we see it in the 1730s as well. But what we see in post-World War II is truly, by any measure, an extraordinary efflorescence of religion.

Now, what's movement religion? It's powered by a coalition of co-believers or, sometimes, co-belligerence and a common cause. Its members happen to be from Detroit or happen to be Methodists or happen to be Irish, but their main bond lay in the pursuit of a shared goal. They were, in effect, religious special interest groups animated with religious fervor, spiritual commitment, collegial intimacy, and, often enough, a legitimating sense of ultimacy.

So this contrast between embedded religion and movement religion is key to the book, and I think it makes a major contribution to our study of religion in America.

In a succession of fast-paced chapters, he sketches in roughly chronological order the parade of movements that mark the age. One by one, the advanced civil rights, anti-war protests, women's rights, liberation theology, evangelical entrepreneurialism, new forms of sacred families, counterculture in Asian religions, therapeutic religions, Republicans and the religious right, and Democrats and politicized religion, especially among Methodists.

Ken's story is really worlds within worlds, and this is intriguing. I think that as you read it, and as I would urge other people to do it, one of the most important parts is the stories themselves that give life, give flesh to these larger structures. For example, Ken's

avocation of the drama in pathos of the historic civil rights trick from Selma to Montgomery in 1965 is j one of the beautiful and utterly memorable features of the book. Like a television photojournalist, he takes us back to that day when the Reverend Martin Luther King strode with Rabbi Abraham Heschel at the head of the march, and Ken quotes Heschel, who said, " That day I prayed with my legs."

Ken does not argue that movement religion won and embedded religion lost. But by my reading of the evidence he details, it does look like embedded religion came up short. In the 1950s, for example, 98 percent of Americans said they believed in God. Baptists and Catholics alone counted for 40 percent of the population. A half century later, 25 percent of Americans claimed no religious identification. It's not quite the figure we heard this morning, but pretty close. Another 50 percent acknowledged only moderate or intermittent concern for religion. The foundations of the powerful culture religion symbiosis of the 1950s had fragmented, and they had reconfigured in new and unpredictable ways.

Woodward can say more in a single sentence than many historians can say in an entire article or book. For me, I'm as Protestant as Ken is Catholic. And the line that sticks best is the one that stung most. And the line is, "If the Protestant Reformation was built on a trinity of alones -- Christ alone, faith alone, the Bible alone -- revivalism added a fourth. The voice alone addressed to the listener as an isolated me alone."

Now, to be sure, even the most flamboyant of the revivalists -- some of you think of Billy Sunday or Aimee McPherson -- they knew perfectly well that Christ, faith, and the Bible, not me alone -- Christ, faith, and Bible was the foundation of evangelical Christianity. But I would say that Ken is basically right. Most of the time, that's not the way they behaved, and that's not how they acted.

I would add that one of the special parts of the book is how witty it is. Growing up

Catholic, he remembers, "We imagined that public school girls were looser than the academy girls, while my pals in the public schools were convinced that Catholic academy girls were lustier because they were more repressed. We all talked more than we knew."

Then he goes on in another place to say as a graduate student in English at the University of Iowa, he soon found that graduate school was a place to study literature, not enjoy it. Some of my favorite lines are the character sketches of individuals. Then he tells us the handsome and expansive Hans Kung loved the microphone. Bill Bright was a short, somber, rather unctuous undertaker kind of man.

(Laughter)

Paul Tillich inspired his former student, James Pike, to live on the boundary of Christian faith, including the boundary of Christian marriage. Both were notorious philanderers, and neither went to church unless he was the preacher.

Other individuals come out looking pretty good. One of my favorite lines, "The mature Billy Graham had the gift of making the simplest sentence sound like sacred scripture."

Best of all, Woodward knows how to poke fun at himself. "When an aging Reinhold Niebuhr agreed to sit down with me," he says, "and agreed to talk, I asked him every question I could think of. Afterward, Niebuhr advised through intermediaries that if I listened more and talked less, I'd get better interviews."

(Laughter)

GRANT WACKER: Now, Ken is not above exaggerating a point in order to make a point. Billy Graham's evangelism, he argues with a straight face, leaped over millennia of Christian history to promote an individualized Biblical Christianity that was, in effect, born

yesterday.

While I would say that claim is true, as far as it goes, but there's more -- and focus on Graham. The letters, the millions of letters, that the faithful posted to Graham over the years suggest that they were writing to Graham, not to plumb his knowledge of the Bible and certainly not his knowledge of history, but, rather, they wrote because they saw him as a pastor who might help them deal with their private pain and find a path to a second chance.

His rare book, it brings so many virtues to the table, including the potential for stirring frank discussion about our culture and where we are headed. I would conclude by saying that *Getting Religion* is a major achievement, and it's a fitting capstone for a long and distinguished career, Ken.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Thank you. I'll buy you a drink.

GRANT WACKER: I have just a few comments I would make about Ken's remarks today, and I will focus on evangelicals, in particular, because they were the subject of this morning's invigorating conversation.

First, the import of covers. Billy Graham appeared on 34 covers -- *U.S. News*, *Newsweek*, and *TIME* -- and I think this is extraordinarily important. How often do we see cover stories about mainline religious leaders? I believe the last one was Franklin Clark Fry in about 1960. The power of the magazines and then the cover on these magazines to reify what's important is a subject that we haven't studied nearly enough. I would go beyond that to say is that they legitimate the study of a subject and, even more, the columns, or as we say in the South, the coly-umns, that they have about religion. The covers are not inconsequential, and particularly, as I go back to Graham, they almost always show these strikingly handsome images of a White Graham with perfect teeth, perfect smile -- how

do they reify certain images, all right?

Ken raised the point of how journalists learn more by being outside a tradition than within it in some cases in some ways. I think this is consistently true, and I would say that in my study of Graham the best journalists, or among the best journalists, have, in fact, been Jewish. I think especially of Ken Garfield, *Charlotte Observer*, and then Cathy Grossman, and there are others. My sense there is that they don't have a dog in the fight, so they can afford to be empathetic and critical in a way. That's another question that's worth thinking about: the role of a kind of critical engagement rather than distance.

Third issue that Ken raises that's worth thinking about and talking about is that he said evangelicals are not embedded. They're part of movement religion. I emphatically agree with that. Evangelicals as a group have no ecclesiology. They don't have much sense of sacraments either, but there's more to it than that.

What evangelism is about in many ways is conversion, and what is conversion? It's leaving who you were and becoming something else. The notion of becoming something else is absolutely fundamental to the tradition, and I would add to it the issue of itinerancy. Itinerancy is important to the tradition, and you get the notion of conversion, the notion the centrality of itinerancy and what that suggests about mobility. We get a sense of the malleability and the amorphousness and the whole movement of the tradition, and that may have ramifications for understanding of evangelicals and politics.

Just one more. Ken talks about the Catholic imagination. I've never in my life thought of using the imagination with reference to evangelicals. We have good evangelical historians, good philosophers, journalists, but we have few evangelical dancers.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: You haven't been to my church.

GRANT WACKER: Well, okay. Liturgical dancers and artists and, particularly, in visual arts. I think this is a key issue because it says something about epistemology, how evangelicals think.

Who else thinks like that? Mormons. If you go to various evangelical denominational headquarters, you'll see art usually on the wall, and you would not know that you're not in Salt Lake City. There is a certain kind of realist epistemology lacking imagination, and I have never heard or read anyone who traces that to political activity. But that's a topic just waiting.

I said that would be my last comment, but it's not. I lied. I'm going to make one more, and that is suggested by a variety of things that Ken says, but not explicitly. Evangelicals have a prophetic sense, calling the nation to be something more than it has been, but, on the whole, they have little sense of irony. They have little sense of -- well, they have little sense of institutional humor and next-to-no sense of lament about themselves, so there's a great deal of judgment about how the nation has gone astray -- usually astray from its blueprint -- but not nearly as much of looking inside ("Where have *we* gone astray?").

Well, those are my comments, Ken, about your book and then a few other thoughts that you triggered in my mind about movements.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Thank you. Thank you, Grant. Okay. Tom Gjelten, you're up first -- and then E.J. and Sally.

TOM GJELTEN, NPR: Yeah. You know, if you're covering politics, the obligation is to be as non-partisan as possible, and some editors like Lynn Downey even advocate not voting. I'm wondering what the corollary is of covering religion. I mean, you did say one interesting thing, which is that the more immersed you are in one tradition, the better able you are to understand another tradition. But I wonder if you could elaborate on that.

I mean, is being a devout believer an advantage or a disadvantage, when it comes to, you know, if you believe in sort of one true faith? How does that position you with respect to other faiths, for example?

KENNETH WOODWARD: Well, first of all, there is a certain sense if that if you don't believe your faith is the one true faith, then why are you there? You know, there's always that attitude. But once you understand yourself -- what I mean by deep immersion, I mean a couple of things. It means, for me as a Catholic, when I go out to, you know, some place, one of the Orthodox places out in Brooklyn, I feel at home. There's all kinds of physical or material things there. There's laws of observation, the same practices and so forth that remind me analogically to Catholic practices, especially when I was a kid when you still had boundaried religion. Namely, we didn't -- we were people who didn't -- eat meat on Friday, and there were other sins that only we could commit, and when you have a tradition where you can commit the sins, you really do have a strong tradition.

I used Heschel's example of the -- he had such sympathy, such concern about these statues and where statues don't figure in his world at all. Those are the examples, you know, that I want to give.

You don't walk out and say, "Gee, I don't think your religion is right." That's not it.

The job for me was, I learned, I had -- anybody I talked to about, including Catholics even though there's a lot of them, for my audience they were all other people. I had to tell them what it was like, what it felt -- when I could -- what it felt like to be a Mormon and why they took this particular ring and so forth. So that's what I'm talking about.

I was also talking about, personally, if you get into interfaith dialogues and things like that, a lot of the Jewish - Catholic dialogues didn't work because they all wanted to talk about Israel. I mean, that's all the Jewish participants did, and they couldn't get around -- where

Heschel and I never talked about the war. We talked about God, and we talked about, you know, his -- if you read his stuff, the kinds of things that he does. That's what I, you know, really had in mind.

Usually people who stay away from it -- I grant what Grant said about being outside and not having a horse in the race. But you've got to really like religion a lot. You could have a horse in the race and still be fair to all participants. I just know that if stuff is vague and vaporous, you can't identify with it very well.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Okay. E.J., you're up next.

TOM GJELTEN: By the way, Mike, I want to congratulate you: a little while ago, Faith Angle Forum was the number two trending item on Twitter, two places ahead of the Golden Globes and for places ahead of Trump. So there you go.

(Applause)

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Well, if I would say something offensive about Trump, maybe he would then re-tweet it and tell me what a scoundrel I am, and that would really take off.

E.J. DIONNE, *The Washington Post*: Thank you to Ken and to Grant. I want to ask a question about a relatively narrow slice of history at the beginning of your career, Ken, to invite both you and Grant to make a larger point, that you started at *Newsweek*, if I remember right, in 1964.

In 1965, my old teacher, Harvey Cox, published *The Secular City*, which celebrated the loosening of the world from religious and quasi-religious understandings of itself. This was a sort of a religious bestseller; it took hold in the world. Harvey's an honest guy, and he's revisited himself over the years. In this same period, as you remember better than

anybody, *TIME* magazine, in a very short period, had "Is God Dead?" on a cover in 1965 and, if I remember the year right, "Is God Coming Back to Life?" in 1969. So they kill God off in '65, and brought him back in '69.

What I wanted to ask about is a kind of two-part question. One is, just to reflect on -- or both of you, really -- to reflect on that time when these ideas were floating around, why they took hold, why they were so popular among religious people, particularly -- Harvey had a great Catholic readership, as you remember -- and how they hold up. In some ways, you can easily say well, the rise of Islam, the rise of the religious right, these ideas were all wrong, and yet if you look at the rising numbers of nonparticipants, some of Grant's figures about the decline of embedded religion, it's not so clear that the thesis -- I reread the book recently, and in some ways the thesis seemed fresh again.

I'm just curious if you would talk about both that time and what it says about our time.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: And during that time, C.S. Lewis was on the cover of one of those magazines.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Yeah, so was Bishop Pike for different reasons.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Which you have a chapter on Bishop Pike that I warmly recommend.

KENNETH WOODWARD: I use him [Bishop Pike] to describe certain forms of decline in the mainline Protestantism. He was a pathetic case at the end. I'm the last journalist he talked to, by the way, before he went off to Israel and died.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: I remember the headline "Dead Sea Strolls."

(Laughter)

KENNETH WOODWARD: That wasn't ours. I wish it was.

E.J. DIONNE: Yeah, that's great.

KENNETH WOODWARD: We did have one with Harvey Cox's class. There were feminist who were complaining every time he used God, "He."

E.J. DIONNE: Do you want to know something funny? I was looking for some Harvey stuff, and I found my 1971 *Harvard Crimson* story on that class, which I took, where every time male reference to God or anything else, people blew kazoos for two weeks.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Right. They did.

E.J. DIONNE: It was a very interesting moment in religious history.

KENNETH WOODWARD: That class is in this book. I mean, Harvey was always on to the next hot thing, but he missed the woman thing all together. And, of course, the anthropology class patronizingly said, "Don't worry about it. It's only pronoun envy," and that was the title of our piece in *Newsweek*, "Pronoun Envy." It was one of the great inspired headlines.

Harvey's book was quite extraordinary in many ways. It was a huge international bestseller. He had just come back from Germany. He was studying German sociology there, and he really applied it in this book. The take that I had -- one of my takes would be on it that, first of all, he quickly found that the real enchantment of the world in his next book very quickly. He was always agile and likable for that reason.

You know, what he was talking about -- I want to make two comments on this, and they come from the book. The first thing he was talking about was the best and the brightest, the Kennedy can-do technology. You know, it could be Dick Friedman today. This is going to take can-do optimism, that was one thing.

He was the east side of Manhattan, not the lower west side. He ignored the still enchanted Catholics. He didn't talk about the people that were going to storefront churches.

Also, it had, in my judgment, went all the way back to John Winthrop's "City on a Hill," you know, or "we are the chosen people to come to this continent," et cetera. The White Anglo-Saxon Protestant was still going to be in charge, but he was hidden back in a way like the Jesuits were in Sweden when they were trying to reconvert them.

If you read it, they are is still going to be there. It's secular, but the secularists are going to need guidance, and even though it seems like the Protestant establishment was no longer an establishment, if you look at that book again, they are still the ones -- admittedly, with right-thinking liberal Catholics -- that were really going to be guiding the secular city. So he left room for that.

So those are the two points that I have to make -- one, that he was really talking about an elite and was very optimistic, and the other thing -- oh, there is a third thing, which was the effect of Martin Luther King and of those marches and all that gave a real spirit of optimism at a time when we lost a president. We lost his brother. This all came in the same years, and his is a brightly optimistic way of looking at things. I suppose the secular city looked a lot like the Great Society in terms of its practical politics.

GRANT WACKER: We didn't mention death of God theology. Ken writes about it a good deal. It had a very short shelf life.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: What did?

GRANT WACKER: The death, not Ken. The death of God theology made a splash, and it was gone. I think there was a much longer -- is a much longer -- ramification of death of God theology, or perhaps that's an artifact of a deeper trend, and that's the mainline's willing relinquishment of cultural authority, the mainline voluntarily emptying itself of its authority and saying, "We have to welcome all kinds of pluralisms, and, in the process, we're going to acknowledge that we do not, and should not, have a custodial role". That is a huge shift in the history of the mainline because, through the 1960s, it exercised this custodial role.

I think, Ken, you write about how many mainliners voted Republican until about the '60s, and then they began to become much more diverse. So that's one long-range effect of secularization of the city.

The other is something that we haven't talked about today the role of anti-Catholicism and how intense that was, and it worked both ways. If we think particularly about evangelicals, until quite recently, until the 1970s, it would be difficult to exaggerate the intensity of evangelicals' dislike and fear of Catholics and the possibility of a Catholic conspiracy. It sounds utterly preposterous now. When I tell undergraduates about it, they have no idea. They can't even imagine such a thing, but the fear of a conspiracy by Catholics, linking arms with Communists, right, to take over America.

Well, this leads to a larger point, and that is the necessity of an adversary. It strikes me that evangelicals always need an adversary, partly for self-definition, but also for self-invigoration.

E.J. DIONNE: Is Islam the new Catholicism?

GRANT WACKER: Yeah. Absolutely, yeah. I mean, we have communism. Well, I mean, we have the Roman Catholic Church, and then we have communism, and anti-Catholicism continues. But then it's understandable why Catholics and evangelicals will now be linking hands. They've got a common enemy.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Yeah.

KENNETH WOODWARD: I wanted to mention something, which is the phrase that we heard at that same time you're talking about, if you remember, it was, "God is setting the agenda, and our job is to see what God is up to." Well, leadership sets the agenda, to back up what he was saying, and they were linking that notion. Hillary Clinton got sent down to the inner city to see how the other half lived, where God was setting the agenda. So I think that was terribly important.

The other thing is secular theology, beginning with Cox and all the others that were in there. The only one that interested me was Altizer, by the way. He was practically unreadable. But he read William Blake, and I liked William Blake, and so that was it.

Secular theology was not addressed to secular people. They didn't give a damn about it. That's one of the problems when you do things like that, is the people you're praising aren't even going to read your book. So …

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Yeah, that's a problem. Sally Quinn is up next. Yes, and then Bill Galston and Cathleen.

SALLY QUINN: I just to say one -- to back up what you said, Novak, Bob Novak, who was a columnist, who was Jewish, and he married a woman who was an evangelical from Texas. I don't know whether you know this story are not.

His mother wasn't too crazy that she married a Jew, but she accepted it. But then Bob converted to Catholicism, and she refused to ever speak to him again.

(Laughter)

GRANT WACKER: There is a hierarchy of enemies. Yeah.

SALLY QUINN: I wanted to talk about Billy Graham's son, Franklin Graham. I met Billy Graham a number of times in the early days, when he was at his peak. Franklin, as I'm sure you know, has exploited his father and his father's reputation and his father's image terribly.

I went to Billy Graham's 90th birthday party, and Franklin put on the whole thing, and you know, the guest of honor was Sarah Palin, and, you know, it was that crowd. I mean, nobody who was friends of Billy Graham was there.

He was running ads, anti-homosexual ads, in the North Carolina paper. I'm sure you saw them with Billy Graham's name. I just wonder what role Franklin -- I interviewed Franklin at one point, and I always ask these questions in my video interviews, if you've ever had any doubts about your faith. Of all the hundreds and hundreds of people I have ever interviewed, everyone has said that there have been moments of doubt except for Franklin Graham, who said he had never had a single doubt in his life. You know, he's been anti-Muslim.

I just want to know from your experience what is the attitude about Franklin Graham. Are the evangelicals buying his act?

GRANT WACKER: Well, thank you Sally. You wrote some wonderful things about this question, and I say wonderful because we agreed. I think it's a complicated question,

actually, and Peter Boyer and I were talking about this last night. Franklin's a complicated figure. In some ways, there are two Franklin's. There is the Samaritan's Purse CEO. Last year, Samaritan's Purse gave away a half billion dollars in humanitarian relief, no questions asked. Whenever there is a natural catastrophe, Samaritan's Purse is right there on the ground.

But it then there's the other side of Franklin, who is a culture warrior, and I would love to see a doctoral student somehow get to him enough that they could write a dissertation about this very complicated man. Maybe the one side energizes the other. I don't know.

But what I do think is that Franklin does not speak for his father. His father is now 98, and it's difficult to talk about this without incurring a charge of ageism, but, you know, for a decade, Sr. Graham hasn't been able to relate to the world out there. So when journalists -- and I think you and I have talked about this on the phone. When journalists call me, I simply try to say that the views that Franklin represents are not the views that his father represented at the time that he was, shall we say, commenting about the world around him.

Now, I don't want to exaggerate that. I mean, there are some continuities. The main difference is one of tone and Irenicism, and an attempt to bring as many people as possible within the hearing range of the Gospel, rather than to draw lines and to cut people out.

The final question, which troubles me, intrigues me, worries me as a historian is, "Has Franklin so created the image of the Graham family that it's impossible to get through that image back to the original Billy?" I think it's possible. I'm hoping it, certainly. But increasingly, I find people who ask me does Franklin speak for his father, and there's this tone there like "surely not."

I just say, you know, one quotation that I write about and I think you've written about in 2004. Laurie Goodstein asked Billy if he agreed with Franklin when Franklin said that Islam is an evil religion. Billy said, "Well, I love my son, but some things we differ about, and this is one." And so then she went on to ask, "Is the conflict between Western and Islamic civilization the great conflict that looms ahead of us?" Billy said no. He said, "I think the great conflict that looms is," in so many words -- I'm paraphrasing -- but he said "is between those of us with affluence and hunger and poverty around the world." That's very different in some ways from Franklin. Yeah.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Billy changed enormously, and I think the change is when he went to the Soviet Union -- I mean to Eastern Europe -- for the first time. He came across Christians there who seemed more committed than the ones he knew back home. For the first time, the separation of Christianity from America became, I think, very real for him.

During that trip, he went to Krakow, and he was to meet the local Archbishop, who suddenly got called to Rome because they had to pick a new pope, and, of course, you know he never came back home.

So when Billy saw him come out on the porch, and the first thing he said was something like, "Christ, Christ is the answer." Billy told me, he says, "Oh, my God, he's an evangelist." And I thought, you know, of all the things that pope was -- and he was a great man and multi-gifted philosopher and so forth -- he was an evangelist, and it took one to know one.

And then when they wouldn't let the Pope into the Soviet Union but they let Billy in, Billy said -- well, first of all, he acknowledged the pope as a spiritual, religious leader of the West. That's a big change from the fundamentalism he came from. Then he said, "I got invited to the Soviet Union because, you know, they wouldn't let the pope in."

And then I thought this is a whole change thing. Of course when the Pope died, the only

organization other than the churches that got invited to the funeral was the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He told me one time that he felt most at home in the evangelical wing -- I think we mentioned that -- you know, evangelical wing of the Anglican Church. I think he liked to dress up a little bit because Baptist threads, after all, are simply Baptist threads.

(Laughter)

GRANT WACKER: I'd add one point quickly. I got this from Ken, actually, and you forgot it, is that I think when Graham went to Krakow in 1979, for the first time he saw the power of the Church. He saw what the Church could do in society in a very positive way. Yeah.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Okay. Bill Galston is up next. Bill.

WILLIAM GALSTON: Ken, you said something that sent the five fingers flying. And here's what I found, and it sort of astonished me. Since I became of voting age, the Democrats have nominated four Methodists for president of the United States -- Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern, my old boss, Fritz Mondale, and Hillary Clinton. Notice something about that list?

The last Democratic President who was a Methodist turns out to be James K. Polk. Maybe there's a reason for that. So here is my question, and I'm delighted to be able to pose it to people who may actually be able to answer it. What is there about Methodism that seems to be politically rebarbative even if it's spiritually impressive?

GRANT WACKER: Politically what?

WILLIAM GALSTON: Rebarbative, as in, you know, hard to swallow. What is there about the affect of a Methodist in public life that seems to create difficulties?

KENNETH WOODWARD: I was just saying "we Methodists know what's good for you." That's what the pastor said, and that's the attitude. We already know. You saw it and Hillary Clinton when her husband said you take care of, you know, healthcare, and she already -- first of all, she had a stack of Methodist papers like this to walk into it with because they had been working on that issue, healthcare, for a long time. There's just that sense that comes off -- not all Methodists, obviously.

Look, the Methodists come in the early part of the 19th century. They get transplanted here. Middle of the 19th century, according to Nathan Hatch, historian, they were the largest national organization. Is it largest? The widest network, perhaps, of institutions in the country except for the federal government itself.

They have an instinct. It goes right back to one-half of Wesley, the founder, is to first reform yourself. The Wesleyan wing of Methodism emphasizes that, right? That's where Pentecostalism comes from. The other side was what we somewhat erroneously called "the Social Gospel," you know, "we're going to change society," and out of that comes the Salvation Army, and that's just part of who they are. But knowing what is good for you is very much a part of that attitude. That would be my answer to your question.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Grant Wacker?

GRANT WACKER: That is a great question. And actually, I am Methodist, and until this moment I'm sorry to say, I didn't know that there were four recent presidents or candidates --

WILLIAM GALSTON: Candidates.

GRANT WACKER: -- that were Methodists. I didn't put it together that way. So thank

you. That's a tough question. And why have they been unsuccessful? I would agree that Ken has a pretty good answer to it. But I also think that Methodism assimilates too well. In a sense, it lacks backbone. There's not an edge, and there certain sects or sections of Methodism that certainly have an edge, but on the whole, it doesn't have that. So it accommodates too easily so that there is not, you know, this compelling message of change. That's the best I can do.

WILLIAM GALSTON: Can you explain the theological reasons for that?

GRANT WACKER: That's a great question.

KENNETH WOODWARD: You know, just to say, Stanley Hauerwas, who's got the dirtiest mouth of any theologian I ever ran across; I'm sure you've never had him here, you would have to blank him out all the time. But Stanley is a Methodist, and he said, "We Methodists are nice. We are nice people. The problem is the word nice isn't in the Bible." Talk about lacking edge.

GRANT WACKER: Now, Peter, you and I were talking about this in some ways last night. Yeah. Yeah.

ELIZABETH DIAS: George W. Bush is a Methodist.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Bush?

GRANT WACKER: That's right.

ELIZABETH DIAS: He converted, yeah.

GRANT WACKER: Yeah.

ELIZABETH DIAS: Yeah, I mean we can debate the finer points of the evangelical influence on that. Just to complicate that.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Bush Jr. married -- I mean joined the church of his wife's choice. He was really raised in the small group movement that Robert Wisner wrote a book about. That's where he comes out of, and he had been an Episcopalian, had been a number of different things. But the formative influence is that, and that had something to do with his, you know, effort to, however political it might be, to use churches to -- it was his father's thousand points of light, run through the churches. I think because of his work in the small group -- I talk about that in the book. He could have done more with that, but they really didn't. The White House didn't want to do much with it.

GRANT WACKER: Elizabeth makes a good point. I mean, formally he is a Methodist, but is he primarily Methodist or primarily evangelical? See, this brings up the tension between movement religion and embedded religion, denominational religion and movement, and you know, it's a mobile tension, yeah. Great. Yeah.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Okay. Let's take a short 10-minute break until 3:00 o'clock. And then we'll come back, and then were going to have a three-hour free time for you to go to the beach and the pool. But right now, if we could take a 10-minute break, and then we'll come back and get right back to it. Thank you.
(Break.)

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Okay. Cathleen Kaveny is up first

CATHLEEN KAVENY: I'm going to try to maybe press you gentlemen a little bit and maybe complicate the narrative a little to see what your response would be to three questions

that are troubling me about the whole general topic.

I haven't read the book. I will read the book on the way home tomorrow. I swear. It looks wonderful.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Oh, it's a fast read, yes.

CATHLEEN KAVENY: If I'm getting something wrong in the book, you know, you can correct me, but I get the sense that there's some nostalgia for the thick communal life of the 1950s. You talk about the embedded religion, the networks of people that care about, you know, the children in this, and there's a real sense of loss that, you know, you feel has plagued the country since that time.

But maybe there's another way of looking at the '50s. I mean, after all, the '50s did, very quickly after this, give birth to the '60s. The kids who were growing up in the nice nuclear '50s families were the kids that joined the Charles Manson family. They were the kids that gave rise to the upheavals of the '60s. They were the young married people who were in Ang Lee's movie *The Ice Storm* you know, having the key parties and all of this.

So being raised in a traditional nuclear family in the 1950s didn't actually lead to the nirvana that, you know, one might expect.

So what went wrong? Is it the *Mad Men* diagnosis that underneath the veneer of family perfection there was a lot of rot going on? You can look not just at *Mad Men*, you can look at, you know, Shirley MacLaine and Jack Lemmon in *The Apartment*, which was contemporaneous, which was set in 1960. So are we being too nostalgic about the '50s when we look at the history? That's the first complication.

The second complication is Ken's claim that being a member of one religious group would

make you more sympathetic toward members of other religious groups, provided you're deeply religious and they're deeply religious. I guess I have some questions about whether that is true. It seems to me there's a suppressed premise that your religion is one that values all of the other people as being created in the image and likeness of God and also sees them as pursuing truth in some way.

Certainly, there are religious traditions around the world now that take their religion very seriously but see that religion as giving rise to an obligation to oppress other religions. Certainly, Christianity throughout its history has had people take religion very seriously and see that as giving rise to a decision to repress heresy.

So the question is it can't just be that you take your religion very seriously if you're going to be a successful religion reporter reporting on other religious traditions. You have to have certain key pieces of a view of God's relationship to those other people that are allowing you to see them sympathetically. That's the second complication.

The third complication is the distinction between embedded and movement Christians. I'm going to be a little provocative here, I guess, and say one of the things that I think has caused some harm to people who have grown up within an embedded tradition, you know, kind of ordinary -- I'll call them "B-plus Catholics" -- you know, just you go to church, you do your thing, but you're not expecting, you know, the Virgin Mary to tap you on the shoulder and give you a private revelation -- has been the way movement Catholics have called into question the integrity of the ordinary day-to-day embedded Catholics who don't maybe go along with the total political project of the movement Catholics.

I'm thinking, in particular, of Richard John Neuhaus here. You know, you have a convert to Catholicism from a different tradition who looks around and says well, "Catholicism's got this great power, this great organizational power. Look at all these bad Catholics who aren't doing what they should be doing to promote family values, to fight abortion, to do

this and that and this." So you get a rift in embedded Catholics precisely because movement Catholics are casting a baleful glance on them saying why aren't you more politically active on the side that you should be, which is my side. Those are my three complications.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Well, let me start with Neuhaus. There's a whole portrait of Neuhaus in the book -- fobbing everything off on the book -- as he moves from left to right and yet, in his mind, stays consistent. He was a movement man throughout the whole thing, and you have to see him as that.

CATHLEEN KAVENY: I do.

KENNETH WOODWARD: So when he moves to the right, he would like to see what it is that he wanted. I resented, too, the newcomer, so to speak, into the Catholic fold immediately telling things how to go, you know, and grabbing on the arm of Cardinal O'Connor support.

Yeah, I think if you're a cradle Catholic, you sort of felt, "Hey, wait, you know, take your turn here. You just joined the mob." And it is a mob, as we all know, the Catholics. think, Cathy, you don't like him because of the positions that he took kind and so on, but he was movement all the way.

I think when it comes to embedded, I was really taking the child's view; the first book I wrote was *The Grandparent-Grandchild Relationship*. I did it with a child psychiatrist, and I learned an awful lot about children's needs in sense of the importance and sense of place and having lots of people around them, that sort of thing.

I was describing it, but I also talk about criticism of it, and the criticism comes from Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*. It's a wonderful book of criticism, because, look,

religion to him was Jewish prophetic religion, and he didn't see it. He thought it was too convenient. Secondly, he was an ex-communist, and he knew from cells that he had been involved with what the commitment was. So he was the first on-scene critic, that comes to my mind at any rate, be able to see the fatuousness and whatever of simply belonging.

You like popular culture. The perfect song for that was "I Believe." "I believe that every" -- awful song, you know – "that someone up there", you know, cares, or whatever. Read the lyrics, and you'll see how icky it all is. And that has a lot to do with contemporary spirituality. So I know when people talk about going back to a previous time you're always tarred with -- you risk being criticized as being nostalgic.

CATHLEEN KAVENY: Yeah.

KENNETH WOODWARD: I am taking the child's view and the security that was there as to when these other things happened. Did they happen to '50s people? I don't know. I just know that that -- and I saw the studies back in the '70s -- people who grew up in the '50s, two-thirds of them were married to the same spouse at that point. That's one part of what they did. You kept a marriage going.

So I'm not so sure. Yeah, it's not everybody, and not everybody was raised quite the way that I'm talking about. But there was more of it around.

I saluted in the book, as you can see, for various kinds of reasons, mainly young people having more than just their family, belonging to -- you know, larger sectors of belonging I think is really good. It's really good to come from somewhere, and perhaps that's my experience of New York. All the people I knew who were interesting came from some place that they then, like Willa Cather, went back and wrote about.

So now, as far as -- what was the other one you were talking about here? When

movement religion was really the time when we had all those movements. There aren't movements now, and the question I raise at the end, it is socially at least as volatile today. Look what we had -- economic collapse, Twin Towers, 20 years of war. We've had every bit as volatile a period as that was. And yet religion, there's -- there are no public -- there are no important pulpits. There are no important people to be in those pulpits.

The kids aren't rebelling against the war because they're not vulnerable to it. It's being bought by our surrogates, the way we do wars anymore. But I do ask the question of how come there's nothing like this right now even though, as I say, it's volatile. Then you were -- what was your other -- your middle question was -- I can't even read my own writing here. Do you remember what it was?

CATHLEEN KAVENY: Well, I think you've answered. One was the embedded versus movement. The other was the '50s.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Yeah, it was embedded versus movement.

CATHLEEN KAVENY: And I guess the question -is embed -- you know, does movement religion, as it's taken the form -- in the culture wars -- actually come back and undermine embedded religion? Because the movement people kind of turn around and look at the embedded people, or people who are kind of B-plus and sort of say you're not doing your job. You've got to do this. You've got to do that. And you kind of want to back away slowly because you don't want to --

KENNETH WOODWARD: They do. They are scolds, yes. Everybody gets in movements. The Berrigans were the classy scolders of all time, arrogant as God knows. And even the other people in the movement, they finally said, "You're not pouring blood on things. You know, you're not sacramentalizing the movement the way we are." And Sloane Coffin, the rest of these guys, and Dorothy Day had big problems with him.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Grant Wacker is going to comment. But E.J., you want to make a quick point on this?

E.J. DIONNE: Yeah. It's just a quick add-on to Cathy's question, and I'm glad you brought up the Berrigans because what you say about the Berrigans in the book very closely parallels what Cathy said about the Latter Day Neuhaus. I'm wondering if both of you could reflect on -- you know, Mike Novak when he was in transit from left to right wrote a great little essay called "Morality versus Moralism: where he was critical of moralists for being self-righteous and saying moralism could become the enemy of morality.

But then it leads to the question, you know, what one side would see as committed versus lukewarm the other side would see as fanaticism versus moderation. How do you square that, and does the lukewarm or the moderate actually lead religion to peter out over time?

I went long on this point. I'm very curious what they make of this.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: No problem. But Grant Wacker, I want you to stay on the points that she asked.

GRANT WACKER: Yeah, I will.

Just some thoughts. 1950 seems -- well, the difference of the young folk in the '50s and the '60s, partly, surely is that they're not independent variables. The '50s were still living in the residue of World War II and the consensual necessity of World War II. I recently read that there's a college in Massachusetts that has chosen not to fly the American flag. I just can't imagine that in the 1950s.

Then by the time we get to the '60s, something else has happened, and that is communism has eroded as a threat. It hasn't disappeared, but it has eroded as a threat. So this raises the question of the role of the adversary. If the adversary has now eroded as a threat, then other kinds of, you know, latent impulses, it seems to me can, come to the surface. But it's a great question.

The empathy question is the kind of thing that historians deal with all the time, especially folks like me who write about religion. How far do you have to get into it? And George Marsden has written a very interesting piece on how American religion divides between those movements that think that they possess an absolute truth and those that don't. There's this constant, you know, tension.

So those of us who, you know, are academics or journalists, I guess that's what we learn in graduate school or in other kinds of training, is how to compartmentalize, make it possible to step over. If I may be autobiographical for a second, I've been working on Mormonism lately, and I wondered, "I'm not a Mormon, is it possible for me ever really to get inside the tradition as long as I don't share their notion of revelation?"

Finally, I disagree with Ken. I think there *is* a movement today, and it's called prosperity gospel, and it's everywhere. It's multi-billion dollar -- well, Elizabeth knows more about this than I. You certainly could pose that as a powerful movement with immense amounts of money and with an influence upon our incoming president.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Is it still as powerful as it was in the days of Jim Bakker --

GRANT WACKER: Oh, I think it's far more powerful. Elizabeth, you could comment on this. Yeah, I think it's surging, especially in its being led by women like Paula White.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Let's get to that in a second. We've got a lot of people on the list,

and I will be glad to come back to that. Did we answer E.J.'s question?

E.J. DIONNE: Do you want to say anything about that?

KENNETH WOODWARD: Yeah.

E.J. DIONNE: And what problems do each pose for religion, each side of that equation?

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: A brief answer, please.

KENNETH WOODWARD: A brief answer is -- well, I said the arrogance and cutting out the other people; "you're not really Christian or you're not really whatever." But then on the other hand, most Christians aren't really Christian. I mean, I'm sorry, I take a very stringent point of view on this sort of thing. You know, when I see no cross and posting, I know it's not Christian. Whatever it is, it isn't that.

I think -- well, yeah, you need both kinds. You really do need both kinds, and there's a danger with both kinds. One is exclusivity. You know, I remember Updike saying, "I like to go to church because I'm surrounded by people who really believe probably stronger than I do, and they kind of make me feel good." I used to think that going to church is where you went to on weekends because you didn't want to be with these people the rest of the week. They weren't my kind.

But you've got to have just the ordinary believer there, and we've got to -- well, I -- it's -- it can be very humbling to meet the ordinary people that are the ballast of all these traditions.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Thank you. Yes. Pete Wehner?

PETER WEHNER: Yeah, I want to direct this to Grant and then, Ken, if you want to take a shot at it, too. A figure that actually hasn't come up but I find in some ways one of the most fascinating and maybe consequential religious figures today is Pope Francis. I wonder as a historian -- and it's, of course, very hard for a historian to try and locate moments in time. But it strikes me that something very important is going on here.

Just as a backdrop, I think, generally, simplistically speaking, there are two view of Francis. One is that this is a person who is a kind of embodiment of extraordinary grace and tenderness, that he's less doctrinaire than other popes; that he did certain symbols like washing the feet of Muslim women, which had a kind of electric effect. So you had people who were either disenchanted Catholics or former Catholics or non-Catholics that thought, "This is very moving," and they're giving the Catholic Church maybe a second look. Others believe that he is discarding his core truths of the faith.

And what's really hit here in the last probably two months is this apostolic exhortation on the family where he was, if I understand him right, it certainly seems to be moving toward couples that divorced and remarried without an annulment are able to get communion or not. This seems to have shaken a lot of the foundations of the Catholic faith for a lot of people. You've had four conservative cardinals press him to try and get an exact answer on what he meant by that exhortation, and so far he hasn't given it. What's your sense in terms of Francis? And is this a kind of a fundamental challenge?
Then just to piggyback a little bit, it strikes me that there's a push and pull. You had said earlier that mainline churches had voluntarily emptied themselves of authority.

And so what you've got is a lot of young people going to sort of more orthodox, at least in my faith, which is the evangelical Christian faith, and yet on the other hand, we live in an era in which it's a kind of anti-authority age.

I'm wondering how -- in the context of Francis, there -- how one, in the one sense, takes

doctrine seriously and offers an argument for an ordered life that people are longing for and yet can appeal in an age in which those kind of traditional efforts raise suspicions.

GRANT WACKER: Yeah. Thank you, Peter. Well, actually, Ken probably will be able to answer that a lot better than I. But you raise a lot of good, interesting points in that, you know, I find among my students who are Catholic those who are, for lack of a better word, on the liberal side, of course, lionize Francis, and those who are not, are on the more conservative side, see him -- well, to put it pretty harshly, selling out.

Then, though, there's maybe a third group who think that journalists are the problem, that journalists find the parts in Francis they like and emphasize that and then say very little about, you know, the Francis that they don't care so much, who is still a very important figure. But actually, while you're talking -- and I never thought of this -- is that there are almost some similarities with Franklin Graham.

I mean, I know some of you will recoil at this, but there are. I mean, there's this side of Franklin Graham that's extraordinarily generous.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: A half a billion dollars.

GRANT WACKER: A half a billion dollars just last year alone.

And then there's a side that isn't. And I don't know. I think individuals themselves obviously carry these tensions within themselves, and perhaps, you know, that's true of Francis. It certainly is true of Franklin.

But when you're thinking about the rise of the -- of a more inclusive irenic side, I mean, this was Billy. I mean, he would not have risen as he did. Maybe we can make the argument that Franklin has cogency in our public life precisely because he does have the

spine, you know, that cutting edge that we talked about a minute ago. I don't know. It's a great question. Yeah.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Ken?

KENNETH WOODWARD: To pick up on what he said. Which Francis are we talking about? This is a guy who in his first interview said I'm a sinner and, you know, and I have received the mercy of God. Everybody heard mercy; nobody heard sinner.

The other day, he talked very seriously about the absolute reality of the devil, all right? Hardly anybody noticed that because they didn't want to hear it. He's not acting in character, and I think, in some ways, his character is unsettled.

The issue that you bring up with the divorce and remarriage, it cuts very close to my home, as a matter of fact. The simplest way to put it is he's tried -- this is a pastoral issue of immense concern. Also, remember his experience is in Argentina, which can be very different from here. So he is trying to get those people who, in some sense, are innocent in a divorce and remarriage situation, okay?

And he's not -- there are people who qualify who should be reunited with the Church and allowed the Eucharist. He's trying to say look, "I can't do it myself. The Vatican can't do it. You people out on the line, you priests, have got to be able to do it."

I also feel, as an embedded Catholic, that, yeah, I think this is a serious issue and not a minor issue. But one reason we have gay marriage and so forth is we don't take marriage seriously anymore. It's why not allow it because it doesn't mean that much to us. I think that has gone on with the gay marriage thing, and it has something to play with in this as well. I'd have to say more than that. But he hasn't spelled it out. He's not done it deliberately is my view.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Okay. Well, we could spend a whole other -- well, we did, actually, about a year and a half ago. We had a session on Pope Francis, a whole session. Maybe we need to revisit that and do it again. Fred Barnes, you're next, and then Sally.

FRED BARNES: I have a one-part question, and it's this. I obviously know a lot of Christians. I go to a church that's an Anglican church. It's a breakaway from the Episcopal Church, obviously. Mike does, too, though we don't go to the same one.

I know so many Christians who are so pessimistic, and they're pessimistic about Christianity -- that it's shrinking. We've heard all these number here today. It's shrinking. There are fewer Christians. People don't want to become Christians anymore, and they're just very pessimistic about it.

I don't happen to be very pessimistic. But I mean, my answer to them -- and I mean, I hear this from -- among other people -- my wife. I tell them look. Christianity has gone through much more threatening and worse periods over the last 2,000 years than it's facing today, and they're not all reassured when I say this. So what would you all say to these people? You must to them as well.

GRANT WACKER: Shrinking here and Western Europe but not in the rest of the world and certainly not south of the equator. So if we look at it globally, I think Christianity is surging. That may not be a good thing. Christianity is usually stronger when it's persecuted and shrinking. I'm not so pleased to see it actually grow, but I think it is.

FRED BARNES: Well, that's not very reassuring to people who live here, you know.

GRANT WACKER: Well, I'm not a therapist. I mean, you know --

(Laughter)

KENNETH WOODWARD: There's a winnowing effect taking place, and we had studies that we know Christian Smith's very good on this. If your parents are committed to the Democratic Party or to the Presbyterian Church -- that's where the kids get it from the most. Even though parents think it's their peer group, he argues that it's parents.

I would just say people took religion less seriously as we moved from this eccentric period of religion in the 1950s, and it's finally coming to roost. That's how religion is, you know, passed on, particularly as the communal aspect tends to disappear. You can hang on being Catholic if you're still in a Polish community and you're Polish, you know. But now, how serious that commitment is, I don't know.

But just simply, you know, it has to be handed on, and it hasn't been handed on, and even the evangelicals are beginning to see some of this. This outside society really doesn't sustain many -- it doesn't value personal qualities, personal virtues like it used to.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Well, Ken, the question is about optimism. You're talking about family formation.

KENNETH WOODWARD: I'll pray for you. How's that?

(Laughter)

KENNETH WOODWARD: No. But I mean, I'm not optimistic either. But I also agree with Grant that, at some point, people are going to have to realize that they have a commitment and it costs. They're so busy getting on -- especially the young people, getting on with things -- and there's no time. The Biblical day of rest disappeared a long time ago. Just so many things are not in place that would allow for this sort of thing.

Who's got time to think about religion?

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Well, let me just say, Fred, one of the historians we've had here at least two, maybe three times is Professor Philip Jenkins. Jenkins had written a lot about the explosion of Christianity around the world and documented it. And it's ongoing. It's largely the Pentecostal Church.

So for your pessimistic friends, you might want to say, you know, everything's not just here. There's stuff going on around the world. I mean, Africa's sending missionaries to America, not the other way around.

GRANT WACKER: And also, much, if not most, of the rest of the world Christian growth is of a prosperity gospel nature.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Some. We can talk about that during our break. But anyway, we're running out of time, and I've got a couple more people in line. Sally, you're up. I don't know if Clare and Carl and Mark -- I don't know if we'll get to you or not. But you're okay?

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Okay. Go ahead, Sally.

SALLY QUINN: Well, Ken, you mentioned at the beginning of your talk that when you came to *Newsweek* that you had hoped to be doing profiles of Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, and so it made me think about those two guys and what influence they had on religion and sort of religion in politics and whether their influence still carries over today. I'd like to hear from both of you.

KENNETH WOODWARD: I would just say Tillich has not been necessarily benign. Who prays to the Ground of Being? He was trying to make connections in a particular cultural

moment. I don't think he's relevant much anymore.

SALLY QUINN: Paul Tillich.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Yeah. That would be my guess, yeah.

SALLY QUINN: Well, what about Reinhold Niebuhr?

KENNETH WOODWARD: Well, Niebuhr -- you know, everybody loves Niebuhr. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. loved Niebuhr. They all sort of cite Niebuhr. I quote Niebuhr in here -- Niebuhr talked -- among other things, he talked about irony -- irony of American history and so forth. We're not in an age of irony, and movement people are notoriously non-ironic. So I think we're not in an age that appreciates Niebuhr, and maybe we should be.

SALLY QUINN: Why are they still quoted? Why are they still touted?

GRANT WACKER: Because he's quotable.

KENNETH WOODWARD: Yeah, just because he's quotable.

SALLY QUINN: Even in this last election, a number of times I've read people have referred to both Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: You didn't hear it from Donald Trump.

(Laughter)

SALLY QUINN: No, actually, now that you mention it.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: And I don't think you heard it from Hillary Clinton. So President Obama said his most important philosopher was Reinhold Niebuhr.

SALLY QUINN: Right.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: And as a result, we did a whole session down here at Faith Angle on Niebuhr because he's so quotable and so insightful. But gentlemen, make some comments on this, and then we're going to go for our three-hour --

SALLY QUINN: Grant, do you have any thoughts?

GRANT WACKER: I agree with him, yeah. I agree with what Ken said, yeah.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: You agree with what Ken said. Okay.

GRANT WACKER: On that issue.

(Laughter)

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, join me in thanking both of these gentlemen.

◆ **END**◆