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more on

Belief and Modern Disenchantment

*Believing Again: Doubt and Faith in a Secular Age** (2009) by Roger Lundin is published by Eerdmans. David Bentley Hart's *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies** (2009) is published by Yale University Press. During the interview, Roger Lundin mentioned George Steiner's *In Bluebeard's Castle** (Yale, 1971). The subtitle of Steiner's book is *Some Notes towards the Redefinition of Culture*. The book is adapted from Steiner's 1970 T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures; the subtitle is an homage to Eliot's 1948 essay, "Notes towards the Definition of Culture" (today available in the book *Christianity and Culture**). Steiner's lectures present a dark vision for the West's future, anticipating an abundance of technological and material progress coupled with (and in some sense encouraging) a loss of spiritual and aesthetic richness. For an examination of the effects of the scientific mentality on the nineteenth-century religious outlook, see James Turner's *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America** (Johns Hopkins, 1985). Turner's brilliant study documents how the effort to reorient Christian belief to make it seem more compatible with the mentality encouraged by science and technology led to the growing conviction that religious belief in any historical sense could be abandoned safely. Michael J. Buckley, S.J., takes a more philosophical approach and a longer historical horizon in *At the Origins of Modern Atheism** (Yale, 1987) and its sequel, *Denying and Disclosing God: The Ambiguous Progress of Modern Atheism** (Yale, 2004). In both books he argues that the ease with which modern people deny the reality of God grows out of various strategies adopted to counter unbelief. Roger Lundin frequently acknowledges the work of Charles Taylor, both in his earlier study, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity** (Harvard, 1989), and in his more recent book, *A Secular Age** (Harvard, 2007). Steve Bruce's *God Is Dead: Secularization in the West** (Blackwell, 2002) is a thoughtful sociological view of the prevalence of unbelief (or at least the prevalence of the sense of the optionality of belief, which may have the same cultural effects as unbelief). The magisterial Church historian Owen Chadwick gave the Gifford lectures in 1973-4, which were published as *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1975, 1990). Chadwick surveys the many and varied social forces which weakened the grip of Christian belief on

Disc 1

- 1 **Introduction**
- 2 **Stanley Hauerwas**, on the public witness of Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, and on why Neuhaus abandoned his 1960s radicalism to become a leading "theoconservative"
- 3 **Clarke Forsythe**, on why prudence is a lost political virtue, and on why and how the pro-life movement needs to broaden its educational efforts
- 4 **Gilbert Meilaender**, on the necessity of a concept of human dignity and on why Americans no longer seem able to defend it

Disc 2

- 1 **Jeanne Murray Walker**, on how her students learn to understand poetry and on how metaphors are at the heart of poetic expression
- 2 **Roger Lundin**, on how the disenchantment of the world led to new forms of doubt and self-expression
- 3 **David Bentley Hart**, on the feeble and confused arguments of the recent crop of outspoken atheists

the minds of those living in what was once Christendom. Max Picard's *The Flight from God* (Regnery Gateway, 1951), first published in 1934, provides an instructive glimpse of how the dechristening of Europe looked in the late 1940s. Picard—born in 1888 into a Swiss Jewish family and converting to Catholicism in 1939—compares "the world of faith" to "the world of the flight," focusing on various losses in various aspects of social experience, including economics, language, art, and work. The anthology *The Sacred Place: Witnessing the Holy in the Physical World* (Utah, 1996) contains a number of works of prose and poetry that counter the assumption of a disenchanted world. Edited by Scott Cairns and W. Scott Olsen, the book includes contributions by Richard Wilbur, Kelly Cherry, Annie Dillard, and John McPhee. The articles by David Bentley Hart mentioned by Ken Myers are "Christ and Nothing" (*First Things*, October 2003), "Freedom and Decency" (*First Things*, June/July 2004), and "The Pornography Culture" (*The New Atlantic*, Summer 2004). Full texts of these are online on the websites of the two periodicals.

Other Works Mentioned

Richard John Neuhaus's final book, *American Babylon: Notes of a Christian Exile** (2009) is published by Basic Books. Clarke Forsythe's *Politics for the Greatest Good: The Case for Prudence in the Public Square** (2009) is published by InterVarsity Press. Gilbert Meilaender's *Neither Beast Nor God: The Dignity of the Human Person** (2009) is published by Encounter Books. Jeanne Murray Walker's *New Tracks, Night Falling** (2009) is published by Eerdmans.

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