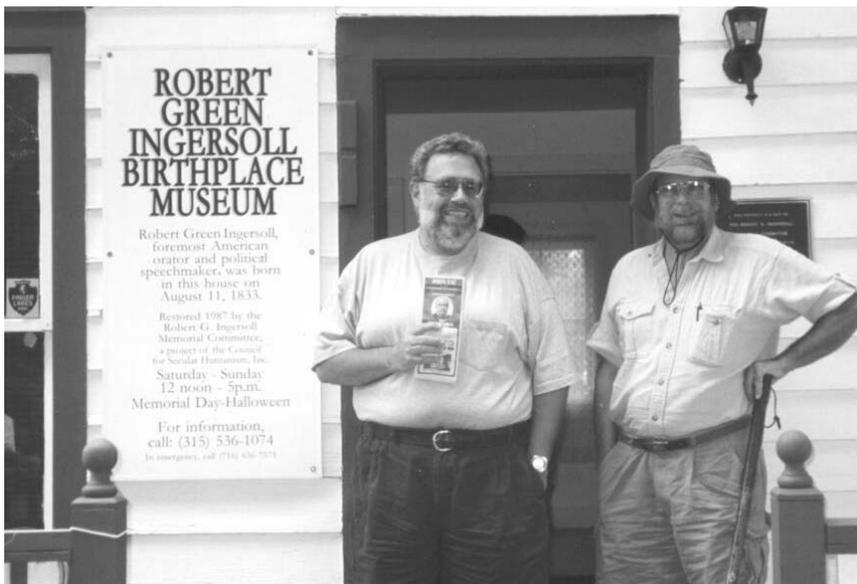


# FIG Leaves

# April 2000

## April Meeting



Tom Flynn

Edwin Kagin

### TOM FLYNN SEEKS MORE RESPECT FOR THE NONRELIGIOUS

FIG members will welcome the return of Tom Flynn, sometimes known as the "Anti-Claus", since speaking to us about his book, "The Trouble with Christmas." We remember him as a humorous as well as a dynamic and informative speaker. This time Tom will speak to us about a variety of topics, reflecting some of the diverse roles he plays as a humanist activist and author.

Tom will begin with comments about "secular humanist consciousness raising" - or if the nonreligious are REALLY the second-largest religious minority in the country (after only the Catholics), why don't we get more respect?

After that, Tom will comment on disconcerting recent developments in church/state relations. He follows these developments closely as the Director of the First Amendment Task Force of the Council for Secular Humanism.

Tom will also tell us about his new novel, "Galactic Rapture" - recently published by Prometheus Books. Tom says that it's an anti-religious science-fiction black-comedy thriller and ought to make a stir. There is a further description on page 2.

Tom is senior editor of Free Inquiry magazine, cofounder of the Secular Humanist Bulletin, and director of the Center for Inquiry International. He is also head of Media Productions for the Council for Secular Humanism and curator of the Robert G. Ingersoll Museum in Dresden, New York. He has been with the Council for 11 years; only Paul Kurtz has been there longer.

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### Events

#### April 25 Meeting

Tom Flynn  
Tuesday, April 25 at 7:00 PM  
Geier Center  
corner Gilbert and  
Elsinore Avenues

#### Potluck Dinner

Tuesday, May 9, 2000  
at 6:30 PM

#### FIG Discussion Group

on Tuesday, May 30,  
6:30 - 9:00 PM at Lenhardt's  
151 West Mcmillan, Clifton

## **Galactic Rapture, a science fiction novel by Tom Flynn**

A description by Prometheus Books

If Thomas Pynchon wrote science fiction, *Galactic Rapture* might be the result. Earth in the year 2344 is a small player in a galaxy of some highly advanced planets - and some incredibly backward ones. A breathtakingly wealthy and sophisticated people, the Galactics keep 40,000 of their 42,000 planets in permanent quarantine, or "Enclave," so their primitive inhabitants can serve as sources of entertainment.

Now called "Terra," Earth has two lucrative exports: a perversely engaging mass entertainment medium known as "senso"; and Earth religions, of which the jaded Galactics can't get enough. Terra's greatest success story, the Universal (Roman) Catholic Church, has left its birth planet to thrive on one of its own, fittingly called Vatican, where priestly sex abuse and imperial corruption take on astonishing new forms. A theology called "serial incarnation" teaches that God incarnates his son over and over, sending him to planet after planet. The Church has grown rich from this doctrine by charging huge fees to reveal to individual planets who their Messiah is and whether or not their historic religious leaders are genuine.

All is well until celebrated mathematician and recent convert Fram Galbior is overheard telling the pope that his new formula can predict where God will send his son next - an Enclave planet where most Galactics, even those in power, are forbidden. Attention centers on the rumored new Christ, named Arn Parek, a con man who becomes hotly sought by the Galactics.

This novel is an iconoclastic, darkly hilarious epic, packed with hypocritical cardinals, scheming Mormons, religious bunco artists, and cynical media manipulators. Called a landmark in the new alternative science fiction, *Galactic Rapture* is an engaging satire on the power of religion, worship, and "infotainment" in the future.

## **Ohio State University Students of Freethought**

For those who don't know me, I'm August Brunzman, the president of Students for Freethought at the Ohio State University (<http://www.osu.edu/students/freethought>).

Easter Weekend (the weekend I know you all really want to travel!) we're having both Prof. Massimo Pigliucci (creator of Darwin Day [<http://fp.bio.utk.edu/darwin/default.html>]) and Dr. Michael Shermer, head of the skeptic Society (<http://www.skeptic.com>) and author of "Why People Believe Weird Things" and "How We Believe: The Search for God in the Age of Science", present.

Pigliucci will be presenting twice... "Creationism and Evolution in the US: on anti-intellectualism and scientism" will be April 21, Friday night, 7:30pm in Townshend Hall rm 247.

"Science and Religion: Friends, Foes, or Apples and Oranges?" will be April 22, Saturday at 2:00pm in Hitchcock 131.

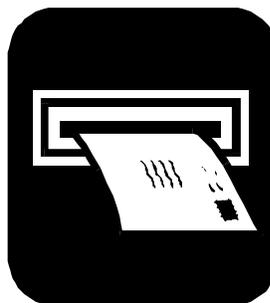
Shermer will be presenting "Why People Believe in God: An Empirical Study on a Deep Question" April 24,

## **PAUL KURTZ CITES CAMP QUEST**

In the current 20th anniversary issue of Free Inquiry magazine, Paul Kurtz looks back at progress made since he founded the magazine and its sponsoring organization, the Council for Secular Humanism. Among the strides in progress in building CSH in the 90s, he notes: "In addition, we supported the launching of Camp Quest (under the Kagins), a secular camp for adolescents and teenagers." (Page 37)

"United with government, religion never rises above the merest superstition; united with religion, government never rises above the merest despotism; and all history shows us that the more widely and completely they are separated, the better it is for both. ..."

--Board of Education of Cincinnati v. Minor (1872)



## **Letters to the Editor**

We have a new e-mail address:  
FIGEditors@aol.com

The mail address remains:  
Editor, FIG Leaves, P.O. Box 8128,  
Cincinnati, OH 45208

FIG Leaves Volume 9, Issue 3, April 2000 - Editors welcome thoughtful articles, letters, reviews, reports, anecdotes, and cartoons. Submit in electronic format via Internet to [FIGEditors@aol.com](mailto:FIGEditors@aol.com) or on disk or typewritten via mail to Editor, FIG Leaves, P.O. Box 8128, Cincinnati OH 45208. Contributions received before the first Tuesday of the month will be considered for publication that month. All material printed in FIG Leaves may be reproduced in similar publications of non-profit groups which grant FIG Leaves reciprocal reprinting rights as long as proper credit is clearly attributed to FIG Leaves and the author. Opinions expressed in FIG Leaves are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect opinions of the editor or the Free Inquiry Group, Inc., its board, or officers. © 1999 The Free Inquiry Group, Inc. FIG Board of Directors: President George Maurer, Vice President Edwin Kagin, Secretary Helen Kagin, Treasurer Joe Levee, Members: Nurit Bowman, Lyse Hurd, Tim Kelly, Inez Klein, Robert Riehemann, Gary

# **2 FIG Leaves**



# **April 2000**

# April 2 Speaker Review -Massimo Pigliucci

Dr. Massimo Pigliucci spoke to a packed house at the Geier Center on Sunday, April 2nd. His topic was the relationship between science and religion. Dr. Pigliucci is a botanist specializing in plant evolution, but he has a strong interest in philosophy, and does not shy away from controversy. He teaches at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The presentation began with a description of Michael Shermer's three models of the relationship between science and religion. The first model posits that science and religion are attempting to describe the same reality, albeit from different approaches. This is the model used by Christian apologists who attempt to interpret Scripture in such a way that it does not conflict with science. The second model is one of separate realities that do not overlap. This is typified by the NOMA (Non-Overlapping Magisteria) model promoted by evolutionary biologist Stephen J. Gould. The third model is one of conflicting realities where only one can be correct. This third model is familiar to many secular humanists and religious fundamentalists, although they sit on opposite sides of the argument.

Even though religionists wish to discredit certain aspects of science, they realize the power that science holds. That is why groups such as the Templeton Foundation pay for studies into the scientific study of religion. This research often concentrates on aspects of nature that reveal design or purpose that cannot be explained through random processes. Despite the scientific nature of this research, it often leads to illogical and unfounded analogies between religious and scientific concepts. One such metaphor relates the dual nature of Jesus as human and God to the dual nature of light as both particle and wave. The result is watered-down science that is accepted when it promotes religion and that may be ignored otherwise.

At the other end of the spectrum, Gould's NOMA principle states that science and religion each have their place, but they cannot truly be in conflict because they do not overlap. Science describes the empirical universe, while religion deals with human morality and ideals. There are several practical problems with NOMA, however. First, it is dependent upon a specific definition of religion, and requires a non-interventionist, unfalsifiable God. It ignores the fact that many religions do make claims about the physical world. Religions also tend to support the concept of universal morality, even though the ethics of society are developed at a local level. And finally, religion does not have a monopoly on the definition and promotion of morality. Philosophy can and does approach morality from a natural perspective without input from religion.

Despite these shortcomings of NOMA, many scientists will adopt the model for various reasons. Dr. Pigliucci referred to the first of these reasons as 'intellectual schizophrenia'. This is the capacity of individuals to hold contradictory beliefs without acknowledging that there is a

conflict. A second reason for supporting NOMA is that it promotes peaceful relationships with the religious majority, although it could be argued that it merely puts a veneer over the conflict. A third, and quite significant reason, is that overt opposition to religion is a threat to the scientist's livelihood. He cited the example of the National Science Foundation which disguises all evolutionary research that it funds. The research goes on, but it must have a politically correct label.

As further evidence that science and religion are actually mutually exclusive, surveys have shown that scientists are much more likely than the general public to be atheists. This statistic has not changed appreciably since James Leuba's original survey of scientists conducted in 1916. When the survey results are limited to 'great' scientists, belief in a personal god drops to only about five percent.

The scientific method requires observations, hypotheses, and more observations before a theory can be put forward. Even then, a theory will be rejected if compelling contrary evidence is found. Therefore, any attempt to present the Bible as a scientific authority must be subjected to the scientific method. By this standard, Biblical claims about cosmology, special creation, and worldwide floods are falsifiable. In summary, Dr. Pigliucci cited the observation of physicist Richard Feynman who noted that science fosters respect for evidence and doubt, while religion suppresses both.

There was a question and answer session after the break. The first questioner claimed that English translations of the Bible are not accurate, and the apparent contradictions with science could be resolved by going back to the Hebrew. Dr. Pigliucci did not dispute the mistranslation, but he noted that what people believe is more important than what is written down. Belief in an activist God is simply not supported by the facts, while belief in an unfalsifiable, passive God is not necessary.

Another questioner noted several award-winning physicists with religious beliefs. Dr. Pigliucci acknowledged that even great scientists are not immune to holding false beliefs. He then went on to describe a matrix he is developing that combines three different types of religious belief with three different degrees of conflict between religion and science. This expanded model will be presented in an upcoming article.

Dr. Pigliucci also discussed his studies into the relative influences of nature and nurture on the physical appearance and behavior of organisms. He feels that genetics often gets too much credit in this regard. Specifically, he feels that human twin studies do not and cannot control the environment to the degree necessary for scientific certainty. Because of the limitations on human research, we will continue to study plants and animals in order to develop theories that may help us to better understand ourselves.



# Kagin's Column

Sent to the Boone County Recorder:



and how to worship that god, the unanimous declaration of the U.S. Senate, in Treaty with Tripoli, signed by President John Adams on June 10, 1797, that "...the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion," then such an assertion might not appear the lying self-righteous attempt to establish a religion that it clearly is.

Dear Editor,

One might well ponder just how the Kentucky Legislature might actually attempt to pass an unconstitutional law to establish a religion in our Commonwealth, and just how such an unconstitutional law would look.

For have not our legislators—those sworn to uphold our Constitution and our American way of life—told us it is not religious discrimination to let churches exclude children, who do not share their beliefs, from renting camp property otherwise available for rent by the public? This is merely to “restore freedom to Kentucky’s churches” we are told—it is not to discriminate on the basis of religion. If that were so, then language has no meaning. How would a bill look if its purpose were to discriminate? If no person or organization ever discriminated, we would have no need for a civil rights law, for everyone who wants to discriminate against others wants the “freedom” to do so, much as criminals want the freedom to commit crimes. Is a church to be permitted to commit crimes, so long as the behavior is defined as “religious freedom?” It has happened before. Our Bill of Rights stopped that sort of thing. Until now.

Section 59 of the Constitution of Kentucky prohibits “special legislation,” and Section 5 guarantees, as one of our most basic freedoms, that “...the civil rights...of no person shall be taken away, or in anywise diminished ...on account of his ...disbelief of any religious tenet, dogma or teaching.” This is exactly what too many of our legislators are trying to do. Our wiser ancestors saw it coming. It is the kind of un-American activity they took great pains to prohibit and prevent, should any latter day prospective tyrants ever again attempt to make their religion our law, followed by their inquisitions and heresy trials. Hopefully, we will not learn too late that when we elect religious fanatics to public office, we get religious fanatics in public office.

The pharisaic protests of the pious over the statesmanship our governor exhibited in his veto of HB 70, and thereby interfering with the “freedom of religious expression” of churches that sought “special rights” denied others, is not a new complaint. In 1692, Governor William Phipps of Massachusetts disbanded the Salem “witchcraft court” after Bridget Bishop and 18 other innocents were hanged as witches based on “spectral evidence” acceptable to the church but not to the more humanistic state. A callous governor had denied certain church leaders of his day their claimed right of “freedom” of “religious expression”. The very reason we have laws is to prevent this kind of twisted moral and linguistic thinking from being recognized as lawful, accepted social behavior.

We are further informed by certain of our elected lawmakers, who know little religion and less law, that posting the “Ten Commandments” in public schools is not an act in furtherance of the unlawful establishment of a religion, but is rather an attempt to teach public school children the historical role of religion in American public life. If we were to post, together with this non-religious Decalogue, that tells us what god to worship, and when

Those legislators who are unable to name the ten commandments, but who seem to think that this code of bronze age nomads will work as a magic talisman to prevent violence and foster morality, might well inform us how teaching children by example that it is perfectly all right to flaunt the Constitution of the United States and the Supreme Court of the United States—that have expressly forbidden what they are treasonably attempting— will further a general respect for the rule of law in our Commonwealth.

In their zeal to destroy as many of our freedoms as fast as they can, those sworn to protect our Constitution failed to do the one thing our Constitution requires of them—to approve a budget for the Commonwealth.

Some hard questions should be asked of those we dared to trust to make our laws. Are they as ignorant of the legal mandates of our Bill of Rights as they are ignorant of the religious mandates of the Golden Rule? If not, why have they attempted to change our democracy into a theocracy? And should they answer that this has not been their intent, let them then tell us just what the prohibition against establishing a religion does mean to them?

Sincerely,

Edwin F. Kagin

Nicolas Hardy Walter once complained about a writer in "The Independent" who suggested that "no sensible atheist will reject the possibility that an intelligence directs the universe." Walter's retort: "On the contrary, a sensible atheist may well reject the possibilities either that an intelligence on its own can direct anything, or that anything can direct anything."

From the New York Times N.H.Walter obituary  
<http://www.nytimes.com/00/03/19/news/national/obit-n>



# FIG Leaflets

## IMAGINE THERE'S NO HEAVEN A FUTURE WITHOUT RELIGION

Celebrate 20 years of Free Inquiry and the Council for Secular Humanism at the conference they'll be talking about for the NEXT 20 years. Join secular humanists from all corners of the world for an unprecedented weekend of information, inspiration, and celebration! We will be celebrating with a gala meeting at the Wyndham Hotel in Los Angeles on May 4-7, 2000. A second, east coast, celebration will be held in Amherst, New York, on October 15th.

In addition to world-class intellectual debate, the conference will feature a wide range of workshops on how to use humanist principles to change your life and your community. There will also be meetings of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, Campus Freethought Alliance, Young Freethinkers Alliance, First Amendment Task Force, Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies, and the Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Societies.

Conference entertainment will include live comedy from veteran satirist PAUL KRASSNER, live blues and rock music from THE HEATHENS, a night of theater at the nearby Center for Inquiry-West, sightseeing tours, banquets and more. IMAGINE THERE'S NO HEAVEN is projected to be the largest humanist conference in over a decade. Don't be left out, register today and guarantee your seat at this once-in-a-lifetime event! Registration is just \$175. Act today!

Paul Kurtz

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Over the last three months, legislators discussed no less than five bills related to the Ten Commandments and various other measures to shore up Christianity in the state.

At the same time, they failed to pass a budget, distribute tobacco money or fix problems with workers compensation. Those items may be taken up on Monday and Tuesday, the last two days of the session.

Karen Samples, *Jewish Lawmaker Stands Ground*, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, Thursday, April 6, 2000

**What locus the soul?**

It is actually rather surprising that human beings do not have twenty-four pairs of chromosomes. Chimpanzees have twenty-four pairs of chromosomes; so do gorillas and orangutans. Among the apes we are the exception. Under the microscope, the most striking and obvious difference between ourselves and all the other great apes is that we have one pair less. The reason, it immediately becomes apparent, is not that a pair of ape chromosomes has gone missing in us, but that two ape chromosomes have fused together in us. Chromosome 2, the second biggest of the human chromosomes, is in fact formed from the fusion of two medium-sized ape chromosomes, as can be seen from the pattern of black bands on the respective chromosomes.

Pope John Paul II, in his message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on 22 October 1996, argued that between ancestral apes and modern human beings, there was an 'ontological discontinuity' a point at which God injected a human soul into an animal lineage. Thus can the Church be reconciled to evolutionary theory. Perhaps the ontological leap came at the moment when two ape chromosomes were fused, and the genes for the soul lie near the middle of chromosome 2.

Quoted from: *Genome: the Autobiography of a Species in 23*

### Huntsville Times Editorial

And if all else fails, we can get the legislatures and judges to pulverize them with public policy. Far too many seem hell-bent on using policy as a pulpit. But in this case, hell-bent is hell-bound.

What seems to escape many believers is that vicious rhetoric, state-promoted faith and outright oppression by the state are all on the same continuum. The leap from launching a holy war of words to the Salem witch trials is not as far as some people think.

In the hands of the wrong people, even a faith- and love-based belief system like Christianity can become cruel, ruthless and destructive. And it starts with the mob mentality of those who call for "religious wars" and aggressive forms of evangelism that disregard the views of others.

Polston, whom Stein described as a nice, gentle man, specifically wanted to know if Stein - the sole practicing Jew in the 100-member Kentucky House - claimed Jesus Christ as her savior.

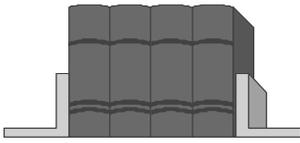
Huh?

Polston's question is absolutely mind-boggling, especially coming from one who claims a belief in Christianity. The New Testament is nothing if not a chronicle of the great Messiah debate that led to the theological split between Jews and Christians.

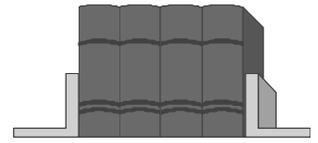
"A lot of people need educating over some of the basics," she said. "Not just over constitutional law, but over the diversity of faith that we have."

David Person, "Faith Needs Willing Hearts", *The Huntsville Times*, April 7, 2000, <http://www.al.com/columnists/huntsville/dperson.html>





# Book Reviews



## ***Swaggart: The Unauthorized Biography of an American Evangelist***

by Ann Rowe Seaman  
(New York: Continuum, 1999)

Before the bridge across the Mississippi from Natchez to Ferriday, Louisiana, was built, the place was a real backwater. There in 1935 in the depth of the Depression Jimmy Swaggart and his cousins Jerry Lee Lewis and Mickey Gilley were born. The entire clan was poor. They lived on the edge of town, over near Bucktown were only the Blacks dwelt. They were sharecroppers, gas monkeys, lived by making illegal whiskey, and by hunting and fishing in the swamps and bayous.

Here is one description of life in the Louisiana back country: (p. 46)

Sharecropping was a subsistence living; the families kept bees and chickens, and sister Viola fended off destitution in a two-room cabin near Bayou Macon, trading molasses, made on a crude cane mill turned by a mule, for flour or meal that came in cloth sacks, which were sewed into clothing when empty. They heated with iron cookstoves and fireplaces, hung their clothes on 16-penny nails, carried water in from an outdoor pump, and were often only one or two pans of cornbread ahead of malnutrition.

Drinking, smoking, screwing, and having kids were the chief entertainments, and making music as well. Swaggart's grandfather was reported to have several Black children in Bucktown. Women were pregnant and perhaps married in their mid-teens, one of Jerry Lee Lewis' wives

was 13 when he married her, Swaggart's wife was 15. It is perhaps no wonder that many women and some men turned to god, dabbled in religion, or sought the emotional release provided by faith.

The family became members of the Assemblies of God church, Pentecostal and fundamentalist. Not a church of dogma and principles, but of concrete persons: a divine Lord Jesus, apostles, a book of absolute truths, speaking in tongues, miraculous healing, and a god who told you what was and what was not sin. Jimmy Swaggart grew up in this church, and it was always as if he had been destined for the preacherhood. At age eight he was prophesying the end of the war and the coming of the atomic bomb, at least so it was later recalled.

Swaggart finished neither high school nor went to college, but this was not required by the Assemblies of God. He apprenticed as a traveling preacherman, and was ordained by his church. Gradually, through inspired teaching and hard work, he built up one of the largest

congregations in the South, and became one of the wealthiest televangelists in the business. His enterprises, which included a Bible college, the television studio, a hotel, and residential areas, was thought to bring about a one and a half million worth of business into the Baton Rouge area. He was traveling the world to conduct religious revivals in many parts. By 1987 Swaggart was a millionaire, and a power in the Assemblies of God denomination.

In October of that year he was caught, literally on film, consorting with a prostitute in a motel on the red light strip of New Orleans. He was caught by a fellow preacher, whom he had earlier helped to oust in righteous wrath from his pulpit and microphone, for a rather similar sin. Swaggart found himself hoist on his own petard. His Church called for a year of penitence, a year of no pulpit or preaching. Rather than relinquish his empire, he severed his ties to the Assemblies of God to start his own denomination.

Initially Swaggart lost a sizeable part of his congregation, but many others did stay with him. Within a year he was having some success in rebuilding his audience, when he was caught in a very similar situation with a prostitute in Indio in California. Jimmy Swaggart is still around, the church is smaller now, but his wife has stuck by him. He is still an inspiring preacher, but somehow the ecstasy, the speaking in tongues is no more what is used to be.

**Wolf Roder**

## ***Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII***

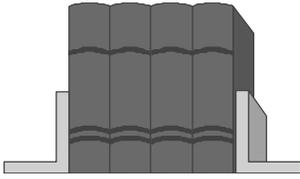
by John Cornwell  
(NY: Viking Penguin, 1999)

Hitler's Pope is not Alfred Rosenberg or Heinrich Himmler, but Eugenio Pacelli who was crowned Pius XII in March 1939 and served until his death in 1958. There has been controversy about the World War II Pope, that he favored Germany, that he was silent on the murder of the Jews, and generally did little to oppose Hitler and the other dictators. His defenders argue that speaking out on the Holocaust would have merely worsened the persecution, while quietly working for rescue his Church saved the lives of some 860,000 Jews. Here is a biography of Pius XII by a British Catholic set into the political and diplomatic activity of his times.

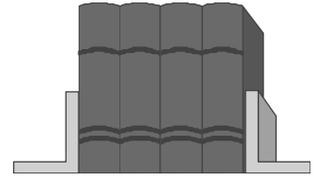
Eugenio Pacelli never was a "pastor," a shepherd of a congregation of the faithful. He studied canon law and entered the legal bureaucracy of the Vatican. His earliest work was the codification of the law of the Roman Church, which he helped to shape into a completely autocratic

*(Continued on page 7)*





# Book Reviews



*(Continued from page 6)*

code giving all the power to the Papacy. As a diplomat of the Church he then proceeded to help implement this code by negotiating treaties with various countries, notably Serbia and Germany. In many European countries local powers and institutions, rules, bishops, or lay people preserved traditional powers and rights, which these treaties aimed to sweep away. Pacelli was completely devoted to making the Pope the supreme and only authority in the Church, and the Church an autocracy ruled from the Vatican.

In complete contrast, the author of the biography would like to see the Church as a community of the faithful, in which lay people and local clergy have much say in matters of governance and morals. Cornwell's central argument is that Pacelli spent his life destroying that community in favor of top down rule from Rome. More specifically, Pacelli signed a concordat (treaty) with Hitler in 1933, which disavowed resistance to the Nazis through local initiatives and the Catholic Center Party, because the Vatican did not control these. Whether supporting local resistance would have made a difference to Hitler's gaining full control of Germany is difficult to know. Cornwell clearly thinks it might have.

During the War Pope Pius XII saw himself and his Church beset by totalitarians on all sides. In a choice between fascist and communist dictators, he clearly preferred the former. Most of the fascist dictators were at least Catholic and supported the Church. In Spain the Pope sided with Franco, and so did the most priests. In Italy, Mussolini gave the Pope his own sovereign "country" which he still occupies. The communists in contrast set out to weaken if not destroy the Church in order to substitute materialism and unbelief.

No historian questions that Pope Pius XII took some risks and saved many lives. Often he did this at great danger to himself and to the Church. The Vatican is tiny, 108.7 dispersed acres, smaller than the UC west campus. Any day Italian soldiers could have invaded and taken the Pope prisoner, cut off his electricity and water. Yet, throughout his life and throughout his priesthood his first priority remained the preservation of the sole authority of the Pope over the clergy and the faithful. After the War, Pius XII implemented an autocratic rule in which he was the sole arbiter of who could preach or teach. Cornwell writes of "Pacelli's intellectual oppression" and quotes Father Berrigan on "intellectual excellence crushed in a wave of orthodoxy, like a big Stalinist purge." (p. 340).

If Pacelli had been merely a secular ruler, just another dictator in an age of autocrats, we would judge him as better than the many of the ugly totalitarians of his time.

But he is supposed to be the Vicar of Christ, who has the ear of the divine, and is expected to act on direct instructions received from god. Since god does not exist and does not speak, Eugenio Pacelli was merely another human who acted in his and the Church's interest first, welfare of Catholics second, and Jews last.

**Wolf Roder**

***A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  
by James Joyce  
originally published in 1916**

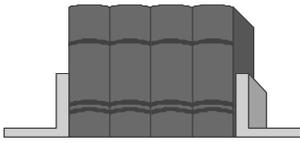
Near the end of this book we see the artist thinking of a woman whom he loves distantly, as did Dante love Beatrice. He has seen her attending to a priest and in a pang of jealousy thinks of himself as "...a priest of eternal imagination, transmuted the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life." In fact, this is not a bad description of the critical view of Joyce the artist. His four books, *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegans Wake*, all celebrate the ordinary and commonplace, finding in them the heroic and mythic to enrich our lives.

Joyce was almost blind; he was haunted by his Catholic past, Irish heritage, Dublin upbringing, and scholarly Jesuit training. He is compared to Homer and Milton, also blind poets and writers of epic, and he is considered the master of 20th century English literature. Born on 2 February 1882 in Dublin, he was one of '...sixteen or seventeen children...' as his father put it. His father figures as an important character in this autobiographical novel. And as the artist, Stephen Dedalus, grows from toddler to young adulthood, finally learning to fly like Icarus, son of the mythical Daedalus. As Stephen grows the family fortune makes a contrasting plunge through the bad luck of the father.

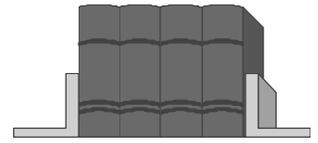
Stephen plunges too; pushed into a ditch and contracting pneumonia when first off to school. Then into the hell of guilt he experiences after his discovery of sexuality in a brothel---guilt engendered by the fire and brimstone sermons presented at the retreat which the boys at his school attend. We see Stephen's intellectual environment, full of Latin, learning, manipulation, and discipline. His description of the outrageous pandybat incident is yet another lowering. Unjustly hit with this stick by the prefect---"A hot burning stinging tingling blow like the loud crack of a broken stick made his trembling hand crumple together like a leaf in the fire: and at the sound and the pain scalding tears were driven into his eyes. His

*(Continued on page 8)*





# Book Reviews



(Continued from page 7)

whole body was shaking with fright, his arm was shaking and his crumpled burning livid hand shook like a loose leaf in the air. A cry sprang to his lips, a prayer to be let off. But though the tears scalded his eyes and his limbs quivered with pain and fright he held back the hot tears and cry that scalded his throat. ---Other hand! shouted the prefect..."

At the end of the book Stephen refuses to attend Easter services as his mother had requested. He discusses this with a classmate and says, "I will not serve." This is an echo from the sermons at the retreat, wherein Satan is given the same phrase to indicate overweening pride as the cause of the fall from heaven to hell. Thus are the images of Icarus and Satan united in Stephen, the apostate. This is the price paid for his art by the martyr, Stephen, named for the first Christian martyr. And so it is necessary to learn about the nature of something so great that it caused Stephen to reject his mother, his family, his church---his entire heritage---"Not only to be separate from all others, but to have not even one friend."

Stephen's goal was stated by his schoolmate: "To discover the mode of life or of art whereby your spirit could express itself in unfettered freedom." The expression was to be one of beauty and Stephen had an elaborate theory of beauty, derived from Aristotle and Saint Thomas Aquinas which searched for "wholeness, harmony, and radiance." The book is an example of the theory, separating out the life of Stephen as the definite thing, the whole, to be understood. The harmony arising from the technique of sustained images and realism. The constant oscillation of up and down, the repeated references to Icarus and Satan, Catholic theology and Irish history, all unify and harmonize the work. The radiance is an exhibition of the wholeness and harmony as being about something, in this case the intellectual and emotional development of the artist. This too is disclosed via technique, but it is the technique of highlight and shade which makes the total story apparent to the reader.

The realization that this could be achieved is what made Stephen an apostate. He describes it vividly in chapter 4: "...a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being...His heart trembled; his breath came faster and a wild spirit passed over his limbs as though he were soaring sunward...An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath and wild and radiant his windswept limbs....His soul had arisen

from the grave of boyhood, spurning her graveclothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom

and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable." And for such a value is justified the artist's poverty and pain.

It is the success of Joyce in this endeavor in the eyes of the world which has ensured his place in our literature. How lucky that for us that the idea of apostasy is a sustained image throughout.

**Bob Riehemann**

Here is what is in store for UC Skeptics this quarter:

MEETINGS:(Thursdays, 429 TUC, 6:00 pm)

April 13: Biotechnology

April 20: The War on Drugs

May 18: Racial Profiling

EVENTS:

National TV Turnoff Week: April 22-28

We will be tabling on Monday-Wednesday, passing out information, etc.

Debate—Public Display of the Ten Commandments:

Thursday, May 4 in 112 Lindner, 6:00 pm (Back up room: 329 Dyer) This should feature Atlanta Professor Ed Buckner and Kentucky Attorney Ronald D. Ray, moderated by University of Cincinnati Political Science Professor Howard Tolley.

The Spitfire Tour: Friday, May 12 in Zimmer, 7:00 PM.

This should feature The Indigo Girls (Amy Ray and Emily Saliers) speaking out on human rights; activist Tracey Conaty speaking out on gay and lesbian rights; activist Julia "Butterfly" Hill, speaking out on the environment and deforestation; and moderated by Spearhead musician Michael Franti.

For more information, drop me an email or contact

uc\_skeptics@hotmail.com

David Nufrio, 281-5010

Jesus Causes Acne Down Under

CANBERRA, Australia - The folks down under really get into the Easter spirit. A local candy maker thinks that he has an exceptional idea. Enter: Sweet Jesus Chocolate. The chocolate crucifix with a Christ figure that "bleeds" red jelly when bitten into, has caused quite a controversy. The creator defended his actions to critics and said, "People who are offended by the icon have lost touch with reality. A Sweet Jesus crucifix will remind them that Easter is more than three days on the beach."

Orange County (CA) Rationalists



## A Student's Assignment

The following is from FTVC member Christie Gorham:

Hi there! I just wanted to pass this along. Mrs. Kolodney, my daughter's Sophomore, English 2, C.P. teacher at Moorpark High School, gave her a homework assignment tonight. They are studying the holocaust and were reading a book titled "Night" which is a personal account of Elie Wiesel's experiences in various concentration camps in WW2. Her assignment was as follows:

### A LETTER TO ELIE WIESEL

"This is your opportunity to 'talk' personally with the author of 'Night.' In his personal narrative, Elie Wiesel describes his total loss of faith in God for allowing the Jews, God's chosen people, to suffer so inhumanely.

How could God, who was all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-loving allow this to occur? Was he too weak to intervene? Was he too apathetic to care? Did he know this would one day occur? How could God, in his perfect justice, allow children to be burned, tortured, and hanged? How could God stand by silently while six million Jews were starved, worked to death, and gassed for no apparent reason?

Take a few minutes to think about how you would respond to Elie Wiesel's questioning of God's justice.

Write a letter to the fifteen-year-old narrator. Attempt to answer Elie's questions about why God seemed so silent, distant, and cold. Why did God allow this darkest hour of man's inhumanity to occur?"

This is my daughter's completed homework assignment:

April 4, 2000

Dear Elie,

Hello, my name is Shawna. I am sixteen years old and I live in California in the United States. I live in a town where acceptance is mostly the rule to live by and where all religions are practiced. Some people though, seem to not like atheists or almost any polytheistic religion. Some people, such as myself, get bothered or embarrassed by their own beliefs. As I do know that this is not idealistic, it cannot even begin to compare to what you went through.

Why would a person torture, hurt, or even just bother another person based solely on their religion? I think that is horrible. People should not have to withstand such bad treatment. Why did people just stand by and let this happen? Why didn't some hero show up and save the day? Why didn't your God, the one you worshipped, respected, and trusted, let this happen?

Because that is not life. Life is real; no magical, mystical, pie-in-the-sky ideals or fairies, or heroes. Why would this God of yours just abandon your hopes and dreams and freedom? Maybe God doesn't exist. Maybe you were paying tribute to your spirits and not the Great One in the

sky somewhere. Maybe people control peoples' lives; their own and others. Maybe it is not Satan who is evil, but people. The thought of someone, up there in the heavens, watching and controlling our every move, might just have been a figment of your imagination; created for comfort.

I apologize sincerely if I have offended you or your beliefs. You are very welcome to have your own beliefs; I am just sharing mine. I am just sharing a suggestion that seems realistically and logically right.

I apologize again if I have offended you; and I am sorry for what you went through just because of what you believe in. I apologize on behalf of the evil Germans who tortured you, or all the people who stood by and did nothing. May they rest uneasy in their graves for all eternity. I wish you happiness for years to come. Thank you for hearing me out. I hope your hopes did not get hampered too much, so that they may flourish in the future.

Sincerely,  
Shawna Sturgiss

Dear Christie Gorham,

Your daughter Shawna's letter to Elie is magnificent! I would like your, and her, permission to reproduce your letters in FIG Leaves, the newsletter of the Free Inquiry Group, Inc. (FIG) of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. You can find us at: <http://gocreate.com/fig/>

I would also like to invite Shawna to check out Camp Quest, the first residential summer camp for the children of secular humanists. She might enjoy it, for it is full of people who see life as she does and not as, so it sadly seems, her teacher does. You can learn all about Camp Quest here: <http://www.edwinkagin.com/campquest/>

If we had more young people like Shawna's telling the truth, when it may not be so popular to do so, the world would be a much better place for everyone. She is to be applauded.

Edwin Kagin

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**April 2000**



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