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Considering a Catholic View of Evangelical Media

PAUL A. SOUKUP, S.J.

Several years ago, the *National Catholic Reporter* carried a story warning readers about the popular *Left Behind* series of Christian apocalyptic novels. Writers in *The Living Light*, a quarterly publication of the United States bishops' Department of Education, point out to their readers that the series denies a number of Catholic teachings and is both subtly and overtly anti-Catholic.¹ While the staff of the Catholic bishops' Department of Education probably wanted to prepare teachers for questions from their students who read the *Left Behind* series, the charge of anti-Catholicism in evangelical discourse was not new.

At the same time, evangelicals and Catholics have found common cause in the United States, working together to defend life at all its stages, to support marriage and family life, and to imbue the culture with religious values. Why, then, the mutual suspicion? What role, if any, do older and newer media play in stereotypes or misunderstandings?

The Catholic and the evangelical traditions of Christianity share wide areas of agreement: not only the values noted above but also the acceptance of the centrality of Christ, a devotion to the Word of God revealed in the Bible, and, less centrally but more relevant to the question, a movement from the margins of U.S. society toward the center. For Catholics, this occurred slowly over the last hundred years, with a defining moment usually credited to the election of John F. Kennedy in 1961 as the first Catholic U.S. president. Catholics today appear in all areas of society. For evangelicals, this movement toward the mainstream is still taking place with ongoing public misunderstanding and criticism not unlike that which Catholics faced a century earlier.

BEING OUTSIDERS TOGETHER

Groups who perceive themselves as outsiders use a "rhetoric of opposition" that

defines themselves as different from others.² Such rhetoric, even when addressed outside the group, has the more important function of speaking to the group and reinforcing group identity. From this perspective, both an older Catholic rhetoric and the traditional evangelical one will share at least this characteristic. As is clear in so many evangelical media, the evangelical tribe often defines its identity in terms of us versus them, with them being all of those outside the tribe.

When nonevangelicals tune in many tribal broadcasts or visit tribal websites, they get the impression that they are outsiders who need to be saved or morally or politically converted to one or another cause. It seems to outsiders that evangelicals are indeed tribal—not in the Native American sense but in the sense of seeing themselves as different from and, sometimes, superior to other groups in society—including other Christian groups. Even the way that some evangelical media use the word *Christian* to include only born-again evangelicals contributes to this. Evangelicals generally use the phrase “Christian bookstore” to distinguish such shops not just from mainstream bookstores but from Catholic ones as well.

In other words, evangelicals’ public rhetoric can easily lead to charges that they are biased, exclusive and even negatively anti-this or anti-that (anti-just-about-everything except themselves, according to some mainstream critics). In the religious realm, this rhetoric of opposition focuses not on similarities of belief with other groups—even other Christian groups—but on particular differences in biblical interpretation, while at the same time ruling out any other interpretation and sometimes the very principle of interpretation itself (as if evangelicals do not interpret Scripture but somehow know exactly what Scripture means).

This dependence on a rhetoric of opposition might also explain why so many aspects of contemporary evangelical communication resemble past (and sometimes present) communication practices in the Catholic Church. Both groups place a premium on communicating internally and externally. Both have established a fairly comprehensive network of print materials (books, magazines, newspapers, bulletins and so on). Both have religious bookstores to support those materials. Both have experimented with and established broadcast ministries. Both explore the use of new communication technologies and have growing, impressive online presences. Both seek to direct the consumption of communication materials by members of their groups, telling them what to consume and what not to consume. Both openly acknowledge the impact of communication media on society and question how the religious community should respond. Both can become defensive in the face of mainstream culture that seems at times to threaten its values, beliefs and institutions. Because of this, both seek to

meet all the communication needs of their tribes.

This attitude toward communication as being critical for identity, community and reaching outside the tribe is so deeply evangelical and Catholic that the affinities can become oddly humorous. A Catholic leader quipped that, after the establishment of a Catholic school system, Catholic hospital system, Catholic insurance groups, Catholic News Service, and Catholic communications, the next logical step would be a Catholic highway system! If that sounds strange, consider the story in chapter one of this book about one of this book's editors flying to a Christian Booksellers Convention with a woman who was in the Christian (evangelical!) wallpaper business.

So the irony, from a communications perspective, is that both evangelicals and Catholics sometimes long for (or seem to feel more comfortable with) a religious ghetto, where they can practice their respective approaches to Christian faithfulness in peace. Even though both groups are evangelical in the sense of reaching out to make converts, they also find great comfort within the tribe. It is also likely that both tribes spend more of their formal communications dollars on intratribal messaging than on extratribal messaging. The Catholic Periodical Literature Index includes over 170 periodicals.³ The largest Protestant group, Southern Baptists, indexes thirty to forty titles yearly in the Southern Baptist Periodical Index.⁴ Nearly all of these periodicals serve the tribe instead of focusing on converting outsiders.

THE POPE CELEBRATES CYBERSPACE

The Vatican, which now has one of the largest websites of historical Christian documents as well as contemporary papal pronouncements, began archiving paper materials over a millennium ago. On World Communications Day in 1989, Pope John Paul II said,

Surely we must be grateful for the new technology which enables us to store information in vast man-made artificial memories, thus providing wide and instant access to the knowledge which is our human heritage, to the Church's teaching and tradition, the words of Sacred Scripture, the counsels of the great masters of spirituality, the history and traditions of the local churches, of religious orders and lay institutes, and to the ideas and experiences of initiators and innovators whose insights bear constant witness to the faithful presence in our midst of a loving Father who brings out of His treasure new things and old.^a

^aPope John Paul II, "The Church Must Learn to Cope with Computer Culture," *Eternal Word Television Network*, May 27, 1989 <www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2COMPU.HTM>.

WHY THE EVANGELICALS BEAT THE MAINLINE MEDIA

To many people in many cultures, the most dramatic symbol of modernity^a is mass communications, especially electronic. To many Americans, the mainline churches most openly embrace modernity. Supposedly, mainline denominations are the most progressive. In theory, they would have been the media pioneers and leaders in the use of radio, television, movies and the Internet.

Not at all. In open competition in North America or anywhere else, the more conservative religious groups—evangelicals included—outpace the more moderate, liberal and modernist ones. If those conservatives were typed as otherworldly and the mainline churches as this-worldly, both groups' use of mass media challenge the stereotypes. Evangelical media efforts seem to be more fully *in* the world.

Why did the conservatives, once cruelly dismissed as “red-neck,” “hillbilly,” “holy roller,” “backwoods” and “rube” from the Bible Belt(s) become technologically sophisticated and programmatically adept at holding audiences, while the mainline, with few exceptions, made few efforts to build media and gather audiences?

One thing the mainline has wanted to do is keep its dignity, shunning the overt worldliness of show-business approaches to spreading the gospel and entertaining the faithful. I recall the Reverend Claude Evans, then campus pastor at Southern Methodist University, making national headlines and being pictured “dancing”—locking elbows and spinning is all that it amounted to—in the aisle of the campus chapel. His colleagues and supporters sneered. I recall radio humorist and mainline Presbyterian Stan Freberg doing some very respectable but creative “go-to-church” radio commercials. He was lambasted not by conservatives but by liberals. Undignified.

The apostle Paul's “being all things to all people” gets quoted in situations like this. Why not entertain, if that's what audiences want? With some notable exceptions, the mainline churches don't try to be and do all things. Why?

Maybe most mainline denominations have the heritage of church establishment in their bones: Episcopalians in England, Congregationalists in New England, Presbyterians in Scotland, Reformed in central Europe, Lutherans in Germany and Scandinavia. The Methodists (carrying the Anglican genes) came closest to breaking the mold in the late nineteenth century, but chose to grow more staid in the late twentieth century. And establishments do not have to—when they are established—enter the marketplace and compete. So when they become post-establishment (something they realized later in the century), it's too late to get new habits and learn new tricks.

In these respects, I compare mainline Christian groups to the noble Greeks when the restless Romans ruled the empire. The Greeks had philosophy, true art, great history, fine literature, and left-over temples, but power had shifted. They looked

down on the law-making and military Romans and their barbarian neighbors from their lofty perch, while the former outsiders, in effect saying “to hell with dignity,” got in there and competed. Whether all the moves of either were truly congruent with their gospel messages is for others to decide. If the gospel calls for pragmatism, we know who won: the conservatives, who determined what worked—and therefore what was deemed to be true.

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^a*Modernity* includes human belief in rationality and progress, often equated with belief in scientific ways of discovering truth and technological means of ushering in progress.

COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE TRIBE

When a religious group values its identity, it is not always sure how to communicate beyond its own tribal borders, for fear of losing its identity in the process. Both Catholics and evangelicals have struggled to find a culturally accepted mode of expression. They wonder how to use newspapers, radio programming, TV, music, worship media, the Internet and so on. Should they merely imitate the media forms of the wider culture, or should they develop a distinctively tribal format? Should they stand apart from the culture in which they live, or should they seek an accommodation? It might surprise some evangelicals to discover that Catholics are similarly concerned about remaining *in* without becoming *of* the world! This is partly why Catholics have been much slower to make worship more contemporary, even with guitar Masses and the charismatic movement that swept through some Catholic circles in the 1960s to the 1980s.

North American Catholics, as members of immigrant minority communities often facing discrimination, have wrestled with these questions for years. The parallel is not perfect, but some evangelical groups from lower socioeconomic groups yet today face similar discrimination or at least elitist criticism. For instance, some of the televangelists are pummeled by TV talk show hosts and newspaper columnists who love to make fun of the evangelical celebrities' ostentatious clothing, freshly coiffed hairstyles, gaudy furniture, Southern accents and countrified musical taste. Even the term *fundamentalist* is used by some mainline media to put down seemingly unlikable or culturally awkward evangelicals.

This kind of cultural tension might be worsened by most evangelical tribes' lack of a clearly defined leadership structure. The impression one gets from mainstream media is that evangelicals are led by entrepreneurial, independent, charismatic (in the secular sense) pastors and preachers, the best known of whom have founded megachurches or begun television ministries. As the various chap-

ters in this book show, each communication medium embraced by evangelicals depends somewhat on a few powerful leaders who have shaped those ministries. Moreover, these leaders and their ministries tend to be criticized not just by mainstream media but even by some evangelicals themselves. Evangelicals have replaced one pope with many popes. High-ranking religious leaders are lightning rods for criticism in any tradition but especially for mainstream media for whom the leaders symbolize all that is wrong with a religion more than what is right with it—with few North American exceptions such as Billy Graham.

Again from an outsider perspective, it seems clear that evangelical structures of charismatic leadership and independent churches lead to competing interpretations of the evangelical *tradition*—even if some evangelicals do not like to use the word because it seems to put rote ways of doing things above Scripture. There is an evangelical tradition that can be traced back to late-nineteenth-century revivalism, before that to the Great Awakenings, even earlier to the Reformation, and to the early church. The fact that so many evangelicals do not seem to be aware of their own theological and church traditions—along with the fact that evangelicals normally are quick to welcome new members who bring a theology and an understanding of Christianity formed outside of the evangelical tradition—leads to ongoing conflict and confusion within the evangelical tribe. The transition from minority group to established group requires self-confidence and the ability to balance the competing interests and creative expressions of the group. This becomes more difficult since the evangelical community consists not just of one local church but of a wide association of churches. The message to outsiders is that evangelicals cannot even agree among themselves, let alone with outsiders.

The Catholic Church dealt with these sorts of tension by appealing to a long theological tradition and a hierarchical governing structure rooted in that tradition. Here, then, is one area of significant difference between the evangelical and Catholic approaches to communication. The Catholic Church has a mechanism in place to plan for and coordinate communication, however imperfectly. It has accepted methods both to criticize its communication structures and efforts and to act on that critique. It also has a structure that allows a given individual or group to speak for the entire body—both to speak within the tribe and to speak outside the tribe. This is the Catholic Church’s “integrated communication plan”—to borrow a marketing phrase used in chapter sixteen of this book—that catches the overall concept if not the spirit of such controlled communication.

THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION

Other differences between the Catholic and many evangelical approaches to communication stem largely from theology. Historically rooted in Reformation

theology, many evangelical communities arise from the Free Church tradition and reject any kind of centralizing organization. Insisting on the primacy and truth of the Bible, the evangelical tradition stresses biblical literalism. Focusing on commitment to Jesus as Savior, the tradition highlights individual conversion and an ongoing relationship with the Lord. Each of these key aspects has consequences for communication, media use and media study.

What evangelicals might see as market-driven, dynamic communication, Catholics often see as overlapping and sometimes competitive or even contradictory communication efforts. Evangelicals seem to be competing with themselves! The Reformation roots of this theology can also have the unfortunate side effect of a lack of attention to the wider history of Christianity. Many times, thought and research about Christian communication jumps from Augustine to the post-Reformation period as if no Christian communicators existed in the medieval and pre-Reformation period. Yet as the authors have mentioned in this volume, those were critically important times for the creation, collection and spread of manuscripts—the early “network” era long before the creation of the movable-type printing press. There was also significant work on oral communication, including preaching, and on worship itself as communication—singing, prayer, sacraments and all. Why wouldn’t evangelicals using PowerPoint today in worship dip into the wisdom behind the use of stained-glass windows and other nonverbal communication from many centuries ago?

All Christian groups interpret the Bible. Important evangelical beliefs, such as the rapture (whose centrality in the *Left Behind* series prompted those questions by the Catholic Department of Education) arise from particular nineteenth-century interpretations of biblical texts, interpretations not shared by other Christian groups. Evangelicals’ focus on biblical literalism leads to their emphasis on a sender-message-receiver model and a practical failure to incorporate studies that stress the role of the audience in interpreting, resisting and shaping messages. Ironically, evangelicals also focus on sin, which surely must affect how people interpret Scripture and other messages.

The ahistorical tendency of this theology can sometimes lead to a lack of appreciation of how communication technology shapes not only faith expression but faith itself. But today we must more consciously attend to both the challenges and the opportunities presented by communication technology. In the sixteenth century, Luther and the other reformers made extensive use of the printing press, and many scholars and historians credit it with adding power and range to the Reformation.⁵ In addition to the external effects of the printing press—the availability and distribution of materials (especially the Bible), the forms of writing and polemic, and so on—the printing press also fostered widespread literacy, which in time “restructures consciousness.”⁶ Writing leads to greater interior-

ity and personal responsibility.⁷ The Reformed churches, with their greater emphasis on Bible reading than in the Catholic tradition, stress much more than Catholics the interior and personal relationship with Jesus Christ, whereas the more orally based Catholicism focuses on community, ritual and group identity as members of the body of Christ.

THE ORAL TURN

These historical accidents of communication technology shape the evangelical experience. Today, as communication forms manifest a secondary orality (i.e., oral presentations based on written texts⁸), people's consciousness again undergoes a restructuring. In addition to the benefits of literacy, people have more experience of orality, in radio, television, film, telephony and so on. No surprise, then,⁹ that ritual and multimedia community events have become greater parts of evangelical worship. Megachurches simply would not happen in a print-Bible-only world. But that also means that the personal response to Jesus Christ and the purely bibliocentric experience of religion will subtly change.¹⁰

This has two consequences. First, evangelical communities (and indeed all Christian churches) must pay more attention to audience-reception studies. How do people negotiate meaning and create meanings from the multitude of communication materials available to them? The "media, culture, and religion" perspective¹¹ argues that religious groups need to pay much more attention to what people actually do in their construction of religious meaning than they have in the past. Even the most devout church member will assemble coherent (at least to them) religious meaning from biblical, ecclesial and popular culture.

Second, an important opportunity and challenge for evangelical communication lies in "materializing religion."¹² Every religious faith must have its physical form: "Religious beliefs are embedded and embodied within myriad physical forms proclaiming and affirming adherence to this spiritual way, that credo and that line of theological argument. Articles of faith of the mental and constitutional sort are complemented by articles of faith of the material and sensory sort."¹³ Religious belief needs physical expression. No surprise that statues and stained glass, distinct architecture and vesture, music styles and rituals mark out Catholic churches. No surprise, either, that evangelical churches now seek out material forms to manifest their faith: books, music, television, radio, Internet sites, public relations, films—all the communication media discussed here seek to "materialize" evangelical belief. In other words, evangelicals seek to develop a consistent aesthetic.

Scholars acknowledge that contemporary society has split aesthetics from religion. They also emphasize the importance of art and artistic expression to reli-

gious belief and practice.¹⁴ Every religion has, in this view, a distinctive aesthetic. Easier to recognize through historical study (the Lutheranism of Bach's music, the Methodism of Wesleyan hymnody, the Catholicism of Gregorian chant, to cite only musical examples), a religious aesthetic grows from the religious traditions, especially of Christianity.

A CATHOLIC AESTHETIC

Richard A. Blake finds such an aesthetic in the work of Catholic film directors, whether or not they maintained their church allegiance and practice. For him, this "indelible Catholic imagination" grows from a theological grounding and informs all their subsequent creative expression. His exposition of the workings of a religious aesthetic shows how religion or theology interacts with artistic expression. To illustrate his thesis, he first describes key characteristics of Catholic theology:

Catholic theologians . . . tend to stress God's presence in the world, and thus for them the material universe is "somewhat like God." Catholics thus find analogy a useful means to arrive at knowledge of God, who, as processed through the analogical imagination, is something like human experience of the material world. . . . In contrast, Protestant theologians, in many of their classic works, tend to stress God's absence from the world. God is known in rare moments of self-revelation, such as the unique event of the person of Jesus Christ. A theology that stresses the absence of God must be understood in terms of a dialectical imagination: God is completely other.¹⁵

Blake then describes how these different theological starting points will lead to different aesthetic expressions:

In the Catholic imagination, if God is perceived as present and active in the material world, it makes perfect sense to celebrate that presence by decorating churches with statues, paintings, and stained glass. But if God is absent, then a more austere form of church design better reflects the human condition: life in this present material world is bleak, but a better life is coming. In addition, since Catholics consider the community sacred because of God's presence here and now, Catholics will tend to stress moral and doctrinal conformity, which defines and supports the community, while Protestants will be more comfortable with private interpretation of Scripture or dogma.¹⁶

How, then, does a Catholic theological aesthetic take shape? Blake suggests three key elements together with six theological footprints or signs.¹⁷ First, a Catholic aesthetic will stress *sacramentality* (that is, the principle that God chooses to use the physical world as a means of self-communication). Objects and experiences can take on spiritual significance and even supernatural value.

In Gerard Manley Hopkins's poetic expression, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God."¹⁸

Second, a Catholic aesthetic manifests *mediation*. People, events and things function as mediators "between God and God's activity in the world."¹⁹ God is a multimedia communicator! Just as Christ is the mediator between God and man, so is the body of Christ.

Third, a Catholic aesthetic both *builds on and builds up communion*—Catholics belong to a group because they belong to the body of Christ. Redemption occurs not alone but as a member of that body. Solidarity is an essential virtue, the one true tribalism.

Blake then offers more concrete manifestations of this aesthetic: "Catholics love saints"; "Catholics love the physical"; "Catholics love the sacramental"; "Catholics love devotional activities"; "Catholics love mentoring"; "Catholics love conscience"; "Catholics love narratives of moral growth"; and "Catholics love the ordinary."²⁰ Each of these, he argues, helps to locate and identify a specific Catholic imagination or aesthetic. The importance of his argument lies not so much in what he offers as evidence but in his recognition that any given theological tradition within Christianity will have particular marks of creative expression.

AN EVANGELICAL AESTHETIC

What about distinctively evangelical communication? Because I write from outside the tribe, I hesitate to offer even an outline of an evangelical aesthetic. However, if we examine only the theological threads of evangelical life already noted, we can see some consequences in the materials of communication. The centrality of the Bible and its literal interpretation suggest that an evangelical aesthetic will emphasize words and reliance on textual approaches (in songs, sermons, Internet sites and so on). Similarly, one would expect an aesthetic of illustration (stories with a point) and commentary (in books and magazines). Films would have some measure of a didactic (teaching) aesthetic, with stories connected to the Bible.

The self-identity of the evangelical communities as free churches leads to an aesthetic of individualism, not only in a preference for characters who stand alone against the crowd but for an individual spirit of critique. Works created by some tribes within the evangelical community may not find acceptance among others. This spirit of self-reliance may also interact with what Max Weber identified as the spirit of capitalism, leading to an aesthetic of work and reward, and of entrepreneurship.²¹

CONCLUSION

Like Catholic communication before it, evangelical media and communication seek a cultural role, both in the church and within the larger society. Moving

from a more insular position, defined by opposition, into the mainstream, the group must now define itself by a particular aesthetic. In other words, evangelicals have to know who they are as a people, even how they understand ultimate reality, and how that reality is to be communicated. They cannot do this in a vacuum, without knowing their history and the various strands of theology and piety that have shaped their history as part of the larger church. Evangelical media and their creators have an opportunity to play an important role in the ongoing theological identity of the community. As communication practices change, so will self-understanding—not only in the larger society but also in the church.

¹³See, e.g., Ian A. McFarland, *The Divine Image: Envisioning the Invisible God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005).

¹⁴Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (New York: Vintage, 1999).

¹⁵The malaise is poignantly expressed in Federico Mayor and Jerome Binde, *The World Ahead: Our Future in the Making* (New York: Zed Books, 2001), p. 5.

¹⁶David Craig and John P. Ferré, “Agape in the Service of Journalism,” in *Ethics and Evil in the Public Sphere*, ed. Robert S. Fortner and Mark Fackler (New York: Hampton, forthcoming).

¹⁷Richard Harries, *Reinhold Niebuhr and the Issues of Our Time* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).

¹⁸See, e.g., Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, ed., *A Testament of Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990).

¹⁹Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 398ff.

Chapter 20

¹Teresa Malcolm, “Fearful Faith in End Times Novels,” *National Catholic Reporter*, June 15, 2001 <http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2001b/061501/061501a.htm>. **[[This article covers the topic, but it doesn’t seem to contain the quotation you cite.]]**

²Richard B. Gregg, “The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 4 (1971): 71-91.

³See the Catholic Library Association’s Catholic Periodical and Literature Index at <www.cathla.org/cpli.php>.

⁴See the Southern Baptist Periodical Index at <www.sbuniv.edu/library/SBPI.htm>.

⁵Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Mark U. Edwards Jr., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁶Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen, 1982), pp. 78-116.

⁷David Payne, “Characterology, Media, and Rhetoric,” in *Media, Consciousness, and Culture: Explorations of Walter Ong’s Thought*, ed. Bruce E. Gronbeck, Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1991), pp. 223-36.

⁸Walter J. Ong, "Literacy and Orality in Our Times," *ADE Bulletin* 58 (1978): 1-7.

⁹At least from a media ecology perspective. See Lance Strate, "A Media Ecology Review," *Communication Research Trends* 23, no. 2 (2004): 1-48.

¹⁰One major movement within evangelicalism that takes into account the nonliteral sense of Scripture and new, more oral modes of communication and worship is the "emerging church" movement. Adherent Brian D. McLaren has written a book whose title captures this: *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-Yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

¹¹Robert A. White, "The Media, Culture, and Religion Perspective," *Communication Research Trends* 26, no. 1 (2007): 1-24.

¹²Elisabeth Arweck and William Keenan, eds., *Materializing Religion: Expression, Performance, and Ritual* (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2006).

¹³William Keenan and Elisabeth Arweck, "Introduction: Material Varieties of Religious Expression," in *Materializing Religion: Expression, Performance, and Ritual*, ed. Elisabeth Arweck and William Keenan (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2006), p. 2.

¹⁴Gregor T. Goethals, *The Electronic Golden Calf: Images, Religion, and the Making of Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley, 1990); Bernice Martin, "The Aesthetics of Latin American Pentecostalism: The Sociology of Religion and the Problem of Taste," in *Materializing Religion: Expression, Performance, and Ritual*, ed. Elisabeth Arweck and William Keenan (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 138-60; "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Direction," in *From Max Weber*, ed. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1948), pp. 323-59.

¹⁵Richard A. Blake, *Afterimage: The Indelible Catholic Imagination of Six American Filmmakers* (Chicago, Ill.: Loyola Press, 2000).

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 9. One could argue that a confluence of theological conviction and communication technology led to both the fact of usage and the pattern of use of the various communication media: Protestants, seeking private interpretation of the Scripture, more readily adopted the printing press, something Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution*, demonstrates. On the other hand, the spread of literacy and biblical translations because of the printing press further encouraged the Protestant tradition of individual Bible reading and interpretation.

¹⁷Blake's argument follows Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981); and Andrew M. Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

¹⁸Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur," in *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 4th ed., ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. McKenzie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 66.

¹⁹Blake, *Afterimage*, p. 14.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 15-20.

²¹Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1930).

Chapter 21

¹Mark I. Pinsky, "Passion Has Made Christianity the Talk of the Town," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 14, 2004.

²*Ibid.*

³Daniel Wolpe, interview by author, email, July 8, 2007.

⁴Douglas Hartmann, Xuefeng Zhang and William Wischstadt, "One (Multicultural) Nation Under God? Changing Uses and Means of the Term 'Judeo-Christian' in the American Media," *Journal of Media and Religion* 4 (Winter 2005): 208-9.

⁵Martin E. Marty, interview by author, email, March 14, 2007.

⁶Simcha Weinstein, interview by author, email, May 2 May, 2007. Weinstein is the author of *Up, Up, and Oy Vey! How Jewish History, Culture, and Values Shaped the Comic Book Superhero* (Baltimore: Leviathan, 2006).

⁷Phil Vischer, interview by author, email, February 22, 2007.

⁸Weinstein interview.

⁹You can see the box office records at "Jonah: A VeggieTales Movie," Internet Movie Database <<http://imdb.com/title/tt0298388/business>>.

¹⁰Mike Nawrocki, interview by author, email, February 21, 2007.

¹¹Phil Vischer, *Jonah* DVD commentary (Big Idea Productions, 2002).

¹²Weinstein interview.