

PART V—DOCUMENTATION

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RELIGION IN DIPLOMACY: A COMPARISON BETWEEN JOHN FOSTER DULLES AND MADELEINE ALBRIGHT

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by Frederick W. Marks, Ph.D.

When Monsignor Graham first proposed that I stand Madeleine Albright alongside John Foster Dulles, I wondered if there would be much of a basis for comparison. The difference between the two records, as well as between the two eras, is enormous. Yet the more I thought about it, the more intrigued I became as I could see a number of similarities.

Both, interestingly enough, were the product of diplomatic backgrounds, Dulles having had a grandfather, as well as an uncle, who served as secretary under previous presidents, and Albright's father spent time overseas on the ambassadorial level. Both were reputed to be staunchly anti-Red, Albright's family having fled Communist persecution in Czechoslovakia. Both, too, were associated with the United Nations. Albright was ambassador to the UN, Dulles one of its founding fathers. As early as 1941, he wrote a pamphlet for the Federal Council of Churches opposing FDR's plan for a world run by "four policemen" and putting the case for a successor to the League of Nations

in which all countries could be represented. Dulles drafted portions of the UN charter and sponsored the Uniting for Peace Resolution under which the UN intervened in Korea.

Even on the physical plane, there are similarities as each of our subjects cuts a striking figure. Dulles stood well over six feet tall with aquiline nose, jutting jaw, and sharply chiseled features, while Albright had about her the look of the tigress even when hidden beneath the black Stetson that had come to be her trademark.

This said, however, it is the dissimilarities between Dulles and Albright that are perhaps most suggestive, and at the crux of these differences, it seems to me, lies the issue of religion.

Social scientists frame hypotheses based on empirical data, and my hypothesis—or paradigm, if you will—may be simply stated: religion makes for greatness. I shall apply this hypothesis to Dulles and Albright, but before doing so, let me furnish you with a few examples drawn from other fields of endeavor.

The man who invented champagne, that most effervescent and glamorous of drinks, was a pious French monk. Marat Safin, winner of this year's US Open Tennis Tournament, along with Pete Sampras, winner of more grand slam events than anyone in tennis history, and Michael Chang, youngest male ever to win a grand slam title, have something in common. All three gave thanks to God before a battery of TV cameras and microphones. Don Shula of the Miami Dolphins and Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers coached world-famous football teams—they were the best in their field—and both were daily communicants. What are we to think?

The greatest writers of all time, from Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton to Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky, were unusually focused on God and committed to the propagation of traditional moral values. Dante was a Third Order Franciscan; Shakespeare the baptismal sponsor for Ben Jonson's daughter, Mary, after Jonson's conversion to Catholicism at the time of Elizabeth; and Milton was deeply attached to his Calvinist faith. Austen, interestingly enough, was brought up in a parsonage, as were the Bronte sisters. Dickens wrote a biography of Christ for his children. Tolstoy gave away all that he owned to follow the Gospel. Dostoevsky was extremely committed to the Orthodox faith. Then there is the little woman who wrote the most influential of all American novels, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Harriet Beecher Stowe had a husband who was an ordained minister, a father who was a minister, and seven brothers who were ministers—nine men of the cloth in her immediate family! One could give any number of illustrations, and what applies to literature applies equally to the fields of music, painting, and architecture. Greatness is proportional to religious commitment.

Shifting to the area of social service, if we were to ask who created the modern hospital, who founded the first nursing homes, who sparked the abolition of serfdom and slavery, and who pioneered in the treatment of mental illness, the answer would be quite simple: brothers and sisters of the Church. The country reputed to be least tainted with racial prejudice happens also to be the eldest daughter of the Church. Braille, the greatest aid ever devised for the education of the blind, owes its existence to a devout Catholic layman. And for the care of lepers, no one has ever been able to match the work of a Belgian priest by the name of Damien. When Fidel Castro shut down Catholic Action in Cuba, he let the nuns continue their service to lepers because he could not find anyone to take their place! It goes without saying that the first modern bureau of charity was founded by a saint, Vincent de Paul, and that the premier social worker of the twentieth century was a nun, Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

One could study the world's greatest scientists and report similar findings. Sir Isaac Newton, the father of modern physics and possibly the greatest scientific genius the world has ever known, worked out of a library filled with works on theology. Albert Einstein may not have been a regular attendee at the local synagogue, but he certainly believed in divine power, remarking once that science would be impossible without God.

Returning to the world of statecraft in which Dulles and Albright labored, one notes that the greatest of all emperors was Caesar Augustus. It was he who ushered in the golden age of Rome. Patron of Virgil and Livy, it was said of him that he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble. Less well known is the fact that he was a man of piety who not only restored 82 houses of God and built temples of his own but also revived the office of censor and founded a new order of priests, the Augustales, which attracted numerous vocations.

I could list dozens of others who were all-time greats in their respective countries and who were equally devoted to religion: Russia's Ivan the Great, for example, who built the six Kremlin churches; Otto the Great of Germany; Louis IX of France and his cousin, Ferdinand of Spain, who recaptured Seville and Cordoba from the Moslems (Louis and Ferdinand are canonized saints). One can name, in addition, Alfred the Great of England; Brian Boru of Ireland, who drove out the Vikings; Ramses II and Saladin of Egypt; Hammurabi of Mesopotamia; Maria Theresa of Austria; Isabella of Spain; Canute the Great of Denmark; and Olaf of Norway (St. Olaf).

Saladin is unique. He recaptured Jerusalem from the Crusaders and extended Egyptian rule into Syria, Turkey, and Tunisia. His greatest claim to fame is probably the gallantry with which he behaved toward Richard the Lion-Hearted when the latter lost his horse in combat. Saladin was so impressed with Richard's courage that he sent him two fresh horses and a groom. But let

it be said, in addition, that this greatest of all Islamic leaders spent twelve years studying Sunni theology while his peers occupied themselves with the martial arts, and that his principal goal was a restoration of religious practice and orthodox teaching. To this end, he built mosques and schools as never before and supported evangelization to a degree unprecedented.

More recently, those who cleaned up the mess left by World War II—Churchill, Truman, Adenauer, de Gaulle, and de Gasperi of Italy—were unusually religious for men of their rank, as compared with those responsible for bringing on the war, who were quite the opposite. Hitler and Stalin were apostates, Mussolini, a scapegrace, and Neville Chamberlain, known for his appeasement of Hitler at the time of the Munich Conference, held organized religion in such contempt that he loathed the thought of going anywhere near a church.

Lastly, a word about Henry VIII. Henry is an interesting mix—neither a Hitler nor a Churchill—having begun life with great promise. Bishop Fisher, chancellor of Cambridge University and founder of a college for scholarship students, tutored this handsome, bright, hard-working charmer. Henry's reaction to news of the German Reformation, as we all know, was to write a refutation of Lutheran errors that won for him the title "Defender of the Faith." But Henry had another side. Not only was he a womanizer before and after his infatuation with Anne Boleyn, he was also remarkably proud and cruel. Dickens, in his *Child's History of England*, calls him "one of the most detestable villains who ever drew breath . . . a disgrace to human nature and grease upon the history of England" (281, 306). Just so. And he was, for good measure, a liar, accusing Anne Boleyn and Thomas More of crimes they almost certainly never committed.

Our hypothesis is again borne out when we find that this Jekyll and Hyde of a man—this mixed man—left a mixed legacy in the field of statesmanship, for while England defeated Scots challengers in the Battle of Flodden Field, it also fought a long, inconclusive, and expensive war with France. Henry made a blundering alliance with the Spanish who left him in the lurch, and although people were told that confiscation of Church lands would result in lower taxes, events proved otherwise. So costly were Henry's public spectacles, not to mention matrimonial misadventures which precipitated risings in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire—risings that had to be put down at great additional expense—that taxes remained as bad or worse.

Like Henry VIII, President Clinton is a man of charm and intelligence, large of stature, and, as in the case of Henry, his religious track record sends mixed signals. On the one hand, he was raised to a large degree by a maternal grandmother who saw to it that he behaved with metronomical regularity and introduced him to the Bible. His governess, Mrs. Walters, took him to church

on Sunday, and during his early years, there can be no doubt that he worked hard, rising to the top 1 percent of his class and coming within a hair of winning the state saxophone competition.

As governor of Arkansas, he sang in the church choir, and each day, his secretary put a Bible verse on his desk. Mrs. Clinton, for her part, went on missions of evangelization around the state. This was Jekyll. Hyde was as loose as King Hal, fornicating before his marriage and philandering thereafter. As president, he committed perjury and so scandalized the nation with his obsessive eroticism that the governing body of the Baptist Church saw fit to excommunicate him, much as Henry VIII had been excommunicated by the Pope. Clinton continued, nevertheless, to cloak himself in a mantle of piety, cultivating men of the cloth and receiving Holy Communion in South Africa.

Secretary Albright began life as a straightline Catholic, receiving her First Communion and going regularly to confession. Her father, Professor Korbelt, was strict about matters of grooming, punctuality, courtesy, and courtship. When a boyfriend asked permission to drive her to the high school prom, Korbelt agreed, but with the proviso that he would drive his own car immediately behind the couple on the way to and from the prom. At Wellesley, Albright took courses in the Old and New Testament, and the rest of her life is an open book: how she scuttled Catholicism to join the Episcopal church at the insistence of powerful in-laws, how she considered having an abortion during a second pregnancy. Some have criticized her for not spending more time with her children and husband. Be that as it may, she took courses at Johns Hopkins and then at Columbia, leading eventually to the Ph.D. Her marriage ended in divorce, and later, at the UN, she championed a program of radical population control totally at variance with the Catholic values which she had embraced as a girl.

In sum, I believe that what we are seeing here—in the case of both Albright and Clinton—is a fair amount of dissonance in personal orientation. The only question is whether such dissonance is reflected in the diplomatic record. And so we must look at the facts.

On the positive side, Clinton and Albright were able to bring Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO. They also intervened in Bosnia and Kosovo without spilling American blood, putting an end, for the time being, to ethnic cleansing while holding NATO together and persevering in the face of Russian opposition. Milosevic is out.

As regards NATO, though, it is not altogether clear whether, in the long run, we will welcome responsibility for the security of nations that lie so far from our power base and so close to Russia. The other problem with NATO enlargement is that it comes at a time of radical cuts in defense spending. Imbalance of this type has traditionally been a recipe for disaster. As it is, UN

forces in Kosovo and Bosnia would be highly vulnerable should the Russians decide to heat things up. Clinton and Albright were cautious in pulling out of Somalia when the body bags began coming home. And it may be owing in part to this general sense of caution on the part of the administration that we have enjoyed a period of sustained peace and prosperity.

But there is a negative side as well. Castro and Saddam Hussein continue to thumb their noses. Clinton pounded Iraq for eight long years and imposed embargoes. But by December 1999, we were down to a single ally, Britain. Arms inspection had been suspended with the support of France, Russia, and China. And Saddam appeared to be recovering.

Clinton sent the Marines into Haiti. One of the purposes of Operation Restore Democracy was to cut the flow of drugs from Colombia. But the drug traffic continues unabated and Haiti is no closer to democracy today than when the Marines first landed. Elections in June 1995 were a fiasco according to the Carter Center, and opposition parties are planning to boycott another round scheduled for November.

In Rwanda, Clinton and Albright did nothing as Tutsi tribesmen numbering close to half a million were mowed down. In fact, they did worse than nothing. When the UN bestirred itself to intervene (the death toll was about to rise to practically a million), Albright barred the way, delaying a crucial vote four days, holding up the sending of troops, refusing to sanction use of the term "genocide," and finally pushing for a reduction of UN personnel. In a gesture that would seem to have been aimed more at political damage control than anything else, Clinton established the Internal Genocide Warning Center in December 1998, and at the dedication, Mrs. Clinton spoke of feminist problems in fundamentalist Afghanistan. If Mrs. Clinton had had the sense to compare Afghan and US statistics on divorce, abortion, illegitimacy, teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse, and pornography, she might have spoken differently. Similarly, if she had factored into her analysis the iron law of American economics that requires women, with few exceptions, to abandon their children for work outside the home, she might have been a trifle less patronizing about life under the Koran.

I have already referred to the sharp cuts in defense that Clinton was able to make by means of his line item veto. But this belongs in the larger context of a huge western effort to pump up the economies of China and Russia. Moscow has benefited from IMF bailouts to the tune of 4.5 billion dollars and is now in the hands of former Communists who are pouring enormous sums into strategic forces and weapons systems. Moscow has launched a stealth fighter program, built a massive network of underground command bunkers, and developed a new ICBM, the Topol M-2. It also has the largest nuclear submarine fleet in the world with some of the world's most

advanced equipment for avoiding detection. And one notes in this connection that 90% of US material reaches its destination by sea.

Russia now polices the borders of Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Turkistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgystan, and Kazakstan. Nine members of its Commonwealth of Independent States have joined to form a common air defense, and while the headquarters of the Commonwealth is situated in Minsk, Belarus, its defense council sits in Moscow. The writing is therefore on the wall: Moscow has not lost its taste for imperial power.

China continues to grow fat on American trade even as it suppresses dissent, persecutes religion, and forces its women to abort their babies. Every other item on American shelves these days is labeled "Made in China." But Beijing is a dictatorship.

I will pass over the abject failure of this year's summit conferences involving Russians, Israelis, and Palestinians and go on to the question of what kind of image we project overseas. George Kennan, one of Truman's chief foreign policy advisers, sympathized with Soviet revulsion at the "decadence" and "lurid quality" of American life; and Khomeini of Iran, not many years ago, referred to Uncle Sam as "the great Satan." If the Ayatollah were with us today, if Kennan were with us today, would there be any reason for either of them to alter their opinion? The United States has used seduction and intimidation to force contraception, abortion, and sterilization on the rest of the world in utter disregard for the precepts of the world's major religions. Clinton, meanwhile, by his personal grossness and besotting of the Oval Office, has further reduced his country in the eyes of the world. And beyond this, he has laid himself open to blackmail, not to mention surveillance by the agents of international espionage.

There is but one conclusion. Clinton and Albright will leave behind a legacy that is, at best, mixed, particularly in light of what Eisenhower and Dulles were able to accomplish at much more difficult time in the nation's history.

All of which brings us back to the 1950s. Any list of credits for Dulles and Ike would have to include two important peace settlements, one in Korea, the other in Vietnam. When Republicans returned to Washington in 1953 after a twenty-year hiatus, there were two major wars underway, and within a year, both of them were over. For the first time in a generation, the world found itself at peace. Add to this Dulles' skillful engineering, against all odds, of German entry into NATO, something opposed by France, frowned upon by Britain, and hotly contested by the Soviets. Ike spent three times as much as his predecessor on peacetime defense and obtained bases in Europe for the installation of IRBMs and tactical nuclear weapons. The Soviets were prized out of Austria on western terms. A split developed in the Sino-Soviet axis that

was regarded by many as the geopolitical event of the century; and this was due, in large part, to Dulles's intransigence in the face of Chinese threats against Matsu and Quemoy, the Nationalist Chinese offshore islands.

And there is more: namely, the recovery of Japan, the unprecedented harmony in our relations with Canada and Latin America, a reduction by two thirds of dictatorial rule south of the border, a defeat of Communist-aligned governments in Guatemala and Iran, and, most amazing of all, a more cordial relationship with the Soviets. As early as 1955, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov had to admit that the road from Moscow to New York was becoming "better and smoother."

In the Far East, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) came into being, shoring up pro-western parties in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaya, and Singapore, while the Caracas Declaration put the nations of Latin America on record as opposed to Communist meddling in the western hemisphere. These were major achievements.

Was there a down side? Yes. America's failure to join the Baghdad Pact as a result of Israeli pressure, coupled with Washington's failure to honor an arms agreement with Iraq may well have contributed to the slaughter of the Iraqi royal family in 1958 and hence to the rise of Saddam Hussein. But the sending of Marines into Lebanon the same year did much to shore up a shaky western position.

In Cuba, Washington paved the way for Castro by slapping an embargo on arms to Havana. Fulgencio Batista, who preceded Castro, was not even allowed to receive arms for which he had already paid. The United States, unwilling to deal with third parties in Cuba, was also slow to grasp the extent of Communist influence. But in fairness to Dulles, it should be noted that he was not personally responsible since Ike allowed a younger brother, Milton Eisenhower, to serve as an informal, behind-the-scenes director of Latin American affairs.

In Laos, the story is different. This time, it was Dulles's State Department that refused to support pro-western groups and dealt instead with neutralist leaders, who fell willy-nilly under the sway of the Communists. The realistic Thais, who lived next door to Laos, could scarcely believe that their American friends would be so naive as to do what they did.

Obviously, one must weigh what happened in Laos, Cuba, and Iraq against the aforementioned catalogue of positive developments while, at the same time, bearing in mind the challenge of the times.

And what a challenge it was! Communism, which had just swept over China and Eastern Europe, was knocking at the door in France, Italy, and Latin America—there were 150 Communist deputies in the French National Assembly by 1953. The Kremlin was plowing hefty sums into foreign aid and intelligence,

and in the eyes of many, Communism seemed on the verge of going all the way. Technically, who could deny that it was ahead in many areas including rocket engineering? The world's largest synchrocyclotron was located, not on the Mississippi, but rather on the Volga. The first rocket in space, the first animal in space, and the first satellite to circle the moon bore the initials USSR. Soviet productivity was rising at an astronomical annual rate of 6%, twice that of the US, and Americans, for the first time in history, had to face the prospect of annihilation should the Russians decide to push the button.

Just suppose, for the sake of argument, that Ike and Dulles had come to power in 1992 after the Berlin Wall had fallen, after Russian troops had pulled out of Eastern Europe, after the Soviets had tasted defeat in Afghanistan, after Communism had been declared dead by Moscow, after the USSR had been dissolved, and after the Russian economy had reached a state of exhaustion. How much easier their task would have been! As it was, Nikita Khrushchev was vowing to "bury" us. We sat eyeball-to-eyeball with Moscow, and all the world was watching to see which party would be the first to blink.

In the course of my research, I came across things the Soviets said about Dulles, even before he became secretary of state, that seem almost unbelievable in retrospect. They accused him of instigating the Korean War and, to prove it, circulated photographs to members of the Security Council showing him standing on the 38th parallel hours before the fighting began. A Russian novel linked him with Hitler in a murder plot against FDR. A Soviet May Day parade featured him on a specially designed float chopping down the tree of peace. Andrei Vishinsky, Soviet delegate to the UN, went so far as to suggest that he be put in chains. Although the Soviet press muffled its attacks after 1953, the year of his appointment, satellite voices continued to use epithets such as "cannibal," "sinister," "snaky," "Hitlerite," "brutal," and "Fascist."

Madeleine Albright, like Dulles, has been the target of name-calling and, like her predecessor, she has learned to develop a thick skin. Not for nothing is she known in certain quarters as "the Queen of Mean." Once, after being branded a snake by the Iraqis, she took to wearing a snake brooch. When they called her a witch—a woman from Georgia actually sent her a broomstick—Albright displayed the broom with pride in her office.

Neither Dulles nor Albright were at a loss for words. On one occasion, Dulles addressed the Soviet foreign minister as follows: "Mr. Molotov has entertained us by an exhibition of his ability to make the preposterous seem plausible. However, we did not come here for entertainment. We came here in the hopes of doing some serious business. I do not know what the Soviet Foreign Minister really thinks about us. Whatever his judgment is, he must know that he is not infallible. . . . I recall that Mr. Molotov was wrong in October 1939 when he condemned France and Britain as being aggressors and

praised Hitlerite Germany.” Or, to cite another instance: “The Soviet Foreign Minister seeks to justify requiring . . . Austria to accept for an indefinite period the presence of foreign troops, which he says are not occupation troops. But they are certainly occupying Austria. They do not stay suspended in the air somewhere; they are in Austria.”

On the day of the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, when Dulles heard that the Soviets had gone back on certain terms of their agreement, he cancelled his flight to Vienna pending clarification. Later, on arrival, he learned of yet another renege. This time, he announced that he was prepared to scrap the entire package and cancel the summit altogether. He also ordered his plane readied for the return trip to America. At which point, Molotov crumbled. Every one of the provisions of the Austrian State Treaty, including Austrian jurisdiction over migres, control of river transport and oil, the right to field an army of unlimited size and the permanence of Soviet troop withdrawal, all were the result of hard bargaining by a single individual willing and able to go down to the wire in the face not only of Soviet intransigence, but also of British and French willingness to yield virtually anything so long as they had their place in the sun.

At the breaking of the news of Dulles’ coup, 500,000 Austrians turned out in the streets of Vienna to celebrate, and the Vienna State Opera staged a performance of Beethoven’s opera *Fidelio* in which the loyal and tenacious Leonora, springs her innocent husband from prison. Fittingly, among those present in the audience that day was the American secretary of state.

In 1958, Peking gave Dulles a deadline of fifteen days to negotiate a satisfactory settlement on the future of Matsu and Quemoy. Dulles replied that he could not and would not negotiate in an atmosphere of recrimination and threats, and he was therefore suspending the talks. Peking extended the deadline, and again Dulles refused to budge. At length, Peking scrapped its deadline altogether. But the crisis was not yet over, for later in the year, Mainland China commenced heavy bombardment of the offshore islands. When Khrushchev sent Ike a long, abusive letter, Ike tore it up and ordered carriers of the Seventh Fleet, along with the Sixth, into the Formosa Straits. Meanwhile, word circulated that contingency plans were in effect for use by the United States of nuclear weapons. Chiang Kai-shek shot down 24 Communist MIGs with the aid of US Sidewinder missiles, and Moscow did absolutely nothing, that in turn, led to the Sino-Soviet split.

It was not a pleasant time. Fear gripped the nation and Dulles had to go up against the press, public opinion, the career foreign service, Canada and the UK. He had to face the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with Dean Acheson and Reinhold Neibuhr in opposition. Even the President seemed to have had enough. But Dulles, and Dulles alone, prevailed. Thus it was that the *London Times* could refer to him as “the strongest secretary in the strongest country.”

Needless to say, there has been nothing comparable to Dulles' virtuosity during the past four years. Clinton has never referred to Albright, as Eisenhower did on more than one occasion to Dulles, as "the greatest secretary of all time." Dulles was *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" in 1954. Four years later, the National Press Club awarded him a special certificate of appreciation accompanied by a standing ovation. The secretary had held a record number of meetings, dinners, and briefings for the press. He had also gone completely on record for the first time and been the first to have most of his conferences published. And best of all, he almost never ducked a question.

Unlike Albright, Dulles took unpopular stands on a variety of issues, striving mightily at times to bend public opinion to the parameters of long-range planning. He defeated the Bricker Amendment by a single vote, thereby preserving a free hand for the executive. He won foreign aid packages for India and Yugoslavia by the narrowest of margins; so doggedly did he stand out from Eisenhower on the issue of whether or not to hold a summit conference in 1953 that Ike, in a moment of pique, offered him the post of chief justice.

Dulles managed to hang on, though, and, in the course of so doing, controlled policy as no secretary before or since has ever done. Churchill may have exaggerated when he referred to Eisenhower as a "ventriloquist's doll." But Macmillan had it right when he described the President as "under Dulles's influence except . . . on very rare occasions involving a matter of the greatest importance."

All we need do, to fill in the remaining blanks of our hypothesis, is to observe that Dulles, son of a Presbyterian minister and father of a priest, was in church three times a week during his formative years, and by the time he went away to school, he had memorized practically the entire Gospel of St. John. Rarely, thereafter, did he go anywhere without his Bible, and down to the last day of his life, he remained active in Church affairs. Phrases like *Deo volente*, which he might inject into a press conference, and "God bless you," which was likely to roll off his lips in a friendly chat, came naturally. Eisenhower, too, grew up in a home where familiarity with the Bible was taken for granted. And as president, he not only introduced the practice of cabinet prayer but also had the Pledge of Allegiance altered to include the now familiar phrase, "under God."

So where, then, does this leave us? It should be apparent that our paradigm is safe within the specific confines we have chosen. But if we wanted to, we could go all the way back to colonial times. Scholars see the years 1776-1826 as the "golden age" of American diplomacy, and this was the age of the Founding Fathers, who were, by comparison with statesmen of the present era, remarkably religious. One look at the design they chose for the Great Seal of the United States speaks volumes. Plainly printed on every dollar bill, alongside the words "In God We Trust," is an unfinished pyramid surmounted by the eye

of Providence and two more words, “*Annuit ceptis*,” meaning, in Latin, “He [God] has favored our undertakings.”

Consider that Alexis de Tocqueville described the United States during its golden age as “the place where the Christian religion has kept the greatest power over men’s souls.” Consider, too, that John Jay, de facto prime minister of the United States from 1784 to 1789, as well as its first chief justice, was also president of the American Bible Society. George Washington’s first order of business, on taking command of the Continental Army, was to require weekly attendance at religious services, and during his darkest days at Valley Forge, this father of our country rode up and down his camp urging officers and men alike to fear God and not the enemy. John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States and son of the second president, is another case in point. Secretary of state for eight years under Monroe and unofficial author of the Monroe Doctrine, Adams was responsible for everything from the acquisition of Florida and the Mesabi Iron Ore ranges of Minnesota to the foundation of our first claim to Pacific frontage. And what do we find but that this greatest of all secretaries of state went to church not once a week on the Sabbath, but twice.

Alongside Adams in order of diplomatic greatness stands Theodore Roosevelt, president from 1901 to 1909. This first Roosevelt (not to be confused with his distant cousin, FDR) won the Nobel Peace Prize for ending the Russo-Japanese War and played a major role in averting a German-French conflagration over Morocco. He mediated disputes between Guatemala and El Salvador, as well as between Nicaragua and Honduras. Withal, he was the most popular and universally respected statesman of his age. And again, what do we find? TR taught religion for seven years during and after his student days at Harvard. He functioned magnificently as husband and father and, toward the end of his life, published an article in *Ladies’ Home Journal* underscoring the importance of weekly church attendance.

Suffice it to say that Americans of every generation have been great in proportion to the intensity of their spiritual commitment. We could recall Harry Truman’s memorization of the Sermon on the Mount, along with Henry Kissinger’s daily sessions at the synagogue on his way to school. You will find a volume by Messers Fuller and Green in the St. John’s University library that analyzes all the presidents in terms of their religious commitment or the lack thereof. And there is but one conclusion: the least religious—namely Harrison, Taylor, Fillmore, Grant, Arthur, Taft, and Harding—were also least great.

I hasten to admit that piety is not a trait normally associated with those in charge of state chancelleries. Nor do I mean to imply that church-going is to be regarded as some kind of magic talisman. We all know men who are good but unchurched, just as there have been churchmen who were anything but good.

My point is that the same religion which brings people to church also builds character and, in so doing, ensures against blackmail. Religion is a training ground for literacy and meditation, two of the hallmarks of inspired leadership. It acts, in the third instance, as a spur to prudent risk-taking since its followers are securely anchored in the hope of eternal life. It also makes for credibility, something indispensable for the diplomat.

The spiritual man is apt to be a balanced man as well, for although religion fosters idealism, it also instills a wholesome distrust of human nature, inclining its adherents to a respectable defense posture. At the same time, it militates against parochialism inasmuch as priests, rabbis, and ministers operate across national boundaries.

And one can go further. By furnishing a scriptural basis for opposing majoritarian views on morality, by causing the faithful to be countercultural, as it were, religion confers upon its followers an ability to stand up to opinion polls and vocal minorities in defense of the public interest.

Finally, I would argue that religion puts one in touch with the source of all creativity. The word culture is derived from "cultus" meaning "worship" in Latin, just as the word "inspiration" is derived from the Greek meaning "possession by the spirit." Religion offers us an "in" with the Almighty, who hears our prayers, acts upon them, and asks us to strive for nothing less than perfection.

I shall close with a handful of additional questions.

Why is it that all three of the greatest writers of detective fiction were fascinated with the supernatural side of life?

Second, is it coincidental that China's Tang dynasty, which ruled over the greatest empire the world had ever known, marked the high tide of Confucian enthusiasm?

Third, what do the following have in common: Copernicus, father of heliocentrism; Columbus, discoverer of America; Magellan, circumnavigator of the world; and Joan of Arc? It's the same thing that Dr. Alexis Carrol, Dr. Jerome Lejeune, and Norbert Wiener, have in common, discoverers respectively of the organ transplant principle, the cause of Down Syndrome, and cybernetics. Similarly, Louis Pasteur, whose name appears on every milk carton across the land. They were all deeply spiritual.

Why is Michelangelo's *Pieta*, arguably the most religiously charged of all the master's works, at the same time his greatest? Why is Handel's *Messiah*, the most religious of all musical compositions, also the most enduringly popular?

Is it not significant that Annie Oakley's favorite pastime outside of riflery was Bible reading?

How coincidental, finally, is it that the greatest political figure among early American Catholics, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, was, as Don D'Elia

has reminded us in his book, *Spirits of '76*, not just a Catholic but a Catholic who took his faith seriously, striving for frequent reception of the Eucharist and preferring Thomas A. Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* to any other book with the exception of the Bible?

Let us, as social scientists entering a new millennium, take Charles Carroll as our model. Let us strive, as he did, to draw closer to God, keeping ever before us the knowledge that religion has brought out the best in mankind, and that it will bring out the best in us as well. All that is required is that we cherish our faith, nurture it intellectually, be willing, son occasion, to run a few risks for the Lord, and persevere—persevere in a society that has become increasingly secular since the end of the thirteenth century. We must never lose hope, for history teaches that the pendulum can, and often does.