

But no man needs this much money or power. Observed James B. Ottaway, a Dow Jones director and a former owner of the Ottaway chain,

I am opposed to Rupert Murdoch's buying Dow Jones to boost his personal prestige, political power, and global media business control. . . . [Murdoch's] taking over Dow Jones . . . would add to already too much concentration of American and global media ownership, and political influence on American society and government decision making.

One wonders why Ottaway sold his papers to Dow Jones, for that, too, concentrated media power in fewer hands. Nonetheless, Ottaway and others made an even more salient point: Wealthy beyond the wildest dreams of 99 percent of their readers, the Bancroft Family had neither good reason nor the need to sell Dow Jones.

Ottaway wrongly believes Murdoch's News Corporation differs substantially from the other massive media plantations that dominate the landscape. The truth is that News Corporation is the same, only bigger. The sad tragedy of American jour-

nalism has been the near-complete eradication of locally or family-owned, small-town dailies. A few gargantuan media companies own many of them—most notably, that hideous Gorgon of anti-American corporate leftism, Gannett. Gannett's journalistic crimes aside, it suffices to say that the owners of a paper in Iowa should not live in New York, anymore than the owners of the *Baltimore Sun* should reside in Chicago or Denver or wherever the Tribune Company's directors and major stockholders live. Most of them have no interest in or knowledge of the communities their papers "serve."

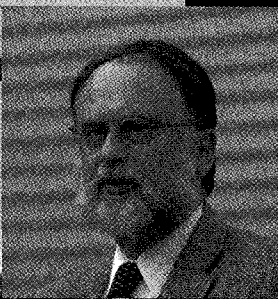
This is the irony of the news media's operation in the free market. With complete freedom to expand, a few companies such as Gannett devoured local dailies by the bushel. So consumers from Portland East to Portland West get their news from faceless, nonlocal media conglomerates that hire nonlocal editors and writers, whose political, religious, and cultural beliefs, which surface in stories and editorials, are often hostile to the community's. Given that starting a daily newspaper is financially impossible for anyone but Bill Gates or Warren Buffett, the only alternative for locals is a newspaper on the web. Of course, media giants

create those, too. A few large corporations control too many newspapers and dominate the media landscape. Strangely, the liberals who despise Wal-Mart are not discussing the gigantism and raw power that Murdoch's insidious accumulation of media properties means. Perhaps they do not care, which might be why they don't complain about Tribune or Gannett. The selective criticism reeks of hypocrisy. Liberals don't oppose concentrated power or influence peddling; they oppose only Murdoch.

And only because of his alleged ideology. Well, then, here is a news flash: Murdoch isn't the conservative the liberal Pecksniffs think he is. No conservative would put naked women on Page Three of his newspapers, or produce ribald television programs such as *Married With Children*, or jump into bed with the Chicoms. Nor would a conservative donate money to Sens. Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer. Murdoch has done it all. His London tabloid, the *Sun*, endorsed leftist Tony Blair. His FOX News Channel is a shill for the Bush administration. Murdoch uses, and will continue to use, his billions to wield power in politics and government. In short, like William Randolph Hearst, he is a public menace. <C>

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BORN-AGAIN CANADIAN

I was one of many who sighed with relief when Conrad Black was convicted in U.S. District Court July 13. He is exceedingly litigious, and word had gone out that anyone who had suggested anything untoward in Black's management of his newspaper empire could expect writs should the great man be found not guilty.

But he wasn't, and I can now state categorically what I had only hinted at in these pages three years ago: Conrad Black is a crook. Specifically, Black was found guilty of fraud for paying himself non-compete payments for newspapers he had sold to himself and of obstruction of justice for removing boxes of evidence from his office while under investigation by the SEC.

He remains free on bail while awaiting sentencing on November 30. As the prosecution is recommending a 24- to 30-year term, the 62-year-old Black will likely spend the rest of his life in a U.S. federal prison.

Unless, that is, he manages to regain the Canadian citizenship he abjured with contumely six years ago. The newly ennobled Baron Black of Crossharbour declared in 2001, "Renouncing my citizenship was much more than a ticket to the House of Lords; it was the last and most consistent act of dissent I could pose against a public policy which I believe is depriving Canada of its right and duty to be one of the world's great countries." In other words, *You are not worthy! Of me!*

Should we see the error of our ways, however, Black was prepared to reconsider: "If my views are taken up and implemented, I will be happy to resume my citizenship." Can't say fairer than that, can you? In 2006, Black announced that we were once again worthy of his lordship. He was now a "demonstrative Canadian flag waver," and could he have his citizenship back, please?

In his *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*, the Catholic thinker and martyr Sir Thomas More wrote, "A man that [is] in peril of drowning catcheth whatsoever cometh to hand, be it never so simple a stick." And the conversion experience of the Catholic thinker and would-be martyr Lord Conrad Black occasioned much cynicism, not to say hilarity, in his native land. It's not as if he

wasn't already drowning in a sea of tribulation. Patrick Fitzgerald, scourge of Scooter Libby, had announced his intention to put Black behind bars for decades, but, if Black could regain his citizenship, he would be eligible for the Canada-U.S. prisoner exchange. This would guarantee him the comfort of a short sentence in one of Canada's "country club" jails, where "offenders reside in residential-style housing units" and "are responsible for their own meal preparation."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says he won't get involved, and Black is now a convicted felon, which should disqualify him. But Canada routinely grants citizenship to foreigners whose crimes are much blacker than Black's, so who knows?

If the self-hating Canadians who dominate "conservative" opinion in this country had their way, Black would not only be repatriated and freed, he would become governor general, allowing him to embrace his destiny as the General Pétain of Vichy Canada.

But a funny thing happened on the way to Black's immolation. Our neocon fifth columnists had no problem with Conrad Black instructing us that there was no problem with Canada that shouldn't be solved by making her exactly like America. This was only the truth. And they cared not when Black's crimes came to light. After all, \$3.5 million is "nothing," and, anyway, theft isn't theft when big businessmen do it. Instead, the already indicted Black was rewarded with a column in the *National Post*, and his noxious wife, the as-yet-unindicted Barbara Amiel, with one in *Maclean's*. Ken Whyte, editor-publisher of *Maclean's*, testified for Black at trial, which is surely unconnected with the \$100,000 "performance bonus" he accepted from Black in 2003, two years after Whyte stopped working for him.

Even as Conrad damned his Jewish prosecutors as "those Nazis" and Barbara damned the reporters covering his trial as "vermin," Black's clique smothered them with true unpatriotic love. Black's ordeal was a latter-day Dreyfus case. Maybe worse. Or so said Mark Steyn, David Frum, George Jonas, Peter Worthington, David Warren, Adam Daifallah, Christie Blatchford, and Ezra Levant.

And yet, when it became clear that Black's number was up, the Vichy Cana-

dians began denouncing the U.S. government with all the fervor of a Paul Craig Roberts. Our fifth columnists became as anti-American as all get out. Truly, God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.

—Kevin Michael Grace

IS THE POPE CATHOLIC?

In July, the Pope endorsed a statement that ruffled some feathers in the Protestant aviary, and it turns out that the statement actually revealed that a number of Protestants aren't all that Protestant anymore. They demonstrated this slide away from Reformation confidence by being upset by the revelation that Pope Benedict XVI still believes that his version of the Faith is true. He still actually thinks those things.

True. What a strange word these days. What the Pope said, in effect, was that the Roman Catholic Church is the one and only true Church, and that the others, um, aren't. Aren't, that is, "Churches" in the proper sense." (The Orthodox qualify as "separated" and "particular" Churches.) Protestant "ecclesial Communities," the document said, "suffer from defects," because they "do not enjoy apostolic succession in the sacrament of Orders," and this means that they cannot be considered to be Churches "in the proper sense."

The reaction was immediate, sad, and kind of funny. For example, Clifton Kirkpatrick, the General Assembly stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), issued a letter that said that Benedict's endorsement of the statement "mischaracterizes our faith," and "reopens questions of Christian unity."

The reaction to the statement reveals at least a couple things about the current state of affairs in the broader Church. The first is that it shows the vast difference between true catholicity and ecumenical goo. If fierce Protestants and dedicated Catholics sought to love each other while standing for the Faith once delivered, quite a bit of good could come out of something like that. But the vanguard of the ecumenical movement has actually been made up of a truth-rot liberalism that believes nothing in particular. The ticket into the ecumenical movement has been to downgrade dogmatic

conviction, and it seemed in the halcyon days following Vatican II that even the Catholics were keeping their end of the deal. But now comes Pope Benedict XVI, *believing stuff*. In public. The Reformed preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said this about the ecumenical movement—and it seems pertinent somehow—“You cannot bring about a resurrection by putting all the corpses into one graveyard.”

The second problem concerns apostolic succession. Some Protestants have a doctrine of it, and many others don't. Those who don't (a hardshell Baptist, say), when asked where their church was before the Reformation, would say something like, “Tied to stakes and hiding in caves from you guys, mostly.” This kind of Protestant, when told that the Pope said that his church is a mere “ecclesial Community,” would say, “Doesn't matter anyway. Like I tell the people every Sunday, no church can save you. Gotta have Jesus.” This kind of Protestant should be upset by the Pope's pronouncement . . . not at all.

Then there are the conservative heirs of the magisterial Reformation who have (in variegated degrees) a Protestant appreciation for a doctrine of apostolic succession. It may be a doctrine of succession in ordinations (as with the Anglicans) or a doctrine of baptismal succession from the

apostles, as Presbyterian theologian Peter Leithart has recently argued, but it is there. These Protestants will not be upset either, because they wake up in the morning knowing what they believe, and they don't have to get permission from Rome to believe it. They have a doctrine of the historical Church (which is not to be confused with a view of contemporary denominations), and they know where they stand. They should be upset . . . not at all.

So who is upset? The forces of relativism and postmodernism have gutted a large wing of the Protestant world. They don't believe the articles of the Creed anymore, they want to ordain all kinds of interesting sexual experiments, and they think Jesus was the original hippie. This is the same wing of the Christian religion that has poured itself into ecumenical dialogue with Rome. About the only thing they have left anymore is a sort of scratch-and-sniff churchiness. And now the Pope wants to take that away.

—Douglas Wilson

OBITER DICTA

Interest in our **Ravenna and Venice Convivium** has been very high. If you are hoping to join us, please do not delay register-

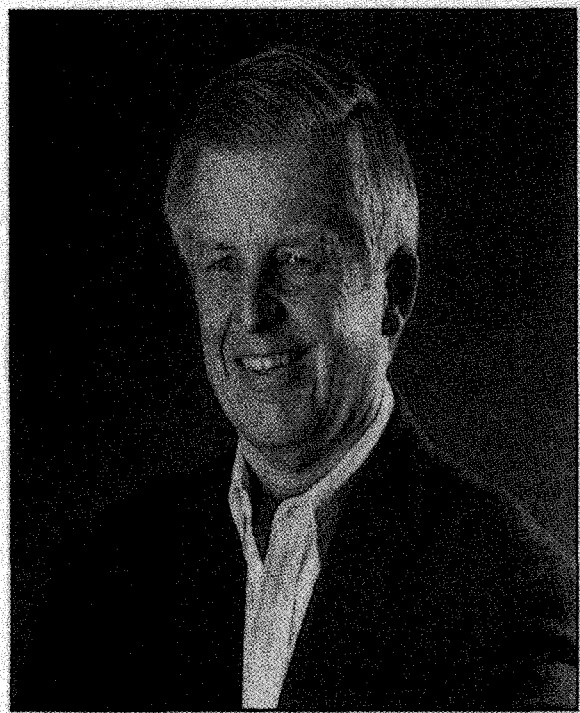
ing. We expect the event to sell out.

Rooms at the special rate of \$169.00, single or double occupancy, remain at the Hotel Washington for the 18th Annual Meeting of **The John Randolph Club**. (See the back cover for more information.) Call (202) 638-5900 to reserve your room. (Ask for “in-house reservations” and mention The John Randolph Club.) Please call Christopher Check at (815) 964-5811 if you have difficulty reserving a room or have any questions about forthcoming events.

This month, our first poet is **Andrew Huntley**, who hails from Bendigo, Victoria, Australia. Mr. Huntley's work has recently appeared in *AD2000*, *Adelaide Review*, *Christian Order*, the *Saint Austin Review*, and *Quadrant*. Collections of his work include *The Stone Serpent Dreaming* (Hale & Iremonger) and *Minor Pageant* (Island Press).

Our second poet is **Tina Brown-Warren**. A retired library clerk from the University of Illinois Slavic and East European Library, Mrs. Brown-Warren's poetry has appeared in *Romantics Quarterly* and the *Lyric*. She writes from Urbana, Illinois.

Our cover and interior art are provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.



Harold O.J. Brown (1933-2007)

The *Chronicles* editors are deeply saddened to announce that our religion editor, Harold O.J. Brown, has passed away. Dr. Brown was a theologian and a philosopher, a journalist and a cultural critic, an athlete and an outdoorsman. He is survived by his wife, Grace, and their two children, Cynthia Anne and Peter.

Dr. Brown served as a seminary professor for nearly three decades. Given his academic accomplishments, his integrity as a scholar, and his personal character, we could see nothing more fitting than to put his picture on the cover of our issue outlining a conservative vision for education, “End as a Man.”

For more on Dr. Brown, see Aaron D. Wolf's tribute to his former professor, “Evangelical Theologian,” on page 34.

Counting People and People Who Count

My *curriculum vitae* still includes a paragraph describing my activities as an “educational consultant,” though it has been some years since I went to Washington to read grants or evaluate schools for the Department of Education. It was all time wasted, less profitable than time wasted on politics. Politicians, to their credit, know that it is money and power they are seeking, but I have never been able to discover what educators have in mind. The worst of them babble statistics—IQs, achievement-test scores, minority percentages, word counts in first-grade readers. None of it amounts to much more than counting—counting words or counting people.

In every discussion of reform, whether it was with professors of education, school-board members, or the secretary of education and his staff, the conversation always ran aground on the following question: “What is your object in teaching a class, running a school, or developing a program?” When I received no better answer than gimmicks summed up in slogans such as “child-centered education,” “back to basics,” “phonics,” or “writing for reading,” I clarified the question by asking, “What sort of person, if you succeed, do you expect to turn out?” A Quaker headmaster informed me that he hoped his students would be themselves; I naturally asked him why parents should pay high tuition to a private school if not to turn their little savages into some kind of civilized human beings.

Perhaps I have spent too much time reading Plato. After all, a simple society can rear its boys and girls to be patriotic citizen-soldiers or competent matrons without having an explicit theory that stipulates the *for what* we teach children, but that is only because traditional societies have an implicit understanding of what a good man or good wife and mother is like. An Athenian on his way to fight the Persians at Marathon did not have a refined definition of *courage* arrived at in a course of dialectic or at the end of an argument with Socrates’ father. He had read or heard the same Homeric poems as his fellows, worshiped the same gods at the same festivals, attended the same meetings of the Assembly and the same courts, where he listened to the wise and the foolish debating the controversies of the day. We are not so lucky.

No young man today, unless he has been locked in a basement or reared by the Amish, is unaware that every virtue extolled by parents and pastors is condemned by the really important people in our society—namely, celebrities. His parents may teach him to be polite and respectful in his speech, but if he turns on the television to learn something about politics—a grave mistake—he will be subjected to the coarse hectoring of Bill Maher and Ann Coulter. He does not need to turn on the TV. Every day in school, he learns the same bad lessons, bad manners, and bad morals. A slave to the indoctrination he has received, he thinks that he (obeying the dictates of the Harvard School of Education and FOX News) is the ultimate judge of all value, whether it is the received wisdom of the Church or

the received wisdom that tells grown men to put on a jacket and tie before going to church. Instead of learning from experience, his own and that of his parents and ancestors, he believes only abstract speculations about human equality and the progress of humanity.

We live in a culture gone mad on theory: theories of sex and family, theories of government, and, inevitably, theories of education. A debate has raged for centuries over “the future of education.” Early American liberals such as Noah Webster insisted that a democratic society needs a suitable educational system, divorced from the classical tradition that encouraged aristocracy and elitism. What sort of American democrat could listen to Sarpedon’s admonition “always to be the best” without giving a Bronx cheer? It took over a hundred years, but this appeal began to take concrete form in American colleges and secondary schools between the two world wars.

John Dewey and his students developed the argument to include a soft social-science indoctrination that would liberate American kids from the shackles of race, ethnicity, nationality, region, class, wealth, religion, taste, and anything else their poor benighted parents might have valued. By the late 1960’s, the attack was extended to sex and gender, species and phylum. An old high-school friend—a beautiful and charming woman—once asked me (at an oyster roast) why I could be so concerned about unborn babies when I cared so little about baby seals. This same woman, if she had not been warped by the propaganda inflicted on her by half-educated Ph.D.’s, would have remained a Trinitarian Anglican and a patriotic Southerner. As things turned out, she was only a New Yorker manqué. That is why every school in the nation should have a sign at the entrance: Enter at Your Own Risk or, better still, *Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch’entrate*.

The conservative response to the progressives’ takeover of education has been of two types, and neither has been particularly effective. The capitalist response is to emphasize vocational skills, whether at the low level of shop and computer courses or on the high level of mathematics and science. Bill Gates, himself a model victim of American education, thinks that he can do some good by rewarding students for designing innovative technical projects before they have learned anything about who they are or why they are alive. The results are all around us: the technological barbarians who cannot even imagine the moral problems presented by cloning, *in vitro* fertilization, and the virtual reality in which young people are imprisoned.

Most of us, who are neither angels nor monks, would like to have money; sensible people would like to earn their money by pursuing an interesting and useful career. We all understand

