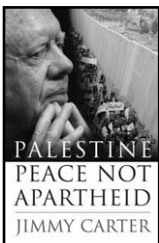


Writings on the Religious Right & Moral Left



Many books have been published recently on the dangers posed by the political onslaughts of the religious right and about the progressive counterattack. A number of public affairs journals have published book review articles covering several such books; see, for example, the November 27, 2006 issue of *The*

Nation for an assessment of nine books ranging from Bill Moyers to Jimmy Carter. We are especially appreciative of "an evangelist's lament" by Randall Balmer, author of *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America*. Damon Linker, who worked for many years as an editor of Richard John Neuhaus' journal *First Things*, has written an insider's eye-opening exposé of the machinations of Roman Catholic right-

wingers called *The Theocons*. We are glad that Kevin Phillips—a political writer usually identified solidly with the Establishment—devoted almost forty percent of his *American Theocracy* cry of alarm to partisan evangelical figures and currents of thought.

An even more alarming book on the same topic has been penned by Chris

Hedges, the eloquent journalist-philosopher. His just published *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America* warns of a particularly virulent form of right-wing Christianity that openly espouses a Taliban-type theocracy for the USA.

Dan Wakefield's *The Hijacking of Jesus* is an insider's view of the pain and outrage felt by a liberal Catholic. The final chapter of

Wakefield's book provides a useful summary of what liberal and progressive religious institutions are doing to turn back the insidious distortions of religion by the right. It surveys the efforts now being carried out by reformers (perhaps they deserve to be called "reclaimers") such as *Tikkun's* Michael Lerner and *Sojourners'*

Jim Wallis as well as reminding us that ecumenical bodies such as The National Council of Churches (NCC) are by no means dead. The new program thrust of the NCC—and the theological vision it expresses—are more fully dealt with in its new general secretary's recent book, *Middle Church: Reclaiming the Moral Values of the Faithful Majority from the*

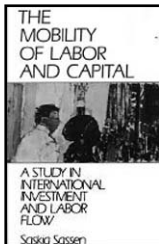
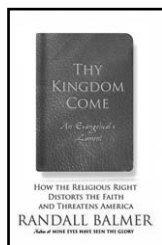


Religious Right, by Robert Edgar.

Yes Magazine's Winter 2006 issue, themed *Spiritual Uprising*, devotes itself to the new interfaith uprising against the increasing economic, social and environmental injustice of the world. It has a great list of resources, articles on jubilee, empire

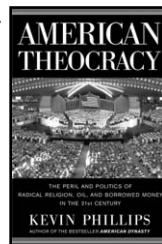
and fair trade.

Theologian John B. Cobb, who co-wrote *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* with Herman Daly, traces the biblical history of common land/ private property and sustainable community. He has also written articles on *A Buddhist-Christian critique of Neo-Liberal Economics*, *A Sustainable Society* and *Against Free Trade: A meeting of Opposites*. These articles are available at religiononline.org.



Activists who want to be effective in setting and pursuing goals for economic life in the modern world can profit from reading *The Mobility of Labor and Capital* by Saskia Sassen and *The Soul of Capitalism: Opening Paths to a Moral Economy* by *The Nation's* fine analyst, William Greider. This is a great primer on how global capitalism works.

Gar Alperovitz's *America Beyond Capitalism; Reclaiming Our Wealth, Our Liberty and Our Democracy* is a clear vision of what the moral economy looks like and how it might come about. He examines worker-owned firms, enterprising cities, building community and local democracy.



The last section of his book, "Toward a Morally Coherent Politics," lays out how change could "come much earlier and much faster than many now imagine."

In *Crunchy Cons*, Rod Dreher adopts a slightly less consumptive, but nevertheless self-satisfied form of materialism. He does think environmental stewardship is a social good, but that's where he begins and ends as far as taking on corporate power. He adopts what liberals do—and then disdains liberalism. He has set up liberalism as a straw man to knock down with utterly false assumptions. There is not one word about social justice—he embraces the global free market as an absolute good. This is evangelical social Darwinism eating organic food.

