
A CHRONICLE

Prof. Charles Taylor
2007 Templeton Prize Laureate



TEMPLETON PRIZE

For Progress Toward Research or Discoveries About Spiritual Realities

*including research in love, creativity, purpose, infinity, intelligence,
thanksgiving and prayer.*

Templeton Prize Press Conference | New York City | March 14, 2007

Buckingham Palace Prize Presentation | London | May 2, 2007

The British Academy: A Conversation with Charles Taylor | London | May 2, 2007

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STATEMENT BY

John M. Templeton, Jr., M.D.

AT THE TEMPLETON PRIZE PRESS CONFERENCE, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 14, 2007

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. As Chairman and President of the John Templeton Foundation, I am delighted to welcome all of you to the annual news conference for the announcement of the 2007 Templeton Prize.

It is a great privilege to welcome our 2007 Templeton Prize Laureate, Professor Charles Taylor of McGill University in Montreal, and currently professor of law and philosophy at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He will share some comments and answer your questions in just a few minutes.

Our format this morning is as follows: First, I shall share with you some of the perspectives of my Father, Sir John Templeton, when he established the Templeton Prize Program and the John Templeton Foundation. Because my Father is now 94 years old, he finds that the rigors of international travel are overly taxing on him. He sends his sincerest apologies, therefore, for his not being able to be with us this year. However, he asked me to share with you his joy in the wisdom of the judges in selecting Professor Taylor as the 2007 Templeton Prize Laureate.

After my introductory comments, I shall then introduce Mr. Michael Goldbloom, the Vice-Principal of McGill University, who will offer the congratulations of the institution where Charles Taylor has served as professor since 1961.

This will be followed by Mr. Michel Robitaille, Delegate General of the Québec Government Office in New York, who will offer his government's congratulations to Professor Taylor.

Following Mr. Robitaille, I will introduce Daniel Sullivan, Consul General of Canada in New York, representing the Government of Canada.

Finally, I shall highlight the accomplishments of Professor Taylor which clearly influenced the judges in their selection of him as this year's Prize Laureate. After this brief review, Professor Taylor will share with us some of the perspectives of his life's work in philosophy and the humanities. Then, after Professor Taylor's comments, we shall open the floor to questions.

The Templeton Prize is the world's largest annual prize given to an individual. This year's award is in the amount of £800,000 Sterling, more than 1.5 million dollars.

The Prize is a cornerstone of the John Templeton Foundation's international efforts to serve as a philanthropic catalyst for discovery in areas engaging life's biggest questions, which we describe as ranging from explorations into the laws of nature and the universe to questions on the nature of love, gratitude, forgiveness, and creativity.

Certainly, a big question which illustrates the mission of the Prize and our Foundation is one that Professor Taylor is currently engaged in and has written and lectured on extensively throughout his extraordinary career of nearly half a century.

That question is: "What is the role of spiritual thinking in the 21st Century?"

Our Foundation's vision is derived from my Father's commitment to progress through rigorous scientific research and related scholarship. The Foundation's motto "How little we know, how eager to learn"

exemplifies our support for open-minded inquiry and our hope for advancing human progress through breakthrough discoveries. By honoring those whose research and discoveries have opened new perspectives and insights into such spiritual realities as purpose, love, and thanksgiving, the Prize fosters an environment that encourages others to help us more fully understand ourselves and our universe.

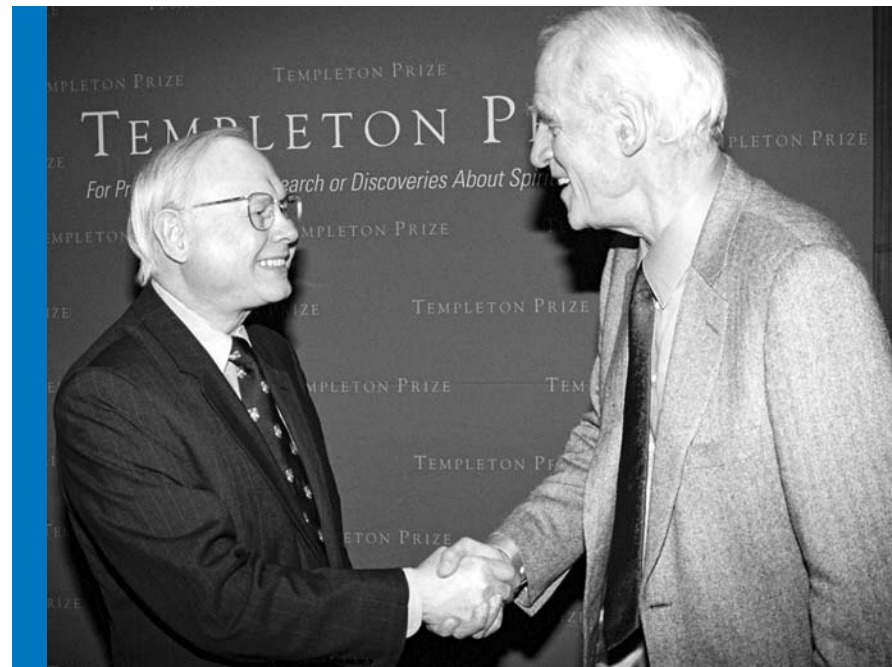
You may recall that five years ago the name of the Prize, which is now in its thirty-fifth year, was changed to: The Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries About Spiritual Realities. We have been looking for ways to draw greater attention to the idea that progress in spiritual information and spiritual discoveries is just as feasible as progress in medicine, science and cosmology. In fact, spiritual progress may be more important than all of these other areas. The name of the Prize was, therefore, changed to inspire greater attention to research or discoveries of a spiritual nature. Spiritual realities refer to matters of the soul that are universal and apply in all cultures and to all people. These realities are non-material, transcendent or metaphysical areas about which many people have intuitive perceptions.

The Prize is given each year in honor of a living person who represents through his or her work a remarkable spirit of inquiry to understand not only the nature of these spiritual realities, but also the nature of the divinity which gives life to these realities. The inquiry can come in many forms, including scientific research or other methods of discovery by which knowledge might compliment ancient scriptures and traditions in opening our eyes more fully to our growing understanding about God's nature and purpose.

In highlighting his vision when he spoke with us here four years ago, my Father said: "All of this points toward tremendous blessings for humanity and that is what I am devoting my life to. My challenge to

you is that if you want to be happy, if you want to be of benefit to humanity, you will not come up with anything more beneficial than new discoveries about spiritual realities including the nature of God and his purposes for us."

That line of thinking explains why we are here today. Years ago my Father looked at the work of Alfred Nobel and discovered that by giving five Prizes in Chemistry, Physics, and so forth, he had persuaded the most brilliant people on earth to devote a huge amount of attention to discovery. Brilliant people who might not otherwise have made these discoveries were inspired by the fact that other people had discovered something important and were recognized by winning one of his distinguished Prizes. Nevertheless, My Father felt that Alfred Nobel had a blind spot when it came to spiritual discovery. He said: "I, therefore, established this Prize program to encourage an attitude of progress in the domain of



John M. Templeton, Jr., congratulates Charles Taylor at the Templeton Prize Press Conference.

religion and also a spirit, even an enthusiasm, for a quest for discovery regarding spiritual realities. I feel that this quest will have the most powerful and beneficial impact in the whole realm of research and discoveries – an impact that will advance the well being of each individual and the world as a whole."

This spirit of inquiry and scholarly commitment is most certainly demonstrated by the life's work of Professor Charles Taylor and the impact that his work is having throughout the world.

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN M. TEMPLETON, JR., M.D.

Before I introduce Professor Taylor, I want to welcome a few representatives of his university and his country, who will offer their congratulations. Mr. Michael Goldbloom is the Vice-Principal of McGill University, responsible for the university's government relations and inter-institutional affairs. Four generations of his family have attended McGill, where Michael earned a Bachelor of Civil Law in 1978 and a Bachelor of Common Law in 1979. Before returning to McGill, Mr. Goldbloom was the publisher of the Toronto Star from 2003 to 2006, and publisher of the Montreal Gazette from 1994 to 2001. May I introduce to you, Mr. Michael Goldbloom.

STATEMENT BY

Mr. Michael E. Goldbloom

Vice-Principal, McGill University

AT THE TEMPLETON PRIZE PRESS CONFERENCE, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 14, 2007

In the name of the Principal of McGill University, Heather Munroe-Blum, who unfortunately has to be in Europe, I would like to thank the Foundation for the opportunity to participate in this great moment, the announcement of the Templeton Prize Laureate.

McGill University, as you can well understand, is deeply honored that this distinguished Prize is to be awarded to Charles Taylor, emeritus professor of philosophy and highly esteemed member of the McGill community for 45 years. Through his teaching, research, and service to the community, Professor Taylor has set an outstanding example of the ways that a university professor can contribute to society at large. I'm going to try to illustrate a couple of dimensions of this very quickly.

First, he has been an inspiring teacher. His teaching has stimulated several generations of the world's brightest students. Many of these students have come to McGill attracted by the political philosophy program that he founded, and which is renowned for the rich intellectual debate which it encourages. Professor Taylor's lectures on philosophy of action, political theory, moral philosophy, theories of meaning, language and politics, and on the culture of western modernity have consistently been engaging and compelling and thought-provoking for all of his students. Many of his students have gone on to play significant roles in guiding social policy and academic thought throughout the world.

The second pillar of his remarkable contribution has been his outstanding scholarly inquiry. In discussing

his philosophy of modernity, it has been said, and I quote, that his contribution has been “to propose a vision of a pluralistic society tolerant of values sometimes contradictory between individual rights and collective aspirations.” And, of course, Professor Taylor’s writings themselves have become a vast field of scholarly research.

The third pillar of his engagement has been his engagement in broader society. He has given countless public lectures reaching out to people

“I’d like to thank Charles Taylor for his outstanding contributions to advancing our understanding of the world, for sharing his insights with students, colleagues and society, and most importantly for his profound and inspiring humanity.”

outside academia. He has been an effective communicator to broad publics through his career as a radio, television, and print commentator on current issues. I cite, as just one example, the Massey lecture series carried nationally by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which was both a popular and critical success in our country. Professor Taylor also turned his political thought to active political engagement running as a candidate for public office. Now, happily for the University, the electors in their collective wisdom voted to have him continue his academic career, and we’re all very grateful to them for that. Most recently, Professor Taylor accepted the Premier of Québec’s request that he co-preside a public commission on accommodation of cultural diversity in Québec in order to help Québécois respond to one of the most critical issues facing our society.

Les qualités exceptionnelles du Pr Taylor sont non seulement appréciées par ses pairs, mais elles ont également été reconnues officiellement. En effet,

le Pr Taylor est récipiendaire du prestigieux prix Léon-Gérin, lequel lui a été décerné en reconnaissance de sa contribution à la vie intellectuelle du Québec, et du prix Molson du Conseil des arts du Canada, lequel souligne son apport remarquable au patrimoine culturel canadien. Les titres de grand officier de l’Ordre national du Québec et de compagnon de l’Ordre du Canada – les deux honneurs les plus élevés décernés aux citoyens - lui ont également été conférés.

On a more personal note, I’d like to say that the marriage of Professor Taylor’s parents – Simone Beaubien and Walter Margrave Taylor – was one of the most felicitous events in Canadian history. Charles’ sister, Gretta, who is here today, is the highly regarded and much loved journalist and Chancellor Emerita of McGill University. I grew up with Gretta and Egan’s children, so for many years for me, Charles Taylor was simply their nice uncle Chuck, a role he played with the same warmth and humanity and wisdom that he’s brought to every other facet of his life.

So on behalf of McGill, I would like to say that we are grateful to the John Templeton Foundation for this unique Prize recognizing the importance of spirituality in our lives. I’d like to thank Charles Taylor for his outstanding contributions to advancing our understanding of our world, for sharing his insights with students, colleagues and society, and most importantly for his profound and inspiring humanity. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN M. TEMPLETON, JR., M.D.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Michel Robitaille, Delegate General of the Québec Government Office in New York. Mr. Robitaille was appointed to this top-ranking U.S. position in August 2002. He is responsible for relations with eight states and Washington, D.C. We are most honored by his presence here today. Mr. Robitaille, we welcome your comments.

STATEMENT BY

Mr. Michel Robitaille

Delegate General, Québec Government Office, New York

AT THE TEMPLETON PRIZE PRESS CONFERENCE, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 14, 2007

I would like to say before reading my brief remarks that it is truly an honor for me to be here today as the Québec Delegate General in New York as representative of the Québec government to attend this official announcement of the Prize-giving to our dear fellow citizen, Dr. Charles Taylor.

The Government of Québec is both proud and grateful that the Templeton Prize has been awarded to Dr. Taylor, who without any doubt is one of the most distinguished philosophers of our time, and surely Québec’s best known philosopher worldwide.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Templeton Foundation and its research objective in the area of spirituality and for its leading role as a philanthropic organization.

As a Québécois I think that the complexity of the environment in which Dr. Taylor grew up helped in some way to shape his remarkable ability to reconcile ideas and concepts that at first glance might otherwise seem in complete opposition. Dr. Taylor’s early interest in questions of identity and his reflection thereon may well have been spurred by his travel in Québec set against the backdrop of modernity.

Even though there may be no direct connection between them, Dr. Taylor’s main areas of philosophical inquiry have sometimes intersected

with key events in the history of Québec, most notably, the struggle between faith and reason.

Although Dr. Taylor has never called the Enlightenment into question, he has seen fit to say when enlightenment thinkers strayed off course. Human reason, and our confidence in the mind’s capacity to comprehend and change the world, ventures into the realm of arrogance when it pretends to explain everything.

Recognizing and respecting the spiritual dimension of human existence, this does help us to achieve a healthy sense of humility, and this is a rare tribute for anyone who seeks a deeper understanding of the world and its inhabitants in all their complexity.

Charles Taylor is all the more appealing because he is among a small number of philosophers who have maintained a steadfast commitment to civil society and its attendant debates without sacrificing the depth of their thinking. For instance, we truly appreciate his tireless support to explain Québec to English Canada and vice versa.

It is worth mentioning that in the 1960s his emphasis on ethical commitment led Dr. Taylor to stand as a federal parliamentary candidate and to enter into a debate with one of Canada’s leading political figures, your friend Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

More recently, at the Québec premier's request, Mr. Taylor agreed to co-chair a committee exploring the question of reasonable accommodation. The objective is to establish guidelines clarifying the extent to which civil society should be expected to adapt to its citizens' religious requirements. This is a local debate with, no doubt, universal resonance.

In our times, Charles Taylor, a man who is adept at reconciling collective and individual rights, identity and modernity, faith and reason, is among a select group of intellectuals in which the world is of great need. Dr. Taylor, you have made a remarkable contribution to Québec society. All Québécois share the joy of the honor that has been conferred upon you today. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN M. TEMPLETON, JR., M.D.

Thank you Mr. Robitaille. And now it is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Daniel Sullivan, Consul General of Canada in New York. After a 38-year banking career, all of it with Scotia Bank, Daniel Sullivan was appointed last year as Consul General of Canada in New York by the Canadian government. Please join me in welcoming Canada's official representative to New York, Consul General Daniel Sullivan.

STATEMENT BY

Mr. Daniel Sullivan

Consul General of Canada in New York

AT THE TEMPLETON PRIZE PRESS CONFERENCE, MARCH 14, 2007

I'm delighted to have this opportunity to congratulate Professor Charles Taylor on winning the 2007 Templeton Prize. Professor Taylor, you are the first Canadian to win this very important award in its 35-year history. Your career has been an extraordinary one, spanning over 50 years, and your work touches on so many areas of study, from philosophy, the law, from political science to history.

Not only are your interests broad, but your work crosses so many boundaries, between academic disciplines, between concepts of nationhood, cultural identities, and religious beliefs.

You encourage us to look beyond the obvious, beyond the accepted frames of reference, and you

inspire us to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves, of what we know, and our relationships with others.

You are beloved by your students, crowded into the lecture halls on McGill's campus, and by people around the world who treasure your writings.

Professor Taylor, as Canadians, we're proud to call you one of our own, to celebrate this great honor bestowed on you today. As Canada's official representative here in New York and on behalf of the Prime Minister of Canada, I congratulate Professor Taylor on winning the 2007 Templeton Prize. Professor Taylor, you make us very proud as Canadians. Thank you.

STATEMENT BY JOHN M. TEMPLETON, JR., M.D. continued

Now I would like to briefly share with you some of the extraordinary background and lifetime work of Professor Charles Taylor.

Many of the details of his accomplishments are highlighted in the Press Package which you have received. Let me take a few moments, however, to highlight some of his remarkable life's work, which clearly caught the attention of the judges in their selection of him as this year's winner.

and philosophy. Through his prolific writings, he became widely sought as a visiting professor, lecturer and fellow at 18 different institutions.

In addition to receiving 13 awards, including the Distinguished Companion of the Order of Canada, he became a member and fellow of eight eminent societies from five different nations including selection as a Fellow of the British Academy.

Professor Taylor has helped to increase understanding of what religious belief is, and how it can be shaped toward a created future in which new knowledge will be possible.

Charles Taylor is Professor of Law and Philosophy at Northwestern University and Emeritus Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at McGill University in Montreal, Québec. He was raised in a bilingual English-French family in Québec, which from an early age, gave him a deep sense of the relationship of language and culture. In his extraordinary career, he took first class honors at McGill University in history in 1952, which was followed by his selection as a Rhodes Scholar with a first class degree in philosophy, politics and economics. His perspectives, however, even at that stage, were very much affected by a sense he developed at about 15 years of age of what he described as "the power of God."

Subsequently, he achieved distinction through his doctor of philosophy thesis at Oxford which was subsequently published as his first major work entitled, *The Explanation of Behavior*.

The briefest reviews of his extraordinary curriculum vitae demonstrate rapid academic progress back at McGill University leading to his dual status of full professor in the departments of both political science

As already noted, his productivity as a writer and scholar have been prodigious. He has written and published 23 books – soon to be 24 books – many of which have been translated into 22 different languages. This is a reflection of the truly global impact of his life's work. Added to this extraordinary productivity are over 170 peer review articles on subjects including nationalism, cause and action, materialism, meaning and purpose, justice and virtue, human agency, and faith and reason.

But what is of greatest significance regarding Professor Taylor extends beyond the depth and breadth of his work. His significance is best seen in the content of his writings and lectures. Reviewers have called him one of the most exemplary polymaths of our age. Many of the prior Templeton Prize Laureates have been distinguished winners of the Gifford Lectureship, as was Professor Taylor. In 1998 and 1999, Professor Taylor delivered his lectures entitled, "Living in a Secular Age" at the University of Edinburgh. Past Gifford lecturers often produced a single volume based on their lectureship. In Professor Taylor's case, however, the framework for his Gifford

lectures resulted in three different volumes including *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited*, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, and this year, his most significant publication entitled, *A Secular Age*, to be published by Harvard University Press.

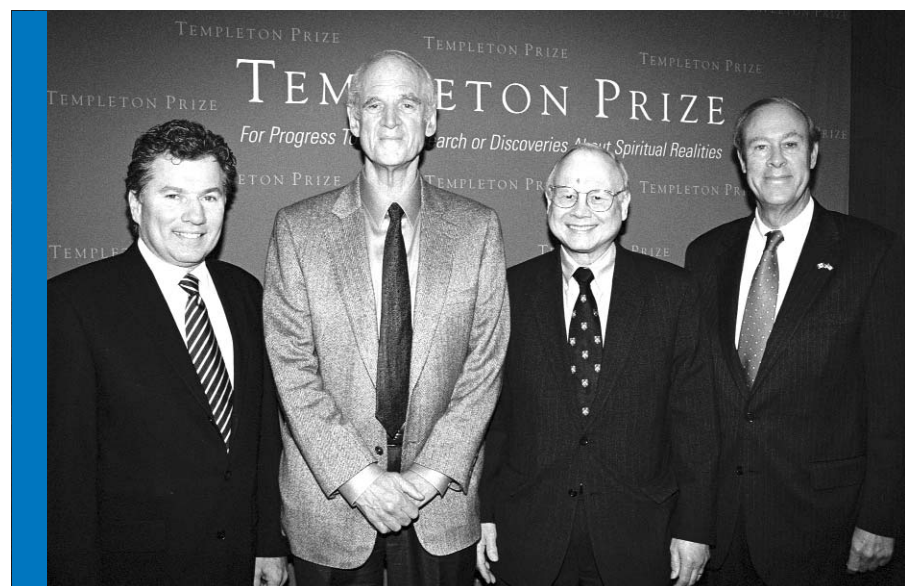
Speaking on behalf of my Father, Sir John Templeton and the Templeton Prize Program, we are deeply grateful that the Reverend Dr. David Martin, himself a leading scholar of religion in a secular culture, nominated Professor Taylor for consideration by the Templeton Prize judges.

Reverend Dr. Martin, in making his nomination, identified Professor Taylor as the leading contributor in the conversation between religion and the social sciences. Professor Taylor has been described as “one of the greatest social thinkers in the English-speaking world in our era,” especially in regard to his eloquent and acute analysis of the spiritual crisis of modernity. The Professor’s main contribution has been to new knowledge in religion – precisely in the way in which religious belief and practice is an essential part of wider cultural history. In his citation for nomination of Professor Taylor, Reverend Dr. Martin said that Professor Taylor’s “latest *summa*, *A Secular Age*, provides a magisterial overview of the relations between religion, secular humanism and science as no one else has attempted, or perhaps could attempt.” The citation went on to say, “In particular, it draws out the special character of the last 500 years and the fragility now attendant on all positions whether secularist or religious.”

In conclusion, the judges for the Templeton Prize recognized the importance of Professor Taylor’s life’s work in his raising the important distinction between the human sciences and the natural sciences and his stress on the necessity of taking

human consciousness and personhood seriously in its fullest social context. Professor Taylor has helped to increase understanding of what religious belief is, and how it can be shaped toward a created future in which new knowledge will be possible. In warning against the danger of social scientists becoming impoverished if their research continues to be guided by an orientation to avoid value-relatedness, Professor Taylor’s style of thinking and argumentation is characterized more by an impulse toward integration rather than polarization. His continuing work pushes forward the common boundaries of philosophy and the social sciences with respect to the history, future dynamics and manifestations of the spirit of God and man.

Please join me then in welcoming Professor Charles Taylor, the 2007 Templeton Prize Laureate, as he steps to the podium to share his remarks with us.



Michel Robitaille, Charles Taylor, John M. Templeton, Jr., and Daniel Sullivan at the Templeton Prize Press Conference.

Prof. Charles Taylor

AT THE TEMPLETON PRIZE PRESS CONFERENCE, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 14, 2007

Thank you very much, Dr. Templeton, and distinguished members of this panel here for your remarks. I have to say I feel once more the sense of being overwhelmed that I experienced when I first heard of receiving this Prize which I didn’t even know I could be a possible candidate for.

But I can see and I understand now the thinking behind the judges and the people in the Foundation and I’m very deeply honored by this. I feel such a sense of being overwhelmed and very humbled about this that I sometimes have trouble seeing myself in these glowing descriptions. But I certainly think that what has been described here is something that I’ve tried to do. Let me try to describe very quickly how I’ve been trying.

We talk here about spiritual discovery and that being put as an analogy to scientific discovery in chemistry, physics, and so on. I think it may be better to say, in part, spiritual rediscovery because there is a tremendous capacity in human life to forget things that we somehow deep down knew. And of course a lot of great philosophers from Plato on have talked about this extensively and, in a sense, the 20th century philosopher, Heidegger, speaks of forgetfulness of being. I think there is a kind of forgetfulness we fall into and in particular there are a set of forgettings that are very central to the modern world.

In a sense the modern world, and what we call the secular world, has led, among other things, to people wanting to forget certain answers to the questions of life. There has been a rebellion in certain areas against religion in my own home society in Québec, and a tremendous rebellion in the 1960s, and a great rejection by many people of the Catholic faith and the church. That hasn’t happened everywhere, but things like that have happened elsewhere.

So certain answers have been totally rejected. But what is really dangerous is to forget the questions. In a certain sense, what I’ve been trying to say is something like this. Human beings, whether they admit it or not, live in a space of questions, very deep questions. What is the meaning of life, what is a higher mode of life, a lower mode of life, what is really worthwhile, what is the basis of the dignity that I’m trying to define for myself, the hunger to be really on the side of the good and the right, in popular terms to be part of the solution and not part of the problem, and I can mention many others. These are deep hungers or searches or questions that people are asking all the time.

And the basic thesis that I have been offering on this could sound very crazy and wrong to some people, but I really think it’s the truth. Everybody exists in this space of questions whether they recognize it or not. They may not think they’ve been posing or solving the question of the meaning of life, but, being a human being, that has to get to you at some level and you have to be living an answer to that, whether you recognize that or not.

And I think one of the really important rules of human science is to bring this out and to bring out very often the inarticulate answers that people are living. That’s why we need another understanding of reason. It’s not simply moving deductively through an argument, it’s also being able to give voice and articulate some of these very deep-lived positions of people and bring them out to the surface. Why do this? I could say,

'Socrates, come here and tell us again the unexamined life isn't worth living.' I think that's part of it, but also I think it's terribly damaging if we forget these questions because a lot of the things that happen in our world have happened because people have answered them in a certain way.

I've talked about this in the last few days. A lot of the violence we see in our world today comes when young people are recruited to certain causes which make them do really horrifying killings. And what recruits them is some offer, some supposed offer, of a real sense of meaning to their lives. They may be living in a stage of unemployment or they see no future or they have no sense of dignity, and they get these answers. They may not think of themselves as having answered a question but they have answered a question and of course in this case answered it in a terribly destructive and self-destructive way.

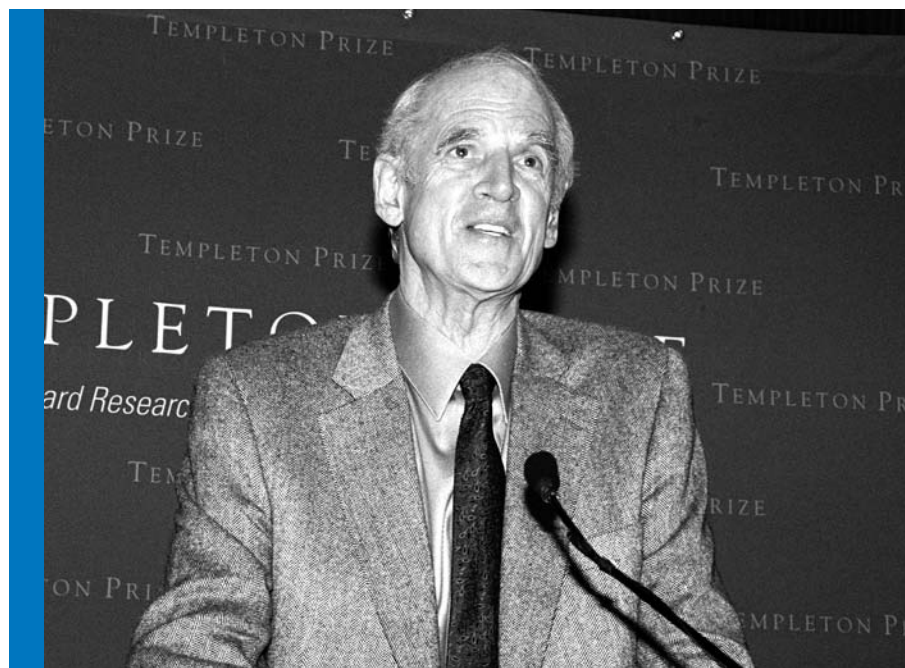
But unless we see that they're working in that space of questions, like all of us, we won't know why they're doing it, we won't know what to do to maybe convince them to find another answer to this. We just will be helpless. I don't really call Socrates to my support here, in pleading that these are important questions, but we have to bring them up, we need actually to live in our world in a way that we can ultimately establish some way of peace and comity and understanding with each other.

Although this is a kind of leap, if you like, of scientific faith to begin with, that we have to understand humans on this level, I really am very convinced of it. It's my trying to bring this up and put it forward that I think is the great affinity that I have with the goals of the Templeton Foundation.

I must say just one more thing. I have tremendously benefited from work with others in various networks

which have been discussing this, because this is the kind of issue you can't solve within one single discipline. You have to bring in people from a whole set of disciplines. I feel at this moment how tremendously I owe a lot of what I am able to say to a whole set of networks.

And of course, et, Michel Rutin l'a mentionné, c'est ma vie au Québec, dans une famille un peu double, un peu entre deux solitudes. C'est ma vie au Québec dans toutes les grandes questions qui se sont posées à nous. C'est ça qui a alimenté, dès le très bas âge which has given me a sense from a very young age of a sense of importance of these questions. So I feel a tremendous debt to McGill and to all the groups and the movements and the networks that have made it possible for me to stand here today and give my thanks for this tremendous honor that you've done me. Thank you very much.



Charles Taylor at the Templeton Prize Press Conference.

Prof. Charles Taylor

FOR THE TEMPLETON PRIZE PRESS CONFERENCE, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 14, 2007

I want to say first how deeply honoured I am to be chosen for the Templeton Prize. I believe that the goal Sir John Templeton has chosen is of the greatest contemporary importance and relevance: we have somehow to break down the barriers between our contemporary culture of science and disciplined academic study (what the Germans gather in the term "Wissenschaft") on one hand, and the domain of spirit, on the other.

This has been one of the driving goals of my own intellectual work, and to have it recognized as such fills me with an unstable mixture of joy and humility.

Sir John has seen, I believe, that the barriers between science and spirituality are not only ungrounded, but are also crippling. They impede crucial further insight. This case has been eloquently argued by the physicists, biologists and cosmologists who have been awarded the prize in recent years. But I feel that now a further step is being taken. The divorce of natural science and religion has been damaging to both; but it is equally true that the culture of the humanities and social sciences has often been surprisingly blind and deaf to the spiritual, and that in my case, the attempt to break down these barriers is being recognized and honoured.

The deafness of many philosophers, social scientists and historians to the spiritual dimension can be remarkable. And this is the more damaging in that it affects the culture of the media and of educated public opinion in general. I take a striking case, a statement, not admittedly by a social scientist, but by a Nobel Laureate cosmologist, Steven Weinberg. I take it, because I find that it is often repeated in the media and in informal argument. Weinberg said (I quote from memory): "there are good people who do good things, and bad people who do bad things, but for good people to do bad things, it takes religion."

On one level, it is astonishing that anyone who lived through a good part of the twentieth century could say something like this. What are we to make of those noble, well-intentioned Bolsheviks, Marxist materialist atheists to a man (and occasional woman), who ended up building one of the most oppressive and murderous brace of regimes in human history? When people quote this phrase to me, or some equivalent, and I enter this objection, they often reply, "but Communism was a religion," a reply which shifts the goal-posts and upsets the argument.

But it's worth pondering for a minute what lies behind this move. The "Weinberg principle," if I might use this term, is being made tautologically true, because any set of beliefs which can induce decent people, who would never kill for personal gain, to murder for the cause, is being defined as "religion." "Religion" is being defined as the murderously irrational.

Pretty sloppy thinking. But it is also crippling. What the speaker is really expressing is something like this: the terrible violence of the twentieth century has nothing to do with right-thinking, rational, enlightened people like me. The argument is then joined on the other side by certain believers who point out that Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, etc., were all enemies of religion, and feel that good Christians like me have no part in such horrors. This conveniently forgets the Crusades, the Inquisition, and much else.

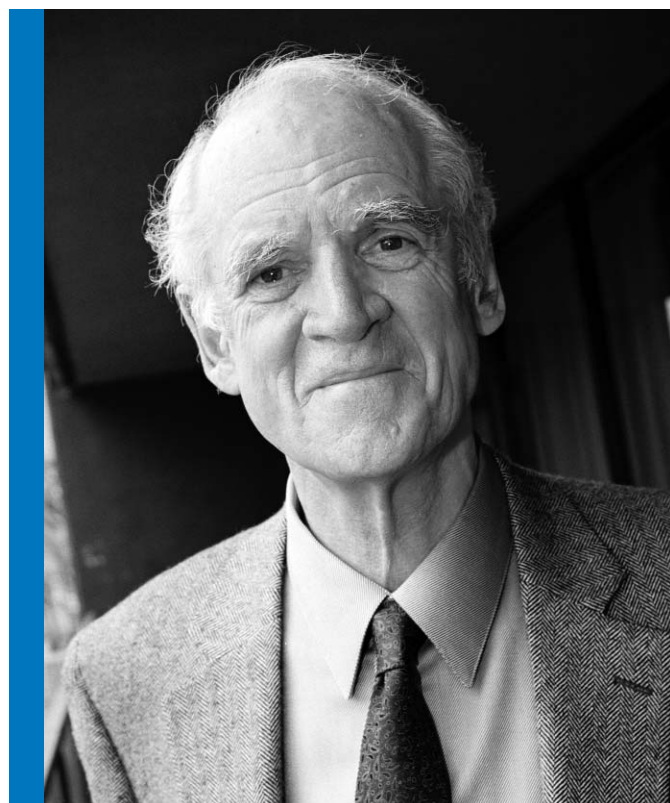
Both sides need to be wrenched out of their complacent dream, and see that no-one, just in virtue of having the right beliefs, is immune from being recruited to group violence: from the temptation to target another group which is made responsible for all our ills, from the illusion of our own purity which comes from our readiness to combat this evil force with all our might. We urgently need to understand what makes whole groups of people ready to be swept up into this kind of project.

But in fact, we have only a very imperfect grasp on this. Some of our most insightful scholars, like René Girard, or Sudhir Kakar, have studied it. Great writers, like Dostoevsky, have cast great light on it, but it remains still mysterious. What is equally imperfectly understood is the way in which charismatic spiritual leadership, of a Gandhi, a Mandela, a Tutu, can bring people back from the brink.

But without this kind of spiritual initiative, the best-intentioned efforts to put human history on a new, and more humane footing, have often turned this history into a slaughter bench, in Hegel's memorable phrase. It is a sobering thought that Robespierre, in the first discussions on the new revolutionary constitution for France, voted against the death penalty. Yet the path to this peaceable republic, which would spare the lives of even its worst criminals, somehow led through the nightmare of the Terror.

We urgently need new insight into the human propensity for violence, and following the authors I mentioned above, this cannot be a reductive sociobiological one, but must take full account of the human striving for meaning and spiritual direction, of which the appeals to violence are a perversion. But we don't even begin to see where we have to look as long as we accept the complacent myth that people like us (enlightened secularists, or believers) are not part of the problem. We will pay a high price if we allow this kind of muddled thinking to prevail.

I've taken this example, of group violence and its supposed explanations, because it is so obviously raises urgent questions in our world. But the barriers between our social sciences and the spiritual dimension of life are crippling in a whole host of other ways as well. I have recently been working on the issue of what we mean in describing our present civilization in the West as "secular." For a long time, in mainstream sociology this development was taken as unproblematic and inevitable. Certain of the features of modernity: economic development, urbanization, rising mobility, higher educational levels, were seen as inevitably bringing about a decline in religious belief and practice. This was the famous "secularization thesis." For a long time, this view dominated thinking in social science and history. More recent events have shaken this conviction, even among mainstream scholars.



Professor Charles Taylor in New York City.

But well before this revision occurred, a minority of scholars were already turning the theory inside out. In particular, David Martin in his epochal, *General Theory of Secularization*. The main thrust of this work, and of others who have followed, is that secularization theory was not just factually wrong. It also misconceived the whole process.

It was indeed, true that the various facets of modernization destabilized older, traditional forms of religious life; but new forms were always being re-invented, and some of these took on tremendous importance. David Martin has traced the development of new congregational forms through Methodism, and

Some of these forms, like those in which religion or confessionality becomes the basis of a quasi-nationalist political mobilization, have obviously assumed immense, even threatening proportions in our day. We urgently need to understand their dynamic, their benefits and dangers, an area that the old framework of secularization theory hid from sight. In this domain too, John Templeton's insight turns out to be valid, a blindness to the spiritual dimension of human life makes us incapable of exploring issues which are vital to our lives. Or to turn it around and state the positive: bringing the spiritual back in opens domains in which important and even exciting discoveries become possible.

I sense in this Prize awarded to me a recognition not only of my work but of this collective effort. This awakens powerful, if somewhat confused emotions: joy, pride, and a sense of inadequacy mingle together.

various waves of revival in the United States, through the birth of Pentacostal forms about a century ago, which are now spreading with great speed in all parts of the globe. Equally far-reaching changes have occurred in Catholic Churches in many parts of the world.

Breaking out of the old intellectual mould opens up a whole new field of great importance: What are the new forms of religion which are developing in the West? And what relation do they have to those which are growing elsewhere, in Asia, Africa, Latin America? This is part of what I am trying to study in my work, drawing on the pioneering analyses of David Martin, on the writings of Robert Bellah, and on the recent work of younger sociologists, like José Casanova and Hans Joas.

I am happy to be engaged in this work, among a number of others: the sociologists I mentioned above, and some philosophers, like Alasdair MacIntyre. I sense in this Prize awarded to me a recognition not only of my work but of this collective effort. This awakens powerful, if somewhat confused emotions: joy, pride, and a sense of inadequacy mingle together. But above all I feel the great satisfaction of knowing that this whole area of work will acquire a higher saliency through the award of this Prize; and I feel the most heartfelt gratitude to Sir John and to the Templeton Foundation.

CLOSING STATEMENT BY

John M. Templeton, Jr., M.D.

AT THE TEMPLETON PRIZE PRESS CONFERENCE, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 14, 2007

Again, I would like to warmly thank each and every one of you for attending this news conference this morning and for sharing your thoughts and questions.

I also want to close with a special request from my Father. First, he would like to suggest that anyone here, or watching our webcast, or anyone who learns about the Prize and this year's Prize Laureate, Charles Taylor, to please contact us with ideas or suggestions you might have for improving the Prize program and, in particular, its outreach and impact.

Secondly, my Father would like to urge you or anyone you know to submit new nominations of individuals who have made singular accomplishments in the broad area of research and discoveries about spiritual realities. You can learn more about the Templeton Prize program and the criteria for applications by going to our Website, www.templetonprize.org.

On that note, please join me in one more round of applause and a warm expression of gratitude to our 2007 Templeton Prize Laureate, Professor Charles Taylor.

We look forward to seeing you here in New York City for our next Templeton Prize News Conference in 2008. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE

2007 Templeton Prize

AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE, LONDON, MAY 2, 2007



The Duke of Edinburgh with Charles Taylor and his family and friends at the Buckingham Palace ceremony.



The Duke of Edinburgh, Charles Taylor, and his wife Aube Billard Taylor, at Buckingham Palace.

A Conversation with 2007 Templeton Prize Laureate Charles Taylor

AT THE BRITISH ACADEMY, LONDON, MAY 2, 2007

WELCOME BY

Baroness O'Neill

President, The British Academy

I would like to welcome everyone very warmly to this very celebratory occasion. The Academy is delighted to be the place for a gathering of many of Charles Taylor's friends and admirers from many parts of the world, and across many years, on the occasion in which he has been awarded the most amazing prize, thanks to the foresight and vision of the Templeton Foundation. I'm going to delegate to Charles Harper, on behalf of the Foundation to tell you a bit about the Foundation and the Prize.

The order in which we'll then go forward will be that five commentators will speak about Charles Taylor's latest book, and the only difference to the way it is printed in the card is that Professor Kolakowski will come number three rather than number one in the order. Each speaker will speak for up to ten minutes. They're not required to hit their ten minutes! At the end I will ask Charles to speak about the thoughts that the occasion has raised for him.

So once again, a very warm welcome and I'm now going to hand over to Charles Harper to talk a little bit about the Foundation and the Prize.



Panel and audience at the British Academy.

INTRODUCTION BY

Charles L. Harper, Jr., D.Phil.

Senior Vice President, John Templeton Foundation

Thank you Baroness O'Neill, my name is Charles Harper, not Charles Taylor. I know we all want to get to the meat of this occasion, so my remarks will be extremely brief.

This morning Charles Taylor was awarded the Templeton Prize in a private ceremony by Prince Philip in Buckingham Palace. Speaking for the John Templeton Foundation, we're deeply grateful to the British Academy for its gracious partnership in making this event possible, to allow many Fellows of the Academy and special guests to convene to celebrate Charles Taylor being honored today, and to do so by engaging with his present work. In particular,

the forthcoming book, *A Secular Age*, to be published by Harvard University Press in September. The editor of Harvard University Press, Lindsay Waters, has come over to participate in this event.

The Templeton Prize recognizes vitally important and significant contributions to scholarship at the interface between research, here philosophical and social scientific in the spiritual quest of humanity, especially through scholarly reflections, analysis and philosophical, theological and scientific inquiry. This event, in this most distinguished institution and company here gathered together exemplifies this vision and doubtless will be most stimulating. Again, we're deeply grateful for this partnership with the British Academy to allow many friends, and interested scholars to engage in this publication that will soon be, when it's published, a major discussion in our wider culture, so I thank you again.



Charles L. Harper, Jr., D.Phil.

Professor David Martin

Emeritus Professor of Sociology, London School of Economics

A Secular Age is a modern formation of a complete intellectual landscape. Within the coordinates of the religious and the secular and the immanent and the transcendent, Charles Taylor has provided us with a series of related projections, enabling us to locate ourselves in Western thinking, in particular over the last 500 years.

It is spiritually informed and informing because it touches on all the horizons of hope and anxiety in the world. It also bridges the disjunction between accounts, in terms of genealogies of ideas, those based on types of secular formation and those focused on all the varied empirical patterns of religious belonging.

Charles Taylor shows how an early modern and uniquely western world view, based on the autonomy of the immanent, not only inheres in the process of secularisation but, in its closed or dogmatic version, mandates it universally. Yet, it's clear that one size does not fit all, and he suggests, moreover, that we can opt for an open as well as a closed version, even though the autonomy of the immanent world clearly defines what secularisation is all about. My question will be how far the particular version of immanence associated with empirical science and its philosophical expression in positivism is the driving force behind our contemporary secular practice.

As a sociologist influenced by the hermeneutic tradition, I agree with Charles Taylor about the relatively meagre yield of positivist empiricism in the human sciences. Yet most sociologists, including those in the positivist tradition, do not accord crucial weight to the direct impact of science or of empirical scientific method in their theories of secularisation. They may rather stress social-structural changes and the advance of technical reason, and maybe the relation of religion to political power. This relation to power informs my own work, and is the main organising principle of what I'm now going to say.

I have to go right back to Weber and Jaspers on the form of transcendence adopted by the world religions, in particular Christianity and Buddhism. They transcend the world as it is, and project a universal vision of a peaceable Kingdom, either to come here on Earth in due time, or timelessly in an inner nirvana. This vision requires disinterested self-offering, not self-assertion or self-expression. In its Christian form, especially in the Latin West, it generates the idea of a non-violent power, not of this world but of the spirit, and thus, of a resistant secular space ruled by the powers that be. Response of these powers, including crucially the regimen of violence, is to co-opt the power of the spirit, only to find themselves haunted by a spiritual doppelganger, the delayed hope of a



Professor David Martin

peaceful advent, or the anxiety of an apocalyptic second coming. Putting it in that way underlines the interest Charles and I share about the partly hidden sources of peace and violence.

I will call the regimen of violence "the secular practice." Its brutal logic remained under-theorised until Machiavelli, and we can treat its exposure by him as the first great secularisation in the social world. It runs in conjunction with another secularisation, the on-set of scientific naturalism or mechanism in the

inner-self at the expense of collective redemption, and second, it converts self-offering into self-expression. This gives rise to a tension between an understanding of the self in terms of sincerity, spontaneity, authenticity and the inherent requirements of social order, cosmic, or otherwise, in terms of authority, internalised discipline, ritual and courtesy. Social institutions, including the church, become identified with oppressive structures and unacceptable demands, including long-term commitments. The spirit wanders at will under the impulse of

"My question will be how far the particular version of immanence associated with empirical science and its philosophical expression in positivism is the driving force behind our contemporary secular practice."

natural world, in particular the mechanical clock time discussed by Charles Taylor. In social time, however, there is only a partial secularisation of religious ages into philosophical stages. The carriers are the enlightened absolutism of the state, mutating into enlightened civic or romantic ethnic nationalism, and the party. These carriers co-opt the church, English style, displace it, French style, or disestablish it, as in America. Whichever option is adopted, nation and party alike represent the kind of collective social solidarity that Charles Taylor labels neo-Durkheimian. In nation as in party there is an uneasy co-existence between a mechanistic empirical science, particularly as manifested in clock time, and a semi-secularised human hope of eternal peace or anxiety of apocalypse, achievable if necessary by a semi-secular version of divine judgment and exemplary violence.

Running in parallel with this and drawing reinforcement from the Reformation there is a turn to the inner self, given classic formulation by Charles Taylor which semi-secularises the church for redemption in two ways. First, it locates the pursuit of fullness, redemption and paradise in the depths of the

unappeasable desire. This epiphany of the self is incapable of recognising the structural realities of politics exposed by Machiavelli and recognised by Christianity under the code name of "sin." In all this, in particular my use of semi-secular, I echo Charles Taylor's insight into the way themes from the religious repertoire work away just below the surface, without their Christian names or their Jewish names being recognised.

What is the net result? In much of Eastern Europe and Russia neo-Durkheimian formations have returned in the form of ethno-religious nationalism. In the USA and France, a neo-Durkheimian civic nationalism, religious and laic respectively, is in some tension with the turn to the self. That turn is now widespread throughout Western Europe as a whole and appears as a homeless spirituality. Self-centred anti-nomianism took off in the elite in the two decades before the First World War, expanded in the inter-war period and reached the popular level through the youth culture of the sixties and thereafter. However, an anti-nomianism of the self is just one element in a melange of which immanent empiricism is simply

another. At least three modes interpenetrate: the power of natural and social science in remaking the world, the power of the people expressed in nation or party, and the power of the self, especially as expressed in education, art and creativity. The Adventist and apocalyptic aspects of these developments hardly conform to the strict scientific attitude. In the world of political parties, for example, there is the recurrent hope of a charismatic political messiah who becomes corrupted by the sombre reality of political practice, whereupon the people look for another, to restore the pristine political kingdom. That has been as true of France and Britain as of the various orange and velvet revolutions in Eastern Europe. Once again we see the religious repertoire at work under the surface.

So what is my argument? We talk of the liberal elite dominating the cultural discourse of the centralised polities of Western Europe. These elites promote an image of themselves as dedicated to the scientific ideal, whereas in practice they're dedicated to an unstable combination of the Adventism of the collective and of the self. If we look at the history of philosophy over the last century it moves from idealism to positivism with an existentialist interlude in atheistic and religious forms and then constrictivism, likewise in atheistic and religious forms. Continental philosophy, phenomenological, hermeneutic, Hegelian is similarly religious and non-religious, but, as Charles Taylor indicates, it *can* upend the whole empirical project.

I suppose the paradigmatic expression of that project might be found in Ernest Gellner's combination of rationalist empiricism and moral utilitarianism which in everyday life shows itself as a semi-reflective secular practice. The scientific mode of operation according to the austere protocols of the philosophy of science is rather rare, and even some of those who claim to represent the scientific approach in the public forum ignore its procedures to engage in prophetic and moralistic denunciation of religion as the main source of all our woes, above all, of violence. These prophets follow an old enlightenment tradition, locating violence, in particular social formations, which therefore need to be dispatched from human history.

Charles Taylor has commented that the tactic of turning a blind eye to the terrible tally of secularist violence, or, illegitimately extending the definition of religion to cover every kind of violent fanaticism constitutes a false claim to purity and innocence. If that style dominates the highest level of public debate, what is the precise regulatory power, the strict scientific writ, in our contemporary Western society, let alone elsewhere?

Charles Taylor locates the power of the materialist scientific picture in terms of certain values implicit in the immanent frame, notably disengaged reason and human agency which are spun to create a closed-world system. I try to offer a supporting argument focused on a horizon of hope and anxiety in relation to the self and politics *likewise* derived at one remove from Latin Christendom, the legitimation for which cannot be contained *in*, or derived *from*, the immanent frame. Thank you.

Lord Parekh

Professor, Centre for the Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics

Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* is an extremely rich and profound book and it addresses an important problem, broadly formulated in the following terms: Until around 1500 it was virtually impossible not to believe in God.

Today we live in a society in which such a belief is just one option amongst several and not easy to embrace. Or, to put it slightly differently, society was once grounded in the sacred. Human selves were seen as porous and open to the influence of spiritual forces. Secular time was embedded in higher times and the drama of human life unfolded within a structured and meaningful cosmos. None of this is the case with modern society.

Charles Taylor's basic problem is how did this come about, and what have we lost, or gained as a result of it? Taylor concentrates on the Euro-Atlantic world and the lack in Christianity. The story that he tells, of what happened between 1500 and now, is extremely subtle and complex, and free from the simplistic

assertions and generalisations of the advocates of the usual secularisation thesis. Unlike the advocates of secularisation thesis, Taylor refuses to take a homogeneous and uniform view of religion. He appreciates that religion appears in new and non-traditional forms and different historical epochs and is not just a matter of what you believe and what you practice. Taylor is not content to tell the story from 1500 onwards. He also goes on to comment, I think in an extremely insightful manner, on the moral predicament of our times, as well as on what he takes to be some of the important blind spots of Christianity, especially Catholic Christianity. He argues, I think rightly, that Christianity has suffered from its inadequate appreciation of the human body, and its disassociation of the erotic impulse from the love of God.

He also argues that its exclusive claim to truth has prevented it from opening itself up to a dialogue with other religions and civilisations. Similarly he goes on to show how much of our moral life today is reduced to rules, and suffers from what he called code-fetishism or nomolatri, which reminded me of Michael Oakeshott's and Friedrich Hayek's expression, "Nomocracy." So a moral life is a form of nomolatri, the worship of norms and rules, and misses out not only on character and virtues as they have been emphasised by others, like Geller himself and MacIntyre, but also on the deeper dimensions of love of our fellow human beings and seeing morality, not merely as a way of relating to other people but also as a form of expressing oneself and living out a certain kind of life.



Lord Parekh

I think that all this is absolutely fascinating, and since I'm not brought in here simply to say how wonderful the book is, what I'm going to do is raise a few questions. I think a book of this kind raises several questions. Is Taylor's way of formulating his basic problem correct and helpful? This is what happened in 1500, or before 1500, and this is what has happened since. Is this a correct way, or very helpful way of formulating the problem? Is his conception of transcendence, because this is one important concept, and the distinction between transcendence and immanence ultimately satisfactory (because that underpins the book)? Thirdly, is his historical account accurate and does it take account of major forces, not only intellectual currents and modes of self-understanding, but economic, political, colonial and other encounters that the West had? Have they played an important part in shaping the world in which we live?

There are all kinds of questions, and what I want to do is concentrate on just one cluster of questions. Charles Taylor contrasts the secular and religious views of the world. The way that he draws the distinction makes sense within the Christian context. I'm not entirely sure it makes the same amount of sense in relation to Buddhism, about which he knows far more than I do, or Hinduism, or other traditional religions of the East. These religions, such as major currents in Hinduism like Advaita, or Buddhism or Jainism, they stress spirituality but deny the existence of God. Remember, the universe is supposed to be eternal and therefore God doesn't come in in any way as creating or regulating the universe. They concentrate on the individual self and the aim is to show how the self is constituted, bounded, builds walls around itself, and becomes the source of suffering and violence. Their concern is to show, not through prayer or rituals of any kind, but by intellectual understanding, how the self can be loosened up, opened up itself to the presence of others, including nature, and become one, which is what it called the state of nirvana.

Now, it is not easy to say whether these are secular views of the world, or religious. In fact, I'm reminded here of a wonderful dialogue between Hindu pundits and Christian missionaries in the eighteenth, early nineteenth century. When the Christian missionary asked the Hindu pundits, "Do you believe in one God or many?" their immediate answer was that the question is absurd and blasphemous. Absurd because it's like if I was to ask you, "Is air one or many?" you would say the question is absurd. So the question of whether you believe in one God or many presupposes that God is a person or at least some form of being. But if God is understood as energy, how? Then the question makes no sense at all and is blasphemous because quantitative predicates cannot be attributed to God anymore than qualitative or empirical.

Now in that kind of real thinking, God, if that's the word that we want to use, because the word itself is rather problematic, is some form of transcendental principle if one wants to use that kind of word. In the Hindu example I have just given, it becomes very difficult to make sense of this distinction between immanence and transcendence. Even when the discussion is limited to Christianity one could take several views. One could argue in the manner of Isaiah Berlin, for example, that secular and religious world views are incommensurable and that one commits oneself to one or the other. A decision cannot be based on rational deliberations, it's a matter of ultimate commitment. Or secondly, one could argue, as I would like to do and have argued, that secular and religious views are different, each contains insights and sensibilities lacking in the other and therefore they can benefit from each other, without ever becoming one. Or, there is a third possibility, for which Charles Taylor opts, from time to time, in addition to taking the second view, and I see echoes of this in Charles. He also seems to think that the secular view is incoherent and points to the religious. In other words there is a distinctly Hegelian attempt to show that the secular view is *aufgehoben*

in the religious view. A very standard argument, one finds that in Hegel, one finds that in Bradley, where the argument is that morality is ultimately transcended in spirituality which is transcended in religion. I'm fascinated by this attempt to show that the secular view is incoherent and ultimately points to something beyond.

My question to Charles Taylor is whether he succeeds in pulling this off? What are the pointers in the secular view that would seem to suggest that we ought to be thinking in terms of a more comprehensive religious

and lots of other things. Now why is the love of goodness not enough? That's the kind of argument that Plato makes. Why should we be locating goodness in some notion of transcendence or god? And I would certainly like to be educated on this.

There is another subject to which Charles Taylor points, in showing that perhaps there is one area again where a secular view of the world points to something transcendental, what he called "the experience of fullness." That we all have, in our lives, experiences which are rich, and fulfilling and

...I would like Charles Taylor to explain to me, a little more fully than he does in the book, the concept of spirituality. ...what aspects of ordinary experiences or certain forms of unusual experiences are best described as spiritual?

view within which the secular view is located as one moment within a larger framework? He gives a couple of examples, I don't have the time to go through all of them in detail, but I will just mention one and allude to the other.

I think very rightly Charles thinks that secular morality lacks adequate moral motivation, especially when it is universalist in its sweep. "I should be concerned about the well-being of all human beings. What would motivate me to do that?" The usual argument: human dignity, we're all equal. That gets in to all kinds of difficulties as Charles shows in this book and as he has shown in *Sources of the Self*, so he is right to point out that the question of moral motivation remains. The question therefore is, does religion, or the notion of transcendence in any way solve the problem by providing the kind of motivation that he is looking for? One could argue, as I would like to argue, that ultimately morality should be located in the love of goodness, and what drives us is the fact that we want to be good human beings, and good human beings articulated in terms of justice, benevolence

profoundly moving, and where we have the experience of being taken over by something beyond ourselves. It's absolutely right, there *are* experiences of fullness, but again, my question would be, are these experiences less articulated and explained in the language of transcendence and God?

At a slightly different level I would like Charles Taylor to explain to me, a little more fully than he does in the book, the concept of spirituality. There are quite a few people who would say, "Look, we understand what is moral, we understand what is right, we can understand what is an aesthetic experience or an emotional experience. What experiences can be best described as spiritual?" But if that is the wrong kind of question, what aspects of ordinary experiences or certain forms of unusual experiences are best described as spiritual? I think there is, from time to time, a tendency to think that spirituality is somehow connected with religion, that is certainly true, but does it mean that spirituality cannot also form a part of the secular view of the world?

Humanism, and again here Charles makes an extremely interesting point when he is explaining the phenomenology of this movement. I must say that as I was reading the book I was put in mind of Hegel's phenomenology because I think it's that kind of experience, to make an age conscious of itself. Charles Taylor emphasises at several points the fact that this self contained, exclusive humanism, whereas human self flourishing is the ultimate model role, is in some sense an important trend which has resulted in the kind of journey that he is trying to explain. Now humanism can certainly be narrowly anthropocentric, a man centred, or *man* centred as a species, but it can also be cosmocentric, as, for example, many human beings are located within the larger context and this is what green humanism or ecological humanism is trying to do in wanting to go beyond anthropocentric humanism. It has, what Charles Taylor would call, a spiritual, a green humanism, or ecological humanism, it has a spiritual or even transcendental dimension, but it does not transcend the cosmos, or, to use Charles Taylor's distinction, the universe, because cosmos is what happens before 1800.

So, what I'm suggesting here is that one can have a form of humanism which transcends individual society, the species that locates itself within the

cosmos and therefore doesn't take the further step of transcending the cosmos itself in the direction of religion. One might also raise a slightly different question. When religion is defined in terms of belief in God or in terms of God then secularity comes to be created with atheism and that seems to me is not the case in Charles Taylor's, but there are places in footnotes where I would have liked to have probed him a little further. Since religion is defined in terms of God, secularity, which is supposed to be the opposite of religion, which I think it's not but nevertheless it can be understood in that way, secularity comes to be associated with atheism and that seems to me to be a mistake. Atheism implies that one denies the existence of God, however God is defined. Secularity has a different take on this question. It implies that one has found no reason to postulate God and therefore, neither to accept nor to deny. A beautiful remark which Karl Marx makes in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* is saying atheists are fools and atheism has to be *aufgehoben* in the form of secularism where when you're asked the question, "Do you believe in God?" you simply say, "I don't see the point of the question." It's not that you are a-religious in the sense of being indifferent to religion. It's rather that you don't see the point of that which is supposed to lie at the centre of religion.

Professor Leszek Kolakowski

Emeritus Senior Research Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford University

I must admit that I haven't read, in its entirety, the book of my old friend Charles Taylor and this is mainly because my sight is so poor now that I cannot read. My wife, Tamara, present here, read me some parts of it which were extremely important and rich.

I would like to make one or two remarks concerning Taylor's extremely right thought. The Jews tell me, and you would know better of course if it is true, that the main difference in the religious attitudes of Christians and the Jews is that when a Christian sings or speaks about his religion, he has in mind mainly the doctrine, whereas the Jew has in mind mainly the law. That is a very important difference and for this reason it is nothing unusual in that there are people who are Christians in their mind, who are believing Christians but not practising, whereas among Jews it seems very unusual. They say Martin Buber was a case, but I don't know. There are, of course, Jews who are practising and not believing.

That is another thing. They say that Christian faiths can survive, so to say, without religious practice, but Judaism cannot. I understand the very Orthodox Jews, like the Jews living in Mea Shearim, to them Judaism or Jewishness is not a concept of nationality, but a religious concept, so therefore the Jew who is not practising, a Jew who has abandoned religious practice is not a Jew in the proper sense. On the other hand I can understand Jewish people who live in Israel or elsewhere and consider themselves Jews in the national sense, they can be nationalist even, but who abandoned their religion. There are Jewish organisations, Jewish movements that generally consider the idea of a Jewish state in fact, how to put it, illegal or improper because precisely Jewishness cannot be like – it understands them, it understands their attitude, their fear that Jewishness that tends to survive without the Jewish religion would not be Jewishness in the proper sense – so it would disappear even as a national concept, a national life.

As I said, among secular Jews in Israel, there is strong antipode towards the Orthodox Jews who are so easily recognised at any time on the street. And there is something similar in Christian Catholic life, the movements like the followers of Archbishop Lefebvre, not that I would like to live under that jurisdiction. But I understand them. They are in despair about the fate of Christianity. This is a church in the way it lives, it's infiltrated by modernity. It is modernity in the historical sense. One may say "Well what is the point of a priest using or not using the priestly garments, it doesn't affect religion." No, the Lefebvrists say, it is important. It is not a matter of dogma, it's a matter of Christian life or, more importantly, what is the problem



Professor Leszek Kolakowski

of celibacy? Why should celibacy continue, the celibacy of secular priests of course, because, after all it's not a matter of dogma, everybody knows how it emerged historically and it can be easily abolished without touching any part of the Catholic doctrine. It seems so, but, I understand that they are afraid of such change. They're afraid of the entire way the Catholic Church took during and after the second Vatican Council.

There is a real danger that the Catholic, that is to say, the universal religion, will disappear. The main point of this doctrine and this controversy is, of course, religious liberty. Religious liberty implies that all religions or all religious organisms are equal, not only in the legal sense that they're legally allowed to survive but in the sense that they're equal, this corpora of ideas which amounts to saying that the doctrine is more or less indifferent. In fact, not just anybody says this in so many words, but in fact it leads easily to such a conviction. You are religious whether you might be Catholic or Buddhist or Jewish or Hindu, it doesn't matter, because we have a religious freedom, which actually means it doesn't matter what is the content of your religion.

Now, what happened, and why this movement changes the Christian world with such despair is one of the main points of Charles Taylor's book. I agree with him entirely that the cause of this secularism is not really the logical contradiction between science and religious doctrine. These two bodies of human life can survive, perhaps not quite without conflict, but nevertheless without fight. The difference is not that people who are committed to a scientific view of the world cannot therefore believe in religion. No, they can, it is not a logical contradiction, but it is a contradiction I think in the hierarchy of values. The science delivers what it promises. Religion delivers something completely else. We can pray to God, people pray to God in order to cause, by divine

intervention, various changes in that life, some good, that life from God, and more often than not they're disappointed.

Now, in terms of the so-called scientists' worldview, that is proof enough to show the falsity of religion. In fact it is not. Christianity never promised that the good we pray to God for will be delivered by God. No. It is not the point. The goods that people get from religion are mainly the sense of life and the sense of cosmos, something that cannot be proved in the way empirical truths of science are being proved. No, they cannot, but it doesn't matter really for the meaning of religious life.

Therefore, people who are completely indifferent to religion and religious life, they see that it doesn't matter, because I don't get from God the goods that I pray for, they only are poorer in their spiritual and mental sense because they believe only in goods that they can touch, as it were, therefore religion is for nothing. Nevertheless we see that there are in the world opposite movements, movements against secularity. I'm not sure about this very word "secularity," it comes from *seculum*, the age, in English and in some other languages, and in fact why *seculum*, to say 100 years should be the proper word for it. For instance, in the Polish language, the adjective, "secular," comes from "the world, worldly," being, of course, understood in the sense of Saint John, *mundus in mundus*, whereas the secular age seems to me often improper, but it is not of course the main question.

I only would like to ask Taylor what he thinks really about the conflict and the possible solution of the conflict between the scientific worldview and religion? Does he have any notion about how it might end or it might change in the coming age? In the coming *seculum*? Thank you.

Sir Jonathan Sacks

Chief Rabbi of United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

I feel very humbled and quite redundant in such intellectual company and I must say I feel a little bit like the occasion when the 27th speaker got up to speak at a Jewish gathering and someone in the audience turned to his neighbour and said, "What do we need another speech for? Hasn't everything already been said?" and his neighbour said, "Yes, everything has already been said, but not everyone has said it."

If I may, I will begin by doing something rabbinic and not entirely irrelevant. It is an enormous privilege to pay tribute to one of the very, very great sages of our time and 2000 years ago the Rabbis coined a blessing to be said in the presence of a wise human being, including and especially a wise human being who is not Jewish and not necessarily a believer, but who had enlarged the intellectual horizons of humanity, and, if I may address this blessing to the almighty Charles Taylor, "Thank you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, for bestowing your wisdom on creatures of flesh and blood. Amen."

And, while I'm on the subject of Judaism, the Rabbi said about Moses that when he had to do short he did very short, and when he had to do long he did very long. He said the shortest prayer on record in Numbers; five words, "Please God heal her now," and on another occasion he prayed for forty days and forty nights after the golden calf. If I may say so Professor Taylor, you're in that tradition!

When you do short books they're short. *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, and when you do long books, *Sources of the Self*, and, especially this 851-page epic, *A Secular Age*, you do very long, and they're both wonderful.

I believe that Charles Taylor has done for metaphysics and for the philosophy of religion what the late Isaiah Berlin did for political philosophy. You have given it back its history and when we read you, we breathe a wider air. I don't think that anyone has brought wider or richer perspectives to the philosophical enterprise in our time than Charles Taylor, and the richness of his range of literary and other references is simply breathtaking.

There is also something else, and it deserves a philosophical paper and it must be my ignorance for not having seen it, and that is this: that when you come to know somebody through their books, you really come to know what kind of person they are. There is a tone of voice that a writer has that is there



Sir Jonathan Sacks

in the language that they use and the argumentative structures, which are as clear a clue to character as handwriting is to a graphologist, and when I read Charles Taylor, I know that this is not only an extraordinarily erudite and wise man, I know that this is a good man, a gentle man, a generous man. He is somebody who takes pains to present the views of those with whom he disagrees, in the best possible way. His work is a living example of what Quine and Dworkin called “charity in interpretation” and that is as precious as it is rare.

What Professor Taylor has done in this book is nothing less than make it intellectually possible to talk about God and religious faith again in philosophical circles. Not that other people have not paved the way in their way, but that was not always possible. I came to know the late Sir Isaiah Berlin rather late in his life, but I will never forget our first conversation. He said, “Chief Rabbi, don’t talk to me about religion, when it comes to God, I’m tone deaf.” And then he said, “But you studied philosophy, how is it you believe?” And I said, “Isaiah, if it helps, think of me as a lapsed heretic.” And he said, “I quite understand dear boy,” and, in the light of that, I just want to frame one question. When I began my doctorate I had just come back from a religious seminary and I had come back very religious and very bearded indeed and my

question and this was the question: “Is there not an obligation to live within one’s time?”

It was a very interesting question, and the implication was clear, although it was unstated that in the title of Professor Taylor’s book, we live in a secular age and therefore we cannot, with integrity, live in light of beliefs that, as it were, belong sometime else. And I want to ask, is that so? Having given philosophy back its history I want to ask, doesn’t the history of ideas itself have a history? Of course that is touched on in *Hermeneutics* and others and you have written about it so eloquently in this book in chapters 9 and 19, but still I wonder, might there perhaps be something missing? Could it be that there is an ethics of history as well as an epistemology of history? Let me explain. Could there not be, not in the Burkian sense, but in the biblical sense, a covenant with the past that somehow in some sense, it makes sense to say “I am keeping faith with the past.” History, as it emerged as a category, lets say, in the 18th century, does, in fact, represent a certain kind of alienation from the past, something Hayim Yerushalmi wrote a book about, called *Zakhor – Jewish History and Jewish Memory*. And might we not be suffering, as it were, from some kind of civilisational Alzheimer’s disease?

What Professor Taylor has done in this book is nothing less than make it intellectually possible to talk about God and religious faith again in philosophical circles. Not that other people have not paved the way in their way, but that was not always possible.

doctorate supervisor was the late Sir Bernard Williams who was an atheist. He really was, he was not an agnostic, and his decency, what we call his *menschlichkeit* was superb, supreme. I learned so much from him because never once did he challenge my religious beliefs. Only once did he touch on them, and he did so in a very oblique way, he asked me a

Are we not in danger of substituting history for memory? And is that, perhaps, not what you’re trying to do? Bring back memory again? In *Sources of the Self* and in *A Secular Age*, there is a tantalising hint right at the end where you quote the phrase from Robert Bellah who hasn’t yet published the book, I gather, the idea that nothing is ever lost, and can

we recover memory. Now, I raise this as a serious point. You have written very eloquently in some of your other books, about the impact of the ideas of Bakhtin and the dialogical imagination. And I’m

wilderness. You speak eloquently in the book about the wilderness, but in a spacial rather than a temporal sense. The wilderness is the place between Egypt and the promised land, what Victor Turner called

You have written very eloquently in some of your other books, about the impact of the ideas of Bakhtin and the dialogical imagination. And I’m wondering whether one could not say more about, what I call, the chronological imagination.

wondering whether one could not say more about, what I call, the chronological imagination. What I call time as story rather than time as system, and indeed, obviously Paul Ricoeur has written even bigger books than you on this, but I’m thinking perhaps just very sketchily of what Jerome Bruner has written about in *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* and various other books.

Your speech in the book, for instance, quoting Robert Wuthnow of the difference between dwellers and seekers. Others, like Sigmund Bauman, I have forgotten who originated this, about the difference between pilgrims and tourists, but I was wondering if there isn’t a different kind of sense of time in the Hebrew Bible? Time as a journey through the

liminal time, or what, in Judaism we call exile, or time as a journey between a remembered past and a future that lies just over the horizon. Might faith then be construed in the sense of that beautiful verse from Jeremiah where God says, “I remember the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you followed me through the wilderness, through an unsown, unknown land,” and might that not be the retrieval of meta-narrative that might put us in a post-postmodernist situation?

If we could perhaps explore that, we might achieve what David Martin said so beautifully now, a horizon of hope, or what I call, faith in the future.

Lord Sutherland

Former Principal, University of Edinburgh and Former President, Royal Society of Scotland

Thank you very much. I also thank Jonathan for giving me my opening line, to steal an expression from the book. “The social imaginary that I now inhabit is as 28th speaker at the colloquium.”

That being said, I reckon that this might be the case, because if you’ve lived with the name Sutherland, initials S.U. all your life, then you tend to know that you tend to come at the end of speakers lists and here I am! It is, nonetheless a great delight, a special delight because I had the privilege of chairing, I think, two of the Gifford Lectures that are in fact the basis of chapters in this book, and, at the end of those lectures, I wanted to say “And?” I had this vision, if I had been a cartoonist for *The New Yorker*, I would have drawn a cartoon of Charles Taylor standing there with a great hopper of ideas above him and they have come down and he has distilled them into this magnificent and extensive text which I found immensely stimulating.

I have had this book for a few days in my possession, and I would like to say I had read, marked, learned and inwardly digested every sentence. But that would be untrue at this stage, but the greatest complement I can pay the book apart from its stimulus is that it has accompanied me in two real journeys to and from Scotland at four hours each and in the course of those journeys I succeeded in ignoring all the mobile phones being spoken into round about me and that takes some doing I can tell you! Your book did it for me. What should I do, I thought, at the end of the list in ten minutes? If I can, I want to just put two points on the table for discussion.

Firstly, the book is magnificently an interaction between the history of ideas and social history, and I wanted to give you another example of that which I’ve worked on and thought about which I think raises the kind of question I want to put to you as others have. The example starts with Norman Kemp Smith,

a great, great interpreter of David Hume, and I think many of his insights are not yet assimilated by the Humeian community.

Kemp Smith referred to Hume in all sorts of ways, but in an introduction to the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* he referred to Hume as a “Presbyterian agnostic.” That phrase caught my attention because in a sense it presages many of the things that I think you’re doing in the book. It takes Hume’s clearly agnostic position, but it sets it in the context of beliefs, ideas, and social structures of his time and actually, I think it’s a very insightful remark. I began reflecting on this and what it took me to was the way in which Hume, for example, had huge admiration for Bishop Butler, a good middle-of-the-road Anglican, a man who wanted to argue rationally for the basis of belief, something that Hume, in the end, rejected



Lord Sutherland

completely. His respect for Butler, I think, comes to its sharpest point in the attachment that Butler made to the concept of analogy and argument by analogy. We still think of him as the man who wrote Butler’s *Analogy*, and Hume’s biting criticisms of arguments from *Analogy* in the *Dialogues*, particularly in part five where he shreds them.

At times I wanted somebody to shred some of the connections that you were making, but then I had to say, “Well, if he has historical context and is a man of his time, what does this mean in terms of the difference between him and Butler?” And the difference, actually, they did belong to two very different societies. Butler belonged to England and as part of the English structure, as part of the centre of the Anglican Church, much stronger than now, he inhabited a world in which questions of authority, political and religious, went hand in hand.

...the greatest compliment I can pay the book apart from its stimulus is that it has accompanied me in two real journeys to and from Scotland at four hours each and in the course of those journeys I succeeded in ignoring all the mobile phones being spoken into round about me and that takes some doing I can tell you! Your book did it for me.

But there were ways of settling what the issues were and what the outcomes were. He could appeal to the traditions to which he belonged, whether within the political system, within the parliamentary system, or within the church. That means that a whole series of analogues were available to him that naturally he could use.

Hume and the Scots didn’t have this, because until the reformation basically political authority was settled by who had the biggest tribe standing behind him. That’s slightly a caricature and some might say it still has application but that is to be settled tomorrow! The issue at the time of the Reformation wasn’t just

religious, it was how do you legitimate political authority in this country where there are no traditions of the English kind, no doomsday book, no attempt to set up some sort of parliament, no attempt to limit the powers of the king in the same way. You limited the powers of the King by raising an army, that’s how you did it then. In fact, part of Knox’s genius was that he introduced the idea of first principles and rational argument. Now, you may not agree with the first principles that he started from, but nonetheless that is how he would counter conclusions politically, religiously and otherwise that he didn’t like.

If you look at the debates in the general assembly of the Church of Scotland in the 17th century, boy, I paid for this, but if you look at those debates, you find that the arguments resisting the notion of bishops being imposed on a Calvinistic Presbyterian church were resisted on the basis of argument from first principle. The arguments in favour of bishops were produced

on the basis of arguments by analogy. You didn’t have to be Mandeville to argue that just because the swarm needs a queen, so the flock needs a bishop and these were the kinds of arguments used and the analogy has stood in one mindset but not in another. I think that is the basis for Kemp Smith’s legitimate difference between those two which is very much I think in line with the kind of thing that you’re doing and simply could exemplify further the ways in which that happened.

But that leaves the question in my own mind, “Well, what now? What next?” We have a magnificent analysis, we understand the move from 1500 to 2000.

What next? Where is the discourse that someone who wants to argue belief and unbelief, whichever side you're on, where is the discourse which they can inhabit to allow you to raise the question that clearly Hume thought he was raising, "Actually, is all this stuff true?" And there is still a bit of me that wants to do that and argue whatever the consequences of the fact that we all live as part of a history and we inhabit our own age and Hume was a Presbyterian Agnostic. I have to say I'm quite happy with that as distinct from a lapsed agnostic, this is fine.

Still, the questions are there, "Is there a place for them?" In trying to come to terms with this, I suppose what I've done is tried to substitute one metaphor for another, and the metaphor that I want to remove from our thinking, in terms of our current position, is that of a pilgrim. Once upon a time, by and large, the notion of what the goal was was understood, the real difficulty is getting there. Whether it be through the slough of despond or whether it be X, Y, or Z, there were always difficulties in getting there.

I think our current position is, and you have just illustrated this magnificently here, that we don't have that common mindset now. You've understood in all sorts of ways that I never did why we don't have that, you've communicated that, but where are we now? I would suggest an alternative metaphor, we are nomads, spiritual, intellectual and moral nomads, and the difference between the pilgrim and the nomad is not that the pilgrim knows where he's going and the nomad is lost. Nomads are not lost, if they were they would soon die out. Intellectually, spiritually and ethically what nomads do is preserve insights which makes continuing life possible and as valuable as possible and of as high a quality as possible. If we

inhabit a world of nomads, rather than a world in which the line of the pilgrim is marked out for us, which is probably true for most of us these days, then you're looking for the insights which are worth retaining, and the argument comes in saying, "Why this insight? Why that insight? Why do you spend time thinking about whoever it is?" And we've had a marvellous list of names. This metaphor I think fits with other attempts to do some of the things you referred to. You mentioned in the book that you don't pursue the line that Alistair MacIntyre did. I mean he's done it so why do that, but I think there are reasons in MacIntyre as to why this is the case today, the disintegration of knowledge and the loss of the picture of the tree of knowledge, or the house of knowledge.

You certainly pay attention, I was delighted to see, and others have mentioned, to Isaiah Berlin. I think that he's going beyond that, I think that he's saying actually the idea of a single vision of the good simply doesn't work. I'm not sure I'm persuaded that Charles Taylor was implying that the secular view is incoherent, I thought more inadequate, incomplete. That is a different set of terms to use, but if Berlin is right, and I think he is, that adds intellectual weight to the process that you have been examining whereby in fact there is unlikely to be emerging, other than through force and the use of violent methods, a single pilgrim-like position to which we can all assimilate. So what is it we can have in common? What we can have in common is an agreement that there are many insights that are spread eclectically through the moral, spiritual, intellectual and artistic world that is our heritage, and increasingly that's a global heritage, and we live in that position rather than in the position of the pilgrim. Thank you very much.

I would like to thank all our commentators, they've brought up so many themes, and that's not an easy thing to do when a long book is a new book. I know that many of us are very much looking forward to hearing Charles Taylor's thoughts, responses and comments, so Charles, over to you.

Professor Charles Taylor

I myself am very overwhelmed by the tremendously interesting remarks coming from very different directions that we've heard at the table here.

First of all I'm wondering how to answer the questions, and I'm sure I'm not very capable of answering the questions, but I'm wondering how even to make my non-answers sound coherent. I think a good way of doing that is to start off by taking a theme that was picked up by a number of speakers in a different way, which is this question of time, or narrativity, of our relation to our age.

One way of talking about the basic purpose of the book, and this is one of the inhabiting goals of the book which I hope I've made some progress in,

was to re-think our whole way of thinking about secularisation, which in the West is very much shaped by, or you might even say, prisoner of, a certain kind of master narrative. Just in parenthesis, I think all this attack that we've had from post-modernists on the invocation of master narratives is very, very misguided, for the reason that, when we think of these big historical issues, of secularisation and so on, we're always thinking in terms of master narratives. The only difference is are we clear that we're doing that, or are we inhabiting the master narrative without knowing that we're doing it? So even post-modernists say, "Well you see it was like this, there was this epoch in which everybody was grasping for master narratives and then along came Jean-François Lyotard or whoever it was and now we're beyond that and we're not into master narratives." Of course you can see right away the pragmatic contradiction involved in seeing things in these terms.

So what is it about the master narrative, the one that inhabited talk about secularisation which I thought needed changing? Well, there are several things, and really the big picture of the book is that I've taken off from one master narrative and tried to get beyond it. I'm not sure I have a totally stable replacement for it, but the master narrative I wanted to get away from was this. There is something called modernity or modernisation and we don't need to define this very



Professor Charles Taylor

closely. It's differently defined but it involves such developments as the growth of science as we know it, technological society, and market economy, which is constantly predicated on growth and development. I could go on and on with a number of things that we all recognise as features of what we think of as modernity. In any case the secularisation thesis, which was for so long dominant, was that there was a uniform relation of causation between the growth of these markers of modernity, however you name them, on one hand, and secularisation on the other hand. That modernity and the developments of modernity were the independent variables which were bringing about, in a uniform fashion, secularisation as the dependent variable, and just briefly, this secularisation had two broad meanings which were not confused but thought to run together. One is the retreat of religion from public space, that's the order in principle of society, and the other was the retreat of belief or practice. These two don't necessarily go together, as we know, we can have states in which religion ceases to be the central organising principle but in which faith or practice is very alive. We can have societies in which religion is still the organising principle but faith and practice have receded, but the idea was that these two, without running exactly in parallel, run sort of together, and they are brought about by these developments we call "modernisation" or "modernity."

So, I'll spare all the details, and it's very interesting stuff, about differentiation, post-Weberian notions about that and so on. I think this narrative is fundamentally wrong in two very important ways. The idea that there is this causal relation is wrong, both because it sees this as a universal, it's always happening, in other words wherever these developments of modernity occur they have a similar effect. And it thinks of them also as linear, that is, the more you have these developments, the more you have the developments called secularisation.

Against, and indeed drawing very much on David Martin's work here I have to say, I think that his book, and I'm very much an amateur here in reading the literature of sociology, his book was liberation for me, because for the first time he introduced this notion that first of all there are obviously very different processes going on in different kinds of society even in the West. That is that the story of what we want to call, vaguely, secularisation in either of these senses is very different in the Anglo-Saxon society than it is in the Latin Catholic societies, and it is again different in the Lutheran domain and you can break this down even further. So there are national or regional stories, and the operation isn't uniform across all contexts.

The second very important thing that is really the hinge of a lot of argument in the book is that it also isn't linear, and really, the stories, and we have to say "stories" not "story," in these different domains are not linear. But there is an insight underlying the original secularisation thesis. The insight is that certain, particularly historical forms of religious life are indeed destabilised by certain developments we speak of as one of the package of developments we call modernisation. For instance, the kind of religious life you have in late medieval Catholic France, a kind of sacral monarchy in a certain sense, complete with the power of the King to cure scrofula by touch and with sacred places and so on, just plainly cannot survive, did not survive, is destabilised by the development of the more, if you like, horizontal associative notions of society that we have in the modern world.

There is a very poignant moment when this became evident, the restoration in France in 1815. Who was it that said, "walking back having learnt nothing and forgotten nothing." This was truer of the second successor, the first one was Louis XVIII and then Charles X came to the throne in 1825 and he wanted to, one hundred percent, legitimise and reproduce the old monarchy in its entirety. So he had a coronation ceremony address, including people coming forward

with scrofula and so on, and the whole thing totally fell flat. It was like running a scenario of ancient Greece in the middle of Piccadilly Circus, it just couldn't work. The idea would have been to have re-ignited this sense of the Catholic monarchy, and in its original format it just couldn't happen.

So there is this great insight in the whole secularisation thesis where people have picked up on the incompatibility of certain original forms with certain developments of what we call modernisation. But what is missing here is *recomposition* that religious life can, as it were, recompose itself, or, if you like, life around religion or a religious metaphysics which can enter the scene here, can recompose itself differently in different societies and with a much greater component of non-religious or antireligious metaphysical views in some societies than in others.

So, what you need is a set of regional stories in which there is this alternation between destabilisation and recomposition, and then if you think of it in those terms, you have to think, and again David has pioneered this to some degree, of the great movement in the West of the 1960s. It's variously characterised as another great destabilisation movement in which religious forms were destabilised, including, interestingly, some of the forms that were powerfully recomposed as a result of the destabilisation of the earlier forms, particularly the ones I've called neo-Durkheimian, where you get societies that are recognisably modern in the sense that they're based on the idea that we mobilise everyone together as citizens according to certain basic markers. You know, we're republican French or Polish or British and so on, we mobilise as equal citizens around a certain number of markers which define the society.

But in this case we could have a very powerful new form, if you like, of the presence of God in society because the markers can have a religious reference, as I think the original U.S. republic founding clearly did, with the idea of a providential design. You know,

we hold these truths to be self-evident and human beings are created equal and have certain inalienable rights. Or, you could have the Polish case which of course we know we have here a particular confessional marker which becomes that which rallies Poles and so on.

Now, these modern recompositions themselves destabilised and what we see, therefore, there's no longer a history, but histories, histories of destabilisation, recomposition, and you can end up, in terms of the most important factor of secularisation, with the retreat of belief and practice. You end up with situations in these different trajectories that have a tremendous spectrum, all the way from let's say, East Germany, perhaps the nadir point of belief and practice in the Western World. I say East Germany because it doesn't exist on the map but boy, it still exists in the mind. If you cross that border in Berlin, you know there is another universe there on one hand. And perhaps the United States, close to the other end of the spectrum. So the whole thing, in terms of a nice neat, universally applicable and linear function just doesn't work, but as a series of different, interesting stories I think you can unlock it if you study each case carefully, with this paradigm in mind of destabilisation and recomposition.

Before I get to the second point I want to pick up something that Bhikhu (Lord Parekh) was saying, that "Why did I do this book in this strange way?" This is not a question that's bothering me, of talking about Latin Christendom from 1500. That is because I was very aware of all the things that Bhikhu said earlier. When you've done a certain amount of this you'll find it impossible to go back. One of the horrendous mistakes of most secularisation theory is that they took religion as one single thing which is going to be declining and when you begin to look at the difference between India and the West you become immediately aware that there is a fantastic variety. So you know, I could have got stuck in the first chapter and you would have been spared this whole book! In the

middle of the first chapter the thing almost came to an end because I couldn't think exactly how I could define what is supposed to be declining. It's going to be a discussion of a decline thesis, then the decline of what?

So I took a simple way out, an utterly cowardly way out, but I think the only fruitful way out, which was to say, I really broke with the idea of a universally applicable thesis. It's a book. There is a process in Latin Christendom and its successor states, successive societies, where there is sufficient unity because of sufficient intercommunication between the units of it. You can get some kind of general sense of what is going on, even though you have to break down the detail into the Anglo trajectory and the Lutheran trajectory and so on. But nevertheless there is sufficient unity here so we can get a story about the decline, or non-decline, some are declining, some are not declining, of this, so what's 'this'?

That allows you to look at certain features of Christianity, Christianity and Judaism, perhaps the Judeo-Christian outlook, to be able to get a handle on what you're studying the decline and non-decline of, without prejudice to whatever studies might be done elsewhere. And this cowardly, but I think prudent approach, looks forward to our making headway in this whole subject by a series of such studies, hopefully more narrowly defined than mine, which is perhaps already too broad, in which we can begin to trace interesting connections and spillovers and analogies with what has gone on in Islamic society or what's gone on in Indian society.

There are fascinating elements of inter-influence and certain European thoughts about religions, and in the British case, very much influenced by the impact of India. What must emerge, of course, from the other side, is reformulating some sense of their Hindu belief in the light of the experience of Christianity. So there is a certain spillover but you don't start off with the

idea that there are universals that apply. That is why I took the book the way I did, at that level of "Let's look at Latin Christendom," which was already by anticipation, as it were, of breaking with the master narrative that I hope I succeeded in deconstructing or at least very much shaking.

But, there's another element of this master narrative that I think we have to come to grips with. That is that there are indeed certain common elements involved in the different Western cases. I am trying to get at them by getting a sense of our way of imagining the world we inhabit today both socially and cosmically and the ways in which it's different from earlier times. This is very difficult and it's a work in progress and I'm sure it's going to be torn apart but I hope that having said it this way will help the tearing apart to be a constructive process which brings us ahead.

One of the things that I think is really key is this immanent/transcendent distinction, and that's another way of addressing Bhikhu's question. There is an immanent transcendent distinction which has come to make sense in this world, Latin Christendom, the Western world, which doesn't apply anywhere else.



John M. Templeton, Jr. with Templeton Prize Laureates: Sir Sigmund Sternberg (1998); John Barrow (2006); Charles Taylor; Paul Davies (1995); and George Ellis (2004).

That is another point where you realise that attempts to use these concepts as universals just break down. You can see this both in the cosmology post-Galileo and natural science, but also in post-Grotian or Lockean understanding of society and also in a host of other ways which you could, in a sense, say that we commonly believe. Generally all of us have a sense of an immanent world whose explanatory principles are within it. We can explain the operation of the physical cosmos in terms of the concepts that are thrown up by physics.

The possibility of there being something more than this is not necessarily excluded, and here we're going back to what Leszek was talking about. Some people do think it's included by the way in which we scientifically explain this cosmos and others don't. But the way that the problem has to situate itself for us in this culture is that there is an immanent self-explanatory world. We can get a concept of social justice, a concept of how to explain the workings of the physics around us, a concept of the human order which we think is just and adequate and so on, or, without necessary reference to what is, or is not, beyond. I believe this is not something that really was present as an option in earlier ages or societies and what is interesting is that it would appear that almost all human societies had some idea of the higher beings and the higher levels and the mundane, this-worldly levels.

So we have the first-off illusion that immanent transcendence makes sense. In the world of Plato, there are the things that are in the flux and then the ideas that are beyond the flux. But of course it isn't the same kind of thing because for Plato, understanding all this stuff in the flux can only be done by referring to the ideas that are beyond the flux. In all sorts of ways, in pre-modern Western and the modern Western worldviews, I don't believe you ever had such a clear cut distinction between the imminent order and the transcendent order. So there

is a sense in which, and I use the word 'secular' but it could be 'worldly,' as Leszek says, this is a secular age for everybody. The idea of a secular age as something self-explanatory is so important for us and in that sense we're all secularist.

So the issue is how do we, or do we? Do we try to move beyond, how do we try to move beyond? These are the issues which arise, and I think there are two things I'm trying to say about this, and here I'm going into Jonathan's question on the one hand which I wish I could answer but he sees I'm struggling to answer. In the dominant form of the master narrative as it's been constructed, it wasn't just a master narrative of secularisation, it was our master narrative at the rise of modernity. Again it's the Scots to whom we owe this, Jonathan, these wonderful stadial theories of Ferguson and so on, stages of history. The stages are not reminiscent but anticipatory of Marx, in terms of the way human beings live, the hunter-gathering stage, the nomadic stage, agricultural stage and then commercial society. We still think like that, only we now say an industrial society, the post-industrial society and we get to the point where we're kind of "stage" struck in the sense that we think of history moving in that way, where there is one feature of this stage construction – it's supposed to have a ratchet effect, in other words, you don't go back. So when you get to commercial society you can't go back to the earlier forms of society.

Gibbon has a wonderful line somewhere where he said, I can't remember exactly, but "Could the Barbarians invade again," roughly speaking, and "reduce us all to rubble?" Well the Barbarians didn't seem very strong in those days compared to the Europeans, but the main point why Gibbon thought that we could be optimistic is that the technology that we have, and so on, would rapidly reconstitute civilisation out of the ruins, even if the Barbarians did invade. This is my idea of the ratchet effect operating in Gibbon.

It is this ratchet effect that I want very much to question in the spiritual realm, and that is where I picked up on Robert Bellah's idea. I'm waiting with baited breath for his book which is absolutely fascinating. I stole some of his ideas because he sent me some chapters, that these different phases of human spirituality, which in their combination, for instance the combination of a certain idea of the sacred in the French monarchy, has been relegated to history, but these various forms of relating to the sacred have not been relegated to history. I refer again to David Martin's work and Bernice Martin's work and it is very interesting on the Pentecostal movement, that there are some recurrences to practices that would have been condemned by earlier, more austere Calvinistic modes of Protestantism as magical and so on.

There are currents of these coming back on to the scene, re-composed in a completely new combination. They have very little to do with the combination of the way that they may have occurred in Catholic Christian culminations earlier, but in a very important sense nothing is really lost, and, in our relation to the spiritual I think that Jonathan is absolutely right. We'll get to Jewish Christian now, a very parochial part of the world here in which the notion of covenant is a key way of reflecting that. We are not living simply in this age, in that respect. That is, as I think of myself writing about my own faith, thinking of the force of a figure like St. Francis of Assisi, who still comes across to me across all these centuries with immense force. I can see something there very powerful, a representation of what I think is the essence of Christian faith or one way of reflecting it which still speaks to me today. In that sense, if we're thinking we could repeat exactly the Franciscan order as it was founded, then no, of course not, that couldn't be done. But, if we think of the spiritual sources by which we live, they could never be confined to today, and where we are now. This is even true of totally humanistic movements, some of them will celebrate Lenin and others will

celebrate Baconian and so on, even though, at the other side of their minds they've accepted some other thesis.

The kinds of revolutionary, utopic ideas which are then defended or not on the stage for us, these people, nevertheless are living that reflex virtually in relation to those sources. So we have to have another sense of our relation to time which is much more complex. I wanted to make this point too, even our understanding of the way that different levels of time fit together, we can't simply go with the one that we have today. I tried to make a long discussion of the way in which we form Christianity, deconstructed the understanding of time, involving a motion of order and underlying chaos, in which the order allows for a reversal of the world turned upside down. For certain periods the order is suspended and then the order comes back. We can look at the way in which we can live in relation to time for periods of reversal, opening up, loosening up of the order that we have, the ability to look at this and live it from outside and see its limitations. This is something that doesn't need to disappear. Even our very narrow understanding that secular time is all there is is not something we're totally trapped in.

So, these are two ways in which I wanted to loosen up the narrative. First, a simple causal narrative, the universality of time linearly working its way out against a narrative of particular national stories, and these being formed by destabilisations and recompositions. And then the idea, the very powerful idea, laid down in the modern stadial narrative which tends to make us think that when we've moved out of that stage it's unavailable to us. So we say things like "That's progressive" or "That's medieval" or "That belongs to another age." The implication was that you can't be outside your age. This is a very complex thing, because what I'm trying to say is that in a sense you can't and you shouldn't be outside of your age if you're thinking that you can ignore and not relate to the way that things fit together today.

But, if you mean by that that you can't retrieve spiritual sources that are totally spurned in this age and largely marginalized in this age and come from somewhere else then you're fooling yourself. That's not the way that human life works, we're not trapped in that way. So the notion of a predominantly dual covenant can make very profound sense to people. Then the big issue is to see how to live this covenant now, in other words, in the total way that we compose our age today, how to live this. One way in which obviously this has a different answer is that our predecessors thought that Christendom is the obvious one, in which Christianity should be, must be, lived.

It seems to me that if we really understand our age today that is totally wrong. What we still have is large elements of Christian churches who are still clinging on to that in various ways, trying as it were to form the common understanding. Someone mentioned this about a common understanding that we all live by. The worrying factor for some people is that there isn't a single common understanding of the most important spiritual truths by which our modern societies can live, it can't be shared. What is shared is a rather thin collection, but a very important collection of principles, the principles of equality, of non-discrimination, of rights and so on. I don't mean by "thin" that these are not strong and that they aren't right, but these are shared by people from very different points of view and they're justified in very different ways.

So from the outside this kind of society looks like a very empty society. If you ask what is there in the public square between people in common, well there's consumer society, people trying to get prosperous, and then there are a few, as it were, traffic control principles, such as "When you're trying to get what you need don't step over someone else's

feet." That looks as though this is a terribly empty society but it's not. Its fullness can be of a quite different kind, provided that there are spiritual movements within it which don't get conned into thinking that they have to live, as it were, totally within this age. This is where I'm aiming at, not where I got to in the book. You can see that I am, in an incoherent way, trying to move towards another construal of how we fit in to time and live in time.

The last point that underpins all this, obviously I'm starting from working out of the social science understanding, is that a purity of social science which aims at universal laws is never going to cut it, is never really going to get to the interesting stuff. I'm talking now of Weber, Rickert and so on. Social science laws always need to be at least complemented, if not largely replaced by – to use the Heidelberg language – idiographic studies that look at certain historical cases and trace them through. So in that case you not only have ideographic, which is the story of a particular and the study of the particular has a heavy dependence on narratives. You understand what's happening, not through simple timeless laws, "The more of this the less of that" or what have you. You have to understand these laws narratively, worked out narratively in order to get real understanding. That is another great *Grande Illusion*, a great illusion of social science, to think you can get away from this. The necessity of narrativity, coming back to my beginning point, it is so necessary that everybody operates with meta-narratives and I'm trying to deconstruct the dominant one now. Not to leave us in a kind of Jean- François Lyotard paradise where nobody has one, but rather, I'm struggling towards another to replace that, which I think is going to be more adequate and less cramping and less distorted.

So thank you, I'll stop here, but thank you so much.

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