Review: The Intellectuals Speak Out about God

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For instance, Paul Blanshard, writing in *The Humanist*, seeks to salvage some pride for the ailing public educational system by stating, "Our schools may not teach Johnny to read properly, but the fact that Johnny is in school until he is 16 tends to lead toward the elimination of religious superstition." (p.94)

Whitehead carefully documents the presence and dangers of creeping totalitarianism in America. He warns that "we must not think of an overnight change, but rather of a subtle trend by those in leadership—government, media, education—toward greater control and manipulation of the individual" (p.5). He suggests that this move toward political polarization is winning ground basically due to three influential ideas: pragmatism, collectivism, and evolutionism (p.12). At least five social factors have spurred this downward slide toward totalitarianism: the bureaucratization of government (pp.26,58), the socialization of law (pp.26,80), disinformation by the major media (pp.5,50), disorientation by public education (pp.19,83), as well as the moral-spiritual vacuum left by pietistic and retreatist Christianity (pp.40,107).

The 10 chapters are well arranged in outlining his argument that America is in a "period of disorientation" (ch.1) which allows for the current totalitarian drift (ch.2). This disorientation is due to the "breakdown of the Christian base" of American culture (ch.6) which has laid the groundwork for a Secular Humanist culture with its "love of death," for example, abortion, infanticide, and so forth (ch.5). The consequences give rise to an attack on three basic Christian institutions—the family (ch.4), the school (ch.8), and the church (ch.9). With such a complex of issues before us, both science and philosophy. Virtually all of the arguments are relevant to establish priorities and a workable plan of resistance (ch.10). The Rutherford Institute address is presented and seems very relevant in terms of priorities: sanctity of human life (pp.112), promotion of the traditional family (pp.115), defense of Christian churches and schools (pp.119), freedom in the public arena (pp.121), and aid for those oppressed for their Christian faith in other lands (pp.123).

In the past decade, the attention of American Christianity has been largely directed toward eschatological and counseling concerns. Now it seems that book publishers are recognizing a "new" field of concern: Christian cultural and political influence. This is an important and healthy sign, but as Whitehead warns: "The staying power of the new (Christian) activism, remains to be seen" (p.107). (Crossway Books, 1983, $6.95)