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Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian  
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3-21-2008

### March 21, 2008: March Atlantic Monthly and the Influence of Religion

Bruce Ledewitz

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Title: March Atlantic Monthly and the Influence of Religion

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3/21/2008--The March 2008 issue of Atlantic Monthly magazine is crowded with religion. The overall title is "Which Religion Will Win" comprised of three contributions: Eliza Griswold: The Contest for Africa, Walter Russell Mead: America's Evangelical Future and Alan Wolfe: The Coming Religious Peace. As a bonus, Christopher Hitchens, leader of the New Atheists, reviews *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite*, by Gregor von Rezzori. The article about Africa suggests a world-wide religious/national competition between Christianity and Islam that also implicates a competition between Islam and modernity. This competition has severe implications for the War on terror. (There was a somewhat similar story about Kenya in the New York Times Sunday Magazine on 12/23/2007). On the other hand, both Mead and Wolfe's pieces suggest instead a long-term growing trend of secularization in the world. This is the direction I think things will go as well. Modernity does not seem to be a force that is going away. Perhaps we are seeing the last of the religious wars. That does not mean these wars will not do tremendous damage. But it should be noted that disgust with the wars of religion spurred secularization in Europe and it may do so in the rest of the world toward the end of this century. The odd thing about Hitchens' book review is that for him, the only Jews mentioned are those who are not traditionally religious: Freud, Einstein and Marx. Judaism for him seems to be just another form of secularism. Perhaps he is right.