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January 25, 2009: 10 Questions for the Author

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Title: 10 Questions for the Author

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1/25/2009--The daily online magazine Religion Dispatches has sent me ten questions about my new book, *Hallowed Secularism: Theory, Belief, Practices*, which will be published in March by Palgrave Macmillan. I thought the answers might be of interest here.

10 Questions for Bruce Ledewitz, author of *Hallowed Secularism: Theory, Belief, Practice* (Palgrave Macmillan 2009)

- 1 I was inspired to write the book because I was the secular parent I am writing about. I was trying to figure out how to raise children and live a life without religion, when I believed that the institutional religions were right about a lot of things (like their views of humanism and materialism).
- 2 The most important take-home message from the book is that it is possible to believe most of the promises of the Bible—not of course supernatural promises like an afterlife—without believing in God.
- 3 No, I didn't have to leave anything out. Since this second book is part of a trilogy—the first book was *American Religious Democracy* (Praeger 2007) and the third book is being looked at by publishers in manuscript form right now—I had the whole series to work with.
- 4 The biggest misconception I am aiming to undo is one held by some secularists—those who believe this world is all there is—who tend to think that everything is obvious. Actually, much of reality is mystery. What used to be called God's hand in history is still there and forgiveness of sin still happens. Not believing in supernatural beings is the beginning of one's search for truth, not the end.
- 5 My target audience is young people who were raised outside the religious traditions.
- 6 My goal is to inform readers about the possibilities that familiarity with the religious traditions open up and thus change my readers' lives. The religious/nonbeliever divide is mostly bunk.
- 7 Originally the title of the book was to be *Hallowed Secularism: A Guide for the Nonbeliever*. I still believe that title communicates the message of the book.
- 8 I like the cover a lot, but it was expensive and authors sometimes have to pay that cost.
- 9 No, there is no other book I wish I had written. No book out there says what I wish to say.
- 10 My next book is going to be *For the Establishment of Religion*, which argues that government should be permitted to endorse the common core of religion, just not any particular religion. That legal change is necessary if the kind of changes I hope to see in secularism are to happen. I hope the book will be published before the end of 2009, but it is still being considered by publishers.