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### October 20, 2018: Absurdities of Anti-Religious Bias

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Title: Absurdities of Anti-Religious Bias

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10/20/2018—Here is a great instance of how anti-religious thinking becomes second nature among secularists. In last Sunday's New York Times, there was a review of *The Faithful Spy: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Plot to Kill Hitler*, a book by John Hendrix. The review was written by M.T. Anderson, described as an "author of books for young readers including 'Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad.'" Here is the key paragraph: For young readers, one could easily play the near-miss attempts to kill Hitler as a straightforward thriller. The plots involve deception, gut-wrenching timing and concealed explosives: a bomb in a gift package, a rigged docent conducting a tour of captured Russian weaponry and an explosive briefcase spirited into the heart of Hitler's fortress, the Wolfsschanze. But Hendrix makes the bold and surprising decision to tell it as a tale of faith. We are talking here about the life of one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century, who, by all accounts, opposed Hitler as an act of Christian witness, and paid for it with his life. His account of his last days in *Letters and Papers from Prison* is a masterpiece of religious thought, inspiring countless believers. Bonhoeffer deeply pondered growing secularism, too, and has been instrumental in religious/non-religious dialogue. In other words, he was a shining beacon of faith, courageous and thoughtful, and died a martyr to Christ. How else could the story of Bonhoeffer's wrenching decision to turn to political violence be told except through his faith? Whatever one thinks of his decision, his faith was the context in which that decision was made. In other words, the plot to kill Hitler can be told in many ways, but the role of Bonhoeffer in it has to be told as a tale of faith. So, what was Anderson talking about? He doesn't seem to mean it is odd to tell the story about Bonhoeffer's role in the plot—and there are other conspirators of religious conscience as well. So, what is surprising about the way Hendrix tells it? I believe Anderson just means young people don't care about religion. But he is wrong about that. Anderson may not care about religion. His friends may not. The readers of the New York Times may not. But children are instinctively religious. They understand better than Anderson what it means to live a life of faithfulness to God. If their thoughts are child-like, they are not childish. If their simple conception of God must change as they grow, it is not the only kind of thought of childhood that must be adapted as we grow. What is "surprising" is that no editor at the New York Times could hear how odd and silly this review sounds.