

Author links religion, public policy

The Culture of Disbelief, by Stephen L. Carter; Basic Books (New York, 1993); 328 pages; \$25.

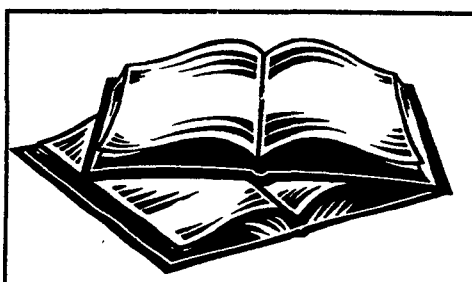
By Richard Philbrick
Catholic News Service

Stephen L. Carter's *The Culture of Disbelief* is a conciliatory, unpretentious book which probably will do more to ease conflicts between religion and public policy than several of the confrontational works on religion and the public square that have appeared in recent years.

Carter, a professor at Yale University's law school, has much the same goal in mind as the authors of the aggressive books — to persuade legislators, jurists, journalists, and others to take religion seriously. Unlike the others, however, he displays no blazing indignation and voices no threats.

He makes a convincing argument that religion is deeply ingrained in American life and that it has a broad influence. It is in the public square, he asserts, and the nation's leaders err seriously when they treat it as a hobby and a trivial activity.

The political essayists are wrong, in Carter's opinion, when they take lightly the stands of those who call for a return to family values, a renewal of religious faith, and for far more em-



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phasis on what they regard as tried and true rules of behavior. These pleas, he believes, are expressions of the deeply held convictions of — as likely as not — intelligent, well-educated, fellow citizens.

He applies that decent respect for the opinions of others as he comments in the calm tone of sweet reason on topics ranging from abortion to the 1992 Republican National Convention.

His convictions about religion and government are particularly enlightening and interesting because he is widely known as an interpreter of the Constitution.

He believes that tax exemptions given religious institutions are a "Faustian bargain." By accepting special tax

treatment, he contends, "religions ... may have paved the way for a future in which they are told that they will lose their treasured tax status unless they reflect, in theology and practices, whatever the current government policy might be: pro-life or pro-choice, pro-nuclear weaponry or pro-nuclear freeze."

Putting his contention another way, he states that "the welfare state has already trapped the religions, and the day will doubtless come when they, too, face pressures to behave correctly."

About proposals to create vouchers for educational purposes Carter is less definite. A voucher, he asserts, "is nothing but a direct subsidy from government revenues." If a voucher program is established — "and I am by no means saying that it should be" — there should be no discrimination against parents who send their children to religious schools, he remarks.

Carter's book has a pleasant tone and pace. It spreads a great deal of knowledge in a most acceptable way.

Philbrick is book review coordinator for CNS. The book is at bookstores or it can be ordered prepaid from Basic Books, Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton, Pa. 18512. Add \$2 for shipping and handling.

Conference planned on spiritual healing

GREECE — The theme of Park Ridge Chemical Dependency's annual fall conference is the healing power through spiritual belief for chemically dependent patients.

This event will take place Nov. 10, from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Park Ridge's Education Center, 1555 Long Pond Road.

Guest speaker will be Dr. David Berenson, associate director of the Family Institute of San Francisco and assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of California at San Francisco.

Registration deadline for the conference is Wednesday, Nov. 3. For registration information, call 716/723-7776.

Auditions scheduled for annual Aquinas musical

ROCHESTER — Two auditions for "The Follies," an annual musical show, will be held next week at Aquinas Institute, 1127 Dewey Ave.

Auditions will take place in the high school's band room on Monday, Nov. 8, from 7-9 p.m.; and in the Aquinas auditorium on Wednesday, Nov. 10, from 7-10 p.m.

The scheduled show dates are March 11-13 and March 18-19, 1994. Auditions are open to men and women ages 18 and older.

For details, call 716/227-8397 or 865-1719.

State health group tabs Sister Castagnaro

St. Joseph's president, CEO to serve two years

Sister Marie Castagnaro, SSJ, president and chief executive officer of St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira, was recently elected president of the New York State Catholic Healthcare Council during its annual meeting in Niagara Falls Oct. 19.

James Cameron, administrator of Manhattan's Kateri Residence, was elected as the council's vice president. Both terms run from 1993-95.

A member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, Sister Castagnaro is a graduate of Nazareth College in Pittsford. She earned her master's degree from Syracuse and Notre Dame universities. In 1988 she was named CEO of St. Joseph's Hospital, a 255 acute-

bed hospital with specialized units in mental health, geriatric care and trauma care, located at 555 E. Market St., Elmira.

St. Joseph's also serves as the Southern Tier's regional burn care and rehabilitation center. Among her numerous community affiliations, Sister Castagnaro serves on the board of the Southern Tier Health Management Corporation, United Way, the Rochester Regional Hospital Association, Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, the Beecher School Advisory Council, the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce, the Catholic Health Association of the United States and the Carondelet Healthcare System CEO Council.

Catholic-sponsored health care facilities and agencies are New York state's largest voluntary, not-for-profit

providers of health services to the poor, the elderly, pregnant women and children, the mentally ill, substance abusers, and people with AIDS.

The Catholic Healthcare Council, a constituent body of the New York State Catholic Conference, advises New York's bishops on matters of public policy related to health issues and represents the interests of the Catholic health ministry in New York state.

According to Peter Capobianco, the council's outgoing president, "Sister Castagnaro and Jim Cameron will bring a record of service, commitment and excellence in their communities to the council's leadership at a time of historic change for health care delivery in our state and nation. They will be outstanding leaders for the Catholic Church's health ministry in the state."

Private prayer postponed at Southern Tier church

ELMIRA — In order to save on heating bills, Ss. Peter and Paul Church, 161 High St., will not be open for private prayer during the winter months.

However, St. Cecilia Church, 954 Lake St., will be accessible for this purpose on Mondays through Fridays, from 9 a.m.-noon.

Both Ss. Peter and Paul and St. Cecilia are part of the East Side Catholic Parish cluster along with St. John the Baptist Church, 327 Lake St.

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The Cup of Wrath

Visiting author Mary Glazener will discuss and sign copies of her recently published historical novel, *The Cup of Wrath: The Story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Resistance to Hitler* on Saturday, November 6, 12:30pm-2pm.

Glazener's work provides a magnificent and intriguing portrait of a courageous German Christian pastor and theologian who joined the underground convinced that it was his duty to work for Hitler's defeat.

The Cup of Wrath successfully combines the essence of many stories of World War II, including the Church's struggle to survive the Third Reich, a resistance movement filled with risk, espionage, and repeated setbacks, and the many Christians and Germans who risked their lives to save the Jews.

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