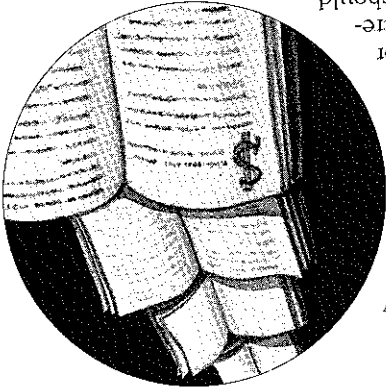


A READING LIST FOR CHRISTIANS IN POLITICS



outcome. Many of his conclusions about the trial run counter to conventional wisdom. Any one with an interest in historical accuracy or the evolution-creation debate should add this book to his reading list.

Charles Murray, *In Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1988). I was unfamiliar with this book until it was the most frequent choice of participants in a Reason magazine feature which suggested books for the next president to read. Since then, it has been an indispensable book in my course on public policy. That said, it is a difficult book to describe except to note that it is excellent at getting readers to think, in general terms, about what they want public policy to accomplish.

Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, Mich., 1994). This book, by a Christian historian, assesses the state of "the evangelical mind" and sadly lacks finding Noll documents the historical reasons for this deficiency and discusses its implications.

Marvin Olasky, *Abortion Rites: A Social History of Abor-*



— Martin Luther King
"To ignore evil is to become an accomplice to it"

Edward Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (Basic Books, 1997). This Pulitzer Prize winner provides a detailed description of the Scopes Trial and a thoughtful discussion of the implications of its

Phillip Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (InterVarsity Press, second edition, 1993). Johnson has spearheaded the recent intellectual backlash against materialistic evolution as a comprehensive explanation for the origins and development of life. This book provides a layman's guide to the logical holes in evolutionary theories and discusses the seriousness and the implications of the debate.

Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (Anchor Books, 1995). The title and subtitle tell the story in one sentence. Cahill's book is an easy-to-read historical account of the Dark Ages. He argues that St. Patrick and other Irish monks "saved civilization" — religion, literature and so on — while the European continent was being overrun by barbarians.

by ERIC SCHANSBERG

"Evangelicals and Economists" in the last issue generated such thoughtful comment that the author was asked to put together a reading list to guide Christians in politics.

Charles Murray has done an excellent job in getting readers to think, in general terms, about what they want public policy to accomplish and what policy can reasonably accomplish.

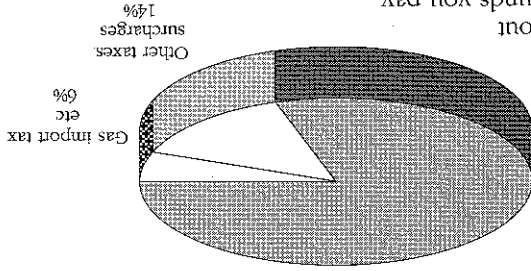
tion in America (Crossway Books: Wheaton, Ill., 1992) A must-read for people interested in this topic. Olasky goes back to the origins of our nation to describe abortion practices and efforts to deal with it (public policy and otherwise). Among many memorable and provocative points, Olasky argues that the rate of abortion in 1860 was higher than it is today. This work is essential for understanding abortion in its historical context and informing one's view about public policy tools to reduce abortion.

Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Regentive Gateway: Washington, D.C., 1992) This is the book on welfare from the 1990s (Charles Murray's *Losing Ground* was the book on welfare from the 1980s). Olasky moves the debate beyond Murray's book, adding to the reasons why welfare has largely failed to help the poor, as well as describing the necessary conditions for even private assistance to be effective. The primary thesis of Olasky's study is that a system of indefinite and indiscriminate assistance is bound to be ineffective. Instead, aid-givers must use "categorization and discernment" to distinguish between those for whom charity-welfare is used as a safety net and those who use it as a hammock, and to provide individual-specific solutions to the disparate problems faced by poor people.

D. Eric Schansberg, *Poor Policy: How Government Harms the Poor* (Westview: Boulder, Colo., 1996) This suggestion is a

THE TAX BITE: ELECTRICITY

In addition to sales taxes, states impose gas import taxes, or other surcharges on your bill. As a result, on average 11.2 percent of what you pay for your electric power bill goes to state governments. For the average customer, this adds up to about \$206 per year. Of the remaining funds you pay for the utility, roughly another \$266 per year on average goes for taxes. Consequently, about one-fourth of what you pay for your electric bill goes to the government in taxes rather than for the electricity. Overall, the government collects \$50 billion a year on taxes paid through your electric bill alone.



— Courtesy of Americans for Tax Reform, 202/785-0266, peter.clearly@atrt.org

Marvin Olasky moves the debate beyond Murray, adding to the reasons why welfare has largely failed to help the poor, as well as describing the necessary conditions for even private assistance to be effective

but I believe that my book provides an excellent overview of public policy. In particular, the book emphasizes how government often inadvertently harms the poor while extending benefits to special interest groups. It also provides an explanation why government so often pursues policies which are harmful to the general public. Topics include drug prohibition and labor market restrictions.

Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction: The Conflict of Christian Faith and American Culture* (Crossway Books: Wheaton, Ill., 1990) An excellent book about the most influential idols in contemporary culture — history, humanity, man-mon, nature, power and religion. It would be a provocative book for those who struggle with idolatry of these gods. And it is a useful discussion for understanding these idols and for helping to convince others who struggle with idolatry.

Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (Harper San Francisco: San Francisco, 1988) A provocative discussion of spiritual disciplines, including their purpose. Willard argues that the disciplines are worthless of themselves, but are useful only as they allow us to more greatly love God and other people. Richard Foster penned the more famous *Celebration of the Disciplines*, but is reported to have said that he wished he would have written Willard's book instead.