

[redacted]
Flat Rock, N.C. 28731-0238
[redacted]

5 November 1997

O.B.K.

Brian Lamb - Host
Booknotes
C-Span
Washington, D.C.

Re: Thomas G. West
"Vindicating the Founders"
11-2-97

Dear Mr. Lamb: 'Histos, very much a living presence
In general I enjoy Booknotes; while there
are occasions there are questions I wish you'd
ask but don't.

Enclosed is a copy of my note to Dr. West.
As a Black on this Earth for a few years I don't
expect Whites, with few exceptions, to fully understand
a walk in my moccasins. I do want to expect
a certain willingness to listen and dialog over
time. The "best" I can say for Prof. West is
that he was disingenuous. Jefferson I see as a
brilliant, conflicted rogue, con-artist. Fortunate
for him — and us — he had enough positive
going for him he didn't become an alcoholic.

By the time of the Civil War (is it War Between the
States, etc. for West?) slavery had so permeated
the South (and in the North in many ways more so)
that it was the issue. States' rights could never
have developed as it did as an issue otherwise.

In 1997, as much as I might wish or do
otherwise, racial issues are still there. I don't
need the pretense otherwise, and my life has
been rather fortunate from birth, along with
having never been a stranger to the otherwise.
For many others * There are things even the worst-off
White never has to have in a life's experience.

White never has to have in a life's experience.
Mind you I grew up knowing a family some of whom now
want to claim Mr. Jefferson. Context means a lot and I'll
have to check on John Hope Franklin's notions of the man — not
that I expect a lot of his current consequences from Pres. Clinton.

Yours truly, [redacted] M.D., M.P.H.

* Many still have to live lives very much with problems
prescribed by the legacies of our flawed heritage.

Flat Rock, N.C. 28731-0238

2 November 1997

Thomas G. West, Ph.D.
Prof. of History
University of Dallas

To Brian Lamb
FBI
ROA, MD
11-5-97

Re: Appearance on Bushnotes
(C-span) 11-2-97 on your "
book, "Vindicating the Forenders" (rec. 9-25-97)

Dear Dr. West: "Mother is a retired what?!"

As a person (a few years under my belt), a Black, a psychiatrist with a very broad psycho-socio-economic experience I have some thoughts. Your 'reflections' to answer questions directly was of interest — from a circuitous identification to the question on who is Salvatore to your daughter getting bottom billing to question about your family (wife, daughter & 3 sons). "Dead White males" was clearly off the mark, given the stated thrust of your book. "Or should have known" is an "iff" statement, and a contradiction. In our communication system what comes after if does not exist, though I'll also note most people proceed to conceptualize as though the after-ifs do exist while the initial presentation is usually on-target. It's a fascinating shift, one that causes a lot of troubles.

I grew up in a very segregated South (not here) lived most of my life in So. Calif. (see how Cleveland) and in my few years here know racism is quite alive. Of course a lot has changed. Know ye that though my focus was science the head of the college history department was a vital influence; "money, money, money!" was his song. He was a person who put his life at risk in voting efforts long before 1954, etc. This is a perspective of existence few Whites ever have to come even remotely close to experiencing.

Founding Fathers or otherwise, I do not expect he-man to be "perfect". On the other hand you appear to go as far in an opposite direction as those you object to.

I suggest the enlightenment thrust "failed" because too many contradictions, self-serving needs. Property rights? The one great power I knew, Father, was property at his hand. Child abuse? Over legal system is based on the child as property, even were [redacted] M.D., M.P.H.

P.S.
I do plan
to read
your
book.

Washington
Post world
Book Review
11-2-97

Jonathan Yardley

Doing the Lord's Work

GOD'S LONG SUMMER
Stories of Faith and Civil Rights

By Charles Marsh
Princeton University Press. 276 pp. \$24.95

THIS original and uncommonly thoughtful book is a study of four men and one woman who played important roles in the "Freedom Summer" of 1964. That was when black Mississippians, joined by black and white out-



serious effort to present the faith of Bowers and Hudgins fairly and sympathetically. Thus Bowers "linked the invading hordes of civil-rights activists—and all those local people who were taken up with the spirit of the moment—with the enemies of Christ," though he cannot see precisely "how, or exactly why," he did so. Marsh finds something oddly poignant about Bowers, and treats him with more compassion than any chronicle of his life would suggest he deserves.

There is little compassion here, though, for Douglas Hudgins and the white Christianity of which he was so prim and proper a representative. "The white church that sanctified and blessed the Southern Way of Life preached a gospel of comfort," Marsh writes, and few can have preached it with deeper conviction than Douglas Hudgins. His mean, narrow theology saw "racial homogeneity" as "ordained by God

theological sense or inner logic in these embodied theologies, and thus there exist patterns specific to the complex interaction of faith and lived experience. I invite the reader to contemplate the inner sense of these religious worlds, to seek an understanding of how the social order looks from the various perspectives of faith, both to broaden our knowledge of the civil-rights movement and better to discern how images of God

the South Carolina college town of Orangeburg; and Fannie Lou Hamer, the saintly black Mississippian who "heard the call of Jesus . . . a call demanding sacrifice, but a call also promising freedom and empowerment," who overcame discrimination and torture to lead a genuinely exemplary life.

The two others are now less widely known, though they got their share of press coverage at the time. Both were white, both

MARSH'S GREAT SYMPATHY WITH the religious faith and practices of Hamer, Sellers and King hardly needs explanation; he is a believer in what he calls "the beloved community," a "reconciled brotherhood and sisterhood, sharing a common cause, celebrating shared and sacred hopes," so it is understandable that he finds the faith of his fellow believers most persuasive and congenial. But he makes a

giant. But there are relatively few of these moments, and their effects are hardly fatal. What matters is that this is a comprehensive, imaginative, fair-minded and perceptive book, a significant contribution to our understanding of those men and women who fought those terrible wars in what seems so long ago but was, in fact, only yesterday. ■

Jonathan Yardley's Internet address is yardleyj@clark.net

The Letter and the Spirit

NEARER, MY GOD
An Autobiography of Faith

By William F. Buckley Jr.
Doubleday. 313 pp. \$24.95

By Bruce Bawer

LAST YEAR the English Tory journalist Paul Johnson published a book about his Catholicism. Rarely was a book more inaptly titled than *The*

Bruce Bawer is the author, most recently, of *"Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity."*

Quest for God: A Personal Pilgrimage, in which Johnson depicted his religious life not as a quest or pilgrimage but as a matter of remaining anchored by sheer will to his boyhood faith and of refusing to seek truth outside of Church teachings. Even the controversial doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven, proclaimed in 1950 by Pius XII, didn't shake Johnson: "The pope and the collegiate church wills it, so I accept."

Now William F. Buckley Jr., perhaps America's closest equivalent to Johnson, has written a book about his own Catholicism entitled *Nearer, My God: An Autobiography of Faith*. In its essentials, Buckley's religion mirrors Johnson's: For him, too, papal de-

crees trump every doubt or difficulty, every prompting of conscience or common sense. In his long fifth chapter—the centerpiece of this curious congeries of anecdotes, quotations, memoirs, tributes and philippics—Buckley synthesizes a 1934 book, *Difficulties*, in which Arnold Lunn, a skeptical layman, raises challenging questions about Catholicism and Ronald Knox, a Catholic priest, answers them.

In each case, Knox's reply boils down to Johnson's formula: "The pope and the collegiate church wills it, so I accept." On papal infallibility, for example, Buckley writes that "Knox would prefer to believe in the infallibility of the Pope than to wonder whether he

is infallible." As for hell, "the Church might have taught that what befalls the unrepentant sinner is simply the annihilation of the soul," which might seem fairer than eternal torment, but "the Church did not do so, and that it did not do so is, for Knox, conclusive." Buckley's sympathy with Knox is evident—he affirms, for example, that "we cannot know the true meaning of any particular [biblical] passage unless the Church has pronounced on the matter"—yet he declares the Lunn-Knox exchange inconclusive, while omitting to explain where, in his view, "Knox falls short."

How, one may ask, does an intelligent person come to —Continued on page 10 3

BOOK WORLD / NOVEMBER 2, 1997

West was
sent to
review
—without
comment

Not →
sent to
West

I hope you don't have Mr. Buckley. As the review shows, for all of his intelligence he is a closed person. Not worth all the PR he gets nor is he truly super formidable. Listen carefully and his language is sketchy—logic as ordinary

'LEWIS & CLARK'



MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Detail from "York," a Charles M. Russell painting. Clark's slave aroused great curiosity among the Indians.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

men had seen. They took it all in. They marveled at the expanse of the Great Plains. They cringed at the sight of the Rockies.

The expedition identified 122 animal species then unknown to science, and 178 new plants. Burns has fun with the expedition's comic encounter with the groundhog and makes the viewer feel the fearsomeness of their first duels with the grizzly bear.

They meet native North Americans who are friendly when told that a distant government now owns their land. They find others who turn testy at the news.

For all of the dangers and hazards of the journey, only one corpsman is lost, and he to illness, and only one hostile volley was fired.

The corpsmen went mighty well equipped with the two contemporary versions of the pen and the sword—they had the latest firearms and ample writing

supplies. Rifles, shot, powder, ink, pens and paper were the only supplies they never exhausted.

And at the heart of it all were Lewis and Clark.

Meriwether Lewis, 29, was Jefferson's personal secretary. He was known to drink a bit and to be given to periods of melancholy. Accepting Jefferson's appointment to head the expedition, Lewis turned to William Clark, four years his senior, to share command. Clark was a Kentucky and Ohio frontiersman who had experience in dealing with Indians.

Jefferson appropriated \$2,500 to pay for the project. Lewis took along his dog. Clark took his slave.

When the corps returned in triumph, its members received various rewards, except for York, Clark's slave. York lobbied for his freedom. Clark expressed annoyance at his slave's pleas and noted in a letter that he'd struck him. Clark freed York five years later.

The series follows some of the men in later years, among them Lewis, whose final unraveling is a sad story told with feeling.

As it turned out, the great explorer had taken an expedition across the continent and back. But in the end, he could not find his own way home.

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