YET ANOTHER BOOK I NEED TO BUY...

Posted on April 21, 2009 by Eddie

Category: Church: World

This book from John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge who are on the editorial staff of the Economist, looks as though it will be a fascinating read. Among the books conclusions are, the fact thatÂ religious people are healthier, wealthier and happier than the non-religious. On a less rosy note, they also cite faith as being at the heart of the world's worst flashpoints of violence.



> *Almost everywhere you look, from the suburbs of Dallas to the slums of SÃ£o Paulo to the back streets of Bradford, you can see religion returning to public life. Most dramatically, Americans and their allies would not be dying in Iraq and Afghanistan had nineteen young Muslims not attacked the United States on September 11, 2001. America's next war could be against the Islamic Republic of Iran â€" or it could be dragged into a spat in Pakistan, where religious fanatics are determined to seize the country's nuclear weapons, or perhaps in West Africa, where there is a monumental clash between Evangelical Christianity surging northward and fundamentalist Islam heading south. Indeed, there are potential battlegrounds all around Islam's southern perimeter, along the tenth parallel, stretching through Sudan to the Philippines. Nor is it just a matter of Christians and Muslims. In Myanmar (Burma) Buddhist monks nearly brought down an evil regime; in Sri Lanka they have prolonged a bloody conflict with Hindu Tamils...*
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> *Religion is even (re-)emerging as a force in the very heartland of secularization. Europe is still a long way behind America: for instance, only one in ten French people say that religion plays an important role in their lives. But nevertheless there are signs that the same forces that are reviving religion in America â€" the quest for community in an increasingly atomized world, the desire to counterbalance choice with a sense of moral certainty â€" are making headway in Europe. Across the Continent the loosening of the ties between church and state is opening the religious market. In France, the fastest growing creed is the most American of all, Pentecostalism. Some two million Britons have taken the so-called Alpha Course, run by an Anglican church, Holy Trinity Brompton. After embracing modernism in the 1960s with Vatican II, the Catholic Church has now returned to a more traditional version of the faith, first under John Paul II and now under his successor, Benedict XVI. The aim is to Catholicize modernity rather than to modernize Catholicism.*
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> *The principle that European politicians do not "do God," as Alastair Campbell, Tony Blair's former spokesman, once angrily told an American magazine, looks out of date. Tony Blair was always a "praying person," and converted to Catholicism shortly after leaving office. His successor, Gordon Brown, claims that he learned his socialism listening to his preacher father's sermons. Before becoming president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy published La*

> *RÃ©publique, les religions, l'espÃ©rance*, in which he called for a greater role for religion in public life. Poland's Law and Justice Party was elected on the promise of a "moral revolution," based on the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

It looks a fascinating read, though the hardback is a bit pricey and I'll probably wait for the paperback - unless anyone fancies buying it from my Amazon wishlist.

HT Justin Long.