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The Catholic Church as a Cultivator of Conscience: Toward Empowering Students to be Agents of the Maturation and Formation of their Consciences

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Abstract

Many Catholic students at Jesuit institutions of higher education will face a crisis in which Catholic identity seems to stand in the way of personal moral growth. The superego-ish conscience of the young adult struggles to mature as she undergoes experiences of expanding social horizons, cognitive-emotive depth, and personal agency. As this maturation begins, Catholic identity often seems to be moral deadweight—to the young adult—as the church seems to be a hopelessly compromised institution pontificating all too often the wrong values without credible foundation. This experience finds support in a popular trope today—advanced in an organized way by groups like the American Humanist Association—in which religion is cast as a superego-ish villain: an oppressive authority figure imposing arbitrary rules with the threat of punishment. According to the trope, atheism (or at least the abandonment of organized religion) is the only avenue conducive to moral growth. This article aims to empower Jesuit educators, and all whose work involves youth formation, to preempt and address this common crisis. To this end, (1) I investigate the moral-religious journey that leads to this crisis, (2) I outline a popular contemporary trope (typified by the rhetoric of the American Humanist Association) in which religion stands in the way of moral growth, (3) I present a nuanced account of conscience and its maturation, and finally (4) I draw a distinction between the (overlooked) maturation of conscience and the formation of conscience and I provide outlines of lessons designed to empower students to be agents of both the maturation and formation of their consciences.

Introduction

The Pew Research Center projects that between 2010 and 2050, Christianity will lose 66,050,000 adherents due to religious switching—by far the most of any major religion. At the same time, the block of people designated “Unaffiliated” is projected to be the greatest beneficiary of religious switching, taking on 61,490,000 new adherents. (Buddhism will suffer the second greatest loss, a mere 2,850,000 adherents, and Islam will enjoy the second greatest increase, 3,220,000 adherents, due to switching.)¹ This article seeks to address one type of religious journey that feeds this global trend.

To give an impression of this journey, take a hypothetical undergrad at Jesuit University named J. J was raised Catholic but is beginning to hesitate before identifying herself as Catholic. Even a year ago, J would have said, “I am Catholic,” but now she pauses. As J undergoes experiences of expanding social horizons, cognitive-emotive

depth, and personal agency she is more and more coming to a personal sense of what is good—what is right and wrong—without ever really meaning to. As she develops this personal sense, it seems that the Catholic Church is all too often at odds with what is right. For J, the Church has a lot of baggage:

1. The scandal of clerical sexual abuse and the concerted effort of the institution to ignore and cover-up the tragic activities of priests.
2. A “Holy” Bible full of texts apparently promoting sometimes backwards, sometimes cruel behavior.
3. Rejection of well-founded scientific claims and questioning combined with blind devotion to outdated teachings and ideologies.
4. Militant opposition to the affirmation of homosexual persons combined with institutional sexism.
5. A history of religious warfare and oppression.

6. General hypocrisy among self-identifying Catholics today.

So now J pauses before affiliating herself with the Church. She has long experienced an oblique discomfort that is now becoming an acute crisis. She can either:

1. Give up personal integrity—refuse the maturation of her conscience—and maintain devotion to the Church.
2. Give up the Church and maintain personal integrity.

When J someday selects option 2, she becomes one of the growing number of students identifying as “spiritual but not religious” and contributes to Pew’s projected cohort of religious switchers.

J is a composite picture of many students: students I have known as a professor, as a teaching assistant, or as a high-school teacher; students who were my undergraduate peers; and my own journey as an undergrad. More tragic, to me, than the switching itself is the nature of the student’s crisis in which personal integrity is pitted against Catholic identity—as if the Catholic Church stands in the way of the emergence and flowering of conscience... as if the only way to grow as a person is to leave the Church.

I write primarily to religious educators at Jesuit (and otherwise Catholic) institutions of higher education (and to all involved with the formation of young adults) in order to promote the development of lessons geared toward empowering students to be agents of both the *maturation* and the *formation* of their consciences. Such lessons will hopefully help the Catholic Church to be and be recognized as a cultivator of conscience and help student’s like J navigate the rough-waters of developing moral and religious identity. This article will proceed in three parts:

- I. I will outline a distinction between superego and conscience and present a popular contemporary trope (typified by the rhetoric of the American Humanist Association) that casts religion as a superego-ish villain and freedom from religion as the only avenue conducive to personal moral growth.

- II. I will present a nuanced account of conscience largely based on the work of Jason J. Howard and I will highlight the fact that every individual will go through a period of time in which an immature, superego-ish conscience is provided avenues and infrastructure for maturation.

- III. I will draw a distinction between the (overlooked) general *maturation* of conscience and the particular *formation* of conscience and I will provide outlines for lessons educators might employ to empower students to be agents of both.

Part I: Superego, Conscience, and the Rhetoric of the American Humanist Association

In “Conscience and the Superego: A Key Distinction,” John Glaser distinguishes between the conscience and the “deceptively similar-looking” superego.² For Glaser, informed by the thought of the twentieth century Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner, conscience is “the preconceptual recognition of an absolute call to love and thereby to co-create myself...”; it is “...the nonverbal insight into a radical invitation to love God in loving my neighbor and thereby become myself abiding love.”³ In an adept appropriation of Glaser, James Keenan, S.J. describes conscience simply as “the call to grow.”⁴ The superego, on the other hand, is concerned with “being lovable.” The superego develops as a pre-personal agent of censorship as a child undergoes the trauma of parental disapproval. The superego has nothing to do with perceiving good; rather it is an expression of “the desire to be approved and loved.”⁵ Glaser provides an itemized comparison illustrating the oppositional nature of the two voices (Figure 1).⁶ While Glaser’s notions of “superego” and “conscience” are problematic, his distinction is helpful. There is a popular contemporary trope that casts religion as a superego-ish force that opposes the genuine maturation of conscience—a maturation only possible for those brave enough to abandon religion. This trope is part of today’s culture but it is most clearly presented by groups actively promoting it. Take for examples three items developed by the American Humanist Association (AHA), an organization that espouses and promotes atheistic humanism and has strong

	Superego	Conscience
1.	Static: does not grow, does not learn, cannot function creatively in a new situation; merely repeats a basic command	Dynamic: an awareness and sensitivity to value which develops and grows; a mindset which can precisely function in a new situation
2.	Oppressive: Commands that an act be performed for approval, in order to make oneself lovable, accepted; fear of love-withdrawal is the basis	Empowering: Invites to action, to love, and in this very act of other-directed commitment to co-create self-value
3.	Authority-Figure-Oriented: not a question of perceiving and responding to a value but of “obeying” authority’s command “blindly”	Value-Oriented: the value or disvalue is perceived and responded to, regardless of whether authority has commanded or not
4.	Arbitrary & Conformity-Oriented -rapid transition from severe isolation, guilt feelings, etc., to a sense of self-value accomplished by confessing to an authority figure -“atomized” units of activity are its object	Growth-Oriented -a sense of gradual process of growth which characterizes all dimensions of genuine personal development -individual acts are seen in their importance as part of a larger process or pattern
5.	Past-Oriented: primarily concerned with cleaning up the record with regard to past acts	Future-Oriented: creative; sees the past as having a future and helping to structure this future as a better future
6.	Self-Oriented: ...the thematic center is a sense of one’s own value	Value-Act-Oriented: ...the thematic center is the value which invites; self-value is concomitant and secondary to this
7.	Punishment-Oriented: urge to be punished and thereby earn reconciliation	Education-Oriented: sees the need to repair by structuring the future orientation toward the value in question (which includes making good past harms)
8.	Authority-Proportionate possible great disproportion between guilt experienced and the value in question; extent of guilt depends more on weight of authority figure and “volume” with which he speaks rather than density of the value in question	Value-Proportionate experience of guilt proportionate to the importance of the value in question, even though authority may never have addressed this specific value

Figure 1: Glaser’s Comparisons

ties to the vocal New Atheist movement (featuring figures like Richard Dawkins and Lawrence Kraus).⁷

First, the AHA’s mission statement:

THE MISSION of the American Humanist Association is to advance humanism, an ethical and life-affirming philosophy free of belief in any gods and other supernatural forces. Advocating for equality for nontheists and a society guided by reason, empathy, and our

growing knowledge of the world, the AHA promotes a worldview that encourages individuals to live informed and meaningful lives that aspire to the greater good.⁸

Humanism, like Glaser’s “conscience,” is dynamic, empowering, value-oriented, and growth-oriented. Humanism is “free of belief in any gods and other supernatural forces,” suggesting that religion is superego-ish: static, oppressive, authority-figure-oriented, and arbitrary.

Second, the AHA’s entire “Kids Without God” Program is laced with this sensibility.⁹ This program has recently been involved in an ad campaign featuring the image of a young girl, a cartoon hand of god pointing from a cloud, and the text, “I’M GETTING A BIT OLD FOR IMAGINARY FRIENDS.”¹⁰ The judgmental hand of the divine authority figure points down at the young girl. But this “God” is drawn, just a cartoon. The girl is real. Eyes and mouth composed in a thoughtful expression, she realizes she is maturing beyond the need for such “imaginary friends.” No “God” will impede her growth. The pointing cartoon hand characterizes religion as oppressive, authority-figure-oriented, and punishment-oriented. Atheistic humanism is supposed to be on the side of the clever young girl because the humanist worldview is dynamic, empowering, growth-oriented, future-oriented, and education-oriented.

Finally, the AHA presents itself as the champion of conscience in its Humanist Manifesto 3 (HM3).¹¹ HM3 is a one page statement articulating “not what we *must* believe but a consensus of what we do believe.”¹² HM3 is a consistently positive document: it lists affirmations of Humanist belief and refrains from explicitly naming other worldviews as problematic. HM3 does not use any form of the word “religion” but characterizes atheistic humanism as a “progressive philosophy” and a “lifestance.”¹³ Among HM3’s affirmations are several sentiments aligning atheistic humanism with Glaser’s conscience:

- “...values and ideals, however carefully wrought, are subject to change as... understandings advance.”
- “Ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience.”
- “Life’s fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals.”¹⁴

Thus atheistic humanism like Glaser’s conscience is dynamic, empowering, value-oriented, growth-oriented, future-oriented, and education-oriented. Without naming religion explicitly, the implication of the HM3 is clear: religions—with their creeds their congregations *must* believe—function in the opposite way; like the superego, religions are static, oppressive, and centered on authority figures who threaten punishment.

J, the hypothetical undergrad, has probably never heard of the AHA, but the sort of sentiments the AHA promotes in an organized way is part of the cultural climate that she lives and breathes—she knows this trope in some fashion. Voices like the AHA’s will make it more likely that developing young adults will experience religion as an impediment to growth and so face the crisis that J faces—give up your religious affiliation or give up your personal integrity and moral development. In order to develop ways to address or preempt J’s crisis (Part III), I will first lay out a nuanced account of the phenomenon of conscience and its maturation (Part II).

Part II: The Phenomenon of Conscience and its Maturation

While Glaser’s distinction is helpful, his use of the concept of the “superego” is rather problematic today. Glaser relies on a (somewhat casual) reading of Freud supplemented by some thought from the psychoanalytic school as it stood in 1971.¹⁵ Not only has the psychoanalytic school’s morality paradigm undergone further development since Freud, but also the psychoanalytic school in general is only one of at least four mainstream schools of psychology currently advancing such paradigms (the cognitive-development school, behavioral school, and biological/evolutionary school being the other three).¹⁶ In addition, Glaser presents the superego and conscience in completely different terms. Glaser gives no account of the psychological phenomena involved in “the preconceptual recognition of an absolute call to love.” His presentation suggests that “superego” is a biological reality whereas “conscience” applies to a spiritual situation—Glaser does not speak of the two in common terms.

In this section, then, I will present a robust account of the phenomenon of conscience. For one, this account will show that Glaser’s “superego” is better thought of as an immature conscience with superego-ish tendencies. More importantly, this account will highlight the fact that there exists a span of time in an individual’s life during which conscience struggles to mature beyond such superego-ish tendencies. This span of time is of the utmost importance because it is during this time that the young adult is also

determining where religion stands vis-à-vis human growth and goodness. Is religion in alliance with the oppressive, immature conscience or the growth-oriented maturing conscience?

In *Conscience and Moral Life*, Jason J. Howard offers a nuanced account of the phenomenon of conscience informed by contemporary psychology as well as philosophy. First of all, Howard rejects the “faculty view” of conscience: understandings that present conscience as a discrete, innate, largely static faculty within the human person capable of issuing infallible moral guidance—e.g., “the voice of God within,” if such a statement is taken literally.¹⁷ Among other problems, such accounts of conscience alienate the individual from his or her own moral growth and identity—morality would consist of simply obeying this voice. Instead, Howard presents conscience thusly:

Seen as a process, conscience refers to a constellation of experiences that center on integrating emotions of self-assessment with degrees of rational justification that serve both to structure self-identity and to motivate changes in behavior. The process arises as a result of the way we exist, as embodied beings inevitably shaped by the moral considerations of others, in which we feel as if the sources of our integrity were constantly drifting just beyond our reach.¹⁸

The emotions of self-assessment are principally guilt, shame, and pride. These emotions involve self-evaluation pertaining either to the total self or to specific acts done or under consideration. These emotions arise from, or reflect the existence of, a pre-conceptual *desire to be worthwhile*.¹⁹ Guilt is a negative evaluation concerning a single act (as expressed in, “I did a bad thing”). Shame is a negative evaluation concerning the status of the entire self (as expressed in, “I am a bad person”). And pride is a positive evaluation that can apply to both discrete acts and the status of the self.²⁰ Each of these emotions involves “the internalization of standards that anchor our sense of self-esteem.” At a precognitive level, the individual learns from others, through socialization, to evaluate him or herself positively or negatively in various situations.²¹ These emotions, as they are first informed by the internalization of standards, need

not necessarily involve any moral relevance—this is especially true when the horizons of socialization are very limited.

Conscience “arises as our concerns and projects expand beyond our immediate family environment...” and “comes into its own as our cognitive capacities increase and we gain some measure of control over our burgeoning emotional life and the new commitments such capacities make possible.”²² This is to say that conscience proper emerges as one’s cognitive capacities develop, one’s horizons of socialization expand, and one becomes an agent of one’s own development. “Conscience” describes the ongoing process by which the emotions of self-assessment (1) are informed by the multiplicity of norms disclosed through social experience and (2) are integrated into a coherent moral disposition. As one’s horizons of socialization expand and capacity for commitment takes on greater depth, this process of integration called conscience becomes a “viable sense of moral responsibility.”²³ “Conscience” names a dialectic between investing norms with a sense of self-identity (via the emotions of self-assessment) and calling these investments into question in light of each other as well as new experiences.

Hence, Glaser’s “superego” is an immature conscience in which self-identity is invested in a very limited set of norms (the household’s norms), and these norms have little depth, little moral import, and are not wholly distinguishable from the authority figures who provided them. The child’s sense of guilt, shame, and pride are informed by the norms of the parents or the immediate household. These norms, assuming a relatively loving environment, tend to revolve around the safety of the child as well as the peaceful flow of day to day life—nothing particularly moral. Moreover, the apparent belief systems of the immediate family are also internalized by the child in a rather passive way: the child has not really appropriated these beliefs with any sense of self-determination. As the youth progresses from elementary to middle school, he or she is also more informed by the norms of peer groups—still with little agency. At this level, the immature conscience often has superego-ish tendencies; it functions as listed above, as: (1) static, (2) oppressive, (3) authority-figure-oriented,

(4) conformity-oriented, (5) past-oriented, (6) self-oriented, (7) punishment-oriented, (8) and with a sensitivity to “right” and “wrong” behavior in proportion to the decibel level at which the internalized commands were given. Conscience proper comes about (or conscience matures) as horizons expand, norms become more fraught with nuanced human endeavor, and the self becomes a more enterprising agent into the world.

While Howard rejects the notion that conscience is “the voice of God,” he only really rejects fairly literal interpretations of this statement and interpretations that would render conscience infallible. Conscience, even as described by Howard, can take on a theo-phonic aspect, from a Catholic viewpoint, in as much as conscience involves the self with investing itself into transcendental realities: e.g., truth, beauty, goodness, justice, love.²⁴ The more conscience becomes engaged with and aligned to the maintenance of such realities, the more it takes on a theo-phonic character... though never becoming infallible. Such a good conscience really is, then, a “call to grow” both as a maturing conscience will naturally seek to expand the horizons, depth, and coherence of one’s commitments and as a conscience informed by the transcendental realities will implicitly involve God’s call to co-create oneself into abiding love.

Howard’s account thus reveals the fact that there is a transitional span of time during which the superego-ish immature conscience comes into tension with experiences of expanding horizons, depth, and agency. During this window of time, conscience may mature beyond superego-ish tendencies or at least subordinate these tendencies, or the individual may cling to the immature conscience and reject the new experiences. In any case, there will be a prolonged tension as experiences render growth possible. For J, this tension also involves the evaluation of her religious commitments as the growth of her conscience seems to necessitate the rejection of her religion.

Part III: Championing both the Maturation and Formation of Conscience

J needs to experience the Church as a champion of her conscience if she is to resolve her crisis

without forfeiting either the Church or her integrity and growth. In order to clarify what this means, two discussions must be differentiated: those revolving around the maturation of conscience and those revolving around the formation of conscience. Discussions concerning the formation of conscience have to do with how the basic dynamics of conscience can be informed by specific traditions, worldviews, lifestyles, etc... Christian discussions of the “formation of conscience” often have to do with how Christians can engage such things as scripture, liturgy, church teaching, charitable work, etc... so as to further align their consciences with Christian belief.²⁵ Discussions concerning the maturation of conscience have to do with the basic dynamics of conscience itself—such as the dynamics proposed by Howard (see Part II)—a dynamic supposed to be universal. The general maturation of conscience is thus distinguishable from the formation of conscience with specific content.

Obviously the Church recognizes a well-formed Christian conscience as an ally of human salvation. But what of the maturation of conscience in general pertaining to the individual’s growth in light of experiences of expanding social horizons, cognitive-emotive depth, and personal agency? According to Vatican II’s *Declaration on Religious Freedom (Dignitatis Humanae)*:

[...all] are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and His Church, and to embrace the truth they come to know, and to hold fast to it.

This Vatican Council likewise professes its belief that it is upon the human conscience that these obligations fall and exert their binding force. The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind at once quietly and with power.

If *Dignitatis Humanae* is to be taken seriously, the Church also recognizes the general maturation of conscience as an ally of human salvation. The conscience is not to be stunted. For the superego-ish, immature conscience the truth is imposed by authority-figures and through oppression and punishment. Only upon the mature and maturing conscience can truth impose itself by its very own virtue. The maturation of conscience is thus

conducive to the will of God, not only the explicitly Christian formation of conscience.²⁶

Pope Francis seems to want to resound *Dignitatis Humanae*’s call for the church to be a champion of the maturation of conscience. It is perhaps helpful to interpret Francis’s controversial 2013 remark—“If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?”—in light of the superego-conscience distinction.²⁷ In this remark Pope Francis refuses to be the superego of the Catholic Church. Rather, Francis calls all, gay and straight alike, to dedicate themselves to earnest searching. In other words, Francis champions the maturation of conscience here by refusing to impose a judgment simply on authority and by encouraging earnest searching.

J’s crisis comes about when the Church fails to be (or fails to be recognized as) a champion of the maturation of conscience as well as its formation. Thus to address or preempt J’s crisis, I offer the outlines of two lessons I hope educators will work into existing curricula. I provide here the barebones of these lessons and I encourage those wishing to implement them to experiment with fleshing them out in multiple ways.

1. Empower students to be self-aware agents of the *maturation* of their consciences.

Catholic educators are called to be champions of the general maturation of conscience. One specific way to do this is to raise student awareness of the dynamics of conscience. Present to students the facts of the matter:

1. Emotions are indications of how one values various realities.
2. Guilt, shame, and pride specifically involve self-assessment.
3. All have experienced guilt, shame, and pride in various contexts.
4. Now they have the option to be...
 - A. either passive persons who merely suffer these emotions.
 - B. or active persons...
 - i. capable of investigating personal experiences so as to trace such experiences to the sources informing

them (parents, religion, peers, society, etc...);

- ii. capable of questioning the appropriateness of experiences of guilt, shame, and pride as such emotions arise in connection with various behaviors.

In this way students are encouraged to develop a feedback loop such that they are empowered to consciously partake in the process by which the conscience matures.


2. Empower students to be self-aware agents of the *formation* of their consciences.

Caricatures that depict religion as superego-ish have popularized the notion that religions adopt moral stances out of blind obedience to outdated divine decrees. To overcome this caricature, it would be helpful for the student to see how Christians and churches come to adopt various stances on contemporary issues. This can be shown in three steps:

1. Introduce students to the notion that Christian stances are informed by four sources: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience—not only scripture and tradition, as the caricature would suggest.²⁸
2. Explain that these four sources give way to a tremendous variety of Christian thought because...
 - a. Christians interpret differently each of the four;
 - b. Christians give different weight to each of the four.
3. Provide a topical example, such as a comparison of various Christian viewpoints regarding homosexuality in terms of how each viewpoint interprets and weighs the data of each of the four sources.²⁹

For students who disagree with the Church, this will allow students to pinpoint how or why *exactly* they disagree.³⁰ In this way, students are not only disabused of the caricature of religion but also empowered to be able to disagree with the reasoning that informs various stances without feeling obliged to reject religion wholesale.

Conclusion

The Pew Research Center’s shocking projections concerning the religious switching out of Christianity and into the ranks of the Unaffiliated in the coming decades is cause for concern. Based on personal experience with many students I have identified and described a common religious journey that feeds this global trend wherein the young adult “raised Catholic” ends up identifying as “spiritual but not religious.” I have pinpointed a crisis many Catholic youths undergo in which Catholic identity seems to impede personal moral growth. Experiences of expanding social horizons, cognitive-emotive depth, and personal agency begin the maturation of conscience, and this early maturation often gives rise to more and more critical perceptions of the Church. In order to alleviate the crisis, the youth needs to see that—despite the popular trope advanced by groups like the AHA—the Church in fact aims to be a cultivator of conscience. The Church teaches that the very maturation of conscience—even if it involves critical perception of the Church—is conducive to the will of God and human flourishing. I have provided outlines for lessons geared toward empowering students to be agents of both the maturation and the formation of their consciences. It is my hope that, as educators implement these lessons in various and creative ways, more students will be able to avoid or navigate the tragic crisis in which Catholic identity and moral growth stand in opposition. 

Notes

- ¹ Pew Research Center, April 2, 2015, “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050,” 11-12, <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>.
- ² John W. Glaser, “Conscience and Superego: A Key Distinction,” in *Conscience: Theological and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. C. Ellis Nelson (New York: Newman Press, 1973), 168.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 169. Glaser explicitly gestures toward Rahner’s “Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbor and the Love of God”—see 186n2.
- ⁴ James Keenan, S.J., *Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition*, 2nd ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 27-43. Keenan provides an insightful discussion of conscience, intended for a popular audience.
- ⁵ Glaser, “Conscience,” 169-170.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 175-176. The text of this chart is Glaser’s; I, however, have taken liberties in reordering, numbering, and providing original headings for some of the items.
- ⁷ The AHA is a charitable organization headquartered in Washington DC. It has over 30,000 members and supporters. To give a sense of its size, in 2014, the AHA reported \$2,725,310 in income and \$2,474,284 in expenses. The AHA has 380,000 Facebook followers and 26,000 Twitter followers. These figures come from the AHA’s Annual Report 2014. See American Humanist Association, “About the AHA, 2014 Annual Report,” accessed May 20, 2015, <http://americanhumanist.org/AHA>. The AHA has a lot of overlap with the “New Atheism”: Richard Dawkins is listed publicly as a signatory of Humanist Manifesto III and was honored as “Humanist of the Year” in 1996; Daniel Dennett was given the same honor in 2004, and Lawrence Krauss is the current recipient (2015). See American Humanist Association, “About the AHA, Humanists of the Year,” accessed May 20, 2015, http://americanhumanist.org/AHA/Humanists_of_the_Year.
- ⁸ See American Humanist Association, “About the AHA, 2014 Annual Report,” accessed May 20, 2015, <http://americanhumanist.org/AHA>.
- ⁹ To explore this material firsthand see American Humanist Association, “Kids Without God,” accessed May 20, 2015, <http://www.kidswithoutgod.com/>.
- ¹⁰ For the image, see American Humanist Association, “Press, Kids Without God,” accessed May 20, 2015, <http://americanhumanist.org/press/KidsWithoutGod>.
- ¹¹ See American Humanist Association, “What is Humanism, Humanism and its Aspirations, Manifesto III,” accessed May 20, 2015, http://americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_III.

- ¹² My emphasis. The brevity of the document seems to be intentional as the text fits very neatly on a single page.
- ¹³ American Humanist Association, “Manifesto III.”
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Glaser provides a somewhat wanting account for how the “superego” fits into Freud’s broader account of the nature of human morality. See Glaser, “Conscience,” 169-172. Freud is supplemented with a few more recent scholars (relative to 1973), Dieter Eicke and Hans Zulliger for example.
- ¹⁶ See Elizabeth C. Vozzola, *Moral Development: Theory and Applications* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1-90. On the history and current state of the psychoanalytic school specifically, see pages 10-16. Vozzola provides an engaging and accessible introduction to these four paradigms in their most current renderings.
- ¹⁷ Jason J. Howard, *Conscience in Moral Life: Rethinking How Our Convictions Structure Self and Society* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 34-43. Walter E. Conn provides an account complementary to Howard’s. Conn focuses on the relationship between conscience and self-transcendence employing the work of Bernard Lonergan as well as the cognitive-developmental paradigm of moral development (as it stood prior to 1981). See Walter E. Conn, *Conscience: Development and Self-Transcendence* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1981). See also John Macquarrie, “The Struggle of Conscience for Authentic Selfhood,” in *Conscience: Theological and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. C. Ellis Nelson (New York: Newman Press, 1973), 155-166.
- ¹⁸ Howard, *Conscience in Moral Life*, 94.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 71-74.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 62.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 63.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁴ See Michael J. Buckley, S.J., *Denying and Disclosing God: The Ambiguous Progress of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 131-137.

²⁵ See, for example, William C. Spohn, “Conscience and Moral Development,” in *Conscience: Readings in Moral Theology No. 14*, ed. Charles E. Curran (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 130-150.

²⁶ John F. Crosby tends toward this point in the connections he draws between John Paul II’s personalism and *Dignitatis Humanae*. See John F. Crosby, “On Proposing the Truth and Not Imposing It: John Paul’s Personalism and the Teaching of *Dignitatis Humanae*” in *Catholicism and Religious Freedom: Contemporary Reflections on Vatican II’s Declaration on Religious Liberty*, ed. Kenneth L. Grasso and Robert P. Hunt (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 135-160.

²⁷ See National Public Radio, Bill Chappell Twitter, “Pope Francis Discusses Gay Catholics: ‘Who Am I to Judge?’” accessed May 20, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/07/29/206622682/pope-francis-discusses-gay-catholics-who-am-i-to-judge>.

²⁸ Here it may be helpful to refer to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, but the point is less a detailed history of the concept and more the fact of the four sources.

²⁹ To this end, see L.R. Holben, *What Christians Think about Homosexuality* (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 1999), in which Holben shows that Christian thinking concerning homosexuality generally fits into one of six viewpoints.

³⁰ The introduction of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral is also beneficial to those students who agree with the Church. Sam Hey and Johan Roux argue convincingly that the introduction of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral to firm-believing Christians can enable them to better respect differing viewpoints as authentically Christian. See Sam Hey and Johan Roux, “Wesley and Beyond: Integrating the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and ‘Praxis Cycle’ to Support Tertiary Student Theological Engagement,” *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 9, no. 2 (2012): 192-209. See also M.R. Cosby, “Using the Wesleyan Quadrilateral to Teach Biblical Studies in Christian Liberal Arts Colleges,” *Teaching Theology and Religion* 4, no. 2 (2001): 71-80. I have personally witnessed a strategy similar to the one I have outlined put to use to great effect by Rev. Bryan Massingale in THEO 4490: “Studies in Moral Theology – Homosexuality and Christian Ethics” at Marquette University. Listening to students’ questions and reading their weekly reflections in this course also helped me to form the hypothetical undergrad “J.”