

## An Interview with Dr. William Harwood

Autor tekstu: **Kaz Dziamka**

**Kaz:** Bill, I have read many of your articles in *The American Rationalist*, *Free Inquiry*, and elsewhere, and I like them immensely. You don't mince words - unlike many religiously correct humanists and even atheists who are afraid to offend the incurably meek, the perennially sheepish, and those that have been scared witless by anti-human god experts. I'd like to ask you a few questions: OK, I know what you have to say about the mind-boggling silliness of many Christian and other religious beliefs. But let's assume that you are on your deathbed (as many of us hope to die, unlike, for instance, being blown out of the sky by Allah's virgin seekers and endless kinky sex). On your right side is your non-religious friend or relative trying to comfort you. On your left side is a local Catholic priest who — having found out a prominent Canadian atheist is dying — is hoping for a deathbed conversion. What do you say to both?

**Bill:** *I would tell a nonbeliever at my deathbed, in the words of a corporal at Little Big Horn, „Please, Mr. Custer, I don't want to go.” I would then add, „Look on the good side. This is the worst thing that can ever happen to me.” I could no more convert to belief in religion than an astronaut who has looked at the earth from an orbiting space shuttle could convert to belief in a flat earth. I would tell any priest present, „If you need to believe in an afterlife to overcome your terror of death and get you through the day without having to be institutionalized and diapered, do it on your own time. Right now, you are trespassing.”*

**Kaz:** Please tell me what you would do if you were editor of the *American Rationalist*? Please, no British or Australian understatements.

**Bill:** *I cannot foresee how I might edit AR. That is experience talking. I once edited Calamity, the monthly newsletter of Mensa's Calgary local. I quit after two issues, because I could not stomach the reaction of brain-dead readers. Admittedly there is a difference. Calamity was written for people whose only common quality was an ability to score high on I.Q. tests. They averaged the same level in functional intelligence, educability and rationality as subscribers to Reader's Digest. I would have no fear of encountering the same reaction at AR. But the point is, I could not foresee the consequences of one editing assignment, and would have to be very reckless to make assumptions on how best to handle another. My guess would be that I would maintain the previous editor's procedures, and try making changes slowly, as they occurred to me, only after I was sure I had a fallback position if they failed to work.*

**Kaz:** You say that North America is still the best place to live, as if Canada was the same kind of country as the United States, a rather bland, generic appellation. (As Michael Moore asked: Who are we? „United Statesters”?) Do you really think Canada and „The Big One” (or „Planet USA”) are significantly similar?

**Bill:** *Ten years ago I would have said that Canada was the best place in the world to live. America had a Republican Party so desperate for power that it was willing to become the puppet of the Mad Dog Religious Right if that was what it took to get elected-and Canada did not. Things have changed. Canada now has an Official Opposition, with one-fifth of the seats in Parliament that wants to do to Canada what the Taliban did to Afghanistan. That makes Canada and America mirror images. So the best place to live is now „North America.”*

**Kaz:** President-nominee Dubya Bush considers Jesus Christ his "favorite philosopher," while our home-grown Christian Ayatollah Ashcroft, who runs the Department of [In]justice, contends that there is no king but Jesus. Do you think we can fall lower than this? Or is this the beginning of the end of the Yankee Christers in the White House?

**Bill:** *To quote Kai Nielson (Naturalism and Religion), „In a recent survey taken in the United States, 88 percent of the population maintained that they had never had any doubts about the existence of God. Even if this survey is inaccurate and this is true of only 40 percent of the population, it is still an intellectual and moral disgrace—a disgrace that should be a scandal in the United States.” Either that 88 percent have never read their own bible, or they did so only after putting their brains in OFF. Jesus the Nazirite is portrayed in his own official biography as a thoroughly despicable human being, who either preached or was accused of*

*preaching a sermon that can be summarized, „Cheat those who are no longer useful to you, and use the stolen money to bribe those who are in a position to do you some good.”*

*When political candidates can try to out-butt-lick one another to praise such a monster, and one of the most mindless sycophants can actually become president (if only by a treasonous coup d'etat), America is in a lot of trouble. We have seen what happened when hardcore believers took over Iran and Afghanistan. No evil is unthinkable to persons who believe they are obeying a god. Gee Dubya Shrub has already cancelled foreign aid to countries that won't conform to the American Religious Right's determination to overpopulate the human species into extinction. If Shrub and his puppet-masters are not tossed out while there is still time, America will go the way of Babylon, Ninevah, and the Soviet Union.*

**Kaz:** Thanks, Bill. I hope our partnership will continue, and I am looking forward to more intellectual dynamite from your free mind and mighty pen.

*I have also asked Bill to offer a brief opinion about pope John Paul II, a man I consider completely deluded and dangerously obsessed with political power and self-glorification. I must say I am very embarrassed that the current pontiff comes from the same country as I do. Surely, Poland has much more to offer to modern civilization than this fourth-century intellect. Every time I think of the „Holy Father,” I am reminded of the dictum that "There is no fool like an old fool." There are many old fools, admittedly, and I may become one as well – considering how „the Good Lord” has designed our bodies to age disgracefully. But there is only one such old man who can cause so much disinformation, confusion, and general retardation as the pope. Ronald Reagan managed, mercifully, to finish his stint as president before his brain began to really disintegrate, and we usually shut out dilapidated ancient bodies from positions of political power. Not the Vatican. The octogenarian fuddy-duddy, his body grotesquely deformed by eight decades of bad living and bad thinking, continues to mutter and mumble empty platitudes, while the sheep continue to hang on his every word, no matter how absurd or how banal.*

Anyhow, when asked about the pope, Bill referred me to a section in his book *Disinformation Cycle* about the wicked Fatima hoax.

An excerpt from William Harwood's book *Disinformation Cycle*:

*Early in his papacy, John Paul II made a pilgrimage to Fatima, thereby jeopardizing the credibility of the Catholic church if the truth was ever revealed. It is inconceivable that even a man of Karol Wojtyła's minuscule intellectual capacity could have done something so incredibly stupid-unless he had already guaranteed that the hoax would never be exposed by destroying the hoaxers' sealed letter. Perhaps, like 1984's Ministry of Truth, Wojtyła believed he could change the facts of history by changing what was written about them. As for the Vatican's recent claim (May 13, 2000) that the sealed letter contained a prophecy of a bishop in a white robe falling in a hail of bullets, that believers would have no difficulty interpreting as Wojtyła's 1981 escape from assassination, the Occam's razor explanation is that the pope's scriptwriter was trying to give the hoax an injection of credibility, even providing an explanation for the prophecy's original suppression, since publishing it in 1960 would have been an open invitation to potential assassins to make the prophecy come true.*

William Harwood is Contributing Editor of the American Rationalist. Kaz Działka is Editor in chief of the American Rationalist and Editor of the English section of *Racjonalista*.

**Kaz Działka**

Główny redaktor sekcji angielskiej *Racjonalisty*. Redaktor naczelny magazynu *The American Rationalist*. Doktor amerykanistyki (Uniwersytet Nowy Meksyk). Autor książki ["Moja Słowiańska Wolność"](#). [Nota biograficzna](#)

[Pokaż inne teksty autora](#)

(Publikacja: 10-06-2003 Ostatnia zmiana: 06-10-2003)

[Oryginał..](http://www.racjonalista.pl/kk.php/s,2491) (<http://www.racjonalista.pl/kk.php/s,2491>)

Contents Copyright © 2000-2008 Mariusz Agnosiewicz

Programming Copyright © 2001-2008 Michał Przech

Autorem tej witryny jest Michał Przech, zwany niżej Autorem.  
Właścicielem witryny są Mariusz Agnosiewicz oraz Autor.

Żadna część niniejszych opracowań nie może być wykorzystywana w celach komercyjnych, bez uprzedniej pisemnej zgody Właściciela, który zastrzega sobie niniejszym wszelkie prawa, przewidziane w przepisach szczególnych, oraz zgodnie z prawem cywilnym i handlowym, w szczególności z tytułu praw autorskich, wynalazczych, znaków towarowych do tej witryny i jakiegokolwiek ich części.

Wszystkie strony tego serwisu, wliczając w to strukturę katalogów, skrypty oraz inne programy komputerowe, zostały wytworzone i są administrowane przez Autora. Stanowią one wyłączną własność Właściciela. Właściciel zastrzega sobie prawo do okresowych modyfikacji zawartości tej witryny oraz opisu niniejszych Praw Autorskich bez uprzedniego powiadomienia. Jeżeli nie akceptujesz tej polityki możesz nie odwiedzać tej witryny i nie korzystać z jej zasobów.

Informacje zawarte na tej witrynie przeznaczone są do użytku prywatnego osób odwiedzających te strony. Można je pobierać, drukować i przeglądać jedynie w celach informacyjnych, bez czerpania z tego tytułu korzyści finansowych lub pobierania wynagrodzenia w dowolnej formie. Modyfikacja zawartości stron oraz skryptów jest zabroniona. Niniejszym udziela się zgody na swobodne kopiowanie dokumentów serwisu Racjonalista.pl tak w formie elektronicznej, jak i drukowanej, w celach innych niż handlowe, z zachowaniem tej informacji.

Plik PDF, który czytasz, może być rozpowszechniany jedynie w formie oryginalnej, w jakiej występuje na witrynie. **Plik ten nie może być traktowany jako oficjalna lub oryginalna wersja tekstu, jaki zawiera.**

Treść tego zapisu stosuje się do wersji zarówno polsko jak i angielskojęzycznych serwisu pod domenami Racjonalista.pl, TheRationalist.eu.org oraz Neutrum.eu.org.

Wszelkie pytania prosimy kierować do [redakcja@racjonalista.pl](mailto:redakcja@racjonalista.pl)