

TEMPLETON REPORT

NEWS FROM THE JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

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Courage, from Aristotle to 9/11

“Courage is a foundational virtue. If you don’t have courage, none of the other virtues can be protected.” So says Charlotte Hays, editor of *In Character*, in explaining why the new “courage issue” of the Templeton Foundation’s tri-annual journal of the “everyday virtues” is so important. “You might believe all the right things,” she continues, “but not have the courage to defend them.”

Contributors to the issue include Sir Ian Kershaw, the leading historian of the Third Reich, who asks himself “What Would *I* Have Done?” in the face of Hitler’s rise. “Acknowledging the level of courage needed to challenge the Nazi regime, even in minor ways,” he writes, “requires some humility for those who, mercifully, have never had to contend with such political ruthlessness.”



Terry Golway, the author of *So Others Might Live*, a history of the Fire Department of New York, recalls the courage of his own father, a member of the FDNY. Golway wonders how anyone could suggest that on 9/11 the firefighters should not have gone into the World Trade Center “because of the obvious risks involved.” “We cannot, in the end, understand firefighters,” he concludes. “Their courage is beyond our comprehension. Likewise the courage of spouses, partners, and children, those who understand that every shift brings risk and that every kiss goodbye might be the last.”

The new issue of *In Character* also takes on a more vexed issue related to the awful events of 9/11: Hays asked six writers to answer the question of whether the al-Qaeda terrorists who attacked the U.S. were courageous or cowardly. Contributors to the symposium include Paul McHugh, the former chair of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Irshad Manji, the author of *The Trouble With Islam: A Muslim’s Call for Reform in Her Faith*; and Ruth Wisse, professor of Yiddish and comparative literature at Harvard.



Sir Ian Kershaw



Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Hays admits that as she began putting together the courage issue of *In Character*, she was inclined to believe that the 9/11 terrorists did have courage of a sort. After all, they had given their lives for a cause, however vile. But after reading the symposium contribution by Robert Royal, president of the Faith and Reason Institute, she reconsidered. As Royal observes of the hijackers, citing Aristotle, “we have no way of knowing what their souls were like,” but “certain ways of facing danger or even of giving up our lives are vices not virtues.”

Several articles in the issue emphasize that resolve in the face of physical danger is not the only kind of courage. As Hays notes, when it comes to the current travails of the economy, “all of us right now are very afraid.” Her interview with James Grant, editor of the *Interest Rate Observer* and one of the first financial writers to argue that lax lending standards portended catastrophe for the economy, provides some insight into what it means to stand tall in the stock market. Grant distinguishes between the “reckless courage” of those who read books like *Dow 36,000* and plunged right into investing, expecting easy profits,

and the courage of someone who studies the market, sticks with his choices, and “despite the intermediate loss of money, despite the peer pressure, and despite the risk of career damage . . . persists in an unpopular but ultimately profitable course.”

In other features of the new issue, the Harvard political theorist Harvey Mansfield, author of a recent book called *Manliness*, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a controversial former member of the Dutch Parliament and the author of *Infidel*, debate whether courage is a masculine virtue. Hirsi Ali suggests that the “West’s preoccupation with personal expression of gender” has caused it to lose sight of radical enemies who have “never had that same luxury.” The critic and humorist Joe Queenan tries to distinguish real courage from false courage in a piece titled “The ‘My Bad’ Syndrome.” And in the issue’s “Devil’s Advocate” column, *Vanity Fair* contributing editor Judy Bachrach makes the case for history’s lily-livered cowards. “Who is likely to live longer,” she asks, “the guy packing heat at the door or the guy hiding under the bed?”

NOTEBOOK

Video of “Evolution and the Ethical Brain” with David Brooks

For much of the past century, Darwin’s ideas were thought to illuminate only the darker side of human nature, our most violent and self-serving impulses. But over the last several generations, the best evolutionary thinking has turned in a different direction, toward more attractive and socially constructive qualities, like altruism, cooperation, and a sense of justice. How did these qualities evolve, and how might we best use and develop our ethical potential?



These and other questions were the subject of “Darwin 200: Evolution and the Ethical Brain,” a Templeton-sponsored panel discussion held in New York City on March 4 and moderated by the *New York Times* columnist David Brooks. The panelists for the wide-ranging conversation included Michael Gazzaniga of the University of California at Santa Barbara, Jonathan Haidt of the University of Virginia, and Steven Quartz of Cal Tech.

For video clips and a transcript of the event, plus information about the panelists, please visit www.templeton.org/darwin200.

Studying Pentecostalism

It has been over a century since Pentecostalism was born in a small church in downtown Los Angeles. Now the University of Southern California is getting a four-year, \$6.9-million grant from the John Templeton Foundation to establish the Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative (PCRI). The project will support innovative social science research in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union by providing up to \$3.5 million in grants to regional centers and individual scholars. PCRI will create a range of scholarly resources, including a digital archive, and also will conduct research on Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity in Los Angeles.



With approximately 500 million adherents around the world, Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity is distinguished by its energetic forms of worship and prayer and by its entrepreneurial drive, which has generated profound cultural and economic changes in the societies where it has taken root. “Our goal is to inspire research partnerships around the globe and fund projects

that will shape the discussion for years to come,” said Donald Miller, executive director of USC’s Center for Religion and Civic Culture, and author of *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*. “We are interested in understanding why Pentecostalism is growing so rapidly, what impact it is having on society, and how it is different in various cultural settings.”

“The growth of global Pentecostalism is one of the most remarkable religious transformations of the last century,” said Kimon Sargeant, vice president of human sciences at the Templeton Foundation. “The goal of this project is to further a better understanding of its significance in the social sciences in areas ranging from social capital to economic development and more.”

For more information, write to communications@templeton.org.

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