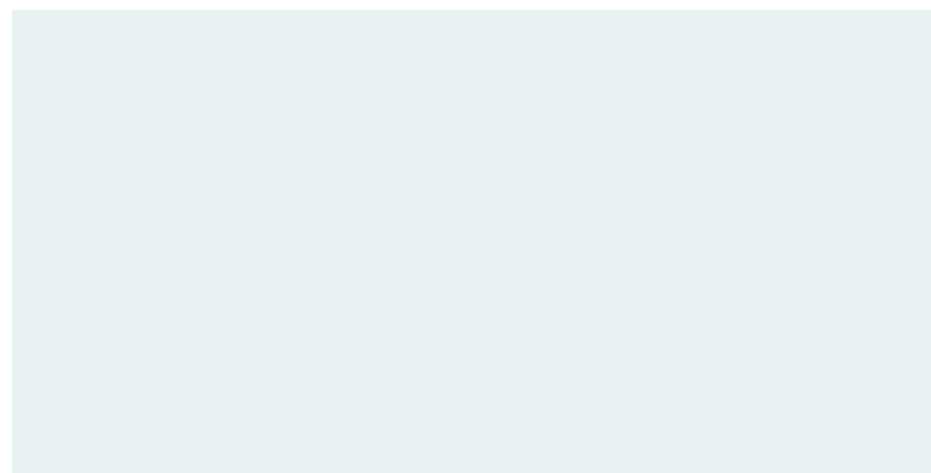


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Wallis challenged the left to recall the achievements of progressive Christian reformers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the abolition movement, women's suffrage, and the civil rights movement as a model for left-leaning religious activism.

Wallis, however, proceeded beyond simply laying out the contours of contemporary politics and religion. He maintained, religion is not supposed to be a wedge that divides us, but a bridge that brings us together. Drawing on the example of Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address, Wallis



Religion and the Academy

In November, Edwards, academic dean at Harvard Divinity School, visited the Boisi Center to discuss the relationship between private belief and public scholarship. Edwards presented sections from his forthcoming book, *Religion, Order, and Power: A History of the University of Chicago*. He argued that although religion is viewed as a taboo subject, especially in academia, the time is right for religious and non-religious academics to discuss belief in the context of the university. In earlier decades, believing scholars faced at best dismissive attitudes toward religion or at worst discrimination. For most of the twentieth century, confidence in the scientific method in both the natural and social sciences relegated belief to the margins. At present, he explained, with the diversity of intellectual approaches, space has opened for serious conversations about religion in the academy.

To insure fruitful exchanges among faculty, Edwards outlined some basic principles of conver-



sation. Key factors include a sense of equality among participants, the importance of real-life experience versus abstraction, the value of emotion as well as reason, and the crucial role of feedback. In order to help frame these conversations, Edwards provided a historical, sociological, and personal analysis of the academy and its relation to religion. On the historical level, he encourages faculty members to

acknowledge the place of religion in the formation of disciplines, whether the communities identified with or against supernatural belief. Sociologically, the professionalization of disciplines further separated religion from academics as, ironically, devotion to the disciplinary community left little room for religion. Edwards expanded on this idea by comparing the experience of academic training to that of a monk or a nun. Also, at the level of the personal, he emphasized the importance of biographical disclosure as a way of breaking down barriers that obstruct open discussion of religion.

In conclusion, Edwards proposed that allowing religion a place at the academic table bodes well for the overall pursuit of knowledge. Specifically, he claims, the cautious use of religious perspectives as a warrant in the realm of morality, metaphysics, and anthropology would enrich each of these topics as they arise in various disciplines.

the abortion debates, and the notion of the Catholic Church as the body of Christ. For example, supporters have actively sacralized her body, creating a chapel replete with relics, photographs and videos. Many believers understand Santo as a victim soul, atoning for the sins of others through her own personal suffering. The plight of Audrey, according to Schmalt, has also been a locus of empowerment for women. Women, including Audrey's mother Linda, lead the Apostolate of a Silent Soul, the lay organization formed to publicize and orchestrate the ministry of Audrey. The virtues of motherhood are celebrated and emphasized through the person of

Linda and her utter devotion to her child. And Schmalt further argues that Audrey's suffering connects to women who live lives of silent suffering—as under-appreciated care-giving professionals or as daughters and mothers in patriarchal families.

Schmalt's vivid picture of Audrey Santo generated a lively discussion. Among their many questions, audience members asked about the ethics of the public consumption of the incapacitated Santo, the attitudes of the official church toward her, and the phenomenon's relationship to the supposedly increasing privatization of religion in America.

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