

Addenda

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New on our desks

The First of Institutions - see **Resource Updates**, below.

Monitoring Stem Cell Research - Since its inception in 2001, the President's Council on Bioethics has occupied itself with - among other tasks - monitoring the developments of human stem cell research. It has presented its findings thus far to the President and the public in [Monitoring Stem Cell Research: A Report of the President's Council on Bioethics](#). [\[Read more\]](#)

Christian-Muslim Dialogue - "Within the Church, Christian-Muslim relations have been largely the concern of a small group of specialists. All that changed on September 11, 2001." In an effort to meet some of the questions coming from the increasing interest in education and encounters between Christians and Muslims, The Institute on Religion and Democracy has published "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Guide for Churches." [\[Read more\]](#)

Resource Updates

We are continually updating the Resource section of our webpages. We are pleased to make available on-line "reprints" of two helpful articles. The first is from the December 2000 issue of *Touchstone* magazine by [Thomas Howard](#) on the importance of ritual and ceremony in expressing the deep significance of events such as weddings, funerals, and births. In "[The Power of Wise Custom](#)" Howard states that ritual and ceremony not only enable people to regard the mystery of significant events, they also enable people to enter into "the precincts of holiness" in public worship.

Second, in an insightful article called "[The First of Institutions](#)," [Gilbert Meilaender](#) argues that conversations about homosexuality should begin with a discussion of marriage and its purposes because marriage is the first of institutions and, as such, has much to say about the nature of sexuality and love. "The First of Institutions" was originally published in *Pro Ecclesia*, Volume VI, Number 4.

Guest Profile: Allan Carlson

On Volume 67 of the **MARS HILL AUDIO** *Journal* (March/April 2004) Ken Myers interviews [Allan C. Carlson](#), one of the most prolific and thorough thinkers and writers on the American family. Carlson has written several books and numerous articles on such topics as the family wage, Swedish family policy experiments, and the family economy. In his latest book, *The American Way: Family and Community in the Shaping of the American Identity*, Carlson chronicles the efforts of social reformers, government policy

makers, churches, and civic organizations to firmly establish the family and local community as the most significant units of American society, as opposed to the detached individual.

Of special interest are the contributions of German immigrants in shaping a particularly American conception of the family, and the concern of earlier feminists for the well-being of families, and in particular, for women as mothers. In our own day, the prevalence of divorce, out-of-wedlock births, outsourcing of child rearing, and childless marriages, along with an extreme emphasis on the rights and desires of the individual, make it difficult to imagine the broad appeal that images of the traditional family held for a majority of the American populace in the first several decades of the twentieth century. In *The American Family* Carlson offers a compelling social history of family life and family policy over the last one hundred years. Included with the Listener's Guide to Volume 67 is an extensive [bibliography](#) on the family and marriage.

Allan Carlson has been a frequent guest on the **MARS HILL AUDIO** *Journal*, having discussed agrarian thinkers on Vol. 45, Hillary Rodham Clinton's *It Takes a Village* on Vol. 19, and one of his previous books, *From Cottage to Workstation* on Vol. 3. Any of these books, as well as *The American Family*, can be purchased from our friends at [Splintered Light Books](#).

Volume 67 (March/April 2004) is expected to be in the mail by the end of April. View a complete [listing](#) of the guests on this issue.

Living in the Biotech Century

The Humanitas Project: A Center for Bioethics and Culture (Cookeville, Tennessee) publishes *Living in the Biotech Century*, an e-mail compendium of news, resources, and commentary on biotechnology and bioethics. The Humanitas Project Executive Director is Mike Poore, a former board member of **MARS HILL AUDIO**. For a free subscription to *Living in the Biotech Century*, send e-mail to humanitas@tnaccess.com or call 931-528-2408.

Ken Myers in Twin Cities area

As part of the Faith & Life Lecture Series of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church of Plymouth, Minnesota, Ken Myers, host and producer of the **MARS HILL AUDIO** *Journal*, will be speaking on April 21 at 7:30pm. The lecture is open to the public and is free of charge. It will be held at the Rush Creek Golf Course in Maple Grove. For further details see www.faith-and-life.org, send e-mail to info@faith-and-life.org or call 763-559-2775.

Listener Mail

For the first installment of our new [Listener Mail](#) pages we've perused our files and e-mail inboxes to come up with a few listener letters from the past year or so. (The names of the writers have been left off since the correspondents wrote without the understanding that their letters would be made available to the general public.) You may send your submission to letters@marshillaudio.org. We will acknowledge receipt of your e-mail, but, depending on the volume, we may not respond to it beyond that. If you would prefer to send a letter, please see our mailing address at the end of this newsletter. If we decide to print your letter we will include your name unless you request to remain anonymous.

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MARS HILL AUDIO

P.O. Box 7826

Charlottesville, Virginia 22906