

ness is closer to puberty, not 5 years old. I am not certain, but then again certainty got us in to Iraq. And certainty will have us lose in Iraq.

John Fletcher/via Internet

Wayne's wasted chance

I was quite disappointed in Wayne Laugesen's recent article ("Jesusland," Wayne's Word, Dec. 28) about the book *Who Really Cares: America's Charity Divide*, by Professor Arthur Brooks of Syracuse University. The author's website summarizes: "Approximately three-quarters of Americans give their time and money to various charities, churches, and causes...Why has America split into two nations: givers and non-givers? Arthur Brooks, a top scholar of economics and public policy...demonstrates conclusively that conservatives really are compassionate—far more compassionate than their liberal foes. Strong families, church attendance, earned income (as opposed to state-subsidized income), and the belief that individuals, not government, offer the best solution to social ills."

Wayne has often defended individual freedom and free-market policies, and exposed government folly and abuse of power. His explanation of Brooks's findings could have continued this. Wayne could have mentioned the obvious: that "progressives" worship at the altar of compulsory government charities, and then exposed their moral bankruptcy, hypocrisy and destructiveness. He could have shown how government charities unfairly crowd out voluntarily-funded ones, how they are unaccountable because tax laws compel us to donate and how spending other people's money is not compassionate, but intolerant and arrogant. He could have mentioned relevant scholarship such as David Beito's *From Mutual Aid to the Welfare State* or Marvin Olasky's *The Tragedy of American Compassion*. That is, he could have explained how compulsory charity is neither a moral nor effective way to solve social problems. Yet, Wayne chose not to do this.

He had ethics, economics and history on his side—not to mention several column-inches to showcase his writing talents—to influence public opinion and be a force for positive change. Instead, his "explanation" employed blatantly fallacious non sequiturs to insult secular non-believers, a good part of his audience. (For an elegant refutation, see Kent Northcote's letter in the Jan. 4 issue.) A left-wing secular friend of mine regularly reads Andrew Sullivan, a conservative Roman Catholic who refrains from such inflammatory ad hominem attacks. After reading Wayne's Ann Coulter-like rant, I doubt my friend would give Wayne a second chance.

Wayne: What is the purpose of your writing? Is it to persuade people that more individual freedom—not Big Government—will promote peace, wealth and justice? Or is it to insult your readers, court angry letters, turn people off to your ideas and consequently become an enemy to the values you profess to advocate?

Brian Schwartz/Boulder

History repeats itself

The recent spate of Democrat-bashing by