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As Americans Defect From Organized Religion in Record Numbers, a Gentle Guide is Published for Christian Questioners

Kansas City, MO. November 20, 2010 – “One nation under God”: This saying remains as true as it ever was, with 91 percent of Americans in a recent Pew study professing a belief in God. However, the same study showed that 44 percent of Americans have switched religions and 71 percent of young Americans label themselves “spiritual” but not “religious.” Further, the Catholic Church estimates that one-third of American Catholics are lapsed. According to former newspaper publisher Tim O'Donnell, it all adds up to an epidemic of confusion over organized religion that his new book, *A View from the Back Pew*, addresses in frank and personal terms.

“With doubt about organized religion and established doctrines so rampant in our society, thoughtful individuals may need help wrestling with the Christian tradition they were brought up in,” says O'Donnell. “My book offers the reader what I learned in five years of respectfully investigating the doctrines and rituals I grew up with as a Catholic. Though others may come to different conclusions than I did, my reporting and personal story will help anyone trying to come to terms with their religious heritage without the burden of guilt that often comes with asking hard questions.”

In a plainspoken style injected with humor, O'Donnell weaves together dramatic accounts of his boyhood and adult experiences with the Catholic Church and his passionate exploration of fundamental questions such as:

- Where does religion come from?
- Is organized religion the only path to God?
- Did Jesus intend to start a new religion, and did he claim to be God?
- Who really wrote the Gospels?
- What is the Trinity, and does this concept truly come from the Bible?
- Where did celibacy of the clergy originate, in the Bible or in later doctrine?

“In writing the book, I did my best to be objective about a belief system I had accepted and followed for a long time,” O'Donnell says. “Just as this approach helped me sort out what I now do and don't believe, it will enable others to make their own heartfelt decisions about the core mysteries of Christianity and issues regarding the Church.”

A View from the Back Pew: God, Religions & Our Personal Quest for Truth by Tim O'Donnell is published by Linchpin Publishing, ISBN 978-0-9845344-1-8. The 280-page paperback retails for \$15.95 and will be available at both online and neighborhood bookstores on March 1, 2011. For more information, visit <http://www.aviewfromthebackpew.com>.