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The God Factor: Inside the Spiritual Lives of Public People

Cathleen Falsani

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When religion reporter Cathleen Falsani climbed aboard Bono's tour bus, it was to interview the rock start about AIDS awareness. Instead, they plunged into a lively discussion about faith. "This is a defining moment for us," Bono said. "For the culture we live in."

Spirituality clearly now plays a key role in the United States. But what is also clear is that faith is a more complex issue than snapshots of the country convey. Jesus. Buddha. Kabbalah. Angels. This may be a nation of believers but not of one belief—of many. To shape a candid picture of modern faith, Falsani sat down with an array of people who shape our culture, and in turn, our collective consciousness. She's talked about Jesus with Anne Rice; explored "Playboy theology" with Hugh Hefner; discussed evil with crusading attorney Barry Scheck, and heaven with Senator Barack Obama. Laura Esquivel, basketball star Hakeem Olajuwon, Studs Terkel, guru Iyanla Vanzant, rockers Melissa Etheridge and Annie Lennox, economist Jeffrey Sachs, Pulitzer-winning playwright John Patrick Shanley—all opened up to her.

The resulting interviews, more than twenty-five in all, offer a fresh, occasionally controversial, and always illuminating look at the beliefs that shape our lives. THE GOD FACTOR is a book for the believers, the seekers, as well as the merely curious among us.

Included are interviews with Sherman Alexie, Bono, Dusty Baker, Sandra Bernhard, Sandra Cisneros, Billy Corgan, Kurt Elling, Laura Esquivel, Melissa Etheridge, Jonathan Safran Foer, Mike Gerson, Seamus Heaney, Hugh Hefner, Dr. Henry Lee, Annie Lennox, David Lynch, John Mahoney, Mark Morris, Mancow Muller, Senator Barack Obama, Hakeem Olajuwon, Harold Ramis, Anne Rice, Tom Robbins, Russell Simmons, Jeffrey Sachs , Barry Scheck, John Patrick Shanley , The Reverend Al Sharpton, Studs Terkel, Iyanla Vanzant, and Elie Wiesel.

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