their children, are out of the picture.

Schor believes that these new methods are turning children into marketing instruments and showing them that "friends are a lucrative resource that they can exploit to gain products or money." She's not impressed by marketers' argument that kids are such savvy consumers that they don't need their parents' help. Speaking directly to kids, they say, empowers children. Schor thinks it teaches them the worst possible lessons about the "value" of friendship.

Feminism Lives!

"The Myth of Postfeminism" by Elaine J. Hall and Marnie Salupo Rodriguez, in *Gender & Society* (Dec. 2003), Sage Publications, 2455 Teller Rd., Thousand Oaks, Calif. 91320.

Are we living in a "postfeminist" age? That's certainly the drift of opinion in the popular press and some scholarly journals. But survey data give the lie to this "myth," argue Hall, a sociologist at Kent State University, and Rodriguez, a graduate student there.

Such hard evidence is exactly what's missing from nearly all the 90 decline-of-feminism articles in *Time* and other periodicals that the authors examined. Only about one-fourth of the articles provided any survey data, and the vast majority of those provided none over time, which would be the only way to demonstrate the alleged decline over the 1980s and early 1990s.

According to surveys by the Center for Political Studies, adults looked *more* favorably on the women's movement in 1996 than they did in 1980. Asked to rank the movement on a 100-point scale, they gave it an average of 63 points in 1996, up from 53 points in 1980. Other surveys show little change in opinion between 1986 and 1998, with more than two-thirds of adults holding very or mostly favorable views.

Contrary to the postfeminist myth, young women are not less likely than older ones to support the women's movement, Hall and Rodriguez say. In a 1998 National Election Survey, 78 percent of women 18 to 29 years old expressed a favorable opinion of the movement, compared with 64 percent of middle-aged women. And 73 percent of black women gave the movement a thumbs-up, the largest proportion of any racial group.

Surveys conducted during the 1980s and 1990s consistently showed that about half of American women "considered the movement to be relevant," say the authors. Yet the postfeminist myth has acquired a life of its own in the mass media, and could "create a future reality in which collective struggle is deemed unnecessary."

Press & Media

Holy Unaware

"Religiously Ignorant Journalists" by Christian Smith, in *Books & Culture: A Christian Review* (Jan.–Feb. 2004), 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, Ill. 60188.

Is it too much to expect that journalists who write about religion should know at least as much about their subject as their peers who write about politics, sports, economics, science, or art? Of course not, says Smith, a sociologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who finds the current level of religious journalism, which is to say secular journalism about religion, low indeed. Smith tells of being called by a reporter for a major Dallas newspaper who wanted to talk to him about "Episcopals," the subject of a story the reporter was writing. "What an embarrassment. How do I break the news to him that there are no 'Episcopals'? Actually, they are called Episcopalians."

How, Smith wonders, is the reporter possibly going to write an informed story, in a matter of days, about so complex a matter as the appointment of the homosexual Episcopalian

bishop Gene Robinson when he starts out ignorant of even the proper name of members of the church? We wouldn't put up with political journalists talking about the "strategies of the 'Democrizer' or 'Republication' parties, or about the most recent 'Supremicist' Court ruling," but a comparable level of ignorance seems no barrier to journalists on the religion beat.

"Why do so few journalists covering religion know religion?" Smith asks. One reason, he suggests, is that "the knowledge class" presumed for most of the 20th century "that religion was simply irrelevant to anything that mattered." That has left them playing catch-up in the post 9/11 era, trying "to figure out religion with little collective accumulated knowledge of it on which to rely." Because news writers and editors are so often ill-informed, "they incessantly project their own biases into their religion coverage." They associate religion with "fundamentalism, violence, scandals, homophobia, dying churches, repression, exotic rituals, political ambition, cults, trivia." It's no surprise to Smith that "of all the possible important and interesting stories about American religion that reporters could cover, about the only one they could seem to imagine reporting on last year was the Catholic priest abuse scandal."

Smith's remedy for the current situation is entirely sensible: He proposes that editors assign religion stories only to journalists who know something about the subject—and that the editors invest in competent religion reporters if none are now on staff.

Ed Murrow's Illusion

"'The Man Who Invented Truth': The Tenure of Edward R. Murrow as Director of the United States Information Agency during the Kennedy Years" by Nicholas J. Cull, in *Cold War History* (Oct. 2003), London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton St., London WC2A 2AE, England.

When Edward R. Murrow took the job of director of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1961, he was the most famous broadcast journalist in the country. He'd made his name reporting for CBS Radio from London during World War II, and then, switching to the new medium of television, he'd taken on Senator Joseph McCarthy during the 1950s (when he also interviewed Marilyn Monroe and other celebrities). But even journalistic icons have illusions. Murrow's was that he thought truth and power could easily be reconciled.

President John F. Kennedy promised Murrow access and influence, and Murrow, in turn, publicly promised to portray the United States "warts and all" to the outside world. Neither promise was fully kept, writes Cull, a professor of American studies at the University of Leicester, England.

Established in 1953, the USIA had the mission of promoting U.S. interests abroad by informing foreign publics about U.S. policies and American life—what we would now call public diplomacy. "Murrow's notion of showing 'the U.S.—warts and all' could be seen in the matter of civil rights," Cull says. But USIA coverage of the protests and confrontations in the South played down the violence and played up the federal protection of the rights of black citizens.

Despite the presidential promise of access, Murrow was "left 'out of the loop'" on the U.S. decision to sponsor a covert invasion of Cuba in April 1961. And when he did learn of the plan, he didn't tell his staff. As the disaster unfolded, says Cull, journalists at the Voice of America, USIA's radio arm, strove for balanced coverage but were "fed misleading material by the State Department and the USIA policy office"—and they resented it.

That summer, the Soviet resumption of nuclear testing was a boon to USIA propagandists. To take full advantage of the development, Murrow urged that U.S. resumption of testing be delayed as long as possible. That proved "his only decisive contribution to Kennedy's foreign policy-making," says Cull.

Murrow came to feel "increasingly ill at ease with the Kennedy administration," writes Cull. He left the government in early 1964 and died the following year. Thirty-four years later, with the Cold War over, USIA was itself interred—absorbed by the State Department. And the age-old conflict between truth and power was no closer to resolution.