

**The Recent Biography of Dr. Warren Carroll and
The Incarnation of Christian Chivalry**

Epigraphs

“He fought the battle of love and humility **when he felt betrayed by those he trusted**. Did he recall the physical deeds of his heroes and internalize them as spiritual battles and deeds?” (Laura S. Gossin, *One Man Perched on a Rock: A Biography of Dr. Warren H. Carroll*, p. 300—my emphasis added)

“In June of 1988 [just before, as a professor, I irreversibly left Christendom College], Warren had written to his mother, 'We finally saw Covadonga [in the Asturias of northwest Spain] where Pelayo [his Latin name was “Pelagius”] made his great stand [c. 722 A.D.]. Pelayo's 'great stand' launched [a *Reconquista*] a 770-year war [until 1492] which would eventually **return** Spain to its Catholic heritage, **that same heritage** in which Warren had immersed himself so enthusiastically during his time in Escorial [from 1970-1975, somewhat intermittently]. Christendom College is itself Warren's 'great stand'.... (L.S. Gossin, *One Man Perched on a Rock*, p. 300—my emphasis added)

“Australia was their chosen destination and hence, **Anne and Warren learned to sail**. In November of 1968, their anticipated trip to Australia materialized and Warren describes his plans to his parents....” (L. S. Gossin, *One Man Perched on a Rock*, p.100—my emphasis added)

Prologue to the Gossin Biography as written by Warren Carroll himself: “I pledge at the outset to do all I can to make sure that this book (unlike many autobiographies) is charitable. I will not engage in detraction of anyone in it. Detraction is probably the least known of all the sins, but I know what it is. I will mention the names only of people I wish to praise and in the strongest terms possible I discourage every reader from trying to guess who are the people whose attempts to interfere with my work I describe.” (L.S. Gossin, *One Man Perched on a Rock*, p. xi—*Prologue*)

This recently published biography of Dr. Warren Carroll is a genuine work of love and fitting veneration.¹ It is written by Laura Gossin, an history major in college and herself a 1987 graduate of Christendom College, the now flourishing institution in Front Royal, Virginia which was first precariously founded elsewhere in 1977 by Warren Carroll himself, a man of considerable courage and impatient trust in the general and particular Providence of God.

In her book, Laura Gossin recurrently quotes and considers Dr. Carroll's memorably compact formulation, "Truth exists and the Incarnation happened," an affirmation that I first heard from him in person in 1974 at San Lorenzo de El Escorial in Spain, tucked in the Guadarrama Mountains northwest of Madrid. Even then, I called him "Warren," though he was ten years older than I. Thus I propose in this essay to retain still this respectful first-name basis, though he and I later had a serious falling out and seemingly permanent breach (1986-1987). At one time, Warren confided many things to me (his sailing, his lonely fears, his baseball, his mother and more), so many of which Laura Gossin has now graciously included in her own biography, though understandably sometimes only in a briefer way.

However, she quotes at length many passages from Warren's still "Unpublished Autobiography." For our further illumination and sympathy, she also quotes from many of Warren's other unpublished writings (*e.g.*, his novels) as well as from his published writings. For instance, since Warren was to die on 17 July 2011 — the Feast of the Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne in the French Revolution — Laura Gossin quotes a lengthy and moving passage (296-298) from Warren's own brief book, entitled *The Guillotine and the Cross*, where he memorably presents the reverent nuns' courageous sacrifice unto martyrdom.

One of the special high qualities of the Gossin Biography is the way she vividly and sincerely presents the last portion of Warren Carroll's life, from 24 March 1998 (his 66th Birthday) until his death some thirteen years later, on 17 July 2011, and the full and respectful obsequies that followed. Gossin first helps us to see the sad circumstances that surprised him shortly after having celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the College's founding, in October of 1997. Less than a year later a consequential neurological blow hit Dr. Carroll in his already deteriorating health:

In March of 1998, Warren celebrated his sixty-sixth birthday. Enjoying decent health

¹ Laura S. Gossin, *One Man Perched on a Rock: A Biography of Dr. Warren Carroll* (Front Royal, Virginia: Christendom Press, 2017), 310 pages. All further references to this text will be placed in parentheses above in the main body of this essay.

up to this point, things took a downward turn after this celebration. In the fall [of 1998], Warren suffered a TIA [Transient Ischemic Attack]—a pre-stroke [or mini-stroke], not a complete blockage but a partial blockage of blood to the brain. (268)

It was a good thing that, just before the celebration (in some places) of the 500th Anniversary of the three-fold 1492 *Reconquista* (722-1492 A. D.), Warren published his book, entitled *Isabel of Spain: The Catholic Queen* (1991). This book conveyed the conquest of the Muslims, the partial expulsion of the Jews, and the launching of Columbus' first voyage. (Warren's book was not as candid and as forceful as his beloved hero, William Thomas Walsh's own 1963 book, *Isabella of Spain: The Last Crusader, 1451-1504*.) Warren was characteristically more cautious, especially about things Jewish or about the political action of Jewish forces, as in their own proclaimed original 711 A.D. assistance to the Muslim invasion of Spain. Warren and Anne's own 1991 Christmas letter, as quoted by Gossin, says the following, in part, and shows his proportionate emphasis about the accomplishments of 1492:

In October [of 1991] Warren's latest book was published, *Isabel of Spain: The Catholic Queen*. This is the only book he has written almost entirely on primary sources; he spent many long days and nights studying Spanish documents in order to write the book. There is also extensive material on Christopher Columbus, and the book was timed to come out on Columbus Day. (266)

We know that it was only after first dealing with the Muslim matter and the Jewish matter that Queen Isabella gave her permission for launching the adventurous voyage of Columbus, the third mark of the long 770-year *Reconquista*, starting with Pelayo himself and his loyal men at Covadonga in 722.

“**The true soul of Spain**, Robert, is to be found in **the Incarnation of Christian Chivalry**.” These were the memorable words spoken to me in person by Professor Miguel Ayuso y Torres, both before and then again after that momentous year of 1992. For it was also then a time when, after 500 years, there were many — especially the combination of three main and very influential groups — who wanted “**to undue 1492**.”² Those three converging groups of dissenters were to be found among the militant and wealthy Islamists, the Jews, and anti-Columbus Indigenists of Latin America (some of whom, such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, even wanted to return to the Aztec civilization of pre-Columbian America). But **their common, depreciated target was the Catholic Church**. (I think Warren Carroll came to believe that. But I am not sure, although Christendom President Timothy O'Donnell would likely know the truth here.)

At least I may say this about Warren Carroll — for I spoke to him in person about the matter; he

2 See Robert Hickson, “The Catholic Strategic Response to 'Undo 1492!'”— as published first in *Apropos* (2004) and then reprinted by Catholicism.org: <http://catholicism.org/the-catholic-strategic-response-to-undo-1492.html>

was very upset, indeed gravely troubled, that his hero Pope John Paul II suspended, effectively canceled, the then-active Canonization Process of Catholic Queen Isabella, which was very likely due to the pressure and influence and practical action of the contemporary Jews. Very reluctantly, and very sadly, Warren was to acknowledge that reality. However, I do not believe he ever put that in writing — although “truth exists.”

Nonetheless, on the premise that “contrast clarifies the mind,” it would still be a good thing for us to read, or re-read, **both books** about “*Isabel la Catolica*”: William Thomas Walsh's 1930 book and Warren Carroll's 1991 book over sixty years later. (Gossin, surprisingly, does not even mention William Thomas Walsh in her biography, but I assure the reader, from close personal exchanges and prior collaborations with Warren, that Walsh himself was not only a cherished hero, but also a literary and scholarly model for Warren Carroll and his own vivid histories.)

Another hero for Warren was Andrew (“Andy”) Eiva, a West Point graduate and a former Army Special Forces Officer; and Laura Gossin admirably treats of this matter in her biography (261-264). For, Eiva greatly supported Warren's anti-Communist position and dedication, after Warren's own life had been changed while at Columbia after reading, in 1955, Whittaker Chambers's own 1952 book, *Witness*, especially Chambers' unforgettably beautiful and heart-piercing “Introduction in the Form of a Letter to My Children.” (For Warren's own words, see Gossin's biography, especially pp. 48-51)

Andrew Eiva, like Warren, also worked with Major General John (“Jack”) Singlaub and his apparatus, all of whom were then avidly and manifoldly dedicated to “**the resistance to Communism in Communist Countries,**” to include Communist-occupied countries like Afghanistan, which was openly first invaded by the Soviets during Christmas of 1979. (General Jack Singlaub, as a full colonel then, was my own commander in Vietnam in 1967-1968 in the special operations unit euphemistically called “MACV-SOG.” “SOG,” in unclassified documents and discussions, was then said to mean “the Studies and Observations Group.” Many at the time, and more later, came to recognize “SOG” as a “Special Operations Group,” and I told all of that to Warren who had also earlier worked for CIA, in its section called “FBIS” — the “Foreign Broadcast Information Service.”)

As part of this anti-Communist set of plans and operations, there was the recruitment of Muslims from all over the world — many of whom, as political or felonious prisoners, were thereby released from jail — in order that they could then go to Afghanistan to combat the Soviets. I then raised with Warren Carroll, and then briefly with Andrew Eiva himself, my strategic reasons for resisting this

multi-national recruitment of Muslim fighters-prisoners, namely that these could and would form a Muslim International, analogous to the revolutionary apparatus of the “COMINTERN” or 1947 “COMINFORM” (the “Communist Information Bureau,” its 1947 deceitful change of label.) However, Warren and Andy Eiva both thought that my strategic reasoning and historical considerations were wrong. And that was that. But, I still believe that the U.S. policy effectively helped create the International Muslim Brotherhood and Its Operational-and Intelligence-Gathering Apparatus. In any case, we should remember and study those who collaboratively have wanted “to Undo 1492.” I could say much more, but not here and not now.

Given the scope and ethos of Laura Gossin's biography, and her strict mitigation or bypassing of certain matters of conflict at Christendom College in the early years — such as once-pervasive Rock Music on campus; the near move of the Campus in 1981 from Front Royal to the Scaleby Estate in nearby Boyce, Virginia; and the contested selection of Warren's first successor as the President of Christendom College, Damian Fedoryka — I wondered about a few things. For example, Laura Gossin does not mention (except for Father Mark Pilon, who was earlier partly involved in Brent Bozell's *Triumph Magazine*) the various priests who were at Christendom over the years: *e.g.*, Father Cornelius O'Brian, Father Edward Berbusse, Father Vincent Peter Miceli, and Father James McLucas, especially how they got there and why some of them left the College.

It should also be known that it was in my home at the Old Farmhouse, and in person with the Candidate himself, that Warren Carroll chose his own first successor — Dr. Damian Fedoryka — and Warren ardently asked me to support him in his final choice, especially before the hesitant and divided Board of the College. (Professor Sharon Mahoney Hickson, currently of the Faculty of Christendom College, will confirm my words, for she was at the same table with Dr. Carroll, Dr. Fedoryka, and me that night. There were only the four of us at that table.)

Some seven year later — in 1992 — I remember being with Warren Carroll and his best friend on campus when he was even more radiantly joyful about the just announced selection of his second successor, Dr. Timothy O'Donnell. (For, I had driven over alone to the College from my home nearby in order to offer my sincere congratulations.) Warren then had such a spontaneous boyish look of real joy and deep gratitude. (I had seen this quality many times before, for example, when he was talking about baseball!) Standing there on Campus with his friend Tim, Warren also showed his sense of generous fulfillment, for he said that he had always dreamed of having Tim as his successor. (Although

I was thoroughly unfit and immediately declined, Warren had even **twice** asked me — in 1982-1983 — to be his successor, which he later likely regretted, I fear, especially because of our increasingly different and divergent views about what was really going on in the Church since 1957-1958.)

I now wish to end my brief review-essay of Laura Gossin's fine and quite intimate biography with one more memorable vignette about Warren, namely “Warren Carroll as a Sailor”! He revealed himself as such in my own Catholic Literature Class at Christendom College one early evening. For, he was regularly sitting in my class as a participant, and we were then reading Hilaire Belloc, whom both of us deeply loved and cherished. One of the texts we were then reading and rumbustiously discussing was Hilaire Belloc's essay “On a Great Wind” — as well as some of his depictions of sailing also in Belloc's great 1925 book, *Cruise of the Nona*. Suddenly, one of the feisty student s— Annie Stuart, I recall — burst forth with objections, although she was not a sailor herself. She said something like “This is not the way sailing really is.”

All of a sudden, Warren from the end of the long table said: “Annie, you are wrong. This is a vivid presentation of the windswept and salty reality. I know for I sailed with my wife, Anne, in a little dinghy on a windy day off San Francisco, when I sailed her out and around Sing Sing Island in San Francisco Bay.” Most of the class listened and looked on with wonder at President Carroll, and asked him more questions about the winds and his responsive “cranky dinghy,” as the Old Salts say! We were discussing this while Warren blushed a little and looked down modestly with his eyes. We remember his characteristic manner on such occasions. He made himself small while he enriched us.

May this Bellocian recollection further illuminate one of Laura Gossin's own brief and somewhat opaque sentences in her biography, to be found on page 100: “Australia was their chosen destination and, **hence, Anne and Warren learned to sail.**” (my emphasis added)

Laura Gossin's later presentation of 1975 Spain and that formative background of Christendom College would also profit from some additionally essential elaborations of the demoralizing truth about Spanish Catholicism and the Carlist youth in 1975, just before Francisco Franco was to die later that year (on 20 November 1975) — that is to say, if she ever expands here fine biography or publishes a second edition, I hope she will include more of the influential Spanish background and the abiding chivalry.

For example, Warren Carroll, on his knees, pleaded with me in August of 1975 to go one night from El Escorial to the Oliva Trappist Monastery up to the north in Navarra in order to help (Warren

said “indispensably help”) in the earnest training of the Old Carlists and of their younger Generation, especially their youth coming from all over Spain (they said). Moreover, I was to travel with Dr. Fritz Wilhelmsen himself and “Pepe Arturo,” the Chief of the Para-Military section of the Carlists know as “the Requete.” For, the Carlists feared that another civil war in Spain might break out when President Franco died, for he was then already weakened by illness. The horrors of that earlier Civil War were still even with the Spanish nuns I met in El Escorial as well as elsewhere. The fears were great.

The fruits of our revealing, but very unexpected, experience with Spanish Catholicism (especially with those Carlists), however, were quite stunning and also very demoralizing indeed, despite Professor Wilhelmsen's ongoing *encomia* and well-known verbal expansiveness to the contrary; but Warren Carroll himself knew the sad truth in his heart. That is why, shortly afterwards, back at Escorial, Warren, together with his wife Anne, asked me to go alone confidentially by night out with them to the garden and fountain at the Universidad Maria Christina (where we were still receiving hospitality in residence in that August of 1975). Warren told me that *Triumph* Magazine was likely to fold, along with Brent Bozell's larger organization. He then said that, if it does, he intends to found a college, Christendom College. He added two more things. He said that I was the only one, except for his wife Anne (sitting there beside him) who knew of his confidential intention and plans. Then he invited me to be on the faculty of his proposed College. And I accepted.

It is fitting that I now once more thank Laura Gossin for her biography, a work of love unmistakably. I hope that she will remain engaged and further helpful in the likely future publishing of Dr. Carroll's own full *Autobiography*. Thank you for your capacious work and affectionate integrity.

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