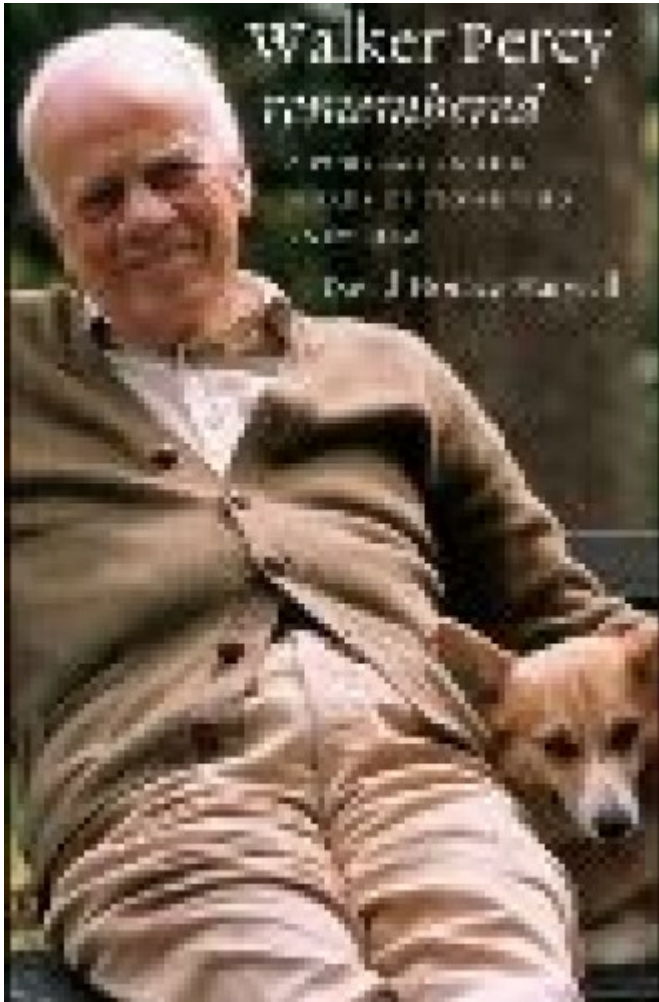


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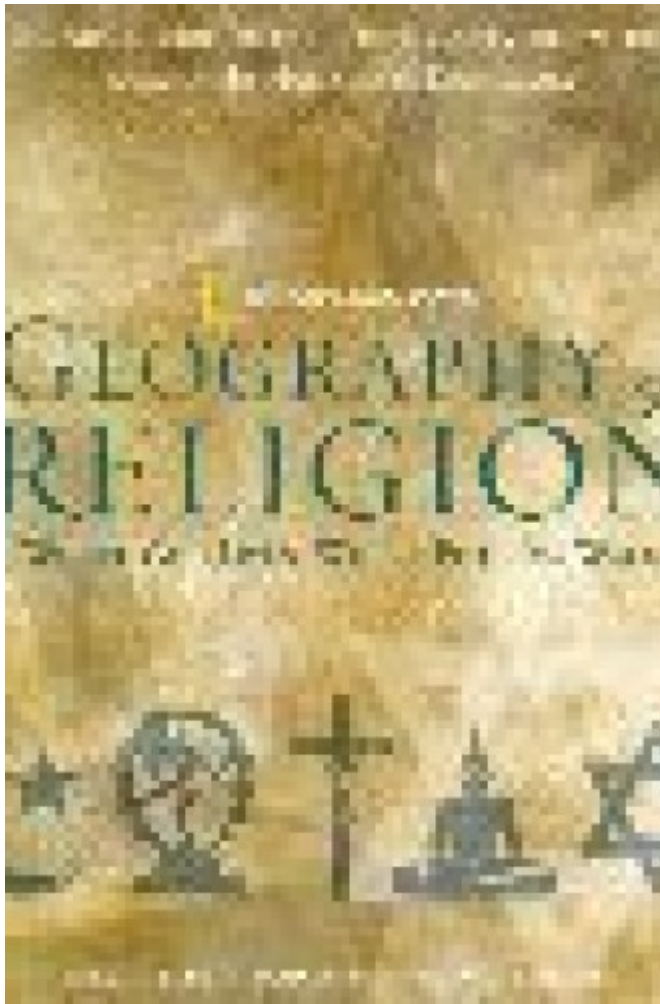
Books in the [October 3, 2006](#) issue

In Review



Walker Percy Remembered: A Portrait in the Words of Those Who Knew Him

David Horace Harwell
University of North Carolina Press



Geography of Religion: Where God Lives, Where Pilgrims Walk

Susan Tyler Hitchcock, ed., with John L. Esposito
National Geographic



The Way We Are

Allen Wheelis
Norton

This volume consists of 13 interviews with people who were personally acquainted with Percy, the noted southern Catholic writer who died in 1990. The best interviews are those with Shelby Foote, the Civil War writer and a lifelong friend of Percy's, and Will Campbell, feisty Baptist preacher and author. The interviews, which would have benefited from further editing, sometimes stray far from the subject at hand (a plus in the case of Campbell), but the sum total provides insight into Percy.

As one might expect of something published by National Geographic, *Geography of Religion*, now issued in paperback, is a beauty to behold; the photos and artwork have a mystical quality about them. It includes an accessible introduction to the histories, beliefs, practices and holy places of each of the five major world religions

(Christianity is covered by Robert L. Wilken).

Wheelis's meditation on the human condition, while insightful and quotable, is both dark and depressing. In his view, there are only the will to power, human desires that can never be fulfilled and loves which never last and only lead to loss. Without God—and Wheelis doesn't believe there is a God—there can be no meaning in life; the meaning we give to it is only a social construction of reality. Though bleak, the book is a helpful guard against all superficial proclamations of the gospel that don't acknowledge the bad news for which the good news is the antidote.