RELIGION & LIBERTY

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The Morality of Intellectual Property Rights

James E. Rogan *was sworn in as Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) on December 7, 2001. Judge Rogan manages USPTO's operations and is policy advisor to the Bush Administration on all domestic and international intellectual property matters. He also co-chairs the National Intellectual Property Law Enforcement Coordination Council, which oversees domestic and international intellectual property law enforcement issues among federal entities. Judge Rogan was a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1997 to 2001. He was one of only two members of the House of Representatives to serve on both the prestigious House Commerce Committee and the House Judiciary Committee. Judge Rogan has also served as a murder prosecutor in the Los Angeles Country District Attorney's office, the presiding judge for the Los Angeles County Superior Court, and as a member of the California State Assembly.*

R&L: *What significance do intellectual property rights have within a free market economy and what importance did the Founding Fathers place on intellectual property rights in the American economy?*

Rogan: They are the underlying basis of a free market economy. The amazing thing about the Founders, aside from their wondrous gift of the Constitution, is that while they were in Philadelphia drafting that precious document they recognized the importance of intellectual property. When I give speeches on the subject, I tell people that if they look at Article I, Section 8, they will find the anticipation of a patent and trademark system. Freedom of religion is what drove the Founders' ancestors from England to America. Clearly that freedom would have been of primary concern for the first Pilgrims. So when drawing up the blueprint for a limited government in the relatively short and limited document that became the United States Constitution, why would the Founders—before they even threw in free speech or free religion or even free press—take this obscure language about an obscure legal area and put it in this document? The answer is they knew that this country could never grow from an agrarian colony to a technological and economic giant if there was not within the system of law the incentive for inventors to invent and creators to create. The Founders recognized the protection of intellectual property rights as a seminal prerequisite to having a prosperous economy. So intellectual property rights are a fundamental underpinning of the free market economy.

R&L: *What challenges face adequately protecting intellectual property rights in today's marketplace?*

Rogan: So much of what is created for today's marketplace is digital content, including music, movies, and books. This means illegal copying and piracy of this material is the bane of our creative enterprises. Today, it is so easy with the Internet and a click of a mouse for anyone to make a million perfect copies of a CD recording, for example, distribute them

around the world almost instantaneously, and undermine the business and economic value of the maker's creativity. Preventing such illegal activity is today's primary intellectual property protection challenge. There are operational challenges at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office as well. Our Office is almost as old as the Constitution. We have been around since 1790, charged with the responsibility of protecting innovation and creativity. The good news is that the Founders, by including us in the Constitution, anticipated our longevity and expected us to be at the forefront of making sure innovation is vibrant and alive, and we are doing that. The bad news is that we have become so mired in bureaucracy that we are not always able to accomplish our mission in a timely and qualitative manner, and thus we could inadvertently end up actually hurting technology, innovation, and, therefore, the economy. The great challenge for me here as the director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to take this two hundred year old bureaucracy that still functions according to a two hundred year old, one-size-fits-all model and bring it into the 21st century e-commerce marketplace so that we can not only do our job faster and more efficiently, but also substantially increase the quality of what we do while bringing down the length of time it takes to get a patent or a trademark. We would like to see the latest technology introduced to the market as quickly as possible rather than having it sit on the shelf for three, four, five, or six years while we wade through an ever growing backlog.

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R&L: *Given that intellectual property rights create a "monopoly" in favor of the inventor or the author to obtain pecuniary gain through the use or sale of the invention or work, can this restriction be justified in the context of a free market economy?*

Rogan: It can. I have heard law professors refer to patents, trademarks, or copyrights as monopolies. I take issue with that description. A patent, trademark, or copyright is not a monopoly at all. In a monopoly a person possesses the opportunity to essentially control the means of production and keep out all competitors, which is, for the most part, not conducive to a typical free market economy. When a person receives a patent, for example, that person does not wield a monopoly. In exchange for an individual's creation, the government gives the inventor a piece of paper that affords him or her exclusivity over his or her invention for a limited period of time. But the government does not just issue that piece of paper to every applicant. The inventor must do two things first. The inventor has to come up with a patentable invention—something new, useful, non-obvious that will add to the quality of life. Second, the inventor must publish the information of how he or she created that product or process. This has great significance. Without the exclusivity assured through a patent system, an inventor would keep that technology hidden as a trade secret. The publishing requirement forces the inventor to describe in detail how to build the invention so that someone ordinarily skilled in the same art or science could replicate it. This allows any other inventor to examine the invention and consider how he or she could make changes that would constitute a patentable innovation. In other words, the publishing requirement not only shows any other inventor how an invention was created, but it provides other inventors with the incentive to improve it. As a result, technology keeps expanding while the quality of human life

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keeps improving. So a patent is not a monopoly, but rather a contract in which the public procures a great benefit in exchange for allowing the inventor to have exclusivity for a limited period of time.

R&L: *What are the dangers of considering intellectual property rights to be less important than other, more tangible property rights?*

Rogan: I think sometimes people feel that if someone builds a house, for instance, then because that is something that can be seen and touched, strong property rights should attach to that house. But if someone writes a book or invents a product, somehow people seem to consider it less worthy of receiving protection through property rights. To me, property is property whether it is real or personal, tangible or intangible, and strong property rights should attach regardless of

IN THE LIBERAL TRADITION

Edward A. Keller, C. S. C. (1903–1989)

"The encyclicals do not condemn our economic system of free enterprise, but instead give a strong moral foundation for such a system."

With these words, written in 1947, Father Edward Keller voiced an opinion at odds with the way many American Catholic social thinkers viewed the relationship between the social teaching of the Church and the market economy. Keller, while not given much attention by historians, Catholics, or free market advocates, was in fact one of the most articulate and forceful Catholic defenders of the market system in the twentieth century.

Keller was born in Cincinnati on June 27, 1903. After joining the religious order of the Holy Cross (the congregation that founded and administers the University of Notre Dame), he went to the University of Minnesota to study economics. As was often the case in the early twentieth century, the needs of Catholic schools and colleges for teachers outstripped the resources of the religious orders that ran them, and Keller was sent to teach at Notre Dame before finishing his dissertation.

Lack of a Ph.D. did not prevent Keller from having a successful career as an economic researcher and as a teacher. His early focus was on the subject of income distribution, and he co-authored several books in the 1940s that argued that income distribution in the United States was in fact far more equitable than the detractors of capitalism portrayed it. He wrote elsewhere that American capitalists, generally speaking, fulfilled the dictates of Pope Pius XI's teachings admirably, using excess wealth in a productive fashion by creating new companies and new jobs.

In the 1950s, Keller raised the ire of many fellow priests (especially the "labor priests" active in union organizations) by being the intellectual force behind the "right-to-work" movement of that decade. Keller argued that Catholic teaching provided ample support for his opposition to any form of compulsory unionism. He always insisted that right-to-work laws were not intended to damage union organization, but rather to preserve the character of labor unions as truly voluntary associations. Like many religious observers since, Keller recognized the injustice of union requirements that members, through their dues, support political and even moral stances that the members personally opposed.

Keller admitted in his major work *Christianity and American Capitalism* (1953) that the economic situation in the United States was not perfect and that reform was needed. He believed, however, that such reform "would not require radical changes in the institutions of American Capitalism." Aware of the imperfections of capitalism, he nonetheless had a profound appreciation of the material blessings the free economy bestowed. His faith, moreover, allowed him to keep all such material considerations in perspective. In the words of one of his students: "He was a humble, holy man who always said that it is much more important how things go in the next world than how they go in this one."

the property's form. Because the Internet makes stealing some types of property easy, some people feel this theft is justified. In the music industry, music sales are dropping off significantly because of the ease with which music can be freely—but illegally—downloaded. These same people would never think of going into Tower Records with a big overcoat on and start slipping CDs into their pockets as shoplifters. They would consider that clearly wrong. So we should not distinguish between property rights and allow the ease and popularity of stealing some types of property to serve as a justification for the theft.

R&L: *In the absence of a greater moral sense regarding property rights, is it possible to prevent the kind of copyright infringement that occurs in the music industry?*

Rogan: It will probably never be possible to totally prevent this infringement, just as it is impossible to totally prevent illegal drug sales or bank robberies or murder. The way that we must try as a civilized society to prevent crimes against both people and property is by helping people see a moral aspect of right and wrong with respect to these crimes. Many in the 1960s and 70s denigrated the concepts of absolute right and absolute wrong. But the more we move away from established notions of absolute right and absolute wrong, the higher the pathologies grow throughout all aspects of society. When the moral aspect of what is right and wrong is removed, acting illegally becomes easier. Now there are ways at least to reduce infringement on intellectual property, and those methods are being debated in Congress and around the globe. With respect to digital rights management and encryption, for example, technology manufacturers, content owners, and equipment manufacturers are all trying to solve this problem through negotiation. These negotiations seem to have the potential to offer a more effective solution than government intervention, because anything that Congress mandates as a technical solution probably would be obsolete within forty-eight hours of its promulgation.

R&L: *Some contend that certain patents are immoral because they limit the public's access to life saving products, such as pharmaceutical patents on medicines. What are the fallacies or merits of this contention?*

Rogan: In 2002, research-based pharmaceutical companies invested nearly thirty-one billion dollars in research and development. On average, for every five thousand medicines tested, only five make it to clinical trials and only one of those is approved for patient use. As a result, the average cost of bringing one new medicine to market is approximately $500 million. Considering the time it takes to get FDA approval, pharmaceutical companies have a very narrow window of opportunity to recoup their costs during the lifetime of the patent (usually eleven to twelve years). Because of this, on average only three out of every ten prescription drugs generate enough revenue to meet or exceed average research and development costs. So based on those figures, the request to lift the patent on these drugs sends this message: "Thank you for spending billions of dollars on research and development. Thank you for trying out hundreds and hundreds of drugs that never quite made it. Thank you for keeping all those scientists working around the clock over the years to keep coming up with something profitable. But now that you have something that will allow you to make a profit, we want to allow your competitors, who have not had to invest a dime in research and development, to ignore your patent and produce the drug at a fraction of the cost, because we think that is the fair thing to do." Obviously, asking pharmaceutical companies to stop functioning as private enterprises and become welfare organizations would obliterate the incentive to invent and create new drugs. Pharmaceutical companies, under the weight of research and development costs, all would shortly go bust. If we want to have a world where silver bullet medicines for major and minor illnesses become a thing of the past, all we need to do is prevent the people who invest in the creation of these medicines from having an opportunity to, for a limited period, recoup their costs and make a profit. I believe this would be extremely unwise.

R&L: *You have spoken to this already, but I would like you to expand a bit. If some patents were removed or prohibited, what would be the effect on the American and international economies?*

Rogan: It would be devastating. Every modern economic giant around the world is a country that has strong protections for intellectual property. It is easily tracked. Those countries that have the strongest intellectual property and private property rights protection also have the strongest democracies and the strongest economies. The less protection they have in these areas, the weaker they are.

The Cross of Christ for 8 Mile Road

Megan Maloney

As anyone who lives in the Detroit Metropolitan area knows, the divisions between city and suburbs along race and class lines are deep and seemingly intractable. These divisions are what make a Catholic high school in Detroit—at one of which I am a teacher—so different from a Catholic high school in the suburbs. Like Rabbit, the protagonist in the recently debuted movie *8 Mile*, my students hail from the south—commonly considered the "wrong"—side of 8 Mile Road. With an incessant barrage of profane language and bleak images, *8 Mile* mercilessly depicts the living conditions of those who come from the south side of 8 Mile Road. The film's depiction penetrates so pointedly that even the most callous person cannot help but gain a feel for the apparent hopelessness festering through these circumstances. This hopeless feel includes tasting the lower class existence in a trailer park in Detroit as seasoned by a missing father, a dysfunctional mother, a little sister traumatized by exposure to domestic violence, a low-wage job in a plant for drop-outs and ex-cons, and a neighborhood blighted by the abandoned houses that shelter rapists and drug dealers.

Although virtually all of Rabbit's life and work throughout the film provide counter-examples of virtuous, or even laudable, activity, *8 Mile* can offer something constructive to kids who find themselves in similar circumstances, to kids for whom poverty and a dysfunctional family are all too familiar, to kids who need to be reminded that they have "got to formulate a plot fore they end up in jail or shot" (lyrics rapped by Rabbit in the movie). If we accept the task of helping these kids make the distinction between Rabbit's genuine virtues and vices, we can make constructive use of *8 Mile*'s wild popularity[1] as a story that can help others caught in Rabbit's kind of world to "formulate a plot," a plot where they envision themselves as the successful, justly rewarded stewards of their own talents rather than the powerless victims of a manifestly unequal initial distribution of gifts or resources.

Inner-city kids—surrounded day in and day out by the urban blight that is as relentlessly dreary in real life as it was on the screen—need to see that they can achieve their dreams through hard work. For myriad reasons, some of these kids will be more drawn to Rabbit than to the more wholesome role models we would prefer them to choose. It is obvious to me, as a teacher in Detroit, that such hard core, but hardworking role models can answer a real need so long as such role models' virtues are clearly discerned and separated from their vices. My students' lives often do not resemble that of the characters in nice, G-rated family flicks. The city vista alone presents a harsh reality—much harsher than in the suburbs—with its overabundance of abandoned buildings and of liquor stores, its dearth of more wholesome enterprises, its higher crime rates, and its lower functioning schools. Where every day life is harsher, the properly discerned hardcore hero simply makes more sense. However, the hardworking quality is just as crucial as the hardcore. Rabbit refuses to accept failure as an option. Without hard work, failure becomes an option for these inner-city kids, along with ending up in jail or shot. As problematic as generalizations like these may be, it seems safe to say that generally the student work ethic in our city schools lags seriously behind the standard in the suburban schools.

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While causes of the phenomenon of these differing work ethic standards may be debated, the phenomenon itself powerfully illustrates the crucial link between virtue and liberty. Every day I am confounded by the incredible gap between my own high school experience (I attended a school in Grosse Pointe, one of the prosperous suburbs of Detroit) and my students' classroom behavior and expectations. Every day spent in the classroom with students who are used to such a different ratio of work-to-play than the one that prevailed in my high school is an object lesson in the necessary relationship between self-discipline, delayed gratification, and the freedom for a person to develop his or her potential and master

his or her environment through something other than brute force or unrestrained emotion. Students who lack virtue—who lack the fortitude, courage, and industriousness that would allow them to resist the temptation to opt for whatever is simply easier, more comfortable, and more fun—lack personal freedom in the most painfully obvious sense.

Because it neglects to emphasize the relationship between virtue and the blessings of prosperity, the standard way in which the Christian faith and ethics are taught in schools like mine fails my students. The propensity to integrate Christianity with economics in no other way but through the prism of personal charity or social justice leaves an entire lesson untaught. Charity and justice are essential, but Detroit (or any other city for that matter) needs citizens who understand that their faith should motivate them to be productive: "'Lord, you gave me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five more.' 'Well done, you good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.'" (Matt. 25:20). Many of my students write journal reflections about how they want to be wealthy and successful someday so they can help the people in their own communities—the poor, the homeless, and other kids without hope—whom they encounter every day. They have a spirit of charity and justice. What they lack is a good work ethic, a spirit of entrepreneurship toward academic competition and personal responsibility for developing their talents.

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As a religious educator in an inner-city Catholic school, I notice a convergence between my students' needs and the Acton Institute's efforts to rectify the negative attitude toward capitalism that has prevailed in much of the Christian (especially Catholic) world. For whatever reason, the publishing houses produce textbooks for religious education in Catholic schools that leave a gap between their faith, one of their greatest strengths, and the economic dreams and anxieties that are among their most pressing concerns. Religion textbooks that fail to make this connection between faith in Christ and the blessings of prosperity, including all the virtues that help to make this connection real in the real world, fail my students.

In the name of our Savior, who identified himself with the least, we need to face this failure and state as emphatically (but not as profanely) as Rabbit: Success is our only option, failure's not. If the Acton Institute can teach the future religious leaders of our nation the virtues of the free enterprise system and its relationship with Christianity, someone can come into our nation's inner-city Catholic schools and teach the same to the children whose parents see our schools as a beacon of hope in a world of academic malaise and urban blight. The Acton Institute's "Toward a Free and Virtuous Society" seminars provide one model that could be used as a resource for developing such a curriculum for inner-city Catholic high schools and colleges. African American Christian Rites of Passage programs with their culturally sensitive emphasis on the development of character and virtue provide another resource. The essential demand and supply factors for such a curriculum are in place, and funding for a well-conceived plan would be forthcoming. Still needed are the entrepreneurial vision, commitment, and skill to bring all the pieces together and the firm Christian conviction that the Lord himself, the Lord who came to proclaim good news to everyone, including those who live on the south side of 8 Mile Road, would back such a venture.

Several years ago, as a student of Adam Smith, I became intrigued by a passage in the book of Isaiah. It was a prophecy delivered to the post-exilic Jerusalem community beset by widespread poverty and economic exploitation by a wealthy, hard-hearted few. The community's hopes of restoration were being crushed as the injustice, indifference, and impiety of the powerful combined with the impotence of the weak to create a debilitating socio-economic malaise. Into this situation, the prophet delivered a beautiful oracle from the Lord, a prophecy of hope and deliverance for the city, represented in female personification as a mother: "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you who love her …. For thus says the Lord: Lo, I will spread prosperity over her like a river, and the wealth of nations like an overflowing torrent, and you shall nurse and be carried on her arm, and dandled on her knees" (Isa. 66:10a,12). The striking evocation of Adam Smith's magnum opus drew me into further investigation of the passage. The full text of Isaiah 66 is extremely rich, but the richest vein opened up for me when I learned that the Hebrew word behind the English word "prosperity" is shalom. Shalom is a word with many facets of meaning: prosperity, peace, greetings, safety, security, health, and God's presence, to name a few. Its fundamental meaning is wholeness, well-being in all aspects, physical, spiritual, economic, individual, and communal. Today the word shalom is commonly associated with the Jewish community, but what makes the word especially significant for

Christians is its association with the "suffering servant" of Isaiah and with the Risen Christ of the gospels.

In Isaiah's songs of the suffering servant—whom Christians identify with Jesus of Nazareth—the work of atonement is linked with the gift of shalom: "He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, on him lies the punishment that brings us shalom, and by his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). Shalom in this passage is usually translated as "peace" or "wholeness," but prosperity is also part of shalom's proper meaning. For many Christians—perhaps in the Catholic tradition more so than in certain Protestant streams of Christianity—the idea that the cross of Christ has anything to do with prosperity may seem foreign at best and anathema at worst. Such a limited understanding of the transcendence of the cross of Christ is debilitating, as a tour along 8 Mile Road in Detroit readily suggests. Certainly, working on the "wrong" side of 8 Mile Road has reinforced my belief that the gift of shalom Christ died for, the shalom God desires to spread over his city, is a multifaceted reality of regeneration that includes not only personal salvation, but also the blessings of prosperity. Catholics acknowledge this reality implicitly every time we pray: Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord.

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I find it impossible to drive every day from the Grosse Pointes into Detroit without believing that the cross of Jesus Christ, and the cross I take up after him, has something very real to do with the hope of prosperity for the city that's been called "America's closest approximation of hell."[2] My daily drive to and from work is a powerful visual accompaniment to the statistics: In the Pointes, median household income ranges from $80,000 to $114,000,[3] while the median values of homes ranges from $223,000 to $600,000; in Detroit, the median household income is $29,000,[4] while vacant housing units have increased from 36,000 in 1990 to 429,000 in 2000. The City of Detroit cannot afford to demolish abandoned homes fast enough to keep our children safe from the drug dealers and rapists who lurk in them. Priority had to be granted to the demolition of houses that are within 400 feet of schools. Surely the Lord who came to preach good news to all desires to spread shalom over a blighted city that cannot properly care for its own children.

Another reason for acknowledging the specifically Christian character of shalom is found on the lips of the Risen Lord. When the Risen Lord appeared to his disciples in the upper room after his resurrection and greeted them with shalom, he was greeting a group of friends who had abandoned him. Most of them had not remained faithful during Christ's crucifixion, when the going got really, really tough. So he came with his power to forgive, and he commanded them to share that power: "'Peace be with you. As my Father has sent me, so I send you.' And when he had said this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whoever's sins you forgive, they are forgiven, whoever's sins you hold bound they are held bound.'" (John 20:21-23).

Just as Judeo-Christianity is linked to the blessings of prosperity in a free and virtuous society, so too human sin is linked to all that has made Detroit a city that evokes associations with hell. Different people may point to different sins based on their personal and political leanings, but the Lord knows them all, and he died and sent his Spirit to convict, to cover, to forgive, to heal, and to make righteous all who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. While much could be said about the various sins that have contributed to the degradation of Detroit, I feel compelled by our city's signature monument, The Spirit of Detroit, to address one area in particular. The Spirit of Detroit is a sculpture created by Marshall M. Fredericks for the city of Detroit. Fredericks designed an image that represents the relationship between God and humanity and honors the human family. The large central figure symbolizes the universal human spirit, made in the image of God and a reflection of his glory. The golden orb in the figure's left hand represents God, the eternal source of light and life. In the right hand is a representation of the human family—a man, woman, and child—described as "the most noble of human relationships" on a plaque that accompanies the sculpture. The image adorns our city vehicles, keeping it permanently present in our consciousness. Unfortunately, nothing serves as a constant reminder of the inscription that inspired the artist: "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 2:13).

The sculpture and its inscription seem so apt for Detroit, precisely because of what is missing in so many of our students' lives. The majority of the students in my school do not have a family like the one in The Spirit of Detroit. The

missing figure at home is the father. The radiant orb that shines on the family in The Spirit of Detroit—symbolic of God's own radiance— does not appear to shine very brightly in some of our students' lives. At our school, we try to make up as best we can for what is lacking. Our Dean of Discipline is a father figure for many of our students, especially the young men; as a Catholic school we are committed to fostering our students' spiritual growth. But a school is a school. It cannot substitute for God's own creation, that "most noble of human relationships," the family. But a stable family, one that can foster virtue and a true spirit of liberty in a child, must be built on a firm foundation. It requires a man and woman who are themselves schooled in virtue and ready to take on the moral and financial responsibilities of parenthood. As Lakita Garth, the 1993 Miss Black California said in her testimony before Congress on sexual abstinence: Abstinence means mastering the art of self-control, self-discipline, and delayed gratification, virtues that are the foundation of achievement in any endeavor, from raising a family to running a business.[5]

I find it impossible to drive every day from the Grosse Pointes into Detroit without believing that the cross of Jesus Christ ... has something very real to do with the hope of prosperity for the city that's been called "America's closest approximation of hell."

A curriculum that would really help our students will not have the irrelevant lessons our current textbook offers on sexual morality, in which a teenage couple is portrayed as engaging in a mature, dispassionate discussion on the pros and cons of engaging in premarital sex. These texts should feature the hard-hitting stories of lives ruined, hopes dashed, and opportunities squandered that my students tell in class. Rabbit's mother's dysfunctional relationship with a man who lacks commitment and leaves is mirrored in her son's short-lived liaison with a young woman who has no apologies when Rabbit finds her with another man. One of my students who wants to get married and have six children, naming his role model to be "any man who works hard to take care of his family," feels no qualms about admitting that he plans to have one wife and as many "baby mommas" as necessary to produce six children. To defend this infidelity, he argues that "you can't find one woman who will have six children, but you can find plenty of women who will have one or two children." When questioned, he reveals that this is precisely the kind of situation that he experienced in his own upbringing. These texts should, at the very least, acknowledge the gritty reality of these circumstances and show the connection between vice and misery, between virtue and prosperity.

Several years ago, in a meeting with the faculty from the various John Paul II Institutes throughout the world, the holy father challenged Catholic scholars and educators to integrate Catholic social teaching with the Church's teaching on marriage and family. In most high school and college curricula, as in American society at large, these two areas of concern tend to be separate. They are taught separately, and it is usually different sectors of the Catholic population who take up the different causes associated with social and sexual ethics. At the time, I thought the holy father's call for integration was prophetic, a word from the Spirit of the Lord. After working in an inner city Catholic high school in Detroit for a semester, I am convinced of this more than ever.

Let us thank God that we who live in this country, and we who teach in Catholic institutions, have the liberty to undertake this work encouraged by the Pope and implement it in our curriculum. May the Lord's Spirit, who sustains the tremendous liberties we enjoy in this great nation, inspire us to find more effective ways to preach good news and shalom to those living in inner-cities and proclaim liberty to captives in our inner-city Catholic schools. And, God willing, may the Spirit of Detroit lead the way, as a light that shines in the darkness of "America's closest approximation to hell"—this side of 8 Mile Road.

Notes

1. *8 Mile* grossed $54.5 million in its opening weekend, had the second-best opening ever for an R-rated film, the fifth biggest opening for 2002, and the biggest opening for a semi-musical or an actor making his debut film. Sixty-nine percent of the audience was under twenty-five.

2. The expression appeared in Frank Rich's review of *8 Mile* in *The New York Times Magazine*, November 3, 2002, and drew a strong response from Detroiters.

3. There are five Grosse Pointe municipalities, hence the range in median household incomes. These statistics are from the 2000 U.S. Census, cited in *Know Your Grosse Pointe* (Grosse Pointe Farms: League of Women Voters of Grosse Pointe, 2002) 19.

4. Theses statistics are based on the 2000 U.S. Census as cited in Alejandro Bodipmemba, "Metro Incomes Soar, But a Big Gap Exists," *The Detroit Free Press* (September 10, 2002), at http://www.freep.com/news/metro/income10_20020910htm.

5. http://www.prolife.com/Lakita.Garth.htm.

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The Political Ideology of Unprogrammed Quakers

John P. Powelson

One branch of Quakers—the unprogrammed, officially called Friends (the organizational name for the Quaker religion is the Religious Society of Friends)—believe that God is in each person and that he leads humans to truth not through adherence to creeds or confessions, but purely through the Spirit by means of experiential understanding and evidence. This experiential evidence manifests itself in the statements of Friends who speak up at a meeting, either voicing their thoughts or reading a passage from Scripture or other literature. Friends are only supposed to speak at a meeting when they feel the Spirit is leading them to do so.

Among unprogrammed Quakers, business meeting is conducted usually once a month. Decisions are made by the Sense of the Meeting, which occurs when the Friends at a meeting arrive at a decision about truth. The clerk of the meeting then commits this decision to writing. This does not mean that the Sense of the Meeting embodies a unanimous or consensus determination. One or more Friends may dissent to this decision. If a Friend voices dissent, the other Friends are to listen carefully, because God's leading could come through anyone of them. Sometimes Friends do not voice their dissent and "stand aside." This means that dissenting Friends allow the decision to pass unchallenged, because even though the decision may make them uncomfortable, they do not have any moral misgivings to proceeding on the basis that the declaration embodies truth.[1]

Unprogrammed Quakers characterize the general beliefs in Quakerism as the sacred triad, consisting of God in every person, silent meeting for worship without a pastor or structured order of events or liturgy, and decisions and declarations about truth in accordance with the Sense of the Meeting. What distinguishes unprogrammed Quakers is that their meetings do not follow any prearranged or structured order of events or liturgy. A programmed Quaker meeting, on the other hand, usually includes a recurring, planned order of events, generally including a reading and a time for singing.

When Quakerism was formed during the seventeenth century in England, and before it split into different factions, many Friends were merchants or otherwise involved in business. They believed in paying their workers fair wages, producing goods of quality, and charging fair prices for their products. They did not haggle with customers. Many people sent their children to Quaker merchants, confident that these merchants would not cheat their children.

Flash forward to the twentieth century. Mark Cary, a Quaker operating a research business, found in a study that unprogrammed Friends today seem publicly almost uniformly negative about most business activity.[2] One is quoted as saying that "the deep-seated ethic of competition that underlies our economic system [is] a form of cultural violence, [and] it is a form of physical violence as well." He continued, stating "this violence has been accorded the status of a religion, demanding from its devotees an absolute obedience to death."[3] Given that this anti-market, anti-capitalism mentality prevails among many Friends, Quaker meetings have become uncomfortable for those who remain true to classic liberalism and the moral potential of free markets.

Given that this anti-market, anti-capitalism mentality prevails among many Friends, Quaker meetings have become uncomfortable for those who remain true to classic liberalism and the moral potential of free markets.

Pinpointing the causes of this drastic change from the seventeenth to the twentieth century is not easy. Chuck Fager, Director of Quaker House in Fayetteville, North Carolina, finds three developments that may account for this drastic change at least in part, all of which surface around the late 1920s and early 1930s. First, he found "records of much debate at the Friends General Conference of the post-1929 years over socialism." These new socialistic, utopian concepts now pervade the thought of most Friends, demonstrating a sharp departure from Quakerism's classic liberalism origins. Second, "the Depression also had the parallel effect of reducing many enterprises and fortunes among established Quaker

families." Thus, some of those who would have historically supported free market business activity had gone from enjoying financial fortitude and successful businesses to struggling with insolvency and unemployment. Third, in the early twentieth century "industrial families of wealth" produced children who opted for Fabian socialism (a group who desired to effect socialistic reforms through dialogue and the political process rather than through military-driven political revolution).[4] More recently, I have observed that the pacifism of the Quaker religion has attracted many individuals who were frustrated with the Vietnam War during the 1960s and 1970s. These new members imported their anti-capitalist views and have gradually become the dominant voice among unprogrammed Friends.

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During the seventeenth century, the period when Quakerism was born, classic liberalism dominated intellectual thought and conversation. Classic liberalism holds that people should be free to decide which goods and services they will produce and how they will produce them, with sales and prices voluntarily agreed between buyer and seller. Among other things, the classic liberal does not want the state to choose or regulate prices. Being free of the king's commands to implement these principles of classic liberalism was a central focus of early Quakers. Over the three centuries that followed, the term *liberalism* became associated with progressive ideas, such as a public school system, antitrust laws, social security, and regulations to make corporations behave like "good" citizens. The government has passed laws to foster and sanction these progressive ideals to the point that, in the United States, liberalism has become synonymous with interventionism, the exact opposite of its classical meaning.

Unprogrammed Quakers have deviated 180 degrees from the classic liberal traditions of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Many Eastern Friends, particularly those at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, have noted and are currently concerned about a significant drop in membership. In a personal letter to me dated November 5, 2002, Mark Cary described his view, with which I am in agreement, that liberal Friends are held together mostly by a few common threads—the open form of worship, the peace testimony, liberal or radical politics, and a lifestyle that glorifies higher education. Quakers comprise a very non-diverse and narrow section of society. Cary's research shows that only about 40% believe in a traditional God. Quakers' levels of prayer are quite low compared to other faith communities in the United States. The Religious Society of Friends seems to be comparatively a rather weak form of religion. Cary believes that "Quakers basically have a religion with a niche appeal on the boundary between religion and philosophy. Unprogrammed Quakerism has very limited appeal outside of the liberal, intellectual elites, having attracted those sorts of people over time and thus having become even less diverse in politics."

This lack of diversity has caused several Friends whom I know to retreat from Quakerism. One of them has written as follows: "One always hates to give up something that seems quite logical and compelling, in this case what seems to be a potentially very fruitful linking of classic liberal thought with contemporary Quaker concerns. But, there may be times and situations that simply do not work out, and it is my feeling that this is the current reality. I am scaling back my Quaker activities because many of the things that I care about passionately, and which I believe are consistent with Quaker insight, simply do not resonate with the majority of Friends."[5]

For similar reasons, I too scaled back my Quaker activities. In January of this year I took a leave of absence from the meeting I regularly attend in Boulder, Colorado, in search of another religious community that conformed more closely to the original concerns of Quakers. By June I was back in my regular meeting again, having found that no other faith community in Boulder observes and practices anything close to the sacred triad—that of God in every person, silent worship, and decisions by Sense of the Meeting.

If Friends have become too political—and with the wrong politics at that—for my taste, so has every other church that I researched and investigated in Boulder. Unfortunately, it seems I will have to tolerate this ideological political climate if I want any church at all (and I do). Worse yet, I have reached the point of despair regarding my attempts to spread my message at the Friends General Conference or other yearly meetings. As I have not succeeded during the past 35 years, I doubt that I will be able to succeed in the short time that I

have left—I am 82. Even so, I will continue to use the one mode of communication that has achieved at least moderate success: the Internet. My online newsletter, *The Quaker Economist* (http://tqe.quaker.org) now has over 500 subscribers from all over the world, including Australia, South Asia, the United States, England, and Russia. The number of people signing on to this web site increases daily.

As some consolation, I have found that I am not completely alone in my frustration. Several other Friends are also uncomfortable in the meeting, many for reasons similar to mine. During my leave of absence I received kind correspondence from many Friends. Most wished me well in my spiritual journey, wherever it would take me. A smaller number said they wished I would return because Boulder Meeting is "my home." A few were so kind as to say they could not imagine meeting without me. I also received messages from friends that offered me advice. One suggested that I spend two months in a Roman Catholic monastery to seek clarity through meditation. Still others told me how I might change myself so I would "fit better" within the meeting. But only a few—those quoted below—agreed that the Friends' religion needed reform. One former member of Boulder, now attending another meeting, wrote: "I am a Quaker because of the spirit-led discernment process that is an integral part of our action …. There is something profoundly wrong when we as Friends are afraid to see the full range of perspectives that experience brings and struggle with where these diverse understandings lead us in action. Discernment is central to our understanding of God ... and how to live in that life and power ... isn't it?"

A reader of *The Quaker Economist* who was on the verge of attending his first meeting states: "Excited as I am about learning more about becoming a Quaker I am fearful of the type of resistance you have had regarding basic economic reasoning. Were I to go to the San Francisco or Palo Alto Meeting I think I would be uninterested in many of the fellow Friends' passionately held beliefs. Yet as I read more about Quaker history … I find myself drawn to the simplicity of the faith. Maybe it's my divine duty to become a Quaker and present the liberal economic realities, as you have done. I fear I'm not yet up to that task." I wrote to this reader to tell him I would be returning to Friends. No church is all we want it to be. I also expressed my sincere hope that he would be led by the Spirit and not by political positions. He replied: "I have decided to earnestly explore Quakerism; today I went to my first meeting—San Jose Friends. I have a long way until I feel it will be appropriate to share my economic views, but I will. And I will utilize your writing. Thanks for corresponding, I will stay in touch."

Another Friend living in Denver wrote: "What courage it took to take leave of absence from your beloved religion …. I was so glad to read it and found myself in accord with much of what you wrote. I hope that you will see fit to send that letter to other places, so many others may read it …. Would that Friends would permit the energy of dissent and different voices instead of singing to the choir so much." A Boulder Friend added: "I was amazed to read the heartbreaking news that you were leaving us. Heartbreaking because you gave so much of your life to three wonderful principles (that I support) and yet the implementation of these ideas by the Quaker community falls so short of what is possible. You showed a lot of guts in being true to your self. I greatly admire your courage to take a public stand for what you know to be true."

I experience this ongoing ordeal of submission when the Religious Society of Friends takes positions on economic matters in its publications that, as an economist, I believe will damage the very people they wish to assist—the poor and the disadvantaged.

An email message from another Boulder Friend (signed by him as "another uncomfortable member") was a bit of all the above: "I, too, suffer (somewhat) from an assumed Quaker orthodoxy that I do not accept. I'm afraid there is no such thing as unambiguous community …. To belong to a community means to suffer. Perhaps that is a little strong. At least we will be annoyed, from time to time, by the body's fallibilities. Yet, there is a joy (at least a satisfaction) in functioning as a part—one organ (fallible)—one indispensable member among the whole. I imagine that to be a 'liver' requires great humility. Its function is indispensable (processing waste and neglected matter), yet it will never be acclaimed. Maybe you are a liver—a collector and processor of unwanted thought. You are, of course, a brilliant scholar and teacher. Yet, the body is always larger (and more glorious and complicated) than the parts. Every part must undergo this ongoing ordeal of submission."

I experience this ongoing ordeal of submission when the Religious Society of Friends takes positions on economic matters in its publications that, as an economist, I believe will damage the very people they wish to assist—the poor and the disadvantaged. I informed Anthony Manousos, Editor of *Friends Bulletin,* about my concerns, but no meaningful discussion ensued. Mr. Manousos simply replied: "The problem with economics is that it is not perceived as 'scien-

The contrary positions to my economic philosophy held by most unprogrammed Quakers could be campaign platforms for a modern liberal running for office .... This should make anyone wonder whether the unprogrammed Friends have converted themselves into a radical political wing of the Democrat and Green Parties.

tific' and people's moral judgments tend to get mixed up with their factual assessments. That's probably why you have such difficulty convincing Friends (or any other American untrained in economics) that what you say is factually correct. Most people are so strongly attached to moral ideas (or prejudices) about economics that they can't discern fact from opinion. I suspect that you would encounter similar problems with any other group of average Americans untrained in your specialty. Prejudices about economics are probably not confined to Quakers, or to liberals. Some capitalists are as dogmatic as some liberals. Again, I commend you for your efforts to help teach Friends to seek economic truth with integrity. Perhaps you have tilted your lance against wind mills, or perhaps not. Only history will tell." Mr. Manousos' reply is representative of how I may be listened to by other Quakers, but never really heard.

Most of this article has focused abstractly on my differences with the majority of unprogrammed Friends. Thus, concluding with the specific ways in which my economic philosophy differs from that of most other unprogrammed Friends would be appropriate. First, globalization and multinational corporations will function as the main agents that will lift the poor out of their poverty. Globalization ushers in jobs to the poorest of the poor, allowing them to trade in a world from which they are now excluded. Multinational corporations infuse capital, technical knowledge, and jobs into impoverished countries. All over the world, the multinational corporations pay their workers more and treat them better than do other employers in the same country. Second, debts should be repaid. Many Friends want to forgive the debts of corrupt despots who have squandered or pocketed their borrowings. If these debts cannot be repaid, proper bankruptcy procedures should be implemented. The poor people of the country rarely borrow, except in small amounts, so they are not the ones who would be forgiven anyway. Third, boycotting sweatshops is cruel and solves nothing. In fact, it forces women on the streets as prostitutes or sends children abroad as slave beggars, because those women and children who work in sweatshops usually do not have viable alternative opportunities to earn a living. Four, increasing the minimum wage causes unemployment and has a negative impact on women and minorities in the workplace. The higher mandated wage encourages automation. As automation increases, employers must reduce their workforce by terminating employees, the first to go being those against whom their employers might harbor prejudice. Five, profit drives the creation of inventions and the use of innovative techniques that allow for more efficient production of necessary goods (food and shelter, for example). Profit also serves as a watchdog against inefficient business practices in that usually a business that is not efficient is unable to earn a profit and will therefore go out of business. Six, the best means to combat environmental degradation is through creating incentives to promote its preservation, not through passing laws that punish its offense.

The contrary positions to my economic philosophy held by most unprogrammed Quakers could be campaign platforms for a modern liberal running for office. This should make anyone wonder whether the unprogrammed Friends have converted themselves into a radical political wing of the Democrat and Green Parties. My experience dictates that this conversion has in fact occurred, and this development away from Quakerism's roots in classic liberalism concerns me greatly.

Notes

1. For further information, see Marsha D. Holliday, "Silent Worship and Quaker Values," *FGC Online Library* (December 17, 2002), at http://www.fgcquaker.org/library/welcome/silentworship.html.

2. Cary, Mark S., "Friends' Attitudes Toward Business in the USA," page 1, Letter no. 40 in *The Quaker Economist,* at http://tqe.quaker.org.

3. Cary, Mark S., "Friends' Attitudes Toward Business in the USA," page 1, Letter no. 40 in *The Quaker Economist,* at http://tqe.quaker.org.

4. Fager, Chuck, Letter to the Editor no. 50 in *The Quaker Economist,* at http://tqe.quaker.org.

5. By J.D. von Pischke, who has left Herndon Meeting in Loudon County, Virginia.

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Intangible Assets and the Catholic Framework for Economic Life

William J. Raynor, III

The "Catholic Framework For Economic Life" (CFEL) prepared by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops provides new optimism for all of us in the global economy. The CFEL consists of ten essential points that help balance societal obligations on one hand with business and economic decisions in a competitive environment on the other. Now more than ever, the balance provided in the CFEL is critical. As everyone knows, moral, ethical decisions can conflict with corporate goals of profit maximization and shareholder value. Affording business the ability to compete in a global market while simultaneously protecting workers' rights and the disadvantaged in society presents a difficult challenge. Enhancing one is often viewed as being at the expense of the other. Increasingly, however, this dilemma is being reshaped, creating new opportunities to take advantage of the CFEL. In many areas, the corporate sector is realigning its goals to address more comprehensively individual worker needs and the disadvantaged in society.

During the past decade, the shift from a manufacturing based economy to an information based economy has accelerated. Now, a firm's assets are much less tangible (manufacturing machines or equipment) and much more intangible (intellectual capital, research and development, or relationships with employees and suppliers). Problems surface because the accounting and financial reporting systems used in the private sector have not kept pace with these changes. Critics of old economy accounting and generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) grow in numbers every day. One of these critics writes "intangible assets like innovation, employee education, customer loyalty ... are barely measured by the accounting system."[1] Baruch Lev, Professor of Accounting and Finance at New York University, has indicated that accounting "no longer delivers accountability" and has become "increasingly irrelevant." Furthermore, the accounting system "cannot capture the new economy, in which value is created by intangible assets .... The disconnect, says Lev, affects more than just financial analysts and corporate financial officers: Employees don't know how to value their contributions accurately ...."[2]

Historically, accounting for these types of intangible assets caused no particular difficulty—the information based economy had not been developed. Maintaining employee relationships, worker rights, and corporate responsibility simply represented costs (liabilities) for a firm. More and more, however, they are becoming assets (intangible assets) to be sought and valued. For firms to be prosperous and maintain a competitive advantage in the new economy, they must fully leverage employee relationships, employee knowledge, and other intangible assets. This, of course, means that management will need to treat workers with dignity and provide them with job security—both consistent with the CFEL. Now a greater incentive exists for firms to adhere to the CFEL's ten points, because firms need employees to "buy into" organizational goals and "go the extra mile" to assure institutional success. These marginal differences (employees going the extra mile) can make the difference between survival and failure in an economy based on ideas, efficiency, and information exchange. "The trouble was that the scientific management approach or, to put it more crudely, the 'top down' approach sees the employee as someone who is there to 'do as they are told.' Why? Because they are paid to 'get on with it.' But they do have a choice; they always did. No amount of pay will 'make' someone do something they don't want to—at least not with the levels of motivation, passion and obsession needed in today's competitive environment. So they have a choice—whether or not to give you their 'hearts and minds.' The secret is to find out how to appeal to the 'what's in it for me'—the WIIFMs."[3] In our information based economy where the firm's assets are intangible, sharing knowledge and cultivating cooperative relationships are absolutely critical. If organizations truly value their employees and enter into more reciprocal relationships with them (consistent with the CFEL), information exchange should flow more easily. Ultimately, this process will translate into increased shareholder value.

The public sector also has an opportunity to develop policies based on the CFEL to encourage a cooperative environment. These policies will help, without hindering, economic development and private sector competitiveness. There will be less resistance, because almost all will eventually benefit. The CFEL is a blueprint for pubic policy, not just because it

is morally correct, but because it has become economically logical for many more organizations in our information based economy to adopt.

Having previously described their merits, the ten points in the CFEL are delineated as follows. First, the economy exists for the person, not the person for the economy. Second, all economic life should be shaped by moral principles. Economic choices and institutions must be judged by how they protect or undermine the life and dignity of the human person, support the family, and serve the common good. Third, a fundamental moral measure of any economy is how the poor and vulnerable are faring. Fourth, all people have a right to life and to secure the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, safe environment, and economic security. Fifth, all people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions, and to organize and join unions or other associations. Sixth, all people, to the extent they are able, have a corresponding duty to work, a responsibility to provide for the needs of their families, and an obligation to contribute to the broader society. Seventh, in economic life free markets have both clear advantages and limits; government has essential responsibilities and limitations; voluntary groups have irreplaceable roles, but cannot substitute for the proper working of the market and the just policies of the state. Eighth, society has a moral obligation, including governmental action when necessary, to assure opportunity, meet basic human needs, and pursue justice in economic life. Ninth, workers, owners, managers, stockholders, and consumers are moral agents in economic life. By our choices, initiative, creativity, and investment, we enhance or diminish economic opportunity, community life, and social justice. Tenth, the global economy has moral dimensions and human consequences. Decisions on investment, trade, aid, and development should protect human life and promote human rights, especially for those most in need wherever they might live on this globe.[4]

The recent difficulties in the economy, including, for example, corporate scandals and volatile capital markets, may be a blessing in disguise. They may have accelerated needed reforms in the accounting and financial reporting sectors necessary for the new economy to grow. This will take time though. Corporate leaders will need to see more clearly how the CFEL has a positive impact on the bottom line. New accounting systems and company valuation methods will have to be tested over time for accurate representation. In the end, everyone should benefit. Employee knowledge, employee value, and employee relationships are intangible assets (no longer problems or costs) that can help a firm prosper in a competitive global market. If these intangible assets are managed properly, productivity and competitiveness will ultimately increase. More than ever, the ten points of the CFEL are as much about how a firm can leverage intangible assets as they are about protecting workers and the disenfranchised.

Notes

1. Farrell, Christopher, "Needed: 21st Century Accounting Rules," *Business Week* (March 22, 2002), at http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/mar2002/nf20020322_7451.htm.

2. Webber, Alan, "New Math For A New Economy," *Fast Company* (January/February 2000), at http://www.fastcompany.com/online/31/lev/html.

3. Thomson, Kevin, *Emotional Capital: Capturing Hearts and Minds to Create Lasting Business Success* (Capstone Publishing Limited: Oxford 1998) 130.

4. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Catholic Framework For Economic Life," *Woodstock Business Conference Report* (Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University January 1997, Vol. 4 No. 1), at http://www.georgetown.edu/centers/woodstock/wbc/wbc-r41.htm.

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Book News

What We Can't Not Know: A Guide
By J. Budziszewski
Spence Publishing Company
250 pp. Paperback: $27.95

In the postmodern world a term like morality is thought to no longer represent a universal constant. The dictates of morality may be determined by nothing more than the caprice of the one making the rules. Armed with their idiosyncratic definitions of morality, many postmodernists marginalize the unborn and the aged by justifying abortion and euthanasia. But something in the back of some of these postmodernists' minds stubbornly objects. J. Budziszewski gives voice to that stubborn objection. In *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*, Budziszewski reminds the postmodernist that he or she is not at liberty to toy with what constitutes morality. He stresses that morality issues from the natural law that has remained immutable since the foundation of the world. He describes how the natural law focus has been lost using examples that expose the ridiculousness of the postmodern moral relativism. *What We Can't Not Know* provides an unabashed response to the groundless pluralistic outlook that pervades secular postmodern culture.

Moral Inferiority of the Welfare State

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

In any discourse about the modern welfare state, rehearsing all the religious and moral reasons for assisting those in need is unnecessary. Citing one passage from the Gospel will do: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these members of my family, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:40). However, this sensitivity does not emancipate us from the obligation to prudently and wisely consider the most appropriate means to carry out this ministry. While Paul encouraged the early Christian community to be sensitive to the needy, he also prudently admonished "if a man does not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). With all its emphasis on love as the fundamental virtue, Christianity has never accepted that a moral responsibility exists to help those who could, but would not help themselves.

This appears to be the general attitude of the American public. Polls indicate that Americans tend to prefer social programs that promote self-support, not dependency. Yet, when the former Michigan Governor John Engler acted to fulfill his campaign promise to reduce the size of government and eliminated eighty-thousand able-bodied general assistance recipients from the roll, his most vocal critics were welfare advocacy groups headed by prominent mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic religious leaders. Two lines of reasoning emerge in this religious defense of the welfare state. The first is a utilitarian one that contends such governmental transfers are actually effective in ameliorating poverty and minimizing crime. The second is that the moral integrity of a society is determined by the use of the state's taxing and transfer apparatus to tend to the needs of the economically underprivileged.

... an awareness of the moral inferiority of the welfare state is slowly dawning within religious circles.

The chief underlying weakness of both these arguments is that each indicates the religious community requires the government to intercede in the religious community's legitimate concern to minister to those in need. The church then becomes functionally removed from its spiritual mandate to perform acts of charity, relegated to occupying the role of lobbyist. These assertions defending the welfare state also present a confused notion of morality. The moral status of those from whom Robin Hood stole was not elevated by the fact that their money was used to help the poor, assuming it really did end up helping them. For whatever noble end one may hope to achieve with the forced sharing of wealth, morality cannot be one of them. Forced morality is not morality, because free choice is a necessary precondition for virtue. This confused vision of morality has resulted in the disintegration of charity into entitlement and the collapse of justice into love.

Yet an awareness of the moral inferiority of the welfare state is slowly dawning within religious circles. To the dismay of religious welfare advocacy groups, in his latest social encyclical John Paul II observed that "by intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility, the Social Assistance State leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase of public agencies, which are dominated more by bureaucratic ways of thinking than by concern for serving their clients." The time has come for religious leaders to abandon their advocacy of governmental programs and reassume their rightful position as the primary ministers to the welfare of those in need.

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“There is no qualification for government but virtue and wisdom, actual or presumptive.”

—Edmund Burke—