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Faith Essential Ingredient of Democratic Capitalism

Interview: George Weigel

George Weigel is President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a non-profit organization based in Washington D.C. dedicated to bringing a religious perspective to governmental and public policy matters. A social and political critic, as well as a nationally recognized authority on foreign policy, Catholic social teaching, and the pontificate of John Paul II, Mr. Weigel is the author or editor of fourteen books, including *The Final Revolution: The Resistance Church and the Collapse of Communism* and *Idealism without Illusions: U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1990s*, as well as hundreds of essays, reviews, and op-ed pieces on religion and public life. A graduate of St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore and the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto, he was a 1984-85 Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

R&L: You opened your essay in* Reinventing the American People, *a recent book from the Ethics and Public Policy Center, by noting that a long line of political theorists, dating back to the days of the Romans, would regard you as "a dangerous man, a threat to the public order" because you are "an orthodox Christian." What is the appropriate way for Christians to be political?

Weigel: My book, *Soul of the World*, begins with this claim: The most important thing Christians say about *everything* is that "Jesus is Lord." And that "everything" most certainly includes politics. The Lordship of Christ is the greatest truth in history, and about history; the Lordship of Christ is a great barrier against absolutizing politics, which has been one of the great curses of the twentieth century. Human freedom and human flourishing are only possible when politics is kept in its place, which is a limited place.

So when Christians confess that "Jesus is Lord" they're relativizing all their other loyalties, including their political loyalties. That's why commentators from Pliny the Younger to Rousseau to the *New York Times* editorial board have considered Christians dangerous. The irony, of course, is that the Christian refusal to treat Caesar—or James Madison—as God is what clears the social space for pluralism, democracy, and the politics of consent.

R&L: In the above quotation, you make a point of explicitly describing your faith as orthodox. Why is this accent on orthodoxy so important in your formulation?

Weigel: Christian orthodoxy has shown itself remarkably resistant to the temptation to make an idol of the political: look at the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany, or the resistance Church in east central

Europe under communism. Attempts to "conform" Christianity to the "spirit of the age" often end up with the Church giving its blessings to some very dubious politics, as in the German *Deutsche christen*, or the "liberationist" churches of Latin America during the 1980s.

R&L: You have described Pope John Paul II as the "pope of freedom." What do you mean by this?

Weigel: John Paul II is the "pope of freedom" because he has given the quest for freedom, which he described at the U.N. this past October as "one of the great dynamics of human history," a philosophical and theological justification that has both deepened and broadened our understanding of liberty and its relationship to moral truth. The Holy Father has also described what I might call the "moral architecture of the free society" with great boldness in his 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. But John Paul's contributions to the cause of freedom have not been merely theoretical; as I argued in *The Final Revolution*, the pope was the primary architect of the revolution of conscience that made the nonviolent Revolution of 1989, and the collapse of European communism, possible.

R&L: What will be the implications of the papacy of John Paul II for future Catholic social teaching? And as we approach the five-year anniversary of Pope John Paul II's encyclical* Centesimus Annus, *what do you see as its greatest achievement?

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Weigel: *Centesimus Annus* is, with Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), one of the three great texts of modern Catholic social teaching. But *Centesimus Annus* did more than recapitulate the teaching of John Paul II's predecessors; it also set the social doctrine of the Church on a new path by its endorsement of the "free economy," its empirical sensitivity on questions of economic development, and its insistence that a vibrant, publicly-assertive moral-cultural order is essential to the functioning of the free economy and the democratic political community. Catholics, and indeed everyone interested in the relationship between moral truth and the free society, will be wrestling with *Centesimus Annus* for at least a century.

R&L: How has this encyclical transformed the public conversation about the nature of rights and duties in modern democratic regimes?

Weigel: It's helped transform that conversation by reigniting a discussion of the link between rights and duties or obligations. Over the past several generations, Americans had begun to think of "rights" as merely instrumental: trump cards, if you will, for advancing the claims of what Father Neuhaus has called the "imperial autonomous Self." This emptied the notion of "rights" of its proper moral content. John Paul II, by emphasizing that freedom finds its fulfillment in goodness, not in mere "process," has

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helped us to re-engage the idea that rights are means for the fulfillment of our duties. Or, as your patron, Lord Acton, said, freedom is "having the right to do what we ought."

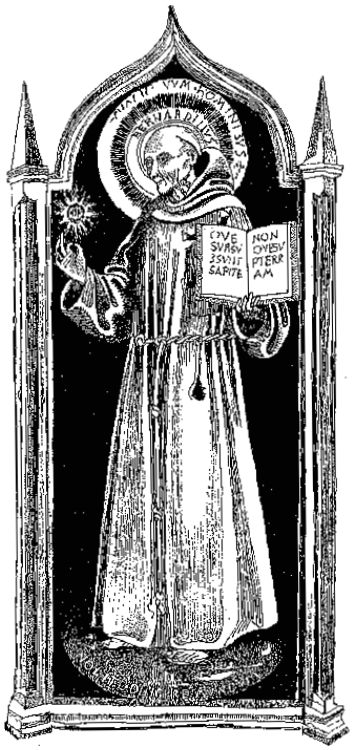
R&L: There are certain defenders of capitalism who, looking at* Centesimus Annus, *are amazed that Christians are becoming apologists for the free market. What accounts for the tendency of Christianity to promote an anti-capitalist mentality ?

Weigel: Some Christians, especially in mainline-oldline Protestantism, are committed socialists. Other Christians, and not without reason, worry about the market's capacity to create what Zbigniew Brzezinski once called the "permissive cornucopia." Given its "organic" view of society, Catholic social doctrine has, until recent years, been leery of what it deemed the excessive individualism of capitalist economies. The pioneering work of Michael Novak and others on the "communitarian indi-

In The Liberal Tradition

St. Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444)

"And the devil answered that having goods that belong to someone else is a sin worse than homicide because it is this sin which sends more people to Hell than any other."



St. Bernardino of Siena, the "Apostle of Italy," was a missionary, reformer, and scholastic economist. He was born of the noble family of Albizeschi in the Tuscan town of Massa Marittima. After taking care of the sick during a great plague in Siena in 1400, he entered the Franciscan order. He became a well-known and popular preacher, traveling throughout Italy on foot. He was offered bishoprics three times during his ministry, which he refused because he would have had to give up what he felt was his primary calling, that of a missionary.

Bernardino was the great systematizer of Scholastic economics after Aquinas, and the first theologian since Jean Peierre de Jean Olivi to write an entire work devoted to economics. This book, titled *On Contracts and Usury* , dealt with the justification of private property, the ethics of trade, the determination of value and price, and the usury question.

His greatest contribution to economics was the fullest discussion and defense of the entrepreneur written at the time. He pointed out that trade, like all other occupations, could be practiced either lawfully or unlawfully; all callings provide occasions for sin. Furthermore, merchants provide many useful services: transporting commodities from surplus to scarce regions; preserving and storing goods to be available when consumers want them; and, as craftsmen and industrial entrepreneurs, transforming raw materials into finished products.

Bernardino further observed that the entrepreneur is endowed by God with a certain and special combination of gifts that enable him to carry out these useful tasks. He identified a rare combination of four entrepreneurial gifts: efficiency, responsibility, hard work, and risk-taking. Very few people are capable of all these virtues. For this reason, Bernardino argued that the entrepreneur properly earns the profits which keep him in business and compensate him for his hardships. These are a legitimate return to the entrepreneur for his labor, expenses, and the risks that he undertakes. *A*

Sources: *Economic Thought Before Adam Smith* by Murray N. Rothbard (Edward Elgar, 1995), *Christians for Freedom* by Alejandro A. Chafuen (Ignatius, 1986), and *The Lives of the Saints* by S. Baring-Gould (John Grant, 1914).

vidual" in the free economy has helped the Church achieve a real development of social doctrine on economic matters, such that in *Centesimus Annus* entrepreneurship and economic initiative are proposed as reflections of the divinely-ordered creativity that is a characteristic of every human person.

Capitalist economies only work when a critical mass of people are possessed by certain habits of the mind and heart (what some of us used to call "virtues"): self-command, the capacity for prudent risk-taking, the ability to form cooperative working relationships, and the willingness to defer gratification. Corporations need to be very careful that, in their marketing and advertising, they don't promote attitudes and counter-values that will, eventually, cause the market system to implode. "Just do it" is bad morals and bad economics.

John Paul II, by emphasizing that freedom finds its fulfillment in goodness, not in mere "process," has helped us to re-engage the idea that rights are means for the fulfillment of our duties.

But the Church will continue to insist, and should continue to insist, that the free economy be tempered, directed, and disciplined by the moral-cultural order and by law.

R&L: You have written in your introduction to* A New Worldly Order *that, in regard to economic questions, "the pope is not persuaded by libertarian arguments" about the self-sufficiency of the market and that "the real issue is the ability of a culture to provide the market with the moral framework it needs to serve the cause of integral human development." Can you elaborate on the deficiencies and limitations of the market, and how ought Christianity respond to them?

Weigel: In *Centesimus Annus* , the pope writes that the temptation of wealthy societies (or developing societies, for that matter) is to confuse "having more" with "being more." Spend an hour looking at ads on prime-time television, and you'll see that temptation is omnipresent in America.

R&L: As a onetime seminary professor, can you give us an overview of the state of seminary education in America today, especially in regard to things political and economic? And what needs to be done to deepen seminarians' understanding of these topics?

Weigel: Most seminaries do a very poor job of teaching the social doctrine of the Church, and what teaching goes on tends to be filtered through an establishment-liberal optic. In these circumstances, the Acton Institute's work with seminary students is terribly important.

R&L: Finally, you have written that ecumenism will be the next great challenge for the Church as it approaches the third millennia. Why do you feel so strongly about ecumenism?

Weigel: I feel strongly about ecumenism because Christ wants His Church to be one. Christian divisions impede the proclamation of the Gospel, and make it more difficult for Christians to be salt and light in society. Happily, Christians of many ecclesial communities have found it possible to work together for the moral renewal of society, even as we continue to search together for that unity which Christ prayed for His Church.

R&L: What is the appropriate theological basis for undertaking the ambitious task of Christian unity?

Weigel: Christian unity is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. There is only one Church, because there is only one Christ, and the Church is His Body. The ecumenical task is not to "negotiate" the "terms" of Christian unity, but for all Christians to work together to give greater effect and public visibility to that unity with which the Holy Spirit has already endowed the Church. *A*

Capitalist economies only work when a critical mass of people are possessed by certain habits of the mind and heart, what some of us used to call "virtues".

The Protestant-Communal Foundations of American Political Thought

Barry Alan Shain

In 1819, Benjamin Constant argued that the apparently unitary concept of liberty in actuality described two sharply distinct understandings: one variant which was most "dear to the ancient peoples," and the second which was "especially precious to the modern nations." He explained that what most differentiated these two understandings of liberty was the status awarded to the individual. Indeed, ancient political liberty was fully compatible with "the complete subjection of the individual to the authority of the community." From this perspective, "no importance was given to individual independence," and each individual "was a slave in all his private relations." Conversely, modern liberty, he explained, is most concerned with protecting private pleasures or individual independence, which he claimed was "the true modern liberty." Moreover, according to Constant, Americans, as citizens of one of the most modern nations, were necessarily adherents and defenders of this modern notion of liberty.

For much of the next 150 years, the judgement of Constant and that of his countrymen, de Tocqueville and Chevalier—that America was a land fully dedicated to modern liberty and thus individualism—was widely accepted and repeated. This perspective was dominant until the 1960s and 1970s when a group of historians challenged this received wisdom. They contended, quite to the contrary, that Americans of the Founding era had been adherents of an understanding of liberty close to that associated by Constant with ancient political liberty. Instead of a dedication to individual liberty and material gain—that is, to modern liberalism—these historians argued that eighteenth-century Americans were a communal people who had sought to give meaning to their lives through political activity and thus are best understood as adherents of classical republicanism.

The debate regarding which of these two political philosophies, liberalism or republicanism, best describes the political thinking and long-term aspirations of the Revolutionary generation has been remarkably strident. But the level of acrimony is understandable given that the answer has broad contemporary political implications. As one journalist explains, at the heart of the raging cultural war between contemporary conservatives and liberals "are competing moral visions of what the Founding Fathers meant by 'ordered liberty': how to balance individual rights with the social responsibilities on which families and communities depend." And as one might expect, each of the two foundational philosophies understood this balance differently and awarded contrasting legitimacies to the immediate needs of the individual and those of the community.

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Inspired by this debate and the persuasiveness of the republican revisionists, I began researching this period expecting to recover from the years surrounding the American Revolution a well articulated public philosophy and an institutionalized set of practices which emphasized the need for individual self-sacrifice and the active participation of all citizens in the life of the polity. I hoped that by recovering what I expected to be the republican, communitarian character of America's past, that truly American alternatives to the present narrow range of individualistic options would be made available so that Americans might remember who they were as a people and think more clearly about who they might become.

Such expectations prepared me to discover that contrary to mythic beliefs widely held by the general public, Americans in the late eighteenth century were not a people who had founded colonies and then a nation "around a pervasive, indeed, almost monolithic commitment to classic liberal ideas," such as "individualism, freedom, [and] equality." Yet in contrast to what those historians who defended a "republican" reading of the Revolutionary era have contended, I found that Americans

did not hold to a republican outlook that was anthropocentric and independent of a Christian or a rationalist faith in an omniscient God. Not altogether surprisingly, I uncovered instead that eighteenth century Americans were a parochial reformed Protestant (or put more broadly, Christian) people whose thought was (to the contemporary republican apologist, inconveniently) strikingly dependent on a Christian origin or natural ordering in the Cosmos. Unlike the idealized Machiavellian urban republican citizens sought by the late Hannah Arendt, rural Americans were more interested in their religious communities, their families, local agricultural matters, and acquiring Christ's freely given Grace than they were in personal development through direct participatory political activity.

Therefore, both of the two regnant contemporary paradigms, "classical republicanism" and "liberal individualism," have proved unsatisfactory. Although they have their place in the totality of the Revolutionary drama, the defenders of each model have been guilty of greatly exaggerating the coherence, hegemony, and institutional strength in Revolutionary America of their preferred body of thought. They do so while virtually ignoring more powerful, though today less useful, influences on the speech and practices of the majority of European Americans; such as the reformed Protestant foundations of almost all the Colonies and their citizens; the deeply formative role of their common-law legal inheritance (that also finds its roots in Christian moral and legal thought); and the hold that various "lived" English agrarian traditions of local communalism continued to have on them.

This confusion is understandable because it is so easy today to forget that in the years 1765-85, those that surround the birth of the Republic, America was a nation of Protestant and communal backwater polities still marked at the beginning of the Revolutionary years by widespread adherence to the principles of a balanced monarchical government. Indeed, regarding the lowly status of the recently uncovered classical republicanism in the colonies, one historian has convincingly argued that "only in 1776 did *republic*, *republican*, and *republicanism* change from defamatory cliches" to being taken generally as "terms with affirmative connotations." Similarly, in this land of largely autonomous reformed Protestant village communities (or counties in the South) the revolutionary and atheistic liberalism of Hobbes and Mandeville was, at least in speech and writing, thoroughly reviled. Henry May has noted that "authors like the atheist Hobbes or anti-moralist Mandeville, had little to say to the busy, serious Protestant inhabitants of British America, and such unsettling writers were in fact little read." In short, the exaggerated attention shown to liberal individualism and classical republicanism probably speaks more to the needs and sensibilities of contemporary urban and secular commentators in search of a useful past than to the historic reality of a rural and Protestant people nestled in a caring and purposeful universe of divinely inspired meaning.

Accordingly, study of eighteenth century American political thought must be framed less by the secondhand analyses of republican and liberal apologists than by the insights of, for example, Alfred Chandler, who reminds us that America was overwhelmingly localist and that "in 1790 only 202,000 out of 3,930,000 Americans lived in towns and villages of more than 2,500." And as Harry Stout has argued, eighteenth century America was just as overwhelmingly Protestant as rural and that one must reject as "unsatisfactory the suggestion that ideas of secular 'republicanism' " or liberalism were the ideological triggers "of radical resistance and violence in the Revolution." Preference, therefore, must be given to explanatory accounts of American speech and behavior that begin by recognizing the overwhelmingly rural and Protestant character of late eighteenth century America, instead of historical analyses that demand that Americans be viewed predominantly through filters better suited and normally associated with urban secular populations. (Is it surprising, though, that urban secular scholars have created an American past in their own image?)

Thus, late eighteenth century Americans were neither a noble nor heroic people in the classical or Renaissance republican cast, nor an avaricious one in the modern individualistic mold. The vast majority lived voluntarily in morally demanding reformed Protestant agricultural communities defined by overlapping circles of community

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sponsored and assisted self-regulation, and even self-denial, rather than by individual autonomy or political self-expression. In the eighteenth century, then, as through much of American history up to the first decades of the twentieth century, Americans were preponderantly Christian, rural farmers who held to a strained and eclectic political vision that defies facile characterization. But clearly for them, the public's needs were to be awarded preeminence over the immediate ones of discrete individuals. In particular, the autonomous self, that combination of wants and passions that has replaced the soul as the essential core of man in modern thought, was then understood to be the center of man's sinfulness or, in the language of rationalism, as the embodiment of his estrangement from nature's (God's) perfect ordering of the universe. This estrangement was best reflected in man's selfishness, an aspect of his being that was deplored by most eighteenth century Americans. For our forebears, unlike for us, the truly autonomous self was neither an ultimate ethical category nor the center of moral worth.

When the eighteenth century American understanding of liberty is examined, one also finds that they believed that liberty in all but one of its various forms characterized a voluntary submission to a life of righteousness that accorded with universal moral standards mediated by divine revelation and the authoritative interpretive capacity of congregation and community. Liberty was framed by numerous aspects of eighteenth century life and thus took on seven different meanings: political liberty, spiritual liberty, English prescriptive liberties, familial or personal independence, natural liberty, communal civil liberty, and the beginnings of the contemporary understanding of the fully autonomous self that is free from social constraints regarding self-referential behavior. But, it was only this last sense of liberty that was genuinely looking forward to nineteenth century individualism. And in Revolutionary America this understanding of liberty was still of no importance.

More critical than this licentious view of liberty in understanding the political thought of the Revolutionary generation was their perception of slavery, which was viewed as an antipode to liberty and thus of importance in shaping its contours. And surprisingly, slavery understood as chattel enslavement was not among those meanings most frequently encountered in Revolutionary-era American political essays. Instead, in the polemical political writings of the period, slavery broadly conceived defined the absence of political liberty for a corporate body and, on the personal level, one's sinful incapacity to control passions and desires. In all cases, the inability or unwillingness to be self-governing is what defined a "slave," and this correct understanding of the meaning of slavery in the late eighteenth century is a missing keystone in a still incomplete reconstruction of Founding-era American social and political thought.

In short, America's most authentic political inheritance is a democratic, Christian, and communal understanding of the good human life that is too often forgotten, but nevertheless is its most enduring political tradition. This legacy is not the politically noble and existentially self-creating secular past that continues to be pursued by republican revisionists. Neither, however, is it illusory. And this authentic and powerful inheritance still resonates with the religious and social beliefs of most Americans. Thus, for many it still might be of importance that Revolutionary Americans were a people deeply committed to a moderate vision of Christian community, family, and an ordered Cosmos and opposed to norms that were implicitly individualistic and licentious. Although incapable of being readily appropriated by contemporary secular elites, it is an understanding of how human beings flourish that can enrich present-day American thought by greatly expanding what is authentically American and, thus, what is effectively conceivable. *A*

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Barry Alan Shain *is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Colgate University and the author of* The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought, *published by Princeton University Press. This essay is a précis of that book's thesis.*

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the State

David W. Hall

One casualty during the heyday of secularism was the historic teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. A once virtually-universal voice, which for centuries had been the dominant Christian voice on political matters in many nations, was shunned by secular and atheistic political models. Besides secularism, there has also been a virtual symbiosis of the Protestant Reformation and the spread of western democracies; thus in much of the western world, Roman Catholic political theology frequently remained unknown. Yet, there is a rich tradition—not to mention a recent revival—of officially-codified systematic teaching on matters of state. The following survey of Roman Catholic teaching, taken from the recent *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, is selected to stress many of the themes that have also been explicated repeatedly in the best Protestant theologies of the state. Indeed, there is much substantial unity in this area, although some differences remain.

The bulk of political theology in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter, *CCC*) is contained in Part Three. Two major sections constitute the general principles of Roman Catholic teaching on the subject: (1) the discussion of Social Life and the Moral Law; and (2) the exposition of the Moral Law or the Ten Commandments. The arrangement of the treatment under these two *loci* is not adverse to the classical Protestant discussion of similar matters.

Authority in general is a topic of fundamental importance. *CCC* states: "Human society can be neither well-ordered nor prosperous unless it has some people invested with legitimate authority to preserve its institutions and to devote themselves as far as is necessary to work and care for the good of all. . . . Every human community needs an authority to govern it. . . . Its role is to ensure as far as is possible the common good of the society." (nos. 1897-1898) *CCC* further qualifies that authority is legitimate "only when it seeks the common good of the group . . . and if it employs morally licit means to attain it." Such "common good" is also the standard for an acceptable political form: "Regimes whose nature is contrary to the natural law, to the public order, and to the fundamental rights of persons cannot achieve the common good of the nations on which they have been imposed." (no. 1901) The modern Catechism also recognizes the non-intervention of governments into other divinely mandated spheres: "It is preferable that each power be balanced by other powers and by other spheres of responsibility which keep it within proper bounds." (no. 1904)

The modern Catechism recognizes the non-intervention of governments into other divinely mandated spheres: "It is preferable that each power be balanced by other powers and by other spheres of responsibility which keep it within proper bounds."

Consistent with historic Protestantism, *CCC* expounds and applies much of the Second Table of the Decalogue as the foundation of the political order. The fifth commandment[1]—to honor one's parents—"constitutes one of the foundations of the social doctrine of the Church." (no. 2198) Under this rubric, a full doctrine of the family is introduced—a contribution of massive importance in our day. The traditional family is an "institution prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated." (no. 2202) This family is "the original cell of social life" and provides "an initiation into life in society." (no. 2207) Further, "The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor." (no. 2208) In conformity with the non-usurpation of governing spheres, "Following the principle of subsidiarity, larger communities should take care not to usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life" (no. 2209)—an axiom which will properly delimit social policy.

Accordingly, the state is to support and encourage the well-being of the family: "Civil Authority should consider it a grave duty to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and

foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity." (no. 2210) *CCC*, therefore, enunciates seven specifics (only one of which would be difficult to sustain from Scripture or tradition, i.e., the fifth item, although this is at least culturally relativized) by which the state is morally obligated to protect and support the family. The seven specifics, assigned as duties for the political community to ensure, are:

> (1) the freedom to establish a family, have children, and bring them up in keeping with the family's own moral and religious convictions; (2) the protection of the stability of the marriage bond and the institution of the family; (3) the freedom to profess one's faith, to hand it on, and to raise one's children in it, with the necessary means and institutions; (4) the right to private property, to free enterprise, to obtain work and housing, the right to emigrate; (5) in keeping with the country's institutions, the right to medical care, assistance for the aged, and family benefits; (6) the protection of security and health, especially with respect to dangers like drugs, pornography, alcoholism, etc; and (7) the freedom to form associations with other families and so to have representation before civil authority. (no. 2211)

Many other worthy affirmations are contained in *CCC*'s exposition of the fifth commandment, the commandment from the Second Table receiving the fullest discussion. Nevertheless, *CCC* is prudent to state that family duties are "important but not absolute" (Mt. 10:37). Moreover, the command to honor parents "also enjoins us to honor all who for our good have received authority in society from God." (no. 2234) Civil authorities are to serve, practice justice, care for the needs of its citizens, and "respect the fundamental rights of the human person," all of course subservient to the "common good."

Under the discussion of the commandment not to murder, *CCC* opposes intentional homicide, abortion, genetic engineering, euthanasia, and suicide. However, it allows for legitimate defense and respect for human life: "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being." (no. 2258) Had *CCC* wished to equivocate or take a position less than the historic and ethical pro-life position, it could have. In the face of mounting selfism and promiscuity, however, *CCC* trumpets the Catholic consensus on abortion and any other attempts to murder innocent life:

> These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. . . . The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined. (no. 2273)

Under the discussion of the commandment not to murder, *CCC* opposes intentional homicide, abortion, genetic engineering, euthanasia, and suicide. However, it allows for legitimate defense and respect for human life.

The commandments prohibiting adultery, dishonesty, and greed are also to be respected by the civil magistrate. It is in this exposition of the 8th commandment, however, that one observes the appearance of conflict, as herein the Catechism seeks to blend classic views of property with the alloys of some modern views. *CCC* affirms that, "The right to private property . . . does not do away with the original gift of the earth to the whole of mankind." (no. 2403) The eighth commandment forbids theft, in its manifold appearances: "The following are also morally illicit: speculation in which one contrives to manipulate the price of goods artificially in order to gain an advantage to the detriment of others; corruption in which one influences the judgment of those who make decisions according to law; appropriation and use for private purposes of the common goods of an enterprise; work poorly done; tax evasion; forgery of checks and invoices; excessive expenses and waste. Willfully damaging private or public property is contrary to the moral law and requires reparation." (no. 2409)

Accordingly, "Promises must be kept and contracts strictly observed to the extent that the commitments made in them are morally just." (no. 2410) The dignity and propriety of human work is upheld, as well as the need to love the poor. The implications of the eighth commandment for the state are exhibited:

> Economic activity, especially the activity of a market economy, cannot be conducted in an institutional, juridical, or political vacuum. On the contrary, it presupposes sure guar-

> antees of individual freedom and private property, as well as a stable currency and efficient public services. Hence the principal task of the state is to guarantee this security, so that those who work and produce can enjoy the fruits of their labors and thus feel encouraged to work efficiently and honestly. . . . Another task of the state is that of overseeing and directing the exercise of human rights in the economic sector. However, primary responsibility in this area belongs not to the state but to individuals and to various groups and associations which make up society. (no. 2431)

In these economic matters, the Church legitimately makes moral judgements about economic matters, with a "mission distinct from that of political authorities." (no. 2420) Among the economic and political systems repudiated by such principles, *CCC* condemns:

> Any system in which social relationships are determined entirely by economic factors is contrary to the nature of the human person and his acts. . . . A theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable. . . . A system that subordinates the basic rights of individuals and of groups to the collective organization of production is contrary to human dignity. . . . The Church has rejected the totalitarian and atheistic ideologies associated in modern times with communism or socialism. . . . Regulating the economy solely by centralized planning perverts the basis of social bonds; regulating it solely by the law of the marketplace fails social justice . . . Reasonable regulation of the marketplace and economic initiatives, in keeping with a just hierarchy of values and a view to the common good, is to be commended. (nos. 2423-2425)

In this recent Catechism, there are still remnants of unfortunate leftovers lingering from the *zeitgeist* of the 1960s and 1970s. For example, one wonders why some of the following were retained, other than to mimic a type of "balance"—not normally the ethos of catechetical instruction: "Access to employment and to professions must be open to all . . . For its part society should, according to its circumstances, help citizens find work and employment. . . . Unemployment almost always wounds its victim's dignity and threatens the equilibrium of his life. . . . A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. . . . inequality of resources and economic capability is such that it creates a real gap between nations. . . . There must be a solidarity among nations which are already politically interdependent." (nos. 2433-2438) Admittedly, these are minor, somewhat qualified, and in pursuit of consensus. However, they stand out in the text as peculiarly contemporary, whereas most of *CCC* is consistently traditional.

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Toward the end, *CCC* seems unable to resist the trend to award some matter of preference to the poor, even though this Catechism speaks of the duty of "preferential love" for the poor; a slight improvement over the earlier "preferential option" for the poor, but still a likely instance of seeking to be more hipster than thou. In addition, *CCC* calls for the "reform of international economic and financial institutions so that they will better promote equitable relationships with less advanced countries," (no. 2440) an expression more compatible with a liberationist approach than that of upholding private property avowed above. "Rich nations" are singled out for certain duties, (no. 2439) and the cry for "full development of human society" (no. 2441) gives one pause in light of the recent history of such phrases.

Protestants—Calvinists in particular—are more skeptical of the prowess of human reason than the Catechism. Taking the noetic effects of sin seriously, one must treat some of the claims to the perspicuity of natural law with caution. It is not abundantly clear that the natural man understands the things of God (1 Cor. 2:11-14; Rom. 8:7). Prior to regeneration or conversion, natural insight or the application of the natural law is essentially restricted by the human legislator. It is not easily proven that all cultures hold to monogamy (7th commandment), nor that all cultures support honesty (9th commandment), nor that most cultures hold to the sanctity of life (6th commandment). Moreover, a realism which reckons the extent of depravity finds itself unconvinced that pagans champion the natural law. Hence, even though natural law is admittedly an integral and historic aspect of Roman Catholic teaching, a quick agreement on this subject between Catholics and Protestants may not be attained.

The biblically-informed Christian will rejoice at many of the political planks contained in *CCC*. Some Protestants will have a diminished skepticism upon reading these, while others will rejoice in the true ecumenicity of belief, even if limited to these areas. A fair understanding of Roman Catholicism is important for those who are co-belligerents, as well as in order to be honest in our

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The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind
by Mark A. Noll

William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1994. 322 pp. Cloth: $24.00

Review by Herbert Schlossberg

Recent years have brought to the fore a drumbeat of complaints from evangelical intellectuals bemoaning the ineffectual work of evangelical intellectuals. This theme has been sounded recently by Os Guinness, David Wells, and John Seel, among others, and now Mark Noll weighs in. Noll believes that American evangelicals have made small contribution to the intellectual life of the nation and so have failed not only in their civic duty, but also their religious responsibilities. Christians who take seriously the sovereignty of God over the creation should recognize the theological implications this has for study and reflection about the physical and social world, and not leave that vital task to others. There are plenty of evangelicals who possess academic credentials, but Noll believes they come up with very little that is both responsible and can be related to the big questions of life in society; it's as if Christian faith had nothing to say about such matters, being concerned wholly with spiritual matters.

A hard-working, prolific, and able historian, Noll not surprisingly locates the source of the problem in the historical circumstances that went into the making of American evangelicalism. Although he has hard things to say about the fundamentalist reaction to the radical drift of the mainline denominations early in the twentieth century, he believes the roots of the problem are far older. The promising start given to the movement by Jonathan Edwards could not survive the emotional revivalism of George Whitfield and various nineteenth and twentieth century successors. Moreover, the evangelicals, like so many of their countrymen, unconsciously adopted a form of the Enlightenment that was native to Scotland and went by the name "common-sense realism." One characteristic of this kind of thinking was an empiricism that owed much to the scientific philosophy of Francis Bacon, and American evangelicals brought this approach uncritically into their thinking about theology, science, and the various social issues that attracted their attention in spite of a pervading attitude of other-worldliness, a spiritual-mindedness that too often could not be bothered with the "unimportant" social, political, and economic issues that preoccupied the worldly.

In broad outline I think Noll is right, although there is plenty of room for discussion about a number of points. Carl F. H. Henry, for example, is one of his models for what an evangelical intellectual should be, but holds to a view of scripture that Noll uses to illustrate the shabbiness of evangelical thinking. To cite another case, Noll views the Creationists as exemplars of obscurantism—Baconism and all that; he prefers the theistic evolutionism espoused by many in the American Scientific Affiliation, but he does not discuss the intellectual ferment now associated with critiques of that point of view. Beyond such opportunities for discussion and clarification, there is an enormous gap in Noll's discussion to which I hope he will return. Since he argues that American evangelicals have failed to contribute the insights of their faith to the problems and opportunities of modern life, why does he have almost nothing to say about the academic institutions which they own and operate? Most of these colleges have long since completed the transition out of fundamentalism to something more like what he wants and have filled their faculty slots with Ph.D.s from good universities. How, then, is it possible that they are still unable to fulfill their intellectual responsibilities?

A few years ago I attended an academic conference at Wheaton College, where Mark Noll is a professor of history, and heard one of Wheaton's academic leaders give a paper urging that the insights of the French deconstructionists be given a wider and more respectful hearing among evangelicals. The respondent pointed out in a withering and closely reasoned reply full of supporting quotations that those "insights" were intended precisely to destroy everything for which evangelicalism stood. Noll was in the auditorium during this exchange, and I would have hoped that the phenomenon which this event exemplified would be central to his analysis.

Noll believes that American evangelicals have made small contribution to the intellectual life of the nation and so have failed not only in their civic duty, but also their religious responsibilities.

Last year the Ethics and Public

Policy Center sponsored a roundtable discussion among members of evangelical college faculties, some of them well-published scholars, who reported that they have been pushed to the margins on their campuses by proponents of the various fads that characterize secular universities. They may not be subject (yet?) to the same reign of terror, but there is little doubt that students and teachers on these campuses can publicly dissent from the feminism, social democracy, subjectivism, and relativism that are features of their environment only with difficulty and with the exercise of considerable courage. An exposé of the intellectual failings of evan-gelicalism that has so much to say about the Scottish Enlightenment but so little to say about the present institutions that exemplify and perpetuate those failings lacks balance. Perhaps this imbalance accounts for Noll writing of the evangelical colleges in a section which cautiously speaks of signs of hope.

There are in fact signs of hope, but they are located in a different quarter. Younger scholars are coming up now of a decidedly different mien than a great many of Noll's colleagues. These people are far more critical of the reigning academic orthodoxies, but not of Christian orthodoxy. Many went or are going to foreign universities because they were too *incorrect* for American Ph.D. programs. I hope Mark Noll gets to know some of these people. They need the encouragement and example of an older hand who has taken the trouble to learn his craft, and he could stand the refreshment of a vision for the articulation of a Christian worldview that goes well beyond what he thinks are hopeful signs. *A*

Herbert Schlossberg *is a contributing editor to* Religion & Liberty.

Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality

by Robert P. George

Clarendon Press, 1993. xvi, 241 pp. Cloth: $42.00

Review by Steven M. Krason

Robert P. George is a Princeton professor, first Vice President of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists, and a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. In this book, he has done an admirable job of combining his fields of philosophy (John Finnis was his mentor), law, and political science to analyze the difficult question of how liberal democracy can enact laws that seek to promote civility and personal goodness while upholding basic individual liberties. Although much of the work critically examines the thought of various contemporary legal philosophers and scholars (all of whom oppose, for the most part, the notion of morals legislation) and can be tedious in places, it is fairly easily readable for the layman.

> There is pitifully little literature on this subject of civil liberties which approaches this problem or takes the stance that Robert George does.

The book is laid out in three parts. The first reviews the thought of Aristotle and St. Thomas—what George calls the "central tradition of western thought" about the interrelationship of morality, politics, and law. George labels the perspective they propounded as "perfectionism," which, in short, held that politics and law are rightly concerned about the "moral well-being" of people and should seek to make them virtuous. While certainly agreeing with this central premise of the tradition, George says that Aristotle's thought is deficient in that, even acknowledging his claim that there are natural excellences of human conduct, he had too narrow of a view of the acceptable range of ways of life and did not explain how those not capable of the highest way of life—i.e., essentially that of the eminently virtuous philosopher—could fit into a political order committed to it. Aquinas' insufficiently developed notion of religious liberty makes his "semi-theocratic (or sacral/consecrational) view of political community and authority" problematic. In sum, the tradition is right to urge that law promote perfectionism, but does not provide adequate grounds for it or a guide for the extent it should be done in a pluralistic political society.

The central and by far the longest part of George's book is the critique of the various thinkers: H.L.A. Hart, Patrick Devlin, Ronald Dworkin, Jeremy Waldron, John Rawls and Joseph Raz. George gives a thorough statement of the thought of each and carefully and incisively examines their crucial assertions.

In the final chapter, George sketches—he cautions the reader to realize that it is merely that—what he calls a "pluralistic perfectionist theory of civil liberties," that is, one which explains how and to what

extent law can be used to promote personal moral goodness in a modern pluralistic setting and with full regard for deeply embedded principles of civil liberties. He makes clear his intention to provide much more detail to his theory and many more specific applications of it in future works. He considers why each of the following generally accepted civil liberties involve worthwhile human goods which should be promoted, and how the theory plays itself out with each of them: freedom of speech, freedom of press, privacy, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion.

His attempt to reflect about the nature of each of these rights and why, properly understood, they help promote the good of man both individually and in the community, is a valuable and needed contribution at a time when frenzy, blind emotionalism, and ideological imperatives seem to dominate most of the discussion on this subject. George provides some interesting insights in this part of the book, such as with his argument for freedom of political speech even in non-representative regimes (e.g., restrictions will prevent a monarch from receiving enough of the correct information he needs to govern well).

Throughout this chapter, George shows that he approaches the question of rights and the citizen's relationship to the political community squarely in light of the notion of the common good of each individual and of the community of which he is a part. There are a few assertions that George makes which, while seemingly true for the most part, necessitate empirical support which he fails to provide (e.g., that any attempt by government to coerce religious faith and practice "is likely to impair people's participation in the good of religion").

There is pitifully little literature on this subject of civil liberties which approaches this problem or takes the stance that Robert George does. More broadly, what is so commendable and critical about his effort in this book is the following: He considers how the perennial insights of the great realist tradition of philosophy and what has been called the "Great Tradition" of political philosophy can be applied to modern conditions. He points to insufficiencies in those traditions and suggests needed adaptations and modifications where possible. He supplies necessary theoretical reflection to help actual practice to develop better than it might by itself. And, simply, he works to fashion theory which can *feasibly* be put into practice. More works like this in more areas are needed to demonstrate why perennial truths and the greatest social-political-philosophical-legal insights remain such and are not incompatible with modern life—and to provide a basis for a restoration of sound culture after the ashes of our cultural malaise have finally been cleared away. *A*

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***Stephen M. Krason**, J.D., Ph.D. is the President of the Society of Catholic Social Scientists and Professor of Political Science at Franciscan University of Steubenville.*

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treatment of another communion. Certainly fundamental differences remain between Catholics and Protestants, but any small sliver of unity should be welcomed. Meanwhile, this Protestant theologian is hard pressed to point to a more comprehensive or consistent modern confessional statement of political theology. The only treatises that come to mind are the *Westminster Larger Catechism's* exposition of the Decalogue and Johannes Althusius's *Politica* (1603). *A*

Notes

1. Since, the earlier parts of this work (*Savior or Servant? Putting Government in its Place* [The Kuyper Institute, 1996]) have numbered the Ten Commandments in keeping with the traditional Protestant enumeration, the succeeding comments will preserve such classification. Hence, even though *CCC* retains the Roman enumeration of the Decalogue, for consistency, my discussion reflects the Protestant taxonomy without seeking to discuss the inherent merits of either classification. Protestants may therefore accuse me of dodging an issue, while Roman Catholics will hopefully forgive me on the basis of my sincere pursuit of consistency.

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Book News

In Praise of Virtue: An Exploration of the Biblical Virtues in a Chrstian Context

Benjamin W. Farley
Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995
181 pp. Paper: $13.00

Published by Eerdmans, Benjamin W. Farley's *In Praise of Virtue: An Exploration of the Biblical Virtues in a Christian Context* is devoted to developing a theology of virtue that can be applied "to the major faith-and-life issues of the day." Professor Farley searches the Old and New Testaments for the Bible's teaching on what virtue is, what the virtues are, and whether human beings can be virtuous.

According to Farley, "the fundamental metaphysics of any biblical ethics of character" rests on the insight that "*no one is saved by exercising virtue; nor is anyone damned for lack of it. God and God's grace come first*." In his view, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews all agree that God's care for human beings and our loving obedience to His Law is the basis for true moral character.

This book is obviously directed to people of faith who want to understand how to respond to the current virtue movement. But Farley also emphasizes that it useful for those who, while not religious, simply want to know how the Bible can deepen their own understanding of the virtuous life. According to him, "the Bible emphasizes…the inadequacy of the human effort to repair the debilitating effects of pride and sin…nonetheless, each is still an intelligent and moral being, capable of self-transcendence, self-expression, accountability, and self-determination." He concludes that while people cannot perfect themselves by acquiring virtue, they can be become better, freer, and happier through its ennobling power.

Ethics After Christendom

Vigen Guroian
Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994
206 pp. Paper: $13.00

Vigen Guroian's *Ethics After Christendom: Toward an Ecclesial Christian Ethic* thoughtfully searches for a way to infuse Christian ethics into a liberal society that is "post-Christian."

The book is divided into three parts. In Part One, Guroian argues that the Church must acknowledge that "Christendom" no longer exists. In his view, the attempted synthesis of Christian natural law and liberal natural rights by such thinkers as Reinhold Niebuhr and John Courtney Murray "has been broken apart… to the point that it is now beyond repair."

But Guroian does not counsel despair. In Part II, he contends that the church's "new minority status" gives it an unprecedented opportunity for genuine "engagement" with the prevailing secular culture. The basis for this engagement is what Guroian calls "ecclesial ethics." This ethics calls for a recognition that the church's mission is in part to supply an understanding of virtue that liberalism can embrace, and through this embrace be made open to the greater mysteries contained in the church's rich liturgical tradition.

Part III discusses the application of this ethic. Guroian treats the family (chapter six), creation (chapter seven), and medicine (chapter eight). In each of these cases, he argues that ecclesial ethics supplies a concept of *oikonomia*, or household management, which provides principles for the application of good means to wise ends. This insightful section goes a long way to clarify what Guroian identifies as the "moral confusion even among self-professed religious people."

Evangelical Ethics

John Jefferson Davis
P&R Publishing, 1993
293 pp. Paper: $14.95

Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing has re-issued a second edition of John Jefferson Davis' well-received work: *Evangelical Ethics: Issues Facing the Church Today*. According to Professor Davis, his book in part comes out of his "practical engagement in life-related issues through the pro-life movement."

Divided into ten chapters, *Evangelical Ethics* covers issues from abortion to divorce to war and peace. Building on John Calvin's argument that "the moral law plays a positive role in the believer's life," Davis offers not only practical answers to real-world dilemmas but also elaborates a basic Christian "*worldview* within which the various data of the human sciences can be understood." He concludes that there is a common ethical ground between believers and non-believers and that "God calls nations to account for the violation of the basic moral principles revealed in creation and conscience."

—Jeffrey J. Sikkenga

Robert A. Sirico, CSP

The Entrepreneur as Servant

"If anyone wants to be the first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." Mark 9:35

Lent has been traditionally the season in the Christian calendar for believers to prepare their hearts for the miraculous work of Easter. It is a time to be reminded that the way of the cross is a way of suffering and service, a way embodied by Jesus Christ. Thoughtful and holy men and women throughout the history of the Church have recognized this fact of faith, and dedicated their lives to such radical service. We ought to be inspired by their examples, and recognize that those who serve are indeed the greatest among us.

But there is one type of servant which has been ignored by most church leaders—the entrepreneur. One sees evidence of the prejudice against him everywhere. Books, television, films, and even sermons all convey the same message: What he does is rapacious, greedy, and socially destructive. Business may be a necessary evil, says reigning opinion, but the entrepreneur should never be given a moral sanction. That is the conventional wisdom as proclaimed by the chattering class.

This sentiment is not unfounded. We all know the business person whose practices are illegal and immoral, who through force and fraud reaches into our checkbooks uninvited in order to line his own pockets. But let us not be confused. We are all susceptible to sin, clergy and entrepreneurs alike. Many critics of the entrepreneur are beset by this confusion. We must remember that the market will exhibit all the failings of a fallen humankind. Sin is a part of business not because the market is involved, but because people are involved.

Markets—and the entrepreneurs who give life to the market—require a moral context in which to exist and function. Firms cannot long exist without a reputation for honesty, quality workmanship, and in most cases, civility. Given the fact that a free market depends on voluntary exchange to operate, if these qualities are lacking, consumers know best when to end the relationship.

We must remember that God has created entrepreneurs with a rare combination of gifts and abilities. St. Bernardino, our focus for this issue's "In The Liberal Tradition" feature, recognized four such gifts: efficiency, responsibility, hard work, and risk-taking. The entrepreneur then takes these gifts and combines them with a special and often subtle insight about something people need, and works very hard to fill this need in a creative and productive manner. In the process, he employs the labor of others, giving them a meaningful means to support their families. And in the end he has created wealth and prosperity that had not existed before. All this comes to be through his faithful service. If the entrepreneur profits thought the application of his gifts and the assumption of great risks, they are profits well-deserved.

God has created entrepreneurs with a rare combination of gifts and abilities.

As a priest, I often find entrepreneurs who are disenfranchised and alienated from their churches. They hear that the path to personal redemption is to give up all their money. But religious leaders display very little understanding of the vocation called entrepreneurship, and of what it contributes to society. It is a mistake to associate business with greed. When people accept the entrepreneurial vocation, they must focus on the needs of others; business people in a market economy cannot be self-centered and be successful. Religious leaders must learn something about economics. Then they will come to understand that the entrepreneurs often are the greatest men and women of faith among us. *A*

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"Everything
that is really great and inspiring
is created by the individual
who can labor in freedom."

—Albert Einstein—

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