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Pope John Paul II's Visit Heralds New Beginning for Cuba

Interview: Mario J. Paredes

Mario J. Paredes is the executive director of the Manhattan-based Northeast Hispanic Catholic Center, which seeks to aid the Roman Catholic Church in its ministry to the United States Hispanic community. He has traveled frequently to Cuba on church-related business during the last thirteen years, and was present for the papal visit there in January.

R&L: In the weeks before Pope John Paul II s visit to Cuba, there was a great deal of speculation as to what he would say and do during his time there. What were your expectations of the pope s visit?

Paredes: Knowing how the Holy Father has addressed local churches around the world in the past, I had no doubt that he would challenge the Cubans to rediscover their faith and to value their traditions and religious identity.

R&L: Were your expectations ful lled?

Paredes: We did not know what the response of the faithful in Cuba would be, so it was wonderful to see the huge manifestations of faith and devotion at the Masses with the Holy Father in Cuba s public squares. This was the rst time in forty years that the church was allowed to hold any kind of public event, and the number of people who attended was overwhelming. It ful lled my expectations beyond my wildest dreams.

My expectations were also ful lled by the reception of the Holy Father s message. His teachings and homilies were all in line with the vision of the church and the teaching of the gospel, while addressing the very concrete problems of the Cuban church. Families, youths, ordained ministers, bishops each of these audiences openly received the teachings of the Holy Father. Further, I was encouraged by how well he was received by the learned community that is to say , scholars, scientists, thinkers, artists, and the like when he visited the University of Havana. It is exciting to see that the teachings of the Holy Father are religiously profound and not merely political discourse; they are much deeper and go directly to the nature of the human person and to questions of values and society.

R&L: You were present for the duration of the pope s visit in Cuba. What did you see there? How did the Cuban people react to John Paul II?

Paredes: I saw ever-increasing enthusiasm from the rst day onward. From the pope s arrival, to the rst Mass in Santa Clara, to Santiago, and nally to the major public celebration in Havana, one was able to perceive the enthusiasm, the excitement, growing daily. At the very end, in Havana, it was a highly, highly emotional experience.

R&L: Did you have a chance to speak with any of the Cuban people and see the visit through their eyes?

Paredes: Yes, I spoke with many people, including Catholics, non-Catholics, and even members of the communist party. All of them, believers and non-believers alike, were taken by the fact that the Holy Father could travel around the country and bring together so many people. They were amazed that the speeches of the Holy Father, whatever the event, were so rich in meaning. This is not something to which people in Cuba are accustomed. They have never heard those kinds of speeches; rather, they are accustomed to the highly political speeches of Fidel Castro. But in the person of the Holy Father you had a physically frail, elderly man full of goodness, wisdom, and simplicity elements that people were able to perceive and to admire.

R&L: In the weeks leading up to the papal visit, many news commentators were emphasizing the political aspect of the Holy Father s visit. You seem to be saying that the real story is its spiritual aspect. Can you address this dichotomy?

Paredes: It is my impression that the press is not too familiar with what the Holy Father does in these visits, and, more generally, with what the church does in her mission, so the press viewed this visit, really, as the meeting of two elderly statesmen who have different visions of the world and who came to meet and to confront each other. But the mission of the church and of the head of the church is intrinsically a spiritual one. The Holy Father s goal is to con rm the faith of the local churches, so the press does not really understand what he was intending to do in Cuba.

The job of the Holy Father never has been to overthrow regimes. Rather … he has experienced conflicts with political systems because he presented the truth.

This is painful because it created false expectations in the way his visit was viewed. The job of the Holy Father never has been to overthrow regimes. Rather, he has visited the entire church all over the world, and, in doing so, he has experienced con icts with political systems because he presented the truth based on Gospel values and on the tradition and work of the church. So, the press was a bit confused about the real nature of his visit.

R&L: Totalitarian regimes such as Cuba fear and suppress the church precisely because the church understands itself to be an independent moral and spiritual authority, as you have been explaining. What is your view of the liberating power of faith, especially as it relates to the Cuban situation?

Paredes: The varied contributions of the Christian faith such as its understanding of the human person, the teachings of the Gospel, and the mission of the church itself in a regime such as Cuba, certainly has not been appreciated. With the visit of the Holy Father and his message that the church has a mission in society to humanize con ict and to bring the human person to her greatness, the Cuban regime now has begun to pay attention to what they have done with their forty-year experiment in communism.

The Christian faith calls the human person to greatness that is to say , to goodness, to sacri ce, to service, to solidarity, to a life of truthfulness and everything that is contrary to that truth about the human person becomes a counter-force for authentic growth and development. That is our contribution as people of faith, and I think the Cuban government is going to begin to take a new look at what they used to mistrust. They had a philosophy, and they developed a view of an atheistic society out of that philosophy that led them nowhere. Indeed, a society based on atheistic values has meant regression and

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underdevelopment for Cuba, so they necessarily have to rethink their position with regard to religion, faith, and the church.

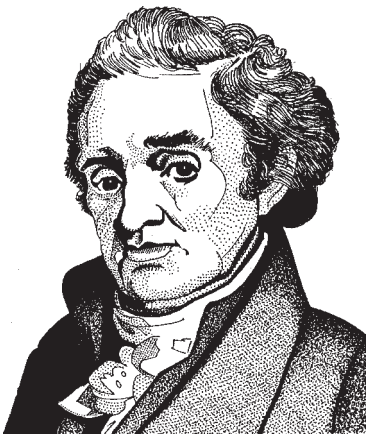
R&L: With that in mind, what will be of lasting signi cance from the papal visit?

Paredes: There is no doubt in my mind that Cuba will never be the same, that this is a new beginning for Cuba. The lasting contribution of this papal visit will be a departure from the historical view of the Cuban regime that they have created a model country based on a materialistic view of society. The spiritual message, the call of the Holy Father for the greatness of the Cuban people, the teachings of high moral values that are essential to develop a good and healthy society these are the major contributions of the papal visit and are the reason the Holy Father spoke so much about the truth and hope that is needed

In The Liberal Tradition

Noah Webster (1758–1843)

"In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed.... The Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people."



The great American lexicographer Noah Webster was born in pre-Revolutionary New England to a Puritan family. He embarked on a career in law after the completion of his studies at Yale College in 1778, which were interrupted by a swift tour of duty in the Revolutionary War. After 1782, he discovered his true vocation in the study and teaching of the English language. His grammars, readers, and spellers began to be published in 1784, with many remaining in print through the rst decade of the twentieth century . Webster had a conversion experience during the Second Great Awakening, whereupon he became an orthodox Calvinist and an ardent Congregationalist.

For Webster, the preservation of property was one of the chief ends of good government: To render every man free, there must be energy enough in the executive, to restrain any man and any body of men from injuring the person or property of any individual in society. Indeed, Webster held that the preservation of private property is one of the surest bulwarks against the encroachment of liberty and that all other rights are inferior considerations, when compared with a general distribution of real property among every class of people. Insofar as property is a result of man s labor, taking another s property without his consent or compensation is tantamount to enslaving him. Thus Webster concludes: Let the people have property and they will have power a power that will forever be exerted to prevent the abridgment of any other privilege. For this reason, he lobbied for the passage of copyright laws at both the state and federal levels to protect the authors of useful inventions. According to Webster, the production of genius and the imagination are if possible more really and exclusively property than houses and lands, and are equally entitled to legal security.

Furthermore, Webster thought a virtuous and well-educated citizenry ensured the preservation of freedom. Information is fatal to despotism, he wrote, and part of his life s labor was the writing and publishing of textbooks to be used in local schools and in homes that would convey the rudiments of spelling and grammar, as well as provide both moral formation and civic education. These latter projects were pivotal for Webster: The *virtues* of men are of more consequence to society than their *abilities*; and for this reason, the *heart* should be cultivated with more assiduity than the head. *A*

Sources: *The Founder's Constitution: Major Themes* edited by Kurland and Lerner (University of Chicago Press, 1987), and "Noah Webster: Founding Father of American Scholarship and Education" by Rosalie J. Slater (Foundation for American Christian Education, 1967).

in today s world, particularly in the context of the Cuban society.

R&L: Much of what you have been describing about the pope s visit has a great deal of connection with themes in his social teaching. How do you see what the pope did in Cuba as related to what he has said in the encyclicals promulgated throughout his ponti cate?

Paredes: There is no doubt that the Holy Father has made an incredible effort throughout this ponti cate to bring out the best of the teachings of Vatican II. The Holy Father has felt compelled to highlight important dimensions of our Christian life in such encyclicals as *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Centesimus Annus*, and *Veritas Splendor*. In all of these encyclicals, and especially in *Redemptoris Hominis*, he sees the human person as the key element in history. This is the major contribution of the Holy Father to political systems around the world. If an organization in our society plans to build human relationships on the dictates of the state and to deny the personal capacity of each individual to make options and to exercise those options freely in society, then it is clearly doomed to failure.

We saw this in the Soviet Union in 1989; it did not have the right anthropological foundations, so the regime collapsed. Societies must address the essential characteristics of the human person, and the Holy Father has used his encyclicals to demonstrate the fact that societies must promote those conditions that guarantee human rights, respect for each individual, freedom, justice, and solidarity.

R&L: What is the economic situation like in Cuba?

Paredes: Any observer who goes to Cuba will conclude that their economy is in big trouble. No one can deny that there is great economic scarcity in that country. The lack of any kind of maintenance of their infrastructure is rather evident, as is the lack of goods and services of all sorts. There is no capital, no money. So, they are having a very dif - cult time.

R&L: Is this a result of the United States embargo or of Cuba s economic system?

Paredes: I think, primarily, the economic system has failed. I will not deny that the embargo has in some ways contributed to the situation, but it is not the only reason the economy of the Cuban society is in such bad shape today. Chie y , it is a result of the failed economic policies of the regime.

R&L: What, then, needs to be done with regard to the embargo, and what are the prospects of such a plan, given the experience and stance of the Cuban-American exile community?

Paredes: I believe that the United States has to take a hard look at its relationship with the Cuban government. The Holy Father was rather explicit at the very beginning of his visit in Cuba: Let Cuba open to the world and let the world open to Cuba. So, I believe that the Cuban government has to take real steps to open herself to the world, and we, as part of the world society, have to take a hard look at our policies toward Cuba. One of these policies is the embargo.

Embargoes especially hurt the most needy. The regime has remained unchanged for forty years despite the fact that the embargo has lasted over thirty-seven years, so let s nd a new approach. If we found a new way of doing business with China, Vietnam, and Korea, why not Cuba? Now, I am by no means suggesting that we simply be naive and not face the hard issues at stake, but through dialogue and careful work we could arrive at an understanding with the Cuban government.

R&L: In conclusion, you mention above that you are certain that Cuba will never be the same as a result of the pontiff s visit. So, what is in store for Cuba s future?

Paredes: The Cuban government will have to make some very serious moves toward opening Cuban society. First, they will have to create a space for the church, which means it must allow for real religious freedom not simply the right to worship but also the right to teach, to speak, to serve, to feed the hungry, to heal the sick. The Church has a mission to ful ll, so the Cuban government, if it is sincere in rethinking its positions, has to signal to the world that it is moving in that direction by allowing the church real freedom in these domains.

Further, I believe that the Cuban government has to come to terms with the United States, to shift the language it uses to address us and to change the tenor of its aggressivity toward the United States. Finally, the Cuban government has to take a serious look at their economic policies, which will mean that private enterprise has to begin to have a role in Cuban society in order to create a new dynamic for the economic process that the rest of the world uses to do business today. Only after the Cuban government addresses these questions can we seriously talk about a meaningful future for Cuba.

I am hopeful, even considering the hard realities of Cuba, that the Cuban government will make such moves. Further, I am hopeful that the United States government will begin to take a hard look into its relationship with this regime. These are the initiatives that need to be taken by both sides in order to see a new future for Cuba. *A*

Natural Law and Modern Economics

Jennifer Roback Morse

It is probably fair to say that many Christian intellectuals regard the positivist, rationalist social sciences with some suspicion. Many Christians would reject outright the proposition that the human person can be studied with the same tools and with the same detachment as inanimate objects. Probably many more Christians would be willing to make limited use of social science research, without accepting the whole philosophical apparatus that seems to go with it.

Among the social sciences, economics would probably win the prize for having the most mechanistic, materialistic view of the human person and his motivations. My background in economics includes thorough training in mathematical modeling of human interactions, as well as in the Humean, Hobbesian subjectivist contractarian approach to analyzing politics as an exchange system for giving people what they want. So, it may be surprising that I plan to discuss the points of contact between modern economics and the Christian natural law tradition.

With a professional background like this, perhaps the only way I can redeem myself is to say that I am a mother. Being a mother is what redeemed me in actual fact, as well. I am the mother of a seven-year-old adopted son, and a four-year-old daughter by birth.

I once was part of the audience at a conference for adoptive parents of children who had spent substantial time in orphanages. In the course of the conference one of the mothers said, My son was fed like a hamster.

All of us in the audience that day knew what she meant. Many of our children had been fed like hamsters too. The attendant at the orphanage takes the baby bottle and wires it between the bars of the crib. The baby can eat whenever he wants, without anyone ever having to pick him up.

Such children are at risk for a serious psychological condition known as reactive attachment disorder.

Reactive Attachment Disorder

Attachment disorder is a diagnosis that strikes fear in the heart of any adoptive parent, for many orphanage children are at risk of this condition. What exactly is this problem?

Children who are deprived of human contact during infancy sometimes fail to gain weight and to develop, and may even die. This can occur even when all the bodily, material needs of the child are met. The child is kept warm and dry. The child is fed, perhaps by having a bottle propped into the crib. The child contracts no identi able illness, yet the child fails to thrive. The widely accepted explanation is that these children die from lack of human contact.

Children who survive without families often have dif culty forming attachments to other people. Even children who are later adopted by loving and competent families sometimes never fully attach to them or to anyone else. The prevailing thinking is that children who do not develop attachments in the rst eighteen months of life will have grave dif culty in forming attachments later. If the parents of such children do not intervene by the time the child reaches twelve years of age, the prospects for successful future intervention are thought to be gravely diminished, to the point of hopelessness.

What do I mean by dif culty in forming attachments? The classic case of attachment disorder is children who do not care what anyone thinks of them. The disapproval of signi cant others is not a suf cient deterrent of bad behavior, because there is no one signi cant enough to matter to the children. These children do whatever they think they can get away with, no matter the cost to other people. They do not monitor their own behavior, so authority gures must constantly be wary of them and watch them. They respond to physical punishments and to suspension of privileges but not to disapproval of signi cant others. They lie if they think it is advantageous to lie. They steal if they can get away with it. They may go through the motions of offering affection, but people who live with them sense a kind of phoniness. They show no regret at having hurt another person or may offer perfunctory apologies. They may nd it fun to torture animals.

As they grow into adolescence, these children may become sophisticated manipulators. Some authors refer to them as trust bandits because they are super cially charming in their initial encounters with people. They can charm people for short periods of time, only to betray the person s trust by using them. They can con people long enough to use them. In the meantime, their parents and anyone else who has long-term dealings with them grow increasingly frustrated, frightened, and angry over their child s dangerous behavior, which may include

lying, stealing, violence, and resetting.

As the parents try to seek help for their child, they may nd that the child is able to work the system. They can charm therapists, social workers, counselors, and later perhaps even judges and parole of cers. This child is unwilling to consider others or even to inconvenience himself for the sake of others.

Who is this child? Why, it is *homo economicus*.

Homo Economicus as Sociopath

Homo economicus is the person who considers only his own good, who is willing to do anything he deems it in his interest to do, who cares for no one. All of his actions are governed by self-interested calculation of costs and bene ts. Punishments matter , loss of esteem does not. He does not self-monitor, so he can always nd some opportunity to evade the rules. As to his promises, he behaves opportunistically on every possible occasion, breaking promises if he deems it in his interest to do so.

Parenting an attachment-disordered child showed me that the very stark version of self-interested rationality cannot be what economists really mean to say about the human person. Of course, economists are well-aware that the human person values a great many things of an intangible nature, things that take the person outside of himself and keep him from being a literal sociopath. Nonetheless, the starkness of this image of *homo economicus* as sociopath shows us that we economists have been, all along, counting on some feature other than pure self-interest to hold society together.

From many perspectives, people working within the rational choice tradition are coming to the conclusion that behavioral norms usually regarded as ethical are central to the smooth functioning of the economy and to society more generally. These norms are described variously as trust, cooperative behavior, or self-restraining behavior. Philosophers, political scientists, law professors, and economists are puzzling over these behaviors.

My purpose here is not to detail a particular solution to the problem of trust within the rational choice approach, but, rather, to show that the rational choice paradigm in general, and economics in particular, has signi cant points of contact with the Christian mind.

I begin by taking note of the great strengths of economics. Economists claim to be scientists. It is safe to say that economics is one of the most successful of the social sciences. Implicit in the scienti c presumption are two propositions, both of which are true and which combine to create the great power of economic reasoning.

The best chance, indeed, perhaps the only natural hope for the conversion of the modern utilitarian mind is through Christian natural law.

—Jennifer Roback Morse

Universal Human Nature

First, economists believe that human nature is something universal and enduring. The fundamental truths of the human condition do not change very much from time to time and from place to place. Economists are willing to apply their analyses to any and all societies, in any and all periods of time, and indeed, to just about any human activity imaginable. This view of human nature accounts for the intellectual imperialism of economics into other discplines so common in recent years. At the same time, it is one of the attributes that most infuriates some of our colleagues in the sister social sciences. But, as I noted at the outset, we have been successful because we have focused on something about human nature that is basically true. Some of our colleagues in other disciplines are not even sure whether there is such a thing as human nature.

The second proposition implicit in economists claim to be scientists is that there is some truth to be discovered. Human nature is universal and enduring, and, therefore, it can be studied in a systematic and scienti c way . By and large, economists do not hold that the truth of an economic proposition depends upon the sincerity of the person who expounds it. We do not, by and large, argue that some economic principles might be true for you, but are not true for me. We do not have signi cant areas of the discipline in which the identity of the author gives automatic status to an idea. We do not, by and large, have feminist economics, which only women can do or understand. We do not have black economics or gay and lesbian economics. We just have economics, and anybody with appropriate training can contribute and participate.

Suppose one posed the hypothetical question to a randomly chosen college professor: Is the material that you teach to undergraduates universally true and applicable? With the possible exception of the physical sciences and mathematics, one would nd very few professors today who purport to teach anything

universally true. One could probably knock on the doors of economics departments at any randomly chosen state university and nd a majority who would claim some universality for their discipline, its insights, and its methods.

This observation alone gives natural law thinking a signi cant point of entry into dialogue with modern economics. Economists, like natural law thinkers, af rm that human nature is universal and enduring. Economists, in keeping with the natural law tradition, believe that there is some truth that can be discovered by the proper and disciplined application of the human intellect.

Choice Under Constraints

The second major area of connection between the Christian mind and modern economic science is that economists study choice under constraints. Economists af rm two principles of human behavior relating to choice. First, economists believe that people really have the capacity to choose. Second, economists believe that the person remains a free agent even in the face of constraints. The average economist cannot necessarily articulate or defend these propositions, but, for the most part, economists believe these statements. Indeed, many people are attracted to the study of economics precisely because it alone among the social sciences af rms the possibility of genuine human choice.

In contrast, some social sciences argue for determinism of various kinds. Some say that the person is driven by social forces beyond his control. Others, that the person is de nitively shaped by early childhood experience. We can accept the validity of these claims in a limited arena, but we can also see that such claims can be, and often are, overstated to such an extent that the reality of human agency is obscured.

To be sure, economics focuses on economic constraints such as income and prices as causative factors in accounting for human behavior. The very language of economics and rational choice highlights the fact that the person is still a choosing agent. We say that the person decides to consume something, given the constraints of income and prices. We say that the person chooses to behave in a particular way . We do not, by and large, argue that a person with few resources has no choices or is coerced into his actions.

> The rational choice paradigm in general, and economics in particular, has significant points of contact with the Christian mind.

Of course, this approach, at least in a broad way, is consistent with the Christian insistence that human freedom is a reality, not an illusion. Although different Christian traditions may disagree on the precise nature of human freedom and free will, surely we can nd something to say to those among the social sciences who take the fact of human choice, human agency, and human freedom seriously.

Conversion of the Modern Utilitarian Mind

Economics has been a successful social science because it has focused on something about human nature that is true that people are self-interested. One might say that when economists study a disordered self-interestedness that borders on the narcissistic or self-centered, they are studying one of the effects of original sin. We can be sure, therefore, that economists will always have something to study. Furthermore, we might even imagine that economists will have something helpful to say about self-interested behavior. There are, of course, many other things about human nature that are true besides the claim that the human person tends toward self-interestedness. Economists can be enriched by acknowledging these other true things and incorporating them into their analysis.

Economists are sometimes insufferable because they have a truth and they mistake it for the Truth. I remember when I saw the economic model for the rst time, at the tender age of nineteen. It was true, I thought. It was good. It had a certain beauty in its elegance. So, I thought to myself: *This is it; this is the Beati c Vision.* I was hardly alone in mistaking a truth for the Truth; I have found this to be one of the most common mistakes people make, even among those suf ciently catechized that they ought to know better. So, I think economists can be forgiven for confusing their little corner of the truth for the real thing.

For Christ died for them too the utilitarians, the rationalists, the positivists, the contractarians. I do not know where David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, John Locke, and Thomas Hobbes are spending eternity, but I know where their modern intellectual offspring are. If they are ever to receive the light of faith, it likely will not come from some television evangelist. The best chance, indeed, perhaps the only natural hope for the conversion of the modern utilitarian mind is through Christian natural law. *A*

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Evangelicals and Economics

D. Eric Schansberg

What does the eld of economics have to offer evangelicals? The embrace of economics should be more than merely an excuse to put forward naive views about public policy. Instead, evangelicals should embrace the economic way of thinking a rigorous study of the bene ts and costs of personal decisions and public policy. That said, the study of economics is frequently limited in scope; thus, evangelicals would do well to learn the economic way of thinking, using a biblical worldview and applying it to topics of biblical concern.

Positive Versus Normative Economics

The distinction between positive and normative economics is one of the opening topics in most economics textbooks. Positive economics is meant to represent the what is portion of economic analysis; normative economics is meant to represent the what should be part. Economists make this distinction for a number of reasons. To name two: It is a way to highlight the more scienti c (positive) aspects of the eld, and it is a useful framework for distinguishing between relatively objective facts and relatively subjective opinions based on those facts. In some circles, the boundary between the two is assumed to be so strict that the eld of economics stops where the normative begins. In this view, when one moves from policy analysis to policy prescriptions, one ceases to be an economist and instead becomes a public policy analyst. Although there is some overlap between the two categories, it still serves as a useful dichotomy.

The primary task of positive economics is to determine cause and effect and to enumerate bene ts and costs. On the surface, this would appear to be elementary. But, in fact, determining important secondary effects is rather more challenging than one might expect. My favorite example of this is our country s sugar policies. The government currently keeps the price of sugar arti cially high and restricts the foreign competitors of domestic sugar growers with import quotas. The result is a high price for sugar good news for producers and the politicians they support, but bad news for consumers.

There are less obvious implications as well. First, the term consumers is broader than one might rst imagine. In addition to higher prices for bags of sugar, consumers are hurt in that any product with sugar in it will be more expensive. Moreover, any rm that uses sugar as an input is harmed and often put at a competitive disadvantage to foreign producers who can obtain sugar at the world price. Second, although jobs are protected in the sugar industry, more jobs are destroyed elsewhere. Those who use sugar as an input may reduce output, shut down, or move overseas. Since consumers have less purchasing power, they will create fewer jobs than they would have otherwise. Third, this policy amounts to a series of wealth transfers between consumers and producers, and between producers and politicians. The wealth transfer also indicates that no jobs are created on net. In fact, jobs are probably destroyed as we subsidize a relatively inef cient industry. Fourth, corn growers bene t from higher sugar prices since demand for their product corn syrup, a substitute for relatively expensive sugar has increased. In fact, corn growers give money to politicians to encourage higher sugar prices. Fifth, and most important, the poor are more greatly harmed by this arrangement since they spend a disproportionate amount of their budgets on higher priced food.

In sum, there are many subtle but important implications to consider about any public policy. Economics seeks to identify such important implications and to educate others in doing more rigorous analysis of public policy. Anyone who advocates policies without knowing its full range of costs is ignorant; anyone who advocates policies knowing but not articulating these costs is disingenuous. Neither is an appropriate option for an economist or a Christian.

The Role of Human Nature

As a social science, positive economics is also interested in behavioral changes in particular , those that respond to changes in economic variables and public policy. As such, it necessarily draws inferences about behavioral changes from observations about how the world functions and from presuppositions about human nature.

For example, unemployment insurance (UI) serves to provide nancial support for people who are between jobs. The ef ciency ar gument for this policy is that it is sub-optimal for highly skilled people to be forced to take the rst job made available to them (such as an engineer delivering pizzas). The ef ciency ar gument against this policy

is that some people will take advantage of the program. In a word, some will treat UI as a safety net; others will treat it as a hammock. Some of the qualitative effects of this program are not debatable for better or worse, subsidizing unemployed people will increase the frequency and duration of unemployment periods but it turns out that the quantitative impact of this policy is a function of human nature. It then follows that one s normative views about UI are in uenced by an understanding of the qualitative effects and a prediction of the size of the quantitative effects as well as normative beliefs about human nature, the desirability of the end, and the appropriateness of the means to the end.

In a more general sense, another example is the eld of Public Choice economics. Among other things, this school of thought studies the behavior of agents in political markets. In the early 1960s, it began to apply the observation that people act in their self-interests. As such, its proponents brought into question the dominant paradigm that public-sector of cials typically act in the best interests of society. Instead, we now recognize that those in political markets may pursue their own agendas and, in fact, may harm the general welfare. The upshot: the possible, if not probable, divorce between the theory and practice of government activism.

The bottom line is that economists study how people behave in certain settings and draw conclusions based on their assumptions about human nature. Christians also have a keen interest in this topic both theologically and practically. Likewise, our beliefs about sin consistently and vitally inform our views on public policy.

Going Beyond Economics

All in all, economists tend to avoid normative prescriptions. However, by de nition, their analysis has implications for the policies they would recommend. Given that either the bene ts or costs of public policies tend to be relatively subtle, the economist who brings them to light will in uence normative opinion and debate. In particular, with respect to government policy, bene ts tend to be obvious while costs are relatively subtle. Moreover, public proponents of activism tend to trumpet bene ts while downplaying or ignoring costs. As such, when economists shine a brighter light on the questions at hand, they tend to bring a relatively sober, and often unwelcome, analysis of the potential ef cacy of government activism.

Evangelical economists certainly have an interest in the economic way of thinking. In general, all evangelicals should as well. In the pursuit of loving God with all of our minds, it is vitally important to think through social problems, personal decisions, and policy prescriptions thoroughly. In other words, evangelicals should learn to think as economists do.

> Evangelicals would do well to learn the "economic way of thinking," using a biblical worldview and applying it to topics of biblical concern.
>
> —D. Eric Schansberg

All of that said, evangelicals bring four variations to this theme. First, we have a more consistent and explicit concern about the impact of human nature than the standard economist. Second, we have a different range of general interests. In addition to public policy, we are very much interested in the costs and bene ts of personal decisions of sin and holiness. And in analyzing public policy, we are more likely to focus on non-economic factors such as stigma, culture, tradition, and most important, the policy s impact on people s eternal destiny. This is particularly relevant in trying to help the poor, since help should be de ned more broadly than merely redistributing income. Third, we probably dig more narrowly and deeply in the realm of important public policy issues. We are concerned with fewer issues, but are presumably more passionate about those issues (e.g., dealing with poverty, ghting the oppression of others, good stewardship of the environment).

Fourth, and most important, evangelicals are fundamentally concerned about the more normative aspects of economics and public policy. In particular, over and above ef ciency and effectiveness, we are concerned about whether the proposed means to the desired ends are appropriate. As such, Christians bring normative beliefs to bear from culture, tradition, and hopefully, from Scripture on their conclusions. For the rest of the essay, I will focus on this last issue: Are the various tools of government appropriate from a biblical worldview?

Means and Ends

Christians can make two mistakes in choosing godly goals: to be lukewarm toward that which God would have us be passionate (e.g., defending the rights of others and the integrity of the

Gospel) and to be passionate about that which one should avoid (e.g., gluttony, sexual immorality). In a sense, these can be divided into sins of omission and commission. We typically focus on the latter because they are easier to detect in others, if not in ourselves but both are important.

That said, Scripture is clear that choosing appropriate means to godly goals is also crucial. For example, God told Abraham that he would have a son. After many years had passed, Abraham reasoned correctly that God had not speci ed the mother of the promised child and then incorrectly took matters into his own hands, agreeing to Sarah s plan for him to father a child through Hagar. Thirteen years later, Abraham was told by God that Sarah would give birth to the promised child, Isaac, and Abraham nally realized the error of his earlier choice. Another vivid example is King Saul who, instead of completely destroying the Amalekites as God had commanded, saved the best of what God had condemned to sacri ce it to God! As a result, Saul was condemned for his rebellion and arrogance, and he lost his kingdom to David. Both Abraham and Saul used reasonable logic and had the best of intentions, but, apparently, earthly wisdom and reasonable motives are not enough. In a biblical worldview, the means do not justify the ends.

As we noted earlier, economists try to avoid such normative issues. Secular policy analysts often fail to recognize the means/ends question at all. Sadly, questions about appropriate means are usually omitted in the policy analysis of Christians as well. Is it all right to tax the rich to give to the poor? To tax the poor to give to the rich? To tax the industrious to give to the lazy? Why or why not? Will the policies be effective? Are the desired outcomes godly? Is the method government s forcible redistribution of wealth appropriate? The questions are often unanswered or even unasked. But a biblical worldview calls Christians to question the appropriateness of the means and the ends, as well as the effectiveness of policy proposals. Of course, the applications go well beyond taxation. Returning to our country s sugar policies, is it appropriate to advocate the use of government restrictions to redistribute income from various groups to sugar farmers?

As evangelicals, we are responsible for understanding the relevance of His word for our daily lives. This includes the study of politics.

Let s apply these questions to the favorite political topics of the so-called religious Left and Right. Aside from the ef cacy of governmental welfare ef forts, should a Christian advocate the use of force by government to redistribute wealth from one party to another? Aside from the ability of the government to regulate behavior in social morality issues, is it appropriate for Christians to advocate the use of force to reduce the freedom of others engaging in voluntary behaviors? (And if the answer is yes, at what point should the government quit reducing freedoms?)

In fact, given that the government uses force, the burden of proof should be placed on those Christians who want to make the case for government activism. If one looks at God s character and plan, it is clear that He has designed us to have immense free will. In what cases is it appropriate for Christians to advocate reductions in that capacity? If one studies the substance and style of Christ s ministry, it is dif cult to make a positive case for advocacy of government activism by Christians. Are the tools of government activism Christ-like?

Although developing a formal case is well beyond the scope of this essay, it turns out that it is very dif cult to make a biblical case for Christian advocacy of government activism except in cases where the government is using its monopoly on legitimate force to protect those whose rights are being directly violated. It is in these matters of justice ar guing for another s rights, preventing one from harming another that we can nd the strongest biblical foundation, shine the brightest light in the world, and bring the most glory to God.

A Consistent Christian Philosophy of Government

As evangelicals, our worldview begins with God and His word. We are responsible for understanding Him better, loving Him and others more effectively, and understanding the relevance of His word for our daily lives. This includes the study of politics and calls to government activism. Thus, an *ad hoc* embrace of government activism is not suf cient; we should have a consistent Christian philosophy of government. That said, the eld of economics has much to offer. The call here is to embrace the best of both worlds. Evangelicals should learn to think as do economists on positive issues, understanding the intricacies of the qualitative and quantitative impact of policy proposals, and we should rigorously and consistently apply scriptural principles to evaluate means and ends in order to form our normative conclusions. *A*

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The Futility of Coerced Benevolence

A Review Essay by Gregory M. A. Gronbacher

Tibor Machan s *Generosity: Virtue in Civil Society* provides a fascinating and thorough treatment of the role of virtue in a society characterized by limited government, freedom of association, and economic liberty. Its thesis, according to Machan, is that Generosity is a moral virtue that cannot ourish in a welfare state or in any sort of command economy, because to be generous is to voluntarily help others in certain ways. It will ourish in a free society . Generosity and virtue cannot our - ish without fully embracing economic, political, and personal liberty. As an example, Machan notes the importance of private property for magnanimous action. Generosity will not ourish in societies that do not respect private property because people cannot give away what is not theirs.

Generosity: Virtue in Civil Society
by Tibor R. Machan

Cato Institute
1998. 120 pp. Cloth: $16.95

This slender volume is notable for the author s recognition of three essential distinctions that mark a signi cant conceptual development for many free-market advocates: the possibility of an individual transcending mere self-interest in virtuous behavior, the dangers associated with legally mandating virtuous behavior, and strong commitment to the inherent social nature of the human person and the importance of this af rmation for social analysis.

Virtue Transcends Self-Interest

Machan s rst key insight, shared by Christian personalists, is that virtue is the rational habit of choosing the good in order to promote or preserve shared values. Virtue is not blind habit, unconscious behavior, or rigid obedience to perceived duty. Virtue, including generosity, is the rational component of a well-formed character, where people elect to give of themselves or their property to aid another. The underlying motivation for acts of generosity is not to increase one s own happiness or even to atter oneself through morally praiseworthy acts. Virtue is motivated by a rational recognition of an opportunity to do good for another and for oneself.

The differences are subtle but fundamental. While speaking of virtue in these terms, Machan and others who subscribe to this understanding admit to the ability of persons to transcend their own entrenched self-interests. According to Machan s theory of virtue, we are not stuck within ourselves, always needing to explain human behavior as motivated by self-interest or duty for duty s sake. He acknowledges that even enlightened self-interest cannot adequately explain all human action.

In the chapter titled Generosity: A Benevolent Virtue, Machan ar gues against a awed description of gener - osity that accounts for magnanimity as being due, ultimately, to self-bene t through enhancement of one s own happiness or well-being. This understanding rules out the possibility of transcending self-interest and actually disposing of our talents, property, and time for others as motivated by love. Does a mother feed her children as a result of some complex and, perhaps, even unconscious calculus of costs and bene ts to herself and her children? Does she consent to an early morning feeding because she rationally determines that by feeding her child her own happiness will thereby increase? Of course not. Most of us would consider a women who analyzed her behavior toward her children in purely utilitarian terms to be un t for motherhood.

Machan s recognition of this aspect of human behavior is not only accurate but refreshing. Far too many advocates of political and economic liberty contend that the sole motivation of human behavior is self-interest, enlightened or otherwise. Machan s careful analysis of generosity concedes that there exist moments when human beings are so enraptured by the beauty, preciousness, and value of another person that they give of themselves in love, not because this may lead to their own happiness but because it is right and tting to do so. Their own happiness is a by-product of the act, but not its motivation.

Resisting Statist Paternalism

Machan s second pivotal insight involves the relationship between law

and morality. Using the example of generosity, Machan teases out the importance of freedom, both personal and political, for this, or any other virtue to ourish. We discern the importance of freedom in his treatment of Robert George s work on law and morality. George, author of *Making Men Moral*, argues that positive law is not only instructive, but also useful for making men moral. The state, according to George, can be used for soulcraft, that is, by requiring good behavior through law, one can force virtue into the human character. This approach closely resembles the dynamic of child-raising; indeed, for George, the state is akin to a parent who uses the force of law to instruct and mold its children.

Machan deftly points out that this legal paternalism is not only imprudent, but also dangerous to both liberty and virtue. Machan states that simply because something is morally praiseworthy does not imply that it ought to be legally mandated. However, the inverse also applies: To reason that something is morally blameworthy does not imply that it ought to be legally prohibited. For example, laws against blasphemy are counterproductive. Surely, blasphemy is a terrible sin. Condemning it as a sin, however, does not require enacting legislation. How would we enforce blasphemy laws? Who will de ne what blasphemy is? How would religious freedom be preserved under such laws?

Con ating the natural moral law and positive human law must be resisted. Not everything in the moral law neither should be, nor can be, present in the positive law. The tendency to demand that human law adequately re ect the moral law is a good and noble sentiment, yet prudence the key political virtue must be exercised or else coercion will result. This point is seen clearly in Machan s consideration of forced generosity: Generosity is morally virtuous because we are essentially social beings with the prospect of intimate relationships enhancing our lives, and because we can ennoble ourselves by supporting others. Yet if generous behavior were not freely chosen, but instead coerced by law, its moral import would vanish; it would amount to regimented conduct, something for which moral credit cannot be due, especially to the regimented. It would cease to be generous.

The Human Person in Community

Machan s third insight builds upon the rst two. Human beings are inher - ently social creatures. They [humans] are indeed social animals, yet their sociality is to be understood as involving critical selections from among alternative social arrangements. Machan acknowledges that the human individual is the fundamental building block of society the proper bearer of human rights. Such a recognition helps avoid problems of overstatement. There is a tendency within political theory to pit individualism against collectivism, the solitary individual standing over and against the community. This is a false dichotomy. By af rming the social nature of the person, we acknowledge the fundamental fact of human individuality, yet we also recognize that this individuality can only exist and ourish in community. The question for humans is not whether to form a community, but rather what kind of community. An individualism that denies this inherent social capacity becomes arid and brittle. Collectivism, however, becomes vicious as Roussean political schemes sacri ce individuals for the good of the community. Without some form of balanced individualism in political theory, human beings become cold calculating tyrants of one stripe or another.

By affirming the social nature of the person, we recognize that individuality can only exist and flourish in community.

—Gregory M. A. Gronbacher

The Fullness of the Christian Tradition

If any aw can be found in Machan s work, it stems from a failure to appreciate the insight and wisdom of the Christian moral tradition. A full and honest picture of human nature and the human condition is gained through the eyes of faith. A cosmology and anthropology that includes original sin, grace, love, and God s redemptive work provides a rich framework from which to do moral and social analysis. Machan s work, although approximating many of these insights, still fails to contain them in their fullest expressions. This de ciency does not invalidate his important contribution to virtue ethics and the role of morality in a free society, but it does demonstrate his lack of appreciation for theological anthropology, which is an essential insight for understanding the key issues of virtue, freedom, and a just social order. A

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Written on the Heart
The Case for Natural Law

by J. Budziszewski

InterVarsity Press, 1997. 252 pp. Paper: $14.99

Review by Rev. John Michael Beers

Many Americans likely never heard of the concept of natural law until it was made an issue in the Clarence Thomas con rmation hearings. As then, we would do well to consider a good, clear de nition. In the broadest sense of the term, natural law embraces the whole eld of morality .

Murder, adultery, incest, prostitution, theft are universally felt to be wrong; they run contrary to the natural law. Defense of one s own life and that of others, the recognition of the distinct difference of human life from all other animate life, the preservation of human life (including that within the womb), philanthropy, marital delity , one s right to property, all of these are recognized as goods, part of the natural moral order.

Johannes Grundel provides the classic de nition of the natural moral law as the order of things assigned to man by his creator for the development of his human qualities ; it is to describe the dignity of the person, the rights of man, and give them validity in social life.

In Roman Catholic thought, natural law, in the strict sense, deals with the moral law as affecting the due order between man and man, and man and society. It comprises the realm of moral obligation that can be determined in the form of norms for the minimum standard of moral behavior and can also be enforceable as law. Among non-Catholic writers, the signi cant distinction is made that the natural law is not always considered part of the moral realm.

Protestant politcal thinker J. Budziszewski gives his own de nition of natural law and contrasts it with the revealed law of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures: As a Christian I regard the natural-law tradition as the nearest approach to the truth about the law written on the heart which ethical and political philosophy have yet, by the grace of God, achieved. I do not mean to be ippant in speaking of God s grace. True, the law written on the heart is utterly inferior to the revealed truth of the gospel, for though it tells us what sin is, it tells us nothing of how to escape it. Yet it too is a real gift of God, for we have to know the bad news before we can grasp the Good News.

In this regard, Budziszewski sounds very much like Clement of Alexandria, who argues that the faith-based knowledge obtained from revelation is more certain than even that of mathematical logic, given the divine origin of the Scriptures. It is surely regrettable that Budziszewski omits any discussion of such philosophers as Clement.

Boethius, too, is missing from Budziszewski s otherwise excellent overview of classical, scholastic, and contemporary treatment of the natural moral law. Boethius, often called the last of the classical philosophers, provides insight into the exercise of human freedom when confronted with the attraction to the *summum bonum*, which gives man the greatest joy. For Boethius, one is logically compelled to follow the natural law because doing so alone can give man perfect satisfaction.

The philosophers Budziszewski does treat are surely representative of the best of the natural moral law tradition: Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, John Locke and John Stuart Mill. Consider the similarity of Boethius with Budziszewski s summary of Aristotle: Remember that the highest human good would have two qualities. First, other goods would be sought for its sake; second, it would be sought only for its own sake. What do we know that s like that? Aristotle points out that almost everyone, in all times and places, gives the same answer to that question: *happiness*. As he sees no objections to this answer, he accepts it.

Though not a Catholic himself, Budziszewski is well-acquainted with contemporary Catholic authors who are most often associated with the natural law debate. He provides an insightful discussion of the various positions (though largely on the conservative side, even of Catholic teaching) as promoted by E. Michael Jones, Germain Grisez, John Finnis, and Joseph M. Boyle.

Both unexpected and refreshing is the thorough acquaintance that Budziszewski has of those sources favored by Catholic apologists, most signi cantly , that of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Very satisfying is the balance of these sources by way of his masterful treatment of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Karl Barth, and Helmut Thielicke, all important voices for the Protestant debate. Even the rabbi Moses Maimonides appears in Budziszewski s study as a voice for the Jewish position on natural law, an inclusiveness seldom found in the best of Catholic writers.

One can only hope to see more Protestant authors make a foray into what is often considered a typically Catholic domain. One should also hope for a continued dialogue among scholars of

diverse Christian traditions, to which Budziszewski invites us all in so compelling a fashion.

As an evangelical Protestant publishing house, InterVarsity Press has not usually shown an interest in books on such a subject more traditionally favored by Catholic publishers. Their editors are to be commended for this relatively daring venture. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company has also demonstrated an interest in natural law thinking, as demonstrated in its recent publication of *A Preserving Grace: Protestants, Catholics, and Natural Law*, edited by Michael Cromartie of the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Aquinas serves as an excellent example for Budziszewski of the role of natural law in the life of man: Everything God made has a nature. However, not everything he made is subject to him in the special way called natural *law*. Natural *law* is a privilege of created *rational* beings that includes us because it is a nite re ection of his in nite purposes in their nite minds. This is what Thomas means when he de nes it as the participation of the rational creature in the eternal law.

Every chapter ends with an inclusive group of re ection questions, making Budziszewski s book an excellent textbook for college-level courses in ethics. Budziszewski describes well the scope of his study: The book is not *only* about the natural law. For context I have included a great many collateral topics, especially concerning the nature and limits of government. Here I must remark that although all natural-law thinkers agree that politics must have an ethical foundation, the line from ethical premises to political conclusions is often curved or crooked, and they do not always agree about its course. *A*

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Book News

Ethics and the Old Testament
John Barton
Trinity Press International, 1998
112 pp. Paper: $12.00

In this provocative work, John Barton examines the role the Old Testament can play in the formation of contemporary ethical thinking. He initiates his discussion by emphasizing that Old Testament writers are maddeningly unsystematic. Knowledge of the good for humankind lies through the observation of particulars, if Old Testament writers are to be believed. Thus moral teachings take form not as generalized statements of principle but as stories; hence, Barton s following analysis of narratives in the Old Testament and their possible application to modern ethical questions, such as ecology and property.

Against the Tide:
An Intellectual History of Free Trade
Douglas A. Irwin
Princeton University Press, 1996
265 pp. Paper: $16.95

The modest project of *Against the Tide*, released this year in paperback, is to present an intellectual history of free trade. Irwin contends that the proposition, that free trade bene ts nations more than protectionism, has stood unrefuted after two centuries of intense, sustained criticism. He makes his case in two parts. The rst recounts the development of economic thought in regard to international trade, culminating in Adam Smith s comprehensive apology for it. The second examines the criticisms that have been leveled against it.

In the course of his account, Irwin provides a useful overview of the contours of economic thought in Greek and Roman philosophy, early Patristic writings, Medieval scholasticism, and Reformational ethical thinking. Further, he sees a direct connection between early classical and Christian economic concepts and the system eshed out by Adam Smith. In his words, The centuries-old doctrine of universal economy should receive the credit for rst elaborating on the basic idea that international commerce can increase the aggregate wealth of all countries undertaking such trade.

Irwin does a great service in his liberal quotation of primary source material, and his bibliography should be useful to all students of political economy. Further, he writes in a style quite accessible to non-specialists. All told, *Against the Tide* is both a valuable intellectual resource and an interesting history of this most tenacious doctrine.

The Mainspring of Human Progress
Henry Grady Weaver
F.E.E., 1997
280 pp. Paper: $12.95

This classic defense of the free society begins by posing a problem: For six thousand years, most people went hungry and many starved. Today, we in the West do not. Why? Weaver s answer: Men and women currently enjoy greater freedom to exercise their mental energies in productive enterprises. To bolster his case, Weaver delimits freedom s history from its roots in the monotheism of the Patriarchs, down through Christianity and Islam, and nally to what he believes was its acme in the American experiment.

Gr egory Dunn

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

The Cuture of Life, The Culture of the Market

Many who proclaim the culture of life fault the free market for devaluing human life and reducing people to mere economic actors, valued only for their earning potential or their productive capacity. Our times *are* characterized by a lack of respect for the dignity of the human person, but it is a tragedy to see our allies against the forces that degrade the human person hindered in their efforts because of a misunderstanding of the market economy. The interaction, tension, and ultimate reconciliation of the culture of the market and the culture of life is a subject worthy of deeper reflection.

The interaction of the culture of the market and the culture of life is a subject worthy of reflection.

First, let us be clear about de nitions: The culture of life is the recognition that this life is a temporary stage of our eternal existence and that life itself is a gift entrusted to us by our Maker that should be preserved with the utmost responsibility and care. Life carries a sacred value from its inception to its end, and every human being has the right to have his life respected to the fullest extent possible.

On the other hand, the market is not a mere abstraction of economic production and distribution, but, rather, people themselves people who save and invest, keep contracts and watch markets, take risks and make dreams. In their economic lives as producers and consumers, they are cooperating in a vast network of exchange in which people half a world away buy their products and make products for them.

The market strengthens the culture of life and its moral order in three important ways. First, the market promotes peace among people. From the simplest to the most complex market exchanges, they all have one thing in common: people trading voluntarily with each other to their mutual self-satisfaction. Second, the market offers people the best opportunities to employ their creative gifts and become full participants in society, thus obeying God s command to work and create. In contrast, legal barriers and perverse incentives erected by government prevent people from entering the workforce and keep many from perfecting their abilities and becoming a vital part of society s division of labor. Third, the free market promotes the material betterment of humanity. For example, it has brought modern medicine, electricity, running water, and, now, information access to an ever-broadening segment of the world population.

It is unfortunate and highly dangerous that many of the market s most eloquent advocates often overlook the moral foundations of freedom. To those who might be tempted to think that society can revolve around the bank statement, the culture of life delivers a message: Base motives can also exist within a market economy. The Congregationalist minister Dr. Edmund Opitz puts it this way: the market will exhibit every shortcoming men exhibit in their thinking and peaceful acting, for in the broadest sense it is nothing else but that. There are values higher than profit and market success, among which is the preeminent value of life itself.

This message that the culture of the market and the culture of life can reinforce each other needs to be brought to public debate. Radical libertarians who deny this need are doing no service to the cause of economic liberty. At the same time, those who would seek a rapprochement between the culture of the market and the culture of life must be clear that they are not for a capitalism that places the human person at the mercy of blind economic forces and that is not rooted in a fundamental ethic of life, person, and property. What we propose, rather, is a free economy that puts the human person at the center of economic actions because the human person is the source of all economic initiative. So, let me make the case that the market, imbued with freedom and virtue, is a necessary ally for a social order that respects human dignity. *A*

***Fr. Sirico** is co-founder and president of the Acton Institute. This essay is adapted from his lecture at the Detroit Athletic Club, March 4, 1998.*

"A man owes it to his children … to secure their future and rescue their lives from impediments to holiness and happiness. Therefore he has no right to acquiesce in tyrannical and immoral government."

—Lord Acton—

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