RELIGION & LIBERTY

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Religion, Morality, and the Private Property Order

Interview: Edmund A. Opitz

The Reverend Edmund A. Opitz is an ordained Congregational minister and served as a member of the staff of the Foundation for Economic Education from 1955 until his retirement in 1992. He is the author of more than one hundred fifty articles and reviews in a score of publications, as well as the foundational book *Religion and Capitalism: Allies not Enemies.*

R&L: You have been long involved in the late-twentieth-century revival of the freedom philosophy, especially with your involvement in the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE). In addition, you are a Congregationalist minister. Why do you think it is important for ministers to be grounded in sound economic thinking?

Opitz: Ministers today are learned and dedicated men and women. They buy books and subscribe to serious journals, striving to keep abreast of trends that affect religion and the church. They are involved in civic affairs; they are liked and respected, even by those who never go near a church. They are good company and have friends in the other professions, especially businessmen. It therefore would not hurt if they improved their understanding of business and the free economy. The discipline of economics, after all, does not dangle somewhere in outer space but is an integral and essential part of this God-created planet. Sound economics has a religious dimension, and the Acton Institute is bringing this truth home to a growing number of clergy.

Monotheism, as opposed to every brand of polytheism, implies a *uni*-verse, a cosmos of law and order with working rules in every sector including the economic sector. Perhaps the most primary economic postulate is scarcity. Human wants are virtually limitless, but the means for satisfying our wants and needs are scarce. The discipline of economics emerged in response to the awkward fact that, struggle as we may, we will always desperately be trying to cope with our unful lled desires. Economics teaches us how to act responsibly and non-wastefully when dealing with the planet s limited resources of human energy, raw materials, and time. Why do we work? asked Francis Bacon, and answered his own question: For the glory of God and the improvement of Man s estate. And Jesus warned that If you are not faithful in your use of worldly wealth, who will entrust you with true riches?

R&L: This view of scarcity and stewardship is very different from that of planned economies, isn t it?

Opitz: That s right. What has happened is that modern man, freed from the superstitions of the past and ener gized by Science, believes he has become as God who can create the world anew and establish a heaven on earth. The teachings of the economists, however, stand directly athwart this mood. Wilhelm Roepke, a ranking economist and social philosopher of our time, reminds us that Economics is an anti-utopian, anti-ideological, disillusioning science. The great social drift during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is based on the

delusion of a few thinkers involved in the French Revolution that Mankind has now come of age and can take charge of its own affairs. Translated into practice, this means that inordinate power comes into the hands of a self-chosen elite to operate a society as if it were an army, that is to say, by command and drill. Every variety of socialism has a Plan, a blueprint, to put the multitude through their paces. In contrast, the biblical teaching is that we human beings will not be able to attain ultimate felicity within this mundane order of space and time. We are created beings on a planet ordained for our instruction and testing, where we learn who we really are and what we may become, guided by God s revelation.

R&L: How does the free economy, then, relate to this biblical view of man and his role here in creation?

Opitz: As I ve said, God has laid down rules for us in every walk of life, including the proper organization of our economic affairs. The free economy is a system of voluntary arrangements that brings together people who have work skills, who use tools and machinery to increase their output, thus producing the incredible abundance of goods and services we enjoy as consumers. Economics, remember, is in the realm of means, but it supplies the essential means for enriching our lives in the realms of the mind and spirit; as well as in music, art, and literature. Now, the virtue of the economic order of a free society is that it is not politically controlled it is run by the consumers. It is the multitude of people in the marketplace, buying this or not buying that, who provide entrepreneurs with the clues they need in deciding what to produce, in what sizes, colors, and so on. The collapse of socialism in our time demonstrates that a complex economy cannot be operated by a bureaucracy.

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The free economy provides us with the things we want and need better than any other economic arrangement; in addition, a free economy provides a bulwark against unwarranted political intrusions into people s lives. Very few Americans, and surely no ministers, want government regulation of their churches; nor do they want teachers to be regulated, or editors. Similarly, we should resist, on principle, the government regulation of businessmen and the economy. It is the function of government and law to maintain the peace of society by punishing anyone who breaks that peace. This rule should apply equally to all citizens: editors, clergy, teachers, and businessmen.

But in an era where millions of Americans are riding the government gravy train, it is only natural that some businessmen, too, would seek to use the public power for private advantage; it is crucial to note that when a businessman accepts such government handouts, he moves outside the free economy and into the shady area of government bureaucracy.

R&L: How did you rst become exposed to the freedom philosophy?

Opitz: My college major was political science, with a minor in economics. Our text in the latter was *Principles of Economics* by Fairchild, Furness, and Buck. Fred Fairchild was a Yale professor and later, a founding trustee of FEE. Thus, early on in my education I learned something about the free economy. After college, three years of theology, ordination, and two apprenticeships, I went to India as a Red Cross man during the latter

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part of World War II. In 1946, I was called to the venerable Second Parish in the town of Hingham, Massachusetts, located on the shore between Boston and Plymouth. By this time I had read and come to admire Albert Jay Nock. I had also worked through Adam Smith s *Wealth of Nations* and books like *Social Statics* and *Man vs. the State* by Herbert Spencer. I had been reading *Newsweek* ever since it began printing Henry Hazlitt s column on economics, and I bought his wonderful *Economics in One Lesson* when it rst appeared. By this time, I was teaching a college course part-time in American government and using Hazlitt s book to explain the economic counterpart to the free society set forth in our Declaration and Constitution.

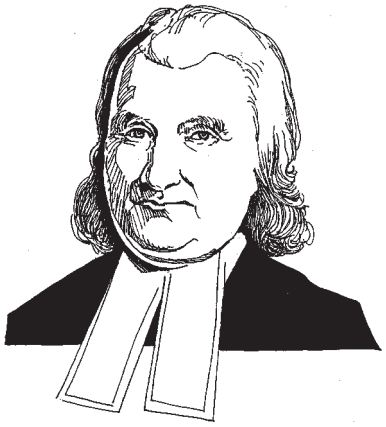
R&L: And then how did you become involved with FEE?

Opitz: I spent most of my adult life on the staff of FEE, joining in 1955. I got acquainted with Frank Chodorov in 1947 through his monthly newsletter *analysis*, and later spent considerable time with him. It was Frank who put me in touch with FEE. The Foundation was producing a series of excellent pamphlets at the time, which very much impressed me. I met Leonard E. Read in 1950, and a year later moved to California to coordinate a conference program for ministers in the area of church,

In The Liberal Tradition

John Witherspoon (1723-1794)

"Nothing is more certain than that a general profligacy and corruption of manners make a people ripe for destruction. A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch, even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue."



John Witherspoon was born in 1723 to a Scottish family that strongly believed in the virtues fostered by religion. Witherspoon began attending the University of Edinburgh at age fourteen. After completion of his studies in 1743, Witherspoon was ordained and started his ministry at Beith, Scotland. He went to the New World in 1768, prompted by an offer to head the College of New Jersey (Princeton). As the president of Princeton, Witherspoon s performance was extraordinary. According to Ralph L. Ketcham, under his leadership, Princeton was a hotbed of revolutionary patriotism, and produced one president, ten U.S. senators, nine governors, and nine members of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, in addition to the usual steady stream of clergymen and business leaders. Witherspoon took an active role in the formation of civic institutions for the new nation: He was a member of the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence, and was a delegate to New Jersey s 1787 ratification convention for the U.S. Constitution.

For Witherspoon, religious faith was essential in fostering true liberty, and liberty was concomitant to religious freedom, and his teaching spurred a generation of Americans to seek and establish freedom before and after the Revolution. He was a staunch proponent of limited government and federalism, thinking that checks and balances and the self-interest of factions could stymie centralization of the federal government. This belief in limited government was made manifest in his support of the Constitution. Further, Witherspoon contended that a righteous people will have little need for a positivistic government when he wrote, Love to God, and love to man, is the substance of religion; when these prevail, civil laws will have little to do. Witherspoon said that the role of government may be all summed up in *protection*, that is to say, those who have surrendered part of their natural rights expect the strength of the public arm to defend and improve what remains... The only reward that a state can be supposed to bestow upon good subjects in general is protection and defense. *A*

Sources: *Faith of Our Fathers*, edited by Mary Sennholz (FEE, 1997); and *An Annotated Edition of Lectures on Moral Philosophy,* by John Witherspoon (University of Delaware, 1982).

state, and economy. Leonard was on the board of the group that sponsored this.

Several years went by, during which Leonard and I became friends. He asked me in the mid- fties if I would consider joining the staff of FEE. What would you want me to do? I asked him. His response was, If I had to tell you what to do, I wouldn t hire you! Well, this was an offer I couldn t refuse. I still harbored the intention of getting back into parish ministry but new projects continued to pop up, which I just had to nish. Leonard was a charismatic personality, good company, and always searching for new ideas and fresh ways of expressing them. I learned a great deal from him and from my fellow staffers, a most congenial corps. For many years I had a secretary who knew more than I did, was a model of ef ciency , took on extra chores cheerfully, and embraced the FEE mission wholeheartedly. I wrote numerous essays for our journal, *The Freeman*, blending the three disciplines of religion, economics, and political philosophy. Several books resulted from these efforts.

I also carried on a ministry of sorts with an informal clerical fellowship called The Remnant, composed of ministers who were uneasy about the Social Gospel and the Christian Socialist trends in the mainline churches that were part of the National Council of Churches. The Remnant held regular luncheons in New York and in other parts of the country wherever my FEE work took me. We had a newsletter and distributed books and pamphlets; as luncheon speakers we had some of the most distinguished economists and philosophers in the land, as well as one of my heroes, Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, who hails from Austria.

Meanwhile, FEE was sponsoring a busy weekend seminar series in various parts of the nation, well over two hundred of them over a period of about twenty years. I conducted a Sunday chapel service at each of these seminars. FEE was an unusual and important organization, and I am proud to have been a part of it.

Every one of man's institutions is operated by fallible human beings; the market is no exception, and so will also be fallible.

R&L: Your book* Religion and Capitalism: Allies not Enemies*, now in its fourth printing, has had a profound in- uence on many people by demonstrating the compatibility of the Christian religion and the freedom philosophy. What prompted you to write* Religion and Capitalism*?

Opitz: Sometime in 1966, I picked up the phone and a voice identi ed itself as Ted Lit, senior editor at Arlington House, who wanted to talk with me. He came to FEE, and I liked him immediately. Arlington wants to publish a book showing the compatibility of Christianity and free-market capitalism, he said, and we think you re the man to do it. After the usual delays, the book was published and was the Conservative Book Club selection in June 1970. But I was never enthusiastic about the title!

Wilhelm Roepke disliked the term *capitalism*, as do I. He writes, as coined and circulated by Marxism, the term has retained up to the present so much of its hate- lled signi cance and class-struggle overtones, that its usefulness for the purpose of scienti c discussion has become extremely questionable. Consult the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, which came out around 1935, and turn to the entry Capitalism written by Werner Sombart. I understand that Sombart was not a member of the communist party, but his thinking was certainly Marxist just the right sort of man to write an impartial account of capitalism! Sombart claims that he was the rst writer to use the label Capitalism systematically in his analyses, published around the turn of the century. The economic order of a free people is better termed The Free Market Economy or The Private Property Order .

R&L: In* Religion and Capitalism *you wrote, The market will exhibit every shortcoming men exhibit Catalog human shortcomings and you have compiled a list of the weaknesses and limitations of the market. Could you explain what you mean by that and why this insight is important for defenders of the free market to understand?

Opitz: Every one of man s institutions is operated by fallible human beings; the market is no exception and so, will also be fallible. But it does have a virtue that few other organizations exhibit: The market is not a power structure. The businessman plays a major role in the market economy, and he has no power beyond the quality of his products and his powers of persuasion. No businessman can compel anyone to work for him, or to buy his goods. The businessman is a mandatary of the customers; he follows their dictates as set by their buying habits. The customer is always right, as the old saying goes, and the businessman must please his customers, change his product line, or go out of business. Consumers are not given to sentimentality; if they see something they like at a price they can afford, they buy. Otherwise, they don t. Every businessman is aware of this.

R&L: What is the relationship between political and economic freedom and the

Judeo-Christian tradition of Western civilization?

Opitz: It is the function of the law, or call it government, to keep the peace of society by curbing those who break the peace by criminal actions. The peace is broken by an act of murder or by assault and battery. It is broken when a person is the victim of theft or when his property is damaged in any way. The peace is broken whenever a person bears false witness, as in the case of breach of contract. In short, the purpose of government is to maintain the integrity of the person and his rightful possessions, and in our culture, the laws for maintaining the peace of society are based on the moral commandments of the Decalogue. There is, of course, much more to the Decalogue than the several items that are especially relevant to maintaining the civil order, and deeper than the Decalogue is Jesus twofold summary of the Law: Love God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.

R&L: You have written that an economic system functions within the framework of ethical and spiritual components This means that the discussion of economic concepts cannot proceed very far without invoking spiritual concepts. What do you mean by this, and exactly what spiritual concepts are important in economic discussions?

Opitz: The American Epic opens with a theological statement: We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain rights The Declaration does not say that all men *hold* these truths because this is not so. The Founders might have continued, We and our fellow countrymen hold that all men are created, and created equal, because we have been schooled by eighteen centuries of biblical teachings in the churches and schools of Christendom. They might have also gone on to say, We humans are not a chance excrescence on the surface of this earth tossed up somewhere between two ice ages; to the contrary, we are on this planet by divine intent; it is God s will that we are here to serve His mighty purposes, and every human person is called to that service, body and soul. We share a common humanity; we are neither animals nor gods; we are equally God s children; we are equal before the Law and equally entitled to an even-handed justice in the courts.

But the idea of equality does not carry us beyond this point. Human beings differ in ever so many ways. If this were not so, the human race could not continue. Individual differences spawn the enormous variety of talents that make for social cooperation under the division of labor and generate a free and prosperous commonwealth.

R&L: Many world religions posit a radical division between the world of the spirit and the world of the esh many Eastern religions, for example, express this. Christianity, in contrast, has no such division. What is the signi cance of this for the study of economics?

Opitz: The Hindu word *maya* is derived from a Sanskrit root meaning structure. *Maya* is the term usually applied by Hindus to the world outside, the world of nature, the world of matter in contrast to the realm of mind and spirit. According to Hinduism, the material world is constantly changing and is therefore untrustworthy; it is illusory and therefore evil. In contradistinction, the biblical account of Creation tells us that God created the material world and called it very good. So, the earth is our proper environment, only awaiting its improvement as we learn to work the earth for food and all other things that enable us to survive and then to ourish. But, if matter is intrinsically evil, then the incentive to work weakens and society sinks into poverty.

R&L: It is often said that America is a Christian nation. In what sense do you think this is true?

Opitz: It is a fact of history that the early settlers on our eastern shore were spurred on by a religious impulse; they came here to a place where they might practice their brand of Christianity without being molested. The number of men and women who list their religion as Christian today in America far exceeds the number of all other religions combined, and it might still be said that we are a Christian nation in the values we live by or aspire to. You might say that Christianity is in our nation s bloodstream, part of our cultural heredity as an offshoot of Christendom and the nature of the institutions set up on this continent by our early forebears. But to a large extent we have become a nation of nominal Christians with little in uence in the public forum.

In our culture, the laws for maintaining the peace of society are based on the moral commandments of the Decalogue.

The prevailing ethos of these United States is secularism of one kind or

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Liberty and the Good Life

by David F. Forte

U-Turns may be prohibited on interstate highways, but it became the standard traf c pattern in the Republican Congress elected in 1996. Republicans did not contest President Clinton s plan to balance the budget. They just wanted to do it earlier. They did not object to Clinton s tax cuts. They just wanted more of them. Republicans want to help families educate their children. But not as expensively or intrusively as do the Democrats.

The new Republican drift is an inheritance from the last dreadful Presidential campaign. As the 1996 session of Congress drew to a close, the Republicans in Congress capitulated to President Clinton s threat to shut down the government once more. Instead of cutting expenditures, instead of trimming regulations, the Republicans buckled. They no longer talked of eliminating departments but gave every department particularly Labor , Education, Health and Human Services, as well as the EPA hefty increases. In 1995, the Republicans reduced the budget for general government expenses from $508 to $488 billion. But in 1996, they pushed it back to $503 billion. They passed a health care bill that mandates coverage by private insurance companies for mental illness, a provision that will increase governmental intrusion and push up health care costs dramatically. As President Clinton accurately stated, the GOP s concession to his incremental approach will more likely gain him his health care scheme than his previous all-or-nothing approach.

We have come a long way from 1994. At that time, the ideological identity of the two parties was clear and understandable. Americans knew what the plan of government was for the Republicans and what it was for the Democrats. Today, party identity is much more muddled. The brilliant manipulations of President Clinton and of his sometime mentor, Richard Morris, and the exceptional political ineptitude of the Republicans leave the American people today with no clear picture of the ideological differences between the parties.

Yet the ideological divisions remain in the body politic, despite the miasma thrown about them by the centrist Clinton and the get along Republicans. The majority of Americans today still call themselves conservatives, but there is little consensus as to what conservatism means.

Four Faces of Conservatism, Three Faces of Liberalism

Today, conservatism wears four faces. There are rights conservatives (those we call libertarians); social conservatives (those with an image of what a good society should look like); traditional conservatives (those who are comfortable with the way things have been done); and status conservatives (those who wish to keep their positions of power). It is this last form of conservatism status conservatism that is the liberal caricature of what a real conservative is.

Status conservatives are everywhere. A liberal tenured member of a university faculty is a status conservative. Those who work in state and federal welfare agencies are often status conservatives when it comes to the programs they have become dependent upon. Some welfare recipients may be status conservatives in their own way.

Conservatism today, however, is settling into two major forms: rights conservatism and social conservatism. In the face of so much radical legal and social change, the traditionalists justi- cation stability requires consistency no longer has much weight. For their part, status conservatives always defend their position by reference to some other value. Professor Smith needs his tenure because of the value we place on free speech. Businessman Jones needs his government monopoly because of the many workers he employs. In other words, status conservatives dress up their privilege in the language of either a rights conservative or a social conservative.

The division of conservatism into its rights champions and its social visionaries is not an innovation. Politically, whenever rights conservatives have joined with social conservatives whenever the program of liberty promises a better, that is, a more virtuous society that coalition can easily achieve dominant status. That s what happened when the Americans won the Revolution. Where the coalition breaks down, or when it adopts, for expediency s sake, the program of status conservatives, it loses its political force and legitimacy. That s what happened during the New Deal.

What about liberals? What sorts of faces do they show to the country? I see three faces of contemporary liberalism.

In America today, the left offers us egalitarian liberalism, welfare liberal-

ism, and autonomy liberalism. At bottom, I think the three are in contradiction to one another, but that does not stop the liberals from proclaiming all three at the same time. They have their coalition politics, too.

Egalitarian liberalism needs no explanation and has, in fact, always been the strongest political attraction of liberalism. All attacks on status conservatism gain credence whenever done from the stance of the value of equality. Along with liberty and morality on the conservative side, equality was also part of the trinity of values animating the Framers and the American Revolution.

In fact, however, modern liberalism has given up on equality in favor of its other two tenets: welfare liberalism and autonomy liberalism. Welfare liberalism ultimately derived from the statist philosophy of a progressivism articulated most particularly by Woodrow Wilson. Welfare liberalism is based on a materialist view of human nature. It holds that the happiness and dignity of each human is determined by his material environment. That is why welfare liberals truly believe they are assisting people when they create a regime of grinding dependency on the government. They think they are helping people because they have only one standard of who a person is: a material being in a material universe. In contrast, libertarians focus on the independent responsibility of the individual while social conservatism looks at the fundamental moral dignity of each individual.

What about autonomy liberalism? It claims to celebrate the individual, to provide the individual with as wide a range of free choice as possible without any moral constraint. But autonomy liberalism is not, as some think, merely the liberal analog of rights conservatism.

For a while, I used to think that there was not much difference between libertarianism and autonomy liberalism except that libertarians were more consistent: They believed in economic liberty as well as other kinds of liberty. But now I have come to realize that autonomy liberalism and genuine libertarianism are polar opposites, for they are based on antithetical notions of what the human person is.

A Moral Vision of Man

At bottom, a true libertarian philosophy harkening to its eighteenth-century roots is grounded in a moral vision of man. Libertarianism s self-evident premises are reason and a natural order among men. It is the Benthamites of the nineteenth century and not true libertarians who regard society as made up of solitary individuals. Rather, a libertarian sensitive to history will see society as made up of individuals who have freely bound themselves to one another in a wide range of mutually dependent social groupings. Such libertarians champion contract because a contract is a promise by which one covenants to behave in a certain way to the bene t and reliance of another person. Promise, trust, and commitment are the essential moral qualities of that kind of libertarian view of society. Without it, the libertarian philosophy would be unworkable and would make no sense.

Autonomy liberalism, on the other hand, pictures the individual as solitary and autarkic. The individual is not ruled by the reason by which he can nd common moral ground with other men. Rather, he is ruled by his own pursuit of his appetitive pleasure. Autonomy liberals regard the will, not reason, as the essential element of human nature. In fact, they deprecate reason and try to deconstruct it, as I see every day in the academy. Autonomy liberals see government not as the enforcer of the moral requirements of trust, promise, and reliance but as the umpire between clashing wills.

It is no coincidence that autonomy liberals are much more insistent on the so-called right of privacy than are libertarians. Clearly, one can only exercise one s will without hindrance, without con ict with the wills of others, in a realm that is immune and private to one s self. Libertarians are far less caught up in the notion of privacy. What they seek instead is the freedom and opportunity to make voluntary connections with others. Libertarians (as do social conservatives) move out from the self; autonomy liberals turn inward upon the self. One is other-regarding; the other self-regarding.

> "For the Founders, a constitutional order is essential to liberty. Liberty is essential to virtue. And a virtuous people are essential to the maintenance of a constitutional order."
>
> —David F. Forte

For their part, social conservatives offer a richer notion of humanity than any version of liberalism. Society is a nexus of mutual dependent souls, each of value in himself and each in need of nurturing from one another. Social conservatives have allied with rights conservatives because they see that with liberty, the individual becomes a morally responsible agent and is encouraged

to commit himself to others and to his own moral development. Social conservatives and rights conservatives agree that not only should government protect the liberty of individuals, but it must also enforce those commitments the individual has made.

Social conservatives understand particularly the moral and social good that comes from stability of the freely entered marriage covenant. Through them, we have come to realize that much more is dependent upon, and many more persons rely upon the commitment of husband and wife than just those two persons. Social conservatives have researched and demonstrated that a freely contracted relationship over time gathers so much more to it, that the mere mutual desire of the two parties to terminate it can create great harm to others. No-fault divorce laws, for example, have wreaked far more damage upon women and children than a pure contractarian could have ever envisioned.

A limited government that both protects liberty and supports the social relations that derive from it is a logical necessity to both libertarians and social conservatives.

Liberty, Virtue, Constitutional Order

Where libertarians see the freedom necessary to enter into moral relations, social conservatives see the moral good that emanates from those relations. That is why a limited government that both protects liberty and supports the social relations that derive from it is a logical necessity to both libertarians and social conservatives.

The Founders of the country had exactly the same vision. For Americans, arbitrary power from whatever source, be it governmental or individual, destroys liberty and corrupts the society. When Americans fought for self-government, they did so in both senses of the term. The American vision was of a self-governed people made up of self-governed individuals. Liberty was equally available to all, and all were equally responsible to ful ll their moral obligations. As John Dickenson wrote in his Letters of a Pennsylvania Farmer:

> Benevolence towards mankind, excites wishes for their welfare, and such wishes endear the means of ful lling them. These can be found in liberty only, and therefore her sacred cause ought to be espoused by every man, on every occasion, to the utmost of his power.

There were three things Americans fought for in seeking an independent state: the realization of an ancient constitutional order based on the rule of law and the traditional rights of Englishmen; liberty and a government that operated only with the consent of the people, and a republic of balanced powers, balanced social classes, and one in which a virtuous citizenry would thrive. All three principles were merged into one cause, and Americans found no contradiction between the rule of law (what a constitution preserves), liberty, and virtue.

For the Founders, a constitutional order is essential to liberty. Liberty is essential to virtue. And a virtuous people are essential to the maintenance of a constitutional order. In the minds of the American patriots, the three elements were indissolubly linked. The alliance between liberty and virtue, between libertarians and social conservatives, defeated the status conservatives and won the American Revolution.

Thus, the alliance between libertarians and social conservatives is both necessary and natural. It is necessary, for separately, they will be defeated by the statists and the champions of arbitrary power. But together as a coalition, they become a formidable force. In fact, such a coalition naturally attracts that other consistent value of American society: equality. For there is no equality between persons except in the dignity and worth in which each is regarded. There can be no greater worth than equal liberty for all. There can be no greater dignity than equal responsibility of all to grow in virtue.

The alliance between liberty and social conservatism is also natural because a liberty that fails to increase virtue is not worth it, and a virtuous person without freedom is a contradiction in terms. There are, however, temptations that bode to shatter that vital alliance. Many libertarians, for example, are bemused by the autonomy liberals insistence on amoral individualism. It is not the way to free community but to narcissism. If libertarians take that route, they will make themselves politically irrelevant to Americans. Americans are natural communitarians, and their communities have always been morally based. The limited role of government is to con rm and assist our naturally formed moral communities, particularly the family. It is not to supplant our private communities, or to be hostile to them in the name of materialist individualism.

Material in Subordination to the Moral

In recent years, the most probable chance for such a successful alliance politically has lain in the Republican Party. But the Republicans have muted that coalition so much in the last election that the American electorate no longer can sense what that party truly stands for. In my mind, the low point in the Republicans political fortunes at their national convention last year was General Colin Powell s speech. There, you will recall, he stated that he was a

Republican because that party was big enough to welcome someone who believes in the woman s right to choose, and who believes in af rmative action, because despite those differences, the Republicans were united in restoring the American dream. But what kind of American dream is it that accepts one and a half million abortions a year? What kind of American dream is it that denies a person educational and employment opportunities because of his race or gender? In one breath, General Powell made irrelevant both virtue and liberty.

Instead, he promised only greater material bene ts for the individual. The only difference between that Republican message and the Democratic is that the Republicans promised us more money to spend on ourselves, while the Democrats promised more government to give us what we want. Both visions see the individual as self-regarding and egotistical.

The American dream has always been material as well as moral, but the framers of the country unmistakably placed the material in subordination to the moral. Their praise of religion, their notion of natural law, their suspicion of the appetitive elements of the human personality combined to create a regime that was dedicated to liberty as the essential means to a virtuous society. Rights only made sense to the Framers when directed to the good. Liberty was not autonomous licentiousness but the capacity to govern oneself for the betterment of one s moral life and the moral life of the community. Without a vision of objective good, liberty has nothing to measure itself against. That vision can only come to pass when libertarians and social conservatives see each other, not as competitors on the right, but as natural and essential allies. *A*

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another. Or, one might call it Humanism, a religion without God. Twenty years or more ago the American Humanist Association published a pamphlet titled *The Fourth R.* That pamphlet advanced the argument that in addition to the three established religions Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism there is now a fourth: Humanism. And now, as this century winds down, we might take note of the astonishing growth of a fth religion in our country , Islam. So, in short, the phrase This is a Christian nation must be carefully explained and quali ed.

Many interpret the phrase to mean that the churches are seeking to make Christianity the of cial religion of the United States, as Anglicanism is the of cial religion of Great Britain. The First Amendment guarantees that no church here shall have such a most favored status in the hierarchy of the State. But there is such a religion that does get large grants of aid: H. G. Wells once declared, Socialism is to me a very great thing indeed; it is the only *religion* I profess. This religion is handsomely subsidized in virtually all modern states, so one must speak with extreme circumspection if he refers to ours as a Christian nation.

R&L: What thinkers have had the most in uence on you? What gures do you most admire, and why?

Opitz: My indebtedness to those from whom I have learned is enormous; help always seemed to be available when I needed it, as when I enrolled for a seminar to study William Temple s book *Nature, Man, and God*, the Gifford Lectures for, I think, 1934—35. I had no background in philosophy in college, and this book oored me. About a week into the course, I found a book titled *Guide to Philosophy* by C. E. M. Joad, a professor at the University of London. It was just what the title promised, and it opened up the subject for me. I read everything by Joad in the University of California library and eventually bought most of his works. Joad writes with grace and charm; he s a good read, and I recommend him.

During the mid-forties I came across a book with an intriguing title: *Darwin, Marx, Wagner* by Jacques Barzun, of Columbia University. I was so taken by this book that I began to read and collect his other titles. The erudite Dr. Barzun is a true scholar, a polymath, and a polished writer in many disciplines.

Albert Jay Nock came within my orbit just before World War II, with his department in The American Mercury. But it was not until the spring of 46, when I returned to the States, that I picked up *Memoirs of a Super uous Man*. I read it entirely during a forty-eight-hour coach ride from San Francisco to Chicago. From then on I was hooked! Fifteen years later three of us Nock fans formed the Nockian Society: No of cers; No dues; No meetings

I stumbled onto Christopher Dawson many years ago; he taught me much about Western civilization and Christendom that I had not learned in college or seminary. Another favorite historian of Christendom is W. G. de Burgh, a professor of philosophy at the University of Reading. His *Legacy of the Ancient World* is kept in print as a Penguin paperback; it s worth owning.

Gerald Heard, a much-neglected thinker, came to America from England in the mid-thirties. He wrote on anthropology, history, and science, as well as philosophy. His *Preface to Prayer* is of particular interest to clergy, as are his short books on the Lord s Prayer and the Beatitudes, *The Creed of Christ* and *The Code of Christ*.

There are many others to whom I am deeply indebted; most of them know who they are, and I hope I ll be forgiven for not naming them. *A*

A Splendid Education in Free Market Economics

A Review Essay by John Attarian

Free-market advocates seeking to convert others face a perennial pedagogical problem: Most people with economic opinions are economic illiterates and economics is notoriously forbidding for nonspecialists. Not only is it often complicated, but most economic writings are baf ingly abstruse. Hence, a crying need for accessible works arguing for free enterprise, achieving clarity without sacri cing content. Happily , the *Freeman* Classics series brilliantly meets that need.

To date, the series contains sixteen volumes, composed of essays and articles from *The Freeman,* the monthly journal of the Foundation for Economic Education. Authors include clergymen Edmund A. Opitz, John K. Williams, and Robert A. Sirico; economists Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich A. Hayek, and Hans F. Sennholz; libertarian policy analysts Lawrence W. Reed and George C. Leef. Space precluding examination of the whole series, we con ne ourselves to ve volumes that address topics most likely to interest clergy and seminarians.

Religion s role in America s development and public life is hotly contested; some argue that the Founders were indifferent to religion, others that America and its freedom are products of Christian faith. *Faith of Our Fathers* abundantly supports the latter view. Not only did desire for religious freedom motivate many colonists, but clergymen such as John Witherspoon were active in achieving American independence, and the Founding Fathers saw religion as a vital underpinning of morality and order. Moreover, the Bible, while counseling obedience to authority, warns that big government means tyranny and oppression (1 Sam. 8 and 1 Kings 12).

Several authors maintain that morality depends on freedom, including economic freedom. Since choices have no moral signi cance unless freely made, without free institutions, morality is impossible. Also, Benjamin A. Rogge argues, economic freedom is consistent with certain fundamental moral principles of life itself, such as autonomy and personal responsibility (*Faith of Our Fathers,* 230).

A very wide-ranging and searching volume, *Faith of Our Fathers* also ably criticizes the modern intellectual climate of materialism, positivism, and egalitarianism as inimical to freedom. Frequently made moral criticisms of the free market as sel sh, materialistic, impersonal, etc., don t hold up in light of common sense and the biblical teaching of personal responsibility. The materialist s problem is the sin within his heart, not his environment (*Faith of Our Fathers,* 264). The authors explorations of the crisis of our age encompass as well the pitfalls of majority rule; the roots of anticapitalist thinking in envy and rebellion against God and the human condition; the danger posed by higher education in fostering such myths as automatic progress, man s natural goodness, and egalitarianism.

Many clergy are either hostile to free enterprise on moral grounds, or unaware of its moral merit. *The Morality of Capitalism* goes far to rectify that. While acknowledging capitalism s achievement of unprecedented prosperity and living standards, most of the authors defend it on *moral* grounds: It respects the rights and dignity of others by allowing people to use only persuasion and voluntary exchange, not force, to mutual bene t and to attain desired ends.

To succeed, therefore, capitalists must serve others; as Rev. John K. Williams observes, the allegedly sel sh man the one who seeks great wealth can only do so by providing other people with what they desire at least cost to these people (*Morality of Capitalism,*

31). Those who serve best, gain most. Then, too, Christ s parable of the Talents teaches, Fr. Sirico shows, that getting ahead through honest enterprise and work is *good.* As regards the material world, it is a story about capital, investment, entrepreneurship, and the proper use of scarce economic resources. It is a direct rebuttal to those who see a contradiction between business success and living the Christian life (*Morality of Capitalism,* 81).

The anticapitalistic mentality also receives thorough criticism, especially in Israel Kirzner s penetrating and comprehensive The Ugly Market, which ranges from speci c attacks (materialism, sel shness, greed) to their sources (envy, resentment, contempt for ordinary people and for self-centeredness). Other essays expose the immorality of coercive government programs af r - mative action, government-mandated health care, and Social Security.

Free to Try ably dispels anticapitalists ignorance of entrepreneurs role in the market and the good that entrepreneurs do. An entrepreneurial economy makes the proverbial rags-to-riches upward ascent possible for many, illustrated by examples from Ego Brown the shoeshine man to Sam Walton the retailer. Investing their own fortunes and risking failure, entrepreneurs greatly multiply the choices open to consumers, create employment opportunities for others, and raise the standard of living.

Unfortunately, the badly misunderstood entrepreneurs must contend with envy, most famously formulated by Marx s labor theory of value, which claims that entrepreneurs exploit workers by diverting some of the worker-created value to themselves, while contributing nothing to its creation. Howard Baetjer and Rev. John K. Williams ably explode this fallacy, and Gary North, brilliantly and provocatively defending ticket scalpers, makes some profound points about the psychology of envy. Far from being exploiters or parasites, entrepreneurs are the indispensable venturers whose insight and initiative make the economy work.

Well, yes, but didn t the Industrial Revolution and free trade immiserate the poor and working classes? Not so, contends *The Industrial Revolution and Free Trade.* Harsh as early factory conditions were, they were actually an improvement for agricultural laborers displaced by the enclosure movement. Often desired by parents, child labor was ended not by paternalistic legislation, but when the parents rising labor productivity made it unnecessary. Moreover, the market brought numerous social bene ts; for example, greater prosperity meant cities and towns could afford sanitation measures for ghting infectious diseases. Free trade, other essays argue, allows consumption of cheaper commodities from abroad, thus increasing the real incomes and well-being of consumers whereas protection of domestic industries does the opposite.

The clergy s laudable concern for the poor frequently nds expression in endorsement of the welfare state. *Up from Poverty* argues, however, that this is a false answer. For one thing, all charity, both public and private, faces the Samaritan s dilemma : While morally right, assistance to the needy increases the need for assistance, harming the needy s own interests. Private charity is better, because the givers have an incentive to ensure that charity is wisely spent. Also, welfare fosters the illusion that we can live costlessly at others expense, when, in fact, it seriously burdens William Graham Sumner s for gotten man the upright, hardworking taxpayer of modest means. There is, too, Michael Levin reminds us, a grave moral problem in coerced compassion; we are all individually responsible for our fates, a responsibility that cannot be undone by forcing some people to pay for the heedlessness of others (*Up from Poverty,* 95).

Not only is its theory dubious, but the welfare state s practice is dysfunctional. Welfare discourages self-reliance and encourages dependence. The ably presented histories of Puerto Rico, saddled for decades with massive statism, and of the catastrophically expensive and demoralizing Swedish welfare state, offer grim lessons in how to wreck an economy. Besides, while imagination, initiative, and hard work enable people to leave poverty and even rise to af uence, as did Andrew Carnegie and Lena Himmelstein (Lane Bryant), the welfare state s regulations and taxes increasingly impede this escape route.

There s a better way to ght poverty , the authors persuasively argue: economic freedom and private charity. Freeing up the labor market would enable more people to escape poverty; private charity both succors the helpless and spiritually bene ts the givers; and, as Kenneth McDonald observes, Helping other people to independence is the true charity (*Up from Poverty,* 174).

The theoretical expositions in these volumes are usually highly competent and accessible. Unfortunately, many articles illuminating free enterprise s practice and statism s follies are dated. In *Free to Try,* for example, the pieces are ve to fteen years old. Some updating

There is a crying need for accessible works arguing for free enterprise, achieving clarity without sacrificing content. Happily, the *Freeman* Classics series brilliantly meets this need.

might have been wise.

More seriously, some arguments are questionable. Capitalism honors and promotes charity and virtue (*Morality of Capitalism,* 63) is only half right. Virtues such as initiative, industry, and honesty, yes; but markets neither promote nor discourage charity. The oft-made free-trade assertion that production s sole purpose is consumption, is overstated; people also work for, say, the ful llment found in their vocations. The assertion that morality requires freedom, meaning political and economic freedom, rests on a profound confusion between exterior (economic and political) freedom, which is not a necessary condition for morality (Christ, the apostles, and the martyrs did not live in free societies), and interior freedom (free will), which *is.*

Overall, though, the arguments are sound. Capitalism *does* comport better with morality than other economic systems; welfare *is* spurious compassion; enterprise *is* meritorious. The focus on principles, especially moral ones, is attractive. So is the unfailingly calm, reasonable tone. The volume of supporting evidence is impressive, as is the range of topics, both within individual volumes and in the series. Besides the ve volumes examined here, the *Freeman* Classics include volumes on specialized topics, such as public education, health care, private property, the gold standard, environmental policy, labor markets, and unions. Interested readers will nd cogent, thought-provoking arguments for free-market arrangements.

The *Freeman* Classics are an invaluable treatment of free-market economics. Even specialists will pro t from them, and for nonspecialist readers, they cannot be too highly recommended. *A*

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Why America Needs Religion

Secular Modernity and Its Discontents

by Guenter Lewy

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996
xii + 160 pp. Paper: $18.00

Review by John-Peter Pham

Recently, University of Chicago professor Derek Neal undertook a study of the education of urban minority students, the same ones who are the much-vaunted at risk students regularly paraded out whenever the body politic even contemplates any change in the educational status quo. After exhaustive research and comparison between the public and private (including parochial) education systems, Professor Neal concluded that there is something different about the curriculum in Catholic schools that gives urban minorities a signi cant advantage over their public school peers. What exactly that something different in the curriculum is, Professor Neal did not elaborate on.

However, the answer to what that mysterious difference is can be found in the pages of Guenter Lewy s little volume *Why America Needs Religion*. The book s title suggests that it was a standard critique of the ethical and cultural relativism that pervades much of contemporary America with its insidious notion of the impossibility of adjudicating between the competing claims of pluralistic society with a diversity of moral beliefs and lifestyles the type of thing that could be expected from a Richard John Neuhaus, a Carl F. H. Henry, or a Francis A. Schaeffer. In fact, this book began as the exact opposite. Its author, a professor emeritus of political science at the University of Massachusetts whose previous works include *Religion and Revolution* and *Peace and Revolution: The Moral Crisis of American Paci sm,* set out, by his own admission, to ridicule the propositions of the above-mentioned gentlemen that the crisis of the age is a crisis of unbelief and to prove the attack on secular modernity to be a danger to individual liberty as well as an affront to people of goodwill who happened to be agnostics or atheists.

However, a funny thing happened along Professor Lewy s way: He discovered that the positions he supported and took for granted were, on second thought, not as convincing as he had assumed. In fact, he realized that, at least with regard to certain crucial moral issues concerning the meaning of life and death, he had more in common with religious moralists than with secular humanists. In short, he concluded that Neuhaus, Henry, Schaeffer, and company were right, after all.

After a long and, at times, rather pedantic historical survey in which he contrives to balance the claims of those who see Christianity as the source of moral inspiration for Western civilization and those who condemn it as *the* force for intolerance and ignorance, Professor Lewy s argument boils down to a rather simple postulate: In order to sustain a decent moral order, America needs traditional religion. His case is made in two chapters.

In the third, titled The Culture of

Modernity and Its Social Consequences, Professor Lewy asks whether secular modernity has promoted the decline of the family and the rise of the underclass. He does a Herculean task of digesting a wealth of data available for the obvious: That while most members of the underclass are poor, membership in the underclass is neither synonymous with poverty nor the result of poverty or abandonment by society. Rather, neither structural trends nor social barriers can conclusively explain the growth of the underclass. As Professor Lewy notes, just as the modern welfare state had succeeded in alleviating most causes of poverty there arose in our inner cities a new form of long-term poverty accompanied by various kinds of self-destructive behavior.

The inevitable conclusion is that the cultural ethos of secularism with its attendant radical individualism has undermined traditional values such as civic virtue, family solidarity, and social solicitude. The spread of secularism has weakened religious belief and thereby further eroded traditional values such as self-restraint, responsibility, and accountability. While it would be overly simplistic to ascribe the emergence of the new underclass exclusively to changes in values, there can be little doubt that the secularist cultural trends have been a crucial factor.

The fth chapter , Religiousness and Moral Conduct: Are Believing Christians Different?, begs the question of whether the Christian faith transforms the lives of those who take their religion seriously. In particular, Professor Lewy examines the questions of juvenile delinquency, adult crime, prejudice and intolerance, single parenting, and divorce, and concludes that the vast majority of social science research supports the nding that the minority of Christians who take their religion seriously (as opposed to the nominal Christians of the Christmas-and-Easter variety) have signi cantly lower rates of moral failure and social ills than any other groups studied. Ever the nonbeliever, the professor concludes modestly that it may be that worship and the feeling of being loved by God indeed produce de - nite changes in a person s behavior.

In the end, Professor Lewy still does not believe in God (he now calls himself a nontheist rather than a secular humanist), although he sheepishly admits to nding that he really has more in common with religious than with secularist thinkers. He thus proposes cooperation between believers and nontheists against the common secular foe. Just how far such an *entente* could go, however, is debatable. Nontheists are indeed capable of good works. Nonetheless, lacking love of God, they are, in Professor Lewy s own words, not likely to produce a Dorothy Day or a Mother Teresa.

Professor Neal and Superintendent Vallas would do well to alter the focus of their educational strategies. Rather than looking for mysterious or rather , not so mysterious but politically incorrect to name dif ferences between public and private (and parochial) school curricula, they would do well to explore the educational outcomes based on the role of religion in the lives of the at risk students and their families. They will no doubt discover, as did Professor Lewy, that the most successful students whether they be enrolled in parochial, private, or public schools will be those raised in environments where traditional religion and traditional religion s God in uences daily moral decisions. The only risk of such a study would be that it would only verify Lewy s prescient thesis. Then what would they do? *A*

> "The cultural ethos of secularism with its attendant radical individualism has undermined traditional values such as civic virtue, family solidarity, and social solicitude."
>
> —John-Peter Pham

Meanwhile, back in Chicago, public schools chief Paul Vallas announced in the wake of Professor Neal s study that he is close to unveiling a restructuring plan that includes a component to develop a character education curriculum. The tragedy of such a plan would be that while it would acknowledge that education must be based on a foundation of values, it would refuse to see the true basis for all human morality: God. Moral reasoning can inform a conscience, but it cannot create one. That requires faith in an ultimate power who is the guarantor of an absolute standard of right and wrong clearly de ned and not subject to ever-changing interpretations.

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Book News

The Arrogance of the Modern: Historical Theology Held in Contempt
David W. Hall
The Calvin Institute, 1997
308 pp. Paper: $21.95

C. S. Lewis wrote in his essay On the Reading of Old Books that every age has its own outlook. It is especially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means old books. Lewis went on to note that, in the modern age, just such a reading of old books and thoughtful appreciation of old wisdom has been neglected in favor of an infatuation with the new and innovative. And in such an infatuation, modern man has become blind to the errors of his age.

David Hall concurs with Lewis, and using this insight as a touchstone, elaborates on the danger of holding the past in contempt, especially in the eld of theology. Although many Christians treat the past like a dead, and therefore irrelevant, ancestor, Hall writes, the theology of an earlier day has much to teach us. In this way *The Arrogance of the Modern* is a sustained apology for the wisdom of the past.

Utilizing the insights of such worthies as Lewis, Saint Augustine, G. K. Chesterton, John Calvin, and Lord Acton, Hall makes his case for the wisdom of the past in two parts. The rst illustrates the consequences of forsaking historic theology. The second is an attempt to correct our tendency to view modern notions as superior to classic wisdom by revisiting principal thinkers of the Christian tradition and applying their insights to contemporary problems.

Unconventional Wisdoms: The Best of Warren Brookes
Thomas J. Bray, editor
Paci c Resear ch Institute, 1997
302 pp. Paper:

The hallmark of Warren Brookes journalistic career was his relentless questioning of the received knowledge of the so-called experts and pundits, and his presentation of wonderfully unconventional wisdom regarding the controversies of his day.

This volume includes nearly one hundred of Brooks best columns culled from his work at the *Boston Herald*, *The Washington Times*, and *The Detroit News* from the mid-1980s until his death in late 1991. In addition, much material never before in print, including many of his speeches, has been added to round out the Brookes corpus. This collection of articles examines such topics as economics, politics, and environmentalism, and is an excellent introduction to the work of this ne journalist.

The Enduring Edmund Burke
Ian Crowe, editor
Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1997
221 pp. Cloth: $24.95

Edmund Burke s support of economic liberty earned him the great respect of Adam Smith; his powerful defense of a morally informed liberty earned Burke the admiration of Lord Acton, who regarded him as a timeless model of humane learning, religious virtue, and enlightened political action. Likewise, Burke s critique of the worst of the modernist impulse, especially as embodied in the excesses of the French Revolution, has gained him the respect of many in twentieth-century conservatism.

This collection of eighteen essays, commemorating the two hundredth anniversary of Burke s death, explores the breadth of his interests and insights into political philosophy and human nature. This volume is especially notable for bringing together academics, politicians, and journalists from America, Great Britain, Ireland, and France to celebrate the multifaceted aspects of Burke s life and legacy.

At the close of the twentieth century, a century bloodied by the intemperance and impiety of ideologies that viewed traditional moral order as spurious, Burke s thought is needed to remind us of the content of that moral order and to give us insight into how it may be preserved and renewed.

The End of Democracy? Judicial Usurpation of Politics
Mitchell S. Muncy, editor
Spence Publishing, 1997
288 pp. Cloth: $22.95

American conservatism s most ferocious internecine controversy in years erupted when *First Things*, a journal of religion and public life, published a symposium on the judicial usurpation of politics, raising the question whether we have reached or are reaching the point where conscientious citizens can no longer give moral assent to the existing regime. A wide-ranging debate ensued, engaging scores of contestants in countless journals and newspapers.

This book collects all the principal contributions to this debate, including the original symposium and responses to that symposium from a variety of publications. Richard John Neuhaus rounds out the collection with an explanatory essay outlining the anatomy of the controversy. Finally, the book includes a useful bibliography listing every article published about, or in response to, the symposium. *A*

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

Toward a New Liberty

The 1991 papal encyclical *Centesimus Annus* has been described as prompting a springtime in Christian social teaching because it makes it easier to see freedom, speci cally economic freedom, as a moral mandate. The sad truth is that the two traditions that come together in *Centesimus Annus* religious orthodoxy and classical liberal social theory have appeared to be at odds with each other for the better part of three centuries.

Although the classical liberal tradition sprang out of a Christian humanism rooted in the scholastic tradition, some of the classical liberals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while keeping the scholastic s habit of rigorous social thought, abandoned their high regard for ecclesiastical and social authority. And the Church, during certain periods, has strongly criticized what was construed to be the free society, partly because some social thinkers con ated the theories of economic liberalism with moral libertinism, viewing them as one in the same and as mutually reinforcing.

This was a great tragedy in the history of the relationship between church authority and the liberal tradition. As the tensions mounted in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the allegiances of men such as Lord Acton were torn as they came to believe that they had to choose between spiritual authority and the dictates of reason, a situation the late scholastics would have seen as a grave departure from teaching of their master, Saint Thomas.

Friedrich A. Hayek s last book had the interesting title *The Fatal Conceit*. The conceit he speaks of is not something as simple as the suggestion that the government can run the economy or that all things can be owned in common, two errors that only the most dogmatic of intellectuals commit today. Instead, the conceit he wanted us to recognize is the idea that human reason is capable of designing a social order without taking into account the evolved patterns of human law, relationships, economy, and traditions. This conceit, he says, leads us to empower institutions such as the state to override the natural order of liberty in an attempt to impose a plan on society.

We nd here in Hayek the potential for complementarity between an indispensable principle of Christian social teaching namely , subsidiarity and the classical liberal tradition. And if we are looking for the extent of this complementarity, we need look no further than Pope John Paul s 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, which accomplished the great task of repairing the damage done by centuries of unnecessary separation between these two great traditions. Because of the courage of John Paul II and his case in favor of the free society now that socialism is being discredited worldwide, we have entered into a new era of intellectual and social history. No longer do we feel compelled to speak of classical liberalism and religious orthodoxy as belonging to two separate intellectual worlds. We have begun to speak of them as one and to repair the split that was unnecessary and proved so dangerous to the cause of human liberty.

> Our task is one of education and intellectual and social engagement.

So our task is one of education and intellectual and social engagement. This engagement will be made all the more potent to the extent that the principle of subsidiarity is authentically observed, and the scope of the Church s moral and evangelistic in uence is broadened by taking back from secular political institutions its primary role of compassion and social service. It is an engagement we must all throw ourselves into completely, and not only because the stakes are so high for the future of civilization. We must also do so because it is our vocation and our duty to tell the truth to man. In doing so, may we continue to work to heal the scars left from the statist errors of this century. May the advent of the third millennium of the Church see us occupied with the construction of a civilization of love, meaningful and free human labor, and the vigorous embrace of a free and virtuous society. *A*

Rev. Robert A. Sirico *is president of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty. This article is adapted from his closing remarks at the Institute s international congress commemorating the fth anniversar y of* Centesimus Annus*, held in Rome on April 29 and 30, 1997.*

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

in memorium

Photo courtesy of the *National Catholic Register*

"We have no right to judge the rich. For our part, what we desire is not a class struggle but a class encounter, in which the rich save the poor and the poor save the rich."

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