

RELIGION & LIBERTY

September and October • 2001 A Publication of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty Volume 11 • Number 5

Religious Education Indispensable for Free Society



Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., is the president of Gonzaga University. He is the author of *Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom, and the Life Issues (Ignatius)* and, most recently, *The Spirit of Leadership: Optimizing Creativity and Change in Organizations (Executive Excellence)*. Prior to his appointment at Gonzaga, Father Spitzer was an associate professor of philosophy at Seattle University. He is also a consultant for various businesses on issues of ethics in the workplace.

R&L: How do you view the role of higher education—and of distinctively religious schools, in particular—in a free society?

Spitzer: Religious schools—and Roman Catholic schools, in particular—supply an invaluable contribution to a free society. They do so because religious education promotes four religious virtues: the transcendental dignity of the human person, a transcendental ethic, agapic love, and an eschatological hope for the world. These four religious virtues, in turn, promote four secular virtues: the intrinsic dignity of the human person, principle-based ethics, self-sacrificial love, and a broad and deep notion of the common good. And these four secular virtues are essential for the preservation and enhancement of a free society.

R&L: How does religious education uphold the notion of the intrinsic dignity of the human person, and how does that

notion contribute to the free society?

Spitzer: Put another way, at a religious school, you can talk about a person having a soul. The moment you say that, you recognize the intrinsic dignity of the human person, and this recognition is absolutely necessary for a free society. The reason this is so is because if all you ascribe to people are extrinsic

dignities, if you do not say that people have a unique irreplaceable value or even loveableness for no other reason than that they are human, then the whole doctrine of inalienable rights, quite frankly, topples.

The preservation of the notion of intrinsic dignity is absolutely necessary for the preservation of inalienable rights. An inalienable right is distinct from an extrinsic right. An inalienable right is one that belongs to a person by his very nature, and it cannot be taken away by a tyranny of the majority, where 51 percent of the people could outvote the rights of the other 49 percent. So once you have a doctrine of inalienable rights, you have an irreplaceable bulwark of the free society. John Locke saw that, and Francisco Suarez, the great Jesuit prior to Locke, saw that.

R&L: Similarly, what is the connection between transcendental ethics and principle-based ethics, and why is that connection important?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE © **Articles:** “Enjoying and Making Use of a Responsible Freedom” by Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., and “The Roots of Law” by J. Budziszewski © **Review Essay:** “Why a Free Society Needs the Family” by Brian C. Anderson © **Book Review:** John R. Schneider on *More Money, More Ministry: Money and Evangelicals in Recent North American History* © **In the Liberal Tradition:** John Courtney Murray, S.J. © **Column:** “Solidarity: The Fundamental Social Virtue” by Rev. Robert A. Sirico © **Plus Book News.**

Spitzer: Religious institutions teach a transcendental ethic, a morality that is rooted in God. Therefore, religious people have no problem talking about principle-based ethics. They have no problem saying, for example, that stealing is wrong in itself. This view is counterpoised to another philosophy called utilitarian or consequentialistic ethics. Utilitarian ethics does not believe in the intrinsic evil or good of an action. A person with a strong religious belief definitely believes in principle-based ethics, or at least has some sense of the intrinsic good and evil of actions. If one does not have a view of intrinsic good and evil, one is left with the utilitarian view. This school views ethics in terms of the harms and benefits of particular actions. Rationalization is much easier when one uses a harms/benefits calculus.

Free societies need principle-based people. And anyone who is transcendently oriented—that is to say, anyone who really believes that morality has some kind of divine ordination—will generally tend to have a belief in intrinsic good and evil. Because of that, such a person tends to have principles that promote free societies.

R&L: *How does love relate to the free society?*

Spitzer: Here we return to the notion of the intrinsic dignity

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*A Publication of the Acton Institute for
the Study of Religion and Liberty*

Volume 11 • Number 5

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The Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty was founded in 1990 to promote a free society characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles. The Institute is supported by donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals and maintains a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

Letters and subscription requests should be directed to: *Religion & Liberty*; Acton Institute; 161 Ottawa Ave., n.w., Suite 301; Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

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of the human being. If you have intrinsic worth, then my love for you does not have to depend on my anticipation of your friendship or my affection for you. I love you because I recognize your intrinsic worth. In that moment of empathy, three very important things occur with agape: forgiveness, compassion, and care for the marginalized, all of which are absolutely important to the survival of the free society.

R&L: *How is having an eschatological hope for the world related to having a broad and deep notion of the common good?*

Spitzer: Religious people believe that God is guiding the world in some fashion to be a better place, and that the world itself is going to be brought into the very kingdom of God. Consequently, religious people have a very wide and broad notion of the common good. Of course, anyone can appropriate these four secular virtues without religion. But being religious certainly helps. A relationship with a loving God helps. A religious community that reinforces this worldview helps.

Religious schools fill those secular virtues with power, which they really could not have without that religious basis. Not only do academic institutions promote the transcendental virtues; they also make the connection between the transcendental or religious virtues, and the secular virtues. And it is that double function of the religious academic institution that promotes the free society.

R&L: *In your new book, Healing the Culture, you argue that America's perceived cultural decline is a result of an incomplete view of the human person. How is this so?*

Spitzer: Our society is tending toward an extrinsic view of the human person. Remember that extrinsic dignity has to be earned. No free society, no culture, can stand on that for very long because you can keep raising the bar on what is required to have extrinsic dignity. And if you cannot make the grade, you are a second-class citizen or, even, less than human. Anytime a culture reduces itself to the recognition of extrinsic dignity alone, it will tend toward bias, prejudice, and eventually the circumscription of property rights and freedom. In the end, it moves to the elimination of people because they belong to a particular group.

R&L: *What would you present as a more adequate view of the human person?*

Spitzer: One based on the intrinsic dignity of the human person. There is no reason that you have intrinsic dignity

and worth other than the fact that you are human.

Do I think that the free society is losing its notion of intrinsic dignity with each passing day? Very much so. That is why I wrote *Healing the Culture*. We are not going to reverse this problem until we recapture the notion of intrinsic dignity and inalienable rights. There is only one way of preserving the free society: to identify “persons” (who are guaranteed rights) with “human beings” and nothing else.

R&L: *In Healing the Culture, you introduce the reader to traditional principles of morality presented in a contemporary manner. What obstacles might prevent contemporary culture from responding to your invitation to a virtuous life rooted in a proper understanding of the human person?*

Spitzer: Egocentricity is one obstacle. Most of the time, the culture is saying, “Ego is great.” That hurts morality because

John Courtney Murray, S.J. (1904–1967)


IN THE LIBERAL TRADITION

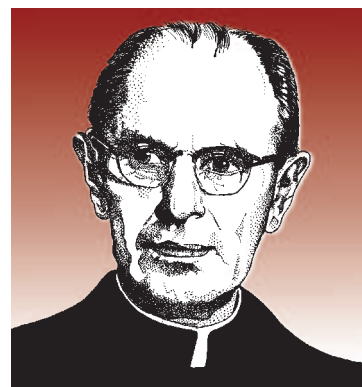
“The prejudice formulated in the First Amendment is but the most striking aspect of the more fundamental prejudice that was the living root of our constitutional system—the prejudice in favor of the method of freedom in society and therefore the prejudice in favor of a government of limited powers, whose limitations are determined by the consent of the people.”

John Courtney Murray entered the Society of Jesus in 1920. He was ordained a priest in 1933 and received his doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome in 1937. Afterwards, he assumed the Jesuit theologate at Woodstock, Maryland, where he was a professor of theology until his death. Additionally, Murray edited the magazine *America* and the journal *Theological Studies*.

While Murray’s academic specialties were the theology of grace and the Trinity, his major contributions were in public theology, especially concerning church, state, and society. His prevailing theme was the compatibility of American constitutionalism and Roman Catholicism. Indeed, according to Murray, freedom’s catalyst in the West was the church’s claim of independence from the state. The principle of limited government follows closely upon the recognition of this claim; consequently, large areas of human activity and experience are given the legal and moral space in which to flourish apart from the state. As he states, “The dualism of mankind’s two hierarchically ordered forms of social life had been Christianity’s cardinal contribution to the Western political tradition.”

The specifically American contribution, then, was to establish this principle by means of a written constitution. In his words, “The American thesis is that government is not juridically omniscient. Its powers are limited, and one of the principles of limitation is the distinction between state and church, in their purposes, methods, and manner of organization.” Further, this thesis “asserts the theory of a free people under limited government, a theory that is recognizably part of the Christian political tradition, and altogether defensible in the manner of its realization under American circumstances.”

Murray’s public theology troubled his ecclesiastical superiors, who restricted his freedom to write and lecture throughout the 1950s. His ideas gained a measure of vindication, however, upon his invitation to the Second Vatican Council, where he made crucial contributions to its statement on religious liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*. 



Sources: We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition by John Courtney Murray, S.J. (Sheed and Ward, 1960), and “Religious Freedom: John Courtney Murray, S.J., and Vatican II” in Faith and Reason (Summer 1987).

people will do anything to satisfy their egos instead of looking at what they can do to advance the common good. Utilitarianism is another. As I said before, the problem with utilitarianism is that it is consequentialistic and therefore easy to make ends justify means. Those two things hinder the establishment of a traditional principle-based ethical system.

I try to get around these two obstacles by correcting the common misunderstandings about freedom. I distinguish *freedom from* from *freedom for*. What I mean by *freedom from* is escape from constraint, and it is an illusory notion of freedom. *Freedom for* involves the idea of self-determination, of being able to determine the person one will become. In other words, I am free only when I can do and be every-

Once you have a doctrine of inalienable rights, you have an irreplaceable bulwark of the free society. John Locke saw that, and Francisco Suarez, the great Jesuit prior to Locke, saw that.

thing that I was meant to do and be, when I can secure various goods for my family, community, or church. The key concept in freedom, then, is commitment. You are never going to be able to do everything you are capable of doing for society, family, friends, or even yourself unless you can commit yourself to a course of action for the long term.

Once we are talking about commitment to a long-term course of action, we are approaching the topic of virtue, because virtues are habits of being oriented toward an end that is worthy of me. *Freedom for* is the only way of getting to that end; commitments are not something to be avoided but something to be pursued. So my strategy in reviving morality is redefining the relationship between virtue and freedom. Once virtue makes sense, there is a fighting chance that people will wake up every morning and try to pursue it.

R&L: *In your ethical advisory role with various corporations, how do you bring a spiritual perspective to the business enterprise?*

Spitzer: As opposed to ethical topics, which I can always address to a general group, spirituality is more difficult to present because a corporation cannot mandate it. The reason, of course, is that a non-believer may not want to hear about a spiritual life. However, many companies will allow *voluntary* religious groups to discuss this matter.


My way of bringing a spiritual perspective to the workplace is twofold. First, I form voluntary groups of people

who want to integrate spiritual life with the workplace and so come together to talk and pray. Second, I try to show these groups how a spiritual life reinforces their ethics in the workplace. For example, spirituality very definitely reinforces the notion of freedom and commitment in the workplace. It reinforces the idea of the intrinsic dignity of the human person. It helps me to see the Good News in people, to keep a level head, and to have very good business judgment.

R&L: *What do you find to be the most useful concept for bringing spirituality to the workplace?*

Spitzer: The key thing that I try to emphasize is that spirituality is not simply good for ethics and leadership principles; it also promotes one important thing for the workplace: peace. If I have peace of mind, my business judgment is great. If I have peace of mind stemming from my prayer life, if I am coming to the workplace with a genuine attitude of calm because I have just said to God, "Thy will be done." If

I am doing those things and have peace, my business judgment is great. On the other hand, if I come to work agitated, my business judgment is off. My egocentric perspectives hound me. Sometimes I am prideful, which turns off everyone around me. I spin my wheels and get angrier and angrier that things are not turning out as well as I thought they could, and so forth.

The best part about bringing the Spirit into the workplace is that you get peace, and peace is worth its weight in diamonds in terms of good business judgment. And most of my job is about judgment, not quantitative analysis. And those judgment calls are very much enhanced by being at peace. If you are at peace with yourself, you can be at peace with others, even if they are not doing things quite right or doing things that frustrate you. When you are at peace, you lead people well and can be a good ethical leader. When you are at peace, you are even a better analyzer because of the good judgment that is interwoven into your analysis. Such peace is invaluable. 



“Enjoying and Making Use of a Responsible Freedom” *Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.*

Lord Acton, the great historian of freedom, understood that “liberty is the delicate fruit of a mature civilization.” The liberty of which he spoke embraced a broad scope of human freedom, including dimensions political, intellectual, economic, and, especially, religious. The civilization of which he spoke was the West, whose heritage of Greek philosophy, Roman law, and Christian faith indelibly marked it and inexorably pushed it toward the full panoply of liberties we enjoy today and to which the rest of the world looks. And the history he sought to express was the unfolding witness to the expansion, refinement, and richer application of the principles of liberty.

*In celebration of the Acton Institute’s tenth anniversary and in the spirit of Lord Acton, Religion & Liberty is publishing a series of essays tracing the history of, as Edmund Burke put it, “this fierce spirit of liberty.” We shall look at several watershed documents from the past thousand years (concluding in this issue with Vatican II’s *Dignitatis Humanae*), each of which displays one facet of the nature of liberty. We do so to remember our origins and to know our aim. And we do so because, in the words of Winston Churchill, “We must never cease to proclaim in fearless tones the great principles of freedom.” — the Editor*

At least in the United States, there is a tendency to read the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965), as though the Roman Catholic Church had rather belatedly gotten around to ratifying the liberalist concept of religious freedom, a concept practically taken for granted in contemporary secular discourse. According to this concept, people are free at any time to adopt or relinquish any religious affiliation, as best suits them at the time. Religion, being a matter of feeling and taste, can make no legitimate claim to truth in the public arena. And since the state has a purely secular function, it should conduct its affairs without any reference to religion.

Behind this mentality is a philosophy that equates freedom with indeterminateness. Every firm commitment is seen as a limitation on freedom. Freedom is also seen as a purely individual matter. We are free to the extent that we make up

our own minds without submitting to the society or to any authority, religious or secular. To the extent that we conform to the will of others or obey them, we diminish our freedom.

Dignitatis Humanae does not embrace this liberalist concept of freedom but, on the contrary, rejects it. It adheres to the classical notion of freedom, which had been incorporated into official Catholic teaching by Leo XIII in his papal encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimum* (1888) and by John XXIII in his papal encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963). *Dignitatis Humanae*, while dealing chiefly with religious freedom as a universal human right, “leaves intact the traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ” (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 1).

To avoid confusion, it will be useful at the outset to note that *Dignitatis Humanae* recognizes two levels or aspects of freedom. On the juridical level, freedom may be defined negatively as immunity from coercion by any civil authority. On the moral level, freedom consists positively in the power to speak and act according to one’s responsible decision. Of the two aspects, the latter is primary, for the purpose of juridical freedom is to enhance moral freedom. The Catholic understanding of moral freedom is grounded in the philosophical and theological anthropology that the church has developed through centuries of reflection on the legacy of biblical and classical wisdom.

According to this tradition, the right to freedom is rooted most fundamentally in human nature. God created human beings in his own image and likeness (Gen. 1:26) with the constitutive endowments of reason and free will and the vocation to rule wisely over the visible world. This dignity, as John XXIII had taught in *Pacem in Terris*, “requires that every human being enjoy the right to act freely and responsibly, ... from a consciousness of his obligation, without being moved by force or pressure brought to bear on him externally” (*Pacem in Terris*, no. 34). Society, therefore, should be so ordered that its members can accept responsibility for their actions in ways suited to their dignity.

Dignitatis Humanae, taking over these concepts from traditional Catholic teaching, applies them particularly to the

issue of religious freedom. At the very outset, it proclaims:

All men are impelled by nature and bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth. (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 2; cf. no. 1)

Dignitatis Humanae also reaffirms the teaching of the Catholic Church:

God himself has made known to mankind the way in which men are to serve him, and thus be saved in Christ and come to blessedness. We believe that this one true religion subsists in the Catholic and apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus committed the duty of spreading it abroad among all men. (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 1)

The Council cannot, therefore, be rightly suspected of abetting religious indifferentism. Religious freedom, in the Council's view, is not a liberation from religious commitment but an appropriate means for arriving at a full personal commitment to the true religion.

The rights of conscience are sometimes invoked as authorization for people to make different religious choices as they see fit. Some nineteenth-century liberals held that con-

science and authority.

Vatican II takes up the themes of conscience and freedom most formally in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Conscience, according to this document, summons us to obey God; it prompts us to be guided by objective norms of morality. Conscience, moreover, is not infallible; it frequently errs. Culpably or inculpably, we often fail to perceive or understand the revelatory signs that God has given. And even when we know the good, we often lack the moral power to perform it, as Paul memorably attests in Romans 7:18–20. Human freedom therefore needs to be assisted not only by external revelation, which instructs our reason, but also by grace, which heals our wounded will.

Fulfilling Purposes for Which We Were Created

The theology of freedom would be incomplete without reference to Christ and to the Holy Spirit. Christ, who is Truth itself (John 14:6), liberates our freedom (Gal. 5:1) and reveals the truth that makes us truly free (John 8:32). *Dignitatis Humanae* itself ends with the prayer of Paul that through the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit all may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:21; *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 15).

Vatican II's concept of freedom exhibits sharp contrasts with that of modern liberalism. Freedom, as understood by the Council, is not an end in itself; rather, it is given as a means for fulfilling the purposes for which we were created. True freedom, far from precluding firm and lasting commitments, is the very condition that makes such commitments possible. Freedom would be pointless unless it could enable us to reach significant decisions. Freedom is compatible with law because authentic law expresses the order of reason, which is the proximate

norm for right decisions. Nor, finally, may respect for freedom be used as a "pretext for refusing to submit to authority or for making light of the duty of obedience" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 8). A properly educated freedom will incline us to cooperate with others and to obey lawful authority, whether familial, civil, or religious.

One of the most notable contributions of *Dignitatis Humanae* is its recognition that people must be given time and opportunity to discover the truth by which they are to govern their lives. They must be able to exchange views with others, look for sound advice and instruction, and weigh various opinions. Governments should protect the integrity of this process and not expect people to arrive at the full truth

Religious freedom is not a liberation from religious commitment but an appropriate means for arriving at a full commitment to the true religion.

—Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.



science, unregulated by any higher norm, was the supreme guide of all conduct. This view was forcefully rejected by Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII. *Dignitatis Humanae* follows traditional Catholic teaching on this matter. Conscience is a precious means whereby God enables us to perceive that we have duties toward a Supreme Power to whom we are accountable. But conscience does not, by itself, tell us what specific forms of action are good and evil. It must, therefore, seek to discern the "objective moral order" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 7). Acknowledging that the supreme norm of human conduct is the divine law, as Leo XIII had taught, we must seriously inquire what God commands and forbids; and in so doing we must make use of experi-

immediately. Because the human person is, by nature, social, religious freedom has social ramifications. It calls for a society in which people support one another in the quest for the truth for which they were made.

Some have accused *Dignitatis Humanae* of incoherently maintaining that individual persons and groups have a right to propagate error. Persons who are in error do not, indeed, lose their natural human rights. They are still entitled not to be coerced in their religious beliefs. They may also have a subjective obligation to obey an erroneous conscience. But there can be no right to hold or disseminate error. It would be absurd to speak of an objective right to do what is objectively wrong. Speaking on behalf of the Secretariat charged with drafting the document, Bishop Emile De Smedt told the Council Fathers, "If anyone is propagating error, that is not the exercise of a right but its abuse."

The state, acting within its limited competence, does not have authority to prevent the propagation of error unless those who propagate it disturb the public order. Emphasizing the value of tolerance, Vatican II referred to the parable in which Jesus said that the cockle and the wheat should be allowed to grow together until the harvest at the end of time.

A God-Given Right to Religious Freedom

At this point our discussion touches on the rights and duties of the state. Whereas papal teaching of the nineteenth century strongly emphasized the duties of the state to protect the Catholic faith as the true religion, the primary emphasis in *Dignitatis Humanae*, as in *Pacem in Terris*, is on the task of maintaining conditions favorable to religious freedom for all persons and groups.

This shift in emphasis is explained by a number of factors. For one thing, the paternalistic conception of political authority had yielded to a system in which governments were more generally seen as the servants of the people, who governed themselves through elected representatives. Then again, the earlier popes had been thinking in terms of what was best for predominantly Catholic nations, whereas Vatican II was speaking within the larger horizon of the emerging "global village." New ecumenical and interreligious relationships made it possible to take a more positive view of non-Catholic Christianity and the non-Christian religions. The earlier popes were speaking in terms of what they saw as the ideal order, whereas Vatican II had in mind what was practical in the actual situation. The approach came to be less deductive, more empirical.


In this new situation, Vatican II evidently considered that both society and the church would stand to gain if the state granted religious freedom to all and that attempts to bolster the Catholic Church by legal privileges would be counter-

productive. But the Council's teaching was not a matter of mere expediency. On the contrary, it held as a matter of principle that people had a God-given right to religious freedom properly understood—that is to say, the right to seek and profess religious truth and to worship in public and in private without external coercion. That right had not always been sufficiently emphasized in papal teaching.

Some bishops at the Council worried that *Dignitatis Humanae* endorsed a stance of religious neutralism on the part of the state. This charge cannot fairly be made. *Dignitatis Humanae* does not encourage the state to ignore or neglect religious questions. It asserts, rather, that the political authorities should favor religious life as an important element in the common welfare. Following Leo XIII, *Dignitatis Humanae* contends that religion pertains to the common good because society profits from "the moral qualities of justice and peace which have their origin in men's faithfulness to God and to his holy will" (*Dignitatis Humanae* no. 6).

The state, according to *Dignitatis Humanae*, has no authority to command or forbid religious acts on the part of the citizens. It should, however, restrain individuals and groups from behaving in ways that violate the rights of others or are injurious to the public order, including the benefits of peace, justice, and public morality. Under this heading, the state would be authorized to forbid evils such as polygamy and abortion. Among the unacceptable violations, *Dignitatis Humanae* listed unworthy proselytization that takes advantage of uneducated people in order to deceive and manipulate them. But short of cases in which public order is violated, abuses of religious freedom must be civilly tolerated because the attempt to suppress erroneous beliefs would exceed the competence of the state and would involve undue coercion.

A Timely Application of a Classical Concept

Dignitatis Humanae does not provide ready-made solutions to all problems that might arise in church-state relations. It leaves certain concepts, such as that of "public order," rather vague. But *Dignitatis Humanae* may be welcomed as a timely application of the classical concept of religious freedom, which had already been enriched by centuries of reflection in the light of the Gospel. *Dignitatis Humanae* succeeds in vindicating religious freedom as a universal human right without according any right to error and without endorsing religious indifferentism or official neutralism. The Council's teaching on religious freedom deserves to be better known and more widely accepted than it is. 

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The Roots of Law

J. Budziszewski

Some may consider a discussion about the roots of law needless. Don't we already know the roots of law? If I were to poll Christians, asking, "Where do we find the roots of law?," no doubt the overwhelming majority would reply, "in the Bible—in the law of God." And I agree that the roots of law are more perfectly presented in the Word of God than in any other book. But knowing this is not enough. Not in the public square. Not in the Congress, not in the courts, not in the colleges and universities. Not on that spot on the nightly news, and not in the driveway as you talk with your next-door neighbor....

The Bible is our beacon, our standard, our guide. Yet we can no longer carry public issues by invoking the authority of its teachings. So what do we do?

Historical Perspective

I think it may be helpful to get a historical perspective on this Bible-citing dilemma. Two generations ago, both the church and the public square in this country were dominated by liberal Protestants. Today, that WASP establishment is all but dead. Today, American Christendom is dominated not by liberal Protestants but by conservative evangelicals and Roman Catholics—and, in the meantime, the public square is dominated by unabashed pagans. In one way, that is good. Liberal Protestantism did not take the word of God seriously and, therefore, deserved to die. In another way, it is bad. We Christians are now outnumbered by people who do not share our presuppositions, and, for the first time in American history, the Word of God is unwelcome out of church.

This is a new situation for Christianity in our country. We have never known a civic rhetoric that was not based on the Bible. The Scriptures were the foundation of American public speech from the colonies onward, not only among believers but even among non-believers. Historians still argue about whether President Abraham Lincoln was a Christian. Yet he talked like one. His Second Inaugural Address—perhaps the greatest American speech ever delivered—is little more than an application of the Nineteenth Psalm to the dreadful War Between the States. Moreover, when Lincoln said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether," he could

be sure that almost all of his fellow citizens would recognize the allusion and feel its force, irrespective of their particular religious affiliation.

It is no use wishing for the old days. The era of biblical civic rhetoric is gone. The new situation demands a new civic rhetoric and a new use of Scripture. Rather than quoting the Bible, when we speak, we must follow the Bible's example....

Here is what I mean. The Bible does not teach that we should begin every public conversation with the Bible. In fact, it teaches the opposite. Consider the example of the Apostle Paul. When he spoke with Jews and Christians, he did quote Scripture, because they knew and believed it already. But when he broached Christian topics with pagans, he did not pull Bible verses from his pocket. Why appeal to things that the pagans did not know and did not believe? Instead he appealed to things they did know and believed already. On one occasion he quoted their poetry: "Yet he is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being'" (Acts 17:28). On another he talked about the weather, of rains and fruitful seasons, invoking their sense of gratitude to they knew not whom (Acts 14:17). That time that he quoted their poets, he also commented on their own secret sense that their idols could not save: He had seen their altar "to an unknown god" (Acts 17:23). As you can see, Paul did not hold back the Bible's truth. But he found ways to express this biblical truth apart from the Bible itself. In this way he aroused an *appetite* for the word of God that could be satisfied later among those who were really serious.

There are a thousand topics we need to speak about with our non-believing neighbors—a thousand topics on which they disagree with us before we even get near the question, "Who is Jesus?" With some of them, we will *never* be able to discuss who Jesus is, because they will not let us. Yet we *have* to discuss those other thousand topics, just because we share the same society with them. What is wrong with abortion? What is wrong with euthanasia? Why shouldn't we clone ourselves? What is so special about marriage, and why is it inherently heterosexual? What is so special about human life in the first place? Couldn't we harvest the organs from people before they die? Couldn't we find cures for dis-

eases by experimenting on human embryos? Couldn't we cross human beings with pigs for research purposes?

All of these matters are regulated by laws, and so inevitably, we must talk with our non-believing neighbors about the roots of law—about things such as what law is for, where it comes from, what it should do, and what its limits are. How can we follow Paul's example when we talk with them *about that subject*? How can we convey the biblical vision of law apart from the Bible itself?

The Roots of Law in Summary

There are three mooring hooks for discussions with non-believing neighbors about law. If we moor our conversations on these three hooks, we will usually be all right. The root of the enacted law is the moral law; the root of the moral law is the design of the created order; and the root of the created order is the Creator...

These sound like biblical truths, and they are. Yet they can easily be explained without making a single reference to the Bible, or even using biblical words. Let us see how.

First mooring hook: The root of the enacted law is the moral law. How often have you heard the slogan, "Law should not enforce morality"? It is an error, but, like all errors, it derives its plausibility from a grain of truth. The grain of truth in it is that not every sin should be punished by the government as a crime. And we should acknowledge that. But if the slogan, "Law should not enforce morality," means that the enacted law should be morally *neutral*, it is not just wrong; it is crazy. All law has a moral basis. Even *bad* law has a moral basis—a basis in *false* morality.

Try to think of a law that is not based on a moral idea. You cannot do it. Perhaps the law that requires highway taxes? That is based on the moral idea that people should be made to pay for the benefits that they receive. Try again. How about the law that requires graduated income taxes? That one is based on the moral idea that some people ought to be made to pay for the benefits that *other* people receive. And so on. The law that sets speed limits is based on the moral idea that we ought to have regard for the safety of our neighbors; the law punishing murder is based on the moral idea that innocent blood may not be shed...

If all laws are based on moral ideas, then, obviously, we ought to scrutinize them to make sure that they are based on true ones instead of false ones. The root of the enacted law is the moral law. Even the everyday pagan can understand this.

Second mooring hook: The root of the moral law is the design of the created order. The fact that human beings are designed is part of the universal common sense of the human race. We are not a mish-mash, but fashioned according to a plan. Human nature means human design.

To make proper use of something that has been designed, we have to know how it works. That means knowing how each feature contributes to the fulfillment of its purposes. In the body, the heart is for pumping blood; each valve, nerve, chamber, and vessel does its part to move the blood along. In an automobile, the motor is for getting the car to go; each cylinder, piston, shaft, and wheel contributes in its own way to propulsion. No sensible surgeon tries to make the heart pump air instead of blood. No sensible mechanic bolts eggplants to the axles instead of wheels. The reason is simple: When you thwart a thing's design, it either works badly, stops working, or breaks. Something goes terribly wrong.

Design is obvious not only in our circulatory system but across the whole range of human capacities. The function of hands is to manipulate objects; the function of fear is to warn; the function of minds is to know and plan. Everything in us has a purpose; everything is *for* something. Consider just our sexual powers. Like everything else in us, they are part of our design. All human societies recognize that one of their



The era of biblical civic rhetoric is gone... Rather than quoting the Bible, when we speak, we must follow the Bible's example.

— J. Budziszewski

inbuilt purposes is to bond the man and woman, and that another is to make new life. It is equally plain that these two purposes go hand-in-hand, for although the bonding of a man and a woman is wonderful in itself, it also motivates them to stay together and raise the new life they have made. All of the other features of the sexual design revolve around these purposes. Notice, for example, that men and women are not merely different, but complementary: Their differences are *coordinated* in such a way that each contributes what the other lacks. In every dimension—physical, emotional, and intellectual—they fit like hand and glove; they "match."

However dimly, we see that the principles of morality are not arbitrary; we need to live a certain way because we are

made to live that way. The root of the moral law is the design of the created order.

Third mooring hook: The root of the created order is the Creator. Design presupposes a Designer. If we are fashioned to live in a certain way, then, it is pretty hard to escape the conclusion that we were fashioned that way by Somebody. In fact, this is the common sense of almost all people in all times and places. For a short hundred and fifty years, it was the boast of the Darwinists that we only *seem* to be designed; that man is the result of a meaningless and purposeless process that did not have him in mind. Today, we have overwhelming evidence that this is not so. Living things contain immense and irreducible complexity that cannot be accounted

The root of the enacted law is the moral law; the root of the moral law is the design of the created order; and the root of the created order is the Creator.

for by the mechanism that Darwin proposed. Natural selection is supposed to proceed by small modifications, one bit at a time. But the living cell has turned out to be a maze of molecular machines; in each one the parts interact in such a way that unless *all* of them are present at once, the machine either does not work right, or does not work at all.

Even if human beings *could* have descended from early life by natural selection, the Darwinian mechanism does not explain where life came from in the first place. Even if it *could* explain where life came from in the first place, it does not explain where the universe came from. And even if it *could* explain where the universe came from, it does not explain why the universe is so exquisitely fine-tuned for the possibility of life like us. These things are so plain that even a non-believing astrophysicist, Fred Hoyle, writes, “A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature.” And so our third mooring hook snaps shut. The root of the created order is the Creator.

One Short Step


Once people realize that the root of the enacted law is the moral law, that the root of the moral law is the design of the created order, and that the root of the created order is the Creator, they are only one short step from understanding what happens when the roots of law are severed. Again, I will speak in threes, but this time much more briefly.

Point one is that *enacted law, severed from moral law, is*

tyranny. If everything is permitted, then everything is permitted to the government. Any king who says, “Everything is permitted” must add, “But I decide for everyone what ‘everything’ includes.”

Point two is that *ethics, severed from the design of the moral order, is chaos.* Is it any wonder that when we try to live in ways that thwart the inbuilt purposes of our sexual powers, we find ourselves in a world of howling loneliness—a world in which boys grow up without fathers, girls secretly cut themselves with razors, and men and women look upon each other as enemies instead of friends? What goes for sex applies with equal force to the other parts of our design.

Point three is that *creation, severed from the Creator, is an idol.* Idolatry is refusing to look beyond the things that God has made to God himself. Yet apart from their Creator, these things are meaningless. God has set eternity in the hearts of men, and we can never escape the haunting sense that none of our idols can save (Eccles. 3:11)....

As you can see, talking with our non-believing neighbors is not as hard as we sometimes think. Not even the pagan has completely lost his common sense. By God’s common grace, there are certain things we can’t not know—things that every human being knows at some level, even if he pushes them down and hides them under a false bottom. The great goal of conversation is to get past that false bottom and bring that deep-down knowledge to the surface. We can do that with the roots of law. 

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Why a Free Society Needs the Family

A Review Essay by Brian C. Anderson

Children who spend their formative years deprived of the love and attention of caring families often have grave difficulties forming attachments throughout their lives. Locked away inside themselves, they care nothing about what others think of them—whether love, hate, or indifference. Only fear of physical force or loss of privileges can motivate them to good behavior. Otherwise, these damaged children do what they rationally calculate they can get away with—lying, cheating, stealing, and hurting others without conscience. As adults, they may smile and appear charming and gregarious, but it is an act, as many people who encounter them, sensing phoniness, eventually realize.

An Exact Stand-In for *Homo Economicus*

By any standard, the so-called attachment-disordered personality is a stunted human being—even a potential sociopath. But as economist Jennifer Roback Morse observes in her fascinating book *Love and Economics*, he is also an exact stand-in for *homo economicus*: “rational, calculating economic man, 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.” *Love and Economics* is an extended exploration of the inadequacy of the model of economic man as a full account of the acting subject in a free society. What is missing from that model, Roback Morse argues, is exactly what the attachment-disordered personality never experienced as an infant: love.

This is more than an academic matter. Over the last several decades in the United States (and in other free societies), Roback Morse points out, the self-interested way of thinking represented by *homo economicus* has moved beyond the sphere of economics, where it serves as a useful *explanatory* tool, to become an *ethical imperative* driving the “lifestyle” choices of individuals. “If it feels good, do it”: Such has been the influential dream of sixties-style lib-

erals and too many libertarians on the right.

Though Roback Morse once was a doctrinaire libertarian who embraced this worldview, her experience of motherhood—she has two children, including an adopted boy suffering from some degree of attachment disorder thanks to an infancy spent in a brutal Romanian orphanage—has led her to modify her thinking. Applied to family life, “laissez-faire” thinking, she came to realize, is a recipe for disaster, as we see in today’s high abortion and divorce rates, rampant illegitimacy, and the large number of families who farm out even tiny babies to daycare centers. Though the 2000 census of-

fers some evidence that the decline of the American family may at last be starting to turn around, no one can plausibly deny that it remains in crisis.

The family’s weakness is hugely significant politically, observes Roback Morse, for it threatens to undermine the economic and political liberty at the heart of democratic capitalist societies. The free society requires citizens who exhibit a host of virtues—key among them are

trust, cooperation, and self-restraint—in order to flourish. Without trust, for example, economic exchanges would be like drug deals between criminal gangs; without self-restraint, democratic citizens would soon become dependent subjects; and a firm whose employees do not cooperate and need everything spelled out in complicated work rules would soon find itself crippled in today’s fast-paced global environment. Only the loving, involved family reliably inculcates such social virtues (present only as potentialities at birth), believes Roback Morse. “Without loving families, no society can long govern itself.”

Resisting the “Laissez-Faire Family”

Take daycare: It certainly cannot replace the family. What harried daycare worker, surrounded by needy children, can match the sacrificing love of a parent? Or can have anything

***Love and Economics:
Why the Laissez-Faire Family
Doesn't Work***
by Jennifer Roback Morse


Spence Publishing
300 pp. Hardcover: \$27.95

close to the tacit knowledge that a loving mother has of her child's unique needs and wants? "Raising children collectively is comparable to centrally planning an economy," writes Roback Morse in one of her book's most arresting images: Collective "care givers" simply lack the intensity of the love and the know-how to do it right. (A recent governmental study showing that the more time children spend in daycare, the more aggressive they tend to become, only confirms that daycare is a poor substitute for the family.)

The love of a father *and* mother is also important to rearing children capable of exercising the virtues of free citizens. Divorced parents, she notes, have a harder time getting their kids to be cooperative. And children born out of wed-

tivism. Roback Morse shares this view, but what is so striking about her argument is its emphasis on religiously grounded *love* as a support for the family and, hence, as a support for democratic capitalism. When we are sure we cannot love enough, she explains, "There is one source of love that we can always count on, that is always in infinite supply and readily accessible to us: the love of God." Drained by others' demands—our helpless and needy children or our perhaps insufficiently attentive husbands and wives—we can "place ourselves in the presence of God and allow ourselves to be filled up with his love." The result: Life's demands become less pressing because we are less needy ourselves. We become more capable and willing to extend the networks of love that vivify the free society and, indeed, make it possible.

Love and Economics has several weaknesses. It is surprisingly abstract for a book concerned with the concrete. Above all, I wish the author had gone into much greater detail about her own experiences as a mother rather than merely hinting at them. The book suffers from considerable repetition, and yet the central theme too often seems to disappear. But these are minor criticisms. Roback Morse has provided a

fascinating exploration of the philosophical anthropology of the free society and, as social thinker Michael Novak has rightly said of her work, she has forever changed the way we must use the term *homo economicus*. 

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What is so striking about Morse's argument is its emphasis on religiously grounded love as a support for democratic capitalism.

— *Brian C. Anderson*



lock, as all but the most obtuse now admit, are far more likely to fail in school, commit suicide, get involved with crime, do drugs, and on and on, across a depressing series of indicators, than children brought up in traditional families.

Yet it is undeniably the case that the logic of *homo economicus* is hard to square with the commitment to family that leads parents to sacrifice for their children or to get and stay married. How to resist the "laissez-faire family"? For Roback Morse—and here she remains an ardent opponent of big government—the best bet is to pursue cultural, rather than political, change. "Inculcating an ethic of fidelity is one of our most pressing national social priorities," she stresses. "If we can hold the family together at the individual and personal level, we could have less need for grand schemes to replace the family at a social level." A powerful agent of transpolitical cultural change (perhaps *the* most powerful), Roback Morse thinks, is religious faith.

Networks of Love That Vivify the Free Society

Social theorists have often underscored the crucial role of biblical faith in the American experience as a transcendent moral orientation of human freedom—ordering liberty that might otherwise slide into democracy-destroying rela-



***More Money, More Ministry:
Money and Evangelicals
in Recent North American History***

edited by Larry Eskridge and Mark A. Noll

Wm. B. Eerdmans, 438 pp. Paperback: \$20.00

Review by John R. Schneider

Most of the sixteen essays in this volume originated at a consultation on “Evangelicals and Finance” in Naperville, Illinois, in early 1998. The purpose of the book is to take “a first step toward understanding how evangelicals have thought about, used, and raised money during the twentieth century.” The majority of its authors are historians and sociologists, so the perspectives are, for the most part, historical and social in nature.

Perhaps the most obvious feature of the book is its broad scope, which makes it interesting but also very hard to manage properly in a review. The editors divide the book into three major parts. The first is “Overviews and Orientation,” in which economists John Lunn and Robin Klay, with historian Michael Hamilton, survey the American economy from 1870 to 1997. Sociologist Gary Scott Smith follows with a chapter on how evangelicals “confronted” American capitalism between 1880 and 1930. Pastor/historian Charles Hambricke-Stowe writes on the financing of revivals, and then Hamilton discusses how evangelicals go about financing themselves generally.

The second part is simply “Specific Studies,” which begins with sociologist Peter Dobkin-Hall on the “interaction” of evangelicals and the economy of the United States between 1870 and 1920 (more on this essay later). Historian Susan Yohn follows with a chapter on the role of women in raising money for charities. Historian Alwyn Austin writes next on Hudson Taylor’s famous “faith principle,” and historian (and expert on the South) Ted Ownby writes on the quite differing approaches to money among Southern Pentecostals and the Churches of Christ. Historian Joel Carpenter offers a revised version of an earlier publication on the rise of evangelical institutions during the Great Depression (more on this essay and his perspective, too). Then, historian/political scientist Robert Burkinshaw relates contrasts between American and Canadian evangelicals in their financial support for Christian colleges. Financial consultant Barry Gardner describes the correlation between growth in evangelical giving and growth in high technology. Next comes a

chapter by Larry Eskridge on the life and theory of Larry Burkett on money and the economy. Next, sociologist Dean Hoge and historian Mark Noll combine to relate statistics on giving among American and Canadian evangelicals—again there are contrasts (Americans give a lot more). At last, legal scholar Thomas Berg offers an accounting (in detail) of the infamous New Era scandal.

In the final part, “Concluding Observations,” Carpenter draws some general conclusions, the most notable being “the relative absence of consistent Christian perspective tools” on this subject among evangelicals and a mistrustful (of systematic theory) “biblicism” (such as Burkett’s, among others). It is a little ironic that the last essay, by theologian John Stackhouse pretty much just states the problem of forging the required theology of modern economic life rather than offers the outline of one.

The majority of the essays are in their very different ways as solid and informative as they are lacking in integrated historical revision and/or constructive Christian theory. The exceptions are the quite dissimilar essays by Dobkin-Hall and Carpenter. Unfortunately, the finely researched piece by Dobkin-Hall raises a critical question for evangelicals that someone ought to have taken up elsewhere in the volume.

At the end of his careful effort to “locate” evangelicals in the course of economic change from 1870 to 1920, Dobkin-Hall more or less confirms the grim truth of Max Weber’s well-known theory of the “iron cage.” Simply, it states that Protestant Christianity was really what ignited capitalism and made it work in the United States, but—great irony—capitalism itself was bound to become the sort of *culture* that was incapable of integrating genuinely Christian principles. Protestants had thus manufactured (literally) their very own cage of iron, and the only way out of it was—well—out of capitalism (which might have been a good subtitle for this book, judging from its many variations on that theme). Dobkin-Hall closes with these astonishing (given their context in this “consultation”) thoughts. Even the “contemporary resurgence” of evangelicalism in politics and the economy (and he could have added scholarship, too) “does not answer the question of whether evangelicalism, because of its deep-seated discomfort with the materialism and pragmatism of modern life *can ever effectively institutionalize itself*” (my italics). For Dobkin-Hall, then, the rise of separate *distinctively* evangelical *institutions* (which Carpenter treats as a sort of triumph) is itself evidence of this problem.

If Dobkin-Hall's suspicions are correct, the rise of these institutions is no vindication of fundamentalism against the anti-religious interpretations of Richard Hofstadter and H. L. Mencken. The emergence of these institutions is not unambiguous evidence against the theory that fundamentalism went spiraling into decline in the 1930s. While important to note, as Carpenter rightly does (and as Hofstadter and Mencken do not), they prove that evangelicalism remained in these forms a "dynamic movement," the implications are troubling. On Dobkin-Hall's analysis, for all these new institutions vigor and success, they are veritable monuments to what was, more deeply, a desperately sad and compromised retreat into cages of capitalism with distinctly Christian covering.

Perhaps not to be so gloomy, Dobkin-Hall grants that it is "not impossible to envision a potent combination of religious

fervor and worldliness fully capable of remaking the world as we know it." So on that condition, it is possible to envision a time when evangelicals have the "consistent Christian perspective tools" they require in this area of life. (Of course, we may wonder whether they would be real evangelicals anymore.) But until this happens, it is probably best to expect Christian theology for life under modern high-tech capitalism to come mainly from where it now mainly does—from Jewish, Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran sources, in which traditions exist for relating doctrines of creation creatively to matters of redemption in a modern economic context. ☺

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Book News

The Theater of His Glory: Nature and the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin

Susan E. Schreiner

Baker Academic

xii + 164 pp. Paperback: \$16.99

Schreiner's landmark study of Calvin's view of the natural order provides a helpful background to understanding his political and social thought. For Calvin, the essential theological category for thinking about politics is God's providence. As Schreiner describes Calvin's view, "God guided history through natural law, chosen leaders, governments, the human will, and the angels." Though sin has marred the world, God continues to uphold it and keep it in order. Essential to this order is politics, especially when engaged in by the believer.

One of the more provocative aspects of Schreiner's study is her description of Calvin's view of the natural law. In her analysis, "Calvin adopted the common teachings about natural law" and "assumed the existence of the 'lex naturae,' whose author was God." While Calvin retained much of the scholastic tradition's understanding of natural law thinking, he limited its scope by rejecting its more speculative elements. According to Schreiner, Calvin "did not develop a 'theology of natural law' but, rather, used the principle of natural law as an extension of his doctrine of providence to

explain the survival of civilization."

Above all, for Calvin, Christianity is not a world-denying faith; the Christian is called to participate in the activities of the world, to the glory of God.

As Schreiner explains, "Calvin believed

that this created realm can be enjoyed properly and is the legitimate sphere in which Christians are to act, study, and exercise their considerable talents and abilities; the church does not call the Christian away from the world created by God." Schreiner's meticulously researched and documented study is essential reading for understanding what theology has to do with politics.

Libraries in the Ancient World

Lionel Casson

Yale University Press

xii + 177 pp. Hardcover: \$22.95

Free and virtuous societies require the liberal arts, and the liberal arts require books. Consequently, as Andrew Carnegie wrote, "There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library." *Libraries in the Ancient World*, Casson explains, "presents whatever is known about libraries from their debut in the ancient Near East in the third millennium B.C. down to the early Byzantine period, the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., when the spread of monasticism fundamentally changed the course of library history." Casson describes not only how ancient libraries were designed and organized but also the political and cultural forces that determined why libraries were built. Casson's telling of this story is consistently informative and entertaining. ☺

Solidarity: The Fundamental Social Virtue



Families are bound together in love and solidarity. Every individual family is called to be a rich expression of that love and solidarity and a witness of the same to the world. Furthermore, the human person participates in the broader human family by his own nature. Our humanity is shared, and our reality as persons immediately and irrevocably links us to the rest of the human community. Yet, for participation to be most meaningful, it must be consciously practiced and chosen. The willingness to practice participation while striving for social justice is the social virtue of solidarity.

Solidarity is, therefore, the acceptance of our social nature and the affirmation of the bonds we share with all our brothers and sisters. Solidarity creates an environment in which mutual service is encouraged. It also the social conditions in which human rights can be respected and nurtured. The ability to recognize and accept the whole range of corresponding duties and obligations that are embedded in our social nature can occur only in an atmosphere enlivened by solidarity.

As a virtue, solidarity's context is freedom and justice. Our solidarity with all of the human family implies a special commitment to the most vulnerable and marginalized in our midst. The natural unity of the human family cannot be fully realized when people suffer the ills of poverty, discrimination, oppression, and social alienation, leading to isolation from the larger community. But our response of love must be voluntary to be virtuous. In a special way, solidarity encourages striving for relationships that tend toward equality on the local, national, and international levels. All members of the human community must be brought as fully as possible into the circle of productive and creative relationships.

In the strict sense of the term, the most genuine and meritorious solidarity is not coerced. Historically, coerced solidarity denied responsible freedom and worked as an affront to human dignity. One cannot force, through political means, the acceptance of our shared responsibilities to one another in love. At the same time, no society may neglect the requirements of justice, particularly social and economic justice toward the poor. Society may appropriately direct the actions of its members to fulfill the obligations owed in justice to all persons. We especially listen to the cries from the most vulnerable among us.

As a virtue, solidarity's context is freedom and justice.

The true communion of solidarity incorporates the reciprocity of men and women, most strikingly in marriage.

Men and women share many characteristics, yet their differing strengths, interests, and emphases create a diversity that becomes a source of enrichment and unity. Solidarity is more fully achieved when the reciprocal differences of men and women are seen as an affirmation of the equal dignity of each.

In addition, solidarity's surest foundation is faith. A true humanism implies love and respect for each and every individual human person. In a fallen world, however, it is only the recognition of the common fatherhood of God and brotherhood in Christ that will ensure the realization of this important principle. Solidarity is a social virtue that bears many fruits and blessings, which come in a variety of forms and affect all of life. Solidarity yields a healthy society, a thriving economy, care for those on the margins, and structures that protect the family. ©

Rev. Robert A. Sirico is a Roman Catholic priest and president of the Acton Institute. This essay is adapted from his presentation to the "Family as a Source of Prosperity" conference in Warsaw, Poland, on September 14, 2001.

“A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man, and the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty.... This Vatican Council takes careful note of these desires in the minds of men. It proposes to declare them to be greatly in accord with truth and justice.”

—*Dignitatis Humanae*—