

ACTONINSTITUTE

Spring 2008 | Volume 18 | Number 2

# Religion & Liberty

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Religious and Economic Liberty?  
An interview with Mustafa Akyol

A Journal of Religion, Economics, and Culture

# Editor's Note



This issue of *Religion & Liberty* offers perhaps a more international perspective than past issues, and that is beneficial since we live in a very globalized society today. We are fortunate to offer an interview with Mustafa Akyol, who spoke at last summer's Acton University. Akyol, a critic of Islamic extremism and Turkish secularism, is also a defender of free markets and the positive role Islam can play in a democratic society with a greater interest in economic freedom.

Hunter Baker offers an excellent analysis of the political marriage or cooperation of social conservatives and libertarians. Baker offers a broad history of the relationship while suggesting "the points

of connection, notwithstanding messy public blow-ups like the [Mike] Huckabee/Club for Growth affair, are much stronger than the forces pulling the two groups apart." This is an important piece amid recent talk about the struggles of American conservatism and its ability to achieve a broad base of support needed for a governing majority. Some critics have even rushed to predict the demise of free markets and conservatism because of troubled financial markets and a lack of prudence from financial leaders. Baker currently believes social conservatives and libertarians have "little natural tendency to trust each other," while also noting the suspicion of power will continue to unite the two groups towards common goals.

Acton's Ray Nothstine reviews Kenneth J. Collins's book *The Theology of John Wesley*. Wesley was an English Anglican cleric who launched an evangelical revival, resulting in the founding and growth of Methodism worldwide. The book is an overview of Wesley's theology, and also engages

some important contemporary issues in the church and state.

Paola Fantini reviews Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone's *The Ethics of the Common Good in the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Fantini has also translated the prologue to the book by Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Kirill, and an excerpt from that appears in this issue. It is notable that her work is the first review and translation of any kind to appear in English. Fantini is an intern in the Rome office of the Acton Institute, and we are indebted for her contribution.

Other highlights include Rev. Robert Sirico's column "Mistaken Faiths of Our Age" and In the Liberal Tradition's profile of Wilhelm Röpke. They are worth mentioning because they call us to return to the core message of the Acton Institute: a free society, the dangers of collectivism, the need for strong ethics infused in the marketplace, and most importantly, the relationship of man and his Creator.

*Robert A. Sirico*

## Editorial Board

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Mustafa Akyol

# Turkey: Islam's Bridge to Religious and Economic Liberty?

An Interview with Mustafa Akyol

*Mustafa Akyol is a Turkish Muslim writer based in Istanbul, Turkey, where he is currently the opinion editor and a columnist for Turkish Daily News, the nation's foremost English-language newspaper. He also writes a regular column for the Turkish national daily, Star. Akyol's articles have appeared in The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, International Herald Tribune, The American Interest, First Things, and The Weekly Standard, among others. He has a book in Turkish titled, Rethinking The Kurdish Question: What Went Wrong? What Next? (Do an Publishing, 2006). Akyol is currently working on a book in English on the future of Islam and the Islamic world. His columns are collected on the website, The White Path (www.thewhitepath.com), which is the English translation of his name. Akyol spoke at the 2008 Acton University in Grand Rapids on the subject of "Islam, Markets and the Free Society." He was interviewed in Grand Rapids by Religion & Liberty executive editor John Couretas.*

*You say there's a growing sector in Turkish society that is engaged with the market economy and that's a healthy trend. Do you see that trend continuing in Turkey?*

There is in this economy a capitalist development, and this is important. In the past, generally speaking, the religious people were more of the peasant class and they were mostly in agriculture—not in modern industrial production. Generally speaking, the bourgeois, the people who were the capitalists, who were owners of production companies or industries,

they tended to belong to the more westernized part of Turkish society. And there was a dichotomy of the rich seculars and the poor religious people. But now that is changing. You now have a religiously devout part of the society that has joined this new trend, and that creates a new consumerism culture. Right now in Turkey you have conservative companies, which are making very fancy and expensive products, and you have catalogs in which headscarves are being promoted by supermodels, and so on. Although secularists perceive this integration as something dangerous because Islam is penetrating into modernity, as they see it, I think it's something healthy. That's because things that have been considered modern, like capitalism, are being sensitized by Islamic values.

*At the same time, you have observed that there is resistance in some quarters in Islam to capitalism because it's identified with this materialistic culture. You see the same thing in the West from religious groups. How will that work itself out in Turkey?*

Well, this is an issue where there is much debate. Among some people in Turkey, generally there is an allergy to the word capitalism. The term free market, or mar-

ket economy, sometimes makes more

"The term free market, or market economy, sometimes makes more sense."

sense. This cultural allergy to capitalism is created in Turkey by the left, through cultural channels like movies. Turkish films



Models promoting headscarves in Turkey

are full of those kinds of corrupt capitalist caricatures. Some Muslims have been influenced by this as well, but now there is this new current, this is changing. And although people might still have these reservations about consumerism, they understand that you can start a business

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# Can Libertarians and Social Conservatives find Common Ground?

by Hunter Baker

As the standard bearer for American conservatism for two decades, Ronald Reagan effortlessly embodied fusionism by uniting Mont Pelerin style libertarians, populist Christians, Burkean conservatives, and national security voters into a devastatingly successful electoral bloc. Today, it is nearly impossible to imagine a candidate winning both New York and Texas, but Reagan and that group of fellow travelers did.

In the meantime, the coalition has begun to show strain as the forces pushing out-

Perhaps nowhere is the tension greater and more consequential than between the socially conservative elements of the group and devotees of libertarianism.

The two groups have little natural tendency to trust each other when not confronted by a common enemy as in the case of the Cold War. Libertarians simply want to minimize the role of government as much as possible. For them, questions of maintaining strong traditional family units and preserving sexual and/or bioethical mores fall into an unessential realm as far as government is concerned. The government, echoing the thought of John Locke, should primarily occupy itself with providing for physical safety of the person while allowing for the maximum freedom possible for pursuit of self-interest.

Social conservatives similarly view the government as having a primary mission of providing safety, but they also look to the law as a source of moral authority. Man-made law, for them, should seek to be in accord to some degree with divine and natural law. Rifts open wide when social conservatives pursue a public policy agenda designed to prevent divorce, encourage marriage over cohabitation, prevent new understandings of marriage from emerging (e.g. gay marriage or polygamous

marriage), prevent avant garde developments in biological experimentation, and a variety of other issues outside (from the libertarian perspective) the true mandate of government that cannot seek to define the good, the right, and the beautiful for a community of individuals. To the degree social conservatives seek to achieve some kind of collective excellence along the lines suggested by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, libertarians see a mirror image of the threat posed by big-government leftists.

Equally intense suspicions exist on the socially conservative side of the relationship. Libertarians can appear to be obsessed with money and a desire to be left alone, unencumbered by any obligation to their fellows other than not to interfere with their lives. The tension inherent in the relationship erupted during the American presidential primaries when the libertarian-oriented Club for Growth clashed with former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, a Christian conservative. Club for Growth seemed to single out Huckabee for the most un-



Ronald Reagan

ward exceed those holding it together. The Soviet Union, once so great a threat that Whittaker Chambers felt certain he was switching to the losing side when he began to inform on fellow Communist agents working within the United States, evaporated in what seemed like a period of days in the early 1990s. Suddenly, the ultimate threat of despotic big government eased and companions in arms had the occasion to re-assess their relationship. The review of competing priorities has left former friends moving apart.

“Do libertarians and social conservatives with religious concerns have a relationship worth preserving?”



charitable view possible of his free-market bonafides. Rather than attempt conciliation, Huckabee apparently relished



U.S. Capitol building, Washington DC

the attack and labeled the small government group “The Club for Greed.”

The question, borrowed from the longest running feature in women’s magazine history, is “Can this marriage be saved?” Do libertarians and social conservatives with religious concerns have a relationship worth preserving? As a Christian with strong sympathies toward social conservatism, I can help address part of that question. My answer is that libertarians and social conservatives have a strong interest in seeing each other persist in the American polity. Perhaps a libertarian analyst can address the issue from the other side.

So, why should libertarians see value in what social and religious conservatives hope to achieve? The answer lies in the concept at the core of the American experiment. America is not about unfettered freedom. America is about a particular type of liberty that has been the glory of the Western heritage, ordered liberty. Freedom without a strong moral basis ends up being an empty promise. The American founding generation understood the problem very clearly. The solution that appealed to a great many of them was to encourage religion among the American people. In their view, the Christian religion helped make citizens fit for a republican style of government.

Meaningful freedom required the exercise of virtue on behalf of citizens. The connection between religion and virtue was easy to make. After all, even Voltaire hid his skeptical conversations about religion from his servants for fear they’d steal the silver if released from fear of divine punishment.

Put very simply, the travail of

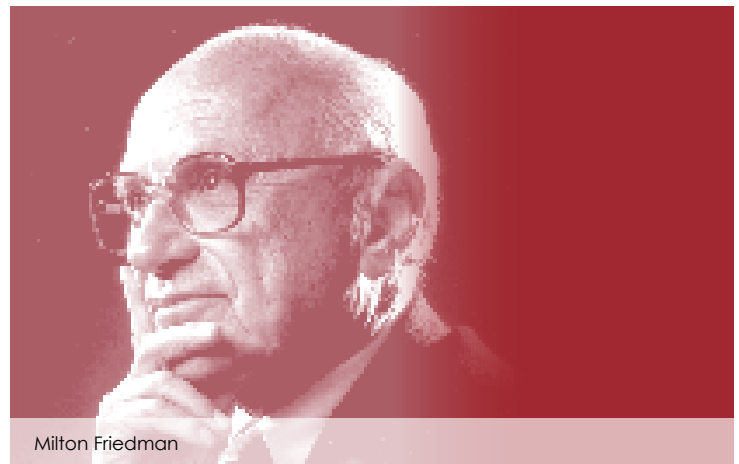
freedom is this: Immoral actors take advantage of moral ones. If everyone has to rationally suspect others of immoral behavior in order to protect themselves, then the value of exchange is severely undercut by the cost of self-protective action. Eventually, in an attempt to ease the expense of self-protection, participants petition the government for regulation. Regulation undercuts the entire libertarian idea. The key, of course, to breaking the cycle of advantage-taking and regulation-building is to change the nature of the actors. The more virtuous the actors, the less opportunistic behavior, and the more confidence all actors can have at the outset of exchange. What is needed is trust. With trust, the costs of transaction rapidly decline and the need for government regulation and enforcement moves downward, as well. Social conservatives press for public policies that tend to increase social capital by improving citizens.

Just as an example, consider the social conservative push toward policies that

encourage marriage rather than cohabitation and discourage divorce. Social statistics from the last twenty years establish in a fairly uncontroversial fashion that children from intact, two-parent families will, on average, perform better in school, be less likely to get pregnant out of wedlock, be less likely to do drugs or abuse alcohol, and are substantially less likely to spend time in prison. If there are policies that can actually increase the likelihood that children can be raised in intact families, then it makes sense to pursue those policies (within reason) because they will become, on average, more virtuous citizens less likely to impose costs on others through

“Social conservatives press for public policies that tend to increase social capital by improving citizens.”

moral failures. If the logic here is sound, then libertarians have an incentive to consider at least some policy activities of social conservatives as potentially justifiable and beneficial even within a libertarian framework.



Milton Friedman

The crux of the matter is social capital. Social capital is the name we give the

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value generated by the virtuous actions and attitudes of the people. A society with a libertarian style government is a near impossibility without substantial social capital. No trust, no virtue, no small government. This formula is virtually axiomatic.

Another point of connection between libertarians and social/religious conservatives occurs because of theology. Social conservatives tend to believe human beings are tainted by a sinful nature. If we are all sinful, then how sound a policy is it to place a great deal of power in a government of one person or of many

*“This suspicion of power continues to unite social conservatives and libertarians.”*

persons? Though the Christian revelation, for example, does not aim its canon specifically against monarchy or any other kind of high-powered government, the practical outworking of a doctrine of original sin is that power should

only of a group of thinkers influenced by Locke, but also by the Calvinism that had long been prominent in the new world as the faith of the Puritans.

This suspicion of power continues to unite social conservatives and libertarians. While libertarians might protest that social conservatives seek to expand the government's interest in “private” matters of sex, reproduction, and marriage, the reality is that they have primarily fought a rearguard action in which they attempt to preserve laws under attack by an activist judiciary. Social conservatives have not fought for some new regime of moral authority at the expense of freedom. Rather, they have tried to save the old one because of the educational effect of law.

When it comes to new ideas about expanding government, social conservatives are largely still quite reserved exactly because of their desire not to feed a bureaucratic beast likely to develop an agenda independent of its intended purpose. As a group, they would far prefer to see mediating institutions take on the great social reforms of the day, just as they would prefer to see the church return to a much more prominent role in

religious conservatives and libertarians is school choice. Prior to September 11, the movement for school choice was gaining steam very rapidly. It was the rare initiative that seemed to fit libertarian purposes easily while simultaneously addressing the question of social justice. After September 11, the war on terror sucked all the air out of the room for creative social policy advances, and school choice moved well down the national agenda.

School choice hasn't gone away, though. It is a matter that promises to re-emerge powerfully when domestic policy again moves to center focus. A great many evangelicals probably came to know of Milton Friedman because of his work in school choice rather than because of his justly famous broader work in economic theory. For libertarians the interest comes from harnessing the power of competition to improve the entire educational system and to take a step toward privatizing a massive public undertaking. Social conservatives perceive those virtues, but are more interested in the protection school choice offers for their right to control the education of their children and to insulate them from what they view as the indoctrination of left-wing ideology.

So, can the marriage be saved? Are libertarians and social conservatives destined to grow further apart or can they unite around these points of connection involving social capital, suspicion of government power, and the privatization of public education? I submit the points of connection, notwithstanding messy public blow-ups like the Huckabee/Club for Growth affair, are much stronger than the forces pulling the two groups apart. This survey demonstrates how much they have in common and how fruitful conversation between the two can be.

*Hunter Baker, J.D./Ph.D. is an assistant professor of political science and special assistant to the president at Houston Baptist University.*



Signing of the Constitution of the United States

be restricted, checked, and divided. The American constitutional regime set up by the founding generation should surprise no one. It was a likely outcome not

addressing both the needs and root causes of poverty.

Another issue that offers great promise for the relationship between social/religious



# The Theology of John Wesley

Review by Ray Nothstine

Kenneth J. Collins offers an insightful study that blends the historical and contemporary in *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace*, published in 2007 by Abingdon Press. The book is Contemporary in that Collins makes a strong case for the relevancy of Wesley's theology and legacy for today. The author is quick to point out that John Wesley was not a systematic theologian, thus some theologians and scholars find him easy to dismiss, while others view him through their preferred theological traditions.

Collins argues that Wesley crafted a theology that was extremely practical and organized around the *Ordo Salutis*. The order of salvation is a theological term outlining God working in the process of salvation that liberates man from sin. It makes sense that the theology of Methodism's founder would emerge into a practical and invitational construct, since Wesley's mission was a powerful evangelical revival in conflict with a nominal folk Christianity that infected much of eighteenth century England.

The influence of the Protestant Reformers is heavily visible in John Wesley's views on justification and the atonement. While some liberal Methodist scholars have attacked the penal substitution theory of atonement, Collins reminds us that the substitutionary death of Christ was central to Methodist theology, just as it was for the Reformers. Collins notes, "Drawing the relation between the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 and Christ, Wesley reveals that at Calvary, the lamb of God bore 'those punishments

by which our peace, our reconciliation to God, was to be purchased.'"

Wesley's views on justifying faith mirrored Martin Luther and John Calvin. Wesley's own new birth experience occurred at Aldersgate in 1738 while listening to a reading of Luther's preface of the Epistle to the Romans. In his agreement with Calvin on justification Wesley declared, "I do not differ from him a hair's breadth." Collins goes on to state, "Wesley believed that this teaching was also expressed in the ancient authors; especially in Origen, St. Cyprian, St. Chrysostom, Hilary, Basil, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine."

While justification and the new birth offered a measure of assurance, there was a greater assurance in the witness of the Spirit to the life of the believer. "For Wesley, the doctrine of assurance, the direct witness in particular, was so vital to the Christian faith that he not only referred to it as 'one grand part of the testimony which God have given to [the Methodists] to bear to all mankind,' but also considered it to be an important element of the proper Christian faith," says Collins. Wesley himself declared:

By "the testimony of the Spirit" I mean an inward impression of the soul, whereby the spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

Wesley's most controversial theological teaching is entire sanctification, or Chris-

tian perfection. It often evokes charges of works righteousness from critics. Collins skillfully traces Wesley's view on sanctification and explains the strong influence of English Reformers as well as the Eastern (catholic) Fathers. Wesley's views on entire sanctification also show a blending of Protestant free grace and the more Catholic view of co-operant grace. Entire sanctification is in part a reaction to antinomianism, where people disregarded God's law because of a belief in cheap grace or a "once saved always saved" mentality.

The passion and desire for holiness suffered, and Wesley's ministry stressed the need for believers to mature and grow in their Christian walk. "Christian perfection, then, is another term for holy love. It is holy in that believers so marked by this grace are free from the impurities and the drag of sin. It is loving in that believers now love God as their goal of their being, and they love their neighbors as they should," says Collins.

One of the strong points of this book is Collins's end of chapter sections titled "Today and Tomorrow," where he looks at how Wesleyan theology might shape matters of contemporary debate and significance. Collins even offers a rebuke to Wesley's economic views on wealth, however well intentioned. Collins explains:

Arguing ostensibly from a larger theme of proper stewardship, Wesley posited a "zero sum" world in which the maxim, "if the poor have too little it must be because the rich have too much," by and large ruled the

*continued on pg 8*

day. As such, not only did he fail to recognize how capitalism actually works in a growing economy, even in a mercantilist one, but also his concern for stewardship, of what he called “robbing the poor,” often developed upon such petty matters as the size and shape of women’s bonnets (and he forgets that poor workers often made these accessories) or upon his favorite moral foibles of censure, the consumption of alcohol.

Collins also sheds considerable light on Wesley’s sacramental theology, his anti-slavery views, and his assistance to the poor. What emerges from this book is an excellent framework for Wesley’s theology, with emphasis placed on Wesley’s own voice. The connected theme of holiness and grace is a theology that arose out of nothing less than love for the lost sheep and the commitment to authentic conversion in the life of the believer.

*The Theology of John Wesley* is a strong reminder that Methodism’s emergence and character was at its root an evangelical reform movement. Collins even cites the acid test by Methodist missionary and theologian E. Stanley Jones on the validity of a Christian church being “whether it can not only convert people from the outside to membership but also produce conversion within its own membership. When it cannot do both, it is on its way out.” It’s an inspirational reminder that many Methodists need to reclaim their rich and vibrant heritage and heed the advice from their founder “to preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

Perhaps nothing is more inspirational than the author’s finishing remarks where he closes with a moving invitation for the broken, hurting, and marginalized to find real liberty in the Good News Wesley preached. That kind of impassioned invitation portrays a serious scholar with a pastoral heart, and nothing else is more Methodist or faithful to its founder.

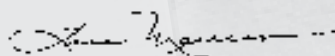
## Acton FAQ

### *Why does Acton advertise in newspapers and magazines?”*

For the last three years, Acton has been reaching out to readers of religious and secular publications with engaging, issue-driven advertising. These professionally produced advertisements have touched on a wide variety of timely topics including poverty, malaria, trade, environmental stewardship, and the rise of the Religious Left. The ads use arresting images and thought-provoking headlines and copy to pose important questions in fresh ways. This approach is very effective for reaching well-intentioned people of faith concerned about important issues, but who may not have yet formed clear social or economic positions.

One memorable issue ad carried a large image of a mosquito over the headline: Let Us Spray. The ad attacked the erroneous notion, advanced for decades by environmentalists, that the pesticide DDT was an unmitigated evil. This thinking has kept DDT out of the fight to stop a disease that kills 2.7 million people in developing nations annually. “We have a safe, powerful and available weapon to fight malaria—but we’re not using it,” the ad says. “So where is the moral outrage?” Not long after the ad ran, the World Health Organization issued a directive to ease the ban on DDT. Another ad that ran in the summer of 2008 showed an image of a wooden shack fitted with spewing smokestacks. The headline—Why the worst pollution comes from poverty, not industry—pointed to the need for economic growth and advanced technology to address environmental problems. Another ad promoted the debut of Acton’s *Birth of Freedom* documentary by showing an image of the transcript of Rev. Martin Luther’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Any references to faith in the speech transcript had been blacked out. The headline: Removing God changes everything.

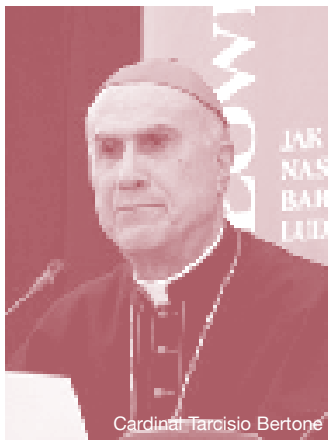
Acton issue ads most recently appeared for several months during the summer of 2008 in *Christianity Today*, a major Christian publication widely read by clergy. Readers were referred to a special page on the Acton website for a deep set of resources on these issues. More than 200 people also signed up for Acton publications. Some of the other publications that have carried Acton advertising include *WORLD*, *Legatus*, the *Rocky Mountain News*, *Crisis* and diocesan papers. The Acton campaign, produced by copywriter Catherine Snow and Grand Rapids agency Grey Matter Group, earned a number of advertising industry awards for its engaging style and effective messaging.

  
Kris Alan Mauren  
Executive Director

**LET US SPRAY.**







# Cardinal Bertone's *The Ethics of the Common Good in the Social Doctrine of the Church*

Review by Paola Fantini

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican's secretary of state and effectively the second most important official in the Catholic Church, takes a close look at economic globalization and the social nature of markets in a book published in September, in Italian and Russian, by Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Bertone's book, *The Ethics of the Common Good in the Social Doctrine of the Church* (*L'etica del Bene Comune nella Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa*) is also notable for its ecumenical character; it has a preface from Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad.

It's not often that the Catholic and the Russian Orthodox churches have collaborated at such a high level. Such an effort could lead to closer relations and more dialogue in the future. Overall, there is a large degree of agreement between Kirill and Bertone, but there are also some strikingly different perspectives on economic globalization and the role of the nation-state.

Kirill writes that money should not be an end in itself, but a means of entrepreneurial activity that serves human development: "Genuine, totally exciting work, is the businessman's real wealth! The absence of the worship of money emancipates man, makes him free interiorly." He also asserts that globalization has increased the gap between rich and poor in the last twenty years and calls an international economic system always on the verge of crisis anything but ethical. He quotes from the final statement of the Third Christian European Interdenomi-

national Conference held in Sibiu, Romania: "All over the world, even in Europe, the modern process of radical globalization of the market has deepened in human society the gap between those who succeed and those who fail, diminishing the value of many people, has catastrophic environmental consequences and, above all, due to climate change, becomes incompatible with a harmonious development of the planet."

Bertone is not as dour regarding the new challenges brought on by rapid growth, stressing the potential common good realized by economic globalization. His positive appraisal is rooted in the history of economic development in the Christian West, as he extensively illustrates the various institutions founded thanks to a Christian spirit and an entrepreneurial vocation: schools, hospitals, banks, and charitable organizations.

Not surprisingly, both Kirill and Bertone agree that a morally-orientated economy is a fundamental aspect for the development of a harmonious society, and both affirm that such a society should tend naturally to the common good when human activity is inspired by the principle of "fraternity."

For Kirill, fraternity is primarily based on national identity and national growth; he often recalls the duty of serving the nation. At the conclusion of his prologue, he writes, "For us, the principal meaning of our work must be to serve God, our neighbour and the Patria [nation], through the creation of material

and spiritual goods fundamental for a worthy life."

Bertone, by contrast, stresses more universal, "transnational" aspects and never uses the nation-state as a center of focus. Recalling Pope Benedict XVI encyclical *Deus caritas est*, Bertone even criticizes the nation-state for crowding out charity with social spending. "The State, presupposing a [strong sense of] solidarity among citizens to realize their rights, makes social spending obligatory. In this way, the State compromises the principle of gratuitousness, denying space to principles other than solidarity."

This criticism of the nation-state raises a question: is there some other, preferable level of political organization? Bertone does not say, focusing more on the principles that ought to animate social life. "Our societies need three autonomous principles in order to develop in a harmonious way and therefore be capable of having a future [...] Exchange of equal goods, (through contracts) redistribution of wealth (through the fiscal system) and reciprocity (through works that attest with deeds fraternity)."

For Bertone, markets are a compilation of economic organizations working together not only for profit but for the common good. "Along side the multinational capitalist corporations, we find artisan shops, cooperatives, social enterprises and those of the Economy of Communion, which bring to the market a non-utilitarian reciprocity. With their activities they allow for a 'multi-dimensional' market, not

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only as a place of efficiency but one where sociality and reciprocity are practiced.”

In general, Kirill’s assessment of globalization is largely negative; Bertone’s is more hopeful. Unfortunately, neither of them seem to take economics as a science very seriously. Many of their arguments on globalization, both positive and negative, would have benefited from an analysis of how markets work, or should work, in conjunction with the moral and ethical beliefs of individuals and society.

Kirill, for example, stresses the need for economic efficiency but does not explain how moral qualities such as trust, honesty, thrift, and punctuality actually encourage such efficiency.

Likewise, Bertone’s insight on the social nature of markets is very welcome but it could also be extended to how market economies are necessary in order to meet the needs of human beings, and how economic expansion is the best way to reduce poverty. Here he would be following Catholic social teaching as developed by Pope John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus*: Expanded international trade is not only a way to express solidarity, it also creates wealth and increases living standards.

This volume proves that Christian social doctrine, whether Orthodox or Catholic, cannot exist simply as a pious wish or a moral theory; at some point, it has to deal with reality—the everyday world of human activities and relations, and especially economics. Without a grasp of this reality, social doctrine will most probably remain the church’s “best-kept secret.”

Paola Fantini is an intern in the Rome office of the Acton Institute. For this review, she translated the text of *The Ethics of the Common Good in the Social Doctrine of the Church* from Italian.

## Double-Edged Sword: *The Power of the Word*

### Acts 3:1–8

*One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.*

*Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.*

The book of Acts is fully titled “Acts of the Apostles.” Their acts are sparked by the empowerment of Christ and the Holy Spirit in their lives. In the third chapter the author Luke notes a beggar is brought to the temple gate to elicit charity from other Jews entering the temple for prayer. The man born with the physical disability probably had some reasonable success begging here for a couple of reasons. He was brought there daily, additionally, people of faith are known for their charity, and probably more so at the hour of worship. It is also important to note that he was surely ignored by many due to his daily presence and repetitious actions. The passage points not only to the great transformation of the beggar but to the transformation of Peter and John, as well as the explosive growth of the early church. The disciples, unsure of Christ and his mission during his life, are now eye witnesses to his resurrection. And Peter, who had just denied knowing Jesus, is now speaking boldly and healing in the name of Christ.

The beggar, expecting some money when eye contact is made, was certainly initially disappointed by Peter’s words “Silver or gold I do not have.” Readers might expect continued focus on the material generosity and sacrifice of Christians. The previous chapter highlighted that Christians were selling their goods for anybody in need. But Peter has so much more to offer him, and his offering is a physical and spiritual transformation that can only come from the King of Kings. It wholly speaks to the authority of Christ and the necessity of testifying to his transformative power. What good can believers and the church do if they have money to give, yet are not equipped with the Holy Spirit and neither have Christ to offer?

Peter commands the beggar to walk, and he gets up and goes into the temple praising God. We too must walk with our Savior and look to him for deliverance and renewal. Charles Wesley, a Methodist hymn writer, says it well in “And Can It Be That I Should Gain?” testifying in song, “My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.”

## Akyol interview continued from page 3

and you can use that for something good. Something for the benefit of society.

*How are those benefits being felt?*

Well, there's this idea of charities coming

**"Among some people in Turkey, generally there is an allergy to the word capitalism."**

in. And this is good because in the old days, in the premodern Islamic states, there were so many charitable foundations. Some rich person or aristocrat would establish a foundation and that money would be spent to fund scholarships or soup kitchens, or other charitable purposes. When the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923, it created a very centralized government, and all these foundations were nationalized by the state.

*There were also Christian foundations, were there not?*

Yes, exactly. Now people in Turkey are speaking out about giving back some of these nationalized properties, and Chris-

AKP, which would give these Christian minorities some of their properties back. And Muslims too, are, creating their own charity networks. The more we get away from the idea of the social state—in Turkey the welfare state is known as the social state—the more room there will be for these sort of charitable efforts.

*Let's talk about religious freedom. There's a great tension between the modern secularist path of Turkey, going back to Atatürk, and the revival of Islam and its influence on politics. Will this be a winner take all battle, or is Turkey working out something a little more complex in the future?*

I say there will be room for all of these views, and Turkey will be more pluralistic than it used to be. Actually, right now, the battle is between the people who want to create room for pluralism and those who want to keep it homogenously secular.



Skyline of Istanbul, Turkey

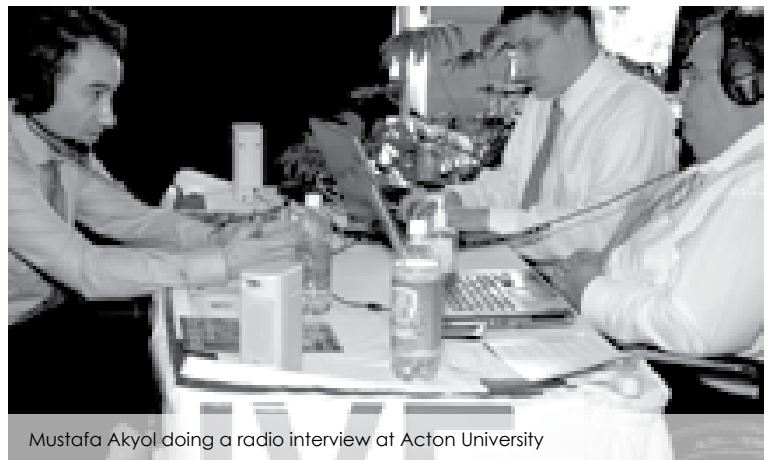
tians have been asking about this for a long time. There has been a new law under the current Justice and Development Party, known by the Turkish initials

Hence came the closure of old traditional religious institutions while the state took control of religion by establishing the Directorate of Religious Affairs. That

way, religion came under the control of the state and it would be permissible only in private sphere or, of course, in the mosques.

*So religion left the public stage?*

That was the idea [that] was imposed. But the religious people never really accepted that and now they have become much more refined in the way that they reject this secularist notion. In the past, they dreamed of going back to the old golden ages of Islam and getting rid of what they called "western systems." But I think at some point, thanks to their in-



Mustafa Akyol doing a radio interview at Acton University

Keep in mind that the founding idea of the Turkish Republic was very monolithic. It picked up the narrative of the French Enlightenment in that **secularism** would make the country safe from religious obscurantism and the forces of darkness.

Integration with the world and the global economy, these religious folk realized that actually what Turkey needs is not less Western-type democracy, but more of it. They understand that in the West, in Europe or the United States, people have more religious freedom than they have in Turkey. It's pretty simple. Now groups like the AKP understand all these things better and their policies are much more sophisticated. They say that the secular state is fine, but the secular state should give us more religious freedom. On the other side, the secularists think, oh, if we move an inch then we will lose everything and it will be the beginning of the end. This is what I call the doctrine of preemptive intolerance, which dominates the state approach.

*Do you see any signs of movement toward more religious freedom?*

*continued on pg 12*

In the recent years, there emerged more attention to the rights of Christians. That could be the right for missionaries to evangelize their faith or for the Greek Orthodox Patriarch to call himself ecumenical or to reopen the Halki Seminary. Now, interestingly, most conservative Muslims are in favor of these rights, whereas the secularists are not. The AKP is much more open to accepting these reforms. Whereas, the secular nationalists think that these are all bad because,



Hagia Sophia, a former patriarchal basilica, later a mosque, now a museum in Istanbul, Turkey

first of all, they think that the Greeks are the foreign element, the fifth column. Some secularists also fear that if you grant other faiths these rights, then Muslims will ask for them. So, they say, we

“When the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923, it created a very centralized government, and all these foundations were nationalized by the state.”

shouldn't give in to any of them.

*How do you assess the prospects for Turkey joining the European Union and what might be the current obstacles?*

Well, first of all, I should say that it is very interesting that Turkey's accession to the EU is being resisted by the French. It's an interesting lesson of history, because Turkey has been a “French wannabe” since the early twentieth century. The second point is that the Europeans who don't want Turkey say that it is not eligible to be part of Europe because it lacks the necessary level of democracy—and they're actually right. But Turkey is becoming more democratic, thanks to the EU process itself. Britain thinks that Turkey also needs to be better in its democracy, but Britain says, “OK, let's help Turkey get through this process which will make it much more democratic and prosperous and much more in line with EU norms.” But France and Germany and Austria, to a degree, are sometimes using this argument in order to block Turkey's path forward. So, yes, we need reforms on many issues, including religious rights and religious rights of Christians. But Europe should be supporting Turkey precisely to help realize those reforms.

*You say that Islamic culture has historically been very open to trade in the past, going back to the Ottoman and Byzantine periods. Today, Turkey is growing, it is attracting more foreign investment, and prospects are hopeful. Can Turkey be a catalyst for the economic development of the Middle East?*

Well, yes and no. In one sense, Turkey is somewhat isolated from Middle Eastern countries because of the language issue. Turks don't speak Arabic and Arabs don't speak Turkish. And traditionally, Arabs have seen Turkey as a lost cause, a part of the western world that's not Islamic anymore. But that has been changing with the AKP government. Now Turkey looks more Islamic than it used to, at least in the way it's governed, and this creates actually more interest in Turkey among Arab intellectuals and Arab politicians.

They may not be as modern, if you will, as the AKP, but there is some link there in terms of inspiration. I have attended several conferences in Istanbul in recent years in which Arab intellectuals come

“..So, yes, we need reforms on many issues, including religious rights and religious rights of Christians.”

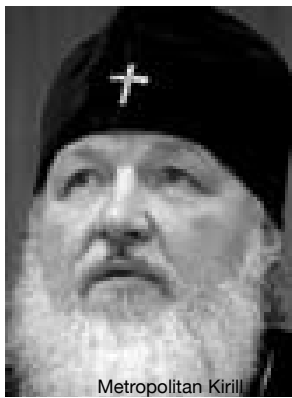
and try to learn about how the AKP made this transformation from Islamism to the



Turkish Market / Targ Turecki

Muslim democrat position. So Turkey will not change the world in one day, but if it shows that a Muslim society can achieve democracy and lives in peace with the western world, that will be a great example to the Muslim nations. We are seeing signs of that.





# Metropolitan Kirill on Economic Globalization and the Social Consensus

*Excerpt from the prologue to The Ethics of the Common Good in Catholic Social Doctrine (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2008) by His Holiness Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone. His Eminence Reverend Kirill is metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad and president of the Department of Foreign Religious Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate. Translated from Italian by Paola Fantini, an intern in the Rome office of the Acton Institute.*

Metropolitan Kirill:

Considering the Orthodox concept of the common good, it must be noted that this concept refers not only to material well-being, not only to peace and harmony on earth, but most of all to the aspirations of man and human society to eternal life, which is the ultimate good of every Christian. For this reason, according to the Orthodox conscience, the debate on the common good will always be incomplete if it considers earthly life exclusively, while the highest good—life in Christ—is ignored by the preachers of radical secularism and vulgar materialism.

This does not mean, however, that the Orthodox Church denies the material aspects of human existence or considers them of little importance to the cause of salvation. The Orthodox Church limits itself to identifying correct priorities and to remembering the words of the Gospel: “What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Mark 8:36). Good hard work and the production of material goods can be justified only if they are meant to ensure man a dignified standard of life which will allow him to help others and develop to his spiritual potential. In following such teachings, the individual can actively serve God and his nation.

History demonstrates that only the aspiration to an ultimate good, the ability to sacrifice material goods in favor of heavenly ones, the ability to pursue duties of a higher order, render society vital and give meaning to the life of every single person. The states and peoples that have negated the value of spiritual life have disappeared from the scene of history. For this reason it is very important, when one speaks of the economy and the growth of well-being, never to forget their ultimate end: to serve the material and spiritual common good, not to hinder but favor man’s salvation.

It is not a coincidence that in Greek the word “economy” signifies building, construction. In his economic activity the individual is called to become like his Creator and to follow His holy will. One can say that the economy is a type of activity forever blessed by God. But it must not be limited to the sphere of exclusively material interests. Economics without morals is immoral and is no longer economics in its original meaning because it does not lead to construction, but to destruction. In the contemporary world there are not a few examples of this: blatant is the misery of millions of people, the worship of consumerism which renders people nitwits, the exploitation of instincts for vulgar purposes, the environmental crisis. All of this is the result of a management deprived of spirituality and the fruit of the “economy” of profit and egoism.

The Russian philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev said some beautiful words: “The problem of bread for me is a material problem, but the problem of bread for my neighbor, for all, is a spiritual, religious question.”

At present, economic globalization practi-

cally produces results contrary to those it first supposed. Only in the last twenty years, the difference in income between rich and poor has increased immeasurably, the international economy is always on the verge of a financial crisis, and like before, millions of human beings do not have access to the glories of civilization. An economic system of this type can certainly not be defined [as] ethical.

In the third millennium, the future of humanity will greatly depend in large part on the way in which the classes of political and economic leaders of developed countries listen to the advice of the world’s religious leaders to promote more just forms of global economic development.

In the “Corpus of the Principles and Moral Rules of the Economy”—an important document of the Ecumenical Council of the Russian People dedicated to economic ethics—it is correctly underlined that “money is only a means to meet a proposed end. It must always be moving and circulating. Genuine, totally exciting work, is the businessman’s real wealth! The absence of the worship of money emancipates man, makes him free interiorly.”

The real businessman always remembers that profit is only a means necessary to continue and develop his own work for the good of his neighbour. For us, the principal meaning of our work must be to serve God, our neighbour and the Patria [nation], through the creation of material and spiritual goods fundamental for a worthy life. Here lies the principal difference between Orthodox socio-economic ethics, our conception of the idea common good with the well-noted “ethics of capitalism.”

## Wilhelm Röpke [1899-1966]

*"We need a combination of supreme moral sensitivity and economic knowledge. Economically ignorant moralism is as objectionable as morally callous economism. Ethics and economics are two equally difficult subjects, and while the former needs discerning and expert reason, the latter cannot do without humane values."*

A decorated soldier in the Kaiser's army, Wilhelm Röpke returned home from the trenches of World War I in 1918, determined to work to ensure that Western civilization never again experienced a crisis of the type that led to the horrors of mass warfare. His life was henceforth to be spent fighting against all forms of collectivism—be it of the National Socialist, Communist, or welfarist variety—and promoting the free society, which, he believed, needed to be grounded in a culture of Christian humanism.

Quickly emerging as one of Europe's premier experts on business-cycle theory, Röpke was equally well known for his classical liberal economic views. An outspoken critic of communism and Nazism, Röpke delivered a public address at Frankfurt-am-Main on February 8, 1933, in which he directly criticized the newly installed Nazi regime. Röpke was consequently among the first professors purged from the German academy by the Nazis. Realizing there was no place for him in Hitler's Thousand-Year Reich, Röpke departed into exile in November 1933, eventually settling in Switzerland where he lived until his death in 1966.

Exile did not diminish Röpke's engagement in the world of ideas. Röpke's work was immensely influential upon



Ludwig Erhard, the initiator of West Germany's post-war economic miracle, which began with the liberalization of the economy in 1948. As well as tirelessly arguing for the necessity of these reforms, Röpke also assisted Friedrich von Hayek in creating the Mont Pèlerin Society in 1947, an international academy of intellectuals devoted to protecting liberty against the tide of collectivism then sweeping across Europe. A committed Christian, Röpke described himself as

*"Quickly emerging as one of Europe's premier experts on business-cycle theory, Röpke was equally well-known for his classical liberal economic views..."*

a Protestant who wished the Reformation had never happened. Though convinced of economics' rightful autonomy as a science, Röpke also held that the truths discovered through economics did not contradict the wider truth ultimately found in Christian Revelation. His writings on economic philosophy are full of references to figures such as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Hugo Grotius. Röpke also greatly admired Catholic social teaching, especially its articulation of the principle of subsidiarity.

In 1962, Röpke was awarded the Willibald Pirckheimer Medal in recognition of his immense labors and achievements in the cause of liberty and economic truth. The citation read: "The measure of the economy of man. The measure of man is his relationship to God." There could be no more apt summation of the deepest principles underlying Wilhelm Röpke's commitment to authentically human freedom.



## The Mistaken Faiths of Our Age

In the midst of financial crisis, Pope Benedict made a statement that immediately hit the headlines. He said "with the collapse of big banks we see that money disappears, is nothing and all these things that appear

real are in fact of secondary importance." He further warned against attempting to build one's life "only on things that are visible, such as success, career, money... The only solid reality is the word of God."

His comments were extension of the Gospel message applied in perilous times. In times of plenty, there is a grave temptation to see in material goods the salvation of our lives. We cling to them, and we discover our disordered attachments

"This was an act of mistaken faith."

in economic bad times. We can go further to observe that this is not only a problem in

wealthy societies. Greed and godless materialism are also features of poor societies as well, though they are expressed in a different form.

Benedict also wrote about another form of materialism that has revealed itself in this financial crisis: the belief that the state can solve all problems. As the crisis deepened, there were ever more calls on the head of the Federal Reserve and the Department of Treasury to do something magical to raise home prices, to lift stocks, to make bankrupt institutions liquid again, and to make the credit crisis disappear. We looked to visible things to save other visible things.

This was an act of mistaken faith. The state has no magic buttons it can push to make this happen. The forces of economics alive in the world are as much an intrinsic part of reality as gravity, and the laws of physics obey no government or central bank. Somehow people have a hard time accepting this fact. The belief in salvation by the state has been cultivated for centuries by intellectuals who stopped

believing that universe is in God's hands. The state became their alternate creative force that can do and know all things. This was not only a problem for communism and Nazism; it is also a problem in all rich countries.

No more evidence is necessary than to point to the election and the debates surrounding it. Many people were looking to the two candidates to provide all answers and solve all problems. Their answers, as we might expect, were some or another version of "expand the state's activities in one or another area of life."

It is long past time that we fundamentally question the belief that public authority is capable of miracles. If we look at the present crisis, we can easily find evidence that it was precisely a variety of government interventions that brought the crisis about. It was the perfect storm of intervention in many ways, and the problems are very deep, beginning with the inflationary policy of the central bank dating back decades. Issues more recent in time include the push for looser credit to fuel the housing boom, the efforts to prevent housing prices from falling, the attempts to "save" lenders who got in trouble, and the draconian interventions in capital markets that included even a ban on short selling. None of these attempts fixed the problem; indeed, many economists believe that they made them worse.

The root problem, however, is not a matter of economics but theology and ethics. The loss of faith in God led to a new and profoundly distorted faith in the state as the savior of the world. The loss in an ethic of life led to a disrespect for the truth of freedom itself, which is the ethical foundation of the market economy. Freedom can be a visible thing but its roots are in an invisible theological outlook that affirms that the universe and mankind have a transcendent origin and purpose. Let us turn to God and pray for conversion away from false faiths toward eternal truths.

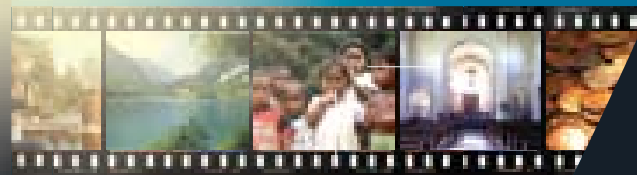
*Rev. Robert A. Sirico is president of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

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