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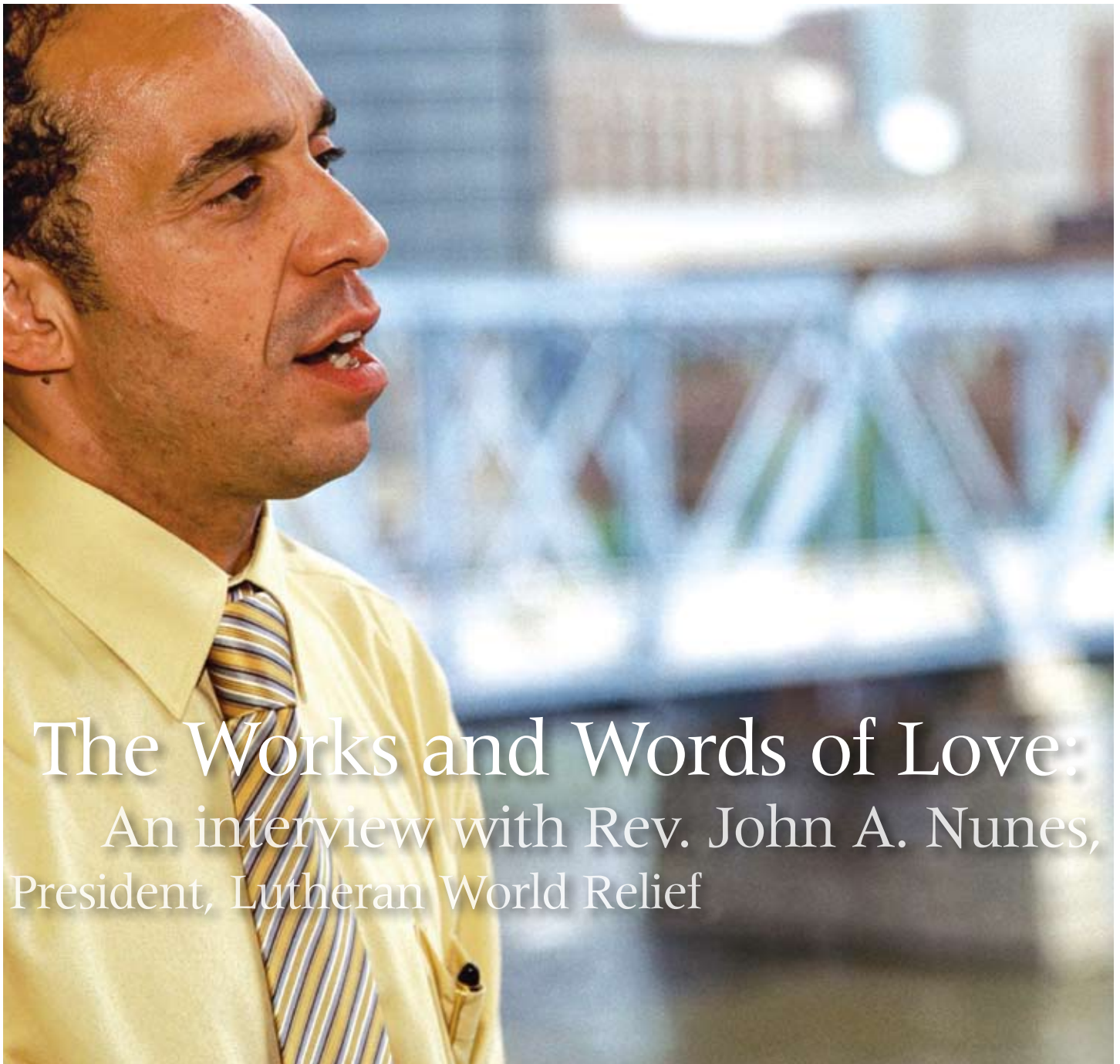
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Religion & Liberty

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The Works and Words of Love:
An interview with Rev. John A. Nunes,
President, Lutheran World Relief

A Journal of Religion, Economics, and Culture

Editor's Note



When the Acton Institute was first established, part of our mission was to influence future leaders. We have done that in countless ways through our array of programs, but this issue of *R&L* highlights one particularly important example. The Reverend John A. Nunes, a Lutheran minister, is our feature interview this month. Nunes was recently appointed to head up Lutheran World Relief. Aside from the genuine pride we have that one of our colleagues has been entrusted with such an important mission, we are also excited to see how the principles that Pastor Nunes wrote about for

Acton will now animate LWR's service to those in material need, and in need of the Gospel.

In our interview, Pastor Nunes speaks about his experience doing community work in Detroit, and what he learned about "accompaniment"—meaning not doing something *for* or *to* somebody, but doing something *together*. Whether that model can be replicated in dozens of countries and with multi-million dollar programs is the challenge that awaits him. We wish him well, and pray that God blesses abundantly the work of LWR.

I am sure that in his work in Detroit, Pastor Nunes came across a Catholic school or two that were islands of hope in a sea of troubles. Kris Mauren explains in this issue the important work Acton does to highlight Catholic schools that exemplify the best in parochial education. Often such religious schools are the only ones left to "accompany" the children of troubled

neighborhoods.

I am not much of a TV watcher, so I must confess that I have never seen the program *Deadwood* on HBO. After reading Jordan Ballor's article on it in this issue, I may have missed something. Set in the nineteenth-century "wild west"—or the Dakotas, at any rate—Ballor argues that the series shows the dramatic conflict between tyranny and liberty, and that mere law and order, while necessary, is not sufficient for a free and virtuous society. Part of Acton's mission is to engage our culture, not only to criticize, but to celebrate the virtues and principles when presented in dramatic form. Those of us who write monographs and edit journals know that the poet, playwright, composer, or painter is sometimes more persuasive than a thousand carefully crafted arguments. I am pleased that Jordan Ballor brought that once again to our readers' attention.

Father Raymond

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The Works and Words of Love:

An Interview with John Nunes

In July 2007, the Rev. John A. Nunes was named president of Lutheran World Relief. He becomes only the fourth president to lead the international development and relief organization since it's founding in 1945. Nunes, 44, is a former research fellow at the Acton Institute and a long-time lecturer at Acton University and the Toward a Free and Virtuous Society student conferences. At Baltimore-based LWR, Rev. Nunes will lead a staff of nearly 100 people, directing projects in thirty-five different countries, and managing a budget currently at \$34.6 million. The author of the book, Voices

from the City, Rev. Nunes is a contributing scholar for Modern Reformation magazine, and holds membership in the American Academy of Religion. He spoke recently with Religion & Liberty executive editor John Couretas.

First, congratulations. Why do you think you've been called to this job, and what gifts do you think you can bring to it?

Thank you. That's a great question. If I can't find an answer to that question, then

our faith into action.

LWR is a pretty big platform for a preacher. How will you stay connected to the church?

I'm rooted in faith communities. And every Sunday morning and every weekend, I'm going to be in a Lutheran church somewhere. This is an organization that represents the humanitarian interests of both the ELCA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the LCMS, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, all around the world. And many NGOs have become disconnected from those communities that gave them birth. Not Lutheran World Relief. Lutheran World Relief is very committed to local communities of faith and to the fact that the good works that we do derive directly from the faith that we confess. And so the faith that we confess is the root, and the works of love that we do are the fruit that flows directly from our root.

How does that translate into work with those groups that may not be Lutheran, or even Christian?

Lutherans have a core concept when working with others called "cooperation in externals." That describes the mutual work that people of differing or varying faiths might do together for the sake of the good of humanity. And so while the work that we do is derived from the root of our faith, we will work with people of goodwill and of good interest everywhere to help transform communities.

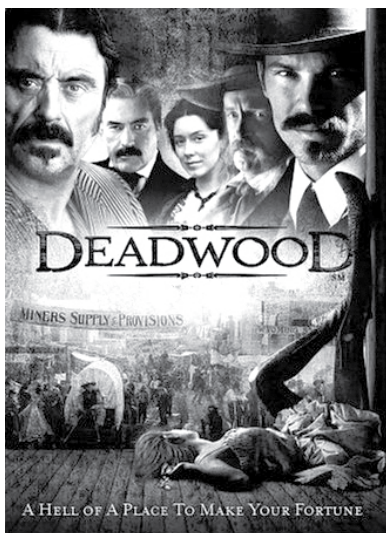
You started out as a community activist, working



"The art of politics is the art of getting a dead horse off the street.' When you're not even able to perform just the simplest of duties of local government, you're in dire straits."

I don't need to be doing what I'm doing. I do sense strongly that I'm being led by God into this position. I think in many ways it's a culmination and a consummation of much of what I've learned up to this point in my life, and I'm really excited about bringing some of my communication skills to bear on the job. My theological training helps me to help Lutheran World Relief articulate why we're doing what we're doing. This is about putting

continued on pg 12



A Law Beyond Law: Life Together in *Deadwood*

By Jordan J. Ballor

The Black Hills of Dakota in the 1870s may seem like an unlikely place for a dramatic narrative pursuing themes of justice, service, and community, but that's exactly what the audience gets in compelling fashion in HBO's recently concluded series *Deadwood*. When creator and executive producer David Milch first pitched the idea to HBO executives, the setting was in fact ancient Rome.

Speaking of *Deadwood*'s setting, a mining camp, Milch says, "This was an environment, as was Rome in the time of Nero, where there was order but no law whatsoever." The character Merrick, who runs the camp's newspaper, the *Deadwood Pioneer*, observes in the first episode that the camp is officially and formally "outside law or statute."

Set against the mythic landscape of the American West, *Deadwood* plays out the

timeless political and social themes that have confronted every formative culture: the conflict between tyranny and liberty; the call of the conscience in matters of justice; the very human longing for order in a wild and lawless land. *Deadwood*, like all Westerns, may be viewed as a commentary about the particular time in which it was produced -- America in the 21st Century. (HBO's characteristic use of nudity and extensive profanity may make this series even more "contemporary" to some.) Ultimately, however, *Deadwood* poses a question that transcends history: Can a raw and bloody town in the grip of gold rush fever overcome its own violence, greed and materialism? Can it shape a destiny and find meaning outside of the idols of brute force and sudden fortune?

A Sense of Justice

It's through the character of Seth Bullock (played by Timothy Olyphant), a former lawman from Montana, that we are introduced to the show's *leitmotif* of law and order.

As with most of the main characters in *Deadwood*, Milch has based the players on real-life figures, although he has

"It's through the character of Seth Bullock (played by Timothy Olyphant), a former lawman from Montana, that we are introduced to the show's *leitmotif* of law and order."

toyed with the historical facts where it suits the story. So while Wild Bill Hickok and Seth Bullock never met in real life, they become fast (albeit brief) friends on the show. Bullock, along with his partner Sol Star, leaves service as a lawman in Montana to seek his fortune as a purveyor of mining equipment and hardware in the fast-growing *Deadwood* camp.

But the life of law enforcement isn't so easy for Bullock to leave behind. As he works on building the frame for the new hardware store, Bullock has an illuminating exchange with Hickok, who himself is a former lawman. Wild Bill notes that soon there will be peace with the Sioux, then "pretty quick you'll have laws here." Seth replies, "I'd settle for property rights," to which Bill asks astutely, "Would you?" Indeed, it becomes clear that given his character, disposition, and temperament,



"Wild" Bill Hickok (left) and Seth Bullock (right)

A Law Beyond Law: Life Together in *Deadwood*

Bullock cannot just “settle for property rights.” A man driven by conscience, ideals, and an innate sense of justice, Bullock eventually, and grudgingly, assumes the role of sheriff in Deadwood. His natural sense of equity provides an element of needed stability in the camp.

In a later conversation with Wyatt Earp, another former lawman of some repute, Bullock admits, “I took the badge off myself once, without losing my impulse to beat on certain types.” The decisive shift for Bullock, moving him into service to the broader community as sheriff, comes in a conversation with General Crook, who seeks brief respite in the camp from fighting the Sioux.

Bullock complains to Crook that the town’s sheriff, whose position had been created for political purposes and had assumed a largely ceremonial role, was corrupt and inept. To this Crook responds, “In a camp where the sheriff can be bought for bacon grease, a man, a former marshal, who understands the danger of his own temperament, he might consider serving his fellows.... We all have bloody thoughts.” Bullock’s calling from General Crook is to put those retributive instincts to the greater good of the camp.

“The main story arc that spans the entire series of *Deadwood* is the conflict between tyranny and liberty, the former personified by the archetypal robber baron, George Hearst...”

Service and Vocation

If Bullock’s contribution to the Deadwood camp consists largely in the administration of justice, the vocations of other figures are much more diverse.

When he recognizes that she has the gift of caring for people, the camp’s doctor calls on Calamity Jane, the friend of Wild Bill Hickok, to assist with an outbreak of smallpox. This gift, belied by her rough carriage and not-so-functional alcoholism, ends up being a constitutive reason why the camp is able to survive such a dangerous outbreak.

Alma Garrett, whose husband’s untimely death leaves her in control of a bonanza gold strike, is determined to open a bank in Deadwood “for the good of the camp.” Her second husband, a gold prospector named Ellsworth, calls Alma “a financial powerhouse,” praising her for her “service to the camp, turning her mine into houses and the like getting built, businesses begun, some for people that will never know her name.”

In a glimpse of the absurdity that sometimes marks life in Deadwood, barkeep Harry Manning runs against Bullock for sheriff in the camp’s first elections, not because he wants to be sheriff, but because he wants to be first deputy, in case Deadwood ever creates a fire brigade. Tom Nuttall, who employs Manning, points out the flaw in his man’s thinking.

“I should cut your salary 20 percent, based on time you’re absent campaigning.... Your plans are idiotic. You’re running for sheriff to be a fireman,” says Nuttall. “Why not build a firewagon that you then rent out to the camp?” When Nuttall offers to loan Manning the money (in the form of the aforementioned salary deduction) and help him build the wagon, plans are

agreed upon to pursue an entrepreneurial venture that will provide the camp with a critically important public service. In Deadwood, when people get together, social life becomes rationalized along economic lines, people seek ways in which to specialize their service, and the social life of the camp moves, sometimes in fits and starts, toward peace.

Given the nature of the “Wild” West, however, *Deadwood* wouldn’t be complete unless there were some more nefarious elements at work. Cy Tolliver (Powers Boothe) runs a brothel called the Bella Union, and is a primary competitor of Al Swearengen (Ian McShane) who helped found the camp and runs the Gem Saloon (and whorehouse).

Tolliver is a masterful manipulator, who at every opportunity attempts to turn his leading pro Joanie Stubbs to his will. While simultaneously offering Joanie the chance to venture out on her own, he tries to entice her back to the Bella Union to continue running women. Cy tells the suicidally-depressed Joanie, “What brings a gun to the temple is lack of gainful occupation and of being useful to others. I don’t see you trying to kill yourself here. All you do here is good for the girls and me too.”

When Joanie tells him that she “don’t want to run women no more,” Cy avers, “that’s turning from your gift and your training.” Joanie concludes with stunning clarity that when Tolliver propositions her in this way, “I feel it’s like the devil talking.”

Camp and Community

The main story arc that spans the entire series of *Deadwood* is the conflict between tyranny and liberty, the former personified by the archetypal robber baron, George Hearst (Gerald McRaney). From afar Hearst exercises decisive influence on the

A Law Beyond Law: Life Together in *Deadwood*

development of the camp in the first two seasons, and in the final season, his personal presence brings even greater pressure to bear on the camp.

In a fit of frustration, Swearengen complains of Hearst to Bullock: “Running his holdings like a despot I grant has a [certain] logic. It’s the way I run mine, it’s the way

man a service in his devotion to mining gold, to acquiring “the color.” Speaking with Odell, the son of his cook affectionately named “Aunt” Lou, Hearst says, “Before the color, no white man, no man of any hue, moved to civilize or improve a place like this had reason to make the effort. The color brought commerce here, such order as has been attained.... Gold is

your chance. Gold is every man’s opportunity.”

In a rare show of sensitivity, Hearst continues, “That is our species’ hope, that uniformly agreeing on its value, we organize to seek the color.... I hate these places, Odell, because the truth that I know, the promise I

bring, the necessities I’m prepared to accept make me outcast.” Time and again Hearst puts aside his instinct to react rashly to offense or effrontery, and each time Hearst forestalls out of the greater interest in pursuing the gold.

When Bullock confronts Hearst over his disregard for the law and Alma Garrett resists his attempts to consolidate her claim into his holdings, Hearst encounters just these sorts of frustrations. Speaking to Cy Tolliver, whom he has placed into his service, Hearst confesses that “just this afternoon such displeasure brought me near to murdering the sheriff and raping Mrs. Ellsworth. I have learned through time, Mr. Tolliver, and as repeatedly seem to forget, that whatever temporary comfort relieving my displeasure brings me, my long term interests suffer.”

But in order to efficiently realize the acquisition of the color, Hearst is unwilling to allow any threats to his dominance to exist. Hearst’s obsession with what Charlie Utter, a friend of Wild Bill and Bullock, would call “amalgamation and capital,” moves him to have murdered those who would oppose him, such as workers who would organize into labor unions.

Knowing that even with their combined efforts they cannot oppose Hearst by force, the leading citizens of Deadwood, including Bullock and Swearengen, cast about for a strategy that will not conclude with Hearst taking “this place down like Gomorrah.”

In a moving scene in which the camp’s leadership palavers, they decide to publish in the newspaper a letter from Sheriff Bullock to the family of one of the murdered union organizers. Comparing the letter favorably to the beauty of the social conventions present in the Declaration of Independence, David Milch says that the letter testifies to basic human decency: “You respect the guy’s humanity, you’re kind to his family, you honor him in his passing.”

Jack Langrishe, a flamboyant theaterman and friend to Swearengen, affirms the wisdom of such an indirect, but unmistakable, course of rebuke to Hearst. In the aftermath when Swearengen expresses doubts about the prudence of publishing the letter, Langrishe wonders why Al might doubt “that proclaiming a law beyond law to a man who is beyond law himself, its publication invoking a decency whose scrutiny applies to him as to all his fellows” is appropriate.

Despite Al’s ostensible projection of himself as a rugged individualist, the image is seen for its superficiality by Langrishe. Speaking of the Deadwood camp to Swearengen, Langrishe asserts, “A thing of this order you’d as soon not see ruined or



(left to right) Al Swearengen, Seth Bullock, and Dan Dority

I’d run my home if I had one. But there’s no practical need for him to run the camp. That’s out of scale. It’s out of proportion and it’s a warped, unnatural impulse.”

But even Hearst’s will to dominate the life of the camp has its own rationalization. Hearst fancies that he is doing his fellow

“...proclaiming a law beyond law to a man who is beyond law himself, its publication invoking a decency whose scrutiny applies to him as to all his fellows’ is appropriate.”

in cinders.” To this Swarengen agrees, “I will if I have to, avoiding it, if I could,” unwilling to see the camp exist under the sway of Hearst’s tyranny.

In *Deadwood* we have the birth of a community in the unlikeliest of places: a gold rush camp where everyone is there first and foremost to seek “the color.” When economic order and social institutions arise organically, even in the face of great evil, Christians recognize God’s providential work through the means of natural law, self-interest, and charity. The struggle between Swarengen and Hearst represents the conflict between the liberty arising from spontaneous, organic order and the tyranny of authoritarian domination and oppression.

As Augustine wrote, “In this universe even that which is called evil, well ordered, and kept in its place, sets the good in higher relief, so that good things are more pleasing and praiseworthy than evil ones.” In *Deadwood* we see both the way in which evil can limit evil, and how God’s preserving grace is manifest in works of pure self-interest and authentic charity.

While the profuseness of obscene language will undoubtedly prevent some viewers from appreciating the show (numerous expletives have been deleted from the direct quotes in this piece alone), as with Milch’s approach to dialogue, which prefers gritty realism to conventionally styled conversation, the violence and sexuality of *Deadwood* is far more likely to evoke pity and compassion, and ultimately a recognition of the personhood of the characters, rather than to titillate.

Deadwood’s narrative is so complex, compelling, and engrossing that at the conclusion of each episode, my wife would look to me and say hopefully, “More *Deadwood*?”

More *Deadwood*, indeed.

Why does the Acton Institute operate the Catholic High School Honor Roll?

Since the Acton Institute’s work to build a free and virtuous society includes serving future religious and moral leaders, it makes sense to begin where these leaders are first formed in social and economic issues: high school.

Why *Catholic* high schools? Because they provide a starting point for broader educational work we plan to do with religious-based high schools.

Catholic schools are also of particular focus because they have shown an increasing trend toward secularization in recent decades. Having long set the benchmark for moral and academic formation as well as education in the classical liberal tradition, many schools now see a loss of traditional Catholic identity, a weakening of academic standards, and the support of views contrary to church teaching. It is no surprise that the majority of Catholic secondary students are taught to be suspicious of business and the free market.

To generate some positive momentum, we saw an obvious need for an ongoing, independent, and rigorous assessment of Catholic high schools in the U.S.—and Acton is well positioned to serve this need. Our staff of serious Catholic scholars with backgrounds of business, law, theology, philosophy, economics, ethics, history, and education is more than equipped to evaluate schools based on the church’s teaching.

By using the power of incentives and competition, the best schools are highlighted to inspire imitation and encouragement among all schools. By examining academic excellence, Catholic identity, and civic education, the Catholic High School Honor Roll (www.chshonor.org) calls on all Catholic schools to scrutinize themselves in relation to the church’s educational calling—and to other schools.

In turn, schools earning this recognition use the honor roll to tell the country that they excel at defying the trend. Since the program began in 2004, over 200 media stories—in major newspapers, magazines, and on TV and radio—have highlighted the fact that these schools have earned this distinction and are remaining faithful to their calling. Even more, schools use the honor roll to promote and strengthen themselves, all because the bar has been held high and they’re proud to have risen to the occasion.

By recognizing Catholic high schools excelling in their purpose and mission, the Acton Institute is planting a seed for broader work in secondary education—work that will encourage sound moral preparation for America’s youth and promote virtuous vocations in business, politics, and theology for years to come.



Kris Alan Mauren
Executive Director



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Is Consumerism Harmful?

by Andrew V. Abela

This article is a selection from “The Price of Freedom: Consumerism and Liberty in Secular Research and Catholic Teaching.” The full article appeared in the Journal of Markets & Morality Volume 10, Number 1. In addition, consumerism is defined in this article to mean excessive desire for material consumption.

Among secular scholars, there is some debate as to whether consumerism is a real problem. James Twitchell, in his book *Lead Us into Temptation: The Triumph of American Materialism*, argues that consumerism is a beneficial phenomenon because it provides a meaning for people to replace the meaning formerly provided them by religion.

The empirical evidence, however, indicates that consumerist attitudes are associated with reduced consumer well-being. People who are more consumeristic tend to have lower satisfaction with their lives, a greater tendency to compulsive spending, higher incidences of depression, and also lower ethical standards. Tim Kasser,

in his recent book summarizing his own extensive work and that of other researchers in this area, concludes that there are “clear and consistent findings” that people who are focused on consumerist values have “lower personal well-being and psychological health than those who believe that materialistic pursuits are relatively unimportant.”

These findings, significant in themselves, are also important because subjective well-being, or happiness, as measured in these studies, is in turn associated with several other important variables. Research has shown that happy people are less self-centered; less hostile or abusive; less vulnerable to disease; and more loving, forgiving, trusting, energetic, decisive, creative, sociable, and helpful.

Among Catholic scholars, there appears to be general consensus (consistent with the empirical research cited above) that consumerism is a negative thing: It is a “threat to the freedom of the human person to

live according to the higher demands of love rather than to the lower pull of material desires.” Consumerism weakens human virtue, and without virtue, human beings become slaves to their emotions and lose the self-control that is needed to live responsibly in a free society.

Catholic teaching on consumerism is rooted deeply. General warnings against the dangers of obsession with material goods can be found from sacred Scripture onward (e.g., 1 Tim. 6:9–19). Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote that man’s apparently infinite desire for riches is disordered and wholly different from our infinite desire for God. The more we possess God, the more we know and love him; while the more we possess riches, the more we despise what we have and seek other things because when we possess them we realize their insufficiency.

Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, written on the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, asked



Journal of Markets & Morality, Volume 10, Number 1

This issue of the journal features a scholia translation of Cardinal Cajetan’s (1469-1534) influential treatise *On Exchanging Money* (1499).

Author: Various

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rhetorically, “[W]hat will it profit to teach them sound principles of economic life if in unbridled and sordid greed they let themselves be swept away by their passion for property, so that hearing the commandments of the Lord they do all things contrary (Judg. 2:17).

Specific Catholic social teaching on consumerism is developed in the encyclical letters of Pope John Paul II, particularly in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and *Centesimus Annus*. In these encyclicals, he warns of “the treachery hidden within a development that is only quantitative, for the ‘excessive availability of every kind of material goods for the benefit of certain social groups, easily makes people slaves of “possession” and of immediate gratification.’” Victims of

“ ... it is not the desire for material prosperity itself that is wrong but rather the desire for having more in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself.”

consumerism are caught up in the pursuit of false or superficial gratifications at the expense of experiencing their personhood in an authentic way. As a result, they experience a radical dissatisfaction, where the more they possess, the more they want, while their deeper aspirations remain unsatisfied and perhaps even stifled.

According to Catholic teaching, it is not the desire for material prosperity itself that is wrong but rather the desire for having more in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself. As Pope Leo XIII taught in *Rerum Novarum*, material prosperity can be the result of Christian morality adequately and completely practiced, “which merits the blessings of God who is the source of all blessings.”

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

Jeremiah 22:13–17

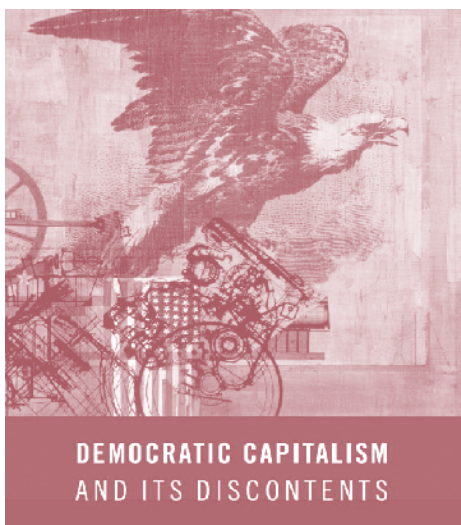
“Woe to him who builds his house on wrong, his terraces on injustice; who works his neighbor without pay, and gives him no wages; who says, ‘I will build myself a spacious house, with airy rooms’; who cuts out windows for it, panels it with cedar, and paints it with vermilion. Must you prove your rank among kings by competing with them in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink? He did what was right and just, and it went well with him. Because he dispensed justice to the weak and the poor, it went well with him. Is this not true knowledge of me? says the Lord. But your eyes and heart are set on nothing except on your own gain, on shedding innocent blood, on practicing oppression and extortion.”



Greed is a deadly sin. But what is greed exactly? Or rather, first of all, what is it not? Greed is not simply desire, as we are wired with many desires—for food, drink, love, God. Greed is not the fulfillment of desires, and it is not a sort of *metadesire*—a desire that our desires be fulfilled. Desire is good because we are wired to desire that which we need.

Like every sin, greed is a distorted, perverted, disproportionate good. “Your eyes and heart are set on nothing but your own gain,” rebukes the Lord, but our hearts and eyes are designed to be “set on” so much more than our own gain. And this is the essence of greed: to focus on one of our desires at the expense of the desires and needs of others. Instead, we must focus our eyes on God and neighbor first. To do otherwise is to deny what we are created to be: generous.

Generosity is the opposite of greed. Generosity goes beyond justice. St. Paul writes: “You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God, for the administration of this public service is not only supplying the needs of the holy ones but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God.”



Democratic Capitalism and its Discontents

by Brian C. Anderson

reviewed by Ray Nothstine

Despite its triumphant defeat over totalitarianism and socialism, democratic capitalism still faces angry and aggressive opposition from inside the West. In his new book, *Democratic Capitalism and Its Discontents*, Brian Anderson carefully examines this opposition and investigates the erosion of liberal democracy by contrasting the thought of classical liberal philosophers, such as Alexis de Tocqueville, with the thought of the heroes of the contemporary academy, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Antonio Negri.

Explaining what he calls the “suicide of culture,” Anderson appeals to Rocco Buttiglione’s view that libertinism is more dangerous to democratic capitalism than Marxism. Anderson explains, “Instead of crushing man’s reason and passions, as did communism, moral libertinism turns man’s passion against the truth.”

However, this doesn’t mean that communist thinking is no longer a threat. Anderson also provides a thorough analysis of the recycled Marxist jargon of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Empire*, a book unsurprisingly fawned over by the likes of *Time* magazine and *The New York Times* despite its painstakingly abstract theory analysis. Anderson wonders, “Does *Time* really think it’s ‘smart’ to call for the eradication of poverty, celebrate revolutionary violence, white-wash totalitarianism, and pour contempt on the genuine achievements of liberal

democracies and capitalist economics?”

But the West is not only caught between libertinism and Marxism; Anderson also vividly sketches the rising tension between religion and secularism by examining the widening disparity between America and much of Western Europe. This rift is caused not only by Europe’s growing practical agnosticism, but also by what appears to be America’s increasing piety (compared with previous generations).

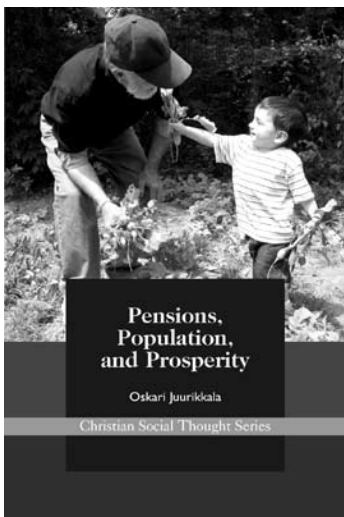
And yet, secularizing forces are also hard at work in American society, particularly among left-leaning educated elites. Anderson deftly traces their influence in higher education and the entertainment industry, and their success in using the courts to chip away at religious displays and influence, even though they have yet to garner popular support.

An important catalyst of much of culture’s dramatic decline, Anderson suggests, is the existentialist influence of French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre’s brand of existentialism highlighted the meaninglessness of existence and the death of God, and, as historian Paul Johnson has noted, offered “self liberation through murder.” Sadly, these ideas have attracted many followers and applauders in the West. According to Anderson, Sartre—who had supported nuclear strikes against the United States to check what he

dubbed its “imperialist tendencies”—“had become nothing more than an apologist for tyranny and terror.”

Balanced against Sartre’s philosophy of despair—if balanced is the right word—is another error undermining culture: egalitarianism, or rather, a misunderstanding of equality for every American. Anderson examines the thought and writings of Harvard professor and philosopher John Rawls, known for his theory of justice as fairness. The logical conclusion of justice as fairness is simply more radicalized redistribution of wealth schemes, which continue indefinitely. Anderson notes, “To see that spirit in action, attend a city council meeting in New York or Oakland when a ‘living wage’ or reparations for black Americans is being debated.” But going deeper inside Rawls’s theories, Anderson points out that Rawls calls for genetic engineering, that which ultimately may be needed to totally wipe out unfairness.

Fortunately there is hope against the rising influence of angry secularists, moral relativism, and recycled Marxism. Anderson’s arguments themselves—his defense of the civil society and religious virtue—might be an important first step to roll back the decay of democratic capitalism. At the very least, we will need such arguments as his to oppose the ever-surfacing foes of liberty, prosperity, and the rule of law.



Work and the Final End of Man

This article is taken as an excerpt from Pensions, Population, and Prosperity, from the Christian Social Thought Series, Number 10, by Oskari Juurikkala.

In addition to economic and health reasons, there are also spiritual grounds for doing away with early, full-time retirement. From a Christian point of view, work is not a punishment, but it is a gift of God that allows man to take part in the furthering of the world of creation. In this, Christ gave us the supreme example: He was a diligent worker, publicly known as a carpenter's son, and good not only in words but also in deeds (cf. Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Luke 2:51; Mark 7:37). Every-



thing that Christ did had a redemptive dimension, including his professional work.

Man also has a moral duty to work. This should be the guiding principle for policies in relation to disability benefits: that the rules may not be so lax and poorly monitored that they tempt individuals to moral evil. The apostle Paul teaches that a Christian cannot live at the expense of others,

so much so that a person who refuses to work should bear the consequent poverty and hunger (cf. 2 Thess. 3:6–12). This does not in any way contradict the principle of charity, which takes primacy over other duties. However, it does refine it so that those who can look after themselves have no right to shirk their duty.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in any work-related public policy is how to value work properly, neither disregarding work nor turning it into an idol. The prevalent pension policies have tended toward both extremes without finding the right balance. At first, they attempted to permit as much leisure as possible, which is not good for people, physically, mentally or spiritually. Now, when things do not look too rosy, the aim is to make people work as long as possible so as to keep the system running. At the root of these policies is a materialistic concept of human nature, masked by reasons of public interest.

Ultimately it is not a question of finding the right compromise but of discovering the basis of a real relationship with God. For a Christian, work cannot be separated from prayer. On the one hand, man needs

rest, not as an end in itself, but as time spent with God in prayer and contemplation. Christ gave a clear example of this during his visit to the house of Martha and Mary: Martha's busy activity was not pleasing to God, because it made her disregard his presence (Luke 10:40–42). On the other hand, when work is done as a service to God and men, it, too, becomes prayer and contemplation, a continuous dialogue with the Creator and Redeemer of this world.

Pension policy cannot, of course, make saints, but it can facilitate a better moral and spiritual atmosphere in society by being more aligned with the deeper needs of man who is a union of body and soul. It is good for a person to work hard, and pension policy should not impose disincentives to do so. At the same time, growing old can be a period of more intense prayer, reflection, and contemplation of the mysteries of God, and, ultimately, preparation for a good death.

This does not mean that one should become idle in old age, for idleness causes both physical and psychological harm, and it tends to give rise to moral and spiritual difficulties too. Volunteer work, assisting with grandchildren, and so on, can be fruitful ways of helping others even after retirement. This kind of interaction between old and young, moreover, fosters intergenerational solidarity—an important fact considering that social security policy relates not only to the aged but is closely

in urban areas. How will that experience be important at Lutheran World Relief?

My community development work, especially in the city of Detroit, while it's very different from the sort of development work that we do globally at LWR, does bear some semblance inasmuch as Detroit has been described as America's first third world city. I learned some core competencies in that environment.

What did you learn in Detroit?

You know, you have almost the utter desocialization of communities and a deteriorated infrastructure, the lack of access to many of the things we take for granted. The city government was dysfunctional. Who was it that said, "The art of politics is the art of getting a dead horse off the street." When you're not even able to perform just the simplest of duties of local government, you're in dire straits. If government's first responsibility is to keep communities safe, then Detroit had failed in that regard. And if government's second kind of responsibility is to maintain a standard of the rule of law, then Detroit had failed also. People were not protected and systems were not protected. So there was basic disincentive to any kind of economic investment in the city. And so I learned in that context, the importance of concepts like subsidiarity, concepts like sustainability, concepts like the accompaniment model as being helpful to bring transformation to communities.

How does the accompaniment model work?

Accompaniment model is designed to build trust and shared accountability with local partners and communities. It means that, before you presume that you have answers or solutions, you have to walk with people and work with people and live with people. It's face-to-face accountability and becoming a part of a community where you want to bring transformation. And so the accompaniment model is quickly followed by the sustainability model, namely that when you mutually begin to explore strategies for transforming communities, that you're there first to

listen and to learn. Together, you create a strategy that does not breed ongoing and perpetual dependency. Each strategy for empowerment is nuanced based on the needs of each community. So it's self sustaining. It's self empowered. It really is about empowering people.

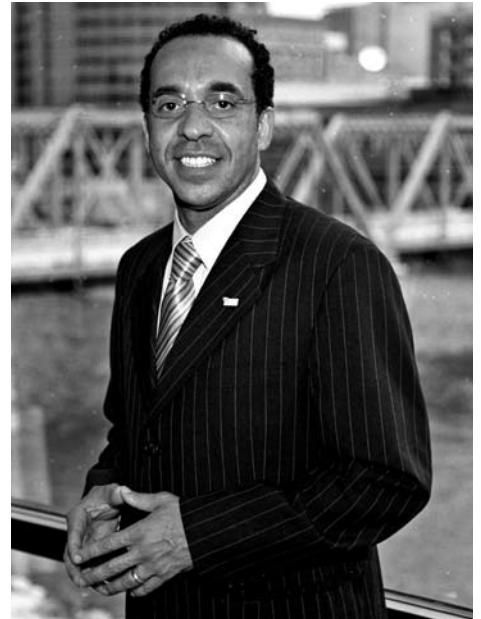
How do you see what you've done at Acton informing what you will be doing at Lutheran World Relief, and how might you do things a little differently?

The local community, those closest to the problem, is involved in the process of solving the problem. Also, you know, the Acton Institute has, although it's based in the United States, always kind of transcended borders and boundaries and really strives to have a kind of global view of the economy, and a global view of the consequences of decisions that we make. And so Lutheran World Relief, of course, also has a global view, and so that was a natural. Another one was a notion that the Acton Institute takes very seriously, the notion that ideas have consequences. That ideas are not disembodied theory or, you know, the consequence of rhetorical flourish, but ideas are actually the presuppositions and presumptions that we bring to bear on reality. And ideas not only have consequences, but ideas and decisions have unintended consequences.

Do you have any sense that the thinking developed at Acton about free markets, rule of law, dignity of the human person, and the power of healthy local communities might be gaining greater currency or acceptance in the NGO world?

I don't want to speak for the entire sector, but I think those are definitely values that resonate at LWR. We have a set of five core values that inform everything we do—one of those values is "God gives all people dignity." All people, not some people. And all of the work we do is geared toward making sure all people are able to live lives of dignity. And so much of what we do is at the community level—accompanying local communities as they work together to confront their challenges, whether it's

two villages coming together to build a dam that will provide water for both communities, or a group of farmers forming a cooperative so that together they can sell their crops directly to international buyers—it's that spirit of community that really



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makes a difference.

Lutheran World Relief talks a lot about how people should be encouraged to learn to do for themselves. Honest work is a powerful thing, isn't it?

Work ennobles people. It does not depreciate people. What depreciates people is the supercilious and arrogant assumption that while work might be good for us, maybe other people don't possess that

kind of capacity. And so that's a common thread between LWR and the Acton Institute. You can't have sustainability without having a sense that work actually gives people dignity. It's vocation. It's about our calling as creatures of God. As I said, a point of correlation between the work of Lutheran World Relief and the Acton Institute is the underlying presupposition, the non-negotiable truth that all people possess inherent dignity, worth and value. It's one of LWR's core values. And it undergirds everything that the Acton Institute is about.

That's refreshingly free of any hint of paternalism.

This is adult to adult. We bring to bear a certain set of resources, but other people also bring a certain set of resources. And so there's mutual contribution, and there's reciprocity that happens. I think we see that really happening in the church, too, where the church in many parts of the developing world is much healthier and much more vital and much closer to the central truths of Christianity than the churches in the western world. So maybe



A group of woman on the way to the market in Africa

that's why God has set this thing up. The Western church can relearn the faith in many of these developing world contexts at the same time that we help to empower the developing world with the resources we have.

You have the advantage of some sixty years or so of history to draw from at LWR as well.

I'm in a learning mode right now and leaders lead best when they lead with their

ears first. And so I'm going to try not to presume anything. For example, I'm trying right now to understand the whole conversation between fair trade and free trade and the relationship of those programs to broader markets. We have a fair Trade chocolate project with the farmer-owned company Divine Chocolate, a fair trade coffee project, and another one involving fairly traded handcrafts. What I really want to do is go to the field and meet local farmers and talk to local people and figure out what's behind all of this stuff, how it is changing their lives for the better. I want to be the best leader I can be, and I've got a long way to grow in terms of understanding the implications of free and fair trade. At the same time, LWR is committed to advocating on behalf of the poor through approaching banks for micro-credit loans. What LWR will do is collaborate with a group of local farmers and, on their behalf, approach the bank and essentially guarantee the loan. We act as a kind of mediating entity and then help the farmers to develop strategies of repayment and how you manage your finances and how you invest. So that's a growing area. It's a very, very interesting set of strategies.

So you're essentially making entrepreneurs out of these farmers?

I have a high degree of confidence that markets that are open and unfettered by unnecessary encumbrances are really the

only solution in many developing communities and countries. Economic justice is about trying to look at the root causes and the ultimate consequences of poverty. And so if we really are serious about economic justice, then we'll be open to a whole variety of solutions—like, yes, encouraging farmers to be entrepreneurial in their thinking!

Like many relief agencies, LWR has worked with government agencies in partnership or as

a channel for relief funds. I understand that LWR has intentionally reduced its government funding. Why?

LWR does still receive some government

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funding, though, you're correct, it's not as much as it has been in the past. That's because our understanding of food security has evolved over time. What we really focus on now in our programming is local agricultural sustainability—programs that don't just provide a stopgap solution like providing immediate food aid, but that really enable and empower people and communities to make positive changes that will result in long-term food security rather than create dependence. Restricted grants provide less flexibility in that area, though we do still work very positively and actively with the U.S. government to locate funding opportunities that are in line with those values of sustainability.

Our vision statement states our faith values: Empowered by God's unconditional love in Jesus Christ, we envision a world in which each person and every generation lives in justice, dignity, and peace. So we're always looking to design our programming around those core faith values.

So you learn, reassess, and put your faith into new initiatives.

Exactly. We keep going. You know, Edmund Burke is right. All that's necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing. By the way, that's another Acton Institute kind of premise, isn't it?

Juan de Lugo [1583-1660]

Price fluctuates not because of the intrinsic and substantial perfection of the article—since mice are more perfect than corn, and yet are worth less—but on account of their utility in respect of human need, and then only on account of estimation; for jewels are much less useful than corn in the house and yet their price is much higher.

One of the most eminent moral and dogmatic theologians of his time, Cardinal Juan de Lugo, S.J., was the last representative of the famous group of early-modern Catholic thinkers associated with Spain's University of Salamanca. Sent by his father to study law at Salamanca, de Lugo entered the Jesuits in 1603 and turned his attention to theology. His theological reputation was such that he was eventually summoned to Rome by the Jesuit General Mutius Vitelleschi in 1621.

Despite his brilliance, de Lugo remained a humble man. He only allowed publication of his writings following a

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direct order from his Jesuit superiors. He also gave freely of his time and goods to Rome's poor. De Lugo was made a cardinal by Pope Urban VIII in 1643, though only under obedience as he initially refused the honor. For the remainder of his life, de Lugo served the papacy in various official capacities. St. Alphonsus de Ligouri called him the greatest Catholic theologian since St. Thomas Aquinas.

De Lugo's writings, such as *De Incarnatione Domini* (1633), *De virtute fidei divinæ* (1646), and *Responsorum moralium libri sex* (1651), covered subjects ranging from

physics to law. Perhaps his most famous work was *De justitia et jure* (1642), which was reprinted numerous times in following centuries. In the context of studying particular ethical problems, this work addresses important economic questions.

De Lugo wrote extensively on the nature of money and explored concepts of opportunity-cost to explain why merchants might stop supplying a particular good despite existing demand for that good.

De Lugo was, however, especially interested in price theory. One element of any rational valuation of a good, he suggested, was its utility. But, he noted, this was determined by collective subjective valuation of people, both the prudent and the unwise. A good's subjective

common estimation, De Lugo argued, thus differed from its objective use value. This was further complicated by matters such as the relative scarcity of the good in question and the volume of demand. These observations led de Lugo to conclude that the just



price was the market price.

Though never viewing himself as an economist, Cardinal de Lugo's work represented the culmination of the Salamanca's school contributions to free-market theory. He exemplifies how serious theological inquiry into human choice and action can reveal economic truths.



Does the Church Serve the State?

The secular world and the Christian world agree that religion and the state should be separate. It's better this way for all concerned. It keeps the social peace. It prevents entanglements that can corrupt the

faith. And these spheres have different jobs to do, and each can uphold its job better when they tend to matters that are their own respective responsibilities.

And yet there are times when mixing does occur, with the predictable result of social division and doctrinal confusion. I'm thinking in particular here of a case in Italy, where the Italian prime minister demanded that the church assist in task of collecting taxes via propaganda from the pulpit.

"A third of Italians heavily evade taxes," Romano Prodi told an interviewer. He continued: "To change this mindset, it's up to everyone, starting with the teachers, to do their part ... the church included."

Now, this strikes me as an unjust demand. It's true that the church teaches that just taxes should be paid. It is a sin not to. But what constitutes a just tax? That is a question of applied doctrine for which there is no universal answer.

For a state to take some 40 percent of national income in taxes is not exceptional these days. In some circles I've heard it said that the state should not demand more than the church, namely 10 percent. I'm drawn to that ideal, even if I'm not sure it should be upheld as a hard and fast principle.

In the nineteenth century, a state that took 10 percent would be considered to be out of control. In the middle ages, a monarch who demanded that much would be risking his life. There is imprudence pushing such a rule, if only because it leads the state to believe that it can and should take at least that much and do whatever it wants to with the money.

The quantity taken can have an impact on matters of justice but so can issues of how the money is spent. What if the state spends all its money on unjust wars and eugen-

"Taxes that hit the poor disproportionately hard are morally objectionable but so are those that seek to expropriate people solely for their financial successes."

ics? There is no justice in that, and so, while paying one's taxes might or might not be prudent, the justice associated with the action is no longer a foregone conclusion.

Certainly it is not for the state to say what does or does not constitute a moral obligation to pay a tax in any particular historical context. If it were solely up to the state, all taxes in all times and all places would be morally binding. But for the church it is a different matter. Certainly individual pastors must observe these situations on a case-by-case basis.

The justice of taxation can also be impacted by the method of taxation. What if food and clothing and medicine were taxed more highly than luxury goods? That certainly wouldn't accord with a plain sense of justice. Taxes that hit the poor disproportionately hard are morally objectionable, but so are those that seek to expropriate people solely for their financial successes. Taxing residents while penalizing foreigners is objectionable but so is taxing foreigners while subsidizing residents.

If the state wants to attempt to enforce this, that's the business of the state. If the religious people find no objection, that's fine too. But to demand that the church participate in telling people that it is their religious duty to pay or else they will pay an eternal price, that's a violation of the separation of church and state, and contrary to the freedom that should be enjoyed by both spheres.

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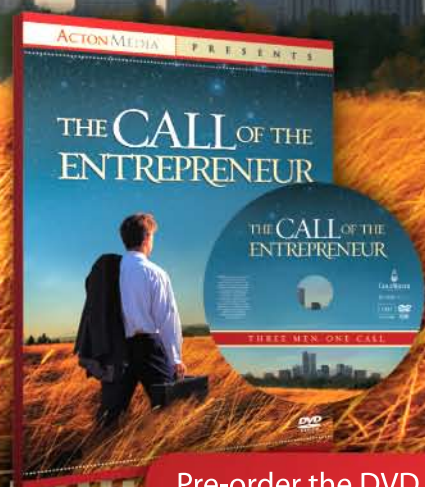
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