

The Roots of American Compassion

Excerpted from forthcoming book
Street Saints: Renewing America's Soul
© Copyright 2003 all rights reserved

By *Barbara J. Elliott*
Senior Fellow
Hudson Institute

The faith of our forefathers played a very significant role in the birth of this young nation, shaping the hearts and minds of the founders. Faith and reason shaped the American soul, which has produced both civic order and compassion, one of the fruits of faith. The covenant that shaped our civic order springs from transcendent order, and the hand extended in compassion manifests morality as it moves the human heart. The animating force of this nation that has given us both is potent, invisible, and ebbing away.

Michael Novak writes that the American eagle mounts on two wings: humble faith and reason. "The founding generation moved easily between faith and practical, common-sense reasoning, indeed mounted upwards on both those wings in unison."¹ He admonishes, "In one key respect, the way the story of the United States has been told for the past one hundred years is wrong. It has cut off one of the two wings by which the American eagle flies, her compact with the God ...who brings down the mighty and lifts up the poor; and will do so till the end of time. Believe that there is such a God or not, the founding generation did...Their faith is an 'indispensible' part of their story."²

From the earliest colonial times, our citizens have lived out a tension between freedom and order, between selfishness and selflessness. Our founders believed that freedom can be lived out fruitfully only when it is paired with virtue. And

the source of their virtue was faith. Their understanding was rooted in a rich spiritual and intellectual history, pushing down deep into the rich soil of civilization of the Western World. Our nation is the fruition of centuries of wisdom that emerged long before our forefathers landed on North American shores.

Russell Kirk offers a magnificent overview of our intellectual and spiritual patrimony in *The Roots of American Order*, where he takes us through five cities and civilizations from whence our rich heritage has come: Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, London, and Philadelphia.³ In a philosophically panoramic view we learn that:

- from the ancient Hebrews we have inherited an understanding of the order of the soul and a purposeful existence
- from Athens, we have an understanding of the order of the mind
- from Rome, we have an understanding of personal virtue and the order of the polity
- from Jerusalem, we received salvation and sanctification from the Savior
- and from London, our concepts of common law, private property and constitutional order.

Each of these spheres of understanding built upon those previous, and the cumulative effect allowed a richer order and deeper understanding to develop.

This wisdom of the ages was planted in American soil in Philadelphia. Here, free of the constraints of the Old World, it produced the unique flowering of our republic. We did not invent these truths, nor was our republic the product of wild-eyed ideologues. We inherited a rich patrimony, rooted in all of Western civilization, which was transplanted into a new continent. Kirk warns us that if we are to flourish, we must tend to these roots and replenish them.

Faith and the Founders

John Winthrop delivered his famous “city on a hill” sermon on the deck of the ship *Arbella* halfway between England and Cape Cod in 1630, to remind the Pilgrims of the covenant they had made with the “God of Israel” and with each other. He said, “We must delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together...For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.”⁴ Like the Israelites, they had a covenant with their creator. And in fact, the settlers to New England believed themselves to be establishing a New Israel.

The settlers who came here believed that their life and liberty were gifts from God, and they would be judged at the end of their days according to how they used these remarkable gifts. They believed that they would be held accountable for their actions, their sins of omission and commission, the care or negligence they showed their neighbors, and their honesty in dealing with each other. They knew God as not only a God of mercy, but also of the God of justice, and they feared his wrath. “I tremble,” Thomas Jefferson wrote, “when I reflect that God is just.”

The Pilgrims, separatists from the Puritan movement in England, settled in the northeast colonies. A small enclave of Roman Catholics settled in the northeast as well. The settlers in the middle colonies tended to be members of the Anglican Church, while the south had a greater concentration of Baptists and Calvinists. There were Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Quakers who also populated the colonies, along with a sprinkling of Jews. Because so many settlers had come here with ferociously independent denominational convictions, albeit overwhelmingly Christian, they found it useful to adapt Old Testament language and imagery. Novak tells us, that in “national debate, lest their speech be taken as partisan,” Christian leaders usually adopted the “idiom of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” as the “religious *lingua franca* for the founding generation.”⁵ This shared language of Judaism “came to be the central language of the American metaphysic – the unspoken background to a special American vision of nature, history and the destiny of the human race.”⁶

The colonists knew the Bible well, both Old Testament and New. The influence of Biblical teaching on early America was profound. At the time of the American Revolution, 84% of the pamphlets circulating were reprints of sermons, generously peppered with Scriptural references. Even in the secular pamphlets, 34% of the quotations were from the Bible.⁷ It was the book often used to teach youngsters how to read, starting with the Gospel of John. Biblical imagery permeated the language and the culture. Sermons were the main form of spiritual, intellectual and civic formation.⁸ The settlers had a clear understanding of theology in which the family was the primary unit ordained by God for mutual care. They believed they had been given property and ability as gifts of God, which were to be released through work. Producing prosperity was an expression of the fullness of a godly life. And they believed that they should be open-handed with neighbors in need.

Conditions were rugged, and the settlers were ravaged by disease and hunger, which meant their dependence on each other was great. Shortly after landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620, nearly all the Pilgrims became deathly ill. Only six or seven of them could still move about, and the rest languished in their beds in misery. But the few who were still on their feet, despite the hazard to their own health, fetched the wood, cooked the meals, washed the linens, bathed and clothed the ill, caring for them day and night. As the Pilgrim leader William Bradford wrote, they did this “willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in ye least, shewing herein true love unto their friends & brethren.”⁹

The colonists were pledged to care for one another, and neighbors joined forces to drain the swamp on one man’s property, and clear trees on that of another. If the parents of a child fell ill or died, it was understood that another family would care for the child as their own.¹⁰ Families were the primary civic unit. These Good Samaritans were often reimbursed from the town coffers for their out-of-pocket expenses in caring for the needy. The town fathers agreed that the individuals’ costs of caring for a neighbor could be shared with the community. This is a precedent worth noting, in light of contemporary debates.

The early Americans felt obligated to give wisely, for the sake of both giver and receiver. They linked the formation of character to acts of charity.

Assistance was almost always given in the form of time, food, cloth, or coal, but not money. They looked at a person's motivation, whether they could get assistance from friends or relatives,¹¹ and whether they were willing to work to support themselves. This was all in keeping with the Biblical teaching to give to those who ask, but that those who do not work should not eat.¹²

Illustrations of the Compassionate Way, from the Tao

C.S. Lewis compiled a number of moral teachings as illustrations of Natural Law, transcendent truth which civilizations have discovered and affirmed in different times and places. Lewis calls this the Tao, or the way. One aspect of this overarching moral law is compassion. These excerpts are taken from Lewis' book *The Abolition of Man*.

'Men were brought into existence for the sake of men that they might do one another good.'
(Roman. Cicero, *De Off.* I.vii.)

'He who is asked for alms should always give.'
(Hindu. Janet, i.7.)

'What good man regards any misfortune as no concern of his?' (Roman. Juvenal, xv. 140)

'Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.' (Ancient Chinese. *Analects of Confucius*, trans. A. Waley, xv.23; cf.xii.2).

'Speak kindness...show good will.' (Babylonian. *Hymn to Samas. ERE v. 445.*)

'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' (Ancient Jewish. Leviticus xix.18.)

'Love the stranger as thyself.' (Ancient Jewish, *ibid.* 33,34.)

'You will see them take care of their kindred [and] the children of their friends ...never reproaching them in the least.' (Redskin. Le Jeune, quoted ERE v. 437.)

'I ought not to be unfeeling like a statue but should fulfill both my natural and artificial relations, as a worshipper, a son, a brother, a father, and a citizen.' (Greek. Epictetus, III. II.)

'The union and fellowship of men will be best preserved if each receive from us the more

kindness in proportion as he is more closely connected with us.' (Roman. Cicero, *De Off.* I.,xvi.)

'The poor and the sick should be regarded as lords of the atmosphere.' (Hindu. Janet, i.8.)

'Whoso makes intercession for the weak, well pleasing is this to Samas.' (Babylonian. ERE v. 445.)

'I have given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, a ferry boat to the boatless.' (Ancient Egyptian. ERE v. 478.)

'They never desert the sick.' (Australian Aborigines. ERE v. 443.)

'You will see them take care of ...widows, orphans, and old men, never reproaching them.' (Redskin, ERE v. 439.)

'When thou cuttest down thine harvest...and has forgot a sheaf...thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.' (Ancient Jewish. Deut.xxiv.19.)

'There are two kinds of injustice: the first is found in those who do an injury, the second in those who fail to protect another from injury when they can.' (Roman. Cicero. *Dr. Off.* I, vii.)

'A sacrifice is obliterated by a lie and the merit of alms by an act of fraud.' (Hindu. Janet, i.6)

'The foundation of justice is good faith.'
(Roman. Cicero, *Dr. Off.* I.vii.)

'The Master said, Be of unwavering good faith.'
(Ancient Chinese. *Analects*, viii.13.)

'Verily, verily I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it.' (Christian. John xii.24, 25.)

C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1955) pp. 95-121

The Fruits of Faith

Sermons of the founding era, whether Anglican, Congregationalist, Methodist, or Presbyterian, regularly noted that faith without works of compassion was dead. Benjamin Colman warned in a sermon, "God values our Hearts and Spirits above all our Silver or Gold, our Herds and Flocks. If a Man would give all the Substance of his House instead

of Love, ...it would be contemned.”¹³ When Methodism spread in the eighteenth century, American followers urged their countrymen to follow John Wesley’s advice to ‘put yourself in the place of every poor man and deal with him as you would have God deal with you.’”¹⁴ It is clear that faith was expected to produce fruits.

In fact, the fruits of liberty prompted by faith are exactly what the founders had in mind when they wrote the preamble to the Constitution. As Gleaves Whitney has pointed out, the intention of the founders was not only to protect the practice of religion, but to foster the fruits of its practice as well: the virtues of forbearance, love, and charity. This formulation runs parallel to a key passage in the preamble to the Constitution: to “provide the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” Here we see that the founders sought not mere liberty, but the blessings of liberty.

Whitney points us deeper. “If the Founders seem as interested in securing ‘the *blessings* of liberty’ as in liberty itself, then it is because they viewed liberty as instrumental. It is a means, not the end – rather like money. Most people want money, not for its own sake, but for what it allows one to have: status, security, power, material comforts, and so on. It’s not the money per se but the blessings of money that we want. By analogy, the Preamble suggests that the Founders viewed liberty not as an end in itself, but as the means to the end, which is the good life.”¹⁵ The good life consists in the virtues of forbearance, love and charity – fruits of the spirit.

The founders believed that there was a striking linkage between civic, moral and spiritual order. Rather than separating matters of the state from convictions of faith, they saw them as interwoven. John Witherspoon, one of the more influential founders, wrote, “in times of difficulty and trial, it is in the man of piety and inward principle, that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the useful citizen, and the invincible soldier. God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable.”¹⁶

Compact and Covenant

Before the first settlers even set foot on Plymouth Rock, they bound themselves to each other and to God in a form of governance derived from covenant theology of the Old Testament. In the words of the Mayflower Compact of 1620: “Having undertaken for the glory of God,...and advancement of the

Christian faith, a voyage to plant colony...in the presence of God and of one another, we do Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic, for our better ordering and preservation.”¹⁷ As Donald Lutz proves in the *Origins of American Constitutionalism*, this was a defining moment for America, because of the character of a covenant, and its civic counterpart, a compact.¹⁸ The Mayflower Compact and other compacts which the original colonies implemented were derived directly from the covenant of the Old Testament, binding Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to the great “I am” and obligating themselves to live in accordance with his law. Our Constitution has the same roots.

The names for God referenced in the Declaration of Independence were Old Testament names: Lawgiver, Creator, Judge, and Providence. Michael Novak points out that, “If these Hebraic texts of the Declaration were strung together as a single prayer, the prayer would run as follows: “Creator, who has endowed in us our inalienable rights, Maker of nature and nature’s laws, undecivable Judge of the rectitude of our intentions, we place our firm reliance upon the protection of divine Providence, which you have extended over our nation from its beginnings.”¹⁹ This is no secular document: our Declaration of Independence has embedded in it this subtext, a prayer.

Conclusive Christian Convictions

The signers of the Declaration were almost all devout Christians, despite the contemporary spin on history which would tell us otherwise. Professor M.E. Bradford researched their lives thoroughly, including their correspondence, wills, and writings, and found conclusive evidence that the signers, with very few exceptions, were firmly committed in traditional practice of Christianity.²⁰ Bradford found numerous “references made by the Framers to Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Son of God” which he says are “commonplace in their private papers, correspondence, and public remarks.”²¹ Their faith was evident not only in their words, but in their lives. For example:

- Patrick Henry wrote in his will, “This is the inheritance I can give to my dear family. The religion of Christ will give them one which will make them rich indeed.”²²
- John Jay of New York in his will thanked “the author and giver of all good... for His merciful and unmerited blessings, and especially for our redemption and salvation by his beloved Son.”²³

- Elias Boudinot of New Jersey was “heavily involved in Christian missions and was the founder of the American Bible Society.”²⁴
- Roger Sherman “was a ruling elder of his church.”²⁵
- Richard Bassett “rode joyfully with his former slaves...singing on the way to Methodist camp meetings.”²⁶
- Charles Cotesworth Pinckney “set aside money to evangelize slaves” and “distributed Bibles to blacks” as president of the Charleston Bible Society.²⁷
- During the Revolution, Abraham Baldwin of Georgia “served as chaplain in the American army.”
- Luther Martin declared “his devotion to ‘the sacred truths of the Christian religion.’”⁸
- James Madison and Alexander Hamilton “regularly led their households in the observance of family prayers.”²⁹
- David Brearly of New Jersey and William Samuel Johnson of Connecticut “devoted themselves to reorganizing the Episcopal Church in their states.”³⁰
- John Witherspoon educated Presbyterian clergy with treatises such as “The Absolute Necessity of Salvation Through Christ.”³¹

Their lives are the proof of their Christian faith, which permeated the founding and their intentions for the country.

The founders were convinced that as creatures of God, we all have both rights and responsibilities, and that the order of the state must be crafted in harmony with the higher order of the Creator. They believed that the moral compass of each individual man and woman allows us to live in liberty because we must be governed from within. They were convinced that without virtue and self-restraint, there would be conflict and eventually chaos. They believed that freedom must be linked to faith and virtue, or freedom would fail.

George Washington said so plainly in his Farewell Address: “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports...let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. ...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”³² Samuel Adams wrote, “Religion and good morals are the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness.”³³ That is exactly the same con-

clusion John Adams reached, and he drove the point home saying, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”³⁴

The Truth About the First Amendment

Why then does the contemporary climate insist that the founders intended a secular nation with a “separation of church and state?” This phrase appears nowhere in the Constitution or the First Amendment. It is cited today by people everywhere who are clueless as to its origin. The metaphor of a “wall of separation” stems from a private letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Baptists in Danbury Connecticut in 1802. The notion of the “separation of church and state” was not, and is not, an amendment to our Constitution. It was a phrase in a letter with no legal binding power. The current application of this phrase to attempt to eradicate all traces of faith from the public square runs completely contrary to the founders’ intentions.

The First Amendment reads: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The intent of the founders was specifically to prevent Congress from imposing one denomination on the entire nation from the federal level. The First Amendment was never intended to exorcise all traces of religion from public life. Quite the contrary. The founders believed that the practice of religion was essential to provide the moral content to fill the institutions of the newly formed government. They understood that in the absence of virtue, there could be no order in freedom. Gouverneur Morris put it this way: “Religion is the only solid Base of morals and Morals are the only possible Support of free governments.”³⁵

Even Jefferson, whose Deist convictions put him outside the mainstream of the founders, clearly articulated the necessity of reliance on God for the survival of our republic. His words are etched in the wall of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.: “God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we remove their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of people that these liberties are a gift from God?”

Jefferson’s own convictions, even as a Deist, honored Christian teaching and specifically Jesus. Jefferson did not believe in the divinity of Christ, miracles in the Bible, or the trinity, but he wrote that “The philosophy of Jesus is the most sublime and benevolent code of morals ever offered to man.

A more beautiful or precious morsel of ethics I have never seen.”³⁶

While Jefferson was president, he regularly attended worship services on Sunday in the Capitol Building. Rev. Ethan Allen, who lived nearby, wrote in his own hand an account of the following encounter. President Jefferson was on his way to church one Sunday morning with his large red prayer book under his arm when, after wishing him a good morning, Allen asked him which way he was walking.

Jefferson replied, “To church, sir.”

He exclaimed, “You going to church Mr. Jefferson? You do not believe a word of it.”

“Sir,” said Mr. Jefferson, “No nation has ever yet existed or been governed without religion. Nor can be. The Christian religion is the best religion that has ever been given to man and I, as chief Magistrate of this nation, am bound to give it the sanction of my example. Good morning Sir.”³⁷

Two dominant characteristics of early America were its deep Christian faith and its denominational diversity. So to encourage faith without diluting it, while preserving the right of all individuals to practice their faith freely, the First Amendment prohibited Congress from imposing one denomination on the country. In fact, the right to establish churches at the state level was fully legal, and several states did so. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Virginia, New Hampshire, and South Carolina had established state churches supported with taxes, the last of which ended only in the 19th century.³⁸

The First Amendment did not prohibit the use of government money or property for religious purposes. Quite the contrary. The founders wanted to encourage religious belief and its practice. Public schools regularly taught from the Bible and offered character education based on it. Jefferson himself authorized the use of federal funds to purchase Bibles to “propagate Christianity among the Indians.”³⁹ Worship services were held every Sunday in the Capitol building. The sessions of Congress opened with prayer, and presidents were sworn into office in a public inauguration with their hand on a Bible, just as they are now. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 proclaimed “Religion ...[to be] necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind,” and set aside land for churches.⁴⁰

States had free reign to foster the practice of religion and its instruction. John Adams in Massachusetts affirmed that “religious education was essential to survival of a free republic.” His

state’s constitution “required the state to pay for religious education if there weren’t any private groups able to do it.”⁴¹ The article of religion drafted by George Mason for the Virginia Declaration of Rights in 1776 and modified by James Madison, reflects the climate of ideas at the time they worked through different drafts of the First Amendment: “Religion or the duty we owe to our Creator.... all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience..... [I]t is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love and charity toward each other.”⁴²

Forbearance, love and charity. These are the attributes that the founders wanted to foster in America.

What Alexis de Tocqueville Saw

When the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville visited America in the 1830’s, he marveled at the faith that motivated civic life. He wrote, “For the Americans the ideas of Christianity and liberty are so completely mingled that it is almost impossible to get them to conceive of the one without the other.”⁴³ He was dazzled by the array of voluntary associations—civic, philanthropic, political, neighborly, moral, educational – and the vibrant good will they harnessed. This kind of engagement was unique to America in this era, quite unlike the European culture. In old Europe, it was much more likely that the nobility or the church hierarchy would take on a project, but seldom would individuals simply band together. But in the years since the first colonials stepped ashore, these European immigrants had been helping one another survive, settle, and thrive. It had become a way of life.

In the famous passage which illustrates the voluntary vibrancy of America, Tocqueville wrote:

Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types – religious, moral, serious, futile...immensely large and very minute. Americans combine to give fetes, found seminaries, build churches, distribute books, and send missionaries to the antipodes. Hospitals, prisons, and schools take shape in that way. Finally, if they want to proclaim a truth or propagate some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form an association.⁴⁴

The variety of such associations was truly staggering. In *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, Marvin Olasky gives us a snapshot of the kinds of groups Tocqueville would have seen on his visit here.

- In New York, The Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children was founded in 1797.⁴⁵
- In Boston the Fragment Society, founded in 1812, provided material for clothes and assisted more than 10,200 families in need.⁴⁶
- The St. Vincent de Paul societies set up hospitals and orphanages, and built the New York House of the Good Shepherd for what they delicately called “fallen women and girls.”⁴⁷
- The Female Domestic Missionary Society for the Poor, founded in 1816, distributed Bibles and provided schooling in poor parts of New York.
- In Baltimore a group of Catholic women founded the Maria Marthian Society in 1827 to assist “all denominations, ages, sexes and colours.”⁴⁸
- In 1822, the Presbyterian women of Petersburg, Virginia established an Education Society, a Ladies’ Missionary Society, and a Dorcas Society, all to help the poor.
- The Baltimore Female Association for the Relief of Distressed Objects, founded in 1808, assisted women in need.
- In Charleston, beginning in 1813, the Ladies Benevolent Society aided the senile, both black and white.⁴⁹
- Jewish settlers established a Hebrew Benevolent Society in Charleston in 1784, a Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society in 1822, and a Hebrew Relief Society in New York in 1831, as well as other societies to assist “destitute pregnant women.”⁵⁰

These associations sprang up like wildflowers across the countryside to meet every imaginable need, and their roots bound people together at the community level. They worked irrespective of denominational lines, racial or class barriers. But Americans were modest about what they did in serving each other, seeking no public fanfare. They realized it had a value not only for others, but for themselves.⁵¹

Fostering America’s Soul

Tocqueville observed that this kind of action has a steadying effect in encouraging people toward virtue, building their character as they practice it. He wrote, “The doctrine of self-interest properly

understood does not inspire great sacrifices, but every day it prompts some small ones; by itself it cannot make a man virtuous, but its discipline shapes a lot of orderly, temperate, moderate, careful, and self-controlled citizens. If it does not lead the will directly to virtue, it establishes habits which unconsciously turn it that way.”⁵² This is the acquisition of civic virtue. In caring for one another voluntarily, Americans foster their own character development.

Tocqueville dubbed these little units of interaction “voluntary associations.” He wrote in the tradition of Edmund Burke, who called them “little platoons” and “subdivisions” of society. Others today call this sector “civil society.” It is expressed in all the many ways people come together freely, in families, neighborhoods, schools, clubs, and communities. Burke and Tocqueville agreed that human beings interact best with each other when they engage in small civic units. To love mankind is abstract, but one can love particular people. Trying to help “the poor” is overwhelming, but helping one family in need is a manageable task. It is the most effective way of reaching individuals: face to face.

Civil society operates at the intersection of faith and free human action. This way of looking at civil society rests upon Christian thinking, both Catholic and Protestant. One of the core principles of Catholic social teaching is the concept of “subsidiarity,” which means in essence that if people closest to the problem can solve it through face-to-face relationships, particularly at the neighborhood level, that is where it should be solved. Catholic teaching says it is “both a serious evil and a disturbance of right order to assign to a larger and higher society what can be performed successfully by smaller and lower communities.”⁵³ This is altogether consistent with Protestant teaching by Calvin, who advocated people “dwelling together in community under the dominion of God.”⁵⁴ Scottish Enlightenment writer Adam Ferguson valued civil society “as a moral sphere.”⁵⁵ Christian teaching across the denominational spectrum promotes interaction that creates a civic good, while strengthening virtue.

From the beginning, it has been crucial for the health of America’s soul to have vibrant manifestations of faith which both reflect virtue and inculcate it. Founder Benjamin Rush put it this way: “The only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in religion. Without it there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all

republican governments.”⁵⁶

The founders’ syllogism is this:

Liberty is the object of the Republic.

Liberty needs virtue.

Virtue among the people is impossible without religion.⁵⁷

The Contemporary Conflict Zone

If we “fast forward” to contemporary America, we discover a very different picture. The scope of the civic realm has shriveled in the past century. People who were once connected through voluntary relationships no longer are. We see the “little platoons” overwhelmed by big cities as urbanization has replaced the agrarian culture. Unbridled materialism and politicization have overwhelmed the public philosophy of life. This trend accelerated over the course of the 20th century, peaking in the 1960’s. It has unraveled the private sector and its morality, and shifted civic engagement from the voluntary associations toward the centralized state and bureaucracy.

At the same time, there was a push in the name of efficiency to turn over the care of the poor to the government, shifting the responsibility from the civic space, where actions were personal, to the public space, where they are not. What individuals once did became the responsibility of a vast institution. As we have decreased our civic engagement, our expectations of government have risen. The weaker our horizontal local ties are in the community, the stronger the dependency on the vertical ties of the state.⁵⁸ A ripple effect has resulted, Charles Murray tells us: “When the government takes away a core function, it depletes not only the source of vitality pertaining to that particular function, but also the vitality of a much larger family of responses.”⁵⁹ The middle sector of civic engagement and the mediating institutions have shriveled. Underlying all of these shifts is the broad secularization of our culture, the post-Enlightenment mentality writ large. We see an overt ejection of faith from the public square. We see that the First Amendment, which was intended to preserve freedom of religion, has now become interpreted as a mandate to protect Americans *from* religion. And we see the private voluntary sector severed from its religious roots.

The centrifugal forces of modernity have accelerated at a dizzying pace from the 1960s to the present. What has happened in just forty years has been the demise of the traditional family, which has been replaced by a culture of “alternative lifestyles.”

We see skyrocketing rates of illegitimate births and abortion, an explosion of divorce and domestic violence, and the evaporation of multi-generational families in one place together. Quite often those living in poverty are single mothers, with their children. In the tonier parts of town, neighborhood has been replaced by “lifestyle enclaves” and gated communities for those who can afford them, where it is never necessary to encounter poverty. Private civic engagement has radically atrophied, with fewer true volunteers. Women, who had been the backbone of volunteerism, are increasingly in the workforce instead, with no spare time.

Americans are “Bowling Alone”

Civic engagement in America remained relatively strong well into the 20th century. Robert Putnam tells us in *Bowling Alone*⁶⁰ that from the Moose and Elk Lodges to the Salvation Army, from the Knights of Columbus to Hadassah, Americans historically have been deeply engaged in civic organizations. They flourished well into the 20th century, diminishing slightly during the Depression, and then rising smartly after World War II and through the 1950s. But Putnam has discovered that since the late sixties, civic engagement has taken a free-fall plummet. A nation that volunteered together or bowled in leagues has abandoned these activities and is now “bowling alone” – hence Putnam’s title.

The Harvard professor has examined patterns of political and religious participation, volunteering, community activity, and philanthropy as indicators of “social capital.” In graph after graph, he presents visible evidence of the decline of civic engagement over the past forty years in everything from churches to political organizations and service clubs. He finds that more Americans are living in cities but are relationally alone, severed from their extended families, surrounded by people but living a life in isolation.

There are several contributing factors to this malaise, Putnam concludes.

- Most markedly, there has been a stark change of mindset between the generations born before the end of World War II and the “Baby Boomers” born 1946-64. The plummet began as the boomers began to reach adulthood, and showed little of the civic engagement of their parents, who were still volunteering actively.
- Putnam looks at the entry of women into the workplace and the pressures of two-career families, and concludes this is one factor, but not the only one.

- Urban sprawl is another factor, which necessitates longer commutes and thins out the sense of community.
- Putnam finds a striking correlation between the amount of time spent watching television and slack civic engagement.

The religious community has been hit harder than it would appear. Over the past four decades, church membership has slipped by a mere 10%. But more telling is the fact that “actual attendance and involvement in religious activities has fallen by roughly 25 to 50 percent.”⁶¹ What used to be a commitment beyond Sunday worship no longer is. This one-time pillar of American life has been “hollowed out,” Putnam tells us. “Seen from without, the institutional edifice appears virtually intact – little decline in profession of faith, formal membership down just a bit, and so on. When examined more closely, however, it seems clear that decay has consumed the load-bearing beams of our civic infrastructure.”⁶²

Don Eberly writes “Tocqueville worried about a ‘separateness’ which has ...been dubbed in the 20th century ‘bowling alone.’ He detected the early signs of civic stagnation when he observed “Individualism is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the greater society to look after itself.”⁶³ Add a television, and you have a perfect recipe for inaction.

Mall as Modern Temple

But the drive toward material consumption is alive and well. Over the same time frame, Putnam finds that 70 percent of young people have decided that making a lot of money is their top priority. Participating in the community is a priority for only one in five.⁶⁴ In an eerily prophetic insight, Tocqueville could already see these conflicting tendencies in the bosom of America. At the same time he admired the thriving voluntary associations and the selfless impulse of Americans, he also saw that a strong streak of individualism and materialism ran through the character of the country.

We see the modern man around us everywhere today. Robert Bellah calls this creature the “radically unencumbered and improvisational self,” cut off from any ties to community, history, tradition, or civic engagement. The culture of the “self” has grown, as have the publications, spas, therapists and support groups to massage our bodies and

egos. What Tom Wolfe described as the “Me Decade” has turned into several decades of self-absorption by the Baby Boomers, and now Generations X and Y. The “pursuit of happiness” in America is increasingly expressed by material consumption. Tocqueville foresaw this also, warning that a decrease in religion was likely to “lay the soul open to an inordinate love of material pleasure.”⁶⁵ His words were prophetic. The shopping mall has become the new American temple.

The market economy has created a higher standard of living, materially speaking, and has created many lucrative jobs. But as the nation has become more intensely market driven, it has also exacted a price on civil society. Markets tend to undermine what makes them work. Trust is necessary for a marketplace to function, but the market depends on a driving self-interest, which can rupture trust. Cooperation is necessary for the market, but a climate of competition can fracture cooperation. The quieter personal attributes can be jeopardized by a stampede toward wealth. This cuts to the heart of the contemporary dilemma in America. At some point, the human conditions that allow markets to flourish are undone by the market’s success.

Dislocation and ruptured families severed from geographic community roots have also weakened the fabric of our nation. People who move every seven years on average, regardless of how much they earn, are relationally impoverished. The mobility which has been efficient for the marketplace has been slowly unraveling the rootedness of American people. Community is dissolved by constant geographic relocation. As small shopkeepers are driven out of business by large chains, the character of our towns is homogenized and depersonalized. It is a delicate order that makes markets sustainable in a free country, and we in America teeter in a precarious balancing act.

Economist Wilhelm Roepke addressed these concerns in *A Humane Economy*,⁶⁶ concluding that there is a point of diminishing returns with unfettered economic growth. Roepke observed that as economic improvement grows, discontentment rises in proportion to expectations. He contends that a growing economy does not necessarily improve the welfare of individuals, because other costs accompany economic growth. The creation of more goods creates new wants, envy, and the social compulsion to acquire. This discontent, however, comes from a mind-set that equates our satisfaction with our material goods, and assumes that our possessions define our worth.

But the real question is the human heart and our attitude toward wealth, not prosperity itself. From the Biblical perspective, wealth is bestowed as a blessing, but with it comes responsibility to use it both wisely and compassionately. If we do not, the result is an atrophied soul, and materialism writ large. The bitter fruit is alienation.

Mediating institutions historically have provided a bridge between individuals and the overarching structures above them. But in the push of the modern age toward big business and big bureaucracy, the bridges of mediating institutions have fallen into disrepair or disappeared. Mediating institutions are the antidote to isolation and alienation of the individual and the dissolution of society by the centrifugal forces of modernity. They are crucial in preserving the good character of the country. We live in a fragile institution.

One of the most powerful mediating institutions was always the church. But over the course of time, this beam in our nation has become hollow. Marginalized in the drive toward secular materialism, which appears to be the new national religion, the transformational power of the church has less influence on the culture. Fewer and fewer people venture outside the pews in any other manifestation of their faith. The voice of self-interest and self-indulgence has become louder to fill the space left in the retreat of virtue.

We have increasingly placed our faith in the power of government to provide solutions for human misery. What was once a strong level of responsibility and autonomy at the city, county, and state level has shifted toward a concentration at the federal level, with only modest attempts since to change the tide. The responsibility for caring for the poor is no longer that of the community, but the federal government, diminishing the need for community. So we see another kind of polarization taking place, where the mediating institutions have shriveled, leaving at one end alienated individuals, and at the other end a vast bureaucracy, in which we have placed our hopes, but which by its nature cannot meet individual, personal needs.

Seeking Secular Salvation

Deep beneath this shift toward the political realm was a philosophical drift that began in an undercurrent several centuries ago. Eric Voegelin, one of the most astute critics of modernity, argued that the modern age has been characterized by the emergence of politics as a secular means of salvation. He traces the unraveling of order back to

Joachim of Flora, a medieval mystic who depicted man's history in three ascending ages, which would bring about the final age of perfection. According to Voegelin, "He and his successors replaced faith in God with faith in man's ability to build heaven on earth. The new earthly faith depended upon the fallacious notion that history itself has a purpose: the achievement of human perfection. Salvation was to be sought in this world, through the pursuit of temporal achievements aimed at making material the transcendent world of God."⁶⁷ Hobbes and Rousseau took the next steps, claiming that the political order could provide the means to rescue man from his fallen state and remake his image.

This train of thought took a cunning twist at the turn of the century in America, through the Social Universalists. Professor Richard Ely urged economists and theologians to converge in support of "coercive philanthropy" which he saw as the "duty of government" to "establish among us true cities of God."⁶⁸ William G. Fremantle expounded this approach, lifting up the "Nation as the Church, its rulers as ministers of Christ, its whole body as a Christian brotherhood, ...material interests as Sacraments, its progressive development, especially in raising the weak, as the fullest service rendered on earth to God, the nearest thing as yet within our reach to the kingdom of heaven."⁶⁹

This is a perversion of the natural order. The government can never bring about the kingdom of heaven. The political realm is incapable of inculcating virtue. Law can draw the dividing line between human beings and their actions, and can punish infractions that violate a person or their property. But it is incapable of directly influencing the human heart to desire good or avoid evil. Government can provide boundaries for human action and can guarantee rights, but it cannot write its laws in the hearts of its citizens. Government can protect the freedom for people to seek their own good, but it cannot mandate the appetite to seek the highest good. These are tasks which must remain squarely in the private sector.

It is an odd paradox, but the success of America depends on these private virtues, and the theological truths that shape them, for its very existence. But it is outside the realm of the government to provide the character formation that is necessary for the survival of the republic. This is what people of faith in the private sector must do. That which is essential for the survival of our civic order must be provided in the private realm, in the armies of compassion, through the street saints.

There are thousands of faith-based organizations, schools, and community associations that educate, nurture, and care for people, shaping their hearts and souls. It is crucial that they succeed in planting the seeds of virtue.

Renewers in America are now seeking appropriate ways to foster the “fruits of liberty” –forbearance, love, and charity – in a way that is consistent with the overarching principles of the country. People of faith are necessary to instill the values and convictions that make people responsible individuals. Without faith, virtue cannot be sustained. We walk in this precarious balancing act, suspended in the tension between church and state, with a push to eradicate all public traces of faith, while the nation depends on the vibrancy of faith for its survival.

A Faustian Bargain?

What then is the relationship between faith and the public square in America? Although the founders clearly proclaimed faith to be essential in fostering virtue, and virtue to be necessary for the functioning of the republic, the linkage has been severed today. For 350 years from the arrival of the earliest settlers, Americans acknowledged their dependence on God’s grace for the human governing institutions to function. Only in the past 50 years has the dependency of the state on the fruits of faith been called into question.

Jefferson’s old metaphor of a “wall of separation between church and state” lay dormant in his letter of 1803, with no legal significance or binding power whatsoever. It suddenly appeared in a dissenting opinion of the Supreme Court in 1947. Justice Hugo Black wrote, “The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach.”⁷⁰ With this dissenting opinion, Jefferson’s words in private correspondence assumed a power that the founding generation and Jefferson himself never intended. In the years since, a spate of court decisions have expanded the concept to roll back manifestations of faith in public life in myriad ways, to the point that Chief Justice Rehnquist has noted that the Court “bristles with hostility to all things religious in public life.”⁷¹

Now a court order has mandated the removal of a monument of the Ten Commandments, and the secular feeding frenzy aims to sanitize the public square from all traces of religion, particularly if it’s Christian.

But at the same time, we have experienced a

White House that has actively sought to reverse the tide that has swept faith away from its rightful place as the cornerstone of America’s civic order. The George W. Bush Administration has trumpeted the successes of the “armies of compassion.” It set out to create a “level playing field” for faith-based and community organizations in the country to provide social services, and to remove the obstacles for them to apply for federal contracts to do so. The rules of engagement dictate that federal funds may not be used for religious instruction, purchase of Bibles or other religious materials, or for proselytizing. Faith-based groups may compete like any other agencies or organizations for grants to provide social services the government contracts out, and the funding may be used for the secular part of faith-based organization’s work. Funding has been allocated through the Compassion Capital Fund to build up the capacity and competence of faith-based organizations through intermediaries, who are strengthening the movement at the grassroots level. But one of the most useful things President George W. Bush has done is to simply focus the national spotlight on faith initiatives, raising their visibility in the country and increasing their legitimacy through his public blessing.

Faith-based organizations are providing results with clear civic value. And whether one understands or agrees with their methods, the results are being expressed in decreased recidivism of criminal offenders, reduced drug addiction, successful transition from welfare to work, decreased disciplinary infractions of at-risk youth, fewer teen pregnancies, and reunited families. These are the tangible fruits of faith, and they are improving the quality of life for citizens throughout the country. If the government can foster these fruits in a way appropriate to its mission to serve the common good, it should.

The issue of federal funding for the operations of faith-based organizations has been rife with controversy. For one thing, many of the smaller grassroots organizations doing good work at the neighborhood level would be overwhelmed with the burden of compliance in administering a sizeable federal grant. By definition, the federal government cannot fund the faith-centered part of the work faith-based groups do. While some ministries can segregate out the secular aspects of their work for budgetary purposes, it’s an onerous task, and in some cases philosophically impossible. If faith is not only the motivation but the method, how do you divide the mission? Faith-based agencies have been advised to establish a separate 501 c 3 nonprofit as a firewall

to handle the work under government contract. But not all providers are in a position to administer a separate organization well. There is also concern that faith-based providers would become dependent on government funding, or trim their mission to accommodate future funding streams.

But there is a deeper issue.

If faith-based groups receive federal funding, it is a Faustian bargain: in those programs they are muzzled in speaking about the source of their faith. Overt faith – preaching, teaching, evangelizing — is sanitized from programs that receive federal dollars.⁷² What remains is the delivery of social services, which undoubtedly have value, but can become decoupled from their spiritual origin. Faith-based organizations who receive significant federal funding run the risk of the new application of Lord Acton’s famous maxim on the corrupting tendencies of power (let’s call it Elliott’s law): “federal funding tends to secularize, and absolute federal funding secularizes absolutely.” By definition, faith-based organizations exist because of faith. But if they are funded fully by the federal government, they may not teach the source of their faith.⁷³

If you take the faith out of faith-based organizations, they do not differ from their secular counterparts, and lose the dynamism that sets them apart. They lose what makes them work. Those who reach out in the name of Caesar have a very different motivation, and it shows. Part of the power of people of faith walking into prisons and schools comes from the fact that they are not agents of the government, but private citizens moved by their heart. The result of moving from faith-based, relational ministry to secular, institutional social service has been impersonal care for the poor, who are neither lifted up nor loved. The work of people of faith is too important for the soul of the nation for it to be neutered or diluted.

What’s Needed is a Change of Heart

But the real debate is not about what the government can do. The obvious solution for funding faith-based work is to turn to the private sector. Foundations, corporations, and individuals are all free to give in their own communities, seeking out renewers and street saints. Corporations and some foundations have behaved as if they were prohibited from making grants to faith-based work, although there are no legal constraints. If these groups are providing work with a clear civic value, they are worthy of support. Individuals, more than any other sector, can maneuver freely with their

giving. If the life breath of the nation needs oxygen, who else should step up but individuals who care?

Equally important is the debate about what the people of faith can do in the private sector to revitalize a rapidly decaying culture from the inside out. The heavy lifting has to be done by individual people who act because of their faith, and are at liberty to give an account of the source of their hope. For too long Americans have been living a lukewarm faith with only tepid ripples of conviction. Only if we can re-ignite a passion for vibrant personal faith, which produces virtue manifested in action, can we maintain the fragile order which has been bequeathed to us by our forefathers. What we need is a change of heart.

The glue that held this society together for as long as it flourished was found in personal, face-to-face relationships. This is where civil society grows. To the extent that we have lost these face-to-face relationships to care for those in need, we have lost an important part of what made America personal, warm, even luminescent. We need to nurture this part of the American soul. We need to quicken the spiritual life of lukewarm believers, and light a fire to mobilize the laity to care for individuals in our own community. The reasons for doing this are compelling. But they require a change of heart.

“Justice will never be fully attained unless people see in the poor person, who is asking for help to survive, not an annoyance or burden,” says Pope John Paul II, “but an opportunity for showing kindness and a chance for greater enrichment.”⁷⁴ Part of the reason to serve the poor is not only to meet their needs, but our own. We are missing the opportunity for our own enrichment if we do not participate in this vibrant, voluntary sector.

We hold in our own hands the threads of our tattered civil society. Reweaving the threads of relationship through face-to-face encounters in our own communities can be a joyous and fulfilling engagement. The antidote to so much of the modern malady is right there, contained in the fragile string of relationship. Abandoned children in the inner city, blasé Baby Boomers, isolated elderly, and disenchanting Gen-Xers are all yearning for a better way of living. And yet we do not connect the threads. Only in the corners of communities where street saints are quietly knitting up relationships is there a renewal of the fabric of our country.

Until our culture demonstrates the virtue of *agape*, it will not move to help its forgotten. Until we do so as individuals, we will never know the joy that comes in serving others. The American culture

has an opportunity now for renewal through its people of faith. We are being called to care for one another because of our faith. We are being called to live out our virtue in service. The American soul has withered, and awaits an infusion of the lifeblood of love. Whether or not we respond may determine the very survival of our civilization. “Just look at history,” Peter Kreeft warns. “Each civilization has survived and thrived in proportion to its virtue. It has decayed when its virtue decayed. Israel, Greece, Rome and the modern West are examples.”⁷⁵

America inherited such a rich patrimony, spanning more than twenty centuries intellectually and spiritually. We have had the benefit of understanding the mind and spirit in the context of human institutions, and we have had the gift of freedom to develop our capabilities with an unparalleled dynamism. We have witnessed a remarkable outpouring of generosity in charity and the warmth of human engagement through a proliferation of private associations, armies of compassion on our

streets. Trust and cooperation flourished in a way that we almost took for granted, but that surprised visitors and newcomers from other shores. We had a nation that was not only strong, but gentle and good. But the soul of America is in peril now.

The question is whether we will heed the call to renew America’s soul.

God has promised He is with us, if we do.

In the words of Isaiah:

“If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; and satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets and Dwellings.”

©copyright 2003

Endnotes

- ¹ Michael Novak, *On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding* (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2002) p.6. The image comes from John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio*.
- ² Novak, *On Two Wings*, p. 5.
- ³ Russell Kirk, *The Roots of American Order* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1974).
- ⁴ John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" 1630, in Perry Miller (ed.) *The American Puritans: their Prose and Poetry* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1956) p.78.
- ⁵ Novak, p. 7.
- ⁶ Novak, p. 7.
- ⁷ Donald Lutz, Center for the American Idea Seminar lecture, Del Lago, TX, June 2000.
- ⁸ See Ellis Sandoz., *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: 1730-1805* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press, 1991).
- ⁹ William Bradford, *Of Plimoth Plantation*, (Boston, MA: Wright & Potter, 1898) Quoted in Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1992) p. 6.
- ¹⁰ Eleanor Parkhurst, "Poor Relief in a Massachusetts Village in the Eighteenth Century", *The Social Service Review* XI (September 1937) p. 452. , Quoted in Olasky, p. 7.
- ¹¹ The laws of the Northwest Territory required relatives to care for members of their family in need.
- ¹² 2 Thes. 3:10.
- ¹³ An echo of 1Cor. 13. Benjamin Colman, *The Merchandise of the People: Holiness to the Lord* (Boston, MA: J. Draper, 1736), from sermons preached in 1725 and 1726., Quoted in Olasky, p. 8.
- ¹⁴ Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, pp. 7-8.
- ¹⁵ Gleaves Whitney, Center for the American Idea Seminar lecture, Del Lago, TX, June 2000.
- ¹⁶ John Witherspoon, "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men," preached May 17, 1776; quoted in Ellis Sandoz, (ed.) *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: 1730-1805* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press, 1991) p. 546-7.
- ¹⁷ *American Legacy: The United States Constitution and other Essential Documents of American Democracy*, (Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1997), p.5.
- ¹⁸ Donald S. Lutz, *The Origins of American Constitutionalism*, (Louisiana State University Press: 1988).
- ¹⁹ Novak, *On Two Wings*, pp. 17-18.
- ²⁰ M.E. Bradford, "Religion and the Framers: The Biographical Evidence," in *Original Intentions: On the Making and Ratification of the United States Constitution*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993), pp. 87-102.
- ²¹ Bradford, *Original Intentions*, p.89
- ²² Campbell, *Patrick Henry*, p. 418. Quoted in Bradford, p. 89.
- ²³ William Jay, *The Life of John Jay with Selections from His Correspondence*, 3 vols. (New York, NY: Harper, 1833) 1: 519-20. Quoted in Bradford, pp. 89-90.
- ²⁴ George Adams Boyd, *Elias Boudinot: Patriot and Statesman, 1740-1821*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952). Referenced in Bradford, p. 91.
- ²⁵ Christopher Collier, *Roger Sherman's Connecticut: Yankee Politics and the American Revolution* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), p. 325-329. Referenced in Bradford, p. 91.
- ²⁶ Bradford, p. 91.
- ²⁷ Marvin R. Zahniser, *Charles Cotesworth Pinckney: Founding Father* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), pp. 272-274. Quoted in Bradford, p. 91.
- ²⁸ Bradford, p. 91.
- ²⁹ Bradford, p. 91.
- ³⁰ Bradford, p. 91
- ³¹ Bradford, p. 91.
- ³² George Washington, "Farewell Address" in W.B. Allen, ed., *George Washington: Collection* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1988) p. 521.
- ³³ Samuel Adams, letter to John Trumball, October 16, 1778, quoted in *The Founders' Almanac* (Washington D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 2002), p. 190.
- ³⁴ John Adams, Address to the Military, Oct. 11, 1798, quoted in *The Founders' Almanac*, p. 191.
- ³⁵ Gouverneur Morris, letter to George Gordon, June 28, 1792, quoted in *The Founders' Almanac*, p. 190.
- ³⁶ Quoted in Novak, *On Two Wings*, p. 29.
- ³⁷ From Rev. Ethan Allen's handwritten history "Washington Parish, Washington City" in the Library of Congress MMC Collection, 1167 MSS, in James H. Hutson, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1998) p. 96. Quoted in Novak, p. 31.
- ³⁸ Bradford, *Original Intentions*, p. 93-94.
- ³⁹ Robert L. Cord, *Separation of Church and State: Historical Fact and Current Fiction* (New York, NY: Lambeth Press, 1982) pp. 41-45.
- ⁴⁰ *American Legacy: The United States Constitution and other Essential Documents of American Democracy*, (Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1997) pp. 38-39.
- ⁴¹ Charles Colson, "Walls of Our Own Making: The Founders and Religion" BreakPoint with Commentary 020104, Jan. 4, 2002.
- ⁴² Quoted by Russell Kirk in *Roots of American Order*, p. 436.
- ⁴³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1955) p. 153. Quoted in Novak, p. 31.
- ⁴⁴ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 513.
- ⁴⁵ Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1992) p. 13.
- ⁴⁶ Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, p. 14.
- ⁴⁷ *The Charities of New York, Brooklyn, and Staten Island* (New York, NY: Hurd and Houghton, 1873) p. 46, Quoted in Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, p. 17.
- ⁴⁸ Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, pp. 16-17.
- ⁴⁹ Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, p. 15.
- ⁵⁰ *Charities of New York, Brooklyn, and Staten Island*, p. 48; referenced in Olasky p. 17.
- ⁵¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 525.
- ⁵² Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 527.
- ⁵³ *Quadragesimo Anno, 79*, quoted in *Encyclopedia of Catholic Doctrine*, Russell Shaw, Ed, (Huntingdon IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 1997) p. 650.
- ⁵⁴ Don E. Eberly, Ed., *The Essential Civil Society Reader*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000) p. 24.
- ⁵⁵ Eberly, p. 24
- ⁵⁶ Benjamin Rush, "Of the Mode of Education Proper to a Republic" (1798), cited in William J. Bennett, *Our Sacred Honor* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997) p. 412.
- ⁵⁷ Quoted in Novak, *On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding*, p.34.
- ⁵⁸ See Robert Nisbet, *Quest for Community* (San Francisco, CA: ICS Press, 1999).

- ⁵⁹ Charles Murray, *In Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), p. 274.
- ⁶⁰ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2000).
- ⁶¹ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 72.
- ⁶² Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 72.
- ⁶³ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 506.
- ⁶⁴ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 260.
- ⁶⁵ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 444.
- ⁶⁶ Wilhelm Roepke, *A Humane Economy: The Social Framework of the Free Market*, (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1998 Third Edition).
- ⁶⁷ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 110.
- ⁶⁸ Richard Ely, *Social Aspects of Christianity* (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1889), pp. 92, 77; quoted in Olasky, p. 121.
- ⁶⁹ William G. Fremantle, *The World as the Subject of Redemption* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1895 second edition) p. 281. Quoted in Olasky p. 122.
- ⁷⁰ *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1.
- ⁷¹ *Doe v. Santa Fe Independent School District*, (2000).
- ⁷² The rights of faith-based providers to wear religious garb or have religious symbols on the wall have been preserved, as has the right to hire in accordance with their faith convictions, as guaranteed by the Civil Rights Act. Manifestations of faith outside the federally funded portion of the work are permitted, as is worship, but federal funds may not be co-mingled for these activities. The provision of services may not be predicated upon participation in such activities. And alternative sources of service must be available for participants who do not want to be handled by a faith-based provider.
- ⁷³ The purists insist any government funding would potentially corrupt the mission. In practice, there are FBOs that have received such funds and remained true to their purpose. The key seems to be the clarity of the leadership in maintaining the faith character through a commitment to avoid “mission creep” that shifts the goals to follow funding streams. Limiting the proportion of the budget from government sources helps to maintain both integrity and independence.
- ⁷⁴ John Paul II, “Evangelical Letter Centesimus Annus”, (Rome: May, 1991) VI, “Man is the Way of the Church” (58).
- ⁷⁵ Kreeft, *Back to Virtue*, p. 193.

HUDSON
INSTITUTE

*Hudson Institute • 5395 Emerson Way • Indianapolis, IN 46226
Phone: (317) 545-1000 • www.hudson.org*