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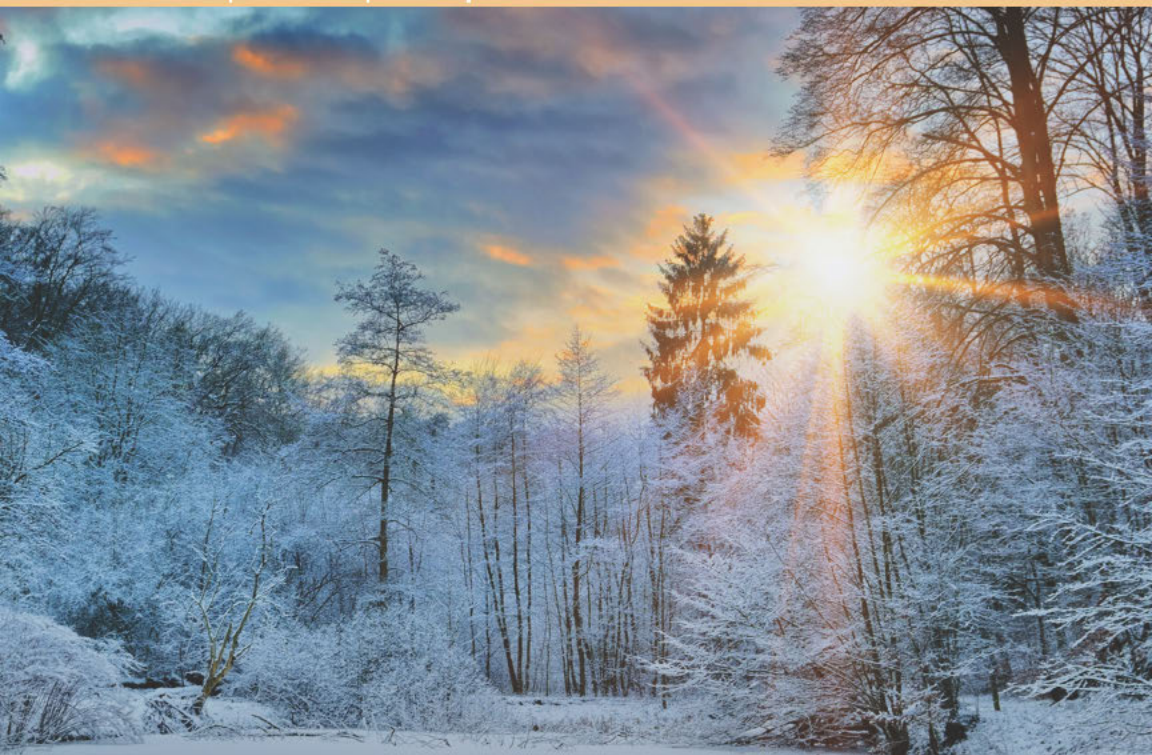
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# WHEATLEY OBSERVER

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IDEAS THAT SUSTAIN CORE INSTITUTIONS

VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 1 | 2016 | WINTER



**Featuring:**

**The Conservative Heart**

Arthur Brooks

**Joseph Smith & the Recovery of “Eternal Man”**

Robert L. Millet

**Self-Mastery, Academic Freedom, & the Liberal Arts**

Robert P. George

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The Wheatley Institution recognizes communications specialist Troy S. Tessem, student editor Adam Duncan, and student employee Genelyn Knapp for their work on this issue of the Observer.

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*The mission of the Wheatley Institution is to enhance the academic climate and scholarly reputation of BYU, and to enrich faculty and student experiences, by contributing recognized scholarship that lifts society by preserving and strengthening its core institutions.*



# THE WHEATLEY OBSERVER

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## THE CONSERVATIVE HEART

Arthur Brooks  
American Enterprise Institute

I want to talk to you about how you can keep spreading concentrically the ideas of goodness, to bring happiness to more people here, around America, and indeed around the world. I want to talk about this in the context of purpose.

I am really going to address my remarks to the students. When you are in college, you get the same question from everybody, especially when you start moving toward your senior year. What are you going to do when you graduate? That is not the most important question. The most important question is a little scarier. What is really important is *why* you are going to do it. That is what I want to talk about with you because if you get that right, you can change the world. If you don't get that right, you are going to face frustration. I am going to give you some suggestions by way of examples. Of the best that I have ever seen, I am going to give you three examples of great purpose, of individuals and institutions.

Johann Sebastian Bach is arguably the greatest composer who ever lived. He lived to be 65 years old and what a productive individual he was. He published 1,000 pieces of music. Keyboard, chorus, chamber music, orchestra, everything

he published. Bach only became famous 100 years after his death. He was known as a good teacher during his time, which is a notable and wonderful and laudable thing to be, of course. Bach was asked by a minor biographer, “Herr Bach, why do you write music?” Crazy question, right? It wasn’t, “What kind of music do you write?” Or “How do you compose your music?” It was, “Why do you write music?”

So what was Bach’s answer? The greatest composer who ever lived? What was his answer? He didn’t even hesitate. “The aim and final end of all music is nothing less than the glorification of God and the enjoyment of man.” Hm. The whole point of music is not that it pays the rent or that I am good at it or I love

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*Do it all for the glory of God and the good of your fellow  
men and women around you.*

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music. It was to glorify God and to give enjoyment to men and women. That is life purpose. If you could say at the end of your days, “Everything I did was for the glory of God and for the good of my brothers and sisters,” and you really meant it, wouldn’t it be a good life?

Example number one: be like Bach. Do it all for the glory of God and the good of your fellow men and women around you.

I want to go to another example of a great life purpose that has a different set of lessons attached to it. I live in Maryland. Maryland was founded by a man named George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, who had never visited before. He was a man of noble birth, of great wealth, and he lived in the time of Charles I. What was interesting about George Calvert was this: he was a Catholic. This was a time of tremendous oppression of Catholics. Catholics couldn’t hold elective office, Catholics couldn’t buy and run businesses, Catholics had real trouble with property and mobility. The result was that a guy like George Calvert, who was rich, he was okay. But every Catholic at the lower levels, working men and women, they couldn’t do anything. They were oppressed.



So George Calvert hatched a plan. He went to Charles I and he got claim to all of the lands north of the Potomac River. This was unexplored territory. All they knew was that there were tribes of extremely hostile Native Americans there. There was malaria; there was disease. Nobody would want to go there. George Calvert said, “What if I made a colony where the Catholics can actually be free for the first time in their lives?” They loaded them all on the boat, 128 pilgrims, the most adventurous of all, and one priest named Father Andrew White, who was a Jesuit priest. The two boats were called the *Ark* and the *Dove*, after the story of Noah, and they set off. It was a terrible journey. There was disease, a bunch of them died, it was dangerous, there were storms, they were looking all the time for pirates, and finally they made it.

Now, why do I tell you about this? Because Father Andrew White, the accompanying priest, was keeping a daily journal that still exists to this day. He was talking about how we think we see a pirate ship, another storm is coming, five more people have died of disease. It was terrible, but he also recorded the purpose of their journey. Father White: “The purpose of this journey is to glorify the blood of our Redeemer in the Salvation of men.” Imagine that. Can each of us say that? “I am going to do whatever it takes, for whatever sacrifice comes my way, and I am going to thank God for that sacrifice because that is going to put me in a position to save more people and to help more people.” Think of the lessons that come from that life purpose. That is number two.

Number three. Brigham Young University. I am going to give you an example of a little way that this place has touched me. I have been coming around for years. Whenever you come to BYU, people give you a lot of swag that says Brigham Young University. On the first visit, Gary Cornia, the old dean of the Marriott School, gave me a Brigham Young University briefcase. It says Brigham Young University on the front. I had a perfectly functioning briefcase, so I took the BYU briefcase and I threw it in the closet. I didn’t think about it. Three months later, the briefcase that I was carrying around broke. I said to my wife, “Agh, that thing broke. I gotta go buy a new one.” She said, “No you don’t. You’ve got that BYU one in the closet over there.” I said, “Yeah, but it says BYU on it.” My wife said, “You chicken?” So I said, “No.” I took it out and put all my stuff in it and

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I started carrying my stuff around in it. At the time, I was starting to travel a lot. I was in airports all the time and I was carrying around this BYU briefcase and I noticed something weird that was going on. When you are in an airport and you are carrying around a briefcase that says something on it, people read the briefcase and then they look at you. I could tell they were thinking, “I have never seen an aging hipster Mormon before. That guy doesn’t look like a Mormon, but okay.” Here is the weirder part. I started changing my behavior. I realized that I was unwilling to carry coffee while I was carrying the briefcase. Why? Not because I am against coffee, but because I didn’t want to wreck your reputation and I was trying to live up to your high standards. Furthermore, I was acting nice in the airport because I didn’t want somebody to say, “You know, I was standing in line at the airport and I saw this Mormon guy and he was being a real jerk.” I couldn’t stand the thought of somebody saying that about you! It was making me a better person. You see what this is? This is moral elevation! Thank you! That is what you can do. That is what this institution can do. That is what purpose can do. When you state purpose that is aspirational and you are trying to live up to it, you change your life and you change other people’s lives too. There are the three examples.

Now I want to give you a little bit of research about the world’s purpose. To talk about that, I want to introduce you to a study from two social psychologists at University of Rochester. These two social psych professors were trying to figure out about life purpose, about goals and the quality of your life when you have one kind of goal versus another kind of goal. Now, what they did was they looked only at graduating seniors, half men and half women, and they asked them a bunch of questions about what they wanted their lives to look like five years later. They found that people have all kinds of goals, but you can categorize primary life goals into two basic categories. The goals were endogenous and exogenous goals. The endogenous goals were all about relationships, about those you love. About half the kids would say, “Five years from now, I am going to know I am successful if I have good friendships, have a good relationship with my family or I am going to be married or I am going to have a better relationship with God.” The second kind of goal were exogenous goals, which in a nutshell are

pure material stuff, worldly stuff. Now everybody has those kinds of goals, but these were primary goals to these kids. The exogenous goals kids said, “I want to be making a lot of money, I want to be on the management track, I want to get a lot of notoriety from my skills.” So they came back five years later and they interviewed all the kids again, all the kids they could find. They found two things. Good news and bad news. First, the good news. Everybody hit their goals. Remember your mother told you, “Be careful what you wish for!” It is true! It turns out that it is empirically true according to this study, that people who wanted to make money were making money. People who wanted to make a great career were working long hours and they had a great career. People who wanted to be married were either married or engaged. People who wanted to have a

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*When you state purpose that is aspirational and you are trying to live up to it, you change your life and you change other people's lives too.*

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good relationship with their family and friends had a good relationship with their family and friends. Good news! Set your goal! You are going to hit it.

Conclusion number two: wrong goals, not such a great life. That is what they found out. First, the kids with endogenous goals had a high level of life satisfaction. They had low levels of psychosomatic health complaints. The kids who had exogenous goals, money and fame, had anxiety, stomachaches, headaches, sleeplessness and depression. Sounds great, doesn't it? That is what happens when you have the wrong goals, when you substitute something for what you really seek.

What are you looking for? What can you do with your goals? Well, let me make some suggestions here. Number one: make your work a gift. All of your work, a gift. That is the whole idea—to serve. That is the whole idea, to work for the glory of God and the enjoyment of men. That is the whole idea of

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working for the salvation of souls even though you are running for your own life. Extraordinary, isn't it?

There is one other thing we need to do, too, which is to remember the value of other people's work. We often forget this. We focus so much on our own work, we don't focus on the work that is going on around us. If you honestly believe the sanctification of ordinary work, that everything is an offering, if you believe that, then you have to believe that there is equal moral worth between running a hedge fund and trimming hedges. If we sanctify our work in the way that we are supposed to, in the service of others, in the glory of God, and we honor the work of other people, we are well on our way to having a real answer to the question, "Why do you do what you do?"

Second, get out of the boat. I told you about the *Ark* and the *Dove*, the two boats that George Calvert launched toward North America. There were 128 pilgrims stuffed onto these little boats. Why were they on those boats? To be on boats? To stay permanently on boats? No, no. They were on those boats to get to the other side of the Atlantic to get off for the salvation of men. This is important why? Because if your life purpose is true to the service of others, you have to be looking forward to getting off your boat. So ask yourself, "Am I doing that?" How do we know we have gotten off our boats? Because we are just a little bit uncomfortable. Because we are not quite cut out for the place. Because we are not invited and it is clear to us that we are not invited. That is when we know we are doing it right. How do you know you are doing it wrong? Because you are 100% in your element, completely comfortable. The *Ark* and the *Dove* are more fun because they are people just like us. It is kind of a pain to get out of the boat, but if we don't, guess what happens? We don't get to share with the people who need us to share with them. It is tricky, it is challenging, but it is the right thing to do because it is what we are called to do. If we do that, then the expanse, the concentricity, the influence of what we are doing will grow. "Men," as Joseph Smith once said, "are all made for enlargement." Maybe that is just what that means.

So where are we? The least important question, this is the one that everybody is going to ask you: What are you going to do? The most important question is

what nobody is going to ask you, but you have to ask yourself. Why am I going to do it? No matter what it is. I am going to ask you to do three things and to put this into practice. Number one: write down your purpose. Write down your why. It is very personal and it is yours. From now on, look at it every year on your birthday. Say, “Am I living up to my own why?” Write it down because if you can’t write it down, you can’t measure it and you can’t pursue it. Number two: make sure it is not about you. How I am going to serve, what I am going to do that serves others in new and fantastic and creative ways? Be as ambitious as you want, just never for you. Number three: go where you are not invited and share it.

If we do these things, then we can continue to change the world. God bless you. I am praying for you in your important work. Congratulations in advance on the wonderful things you are going to do.

*Arthur Brooks is president of American Enterprise Institute. Previously, he was the Louis A. Bantle Professor of Business and Government Policy at Syracuse University. He has also taught at Georgia State University. He is the author of 10 books, most recently including *Gross National Happiness: Why Happiness Matters for America—and How We Can Get More of It* and *Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth about Compassionate Conservatism*. He gave a BYU Forum address in 2009. He has a B.S. from Thomas Edison State College, an M.A. from Florida Atlantic University, and a PhD from RAND Graduate School, a public policy program located at the RAND Corporation, where he was also a doctoral fellow. He and his wife, Ester, are the parents of three children.*



*This article is an abbreviated version of a lecture sponsored by the Wheatley Institution and delivered on September 8, 2015. To watch the full lecture, please visit [wheatley.byu.edu](http://wheatley.byu.edu).*



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## FAITH, LEARNING & EDUCATION FOR WISDOM

Darin Davis  
Baylor University

**C**olleges and universities like Brigham Young and Baylor share the aspiration to advance the cause of education in a way that is animated by religious faith. Very often this task is referred to as the commitment to faith and reason, or faith and intellect. Sometimes it is referred to as the integration of faith and learning. I want to suggest another way to describe our common task: educating for wisdom. A generation ago, it was generally believed that the central purpose at a university education involves shaping the moral and intellectual character of students in ways that led them to live and do well over their entire lives. I take this to be what is intended by the phrase “educating for wisdom.” In the contemporary milieu of higher education however, such a claim will seem to some amusingly irrelevant. Others may have little idea of what wisdom actually is, perhaps confusing it with shrewdness or ingenuity. Perhaps it is just the fancy and beautiful rhetoric of mission

statements. So before any proposal about educating for wisdom can receive serious consideration, careful thinking needs to be done about what wisdom is and how the pursuit of it might direct the aims of universities like Baylor and Brigham Young. Beyond this, there is a need to reflect upon the nature of the crisis experienced by the modern academy. My own sense is that the crisis is of a spiritual nature, that the university's very soul is in disarray.

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*The Greek tradition understands wisdom as a virtue, an excellence that enables one to strive for true flourishing or happiness.*

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Wisdom is a complex notion that resists simple definition, but a good first step is to recall how the ancient Greek tradition and conceptions of wisdom are embedded in larger accounts of human nature. The Greek tradition understands wisdom as a virtue, an excellence that enables one to strive for true flourishing or happiness. The Greek word for this is eudaimonia. Though Plato and Aristotle believed that humans are neither morally good nor bad by nature, they maintained that humans can become good by developing a second nature of virtue through habituation. Virtue becomes a stable part of one's character, not in an instant, but over time and through experience. The virtue of honesty for example, comes from being truthful time and time again. Through the process of habituation, one becomes an honest person. The temperate person, through the use of reason, controls her desires consistently.

So what kind of virtue is wisdom, and on what basis may we justify the pursuit of it? The ancient Greek tradition conceived of wisdom in two aspects: practical and theoretical. Practical wisdom involves knowing what to do as well as how and when to do it. Practical wisdom is expressed in action, but practical wisdom depends first and foremost on one's ability to see the circumstances one faces. There is no good way of knowing what, how, and when to act unless one can sensitively appreciate the context in which one will act. In this way, practical



wisdom is necessary for the full expression of any of the other virtues. The practically wise person not only has a well-tuned moral perception, she can also deliberate well about the best way to achieve the goal she sees as good. To achieve a certain goal, one needs both a conception of what is being pursued, and an understanding of how best to achieve it. Accordingly, practical wisdom is adequately described as goal directed reason. It is required for any act of virtue whatsoever.

Seeing and deliberating and doing the right thing in a particular circumstance also involves grasping a more general understanding of what is good. This more general conception depends on one having theoretical wisdom. The Greek insight here is this: one cannot know what is best to do in a particular circumstance without knowing what is best most generally. In the Greek tradition, theoretical wisdom is described in a number of important texts. Consider for instance, book VII of Plato's *Republic* in the Allegory of the Cave. Recall the lone cave dweller and how he is unshackled from chains of self-imposed ignorance and begins the long and painful extension towards the ineffable form of the good, the source of all that is true and good and beautiful, being itself. Aristotle likewise describes a longing that all humans have for this more general kind of wisdom. In his *Metaphysics*, he expresses the yearning to know things at their most general level as the expression of a natural desire, a sense of wonder that all humans have. The particulars we know through the senses do not tell us the "why" of anything, yet we desire to know why. So we inquire into the causes of particular things, including ourselves. We seek to understand, to unify disparate elements of experience, to find meaning. This kind of inquiry is aimed ultimately at understanding the divine. Theoretical wisdom was an exercise of the most divine element in us, towards the most divine object. As Aristotle puts it, we are to take on immortality as much as possible. This description of wisdom is something akin to a religious conversion. Again, wisdom is not just one among many virtues: it is preeminent.

The Greek understanding of practical and theoretical wisdom is grounded in a larger conception of human nature. Human beings are complex, both psychologically and physiologically. We desire things that keep us alive fundamentally like food and drink and sex, but we also desire power and honor

and wealth and friendship and even knowledge. Our desires have to be rightly ordered. So it is the role of reason to direct us toward our proper end: living and doing well. The ancients clearly placed supreme confidence in the power of reason. It alone was capable of ordering human action, of shaping human desire, of reflecting upon truth and deity and goodness. Likewise, the ancients pointed the telos of human life to human life itself, not towards any eternal world. If the Greeks were right, then there can be no more important task for education than to seek and cultivate wisdom, for wisdom is the virtue that helps orient humans towards true happiness.

Is this possible today? At first glance, it might appear that many colleges and universities are in fact educating their students for wisdom—practical wisdom at least. The myriad courses and programs in leadership studies and applied ethics often promise to prepare students for ethical decision making and problem solving, civic engagement, global leadership. These aspirations doubtlessly require practical wisdom. They require us to know what to do in the particular case. But despite admirable intentions, such initiatives, unless they are properly conceived, can actually undermine the cultivation of practical wisdom.

One way such courses can be ill conceived is to promise students techniques and skills and tools that they can use to achieve success in particular domains. Now on its face, this may seem like an entirely noble aspiration. If students are preparing to confront the challenges inherent in a complex world, a good education should provide the necessary tools to take them along the way. However, the bare mention of techniques and skills and tools is problematic. The sort of moral reflection that is part of practical wisdom is not a handy multi-purpose tool or a five-step technique that can be applied to solve moral quandaries. Although virtues and skills are both developed through consistent practice, one can be skillful in any number of pursuits like fly fishing, wood carving, bronc riding, and playing the stock market, and still be a crook, a liar, and a cheat. The point is this: virtues are about more than performing particular activities well. They are about being the right sort of person. This is the central reason of formation for any kind of virtue requires special attention and while formation into practical wisdom cannot be like the assembly of a well-equipped tool kit. Virtues, unlike tools, are not the sort

of things that can be taken up, used, and put away. They shape our entire way of living. Such tool kit courses in leadership and applied ethics proliferate because know-how questions dominate the psyche of the contemporary university. The engines of the modern university are churning briskly, producing mountains of research, readying students to enter the workforce, but the techniques and tools being refined and the knowledge being passed down to the next generation are rarely appraised against more general moral commitments.

So we are learning a lot, but for the sake of what? These commitments

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can only be understood through the pursuit of something akin to theoretical wisdom. Indeed, if it has not entirely disappeared from the consciousness of contemporary higher education, theoretical wisdom is unquestionably in exile. Even in philosophy departments where one might find or expect to find the pursuit of fundamental questions in full bloom, hyperspecialization often gets in the way. Indeed, the impoverishment of theoretical wisdom seems to go hand in glove with hyperspecialization. University education that students receive is largely utilitarian, consumerist, and fragmented. What would it mean if more courses were taught in ways that encouraged scholars and students to think outside the bounds of their own subject matter and in ways that attempted to integrate larger concerns shared among the disciplines? Or imagine if students were encouraged and indeed required to slow down, ask big questions about human life, read and discuss the texts that explore these questions among good teachers and other students,—not because these endeavors would earn them a six figure salary after graduation, but because it might orient their lives towards true happiness. An

education that prizes wisdom would mean that inherently philosophical questions would be vibrantly and realistically presented throughout a university education and that there would be a set of central concerns that no one seeking a good life could possibly avoid. It is lamentable that precisely this kind of education is nearly non-existent in most institutions of higher learning these days.

A Christian understanding of liberal learning deserves special attention. Such an account of higher education will recognize not only practical and theoretical wisdom, it will also see a third kind of wisdom: theological or spiritual wisdom. Spiritual wisdom brings human beings a more distinct awareness of how God is not only manifest in all of creation, but also the particular ways that God calls each person to faithfulness. Such wisdom can never come from sheer intellectual effort alone because it surpasses what could ever be grasped through the power of cognition. This is not to say that reason plays no role in the discernment of spiritual wisdom, rather that grace perfects reason, revealing a transcendent source of guidance that outstrips the powers of human understanding.

So what are some particular ways that spiritual wisdom might shape the teaching and learning of Christians? First, an education that seeks and affirms spiritual wisdom should reveal connections and interdependence among the academic disciplines. While the contemporary academy is often described not as a university, but as a multiversity, where fragmentation of bounds and the various disciplines lack a common tongue with which to speak to one another, Christians have a special reason to resist this trend. The reason is ontological in nature, built into the fabric of a Christian conception of reality: if divine wisdom is the very wellspring of all teaching and learning, if God is the creative source of all goodness and truth and beauty, then each academic discipline and each scholar working within that discipline will in some way find relation to other lines of inquiry that seek the same end. In this way, scholarly teaching and learning, no matter its point of departure will reveal an aspect of the divine. I want to say that a Christian conception of learning that seeks spiritual wisdom as its goal may show not only how seemingly disparate disciplines are related, it can also reveal how disciplines actually depend upon one another. It is not just that they

are related, it is that we depend upon one another. If you have this Christian conception of language, the world and creation hang together.

Second, the pursuit and cultivation of spiritual wisdom should be marked by charity, understood as *caritas*, which is not simply alms giving, but the classical sense of the love of God and the love of neighbor. To some, this may sound like a rhetorical flourish or some kind of hopelessly naïve aspiration, especially in the context of contemporary higher education. It doesn't seem like there is a lot of love sometimes. For Christians, educating for spiritual wisdom through the various activities of teaching and learning and research and scholarship is a fundamentally profound expression of love for God and neighbor. It is out of God's providential love that humans are created. It is because of God's love that he calls humans to genuine happiness, to the perfection of their nature. Seeking and receiving spiritual wisdom is precisely what God made humans to do: to understand, however incompletely, the love of God and the way God calls his creatures to faithfulness.

Likewise, those who educate for the sake of spiritual wisdom will see others—teachers, students, colleagues, co-investigators—as fellow lovers of truth, created also to seek and understand God's wisdom. Undoubtedly, the ways that charity might inspire the ways of education could be countercultural. Both the subject matter of one's study and one's intellectual collaborators and even one's intellectual opponents would be objects of love, worthy of searching attention and care. Teaching and learning would be more akin to prayer and worship and less like efforts to eviscerate an intellectual opponent or to master a particular body of knowledge for the sake of self. Christian universities need to model more than ever what it would be to be a winsome witness, to be a profound expression of charity. Spiritual wisdom seems to be very much at the heart of that.

Third, an education animated by spiritual wisdom can encourage in teachers and learners a profound sense of awe and humility. The very recognition of a creative source of truth, goodness and beauty that stands independent of time, place and circumstance puts human intelligence and its limits in proper perspective. Humans are prone to all kinds of misunderstandings and plain and simple error. We simply don't know everything. Beyond the intellectual mistakes that abound,

moral and spiritual vice can cloud efforts to realize what is true and best, but the awareness of human fallibility need not lead us to despair. For Christians, human imperfection instead provokes a sense of awe, understood as that remarkable mix of fear and wonder and reverence when one acknowledges something truly real, powerful, and beautiful beyond one's self. It is this recognition of the divine that begets humility as one comes to realize the proper relationship between oneself, others, and God.

In closing, another way of describing the identity crisis of the modern academy is simply this: it cares about the wrong things. It pursues goals that belie its essential mission. It has its priorities out of order. Moreover, it seems distracted, moving in so many directions, trying to fill the wants and desires of so many competing constituencies that it does not have a grounded sense of its responsibility to educate for wisdom. The very soul of the university is compromised and undergoing a spiritual crisis. No new technique, no strategy, no additional assessment or measurement is likely to address the pressing challenges the modern academy faces. Determining the way forward will require wisdom.

*Dr. Darin H. Davis joined the faculty of George W. Truett Theological Seminary in the fall of 2013 as assistant professor of Christian philosophy and ethics. In addition to his appointment at Truett, Dr. Davis is director of Baylor's Institute for Faith and Learning and an affiliated faculty member in Baylor's Department of Philosophy. Throughout his career, he has taught broadly in the areas of moral philosophy and the history of ethics. He is the author of articles and reviews in *The Modern Schoolman*, *the American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, *Christian Reflection*, and *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*. He holds degrees from the University of Texas at Austin, Baylor University, and Saint Louis University (Ph.D. in philosophy). He is a licensed Baptist minister. He and his wife Brenda have three daughters.*



*This article is an abbreviated version of a lecture sponsored by the Wheatley Institution and delivered on September 30, 2015. To watch the full lecture, please visit [wheatley.byu.edu](http://wheatley.byu.edu).*

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## JOSEPH SMITH & THE RECOVERY OF “ETERNAL MAN”

Robert L. Millet  
Brigham Young University

**J**oseph Smith was charged to restore a correct knowledge of God and man. To assist humanity in accomplishing this near-impossible task, God had been about the business of orchestrating things in preparation for that revolution we call the Restoration. This marvelous work and a wonder was not to take place without immense and intricate preparation by Divine Providence. People would be in place, concepts and points of view would be in the air, hearts would be open to a new revelation in an unprecedented manner. Nothing was to be left to chance.

The First Vision in the spring of 1820 was essentially the beginning of revelation of God to man in this final dispensation. Brother Joseph learned that the Father and the Son were separate and distinct personages, separate Gods, and thus that the creedal statements concerning the triune deity were incorrect. While Unitarians believed that the first and second members of the Godhead were

distinct beings, most Christians subscribed to the doctrine of the Trinity. Only 11 days before his death, the Prophet Joseph stated this, “I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods.”<sup>i</sup> Notice he said, “I have always taught that . . .”

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*From the Prophet Joseph we learn that God is more than a word, more than an essence, a force, a law, more than the great first cause.*

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From the Prophet Joseph we learn that God is more than a word, more than an essence, a force, a law, more than the great first cause. He has form, shape, an image, a likeness. He is a he. He has gender. We are uncertain when the young prophet learned that God has a physical body. We can't tell whether he learned it at the time of the First Vision simply because he doesn't mention it. The doctrine of divine embodiment is inextricably linked to such doctrines as the immortality of the soul, the incarnation of Christ, the literal resurrection, eternal marriage, and a continuation of the family unit into eternity. We are given to understand from Brother Joseph and his successors that, in his corporeal or physical nature, God can be in only one place at a time. His divine nature is such that his glory, his power, and his influence (meaning his Holy Spirit or what we call the Light of Christ) fills the immensity of space and is the means by which he is omnipresent and through which law and light and life are extended to us.

Joseph Smith certainly did not believe that God's physical body limited the Father in his divine capacity, or detracted one whit from his infinite holiness, any more than Christ's resurrected body did so. The risen Lord said of himself,

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<sup>i</sup> *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007), 41-42. Henceforth cited as *Joseph Smith*.



“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”<sup>ii</sup> In LDS theology, Truman Madsen noted, “The physical body is not the muffling and imprisoning of the spirit. The body is the spirit’s enhancement. It is an instrument of redemption; and the instrument itself is to be redeemed.”<sup>iii</sup> Joseph had little sense of the flesh being base. In contrast to conventional theologies, Joseph saw embodiment as a glorious aspect of human existence.

I have been very interested in the work of scholars outside our own faith, who have dared to explore the notion of God having a physical body. James Kugel, Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Literature at Harvard, has written that some scholars’ most basic assumptions about God, including the idea that he has no body but exists everywhere simultaneously, are not articulated in the most ancient parts of the Bible. In time, the God who spoke to Moses directly “became an embarrassment to later theologians,”<sup>iv</sup> he wrote. “‘It is,’ they said, ‘really the great, universal God [who is] omniscient and omnipresent and utterly unphysical.’”<sup>v</sup> He says, “Indeed, does not the eventual emergence of Christianity, in particular Nicene Christianity with its doctrine of the Trinity, likewise represent in its own way an attempt to fill the gap left by the God of old?”<sup>vi</sup>

Dr. Stephen Webb, Roman Catholic scholar and previous Truman Madsen lecturer pointed out that “far from being nothing, matter for the Latter-day Saints is the very stuff of the divine. Joseph Smith rejected the philosophical move, stretching all the way back to Plato, of dividing the world into immaterial and material substances . . . [William] Tyndale was just as controversial in his day as Smith was during his. Tyndale wanted to get the Bible into the hands of everyday believers, while Smith wanted to open the ears of ordinary people to divine revelation. Reformers like Tyndale broke the Catholic church’s political and religious power in Europe and let loose a host of social changes that they

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ii Matthew 28:18.

iii “The Latter-day Saint View of Human Nature,” in *On Human Nature: The Jerusalem Center Symposium*, ed. Truman G. Madsen, David Noel Freedman, and Pam Fox Kuhlken (Ann Arbor, MI: Pryor Pettengill Publishers, 2004), 100-101.

iv Kugel, James L. 2004. *The God of Old: Inside the Lost World of the Bible*. Simon and Schuster, pp. 63.

v Ibid.

vi Ibid, pp. 195..

could not have anticipated and were not able to control.” Webb then poses this rather fascinating question, “Could it be that Smith, who had virtually no formal education, put in motion ideas that will overthrow the consensus of Western theological immaterialism?”<sup>vii</sup>

The saints may have been teaching and discussing God’s physical body as early as 1835 or 1836. Professor Milton Backman brought to light many years ago a description of Mormonism by a Protestant clergyman in Ohio: Truman Coe, a Presbyterian minister. He had for four years lived among the Saints in Kirtland and he published the following in the 11 August 1836 Ohio Observer regarding the beliefs of the Mormons. “They contend that the God worshipped by the Presbyterians and all other sectarians, is no better than a wooden God. They believe that the true God is a material being, composed of body and parts; and that when the Creator formed Adam in his own image, he made him about the size and shape of God himself.”<sup>viii</sup>

I have been asked a question many, many times over the years by persons of other faiths. The question? What is the LDS concept of the nature of man? It seems that what they want to know is this: do we believe that men and women are basically good or basically evil? I generally respond with a question of my own. To which man do you have reference? Do you have reference to fallen or mortal man or are you speaking of eternal man? Let me explain my response. How would Joseph Smith have learned about humanity, whether men and women are depraved or divine? It seems to me that his first serious entry into theological anthropology, the nature of humanity, would have come through his exposure to the teachings of the Book of Mormon prophets. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery would have learned through the translation of the golden plates that because Adam and Eve transgressed by partaking of the forbidden fruit, they were cast from the Garden of Eden and the presence of the Lord. They experienced spiritual death. As a result came blood, sweat, toil, opposition, bodily decay, and finally physical death.

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vii Webb, Stephen H. 2013. *Mormon Christianity: What Other Christians Can Learn From the Latter-Day Saints*. Oxford University Press, pp. 81-82.

viii Truman Coe’s 1836 Description of Mormonism,” *BYU Studies*, 17:347, 354 (Spring 1977); emphasis added.

Even though the Book of Mormon often presents what is called “the fortunate Fall”—that “Adam fell that men might be”<sup>ix</sup> —the prophets within that record proclaim fearlessly and repeatedly that all humanity are “in a lost and fallen state and ever will be save they shall rely on this Redeemer.”<sup>x</sup> We learn also from the Book of Mormon, that, although God forgave our first parents of their transgression, although there is no original sin entailed upon Adam and Eve’s children, and although “the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children,”<sup>xi</sup> that is not to tell the whole story. To concede that we are not accountable for or condemned by the Fall of Adam is not to say we are not affected by it. The Book

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*To concede that we are not accountable for or condemned  
by the Fall of Adam is not to say we are unaffected by it.*

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of Mormon prophets knew very well that “since man had fallen, he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atoned for their sins through faith and repentance.”<sup>xii</sup>

Now, let’s point ourselves in a different direction. Joseph Smith learned also by revelation that man is an eternal being. Of man’s divine capabilities, Joseph said on one occasion, “We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, until he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin.”<sup>xiii</sup>

The doctrine of the premortal existence of men and women comes surprisingly early in the Prophet Joseph’s ministry. In Section 93 of the Doctrine

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ix 2 Nephi 2:25.

x 1 Nephi 10:5-6.

xi Moses 6:54.

xii Alma 22:14.

xiii *Joseph Smith*, 210-11.

and Covenants (this is in May of 1833) we read the following: “Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth . . . Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.”<sup>xiv</sup> Clearly there is something within the human being—call it intelligence or ego or some primal essence—that has always lived and indeed has no beginning. As Truman put it, “Man as self had a beginningless beginning. He has never been identified wholly with any other being. Nor is he a product of nothing.”<sup>xv</sup>

Joseph responded to the universally accepted Christian doctrine of an ex nihilo creation, out of nothing, by declaring that the Hebrew word translated “create” really means to organize, implying that deity drew upon already existing matter. He taught, “We infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos, chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time God had. The purer principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed. They may be organized and reorganized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning, they can have no end.”<sup>xvi</sup>

Truman Madsen trumpeted the distinctive LDS perspective on who we are and what we may become in these words:

*“What the eternal Father wants for you and with you is the fullness of your possibilities. And those possibilities are infinite. And he did not simply make you from nothing into a worm; he adopted and begat you into his likeness in order to share his nature. And he sent his Firstborn Son to exemplify just how glorious that nature can be—even in mortality. That is our witness.”*<sup>xvii</sup>

If asked to describe the nature of humanity, the Christian world generally, particularly its more conservative branches, will do so in terms of fallen man: the person desperately in need of divine grace and pardoning mercy. And as I have tried to point out, we are not totally in disagreement with our brothers and sisters of other faiths on this matter. The Fall of Adam and Eve was very real and

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xiv D&C 93:23, 29.

xv Madsen, Truman G. 1966. *Eternal Man*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 24. Henceforth cited as *Eternal Man*.

xvi *Ibid*, pp. 308-309.

xvii Madsen, Truman G. 1978. *The Highest in Us*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 5-6.

takes a measured toll on us physically and spiritually. Joseph Smith did, however, confront and denounce the concept of human depravity, if that means that men and women do not even have the power to choose good or by extension cannot trust their thoughts, feelings, and prayers. The scriptures of the Restoration teach otherwise. Through the intercession of the Messiah, fallen men and women become redeemed men and women.

The Fall and man's fallen state are necessary ingredients in the plan of God the Father. In the words of Elder Orson F. Whitney, "The Fall had a two-fold direction—downward, yet forward. It brought man into the world and set his feet upon progression's highway."<sup>xviii</sup> The Fall opens the way for the Atonement, and as C.S. Lewis observed once quite wisely, redeemed humanity will rise far higher than unfallen humanity.<sup>xix</sup> Speaking of the image and likeness of God our beloved friend, Truman Madsen, said this, "One can ascribe to the children of God more than rationality and creativity. In an embryonic state, other divine attributes and powers inhere in human nature. We are theomorphic." Further and by logical extension he said, "The ultimate intent and meaning of Christ's life and death is theosis, the universal transformation of the whole of human nature and the whole of the human family." In short, in this mortal condition, our second estate, we are as set forth in the Hebrew text of Psalms 8, "a little lower than the gods."<sup>xx</sup> If it is, as Jesus prayed, life eternal to know God, to know Jesus Christ, how disappointing to find that the wonders and ways of the Godhead had been shrouded in mystery never to be understood. Rather it is very much about having a correct view of the character and attributes of God, which then automatically opens the door to understanding man's nobility and potentiality.

Let's end where we began. If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves. President Brigham Young simply turned things about and pointed out that to know and understand ourselves and our own being is to know and understand God and his being. Or as the man we honor tonight, Truman Grant Madsen, put it so beautifully, "One begins mortality with

<sup>xviii</sup> *Conley and Whitney on Doctrine*, comp. Forace Green. 1963. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 287.

<sup>xix</sup> Lewis, C.S. 1978. "The Grand Miracle," *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. New York: Macmillan, pp. 122–23.

<sup>xx</sup> Psalms 8:5.

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the veil drawn, but slowly he is moved to penetrate the veil within himself. He is, in time, led to seek the ‘holy of holies’ within the temple of his own being.”<sup>xxi</sup> Elder Neal A. Maxwell commented on those poignant encounters with forever. “Brothers and sisters,” he said, “in some of those precious and personal moments of deep discovery, there will be a sudden surge of recognition of an immortal insight, the doctrinal déjà vu [if you will]. We will sometimes experience a flash from the mirror of memory that beckons us forward toward a far horizon.”<sup>xxii</sup>

These things are true. They matter. They are not merely the product of clever or whimsical theological explorations. They mark the path to understanding the God we worship and the Redeemer we seek to emulate, which is the path to life eternal. When received humbly and gratefully, these teachings are liberating and exhilarating. They point us to an infinite past and a never-ending future. Understanding and accepting them, we begin to turn the pages of our book of eternal possibilities.

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xxi Eternal Man, 20.

xxii Maxwell, Neal A. 1978. “Meeting the Challenges of Today.” *BYU Speeches*, October 10.

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## IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF BUSINESS ETHICS

Darin Gates  
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**I**n teaching business ethics courses, we cannot simply assume that students will have a well-formed ethical sensibility, understanding, or commitment, and even if they do it is important to spend time strengthening student's moral sense—their sense of right and wrong. If we fail to do so and move too quickly to the ethical dilemma stage involving complex cases, we can give students the impression that being ethical in business is simply a type of cognitive game in which they learn how to rationalize whatever they end up doing. This feeds moral skepticism and the all-too-common view that ethics are simply relative and that ethical decision-making is merely an exercise in rhetorical skill.

To avoid this, it helps to begin a course by articulating some of the fundamental moral intuitions and principles found in almost all moral theories—for example, that all persons deserve respect, that there are minimal standards in terms of which we expect others to treat us and which we in turn can be expected to treat

others, and so on. Elucidating such principles is crucial to help students recognize that there are objective, universally valid, moral principles that anyone should be able to accept. The point is not that there are easy answers or absolute rules to determine every ethical decision, but rather to show that there are objective moral principles that go beyond individual preference and guide us in making such decisions.

One such principle is the Golden Rule. This principle, however, must be presented in a way that avoids common interpretive problems.<sup>i</sup> Even the Golden Rule may have certain limitations when trying to apply it to situations when many people are involved.<sup>ii</sup> Nevertheless, the Golden Rule principle is a highly effective way to help students recognize that ethics has a significantly objective status.

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*Ethics is not based on self-interest*

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Furthermore, many of the fundamental moral intuitions found in different moral theories have an important kinship to the Golden Rule.

In teaching ethics in a way that strengthens both students' ethical understanding and commitment, it is crucial to help them recognize that (1) ethics is not *based on* self-interest, but also that (2) ethics is not necessarily contrary to self-interest. One way to support the first claim is to point out that certain immoral or unethical actions are wrong regardless of how they may adversely harm the interests of those who initiate such actions. When it is pointed out to them in the right way, students can readily recognize that serious ethical wrongdoing—for example, murder, rape, fraud—are not wrong simply because these acts might harm *their own* interests in various ways (prison, etc.). They are wrong because of what such

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i Harry Gensler's formulation—"Treat others as you would consent to be treated in the same situation"—avoids some of the problems commonly ascribed to the Golden Rule. See Gensler's *Ethics: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

ii Samuel Bruton does a good job showing that the limitations on the GR show the need to include other fundamental moral principles, such as Kant's Formula of Humanity as an End. See Samuel Bruton, "Teaching the Golden Rule," *Journal of Business Ethics* Jan. 2004, 49: 2, 179-187.



acts do to *others* who deserve the basic respect called for in our fundamental moral obligations not to harm others in such ways.

In business ethics courses, we can also appeal to Adam Smith to show that capitalism cannot only operate on self-interest. While for Smith the success of capitalism is based largely on self-interest, this success must come within certain limits on self-interest; self-interest cannot be reduced to the morally blameworthy selfishness that violates basic duties of justice. As he states in the *Wealth of Nations*, “Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest in his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man.”<sup>iii</sup> In another passage from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith writes: “One individual must never prefer himself so much . . . as to hurt or injure [others] in order to benefit himself, [even] though the benefit to the one [might] be much greater than the hurt or injury to the other.”<sup>iv</sup> Smith refers to this sense of justice as “fair play.”<sup>v</sup> Having a sense of fair play and the moral limits on self-interest are essential for Smith, and arguably for the success of capitalism.

Thus, while ethics cannot be grounded in self-interest, it is nevertheless true that being ethical is almost always in one’s real interest. Unethical practices will most likely lead to failure, and long-term success is not likely without an ethical commitment. As Robert Solomon put it: “Though integrity does not guarantee success, there can be no success without it.”<sup>vi</sup>

Finally, it is important to alert students to common forms of moral blindness to which we are susceptible. This has been a prominent theme of behavioral business ethics in recent years. For example, in their book *Blind Spots*, Max Bazerman and Ann Tenbrunsel identify several psychological patterns that contribute to unintentional wrongdoing. As they write, “most instances of corruption, and unethical behavior in general, are unintentional, a product of bounded ethicality

iii Smith, Adam. 2001. *Wealth of Nations*. Hayes Barton Press, pp. 381. See also (Smith 1776, pp. 82-3).

iv Smith, Adam. 2002. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 159.

v *Ibid*, pp. 97.

vi Solomon, Robert C. 1999. *A Better Way to Think About Business: How Personal Integrity Leads to Corporate Success*. Oxford University Press, pp. 38.

and the fading of the ethical dimension of the problem.”<sup>vii</sup> “Bounded ethicality” refers to the “cognitive limitations that can make us unaware of the moral implications of our decisions,”<sup>viii</sup> and “ethical fading” occurs when the ethics of a situation fade and we interpret the situation under another description—such as a business, or legal decision. Such ethical fading is often due to *self-deception*.<sup>ix</sup>

One of the best accounts of self-deception comes from the work of C. Terry Warner. His emphasis is less on the type of external pressures and psychological patterns that we find in *Blind Spots*, and more an emphasis on how moral blindness is caused by our own conduct. Thus, some forms of moral blindness are more our own creations than inevitable consequences of the circumstance. Helping students recognize such self-deception provides students a way to understand both that they are moral agents and that their own actions profoundly influence their moral perception of the world.

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vii Bazerman, Max H. and Ann E. Tenbrunsel. 2011. *Blind Spots: Why We Fail to Do What's Right and What to Do about It*. Princeton University Press, pp. 19.

viii *Ibid*, pp. 30.

ix See Tenbrunsel, A. and Messick, D. M. “Ethical Fading: The Role of Self-Deception in Unethical Behavior,” *Social Justice Research*, 2004, Vol. 17, No. 2.

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EQUAL PARTNERS:  
THE SALIENCE OF ROLES IN  
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Helen Alvaré  
George Mason University

**I**n the world we live in today, the phrase *equal partners* will probably satisfy a lot of people, particularly people who like the word *partners*, not spouses, and people who don't like the words *marriage* and *family*. But then they would really be upset with the next part of the title which uses the words *roles in marriage and family*. All three of those words are really getting a run for their money right now. In the work I do in the United Nations, in particular, you would never see the words marriage and family in documents about women, children, and families; it is as if they do not exist. You'll notice that the word roles is central in this title. What I offer is going to bridge the two parts of this title, *Equal Partners and the Salience of Roles*.

We have to acknowledge that many role assignments to men and women end up inuring to the detriment of women. On their face, many of these role assignments are not just objectively placing women in the lesser position, but society has accounted these roles as lesser. Philosopher Prudence Allen investigated such questions from the perspective of the concept of woman in philosophy from the beginning of recorded philosophical inquiry to the present.<sup>i</sup> If you look at her material, you will see that, while women's traits would not objectively be ranked less on their face, they often were ranked less in fact. Consider the following pairs of traits, with women's traits listed first and men's traits second: body/mind; body/rational faculties; matter/spirit; domestic or private sphere/ public sphere; practical/intellectual; intuitive/rational; concrete/abstract; detail oriented/big picture; local/national; linear thinking/complex thinking; follower/leader; passive/active; dependent/independent; receiver/giver; invisible influencer/visible influencer; gentle/rough; weak/strong; non-violent/violent; calming/provoking; innocent/worldly; relational/individualistic; communitarian/individualistic; collaborative/hierarchical; scattered/focused. And here is an interesting set: virtue/vice or vice/virtue. Depending on the era, those switch places, as does another pair, tempted/tempter; tempter/tempted.

Those are some of the leading dichotomies, if you will, through history, but it is by no means sure that the assignment of those dichotomies will not shift or even reverse in our present time. The usual rankings assumed that the male trait was objectively superior, but, again, we don't know that these rankings will remain stable in the future. Societies, economies, and practices change, and what are now called female traits—particularly collaboration or relationality—are today getting their due. They're being seen as valuable in and of themselves and to the society, in part through the work of some of the feminists of the late 20th century.

Still, I'll argue that while it remains fraught to speak of dichotomies, roles, differences in natures, it remains rational—and even helpful—to do so, but in a new framework. This framework, a way to speak of these things that provides a foundation also for speaking equally of roles and equal partnerships between

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<sup>i</sup> Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997).

men and women, is derived from the theology of Catholic teaching. It is called the anthropology of women, or the anthropology of the dignity of women, or the anthropology of sexual difference. A lot of it has echoes or analogies or common references to *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints<sup>ii</sup> and I will point them out from time to time. I'm going to turn first to the question of why we can still even speak of the salience of roles of men and women, then I'm going to talk about how in particular a Catholic anthropology of roles or male and female puts them in a new framework that allows us to speak of equal partnerships in the same way that the family proclamation would speak of them on many points.

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*We have to acknowledge that many role assignments to men and women end up inuring to the detriment of women.*

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We're very familiar with the modern iteration of the sexual revolution that has been unfolding for at least 50 years. During these 50 years, women's acceptance of the dissociation of sex from babies and marriage has been the outstanding feature of this revolution. Women have voted with their feet by assuming roles that in some cases overlap quite neatly with those populated previously almost exclusively by men; but they have also voted with their feet in many cases to choose X but not Y in a way that indicates that the phrase "the salience of roles" is neither offensive nor inaccurate.

There is evidence, in other words, of persisting differences in the lives that women and men choose even though virtually every choice is now open to women. Women still prefer some jobs over others, as do men.<sup>iii</sup> Women still profess a

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ii The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, November 1995, Web.

iii Roxana Barbulescu and Matthew Bidwell, "Do Women Choose Different Jobs from Men? Mechanisms of Application Segregation in the Market for Managerial Workers," *Organization Science* 24.3 (June 2012): 737–56.

higher interest in getting married than men do, and getting married earlier, too.<sup>iv</sup> Women express preferences for fewer sexual partners in their lifetime.<sup>v</sup> They express more regret and actually experience more depression than do men about sexual encounters that occur outside the context of commitment.<sup>vi</sup> It is women who dominate lone parent households by a whopping 85 percent to 15 percent female to male.<sup>vii</sup> Women also more often express a preference for flexible or part-time work schedules in order to spend more time with their children and with elderly family members for whom they care.<sup>viii</sup>

In terms of the appropriateness of talking about the salience of roles, there's also the fact that the most famous "scientific" gambits for the proposition that there are no important differences between men and women have really been exposed as failures, lies, or worse. The research upon which the most strident claims of the 20th century were made for the claim that there's no difference between men and women has been shown to have some common problems. In a forthcoming book, Prudence Allen identifies the most common problems as the following: they are often based upon research that wasn't just using flawed methods, but outright fraudulent methods; they used research that harmed the innocent and the consequences of their research also harmed the innocent; they tried to argue from animal behaviors to human behaviors; and researchers argued from the exception to the rule.<sup>ix</sup>

Even knowing what we know about the problems with these claimed scientific findings, we have to acknowledge that there still is a great resistance to acknowledging differences between men and women. We have to sympathize

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iv D'Vera Cohn, "Love and Marriage," *Pew Research Social and Demographic Trends*, February 13, 2013, Web.

v David M. Buss and David P. Schmitt, "Sexual Strategies Theory: An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating," *Psychological Review* 100.2 (April 1993): 211.

vi Andrew Galperin, Martie G. Haselton, David A. Frederick, Joshua Poore, Willian von Hippel, David M. Boss, and Gian C. Gonzaga, "Sexual Regret: Evidence for Evolved Sex Differences," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 42.7 (October 2013): 1511.

vii "Single Mother Statistics," *Single Mother Guide*, June 19, 2013, Web.

viii Roxana Barbulescu and Matthew Bidwell, "Do Women Choose Different Jobs from Men? Mechanisms of Application Segregation in the Market for Managerial Workers," *Organization Science* 24.3 (June 2012): 737–56.

ix Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman Volume III*, (forthcoming, manuscript shared with author).

somewhat with those who are afraid to acknowledge those differences. It is true that various cultures, governments, or even religions have relied on these differences as reasons to treat women with less than equal dignity, but we cannot let fear of what might happen with these dichotomies be the last word. We have to concern ourselves first with what is true, not only because it is important to acknowledge what is true about the human person, but also because refusing to acknowledge differences between the two sexes has played an important role in instigating real social harm. People who claim that there is no difference between male and female have argued that it makes no difference in married life if the man and the woman switch roles or if they have an agreement to observe a rigid fifty-fifty division of everything that people do in a marriage, and yet we find that couples who live this way actually have the highest risk of divorce. People who live with a marital philosophy of measurement confound their own inclination toward their own vocations in marriage and the creation of a marital culture of abundance or giving, so it is actually couples who switch roles or “keep accounts” who have the least successful marriages, not the most successful.

Further, by refusing to acknowledge differences between men and women, we have a refusal by definition to consider even the possibility of complementarity. We insist that everything that a male and female does in the context of the family is an overlap of what the other does, and that the sexes are absolutely redundant and there is nothing that either could receive from the other. In a variety of academic disciplines this has also led to a real lack of studying of the phenomenon of complementarity.

St. John Paul II approached this question in a reflection on women called *Mulieris Dignitatem* (which means on the dignity of women), published in 1988.<sup>x</sup> *Mulieris Dignitatem* refused to accept these historically received dichotomies on their face with their greater and lesser ranking and innovated the understanding of the meaning of being created in the image and likeness of God. This is something many religions share. The LDS Family Proclamation is clear that all human beings are in the image and likeness of God, right away a basis for a kind

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x John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women), (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1988).

of equality that is hard for anything else in the world to match.<sup>xi</sup> And *Mulieris Dignitatem* highlighted something new. It stated that human beings image God in a way that is fully as important as free will and rationality; it is that we were made in and for relationships in the sense that men and women together image God, not one to the exclusion of the other.<sup>xii</sup> By this I do not mean that neither the man nor the woman alone can image God. Each does. But together, they are a particularly rich image of God, because they offer a glimpse of his relational self as Trinity. Theologian Margaret McCarthy has a wonderful analysis of the relational aspect of Imago Dei.<sup>xiii</sup> She analogizes this relationship between men and women to that between Jesus and His Father. The Father is a father by virtue

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*Love is the meaning of life, and women are first, or prior,  
in the order of love: the first to be entrusted with new life.*

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of having a son and the Son a son by virtue of having a father. Applying this analysis to men and women, each is the only one fit to be of mutual help to the other ontologically.<sup>xiv</sup> Each is the only one who can make the other apparent with the help of the Lord, as Genesis says.<sup>xv</sup> Each needs the other to understand more about the very identity and image of God.

Once this human imaging of a Trinitarian God as relational is brought to the fore, then men and women are not only essential partners, but the woman's capacity to bear new life and her special gift of attention to new life—which Benedict XVI calls her “capacity for the other”<sup>xvi</sup>—can be identified and

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xi The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, November 1995, Web.

xii John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women)*, (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1988).

xiii Margaret McCarthy, “Experience, Feminism, and the Need for Christian Witnesses,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 37.2 (Summer 2010): 329–45.

xiv McCarthy, “Experience, Feminism, and the Need for Christian Witnesses,” 329–345.

xv Genesis 4:1 (English Standard Version).

xvi *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (Washington, DC:



valorized. The old dichotomy's instinct to rank traits is transcended in favor of seeing one always in light of the other, which is very much my understanding of the way the family proclamation talks about the gifts of the husband and wife as an equal partnership, but definitely different: not less than one another, but each in light of the other, with interacting mutual gifts.

While *Mulieris Dignitatem* eschews rankings of gifts or traits, it easily affirms the differences between the sexes. This transcends the inclination of history to rank and the inclination of secular feminisms to avoid acknowledging differences because of the belief that they can only lead to rankings. *Mulieris Dignitatem* accomplished this by framing all differences as gifts received in order to be given. You're given a gift in order to give it. There is a theologian, Brian Johnson, who talked about a new framework for understanding Catholic morality: All behavior has to be judged in terms of whether it capacitates the other to be a gift. To love another is to capacitate who they were meant to be by God.

*Mulieris Dignitatem* boldly asserts that love is the meaning of life, and women are first, or prior, in the order of love: the first to be entrusted with new life. It bases its conclusions not only on the fact of women's fertility, but also women's demonstrated gift for acknowledging the other. The recognition of women's gift for loving other people means, John Paul II claims, that she teaches the man his fatherhood, not to lord it over him, but to enable him to give the gifts that men give to their wives, to their children, and to the world. This feature of *Mulieris Dignitatem* claims that women are gifted with a capacity for the person, but its simultaneous insistence that love is the meaning of every human life upends the entire historical inclination to account feminine traits as lesser both because they are feminine, and because such a ranking assumes that worldly goods and power are the measure of success rather than the capacity to love well. If that is the measure of success, then this discussion of who the woman is and what her primary gift is has a whole new aspect.<sup>xvii</sup>

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Uscsb Pub., 2012).

xvii John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women)*, (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1988).

*Mulieris Dignitatem* redeems the body while not exalting it as higher than the spirit or soul. Because the body's mortality and its other limitations and feelings were noted, women's association with bringing forth new life and caring for persons was counted against them. From these premises flow the problems we see with women's bodies being treated as things, as property. This includes prostitution, pornography, trafficking, and demands that sex is the price of a romantic relationship. *Mulieris Dignitatem* brings the body into the economy of salvation, teaching that it images God in relationship, that it points toward the goal and the good of the male-female union. It points toward the social context of every human life, that bodies are obviously not built to be alone – they are

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built for relationship. It points toward God in pro-creative activity. So, *Mulieris Dignitatem* reinterprets the meaning of all human bodies.

I would like to conclude with thoughts about where we might go from here, particularly on the matter of women's roles in light of the signs of the times.<sup>xviii</sup> First, I think the word "roles" may be irreversibly tainted in the modern world. It might be more useful to speak of women's and men's gifts, capacities, or contributions. Second, I think any reflection about the future of women needs to be framed in the context of the gifts that men and women bring to one another. Third, the secular feminist response to women's historical inequality is to deny all differences, to say everybody is the same, to deny complementarity, and to deny that marriage has anything to do with happiness, freedom of women, or children. This secular feminist response is hurting poor, vulnerable, and minority populations and children the most. The religions like ours, which have deep

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xviii *Ibid.*

grasps of the family, have a lot of work to do, not only among our own, but also out in society to overcome this.

Fourth, women have to be particularly active participants in the movement for religious freedom around the world. It is important work to assist authorities in less-privileged countries to understand that they can embrace authentically pro-women reforms without swallowing all of the horrid women's platform that comes from the West that says abortion, contraception, and avoiding marriage and childbearing are the keys to women's freedom. This is delicate work, but it has to be done while promoting religious freedom.

Fifth, we have had a natural experiment over the last several decades that allows us to observe what happens when a substantial number of women actually can choose how they would like to spend their whole lives: Women still want to marry and have marital children. Sixth and finally, women seem very much in a position to be excellent communicators of all these messages that I am putting forward. They do not have to adopt male ways of doing things. Women are brilliantly placed to communicate not just the power of this gospel, but the power of this truth that everybody knows by the time they die: Human beings are not made to live as individuals; they are made for the law of love, which is a cycle of entrustment and fidelity.

As I said, it was an attack upon women's natural desire and instinct to hold sex, marriage, and childbearing together that *really* gave us this sexual revolution. Around the world today, it is the woman who is urged, often by self-proclaimed women's groups, to abort her child. It is the woman who is urged to distrust men as a general hermeneutic. It is the woman who initiates divorce proceedings in the United States in 66% of all marriages and in the majority of marriages not marked by violence. It is the woman who is assured that non-marital childbearing is morally neutral and that labor-market accomplishments are far more valuable than anything she could be doing with the family. It is the woman who is targeted to deny the fundamental truth that human life is about relationship, not autonomy. This is terribly ironic when you consider that it is probably the woman who is entrusted first with the opposite message. This is not an absolution of men; it is an identification of areas where women could be exhorted to lead the way out of

the crises that we are in with regard to relationships between men and women, with regard to the family, and with regard to marriage.

Women could lead the way toward prioritizing again the demands of love. Empirical data indicate that if women understood their power in the marketplace of relationships, and acted by making demands of men and of employers when it came time to marry and have a family, they would not only serve their own interests but also the interests of the neediest, including in particular those of children and of poor women. They would vindicate the cause of the human being to a great degree.

It is not weakness; it is not just bowing to the demands—to the fiat—of religion for women to do this. Rather, it is cooperation with the internal logic, the natural law, and the law of freedom that is coextensive with the law of love. Women have the power, at this moment in time, to bring this message to the fore and because they have the power, they also have the duty to do so.

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# THE WHEATLEY OBSERVER

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## INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF RELIGIOUS GLOBAL CONFLICT

Eboo Patel  
Founder of Interfaith Youth Core

**S**everal years ago, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright wrote a book called *The Mighty and the Almighty*.<sup>i</sup> The big notion of the book is that religion matters in world affairs. The thing that struck me the most about that book was that when she was Secretary of State, she had literally armies of people that she could turn to when it came to non-proliferation issues or economic issues. But there were barely a handful of people that she could turn to within the State Department or diplomatic circles within the United States who were experts on religion or religious diversity. Here is why that struck me: Secretary of State Albright wasn't calling for more programs or more money

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<sup>i</sup> Albright, Madeleine Korbelt., and William Woodward. *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006. Print.

or even new bureaus. She was saying “I need people, I need leaders.” If there is a central part of my talk tonight, it is going to be on what it means to be an interfaith leader.

I want to define it thus: an interfaith leader is somebody with the framework, knowledge base, and skill set to build understanding and cooperation between people who orient around religion differently. We can have a whole set of geeky conversations about what I mean by that mouthful, those “who orient around religion differently.” Suffice it to say it means everything from Muslims and Jews to internal divisions within Islam like Sufis and Salafis, to believers and non-believers, to the various political orientations within the Catholic, Lutheran, Evangelical, whatever community. In other words, it means the variety of ways that people orient around religion: politically, socially, theologically, etc.

Why does this matter now? I want to cite a modernity theorist named Peter Berger who is at Boston University. He says we live in the late modern age, the late 20th and early 21st century, and the signal characteristic of the late modern age is interaction between people who are different. The world has always been diverse; it has never been this interactional. What that means is that, 500 years ago, there were Muslims and Jews and Christians and various stripes of Christians, but those people weren't bumping into each other all the time. The creation of world cities, the advent of air travel, communications technology, migration flows, means we moderns live a very complex psychological life. This is what characterizes the era in which we live. So, all of you grew up in an era in which you heard things like “diversity is our strength, diversity enriches us, we ought to celebrate diversity, etc.” This is what you grew up with, right? Baghdad is diverse, it is true; it is also a civil war. Belfast is diverse; it is also a barely cold conflict. Bombay is diverse. On a good day, things are ok. On a bad day, there is a bomb somewhere in that city, largely between people who orient around religion differently. Diversity is not necessarily a good thing. In many parts of the world, it's not a very good thing at all.

The question is, what do we do with that diversity? Diversity can just as easily become a civil war as it can become something beautiful and positive, the kind of thing that your elementary school wanted to think it was. What do we do with

diversity to turn it into something positive? This is what Diane Eck calls pluralism.<sup>ii</sup> Our definition of pluralism at Interfaith Youth Core has three parts. Pluralism is a situation where people's identities are respected, there are relationships between diverse communities, and there is a commitment to the common good. Here is another way of defining an interfaith leader: an interfaith leader can take religious diversity and build from it religious pluralism. Let me emphasize again: religious diversity can just as easily, if not more easily, turn into a conflict situation than a situation of pluralism.

Let me encourage you to do an exercise. For the next week, read the international section of the New York Times, page A1 to A8, cut out the stories that have something to do with religion, put them in two piles, the ones that have to do with religion and conflict, and the ones that have to do with religion and something else. Then, see how much of the international section you have left and see which pile is higher and ask yourself the question, what is religious

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diversity most likely to lead to? And then ask yourself the question about the urgency of interfaith leadership. Frankly, interaction between people who orient around religion differently can turn into four things. It can turn into bubbles of isolation harder and harder to continue in the modern world, to be a bubble of isolation; it can turn into barriers of division where people emphasize their differences and divides with other people; it can turn into bombs of destruction, those of the extremist movements that you will see when you do your exercise in the New York Times; or, four, it can turn into bridges of cooperation. But here is

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<sup>ii</sup> Eck, Diana L. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001. Print.

the crazy obvious thing: bridges don't fall from the sky. They don't rise from the ground. People build them. You build them.

What does it take to be an interfaith leader? What is the framework, the knowledge base and the skill set? I think it's important to have what I call a theology of interfaith cooperation. Those of us who believe in a world in which religious divides are bridged and are committing ourselves to build those bridges, ought to be able to articulate our own theology or ethic. What is your theology of interfaith cooperation? I started to ask myself this question, back in the Muslim sources and scriptures, and I found this story.

We Muslims believe that in the year 610 a merchant named Mohammad made his annual pilgrimage to a cave on mount Hira in the month of Ramadan. On one of the last nights of the final ten days of that month, as he was praying and giving alms to the poor and fasting, Muhammad was visited by an angel, angel Gabriel, and he felt this force squeeze him. The first thing the force says is iqra, recite, and Mohammed says, "I'm not a reciter." Then the second time, the force squeezes him and says, "Recite!" And Mohammed a second time says, "I'm not a reciter," and the third time, Mohammed feels that the life is being squeezed out of him, and finally feels coming from his mouth the words, "Recite in the name of your Lord who created, created humankind from a clot of blood." The first verse of the Koran. He then went to the person he trusted and loved most in the world, his wife. For me that's a powerful example of the exalted role of women in Islam. And his wife, Khadija, hears the story and says to her husband, "I don't know what's happened to you, but I know that God has not forsaken you because you are too good and righteous and believing of a man for that to happen. I know somebody who can shed light on this. My uncle, Waraqa, is a man learned in the scriptures. I will go to him and tell him this story." So Khadija goes to her uncle Waraqa, sits before this man dressed in robes. Waraqa listens, nods his head, and says, "Verily, the prophet of your people has arrived." And the next time that he sees Mohammed passing through the square in Mecca in front of the Q'aba, he comes to him and looks him in the eye, and he kisses him on the forehead and says, "You are the beginner of a new religious civilization." So, who was Waraqa? Who was the first person to recognize the prophethood of Mohammed?



Waraqa was a Christian; the first person to recognize the prophethood of Mohammed, the coming of a new religious civilization, was a Christian, a man who, incidentally, never converts to Islam. That's the beginning of my theology of interfaith cooperation.

I want to be clear about something. This is not proof-texting. This is identifying a deep logic in a tradition that says to you, "I am commanded, I am inspired, I am meant to be an interfaith leader. This is who I am, and what I do." I think oftentimes those moments for people come in a powerful, personal moment. I think of one in particular, in 1950, late winter, early spring, a young man, 20 or 21, from a deeply devout Baptist family in Atlanta, Georgia. He was at seminary up north and he went to hear a sermon from the great black intellectual, Mordecai

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*He was a civil rights hero, he was an African American hero, he was a paragon of non-violence, but amongst all of those things, King was also an interfaith leader.*

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Johnson, on Christian love. Johnson was the president of Howard University and had recently been to India. And I keep thinking to myself, what must have been going through young Martin Luther King Jr.'s mind, sitting in the back of the lecture hall when he heard Mordecai Johnson give, as the embodiment of Christian love in that lecture, the example of a Hindu from India, Mahatma Gandhi. That's King's first interfaith moment, recognizing that somehow Hinduism has created in Gandhi a Christ-like paragon of non-violence. And it was something that, frankly, rocked King's world up until that point, the Jesus ethic of non-violence as something that was relevant for personal relationships.

Martin Luther King Jr. was many things. He was, I think, the greatest American of the 20th century. He was a civil rights hero, he was an African American hero, he was a paragon of non-violence, but amongst all of those things, King was also an interfaith leader. In 1959 he preached from his pulpit on Palm Sunday, "Father, we call you this name. We know some call you Allah, we know some call you

Brahma, we know some call you Elohim, we know some call you the unmoved mover.” That’s the second to last line in that Palm Sunday sermon in 1959. The last line: “We open the doors of the church for those who would come to the front and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.” This is Martin Luther King Jr., deeply appreciating the religious traditions of other people, lifting up the holy names that other people call God, and knowing exactly who he is as a Baptist Christian. That’s what an interfaith leader is. Someone with roots—and wings. Somebody with the theology or ethic of interfaith cooperation that says, I am a Muslim and it is precisely because I am a Muslim, or a Mormon, or a Jew, or a secular humanist, that I build bridges between people who orient around religion differently.

Here is the other thing we do with diversity. We pretend that diversity means

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*Dealing with religious diversity means being able to deal with people who disagree with you on fundamental matters.*

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interesting ethnic restaurants. What diversity really means is disagreements on fundamental matters, especially religious diversity. Religion, past hilik, is about ultimate concerns, fundamental things. Diversity is not about colorful people who all agree with you. Diversity is about profound disagreements. So if you are dealing with religious diversity and you encounter somebody who you disagree with on a massive issue like abortion, marriage, or where to draw the line in the Middle East, and you look aghast and you say, “I can’t believe you see that differently!” you’re in the wrong business. You can’t have water without the wet. If you walk into a room and everybody there is eating interesting ethnic foods and is of a variety of colors and they all agree with you, it is an interesting space, it is not a diverse space. Dealing with religious diversity means being able to deal with people who disagree with you on fundamental matters. And how else do you have a diverse democracy unless people who disagree on fundamental matters are

able also to work together on other things? And how else does that happen unless you have a vanguard of leaders who are creating spaces, who are articulating a language, who are employing a knowledge base, who are applying a skill set?

So here is my favorite story about this. One of my heroes and mentors is a woman named Ruth Messenger. Ruth was the Manhattan Borough President for many years in New York; she ran against Giuliani for mayor, found her next vocation leading the American Jewish World service, and was encouraging to Interfaith Youth Core from the beginning. By the way, the people you will never forget are the ones who believed in your crazy dreams when you were 19, and that was what Ruth Messenger was for me.

So somebody in Interfaith Youth Core once asked her, “How did you start off as an interfaith leader? What got you into this?” Ruth tells the story that her first job after graduating from grad school happened to be for the state government in Western Oklahoma. And her job was to find foster families, especially for orphans from Native American backgrounds. The group of people that Ruth found who were most ready to immediately provide foster families for these kids were Southern Baptists in Western Oklahoma. And I think to myself, how many millions of disagreements Ruth Messenger and those folks, especially the people in the pulpit, must have had. I imagine that sitting in the back of those prayer gatherings and song circles and wood frame churches on Sundays, Ruth heard a lot of things that probably offended her. Welcome to the disagreements around religious diversity. And she kept her focus straight as an interfaith leader. How many thousands of kids have foster families as a result of Ruth and those Baptist preachers in Western Oklahoma deciding that they were going to build bridges instead of bubbles or barriers? That’s interfaith leadership: recognizing there is a wide swath of things on which you disagree, and deciding to have the discipline to focus on areas of work together.

Here is my final story. It’s a personal one, and I think that ultimately people come to this work out of some kind of a personal story. Maybe you’ve experienced religious discrimination; maybe you saw a friend experience it and you just don’t want that to happen to anybody else. Maybe like Martin Luther King Jr. you have found somebody from a different religion that you admire deeply, whose way of

being Buddhist, or Hindu, or Mormon, has changed your way of being Jewish, or Muslim. So here is my story: When I was a junior in high school, I fell in love with a Mormon girl. And somehow God was working with me, and He encouraged my expressiveness. I don't know how well God did that tonight, but He did a good enough job of it when I was a junior in high school to convince one Lee Spence to begin to date me. Maybe a week into our relationship, Lee sat me down and she drew a stick figure of herself, and she drew a circle around about 85% of her body and she said, "Everything that is in the circle is no-go." I was a 17 year old male, caught up in the various biological and cultural processes of the time, and I looked at that circle, and I looked at Lee. The first thing I thought was, "Is there any wiggle room here? Is that a dotted line?" It was not a dotted line. And it was my first experience of somebody willfully following a discipline based on a cosmic order and it was among the best things that have happened to me, to fall deeply in love at 17 and to be able to prosecute that love through dimensions other than the ones I might have chosen at that time. For the first time I thought to myself that the cosmic order is what I wanted to be a part of and discipline is something that I wanted in my bones, and that it didn't actually originally come from me, it came from elsewhere, and I wanted to align with elsewhere. And it is because of Lee Spence, a Mormon girl that I met when I was 17, that I recommitted to Islam when I was 23, and I don't think I'd be a Muslim, or an interfaith leader without her.

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THE  
WHEATLEY OBSERVER

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SELF-MASTERY, ACADEMIC  
FREEDOM, AND THE  
LIBERAL ARTS

Robert P. George  
Princeton University

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hen the flower children and antiwar activists of the sixties came to power in so many universities in the seventies and eighties, they did not overthrow the idea, or at least an idea, of liberal arts education. In a great many cases, they proclaimed themselves true partisans of liberal arts ideals.

Now it is true that many representatives of that generation in positions of influence and authority in the academy today believe that universities should be in the forefront of producing young men and women who will be left-wing social activists. Indeed, more than a few seem to be eager to transform university education into a species of vocational training for aspiring ACLU lawyers, Planned Parenthood volunteers, and “community organizers.” There are, indeed, some

colleges and universities that actually offer academic credit for social activism. Others, however, resist the idea that learning should be instrumentalized in this way. They profess allegiance to the traditional (or, in any event, traditional-sounding) idea that the point of liberal education is to enrich and even liberate the student-learner. That's what is supposed to be "liberal" about liberal arts learning—it is supposed to convey the knowledge and impart the intellectual skills and habits of mind that carry with them a certain profound form of freedom.

However traditional this may sound, there is nevertheless an unbridgeable chasm between the idea of liberal arts education as classically conceived and the conception sponsored and promoted by some (though, mercifully, not all) in authority in the academy today. Many academic humanists and social scientists working in contemporary higher education propose liberation as the goal of liberal arts learning, to be sure; but the question is, liberation from what?

In their conception (what I shall call the revisionist conception), it is liberation from traditional social constraints and norms of morality—the beliefs, principles, and structures by which earlier generations of Americans and people in the West generally had been taught to govern their conduct for the sake of personal virtue and the common good. Why do they regard this form of "liberation" as desirable? Because it has become a matter of dogma that the traditional norms and structures are irrational—they are vestiges of superstition and phobia that impede the free development of personalities by restricting people's capacities to act on their desires.

According to this conception of personal authenticity, whatever impedes one from doing what one truly wants to do (unless, that is, what one happens to want to do is in violation of some norm of political correctness) is a mere hang-up—something that holds one back from being true to one's self, from being the person one truly wants to be. Such impediments, be they religious convictions, moral ideals, or what have you, are to be transcended for the sake of the free and full development of your personality. The very essence of liberation as reconceived by partisans of the revisionist conception of liberal arts education is transcending such hang-ups by, for example, "coming out" as a homosexual, transvestite, polyamorist, or as a member of some other "sexual minority" and

acting on sexual desires that one might have been “repressing” as a result of religious and moral convictions.

The true founder of the liberal arts ideal was Socrates, as presented by his student Plato. And Socrates’ method of teaching was to question. He is the great exemplar of what the late Allan Bloom labeled the “interrogatory attitude”—an attitude that even defenders of the classical liberal arts ideal sometimes fail to exhibit and inculcate in their students. The liberal arts ideal assumes, to be sure, that there are right answers to great moral and existential questions. It is

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*Many academic humanists and social scientists working in contemporary higher education propose liberation as the goal of liberal arts learning, to be sure; but the question is, liberation from what?*

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the enemy, not the friend, of moral relativism. But liberal arts teaching is not fundamentally about telling students what the right answers are—even when we are justifiably confident that we have the right answers. Liberal arts learning is not just about receiving and processing information, even if it’s great information, such as historical facts about the Western tradition or the American founding, vital though that is. It is not just about reading Aristotle or Chaucer or Shakespeare or Tocqueville and knowing what these great writers said. It is about engaging with them; indeed, it is about wrestling with them and with the questions they wrestled with. It is about considering their arguments or arguments that can be gleaned from their work. It is about considering the best possible lines of counterargument and examining alternative points of view.

And the range of alternatives that students should be invited to consider, while not limitless, needs to be wide. Liberal arts education is not catechism class. Students should not simply be presented with officially approved views— even if they are the right views. I want my own students to seriously consider a range of possibilities, including some—Marxism, for example—that I think are not

only unsound but also reprehensible and whose record in human affairs is a record of death and abomination. I certainly want them to hear the profound arguments advanced against Marxism by people like Hayek, Solzhenitsyn, and John Paul II, but I also want them to understand how it was that Marxism could have attracted the allegiance of many intelligent and even morally serious (if seriously misguided) people. I want them to know the arguments Marx and his most intelligent disciples made. In fact, I want them to consider these arguments fairly on their merits. The task of the liberal arts teacher, as I envisage it, is not to tell students what to think; it is to teach them to think, as my young friend said, carefully, critically, and for themselves.

Now, why? Is it because I think there is something intrinsically valuable about the interrogatory attitude? Allan Bloom might have thought so. The possibility that he did is what opened him to the charge of relativism and even nihilism advanced by some culturally conservative critics of Bloom's influential book *The Closing of the American Mind*. Walker Percy, for example, faulted Bloom for allegedly holding the view that the point of an open mind is merely to have an open mind rather than to arrive at answers that are to be affirmed and acted on. Whether or not the charge is just, the charge, if true, would be damning. The idea of a mind that never closes on a truth is antithetical to the liberal arts ideal. The point of the interrogatory attitude, rather, is precisely to move from ignorance to truths—truths that can be affirmed and acted on. As G. K. Chesterton once said, "The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid" (in "Friendship and Foolery," chapter 10 of *The Autobiography of G.K. Chesterton* [1936]).

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THE

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# WHEATLEY INSTITUTION

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