

legitimized authority that expounds the will of God? The “new humanistic synthesis” proposed by Benedict XVI makes no sense if it is separated from the theological foundation of humanism, that is, man’s creation in the image of God.

Most contributions attribute “humanistic” to “systems” of management or to the economy; only few papers (such as that by Beabout) explicitly attribute it to managers as a trait of character and of conduct following from it. By dwelling on the macro- rather than the micro-level, some authors do not render justice to the true novelty of *Caritas in Veritate*, which lies, as many authors concede, in emphasizing a new approach to the latter.

Benedict XVI indeed proposes a humanistic form of business but clarifies that it can be such only by resting on an indispensable foundation of faith. While all papers collected in this volume make a welcome contribution to understanding this humanism, some go beyond others by developing a constructive approach toward Christian humanism. It will be worthwhile to explore this perspective further, particularly in its concrete ramifications for business management. For humanistic management to be a truly new, theoretically rich, and empirically fruitful approach in the normative study of business, more will be required, not least a clear understanding of the interface between a human and a theonomic sphere in social relations. Humanism would then no longer center on claiming autonomy from divine or even natural law, or on emergence from “lower” forms of creation, but on embracing what man truly is and is called to be. Much of this volume goes in this direction, although more hesitantly and carefully than consistently and with arms outstretched to a truly new way of thinking about management and business. However, expecting more than that from the proceedings of a seminar, which presents valuable contributions to the literature in their own right, may lack the spirit of charity and realism that *Caritas in Veritate* so impressively reclaims.

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The Transformation of the American Democratic Republic

Stephen M. Krason

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The conclusion of this book is a series of recommendations aimed at restoring the United States to its “founding principles.” The final admonition is for citizens to “oppose strongly every unreasonable attempt to limit their liberties more, and seek to reverse or minimize the effects of such limits already in place.”

These are striking words, not for what they say so much as for who says them. Coming from a libertarian, a Republican politician, or a Tea Party activist, such an exhortation would be less-than-newsworthy. Stephen Krason, professor of political science at Franciscan University, is none of the above. A lifelong student of American politics, law, and history, his lodestar is Catholic social doctrine. His reading of American history is

not especially conservative—most of his secondary sources are standard, mainstream works—nor is his interpretation of Catholic social teaching skewed toward a limited government approach. Yet, in the final analysis, he finds himself largely in alliance with those calling for government retrenchment in contemporary American politics. This result is a function of his understanding of the course of American history and the dangerous trajectory of current political trends. That increasing numbers of scholars, not to mention other Americans, are coming to such a conclusion is indeed newsworthy. This book helps to explain why it is happening.

Krason's thesis is that the political order established by the American Founders (1) was a fundamentally sound regime though flawed in certain ways; (2) was embedded in a culture that was supportive of and essential to the success of that political order; and (3) has been gravely compromised over the course of history, with the most damage done since 1960. Krason does not think that the country has passed the "point of no return," but he does believe the need for immediate and forceful action is urgent.

The book begins with an articulation of the founding principles—in the words of the first chapter's title, "the original character of the American democratic republic and the culture supporting it." Krason's insistence throughout on the use of the term *democratic republic* is not pedantry; he is convinced that such a mixture of elite expertise or ability and popular approval is the key to the success of the American regime. In fact, the democratization of American politics at the expense of its republican character is one important source of corruption, in Krason's telling.

Distinguishing the three categories of (1) institutional arrangements, (2) democratic principles and practices, and (3) social conditions, Krason identifies the most important principles of the founding as: (1) separation of powers, checks and balances, independent judiciary, and federalism; (2) the twin purpose of government (securing individual rights and promoting the common good), popular sovereignty, limitation of the franchise, measured liberty, political equality, private property, political and legal rights, short duration in public office, civilian control of the military, and avoiding excessive public debt; and (3) religion, education, morality, virtue, a commitment to freedom and republican principles, prosperity and other economic factors, respect for law, respect for the common good, and a natural aristocracy. Even this lengthy list is a simplification of Krason's presentation of the principles, whose complexity is challenging yet fully justified by the complexity of the actual historical reality he is trying to reconstruct.

The author traces the fortunes of the founding principles through American history in successive chapters on "the formative years" (1789–1817); the eras of "good feelings" and Jacksonian democracy (1817–1840); expansionism, sectionalism, the Civil War, and Reconstruction (1840–1877); the Gilded Age, progressivism, and World War I (1877–1920); the 1920s, the Depression, and World War II (1920–1945); the Cold War (1945–1960); "the welfare state, cultural upheaval, and the reign and decline of liberalism" (1960–1980); and "the upsurge of conservatism, economic transformation, and post-Cold War America" (1980–present). As these descriptions indicate, Krason's categories are primarily political, although the unique value of the account lies in his somewhat successful effort to integrate

cultural and economic developments into the dominant political narrative. This integration is something few historians attempt, for the obvious reason that it is immensely difficult. Krason is astute enough to recognize that the political deformations that he chronicles cannot possibly be explained without recourse to their cultural origins.

All of the founding principles, Krason finds, have been compromised to a greater or lesser extent. The United States' republican character has been greatly diminished, he argues, and Americans now experience in fact what Tocqueville warned against in the early nineteenth century: "a gentle despotism where people continue to elect their leaders, but increasingly see their everyday lives regimented, liberty reduced, and governmental power centralized." The final section of the book is devoted to recommending courses of action that will reverse or at least stem the harmful trends of recent decades.

Strong points of Krason's discussion include his recognition of the undulating nature of history and his treatment of legal developments. Historical developments are rarely simple, linear phenomena, and, although Krason's thesis is clearly one of overall decline, he is conscientious enough to note when "reversals" appear in the narrative (such as the resurgence of religious practice in the immediate post-World War II years). His incorporation of legal history, Supreme Court cases in particular, is also a valuable feature of the book; his mastery of this field reflects the author's primary academic background and interests.

Some will view Krason's orderly and dispassionate approach to the subject matter as another asset, but it also gives rise to the book's limitations. Written in a social scientific rather than a narrative historical style, the pace of the book is somewhat sluggish. The attempt to fit the entire history of a large and diverse nation into a set of categories is certainly helpful for imposing order on the material, but order sometimes comes at the expense of realism. A different organizational approach might better convey a sense of the interconnections among cultural, political, and economic developments. History is a messy affair, and a messier narrative is sometimes necessary to do justice to reality.

Quibbles about organization and style aside, Krason makes an important point and does so with the backing of considerable scholarship. The scope is big enough that everyone will find differences of opinion concerning the details, but those who wish to refute the main argument will have to do so with an equally impressive arsenal of evidence.

—Kevin Schmiesing
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