



**“Religious Freedom in a Secular World: Doomed or Doable?”  
Sydney Catholic Business Network, Sheraton Grand Hyde Park 31 May 2024**

**Prologue: 2035**

The year is 2035, hopefully my last as archbishop. I've just emailed my draft homily for Sunday to the Religious Safety Commissioner for her approval. She's the independent regulator charged with ensuring that faith groups spread no discriminatory and otherwise harmful messages. With the help of AI, she vets all planned sermons and spiritual talks to be given in Australia each week, catching any inappropriate words or themes before they are spoken.

Our school system also meets each month with Departmental officials to monitor what's taught in our schools and ensure this accords with contemporary expectations. The Department itself now appoints Catholic school principals, SERECs (Secular Ethics and Religious Education Coordinators), and other staff in accord with DEI policy and approves all curriculum.

Hospitals like St Vincent's are no more. Because these institutions so stubbornly refused to provide 'the full range of services', such as abortion, euthanasia and sex-change surgery, the Greens-Teals Coalition nationalised the faith-based public hospitals in 2033, following the precedent of Calvary Hospital Canberra a decade before.

Charitable status is no longer granted to faith-based education, health, aged care or welfare, and state subsidies have been declining, while secular bureaucratic interference and taxes on former charities have been increasing, making some of these institutions unsustainable. The Census people and the Productivity Commission, egged on by sections of the media, have decided religion no longer warrants recognition.

**Dystopian fiction or plausible future?**

The future I've sketched is exaggerated as a provocation. But is it entirely implausible? I was scheduled to address the Sydney Catholic Business Network in December 2022 on today's topic but had to cancel following my father's death. The address I had prepared began with the case of Andrew Thorburn, the businessman hired as CEO of Essendon Football Club and forced to resign less than 24 hours later. His crime? Chairing the 'parish council' of an evangelical Anglican church with traditional views on sex and life. No one cared what Thorburn *himself* believed or said on

these matters, or that in his previous role as CEO of a major bank, he had championed 'DEI'. The Victorian Premier labelled his views "hateful" and "absolutely appalling", and that was that.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sports v religion**

So, what's happened in the eighteen months since then? Well, sports continue to be a major arena of contest over sexual, religious and woke politics. Teams have been pressured to wear 'Pride' jerseys.<sup>2</sup> Sporting organisations, players and fans are very divided about whether women's sports should be reserved to biological women.<sup>3</sup> But to say so is risky, especially if your reasons are religious. When NSW Swifts netball star, Samantha Wallace-Joseph, said on social media that she thought it disrespectful of Joe Biden to promote Easter Sunday as the Transgender Day of Visibility, Netball Australia came down on her like a ton of bricks.<sup>4</sup>

### **Schools v religion**

Schools are another major arena for these battles today. In March, the Australian Law Reform Commission recommended that faith schools no longer be permitted to preference enrolments and staff according to faith and witness, and that they be required to facilitate 'alternate' views taught on religious and moral matters being taught in their schools.<sup>5</sup> Some states have already moved in the direction proposed.<sup>6</sup>

Recently I appeared on behalf of the Catholic and Orthodox bishops before a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Alex Greenwich's "*Equality Bill*".<sup>7</sup> He, too, would forbid religious schools taking faith or witness into account in employment and enrolments.<sup>8</sup> I began by saying our Churches "sympathise with all efforts to discourage or forbid unjust discrimination against 'LGBT' people" but that we are troubled by the anti-religious undercurrent in the Bill. I was immediately interrupted by two trans activists swearing and screaming. When order was restored, I explained that removing the only protections for Church schools from lawfare would only enlarge the scope for discrimination against believers.

Apart from lawfare, social media and mainstream journalism are regularly employed against religion today. Only last week, an international speaker, booked for talks to Catholic students on human sexuality and relationships, met a fierce campaign to "cancel" him led by an activist parent or two, a federal MP, and a society of self-proclaimed witches. The speaker's views were ruled "outdated" and "not in accord with modern Catholicism" by *SMH* and ABC inquisitors.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, large numbers benefitted from Jason Evett's presentations, but certain journalists miss no opportunity to bad-mouth church schools, especially ones they consider "conservative",<sup>10</sup> to campaign to defund them,<sup>11</sup> and to silence Christian voices.

Earlier this month, Equality Tasmania and other lobby groups targeted Hobart Archbishop Julian Porteous for publishing a pastoral letter they characterised as “homophobic” “misinformation”, “stigmatising” LGBT students and staff, and rendering Catholic schools “unsafe”.<sup>12</sup> A few months before, the Productivity Commission recommended axing tax-breaks for Church-school building funds.<sup>13</sup> Not long before that the Victorian government imposed new taxes on church schools.<sup>14</sup> And while the Turnbull government’s attempt to defund church schools cost it dearly, federal and state governments regularly disadvantage these schools in funding and policy. We could give many other examples of Catholic schools and universities being targeted by governments, bureaucrats, education unions, or powerful anti-religious lobbies.<sup>15</sup>

### **Hospitals v religion**

Schools are not the only Church institutions facing unremitting attempts to secularise them or force them out. Catholic health providers are regularly pressed to offer abortion and euthanasia on pain of being defunded, and health professionals to provide or refer for these or be deregistered.<sup>16</sup> Today is the first anniversary of the most brazen recent attack on religious institutions: the passage of the *Health Infrastructure Enabling Act 2023* by which the ACT government, appalled by the “overriding religious ethos” of Calvary Hospital, forcibly acquired the Church’s land, operations and staff with, to date, zero compensation.<sup>17</sup>

### **Other v religion**

At my recent appearance before the NSW Parliament’s Committee on Community Services, I pointed out that the ‘LGBTIQ+ Equality Bill’ not only sought to secularise Catholic schools: it would permit solicitation outside churches and Catholic schools; and it would undermine women’s-only spaces, single-sex schools, and the wedding and ordination practices of major religions, by allowing people to falsify their sex on their birth certificates.

Then there’s the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which has already put ‘No religion’ as the first choice for the religious affiliation question in the census. It now proposes to have a tick box for “No” but none for “Yes”, and no menu of religions to choose from as in the past. Instead, there’ll be a space to write a religion, which will inevitably mean underreporting of belief.<sup>18</sup> It is difficult to view all these recent proposals as anything but hostile to religious freedom.

### **Legislative protection of religion?**

So, a lot’s happened in the 18 months since the Thorburn case was hot news. The last federal government’s promise to protect religious freedom after same sex marriage came to nothing.<sup>19</sup>

The present government has also gone quiet on its electoral promises to do so, but as reported in today's press its draft bill to date would set religious freedom backwards.<sup>20</sup> Instead, it proposes anti-vilification laws which could be as much a danger to religion as an antidote to religious hatred.<sup>21</sup> Australia is a signatory to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*<sup>22</sup> and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*,<sup>23</sup> both of which insist on rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. But unlike provisions concerning racial, sexual and disability discrimination, Australia has never incorporated the provisions religious freedom into federal domestic law. Yet many social commentators agree that religion is increasingly under attack in Australia.<sup>24</sup> This slide in the culture may incline us to gloom. But it can also serve as a wake-up call—a reminder that religious freedom cannot be taken for granted and a catalyst for us to do something about it.

### **A positive case for religious freedom**

I have elsewhere addressed the long march of secularism, and the *laïcité* movement to restrict religion to a much narrower field.<sup>25</sup> In the time left to me I want to offer the outlines of a *positive case* for why letting religious believers do their thing—within reason—is actually good for the community. By religious liberty I don't just mean the freedom to attend church, synagogue or mosque, but the right also to adopt, hold or change beliefs, to manifest them alone or with others, to worship and practice in accordance with those beliefs, to teach them to others, including transmitting them to one's own children.

### **What makes us tick?**

The case for allowing religion might begin with the various dimensions of the human person and human good, what makes us flourish and do the things we do. Amongst the basic goods of human choice and well-being are life, health, friendship, marriage, knowledge, beauty, work, leisure, moral integrity and *spiritual experience*.<sup>26</sup> As *religious animals*, the spiritual is basic to how perception, cognition and explanation ordinarily work for us;<sup>27</sup> and religion provides us with meaning and identity, community and order, beauty and ecstasy.<sup>28</sup> Even many secular-minded people make space for the 'sacred' in the sense of ultimate questions concerning existence, and transcendent experiences of the sublime or awe-inspiring.<sup>29</sup> If we do not make a space for religion in our community, we will not flourish, either as individuals or as a society.<sup>30</sup>

### **What religion has contributed historically**

In *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, John Cleese plays Reg, a member of the People's Liberation Front of Judea. In a terrorist cell meeting he asks rhetorically, "What have the Romans ever done for us?" His fellows respond with example after example of the benefits of Roman civilization. "All

right... all right,” Reg concedes, “but apart from sanitation, medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a freshwater system, and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?”<sup>31</sup>

“All right, all right,” the secular interlocuter interjects, “but apart from the sanity sanctity brings to a world of sin; the hospitals, hospices, nursing homes and leprosaria; the orphanages, schools and universities; providing food to the indigent and so many other welfare services; or the supports for families and neighbourhoods... what have the Romish ever done for us? Apart from explicating a sublime moral code and vision of the person; ending human sacrifice, cannibalism, slavery, infanticide and the chattel conception of women and children; shaping our language and promoting literacy and libraries; inventing the scientific method and sponsoring so much science, medicine and technology; sponsoring much of the greatest art, architecture, music and literature; grounding our common, civil and constitutional law; and providing the metaphysical underpinnings for our polity... apart from all that, what have the Roman Catholics ever done for us?”<sup>32</sup>

In Australia the churches, especially the Catholic Church, made the greatest contributions to the nation’s social capital. Otherwise, there would be no Calvary Hospitals to steal or imitate! There are so many good stories to tell here. One day economists might give us a reliable estimate of how much faith groups save the taxpayer each year by providing the educational, health, aged, welfare and pastoral care they do. Even when the state subsidizes some of these things, they come at a great saving to it.

### **Psychological and social benefits of religion**

Religion brings many benefits to individuals and societies. Religious belief has been linked to increased levels of volunteering and charitable works, of education, and of greater marital satisfaction, and to decreased levels of domestic violence, criminal behaviour and divorce rates.<sup>33</sup> A 2019 study found that Australian churchgoers scored higher than the general population on metrics of belonging, worth, civic participation, social justice and acceptance.<sup>34</sup>

We can’t put everything upon the state or the individual. Healthy societies require a series of intermediate institutions such as churches, charities, unions, community groups, sports clubs, small businesses and arts organisations. These bring perspectives and energies no individual or state can muster. Exclude religion, and you exclude a major source of inspiration for joint voluntary action and community building.

Finally, we might ask, where a democracy like ours will find its moral-spiritual compass if it abandons the Judeo-Christian perspectives that have underpinned its laws and customs till now. Will not the secularist dream of “liberation” from religion only leave us slaves to powerful corporate interests, the social media and the bureaucratic state?

### **Religious freedom doomed or doable?**

What might we do to ensure that the good of religion is recognised in our society and believers given the space they need to do the good things they do? The endless assaults on religion can tempt us simply to salvage what furniture we can whilst the house (or cathedral!) is burning. But that is, I think, too defeatist, can sound like special pleading to protect private interests, and is in any case doomed to the death of a thousand cuts.

If my case for societies admitting and to some extent supporting religion is made out, or could be; if we think a community in which believers are allowed to do their thing within reasonable limits is good for believers and non-believers alike; if we think we have some good stories to tell—then objecting to unjust infringements on our religious liberties, though necessary, is not enough. We should be doing more to make *the positive case* for religious freedom, out-narrating those who would scrub religion from society. Our parishes, schools, hospitals and welfare agencies must stand firm on their religious convictions and tell their stories of service, not out of tribalism or institutional self-interest, but because *we are convinced we offer something precious*. We must boldly celebrate the religious underpinnings of our various works of mercy and support those struggling to remain faithful to their convictions in today’s social context.

Some have suggested we should ‘do another Goulburn’ and close our ministries in protest against cultural, legal and governmental interference. But you don’t get to play that card too often, and the strategy can easily backfire. It would also rob the community of needed services. Of course, sometimes strategic withdrawal is in order, especially to repair and regroup. But I am not in favour of fleeing to the caves, at least not yet. First, we need to accept that the religious liberty we have long enjoyed in Australia is at risk and be much more intentional about making out the case to our community for freedom of religious belief and action. This is part of what the recent popes called evangelising the culture. Some are already convinced. Some never will be. But many could yet be persuaded.

## Jubilee hope

Next year is a jubilee year, a quarter-century anniversary of the Birth of Christ, the turning point of history. It is also 1700 years since the Council of Nicaea settled the Christian creed. We've already survived twenty centuries of sporadic persecution and repeated declarations of the death of God and the Church. Yet Christ rose from the dead and in 2025 the Church will still be around. My hope is that by 2035 we will be not so much in a dark dystopia as a bright religious renaissance.

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Durkin, "Andrew Thornburn cancelled as Essendon CEO after 24 hours," *Financial Review* 4 October 2022; <https://www.afr.com/work-and-careers/leaders/andrew-thornburn-cancelled-as-essendon-ceo-after-24-hours-20221004-p5bn33>. On the Israel Folau case see: <https://www.skysports.com/rugby-union/news/12321/11690388/israel-folau-s-rugby-australia-contract-terminated-following-anti-lgbt-posts>; <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-17/israel-folau-sacked-over-social-media-posts/11090938>

<sup>2</sup> John Steenhof, "Christian football players penalised for refusing to wear pride jersey," *Human Rights Law Alliance* 29 July 2022; Samantha Lewis, "'We always play with pride': How the Matildas helped pave the way for LGBTQIA+ visibility in football," *ABC News* 1 July 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Zachary Gates, "Athletics Australia's response to transgender ban torched by British shot-put champion," *Nine.com* 25 March 2023; Dennis Weisman, "Transgender athletes, fair competition, and public policy," *Cato Institute* Fall 2022; "Australia recommends testosterone limits for transgender athletes in elite female sport," *Reuters* 16 June 2023; "Netball Australia rejects world governing body's ban on elite transgender players," *Guardian Australia* 10 April 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Mikaela Mulveney and Erin Smith, "Christian groups back netballer in trans post furore," *The Australian* 3 April 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission, *Maximising the Realisation of Human Rights: Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws* (Canberra: ALRC Report 142, 2023). Commentaries include: Anthony Fisher, "Commission's 'reforms' a betrayal of faith among our leaders," *The Australian* 25 March 2024; Paul Kelly, "Religious school reform a deadly test for Labor," *The Australian* 27 March 2024; Ronald Mizen, "Scrap private school religious discrimination rules, Labor advised," *Financial Review* 21 March 2024; Nick Cater, "Christian schools on the nose amid PC's green faith," *The Australian* 11 March 2024; National Catholic Education Commission, "Law Reform report is at odds with parents' desire for a faith-based education," *NCEC Executive Director's Updates*, 27 March 2024; Simon Kennedy, "Endangered Christian schools," *Quadrant* 12 May 2024; Sarah Ison, "Howard's pitch on religious freedom," *The Australian* 21 May 2024.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Natasha Bitá and Lydia Lynch, "Anti-discrimination laws would 'stop religious schools sacking staff for adultery'," *The Australian* 11 March 2024; Michael McKenna, "Catholic, Muslim and Jewish leaders condemn proposed anti-discriminations in Queensland," *The Australian* 5 May 2024. Shib Thomas, "Religious Schools in Victoria will not be able to sack or refuse to hire LGBT Staff from today," *Star Observer* 14 June 2022, <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/victorian-religious-schools-to-be-banned-from-sacking-lgbtq-staff/f3f2ufmbo>

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Fisher, *Opening Statement to the Committee on Community Services re the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTI+) Bill*, <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/addresses-and-statements/2024/draft-opening-statement-by-most-rev-anthony-fisher-op-to-the-committee-on-community-services-re-the-equality-legislation-amendment-lgbtq-bill/>

<sup>8</sup> Michael Cook, "Alex Greenwich's LGBT bucket list could smother religious freedom in NSW," *MercatorNet* 8 May 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Harris and Lucy Carroll, "'Love or lust': Travelling chastity preacher at schools sparks parent backlash," *Sydney Morning Herald* 18 May 2024; Joe Kelly, "Chastity campaigner Jason Every hits out at cancellations," *The Australian* 21 May 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Louise Milligan, "Purity: An education in Opus Dei," *ABC TV* 30 January 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Jenna Price, "Why we should defund private schools and examine their values," *The Sydney Morning Herald* 31 January 2024

<sup>12</sup> Archbishop Porteous faces strife over new pastoral letter," *The Catholic Weekly* 14 May 2024; Clancy Balen, "Catholic school rebukes Hobart Archbishop," *ABC News* 30 May 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Natasha Bitá, "Government hoses down Productivity Commission push to axe tax breaks for private school donations," *The Australian* 15 February 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Natasha Bitá, "Government hoses down Productivity Commission push to axe tax breaks for private school donations," *The Australian* 15 February 2024; Nichol Precel and Robyn Grace, "Labor softens on school payroll tax," *The Age* 29 June 2023.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. the push to banish 'SRE' or scripture classes from state schools increasingly marginalises those who hold religious convictions in those schools: Jane Goldsmith, "'Time's up for special religious education': The schools where 99% of

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students opt out of scripture,” *9 News* 12 December 2023. Or the state-by-state bans on “conversion therapy” and “hate speech” have placed restrictions on what parents, priests, teachers and counsellors may say by way of teaching or guidance around sexual orientation, gender identity and chastity, and in some jurisdictions even what they might pray: Sumeyya Ilanbey and Paul Sakkal, “Gay conversion therapy banned in Victoria after marathon debate,” *The Age* 4 February 2021; Maryanne Raouk, “NSW bans gay conversion therapy after marathon parliamentary debate overnight,” *ABC News* 22 March 2024.

<sup>16</sup> See Donna Lu and Melissa Davey “I was shocked: Catholic run public hospitals refuse to provide birth control and abortion,” *Guardian Australia* 22 August 2023; *Inquiry into Abortion and Reproductive Choice in the ACT: Report by the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing* (Canberra, 202x).

<sup>17</sup> Editorial, “Territory policies driven by warped ideological biases,” *The Australian* 1 July 2023; Sarah Ison, “Archbishop Christopher Prowse warns ACT Calvary Hospital takeover sets ‘precedent’ for other states,” *The Australian* 23 May 2023; Julian Lesser, “Labor’s ideological war on faith a threat to dignity, morality,” *The Australian* 8 July 2023; Michelle Pearce, “Canberra’s Calvary,” *Spectator Australia* 4 July 2023; Angela Shanahan, “Calvary Hospital takeover exposes Labor’s religious hypocrisy,” *The Australian* 1 July 2023; Dennis Shanahan, “Calvary Hospital: former PM John Howard accuses ACT Labor of ‘greatest assault’ on private ownership,” *The Australian* 16 June 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Rhiannon Down and Paul Garvey, “Census changes ‘to dilute religion’, says Catholic archbishop,” *The Australian* 30 April 2024; Timothy Costelloe, ‘Changing measure of faith will weaken census data,’ *The Australian* 30 April 2024.

<sup>19</sup> Jake Evans, “The government lost a dramatic showdown on religious discrimination laws overnight. So what happened?” *ABC News* 10 February 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Rosie Lewis, “Catholic Church leaders say faith laws ‘going backwards’,” *The Australian* 41 May 2024; Stephanie Borys, “Faith groups warn Albanese a deal with Greens on religious discrimination would be a ‘betrayal’,” *ABC News* 28 March 2024; David Crowe, “Why Albanese refuses to take this leap without Dutton,” *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 March 2024; Paul Kelly, “PM’s battle to reconcile faith with equality,” *The Australian* 30 March 2024.

<sup>21</sup> The proposal is to strengthen civil provisions and introduce criminal sanctions for ‘hate speech’. Concerningly, these changes to vilification laws would apply not only to religious vilification but also to racial, sexual and gender vilification, which religious preachers are often accused of as a way of silencing them. If the Bill adopts the low threshold of anything that “offends”, then the Porteous case could be repeated beyond Tasmania.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), article 18: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

<sup>23</sup> United Nations, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), article 18: “1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. 2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice. 3. Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. 4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.”

The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief may also be relevant to:

- the prohibition on discrimination, the grounds for which include religion, in articles 2 and 26 of the ICCPR
- the prohibition on advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence in article 20 of the ICCPR
- the right of religious minorities to enjoy their own culture and to profess and practise their own religion in article 27 of the ICCPR
- the right to freedom of opinion and expression in article 19 of the ICCPR
- the right to peaceful assembly in article 21 of the ICCPR
- the right to freedom of association in article 22 of the ICCPR.

<sup>24</sup> Piers Akerman, “Religious tolerance at risk in war on freedom of choice,” *Sunday Telegraph* 31 March 2024; Matt Canavan, “It’s time to make certain telling the truth is legal,” *Daily Telegraph* 29 March 2024; Centre for Independent Studies, *Faith No More? The inadequacy of Australia’s protections for religious freedom*, 6 April 2023; Kevin Donnelly, “The growing assault on faith-based schools,” *Quadrant* 26 March 2024; Editorial, “Religious freedoms need courage,” *The Australian* 23 March 2024; Anthony Fisher, “Angry mobs still demand crucifixion and cancellation: Archbishop of Sydney Anthony Fisher,” *The Australian* 7 April 2024; Stephen Fogarty, “Education has become Game of Thrones, and we the faithful are cast beyond the wall,” *Sydney Morning Herald* 27 March 2024; Mark Fowler, “Sex Discrimination Act reform proposal a breach of faith,” *The Australian* 13 April 2024; Gerard Henderson, “Faith schools stoush a solution looking for a



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problem,” *The Australian* 30 March 2024; Joe Kelly, “Anthony Fisher warns the role of religion in Australia is under attack,” *The Australian* 25 March 2024; Chris Merritt, “Religious freedom at risk,” *The Australian*, 12 April 2024; Mike O’Connor, “These attacks on religion will hurt the whole nation,” *Courier Mail* 3 April 2024; Chris Uhlmann, “Progressive crusade to bend arc of history,” *The Australian* 11 May 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Anthony Fisher, “The West: Post- or pre-Christian?” *First Things* 330 (February 2023) 19-26.

<sup>26</sup> John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Melissa Moschella “Beyond liberty: religion as a distinct human good and the implications for religious freedom,” *Journal of Law and Religion*, 32(1) (2017): 123-46. See the many works by John Finnis, Germain Grisez, Robert George and others on these matters.

<sup>27</sup> Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (Oxford UP, 2009); “Man the religious animal,” *First Things* April 2012; *Religion: What It Is, How It Works, and Why it Matters* (Princeton UP, 2019), 213; Charles Taylor, *The Secular Age* (Harvard UP, 2007), p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Roger Scruton, *The Face of God: The Gifford Lectures* (Continuum, 2012); Smith, *Religion: What It Is, How It Works, and Why it Matters*, pp. 204-233.

<sup>29</sup> Robert P. George, “Religious liberty and the human good,” *International Journal for Religious Freedom*, 5(1) (2012), 38. Even in very secularized societies, people crave “a fullness”, whereby life is deeper, worthier, more admirable, “a communion of whole lives, of whole itineraries toward God”: Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 5 etc.; Giovanni Montini, *Man’s Religious Sense: A Pastoral Letter to the Ambrosian Diocese* (Newman Press, 1961); Luigi Giussani, *The Religious Sense* (McGill-Queen’s UP, 1997); Henri deLubac “The total meaning of man and the world,” *Communio* 35 (2008): 613-41; Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books 1993), 123-25; Roger Trigg & Justin Barrett (eds), *The Roots of Religion: Exploring the Cognitive Science of Religion* (Routledge, 2016).

<sup>30</sup> Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 89-90.

<sup>31</sup> *Monty Python’s Life of Brian*, Scene 8: *The Grumpy People’s Front of Judea*:

[http://montypython.50webs.com/scripts/Life\\_of\\_Brian/10.htm](http://montypython.50webs.com/scripts/Life_of_Brian/10.htm)

<sup>32</sup> On our debt to Christianity for healthcare: J.T. Aitken et al., *The Influence of Christians in Medicine* (Christian Medical Fellowship, 1984); James Brodman, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe* (Catholic U Amer P, 2011), 45-89; Alvin Schmidt, *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization* (Zondervan, 2001), 151-166.

On our debt to Christianity for education: James Bowen, *A History of Western Education* (St Martin’s Press, 1975); Thomas Woods, *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Regnery, 2012), 47-65; Kevin Burke & Avner Segall, “Christianity and its legacy in education,” *Curriculum Studies* (October 2011): 5-9; John Roberts & James Turner, *The Sacred and Secular University* (Princeton UP, 2000).

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On our debt to Christianity for its moral code: Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (Routledge, 1998), 106-17; Holland, *Dominion*.

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On our debt to Christianity for science: Edward Grant, *Science and Religion: From Aristotle to Copernicus 400 BC- AD 1550* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2004) 165-184; Peter Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion* (U Chicago P, 2015); Ronald Numbers, *Galileo Goes to Jail: And Other Myths about Science and Religion* (Harvard UP, 2010) 19-28, 90-106; Stark, *For the Glory of God*, 121-200.

On our debt to Christianity for the arts: Alex Locay, *How Christianity Built Western Civilization* (WestBow, 2021), 167-203; John O’Malley, *Four Cultures of the West* (Harvard UP, 2004), 222-33.

On our debt to Christianity for Western theological, philosophical and political thought: Edward Baring, *Converts to the Real: Catholicism and the Making of Continental Philosophy* (Harvard UPs, 2019); Stephen Clark, *From Athens to Jerusalem: The Love of Wisdom and the Love of God* (Angelico, 2019); Samuel Gregg, *Reason, Faith, and the Struggle for Western Civilization* (Gateway, 2019); Arthur Herman, *The Cave and the Light: Plato Versus Aristotle, and the Struggle for the Soul of Western Civilization* (Random House, 2013), 147-187; O’Malley, *Four Cultures of the West*, 77-87; Rodney

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Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (Random House, 2006), 33-60.

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<sup>33</sup> See Hon. Justice Sarah Derrington, “Faith, hope and charity – Religion as a public benefit in modern Australia,” 2019 *CLAANZ Annual Public Lecture* <https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/digital-law-library/judges-speeches/justice-s-derrington/s-derrington-j-20191129>

<sup>34</sup> Miriam Power, Ruth Powell and Gary Bouma, ‘Social cohesion in Australia: Comparing Church and community,’ *Religions* 10 (605) (2019):1-22.