our convictions. Even those who do not care for religious voices in politics will, should they chance upon this book, find themselves seriously challenged. Religious people will find here good reasons to speak their faith and use their distinctive language in civic participation, though always with respect for persons, including other religious persons who do not share their viewpoints, as is, after all, proper in a democracy.

—Thomas Sieger Derr
Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts

The Universal Hunger for Liberty

Michael Novak

New York: Basic Books, 2004 (281 pages)

The author of the well-known *Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* has offered his readers yet another book that deserves to be read, weighed, and considered. Michael Novak is an indefatigable defender of economic liberalism and moral values, the two pillars of a free and virtuous society that can never be separated without harm to man himself. This book hastens to support his long-standing claim. Freedom, the free market, and free competition can only be safe and beneficial when human beings know the essential hierarchy of things, the difference between ends and means, man's ultimate goal, and the world in which he lives as a responsible steward.

Novak affirms that there is a universal hunger to exercise liberty (14), whereby people want to make their own choices. By own choices he means, however, not only that our acts should be free from external coercion but also that they should be internally free from greed, untruth, and bad intentions. We are free, rational, and moral beings, inasmuch as we take these three components in their integrity. Making one's own choices is not enough; we have to make good choices. Human beings need an appropriate setting for the exercise of their liberty, that is, a supportive culture, because "liberty needs the sunny warmth of culture and ideas and the nourishing rain of favorable institutions of politics and economics" (14). Liberty is a gift and a task at the same time (John Paul II), something to take and something to be done with, a gift that may bring about fruit or may lead to disaster.

Such being the case, the appropriate exercise of freedom is of utmost importance. Novak does not back away from the task of laying down some guiding rules. Henceforth he may rightly call his book "a vision for the twenty-first century" (17). We have seen many projects intended to bring a solution for all social problems as they, one by one, failed and caused disaster. Communism, for that matter, conceived that removing religion from social life would free the human species from alienation. Now political correctness does the same by imposing forced secularization on Western societies. Such projects propose no lasting solution, Novak notes, because secularization has "no corrective for a whole society's rapid slide into decadence" (19).

Novak sides with Augustine whom he calls a teacher and a father of political realism (18, 28). By distinguishing two orders—the divine order and the worldly order—the saint from Tagaste implores us not to lay all our hope on the legal-political sphere and neglect the subject of that sphere, the human person. The two realities must come together in harmony: the reality of good political institutions and the reality of a human being with strong inherent morality. Only in this crucial conjunction can we expect the world of democratic liberalism to flourish. "The world as a whole," Novak writes, "needs an idea about how to structure a universal civilization that will respect all its inner varieties and different civilizations and make some sort of unity out of its inherent, rich, and valuable diversity. This future structure, of necessity, will have to give broad scope to the world's great religions. To suggest mere 'secularization' as a model will not do" (28).

The author approves of a functional separation of church and state, that is, the two realities have their respective duties. Novak favors the American model here, wherein separation does not mean banishment of any religious expression from the social sphere. Mature separation, Novak seems to claim, is when church and state are not set in hostile opposition to each other but develop in their respective areas, thereby giving life to the whole structure. "Religious vitality looms as a salient characteristic of the twenty-first century" (21), says Novak (as if paraphrasing André Malraux's statement that the twenty-first century would be either religious or it would not be at all). Politics orders the human reality from without; religion orders it from within. Politics is corrective; religion is transforming, and "where there is no self-transformation, there is death" (22).

Thus, we have arrived at the leading idea of the book: Caritapolis—the City of Love—where people are "moved by God's own inner life" for "[they] cannot live by the secular alone" (25). Caritapolis is modeled on Augustine's City of God, the city that reigns in the interiority of human souls, to which only God has access and that should be entirely subordinated to him (not to any external political system).

This special unity between the external political order and inner religious life Novak finds in the history of Christianity. When comparing it with Islam, he says that while the latter "emphasizes the greatness of Allah; Christianity and Judaism highlight human freedom in response to the Almighty" (4). Novak outlines the origins of modern Western civilization whose cities were "based upon prayer and learning, gathered around the monastery walls" (7). One should bear in mind that Aristotle was handed down to European thinkers by Averroes with his most penetrating commentaries on the Stagirite. We should never lose touch with "this great moment of conversation, dialogue, and mutual learning" (10).

Novak does not ignore the differences, among which he notes the fact that Islam is more intent on the world beyond because nothing is an image of God; "Allah is too great for that" (14). Islam lays stress on God's transcendence and leaves little room for human freedom and "how human choice affects the will of God" (15). The medieval Muslims imagined it as a zero-sum game. Either God is free, or humans are free, but

they cannot both be free. Such being the case, we may conclude "that liberty is *not* an important item for reflection in the Islamic tradition" (15).

Judaism and Christianity bring forward a new perspective with much more room for the interplay of human liberty. Humans can accept God or not; they are "capable of *reflection* and *choice* [and with] plenty of room for contingency, singularity, and chance" (16). God empowers us to be free, that is obvious, but this does not mean that we are passive tools in his hands. On the contrary, we are invited and encouraged by him to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen 1:28) like active and free partners of God the Creator, not like slaves.

Another element, where Judaism and Christianity part ways with Islam, is the *unicity of intellect* (16). Following Aristotle's division, where intellect is divided into passive and active, whereby people receive the world and inquire about it, Islam focuses on the former. Judaism and Christianity highlight that people are free to examine, to pose questions, to say yes or no, ultimately, to live through their drama of freedom. That drama, says Novak, is "at the heart of the Jewish and Christian story" (18).

Now what are the main tenets of Caritapolis? Above all, it needs to be supported by "moral ecology" (30), wherein its citizens can be trained in good habits. Liberty needs cultivation, and it should be of great concern for us to determine what kind of culture we would like to live in, knowing that "an honest, truthful, and straightforward culture makes it much easier for us to mature as moral beings" (31). Moral ecology is simply truthfully human. It is composed of several elements: cultural humility (we do not look down on others), truth (in my conduct my freedom should respect truth), the dignity of the individual person, and solidarity. Only by taking into serious consideration the above components can we really understand and take advantage of genuine globalization, that is, participation. Indeed, "Caritapolis is the City of Communion, ... participation in the love of God that the Christian gospel announces" (45).

Such rules inform the economics and politics of liberty. Abiding by them, persuades the author, may help the world to avoid the dire straits of utopian communism or any other totalitarianism that usurps to save, and "escape the prison of poverty" (108). The world should never be considered only in secular terms. The proper exercise of liberty calls for self-transformation, the thing that no politics or no economy can do. Political systems deal with living beings, not robots, and may flourish when carried out by morally ordered and God-fearing people. Such people find it obvious to acquire political, economic, and cultural virtues; they establish voluntary associations and supranational religious bodies. Political institutions and moral human beings should coexist like reason and faith, giving rise to a "moral global vision" (228), a vision in fact derived from various religious traditions, yet capable of conducting a "fraternal dialogue" and, despite differences, striving at what is common.

—Jan Klos
John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland