



## Tracts for Our Times

### *Caritas in Veritate*

A summary of the Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI

Tract 1

July  
2009

Christ, who is Absolute Truth and charity, frees man from the poverty he brings upon himself. The love of God, incarnate in Jesus, is the source of all human development. “Everything has its origin in God’s love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it.” Without truth, charity (love) breaks down into sentimentality. Charity has to reflect our personal relationship with God, who calls all mankind to love, for he is love.

Truth opens our minds to the proclamation of God’s love, and charity unites us to him. Without Christian charity, rooted in faith, we lose our sense of relationship and responsibility.

Love is a grace of God and we are instruments of his grace to our neighbours—without love and truth and grace, we lose our social conscience. Justice and the common good are linked to love. Through the love of God, our relationships on earth are no longer revolve solely around our rights and responsibilities, but rather gratuity, mercy and forgiveness. Our reliance on “the common good” of society is a witness to the goodness of God on earth: as we build up the People of God, we build up the Kingdom of heaven.

Human development, in the light of the of Christ’s truth, moves our hearts and minds to search for wisdom and charity. We then become better members of a society who follow Jesus.

A globalising world loses its sense of the dignity of each man, sacrificing its conscience, which considers the common good. It is charity and truth that makes us humane. The Church cannot claim to interfere in the technicalities of development, but she is custodian of truth for the good of the People of God. Her social teaching is a proclamation of Christ, the light of the world.

The Church has reminded us in the past of the truth of charity. She always teaches the same truths, of the One Lord Jesus, relevant for all times and for all peoples. The truth that God has revealed was the treasure of the Apostles and the crown of the martyrs.

It is the pope’s task to strengthen the faithful, amidst modern crises, with the truth that the love of God is constant. Hence, the current encyclical.



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Two truths lie at the heart of the Church's social teaching. Firstly, in all she does, the Church *promotes human development while she proclaims Jesus as Lord*. Secondly, *human development involves the whole person*, even after this life. Indeed, the ultimate end of man's development is eternal life. Even though he might gather for himself the riches of the world, he cannot be fully human without the grace of God, who transforms man's care-free attitude into an attitude of charity, concern and care.

Man is destined for development. His *progress fulfils his vocation*, given to him by God. Holy Mother Church is bound to nurture his vocation.

His *vocation is freely exercised*—development leads to freedom. Rather than be tied to the institutions or habits that he forms for himself, man frees himself from cares by accepting that his vocation from God. Without God, man is not free. He spends his time searching for reasons to develop, which distract him from God. Man agrees to participate in his development by exercising responsible freedom. Man is most responsible when he responds to God.

*Vocational freedom demands truth*. Development does not mean that man “has more”; it means that man must “become more”. We cannot become something which God has not called us to be—in this way, we see that development is a vocation, and vocations are directed to Christ. In Jesus, we see how God is revealed to man. In proclaiming his Kingdom, we reveal to our fellows their identity—that is, what they can be in Christ. As the Body of Christ, we develop as his people and it is by perceiving the supernatural grace of God that our current realities become clear and meaningful.

*Vocational development enshrines charity*. We do not develop as people if we do not will it, if we do not think it, or if we lack brotherhood. While globalisation makes us neighbours, only Christ can make us brothers. As Saint Paul encourages: “the love of Christ urges us on,” (2 Cor. 5:14), we realise that reform cannot be delayed. Bringing the Gospel into our own lives means that even our current hardships urge us to develop in the love of Christ.

The Gospel builds society according to love, freedom and justice. The unity that technology brings cannot help but remind us of the oneness of peoples under Christ. Development for all people, then, is at the heart of the Christianity. Despite its value, we cannot equate technological advancement with human development. We cannot devalue the capacity of human beings, stripping man of his dignity. At the height of this dignity, man is called to be a co-creator with God. The family is the core of society. Urged by God, the Life-Giver, we are called to value human life at all stages, thereby valuing society and safeguarding her development. We safeguard justice, peace and development by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. The mission of society, as a whole, is to proclaim Christ as King. Under his Headship, society will develop. Christian social doctrine has at its base the truth of God-made-man, Jesus.

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Considering profit to be the exclusive goal of our dealings destroys wealth and creates poverty. We destroy society and hamper development by largely speculative financial dealings, forcing the migration of peoples (who are treated as merchandise) and by exploiting natural resources. Such crises call for a re-planning of our human journey. Even though we see the quantities of wealth increasing, the inequalities that accompany such growth, increase too. Corruption is rife, workers are exploited, many are unemployed and knowledge which could aid many is preserved by few, particularly in health care. These issues hamper development.

The role of the State in enterprise seems to be that of outsourcer, searching for low production costs, which diminish social security systems and cut social spending. This limits the State and trade unions from protecting the “primary capital” of the country—the human person. Lowering worker protection levels for immediate competitiveness of countries will cause unprecedented damage in a world that already laments the Earth’s poor state.

The global village stands the risk of equating different cultures or perhaps promoting conduct and life-styles that are contrary to social development.

Hunger is a scandal that confronts this of “network of economic institutions”, from whom one hopes for developed methods of agricultural and land reform.

Human development and human life are intrinsically linked. We cannot search for human development when we forget the significance of human life. To promote abortion or euthanasia, or to compromise life at any stage, is to lose the motivation to strive for man’s true Good. Methods of curbing overpopulation that promote birth control, reducing sexuality to entertainment, do not promote the family as the primal unit of human development. Indeed, we are all members of the total human family, sons and daughters of God.

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Denial of religious freedom is a type of terrorism that, in the face of fundamentalism, usually devolves into violence.

Atheism, secularism and fundamentalism, aggressively obstruct the development of peoples, removing from them all of the spiritual and human resources that aid development. They deny Godly people the opportunity to show the strength of their faith in public thereby contributing to the development of all peoples, irrespective of their particular stances or creeds.

Economics should always consider human morality. Without a sense of giving, of gratuity, economic activity—even in competitive markets—is reduced to a dehumanised activity *promoting sheer consumerism and valuing people and institutions on their level of usefulness*. Business sense must seek the common good, and the market must become a field of the human conscience. *Transparency, honesty and responsibility cannot be ignored.*

Economics cannot completely eliminate the State—it needs “just laws”. All economic activity should be based on the solidarity of peoples, under the Kingship of God. Market participants should seek to “civilise the economy” rather than dehumanise it.

Many affluent countries claim a right to excess, while food and water are lacking in underdeveloped countries. Rights and responsibilities are not attached to particular societies, or peoples, but are objective and find their source in God, our Creator.

Even the environment, a gift from God, calls for responsible action. The energy problem provides hindrances to development where power groups hoard sources of energy, and do not promote regulated use of non-renewable energy sources. Research into alternative means of energy provision is necessary.

Mankind needs to adopt a new life-style that is not prone to pleasure or consumerism. With a lack of respect for the “human ecology”, the environmental ecology suffers.

“Subsidiarity” promotes the independence of aid-giving bodies, responsible to the whole human community at large. It means that bodies are not dependent on any particular source of aid, or beneficiary.

Gratuity cannot be targeted at a particular market. Larger developed countries should allocate higher percentages of their GDP to international relief aid and education. Economic institutions and international finance organisations need to reform in order to accommodate human development. International solidarity and subsidiarity need to be safeguarded and ordered by an authority with effective power.

Technology, for all of its benefits, cannot recreate man, or build society. It should promote human dignity through social communications and research, particularly in the field of bio-ethics. Technology seeking to program births, or conduct research using aborted fetuses and human cloning, make man believe he has “mastered every mystery”.

Development must promote spiritual growth, the growth of a “new heart” to overcome the challenges of the modern world.

Christians, to whom the development of society is a vocation from God, should lift their hands in prayer to him. Human development, with all it can bring to society, needs love and forgiveness, self-denial, acceptance of others, justice and peace. The goal of human development is eternal life, life with God. ✠



*“The following Tracts were published with the object of contributing something towards the practical revival of doctrines held by the great divines of our faith.”*

This was the intention of Cardinal Newman and his companions  
(known as the Oxford Tractarians) when they began publishing their *Tracts for the Times*.

The Port Elizabeth Oratory, faithful to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church  
and the spirit of Saint Philip Neri, hope to contribute something to the  
faith and understanding of the People of God in Port Elizabeth,  
conforming their hearts and minds ever more closely to the Person of Jesus Christ.