



Gloria Albrecht, *Hitting Home: Feminist Ethics, Women's Work, and the Betrayal of "Family Values."*
Hitting Home: Feminist Ethics, Women's Work, and the Betrayal of "Family Values." by
Gloria Albrecht,

Review by: Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore

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and Peach's disagreement with Noonan is thus an unacknowledged religious disagreement.

Furthermore, Peach's legal approach is a significant departure from the Court's current interpretation of the Establishment Clause, and her approach would dramatically increase the number of laws found unconstitutional under the Establishment Clause (and other constitutional provisions) because they were "influenced by religious considerations." To the contrary, only four Supreme Court cases (*Edwards v. Aguillard*, *Wallace v. Jaffree*, *Stone v. Graham*, and *Epperson v. Arkansas*) have found statutes invalid because they lacked a secular purpose, and all these cases dealt with the sensitive context of public elementary and secondary schools. Also, the Court has rejected the argument that the mere presence of a religious purpose invalidates a law and has held that the Establishment Clause does not prohibit the law from implying a religious purpose as long as there is also a sincere secular purpose and the religious purpose does not predominate. For instance, in *McGowan v. Maryland*, the Court recognized that mere coincidence with a religious purpose (e.g., prohibiting murder or Sunday closing laws) does not make a law invalid because it lacks a secular purpose. Otherwise, any regulation of murder, abortion, euthanasia, and so on, could be unconstitutional because the regulation (whether pro or con) could be held to coincide with a religious justification.

Moreover, Peach's understanding of law fails to take into account the indeterminacy of legal norms (a key issue in legal theory) and in particular the indeterminacy of constitutional norms. For example, Peach's critique of the Establishment Clause jurisprudence fails to recognize that Supreme Court Justices have had to rely on extralegal theories about the proper role of religion in a pluralistic democratic society (e.g., accommodationist, neutrality, and separationist) because the Establishment Clause is indeterminate. Peach also fails to consider that these current Establishment Clause theories would continue to inform Justices's interpretation of her new legal standard because it is also indeterminate. Her standard is not a mechanical bright line rule that eliminates judicial discretion. Consequently, even if her standard were adopted, it would not likely be interpreted to invalidate religious lawmaking in the manner she suggests. Thus, despite the importance of raising issues about the centrality of religion to moral identity and the possible gender issues arising from religious lawmaking, Peach's account of religion and law significantly undermines the viability of her legal and pragmatist approaches to religious lawmaking.

MARK MODAK-TRURAN, *Mississippi College School of Law*.

ALBRECHT, GLORIA. *Hitting Home: Feminist Ethics, Women's Work, and the Betrayal of "Family Values."* New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2002. 176 pp. \$22.95 (cloth).

The American debate over the family rages, now joined by the Christian feminist liberative ethics of Gloria Albrecht. Her detailed economic investigation reveals the importance of serious socioeconomic analysis that is lacking in the current literature on the family. The debate often proceeds by treating reproductive labor and productive labor as if they are completely separate matters and by discounting family work, portraying it as "non-work."

By contrast, Albrecht devotes the major portion of her book to amassing

data about women's work situation, providing concrete evidence to dispel ethereal neoliberal claims about traditional family values and the benefits of post-industrial capitalism. She investigates the basic material conditions that support family well-being, women's hidden labor in particular, and the dominant class, race, and gender prejudices that infiltrate not just global worldviews but daily life. After describing her commitments, method, and initial assessment of the primary factors shaping women's lives (poverty, increased household responsibility, low wages), Albrecht devotes three intermediary chapters to women's work (chap. 2), child care (chap. 3), and corporate control of time (chap. 4). The final chapter reiterates her original argument that promoting women's welfare requires appreciation for the liabilities of caregiving, adequate compensation for the labor of social reproduction, and promotion of justice within families as an important component of justice at large.

Fundamentally grounded in advocacy for the social equality of women, Albrecht relies heavily upon social scientists, such as Susan Moller Okin, whose research on the family accents the asymmetrical vulnerability of women as primary caregivers. Through statistics and specific examples she makes visible the invisible vise of social structures that increase the affluence of those at the top (often white men) at the cost of those on the bottom (often women and people of color). So-called ideal families simply solve their work and family conflicts by exploiting other women and families. Meanwhile, government and business abdicate their social responsibility, brandishing new "family friendly" policies that, in fact, do little more than fatten the corporate pocketbook or swing a few votes.

Today's family "crisis," then, should not be understood as a problem of moral virtue (parents selfishly pursuing their own self-interested desires) but as a critique of unjust social systems. Families enter into crisis when the spread of globalized capitalism favors employers, privileges the white male worker, sees childcare as a private problem, hires women at poor wages, places women and children disproportionately among the poor, and generally proceeds without the shared, democratic moral assessment it needs. Under this definition, the newly freed slave families in the late eighteenth century knew family crisis. So also did the immigrant families at the turn of the nineteenth century. And those now stressed by economic loss, changing gender roles, and care of dependents are more rightfully families in crisis than those customarily so labeled—the divorced, the single parent, the mother out of wedlock. She argues against those who sanction what she calls elitist privileged norms of an ideal family. The solution to the widely lamented family crisis lies in a just economy, not in marriage.

This book is heavy on social science analysis and short on constructive theological proposal. The latter results partly from limited engagement with both the Christian tradition and a range of contemporary Christian voices, especially texts most akin to her own, such as Pamela Couture's *Blessed Are the Poor? Women's Poverty, Family Policy, and Practical Theology* (Nashville, 1991) and my own *Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma* (Nashville, 1994). Albrecht refers to scripture only briefly and erroneously reduces the complicated meaning of Jesus' relationship to family as one of rejection. She truncates Lisa Cahill's subtle understanding of families in the ancient world, highlighting only her criticism, and wrongly characterizes the causal analysis in *From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate* (Louisville, Ky., 2000) as focused entirely on cultural individualism and the

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solution as primarily a reduced work week. Finally, Albrecht entirely overlooks the potentially important role of religious communities in social activism and family nurture. For someone caught up in family debates in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a contributor to its recent controversial Report on Families, this is an unfortunate lapse. Ultimately, this book shares with the conservative right a common failure. Both assume that the goals of justice and committed marriage/parenthood are mutually exclusive. Yet, despite these limitations, Albrecht's perceptive exposure of the unjust assumptions behind family proposals and her fine exploration of work-related statistics lay helpful groundwork for a more economically informed debate and a better future.

BONNIE J. MILLER-MCLEMORE, *Vanderbilt University Divinity School*.

HOLLENBACH, DAVID, S.J. *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*. New Studies in Christian Ethics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xvi+269 pp. \$65.00 (cloth); \$23.00 (paper).

David Hollenbach, S.J., charts new directions for envisioning and enacting the common good. Steeped in the debates of the past few decades and conversant with political theory, development economics, and the sociology of race, poverty, and civil society, this wide-ranging and illuminating book extends his articulation of the common good as a distinctively Catholic contribution still vital to public policy and discourse.

Hollenbach remains deeply engaged by the idea of and prospects for the common good. Drawing principally from Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Jacques Maritain, he rejects the tendencies toward retrenchment found in some recent Christian thought on the subject. While Alasdair MacIntyre's influence is apparent in Hollenbach's historicist sensitivity to the fragility of the commitments sustaining any common good, Hollenbach eschews the other's methodological fixation and despair over ruined traditions. His theoretical aim is to offer a conceptual framework to help readers discern the "common goods" and "common bads" in today's pluralistic societies (p. 42). Although Hollenbach locates this framework and his normative concerns firmly in Catholic social thought, he affirms the Second Vatican Council's dethroning of theology as the unrivaled queen of the sciences (p. 116). So distant is his vision from the theological insularity of "radical orthodoxy" that no one in this movement is even mentioned. (Nor does Hollenbach survey the various other Catholic and Protestant writers on the common good in recent years.)

Hollenbach's conceptual framework builds on a central insight of his earlier writings. The common good exists between people. It shows in what people have, use, and need with others. He emphasizes shared goods and social relationships, and importantly, he argues that some goods are possible only in relationships with others. While reminiscent of MacIntyre's idea that "internal goods" are available only in social practices, Hollenbach's account of social goods is more expansive and flexible. Such goods are not confined to traditional practices and intimate friendships. They depend on "networks of human interaction" structured in large part by rights and institutions, and they permeate cultural, civic, political, and economic life (p. 42). Indeed, in his analysis many of the most important goods of liberal democracies—mutual respect, self-determination, individual agency—are necessarily "social." They arise in "a community of freedom—a community in which freedom is shared