

June 2014

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ISSN: 2472-2596 (print)

ISSN: 2472-260X (online)

Recommended Citation

Dayes, Anna-Kay. 2014. Discretely Stealing Dignity? Ownership and the Ideas of Rerum Novarum. *Obsculta* 7, (1) : 143-160. <https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/obsculta/vol7/iss1/11>.

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DISCRETELY STEALING DIGNITY?
OWNERSHIP AND THE IDEAS OF *RERUM NOVARUM*

Anna-Kay Dayes

Justice is a combination of Truth and Charity as God’s cosmic ordering.¹ Justice (as love)² is the central idea at the heart of social thought and action in the Judeo-Christian understanding of God, life and human purpose. Central to the articulation of an *idea of justice*, is a self-understanding of “a way of living” that corresponds to human rights, dignity and purpose in relationship to creation. The purpose of this paper is to explore the idea of owning “private property” in respect to the larger idea of Christian justice. Property is considered a part of cosmic creation, and because Christians believe all things have a “purpose,” property as a form of wealth must have a reason for existence and a function. Property can bring us closer to or further from Christian justice. It is the relationship between human action and a higher purpose for material wealth which is ultimately examined by exploring the ideas of Scripture, the patristics, *Rerum novarum*³ and myself. Christian justice is the central focus of *Rerum novarum*, to which we now turn.

Rerum novarum is Pope Leo XIII's encyclical that provides ideas for how people are to live. It emphasizes *natural law* to promote private ownership. In a brief summary—expanded in the endnote—the document argues for the “ownership” of property and notes that the acquisition of material goods (including property) should be held in tension with the common good. It stresses the ability to arrive at God's justice through human reasoning. It centers on labor and corporate self-expression at the national and local levels. The document influences praxis rooted in the idea that, in addition to human desire, a man has a God given right to provide for his children and family, and a God given right to establish private property.⁴ Pope Leo recognized the dignity of men and families as related to economic security.

The difficulty, a stress upon humanity, is that the directives of *Rerum novarum* do not support the fullness of charity—as lived action—which would allow humankind to flourish and worship with true gratitude for life. Further, it does not center on *increasing* dignity for the people who are without family or without economically-enabled circles. Many early Christian writers and Biblical scholars would have taken serious issue with many of this Pope's ideas and conclusions, such as the limitations of charity and the ordering of priorities—ideas which are clearly emphasized in the document and explained towards the end of this paper. If Pope Leo XIII had rooted his ideas of private ownership in an image of Christ—based in an anthropomorphic-sociological idea and image of what it means to be both human and divine, to reflect dignity, and to be in support of the purpose of man's nature on Earth—his conclusions would not lean towards a division of people based on economics and comforts as “natural” and in agreement with God's justice.

Many early Christian writers⁵ and Scripture passages illustrate that personal desires and personal choices to secure continuous wealth—on levels that differentiate “self” from the community—is impermissible. The Acts of the Apostles⁶ illustrates this impermissibility, through its descriptive consequences of actions (rooted in desire), which counters authentic community and equality in property. In Acts 5:1-11 Ananias and Sapphira gave themselves over to Christian living: a self-declaration and self-understanding of the goal of sharing *all* resources. In the narrative we are told that the pair sold their property but chose to keep some of the wealth for themselves; although they declared equality by making a verbal commitment to share all resources, they secretly chose not to be in communion with the acknowledged *principles* of living for Christ’s teachings. The result of their choice was death. This result was repeated twice and used narratively to justify that desires not aligned with the Christian communal agreement of equal sharing⁷ as a way of being—were unjust to God. Justice does not align itself with contradiction. Based upon the Scriptures, the act of withholding from the community you claim fellowship with is *against* the spiritual understanding of God’s justice. Justice thus involves unity in principles (which reflects Truth) and sharing of resources within the community; Justice rejects hypocrisy.⁸

Christian community is to be lived in a *particular* way. Through the writings of the patristics, as presented by William Walsh, S.J. and John Langan, S.J.,⁹ we are given a historical foundational frame for Christian aspirants and basic values on “private ownership.” The values were established as the personal “willingness”—proven only in action—to become detached from wealth: “the rich must become detached from their wealth before they can be genuine Christians;”¹⁰

Christians are “not permanent residents of this world”¹¹ such that they should aspire to create a stability of personal legacy. To illuminate what I mean by “stability of legacy” I draw on Scripture which speaks of this aspiration within the soul. Scripture provides a *contrast* of images between men’s desires and the accumulation of material wealth, with that of spiritual reality. Psalm 49 informs those who pray to guard against the desire for generational possession of anything of this world; it illuminates that humankind does not have the ability to secure legacy or spiritual life.

11. Indeed, he will see that the wise die, and the fool will perish together with the senseless, and they leave their wealth to others. 12. Their tombs are their homes forever, their dwellings through all generations, they named countries after themselves. 13. but man does not abide in splendor. He is like the beasts—they perish. 14. This is the way of those who trust in themselves, and the end of those who take pleasure in their own mouth. Selah. 15. Like a herd of sheep they will be put into Sheol, and Death will shepherd them. Straight to the grave they descend, where their form will waste away, Sheol will be their palace. 16. But God will redeem my life, will take me from the hand of Sheol. Selah. 17. Do not fear when a man becomes rich, when the wealth of his house grows great. 18. At his death he will not take along anything, his glory will not go down after him. 19. During his life his soul uttered blessings; they will praise you, for you do well for yourself. 20. But he will join the company of his fathers, never again to see the light. (Ps 49:11-19)¹²

Humankind does not have the ability to *secure* legacy, a spiritual ambition. Further, there is no legacy to be gained in acquisition through generations or in private

ownership. Like the psalm, early Church leaders¹³ acknowledged that creation and its direction is for God's pleasure, and man's necessity, *not* for man's own desires.

The desire for legacy through creation is not rooted in God who is Justice. Because the desire is not rooted in God, clinging to wealth continues to result in death; sharing the wealth can result in a movement of becoming *like* God, who is Justice. The *purpose* of creation is to enable visibility of justice; creation is to enable both the poor and the wealthy to *experience* spiritual life lived at its fullest. The Spirit within man has no need for possessions but possessions themselves provide a purpose for man: to fulfill the higher good through charity which allows increased faith and understanding of God to be present in this world. Through charity one *encounters* God.

The patristics [as reflected through the writings of Hermas and the *Epistle to Diognetus*] support these ideas by stating the following: wealth is to be used to "...buy souls that are in trouble (i.e. to provide relief for human suffering so the spirit may rejoice)¹⁴ ...God has permitted Christians to be wealthy: it is 'to perform this ministry [to the poor] for him'...God made the world for man... sent his Son to rescue him and promised him a share in his kingdom ...sharing the blessing he has received from God with those who are in want, he himself becomes a god¹⁵ ... [and] such a man is indeed an imitator of God."¹⁶ Walsh and Langan note that Clement of Alexandria also "reaffirms the scriptural position that the source of all man's troubles is the desire for wealth, not wealth itself."¹⁷ Choosing to desire more than one's needs, and following *Rerum novarum's* encouragement to secure progressive wealth—with *self* as primary interest—inevitably leads to spiritual pride, self-destruction and death of the soul; because the soul ("rightly-aligned")

already finds its orientation within a spiritual hunger to remove itself from an obsession to accumulate earthly pleasures.

We could continue illustrating the reasons why *seeking ownership* of property is not natural nor a spiritual movement towards the idea of Christian justice; because of given limitations we must move forward to discuss how these views and understandings of aspirancy towards private property, as illustrated by Acts 5, Psalm 49 and the patristics, would lead to a rebuttal of Leo XIII's decree on "how we are to use what we own." No one contests that we have the "right" to own things—not Scripture and not the patristics; the *right* is seen as a privilege which should be differentiated from "desirable choice." The first—the given privilege—is about God's permissibility to act out God's self as Charity, and the second is about spiritual *intentions* to become distinguishable—recognized as "superior to thou." There is no reason to condemn the wealthy man whose spiritual *intentions* are generous—and performance can demonstrate generosity—but generosity is not what *Rerum novarum's* "natural law" argument is based on, rooted in or inclined towards. *Rerum novarum* emphasizes human distinguishability more than it encourages "how" charity is to be lived. It speaks of charity as a temporary act and "weighable" in relationship to self-comfort.

As documented, *Rerum novarum* declares that man is to *first* feed his own desires; *if* there are any resources remaining *after* personal fulfillment *then* the poor are then to be considered. The author declares the following: "True, no one is commanded to distribute to others that which is required for his own necessities and those of his household; nor even to give away what is reasonably required to keep up becomingly his condition in life...."¹⁸ We can conclude from assessment of Scripture and patristics that if Pope Leo XIII's *ideas* of

“private ownership” were rooted in Scripture and Christ, he (through encyclicals) probably would not have promoted preferential option *towards* materialism and pleasure as *life* oriented towards Justice.¹⁹

Charity as both a noun and a verb (God’s justice in visible form) has never been rooted in the idea of minimalism—choosing to serve self-interests before animating God’s spirit in others; to do such is to reduce *God’s reality* for and with human-kind which Scripture and the patristics would condemn. To reduce the Holy Spirit—Charity and Truth—to self-gain, disinterest in maximizing charity, disinterest in renewing life, and disinterest in replenishing the earth, is *against* Divine truth.²⁰

Rerum novarum minimalizes charity, stewardship, and equality in community. Its *emphasis* is on fear of extremism and minimizing the conditions of physical equality that are critical and necessary for knowing God as Peace. Scripture and the patristics directed hearers to understand that we are to exercise *maximal* social responsibility and generosity *after* basic, life-giving resources are met.²¹ If the ideas of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclicals were rooted Biblically in Christ, or the Holy Spirit, the common welfare of the larger community would be the primary concern and individual desires second.

Christ exercised such a ministry of placing the wider community before self; Christ thus gave us an image of “how to” live for Divine justice and within Divine laws, and that included maximal Charity and *seeking ownership* of nothing beyond his own body.²² Divine justice moves from speech to act. It cannot be said, based on the evidence, that *Rerum novarum* is in agreement with the “how to” of living (Spiritually based) Christian understanding of justice and community; if we say the documents are in agreement

we are concluding that Christianity is about minimizing self-generosity extended to others; we are concluding that Christ is about personal earthly pleasurable comforts.

In conclusion, dignity has a relationship to material reality. *Rerum novarum* offers a limited applied-understanding of the relationship between justice and material wealth, and of God's presence in the actions and "person of Charity." Positively, the document offers a view of possible degrees of social concern and expected corporate responsibility. However, the document minimalizes the dignity of those outside positions of authority and Catholicity. There are important aspects of human dignity, central to justice, which need to be addressed; questions²³ must be answered if the church intends to establish dignity, clarity and directives, as well as to move closer towards Christ's vision for the wider world.

Christ demonstrated the highest dignity for those who had family and those without family. Jesus acknowledged the dignity of people in authority and people not in authority. Dignity flourishes when Justice is visible.²⁴ In seeking to create universal documents which *adhere* to Christ—Christ is the Christian model central to Justice—future leaders need to revisit the past (inclusive of the ideas in *Rerum novarum*) and make amends in order for trust to flourish. The church should acknowledge²⁵ the limitations of past choices in the name of "good;" add new visions and practices that honor Christ through acts of restoring dignity lost and stolen through acquisitions used to maintain privilege and legacy.²⁶ Justice was *wounded* when the directives went astray from the holistic understanding of being "right-aligned"

with God. The governing church, if she intends to lead, must *restore*—physically and psychologically—what was taken away; to restore is to move towards establishing dignity.²⁷

Life *in* God is more than securing property, legacy and directing a church towards self-preservation. Life in God is about a *particular* way of loving which enables Justice to *reveal* herself; it is a particular way of loving that *increases* dignity for others. At this time, much can be achieved for universal peace by answering critical questions, which open the church to a new way of thinking. Much can be achieved through documents (including encyclicals)²⁸ that encourage *investing in* the dignity of others through personal sacrifice, and encourage stewardship beyond family—as properly living for Justice. The generous Christian (rooted in Justice)²⁹ is the steward who is needed more than ever; she is needed to secure belief in Christianity as a faith and a tradition worth trusting in.

Notes:

¹This first definition is my understanding. My definition of justice may not speak to the understanding and acceptance that prevails in Western Christian identity; all expressions are developed from regional heritage (as they were with the various churches) and I acknowledge that this definition and expression is not rooted in Western Christianity, but in Caribbean Judeo-Christian understanding.

Justice is the manifestation of the Divine Spirit, called love. Further, the higher the exercise of truth and charity, the higher the microcosmic *ordering of God* within the human vessel. Ordering is designed for spiritual self-fulfillment in a visible way; guiding Christ's image of love into people's lives concerns spiritual self-fulfillment in a visible way. Christ's image of love should be the conscious understanding of justice for Christian thinkers. The image is a performative nature to "loving." Truth and Charity is Justice as Divine *loving*.

²The theological idea agreed upon by the Christian churches is that Justice is about relationships through a distinct understanding of God. God has been established as a symbolic *gerund* and the Spirit of Love. An example is the Paraclete as a symbol, and Augustinian ideas of “loving” as Divine “being.”

³Pope Leo XIII recognizes that life requires dignity, material goods and the right to income. It specifies that through *natural law* humans have the right—God given authority—to own material things in varying degrees of permissibility; how we use property and material goods *should be held in tension* with the common good. Further according to the document, humans have the authority to “ownership” *because* material things *give pleasure* and *build societies*. We do not have the right to use objects and resources how we (the “owner”) desire. Justice gives the right to own, but purpose must consider the common good.

The document indicates an idea that private ownership has a positive effect on social life; owning material goods is about “living for God’s justice.” The accumulation of material life concerns restoration of order and authority. “Living for justice” through private ownership is about *human purpose and dignity* in relationship to creation, and thus *demand*s individuals have authority and possession in participating with spiritual order (and desire). As the document proclaims, the “goal was still the restoration of order and authority.... (O’Brien and Shannon, 13).” The undiscussed tension in Christian life is always “whose order” and authority is primary, and is affected?

Rerum novarum is deeper in conflict than seen at surface level. It presents that “natural laws” and “desires” spiritually *unify* in the human person through reason, as a means to achieve God’s Justice. Justice (as a noun) is believed to be concerned with full-filling order through property “ownership”; visible “ownership” was *self-understood* as part of God’s *purpose for creation*, and to enhance human dignity and to permit the stated “natural inequality.” Therefore, “owning” is a declarative pre-requisite for living justly and achieving justice; with the latter put forward as a central idea, *natural law* encourages tension as “Divine will.”

For the document’s creators and issuer Justice demanded possession of property, which would serve to illustrate a “distinction between man and the animal creation (Cf., *Rerum novarum* 6).” For him, the *power of reason* is believed to endow humans the right to ownership; implicit in his argument is an erroneous *idea that reason equals right*, and “right” equals spiritually accurate. This first assumption in the document is accounted for in his method of

presenting ideas and the ideas themselves: because man can “enjoy” and *is* “the full perfection of animal nature,” which can be illustrated by his recognition of man’s enjoyment, this is reason enough to assert that God gave desires to be reasoned into fulfillment; one such desire is to accumulate things which permit an easier life (RN 5).

This “right” (through reasoning) to private property is essentially argued (indirectly) as *the law of nature* paralleling fulfillment of desire—a pleasurable life. Humans desire to possess things, and “direction of reasoning” signifies “right.” He supports an agenda and his view by stating that the principle of private ownership stems from recognition of desire, and conformity with human nature permits peace and tranquility (RN 8). There is an implicitness in his argument that desires and perceptions are “right-ordered” for himself and others; unfortunately due to topic and space limitations “right-ordering” of mental reception and perceptions—which stem from the mind—and “right-ordering” of hearts desires—cannot be addressed within this paper. *The ordering of both must be scrutinized* deeply, because they affect the documents and lives; further tensions and limited charity are presented as a part of the larger argument of God’s law.

Returning to describing *Rerum novarum* Pope Leo XIII affirms that *in agreement with desires*, is a man’s desire and right—authority—to continue providing for his children and family. He states the latter cannot be achieved without acquisition of physical property, which must be passed forward to his descendants to permit continual growth of dignity. He encourages growth of dignity, but in contradiction he does not support the fullness of growth of Charity—as lived action—in his directives to the people; directives which *could* possibly *allow* humankind to flourish to a level that they can worship without fear, and be *enabled and supported* to achieve fullness of dignity. This encyclical, which centers itself on corporate and group life, and supports interior restrictions in charity, would become and *remain* a primary foundation for guiding Catholic social ethics.

⁴Property establishes corporate identity and expression critical for community. Corporate expression is the recognized institutional term for structured “cohesive” group dynamics connected to political identity. Ethnocentric-historians have previously called this external sense of identity “the tribes.” Similar structures and patterns for formulating Christian communities at the local and national level may be seen. Institutional community (inclusive of the church) is corporate expression tied to belief systems and political heritage.

⁵The early Christian writers as interpreted through the writings of William Walsh, S.J. and John Langan, S.J., “Patristic Social Consciousness—The Church and the Poor” in *The Faith That Does Justice*, ed. John Haughey, S.J., 113-151 (New York: Paulist Press, 1977). This includes Clement of Alexandria who affirms the problem of desire (Cf., 117, 120). This writer understands the idea of attempting to “secure” as rooted in desire.

⁶Biblical citations used in this paper are from the New American Bible (NAB) as required of the Catholic institution for which a shorter version of this paper was written. Parallel ideas expressed in the context of this paper can be found in the Kings James Version of the Bible (KJV), illustrating that both traditions share a common understanding. Consistency of the ideas presented is important in the theological search for a common understanding. All in-text biblical quotes and references are taken from the NAB online Catholic edition.

⁷Sharing is the distributive *act aligned* with a principle of living. Asked to clarify the term chosen, the word “distributive” would not be proper to the context of the sentence or pericope; “distributive” implies an act of giving, but the term does not imply required Truth and Charity which is the definition of Justice outlined as love earlier in the paper. Justice always understands itself to be a right-alignment of Truth and Charity, and not outside of Divine principles.

⁸The example illustrates my understanding of Justice as Truth and Charity. The pericope is not simply an issue of being poor or having property.

⁹Cf., Walsh and Langan, “Patristic Social Consciousness,” 115-16.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid. See page 115 for further details. The idea borrowed is in quotations to distinguish it from this author’s own ideas in the same sentence. *Stability of personal legacy* has two ideas presented as recognized actions against Christian living: attempting to create personal legacy which is seeking God-like glory, and attempting to ensure that identity continues forever, which is seeking immortality. The entire argument is a concern of human intents of controlling spiritual location, recognized identity and length of time.

¹²In accordance with the university for which this paper was originally written the NAB citation has been used. The USCCB's footnotes indicate that the meaning of the passage reflects the explicit picture provided by the KJV on the end result for man, and the relationship between accumulated wealth and death. The critical verses are 11-13 and 17-20 within the NAB, and 11-13 and 16-20 within the KJV, the verses are organized differently. The King James Version of the Bible offers explicit language and stronger images between desires and the soul, and wealth and spiritual destiny (see especially verses 11-12).

¹³The ideas are not limited to patristics but the term is used to reflect a self-understanding and inclusivity of mystics and matristics, as related to the idea presented in the sentence. One patristic which presents such an idea as related to the paper is *The Shepherd of Hermas* as cited in Walsh and Langan, "Patristic Social Consciousness," 114 - 115.

¹⁴Parentheticals are my own. All parentheticals which follow are my own.

¹⁵Small 'g' possibly meaning, worthy of praise and also possessing awareness of the desires of the Divine spirit.

¹⁶Walsh and Langan, "Patristic Social Consciousness," 115 - 116.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁸Cf., Leo XIII, Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (1891), in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010). See especially, 23.

¹⁹Ideas do not become a way of life by themselves but find a place in the world through human desires. Readers can assess that the roots of ideas in alignment with desires are important to our directions as God centered people; being rooted in Christ, Scripture, or an understanding of Justice as introduced in the paper, permits ideas to be directed towards an ordering of priorities distinctly reflective of Christ-centered love.

²⁰Theologians have already indicated that *truth* is the root idea of Divine law. Christian theologians already affirm that Christ is *the highest representative* of truth in human form. If Christ is Truth

(noun and verb), then Divine laws require motion because Christ “acted” with generosity; spiritual animation is motion. By naming Christ as representative of Divine law can authority *rooted* in Divine law then minimize living charity?

The Scriptures already note that the purpose of Christ’s consciousness is to enable “the advocate”—the Holy Spirit—freedom to work; in being enabled by the Spirit of God, Christ *maximized charity*, becoming the noun itself. Since the noun and the verb are “one,” which we call “being” or God, persons exercising Christ consciousness *as Charity* would center themselves in reducing suffering, so that the Spirit in others may find dignity (including basic security) and praise the *source of life*.

Because the leading document—said to be written for the world’s good—does not exercise Christ’s charity or motivating force, we can recognize and conclude who it represents, simply by what it is offering as *an imitation of God*. Seekers of truth in doctrines should investigate not simply written ideas, but cultures and life-styles of writers to gain a better understanding of what people “lived out loud” as authentic belief—principles. Is the speaker practicing the images and descriptions they state as “the path” of divine law?

²¹We are to participate in establishing dignity by providing basic human security. The basics of food, water, shelter, clothing and physical safety are the minimum measures needed to ensure security, and thus enable the establishment of dignity. Maximal social responsibility is a measure of concern for human dignity, this is love through my lens (See endnote 1).

²²Some may argue the degrees of charity to the extent of claiming that Christ went so far as not seeking ownership of his own body, but that remains to be investigated in light of relationships both human and cosmic, and the spiritual mysteries yet unknown.

²³In seeking to look at *Rerum novarum* with a historical, holistic, critical and analytical lens there are a few questions that will need to be investigated *by appropriately learned scholars*. *Rerum novarum* is not a simple presentation of ideas. The ideas, which become decrees and influence laws, should lead readers and receivers to ask prophetic and cause-effect questions: *if the guiding foundations are limited or “cracked” what is the end result for society?* What type of people are the ideas developing? Who is the primary benefactor of the ideas and methods of restoring maximal dignity? What is the degree of separation between Christ’s path and the path of leadership

presented by these ideas?

The ignored problem, the crack, is not simply the concept of limited charity in *Rerum novarum*; readers and receivers must ask what *primary lens* is being used to speak, write and form Christian identity, and also to shape human dignity? Were *psycho-philosophical perspectives*—“right to own”—deeply interwoven with ethno-cultural origins, used to lead and affect the dynamics of human relationships globally? Are the effects positive or negative in our goals of teaching Christ’s understanding of laws? Do the documented ideas reflect Christ? Do theologians tend to minimize the location and cultural-environmental *origins of ideas*, knowing that *scrutiny of ideas* is necessary because it shapes the spheres of social responsibility, self-accountability, and power?

Who will answer the questions? Theologians and everyone must be able to distinguish Christ’s voice in documents promoting heritage and treatment of people. Christ-centeredness illustrated itself as possessing a nature of maximal charity and attentiveness to responsibility. Christ *investigated the root motivating force and heritage of ideas*; to engage the latter was to question *spiritual intent* which is the heart. It is to question the role acted out, and the level of charity and responsibility accepted. Jesus looks at—questions and perceives—the implication of voiced documents as leading towards actions, when he spoke of desire and decrees *in relationship to* men of the law and tradition (Cf., Mk 10: 3-7 and Mt 19: 7-8). It is to question the claimed sources of authority, and the relationship between law and ego, and satisfaction with the privileged person’s own position and culture.

This leads us to ask, is comfort disabling true Charity and did comfort permit *Rerum novarum* to become a leading document in Western Christianity affecting the actions of millions globally? What are the effects of leadership ideas of “right to own” things? What methods did leaders use to structure achieving these ideas in corporal reality? What do the people who experience the effects of the documents have to say about its reality as related to Christ? Leadership as authority is meant to accept responsibility, accountability and live by the image they uphold as God; *Rerum novarum* upholds Christ as God. Does the language and life-style of leadership illustrate the self-giving responsible stewardship we see in the Divine image? What type of leadership is created by the intents of *Rerum novarum*? I am certain the efforts of Pope Leo XIII were considered *progressive* by many in the late 1800’s. It is a beautiful *sounding* document, but *do we* have the courage to look deeply at how decrees connect and disconnect from agreeable foundations on Charity and Dignity—Christ as leading? Creativity was permitted as

as a means for worship and thriving within God's love; has this document succeeded in making God's love visible?

²⁴Justice is visible when leadership is in alignment with the Holy Spirit and creates guidance for followers to "be" in Justice. Leadership is more than documenting ideas; it must be more than excusing poor choices and *limiting* people from growing in responsibility and accountability for any failure to live the Gospel.

²⁵To acknowledge, is to *accept*, accountability *without* attempting to "self-justify" any visibly contradictory messages or harmful acts. To accept is to move *beyond* reasoning and defending poor choices; acknowledgement is humbleness. The act of acknowledgement is (spiritual) openness towards increased (mental) awareness, awareness of choices which may have wounded Christ's work and Justice. This is important because *awareness* is necessary for healing and restoration to begin.

²⁶The idea speaks to engaging restorative Justice in many forms. Justice is an established responsibility of the church that has been greatly neglected in many parts of the world. If the church ignores *restorative justice* because it is "problem-solving" or "social-work" then how will the church authentically represent an image that symbolizes life? Can the church represent Christ and choose not to problem-solve which is to give new life? Was not Christ a "worker" struggling by the sides of the marginalized of society providing ideas and assisting in resolutions?

²⁷Dignity is at the heart of the Christian understanding of life in God.

²⁸Some ideas (inclusive of standards) are far outside of achievable reality; these ideas limit billions of people from attaining dignity. Leaders (for Justice) writing decrees must critically consider their "directives on prioritization" as related to resources, actions and achieving dignity. Ordering of priorities affects not only the Christian trying to achieve the Church's standard of dignity, but the entire global body.

²⁹This is Charity and Truth united; it is a reflection of being rightly-aligned (with Christ). The Holy Spirit is rightly-aligned and transparent, being a form of God herself. This person is a leader rooted in God.

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