

Dissertation Title: Humanizing Economic Logic: A Reading of Wendell Berry in Light of *Caritas in Veritate*

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to retrieve economic logic as a true human logic—namely, as a logic that presumes the category of relation as *gift*, thus recognizing man’s fundamental being-in-relation with God, with nature, and with other people. Such an economic logic will be capable of sustaining integral socio-economic developments. More concretely, the dissertation’s goal is to examine how the logic of economics in the thought of Wendell Berry agrees in a fundamental way with Pope Benedict XVI’s economic logic as developed in his social encyclical *Caritas in veritate*. Our aim is to show the sense in which Berry confirms in an American context the economic teachings of the encyclical. We argue that in order for economics to be able to be considered a truly human order and thus apt for the achievement of an integral human development, its foundations have to be placed, as the Pope asserts, in three main pillars: gratuitousness, creation, and the common good. These are principles which refer respectively to man’s intrinsic relations with God, with nature, and with other people—relations that Berry’s agrarian-economic analysis will illumine for us. Therefore, this dissertation seeks to recover a true anthropological economy. **Chapter One** begins with an analysis of Benedict’s notion of economic logic present in *Caritas in veritate*. We will present the threefold foundational principles—God, nature, and others—on which economic logic, understood within the category of relation as gift, needs to be founded. The next three chapters will examine Berry’s understanding of the logic of economics in respect to God, to creation, and to the local community. In **Chapter Two** we explore how, for Berry, the origin and foundation of human relationships—our relationship with God—needs to be retrieved by economic logic, if we really want to bring about a truly human economy. The Kingdom of God or Great Economy enables Berry to place love and affection at the center of the logos of economics, rather than mere economic efficiency and power. **Chapter Three** focuses on how, for Berry, the natural form of economics, rightly understood, must include fidelity to and harmony with the gift and order inbuilt in nature and must recognize the central role of the household. **Chapter Four** addresses the importance that Berry gives to the local community, as the natural milieu in which a true humanizing economic logic tends to generate economies of communion and the achievement of the common good. We end this dissertation with **Chapter Five** by interpreting Berry’s understanding of economic logic in light of *Caritas in veritate*. Attending to man’s constitutive being-in-relation, a truly human economic logic has its origin in God, its ground in nature, and its end in work and communion with other people—particularly the local neighborly community.