

Nov 10th, 8:30 AM

The Dignity of the Human Person: Catholic and Islamic Approaches to Human Rights

Matthew Bagot
Spring Hill College, mbagot@shc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://ecommons.udayton.edu/human_rights



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), [Ethics in Religion Commons](#), and the [Islamic Studies Commons](#)

Bagot, Matthew, "The Dignity of the Human Person: Catholic and Islamic Approaches to Human Rights" (2017). *The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy*. 1.
http://ecommons.udayton.edu/human_rights/2017/faithbased/1

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Human Rights Center at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlange1@udayton.edu.

The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

2017 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

Nov. 8-10, 2017, Dayton, Ohio

For the archive of the conference, see http://ecommons.udayton.edu/human_rights/2017/

Research Panel: Faith-Based Perspectives

Presenter: Matthew Bagot, Spring Hill College

Title: The Dignity of the Human Person: Catholic and Islamic Approaches to Human Rights

Abstract:

At the beginning of *The Global Face of Public Faith*, David Hollenbach, S.J., challenges the world's religious communities to relate their distinctive visions of the good human life with the growing awareness that all persons are linked in a web of global interdependence. Hollenbach's work is founded on an understanding of the common good that he discerns at Vatican II and calls "dialogic universalism." It is universal because humans are sufficiently alike when it comes to the requirements for their respective goods; it is dialogic because cultural differences necessitate deep intellectual engagement across traditions if they are to be bridged.

In this paper, I hope to engage in "dialogic universalism" by exploring the confluence between Catholic and Islamic approaches to human rights. The paper is part of a broad project in comparative ethics.

The Catholic approach to human rights is premised on the dignity of the person. But the "person" here is conceived, crucially, as a social creature. Thus Hollenbach writes: "Catholic thought and action in the human rights sphere ... are rooted in a communitarian alternative to liberal human rights theory." This alternative conception defines human rights as "the minimum conditions for life in community," which is premised not only on the relational nature of the person (created in the image and likeness of a Trinitarian God), but also on a conception of justice as participation in the life of the human community for all persons. Consequently, rights are conceived not simply as negative immunities but more broadly as positive empowerments.

I will argue that this vision of empowering all citizens to participate in communal life is replicated in the work of Iranian Shi'ite scholar Abdolkarim Soroush, for whom rights imply duties to others and thus the pursuit of social and economic justice in a democratic context.

About the presenter:

Matthew J. Bagot (Ph.D. in theological ethics from Boston College, 2010) is an associate professor of theology specializing in social ethics at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. In the past year, he has published "Dialogic Universalism Today: the Intellectual Solidarity of David Hollenbach, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, and Naser Ghobadzadeh Regarding the Political Role of Religion" in *Public Theology and the Global Common Good: Essays in Honor of David Hollenbach* (Orbis Books, Fall, 2016) and "Catholicism and Cosmopolitanism: the Confluence of Three Catholic Scholars and the Cosmopolitan Democrats Regarding State Sovereignty" in *De Ethica: A Journal of Philosophical, Theological, and Applied Ethics* 2016 3(2). Recent presentations include "Another Vision of Integral Development: Luigi

Sturzo on Human Personality, the International Community and a Pluralistic World” (Soul of Development: 50th Anniversary of Populorum Progressio, Catholic Social Tradition Conference, University of Notre Dame, March 23-25, 2017) and “‘The East’ meets ‘The West’: the Intellectual Solidarity of Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, Naser Ghobadzadeh, and David Hollenbach on Religion and the State” (International Conference on Ethics and Law, Societas Ethica and the Evangelische Akademie Bad Boll, Germany, August 2016).