

# ἐμπάθεια (Empatheia) and Caritas: The Role of Religion in Fair Trade Consumption

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**ABSTRACT.** There is much still to learn about the nature of fair trade consumers. In light of the Pope's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, this article sought to advance the current understanding by investigating the role of religion in fair trade consumption. In this study, fair trade consumers and non-consumers across many religions as well as the non-religious described their consumption of fair trade products as well as the use of their religious beliefs in their purchase behavior. It appears that the non-religious are slightly more inclined toward buying fair trade products. Of the religious observers studied, Buddhists have a greater propensity to buy fair trade. The relationship between religion and fair trade consumption is complex in that religious affiliation – group membership – alone is not enough to encourage members to buy fair trade; rather, it is the use of religious beliefs as a criterion in consumption behavior that linked religion to fair trade consumption.

**KEY WORDS:** ethical consumption, fair trade, religion, religious beliefs, papal encyclicals, consumerism, values

## Introduction

There is...a growing conviction that business management cannot concern itself only with the interests of the proprietors, but must also assume responsibility for all the other stakeholders who contribute to the life of the business: the workers, the clients, the suppliers of various elements of production, the community of reference.' (No 40).

The latest encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, has sharply refocused and extended the Church's teaching on Social Responsibility broadly conceived. It is in the tradition of *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Populorum Progressio*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, and other less formal pronouncements. However, with the intensified global business network and

the financial collapse clearly linked to ethical failures of those charged with vigilance, the document fills a deeply needed void in the current argument by expanding the church's application to the current situation. The pope's argument states clearly that the goals of business may be profit but it must be profit, economic and humane. In short, the goals must always be tied to "achieving human and social ends" (No 46). One of the areas in which this mandate can be carried out without damaging either the profit motive or the social component of community is with fair trade. This model of business allows for components such as charity and empathy to be entered into the ledger of business practices as elements that enhance not only the human society in general, but also increases the wealth of the world. Nor is the Pope naïve as he comments, "the world's wealth is growing in absolute terms, but inequalities are on the increase." The gauntlet is clearly thrown down: How can one approach business in a socially responsible, charitable, and empathic manner?

The Church has been considerably ahead of the wave in terms of social concern and the dignity of the person. The notion that management was failing to fulfil its social responsibilities was argued by Kotler (1972) three decades ago yet management continues to remain focused on profits at the expense of all else. Management still argues that its moral imperative is to provide a return to those who invest in businesses and not other stakeholders. They are emboldened by Friedman's (1970) argument that management's only responsibility is its fiduciary responsibility to investors and should managers feel obliged to be socially responsible then they should do so with their own money and not that of the business. This is not a sentiment that has dissipated over the last 30 years. However, now more than ever, businesses have the

opportunity to take an ethical stance without hurting investors simply by choosing to market products with an ethical attribute. These products appeal to a growing interest among consumers in purchasing goods that reflect their personal ethical beliefs.

The concept of ethical consumption has been garnering increased attention in recent years from academia (Bezencon and Blili, 2009) but despite this, still not enough is known about what Low and Davenport (2007) describe as the “stubbornly elusive” ethical consumer (p. 342). This article seeks to further the current understanding through its investigation of the role of religion in the decision to buy ethical products; specifically, fair trade products.

Why religion? Social scientists argue that religious values and institutions are formidable forces in contemporary society from both a social and political perspective (Gay and Ellison, 1993). Approximately 71% of Americans are absolutely certain God exists; another 17% are fairly sure. A total of 82% of Americans report that religion is either very important or somewhat important in their lives (The Pew Forum, 2008). Therefore, this facet of life is worth investigation to determine if it can highlight aspects of the fair trade consumption that are hitherto unknown. This study seeks to advance the understanding of the antecedents of fair trade consumption by investigating the affect of religious membership on the propensity to buy fair trade.

There a number of ways that the religious construct might be operationalized and this study looks at the role of affiliation. The religious affiliation dimension is defined as a person’s current denomination or sect. Different religions exhibit different patterns of consumption; products are viewed and prized differently by different religions thus shopping and purchasing behavior of their members differ (Essoo and Dibb, 2004). Hence, it is not a stretch to assume that this also applies to shopping for and buying fair trade products.

The remainder of this article discusses ethical consumption, fair trade, religion and fair trade, methodology, results, and discussion.

### **Ethical consumption**

Consumer interest in ethical products is not new; in its contemporary form, it is a phenomenon hundreds

of years in the making. Since British abolitionists began to protest the use of slave labor on sugar plantations people have been concerned with how goods are produced (Jaffee et al., 2004). However, ethical consumption as we know it today has its genesis with the emergence of the green movement (Freestone and McGoldrick, 2008; Nicholls, 2002). Ethical consumption nowadays is more broadly defined in that a consumer can choose a range of products each supporting beliefs regarding people, the environment, or both. People have become increasingly committed to social issues (Freestone and McGoldrick, 2008) and they are looking inward to find solutions to social and environmental problems through their consumption behavior. The consumption of ethical products is aimed at tackling the consequences of trade in terms of its social and environmental effects (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). Therefore, to consume products with an ethical component is to consume a product that negatively affects neither man nor the natural world. The ethical consumerism movement is comprised of three types of consumer behavior (Tallontire et al., 2001). Consumer action involves such behavior as lobbying or direct action, negative ethical purchase behavior involves not buying unethical goods (boycotting), and positive ethical purchase behavior involves the consumption of goods with an ethical attribute. Buying fair trade is an example of positive ethical purchase behavior.

### **Fair trade**

Injustice arises from an inequitable distribution of resources and power and social justice efforts seek to exact change where there is an inequity among groups in that one is privileged and the other is treated unjustly (Choules, 2007). The fair trade movement addresses these injustices because it creates equal opportunities for both parties in an economic exchange (Strong, 1997). Fair trade allows those associated with production and their families higher incomes, better working conditions, and sustained financial stability in the long term (Gould, 2003). There are three types of fair trade consumers. Activists buy fair trade products but also actively disseminate the fair trade message. Ethicals are regular consumers of fair trade and finally, semi-ethicals

buy fair trade infrequently and are more sensitive to what they must forgo in order to consume fair trade (Tallontire et al., 2001).

Fair trade production systems exist in 58 countries benefiting 7 million farmers, workers, and family members (Fair Trade Foundation, 2010). By 2008, global fair trade certified sales had reached \$2.9 billion (Fair Trade Foundation, 2008, 2010). Consumers have the opportunity to buy fair trade in two major ways; either by buying products from alternative trade organizations (ATO) or buying fair trade certified products in regular stores.

#### *Alternative trade organizations*

Religious groups have had a tremendous role in the growth of the fair trade movement; specifically, they have had a significant influence on the emergence and evolution of ATOs (Reynolds, 2008). The fair trade movement in its early form was comprised only of ATOs that eradicated the need for intermediaries by bringing products directly from producers to consumers, which allowed for a better financial return to disadvantaged producers (Equal Exchange, 2010a). Beginning approximately 50 or so years ago, fair trade operated as a complement to the activities of charities in developing countries. Churches sold the products of the marginalized individuals whom they were helping in retail outlets back in the developed world. This allowed disadvantaged producers access to formerly inaccessible markets, where they received higher prices for their products (Bacon, 2005). It is commonly accepted that Edna Byler, a Mennonite, was responsible for bringing fair trade to the U.S. Byler, who was working with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Puerto Rico, began bringing lace back home to sell. Her efforts resulted in the opening of Ten Thousand Villages (Fair Trade Federation, 2010).

Ten Thousand Villages and SERRV were the first to begin trading fair trade products in the U.S. in 1950s (European Fair Trade Association, 2006) and the first ATO opened in the Netherlands in 1960 (Tallontire, 2000). ATOs exist so that the producers can afford to live under acceptable conditions (Erffmeyer et al., 1999) and they work directly with producers and artisans providing help with product design, quality control, management,

and shipping issues (Littrell and Dickson, 1997). Some of the products sold by ATOs are certified fair trade by independent labeling initiatives and other products are sourced directly from fair trade producers. Nowadays, it is very common for an ATO to be a certified fair trade organization (FTO). To become a certified FTO, the organization must prove that the producers and artisans with whom they work have been fairly paid, they have had advance payments and loans made available to them, and they have received advice on sustainable practices and financial management (FTF, n.d.). ATOs and FTOs sell fairly traded products such as crafts, textiles, clothing, tea, and coffee and they raise awareness through exhibitions, campaigns, plays, petitions, Fair Trade breakfasts, and so on (Worldshops, n.d.).

#### *Fair trade labeling initiatives*

Whereas ATOs are part of the economic exchange, fair trade labeling initiatives are not; rather, they determine if fair trade products meet the required standards for fair trade certification (Tallontire, 2000). Fair trade code of conduct contracts are established to regulate producers:

Among the workers' representatives, a person must be nominated who can be consulted and who can address health and safety issues with the organization.... All employees must work under fair conditions of employment. The producer organization must pay wages in line with or exceeding national laws and agreements on minimum wages.... Workers and employers shall have the right to establish and to join organizations of their own choosing, and to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives and to formulate their programmes.... Forced or bonded labour must not occur.... Children may only work if their education is not jeopardised. If children work, they must not execute tasks, which are especially hazardous for them due to their age. (FLO-certification, n.d., pp. 20–22)

When a fair trade certifying body verifies that the requirements in the contract have been met it awards a fair trade label.

Max Havelaar was the first fair trade certification body and was founded by Francisco VanderHoff Boersma, a Catholic priest, Nico Roozen, and the

Dutch development agency Solidaridad in 1988. Max Havelaar certification gave distribution opportunities to business that were not ATOs, which in turn made fair trade products available to the masses. In 1997, approximately 20 labels were brought together under the umbrella organization of the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO-I) (Renard, 2001). There is a long list of certified fair trade products now available: coffee, cocoa, dried fruits and vegetables, fresh flowers and plants, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, fruit juices, honey, nuts, olives and olive oil, quinoa, seed cotton, soy and pulses, spices and herbs, sports balls, and sugar (Fair Trade Foundation, n.d.).

### Religion and fair trade

There is a glut of information in extant literature examining how religion influences many facets of life: values (Delener, 1994; Fam et al., 2004), self-identity (Cosgel and Minkler, 2004), lifestyle choices (Fam et al., 2004; Vieten et al., 2006), group membership (Bearden and Etzel, 1982), relationships (Reynolds, 2008), concern for the “other” (Arnould et al., 2009; Cornwell et al., 2005; Delener, 1994; Martin et al., 2007), and culture (Delener, 1994) to name but a few. Determining the connection between religion and economic exchanges is not new either (Peifer, 2008). However, of particular concern to this article is economic exchange with a focus on the other as well as the self; buying products with an empathic and/or charitable attribute that emphasize benefits to producers as well as consumers.

Why would religious individuals be concerned enough or more so than the non-religious to buy fair trade to improve the well-being of strangers in distant corners of the World. The religious may be more apt to perspective taking because perceptive taking is facilitated by experiencing a similar situation, via instruction, or by a feeling of attachment (Batson and Shaw, 1991b); religion providing the instructional link between the two. However, it may also provide the attachment link through the ability to an increased ability to empathize with others.

Empathy is defined as “an other-focused vicarious emotional response congruent with the perceived welfare of others” (Batson and Shaw, 1991a, p. 161).

Empathy has also been described as the capacity to establish a worldview that encompasses the world of others (Natale, 1972). There is much in the extant literature to support the argument that empathy motivates people to help others. It has also been suggested that helping behavior is self-serving, however, Batson et al. (1995) suggest that this is not the case, that indeed the motivation to help others is altruistic – helping the other regardless of return for the self. Empathic concern evokes feelings of sympathy, compassion, and tenderness about others in need. It causes a person to become distressed or sad for the person in need and these feelings encourage helping behavior (Batson and Shaw, 1991a). Therefore, empathy influences helping behavior indirectly via altruism. Much like values act as a motivation for behavior so too does empathy; empathy having a pro-social outcome. Smith (2003) found religious individuals to be more altruistic than non-religious people. The religious were also found to be more empathic than the non-religious. Furthermore, the higher the religious involvement the more empathic and altruistic one is. Hence, it might be argued then that to be religious is to be empathic and to be empathic is to behave congruent with the needs of others; the feeling toward the other goes beyond the affect state and results in associated behavior. In this case, perhaps helping behavior in the form of buying fair trade out of concern for the disadvantaged producer.

Religious affiliation can be divisive and has undoubtedly been used as a reason for discrimination and hatred. However, beyond religious strife, be it historic or contemporary, there is a common belief shared by all religious followers that there is an interconnectedness to humankind (Arnould et al., 2009). Within the Islamic tradition, for example, helping the poor is a manifestation of followers’ moral principles of compassion and justice (Martin et al., 2007).

In Christian and other Western spiritual traditions, the Greek word *agape* (or in Latin, *caritas*) refers to human beings manifesting God’s pure love, or an intentional and unconditional love for others, including Enemies... In Sikh and Hindu derived traditions, the Sanskrit *seva* refers to being of selfless service to the needs of others... In Buddhist traditions *metta* in Pali or *maitri* in Sanskrit is used to refer to both a quality and a

practice of unconditional and unattached loving kindness, or the strong intention for the happiness of all beings...The Tibetan Buddhist practice of *tonglen* refers to the practice of taking in suffering and giving out love or blessings. (Vieten et al., 2006)

More evidence of religious orientation toward the oneness of people is that the Golden Rule exists in all of the major religions (Kung, 2001). Scarborough Missions (n.d.) provides the following examples:

Buddhism: "Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful," *The Buddha*, Udana-Varga 5.18.

Christianity: "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets," *Jesus*, Matthew 7:12.

Confucianism: "One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving-kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself," *Confucius*, Analects 15.23.

Hinduism: "This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you," *Mahabharata* 5:1517.

Islam: "Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself," *The Prophet Muhammad*, Hadith.

Judaism: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it," *Hillel*, Talmud, Shabbat 31a.

Furthermore, the world's big religions are more successful in encouraging ethical behavior than other ethical influences because they provide their members with what Kung calls the "why and what for" (1997, p. 26). Kung also argues that only religion can provide a real basis for objection to the unjustness in the world. Reactions to issues of justice or injustice are more pronounced for religious followers because religion is a manifestation of a longing for the "wholly other" that is pervasive and sustained (p. 26). In line with this, pro fair trade behavior among the religious is not just a matter of empathy, charity, life style, group influence, etc.; there are theological imperatives for engaging in behavior in support of fair trade:

Jewish tradition pays great attention to ethics in business and economic life. Indeed, one story relates that

the first question one is asked when one arrives in the world to come is, "Did you deal fairly in business?" In the context of international trade, Jewish tradition offers several guidelines. First, we must practice fairness and honesty in all business dealings. This principle is enshrined in Leviticus: When you sell property to your neighbor, or buy any from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another. Leviticus 25:11–14. We are obliged to deal with each other fairly, to use honest weights and measures, and not to take advantage of one another in business. Second, as consumers, we bear responsibility for the entire chain of economic activity that brings goods and services to us. Not only are we prohibited from dishonest business practices, we are barred from benefiting from others' unethical business practices. We can infer this principle from Rumba's rule about the purchase of stolen goods: One may not buy from a thief the goods he has stolen, and to do so is a great transgression because it strengthens the hands of those who violate the law and causes the thief to continue to steal, for if the thief would find no buyer he would not steal, as it says, "He who shares with a thief is his own enemy" (Proverbs 2:24). (On1foot: Jewish, n.d.)

Global interconnectedness has led to the emergence of a new political power, that of consumers and their associations. This is a phenomenon that needs to be further explored, as it contains positive elements to be encouraged as well as excesses to be avoided. It is good for people to realize that purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act. Hence *the consumer has a specific social responsibility*, which goes hand-in-hand with the social responsibility of the enterprise. Consumers should be continually educated [145] regarding their daily role, which can be exercised with respect for moral principles without diminishing the intrinsic economic rationality of the act of purchasing. In the retail industry, particularly at times like the present when purchasing power has diminished and people must live more frugally, it is necessary to explore other paths: for example, forms of cooperative purchasing like the consumer cooperatives that have been in operation since the nineteenth century, partly through the initiative of Catholics. In addition, it can be helpful to promote new ways of marketing products from deprived areas of the world, so as to guarantee their producers a decent return. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2009)

... the principles of Islam are not silent on issues of fair trade and trade justice. Indeed, there is a rich heritage in Islam of high moral standards, ethics, values and norms of behaviour, which govern personal,



professional and business life. In the area of business and commerce Islam obliges buyers, sellers and consumers to act honestly, fairly and with integrity in their daily business practices – for business is not something that can be treated separately from all other aspects of social life. Islam also obliges workers to be treated fairly, and with dignity and respect. Since the fair trade movement is primarily concerned with fairness, equity and justice, it seems that the principles of fair trade and the teachings of Islam are entirely congruent. With references from the Qur'an and ahadith this analysis demonstrates that, from an Islamic perspective, there are indeed strong and clear faith-based reasons for supporting fair trade initiatives. (Khan and Thaut, 2009)

There are many examples from contemporary religious life where faith-based organizations have begun incorporating fair trade into their social and ceremonial activities. For example, approximately 2500 congregations used fair-trade palm fronds in their Palm Sunday ceremonies (Reed, 2009, April 4); American Jewish World Service, the Church of the Brethren, the Disciples of Christ, Islamic Relief USA, Lutheran World Relief, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Presbyterian Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Committee, Unitarian Universalists, and Catholic Relief Services have partnered with Equal Exchange to promote the issue of fair trade and make fair trade products available for sale to their members (Equal Exchange, 2010b); volunteers at the Parliament of the World's Religions, hosted in Melbourne 2009, wore tee shirts fashioned from fair trade cotton and produced in an Indian co-operative (Council For a Parliament, 2009); and Catholic Relief Services has trained and dispatched 50 fair trade ambassadors to promote fair trade in parishes and schools across the U.S. (Catholic Relief Services, 2010).

## **Methodology**

The notional connection between articulated religious adherence/belief and explicit behaviors regarding commitment and action directed toward fair trade concerns have been described above. James 2:20 argues directly that “faith without works is dead.” It would seem that religious exhortation of any denomination reminds people of their commitment to act carefully in specific matters, so the question then becomes are the religious more likely

than the non-religious to buy fair trade, and are there differences between religious groups as to the inclination to support fair trade; these are the research questions guiding this study.

Data was collected online from the customers of four fair trade retailers who purchased fair trade tea, coffee, chocolate, jewelry, clothing, and crafts as well as university graduate students. The response rate was approximately 20% returning over 800 completed surveys. Over 200 surveys were eliminated for the purposes of this study because the respondents provided conflicting responses such as they frequently bought fair trade but they reported elsewhere in the survey that their average annual spend was zero. In addition, when respondents identified themselves as being both a Green and a fair trade consumer – and not just a fair trade consumer – their responses were not included lest they result in spurious findings (fair trade products are often produced using environmentally friendly methods of production and cultivation).

Fair trade consumption was measured in terms of commitment to buying fair trade products. Commitment was measured on a scale of 1–4: never buying fair trade was assigned a rating of 1 and the choice to always buy the fair trade product alternative was assigned a rating of 4. This construct appears in the tables, the results, and the discussion as Commitment or commitment to fair trade.

To measure the role of religious beliefs – and not just religious group membership – in buying fair trade, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1–3 if their religious beliefs affected their purchase behavior; 1 indicated that religious beliefs never influenced purchase decisions and 3 indicated that they always influenced purchase decisions. This variable appears in the tables, results, and discussion as Religious consumption or religious based consumption.

Religious group membership was determined by asking respondents to choose from a list the religion they most identified with: Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity (Catholic, Protestant, Christian-other), or Other. This variable is referred to as Affiliation or religious affiliation in the tables, results, and discussion. The control group was comprised of people who described themselves as agnostic, atheist, non-religious, or secularist.

Religiosity is a belief in God accompanied by a commitment to follow principles believed to be set by

God (McDaniel and Burnett, 1990) and it is frequently used to determine the level of commitment to a religious group and/or God. The values Devout and A Spiritual life were used in this study to measure intensity of religious beliefs; not religiosity. Devout and A Spiritual life were measured using the Schwartz Value Survey (see Schwartz, 1992 for further details). Devout was described as *holding to religious faith & belief* and A Spiritual Life was described as *emphasis on spiritual not material matters*. These values were measured on a scale of  $-1$  to  $7$ ;  $-1$  represented *opposed to my values* and  $7$  represented *of supreme importance*. Data on Devout and A Spiritual Life were used to control for the fact that people's level of adherence to or intensity of feeling toward their religious group of reference might obscure information on the effect of simple group membership. Demographics were also used in the study as covariates where relevant.

The first approach taken in the statistical analysis was to use analysis of variance and analysis of covariance to discern if there were any significant interactions between the constructs under examination. Partial correlation and regression analysis were utilized to determine the more linear relationships between the variables.

## Results

Even though the values Devout and A Spiritual Life were measured on a scale of  $-1$  to  $7$  these numbers do not appear in the tables, or analysis as one of the crucial factors in measuring values with the SVS is the use of ratings centered around the respondents mean scores; the MRAT. There were only two Muslim responses in this study so this religion was not included in the analysis. The purpose of this study was not to examine the influence of other constructs such as demographics on fair trade consumption (this has been done many times elsewhere); consequently, information on demographics is not presented in the final analysis.

### ANOVA results

#### *Commitment and the effect of affiliation*

The result of the ANOVA was significant,  $F(9, 582) = 5.822$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . Participants were more

likely to buy fair trade if they belonged to the group Buddhist ( $M = 3.29$ ), than Hindu ( $M = 3.25$ ), than Non-religious ( $M = 3.06$ ), than Other ( $M = 2.95$ ), than Christian-other ( $M = 2.70$ ), than Protestant ( $M = 2.51$ ), than Catholic ( $M = 2.50$ ), or Jewish ( $M = 2.47$ ). Significant *post hoc* comparisons indicated that Catholic was significantly different from Non-religious,  $-0.559$ ,  $p = 0.041$ . Catholic differed from Buddhist,  $-0.793$ ,  $p = 0.005$ . Protestant differed from Non-religious,  $-0.548$ ,  $p = 0.029$ . Protestant differed from Buddhist,  $-0.782$ ,  $p = 0.004$ . The  $R^2$  was  $0.083$  (see Table I). The  $R^2$  changed to  $0.112$  when Devout, A Spiritual Life, and Religious consumption were entered as covariates (see Table II).

#### *Commitment and the effect of religious consumption*

The result of the ANOVA was significant,  $F(3, 579) = 5.954$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . Participants were more likely to buy fair trade if they belonged to the group Most definitely, religion influences how I consume ( $M = 3.16$ ), than Religion sometimes influences how I consume ( $M = 2.76$ ), or Religion does not influence how I consume ( $M = 2.76$ ). Significant *post hoc* comparisons indicated that Religion never influences how I consume differed from Most definitely, religion influences how I consume  $-0.398$ ,  $p = 0.013$ . Religion sometimes influences how I consume differed from Most definitely, religion influences how I consume,  $-0.399$ ,  $p = 0.014$  (see Table I). The  $R^2$  was  $0.03$ . The  $R^2$  changed to  $0.099$  when Affiliation, Devout, and A Spiritual Life were entered as covariates (see Table II).

#### *Religious consumption and the effect of affiliation*

The result of the ANOVA was significant,  $F(9, 571) = 17.852$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . Participants were more likely to say that religion influenced how they consumed and belong to the group Hindu ( $M = 2.25$ ), than Buddhist ( $M = 2.14$ ), than Protestant ( $M = 1.92$ ), than Other ( $M = 1.81$ ), than Christian-other ( $M = 1.80$ ), than Jewish ( $M = 1.80$ ), than Catholic ( $M = 1.68$ ), or Non-religious ( $M = 1.23$ ). Significant *post hoc* comparisons indicated that Catholic differed from Non-religious,  $0.453$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ; Other differed from Non-religious,  $0.586$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ; Protestant differed from Non-religious,  $0.697$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ; Christian-other differed from Non-religious,  $0.576$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ;

TABLE I  
Tests of between-subjects effects

Source	Type III Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Partial $\eta^2$
Commitment and affiliation						
Corrected model	45.897 <sup>a</sup>	9	5.1	5.822	0	0.083
Intercept	1043.856	1	1043.9	1191.8	0	0.672
Affiliation	45.897	9	5.1	5.822	0	0.083
Error	509.763	582	0.876			
Total	5261	592				
Corrected total	555.66	591				
Commitment and religious consumption						
Corrected model	16.295 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.432	5.954	0	0.03
Intercept	498.476	1	498.48	546.43	0	0.486
Religious consumption	16.295	3	5.432	5.954	0	0.03
Error	528.188	579	0.912			
Total	5141	583				
Corrected total	544.484	582				
Religious consumption and affiliation						
Corrected model	66.057 <sup>c</sup>	9	7.34	17.852	0	0.22
Intercept	410.854	1	410.85	999.33	0	0.636
Affiliation	66.057	9	7.34	17.852	0	0.22
Error	234.755	571	0.411			
Total	1937	581				
Corrected total	300.812	580				

<sup>a</sup> $R^2 = 0.083$  (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.068$ ).

<sup>b</sup> $R^2 = 0.030$  (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.025$ ).

<sup>c</sup> $R^2 = 0.220$  (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.207$ ).

Hindu differed from Non-religious, 1.023,  $p = 0.025$ ; Buddhist differed from Non-religious, 0.914,  $p = 0.025$ . The  $R^2$  was 0.22 (see Table I). The  $R^2$  changed to 0.259 when Devout and A Spiritual Life were entered as covariates (see Table II).

#### Correlation analysis

A partial correlation was conducted on all variables using demographics, A Spiritual Life, and Devout as covariates. Commitment correlated with the following variables: Religious consumption, 0.126,  $p = 0.008$ ; Buddhist, 0.110,  $p = 0.018$ ; Non-religious, 0.100,  $p = 0.030$ ; Religious,  $-0.100$ ,  $p = 0.030$ ; Catholic,  $-0.104$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ; and Protestant,  $-0.147$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ . Religious consumption

correlated with the following affiliation group: Buddhist 0.243 (see Table III).

#### Regression analysis

The best predictor of the variable Commitment was Buddhist  $R^2 = 0.025$ ; Buddhist/Non-religious  $R^2 = 0.048$ ; Buddhist/Non-religious/Religious consumption  $R^2 = 0.069$ ; Buddhist/Non-religious/Religious consumption/Other  $R^2 = 0.079$  (see Table IV).

The best predictor of the variable Religious consumption was Buddhist  $R^2 = 0.047$ ; Buddhist/Protestant  $R^2 = 0.076$ ; Buddhist/Protestant/Christian-other  $R^2 = 0.092$ ; Buddhist/Protestant/Christian-other/Other  $R^2 = 0.118$ ; Buddhist/Protestant/Christian-other/Other/Hindu  $R^2 = 0.137$ ; Buddhist/Protestant/Christian-other/Other/Hindu/Catholic  $R^2 =$



TABLE II  
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects with covariates

Source	Type III Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial $\eta^2$
Commitment and affiliation						
Corrected model	48.947 <sup>a</sup>	12	4.079	4.927	0	0.112
Intercept	190.034	1	190.03	229.55	0	0.328
Religious consumption	6.859	1	6.859	8.286	0	0.017
Devout groups	4.19	1	4.19	5.062	0.03	0.011
A Spiritual Life groups	6.539	1	6.539	7.899	0.01	0.017
Affiliation	20.208	9	2.245	2.712	0	0.049
Error	389.094	470	0.828			
Total	4341	483				
Corrected total	438.041	482				
Commitment and religious consumption						
Corrected model	43.430 <sup>b</sup>	6	7.238	8.731	0	0.099
Intercept	148.184	1	148.18	178.75	0	0.273
Affiliation	9.199	1	9.199	11.096	0	0.023
A Spiritual Life groups	7.803	1	7.803	9.412	0	0.019
Devout groups	12.595	1	12.595	15.193	0	0.031
Religious consumption	10.387	3	3.462	4.176	0.01	0.026
Error	394.611	476	0.829			
Total	4341	483				
Corrected total	438.041	482				
Religious consumption and affiliation						
Corrected model	64.736 <sup>c</sup>	11	5.885	15.005	0	0.259
Intercept	343.189	1	343.19	875	0	0.65
A Spiritual Life groups	2.617	1	2.617	6.672	0.01	0.014
Devout groups	4.828	1	4.828	12.31	0	0.025
Affiliation	30.602	9	3.4	8.669	0	0.142
Error	184.734	471	0.392			
Total	1645	483				
Corrected total	249.47	482				

<sup>a</sup> $R^2 = 0.112$  (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.089$ ).

<sup>b</sup> $R^2 = 0.099$  (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.088$ ).

<sup>c</sup> $R^2 = 0.259$  (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.242$ ).

0.162; Buddhist/Protestant/Christian-other/Other/Hindu/Catholic/Jewish  $R^2 = 0.178$  (see Table V).

## Discussion

Fair trade products appeal to those consumers who are concerned about the inequities in economic exchanges. To them, it is important that the exchange is fair to all parties, especially to disadvantaged producers in developing countries. Religious groups encourage their members to be concerned

about the relationships in economic transactions (Reynolds, 2008) therefore, it seemed apropos to determine if some religious groups were more concerned than others, so much so that they would have more of a propensity to buy fair trade.

From the ANOVAs, the Buddhist, Hindu, Non-religious, and Other groups had much higher mean scores; they were more committed than the other religions to buying fair trade. The ANOVAs also indicated that commitment to buying fair trade was highest for the group, which claimed that they always used their religious beliefs as a criterion in

TABLE III  
Correlation matrix

Commitment and catholic	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income Spirituality Devout RelCons3	Sig.	−0.104 0.028
Commitment and protestant	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout RelCons3	Sig.	−0.147 0.001
Commitment and Christian-Other	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout RelCons3	Sig.	0.034 0.459
Commitment and SecNonreligious	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout RelCons3	Sig.	0.100 0.030
Commitment and Jewish	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout RelCons3	Sig.	−0.031 0.506
Commitment and Buddhist	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout RelCons3	Sig.	0.110 0.018
Commitment and Jewish	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout RelCons3	Sig.	−0.031 0.506
Commitment and other	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout RelCons3	Sig.	0.005 0.917
Commitment and Hindu	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout RelCons3	Sig.	0.037 0.424
Commitment and religious consumption	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income Hindu Other Buddhist Jewish ChristianOther SecNonreligious Protes- tant Catholic A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	0.126 0.008
Religious consumption and Catholic	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	−0.054 0.253
Religious consumption and Protestant	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	0.039 0.398
Religious consumption and Christian-other	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	−0.012 0.788
Religious consumption and SecNonreligious	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	−0.226 0.000
Religious consumption and Jewish	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	0.056 0.231

TABLE III  
continued

Religious consumption and Buddhist	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	0.243 0.000
Religious consumption and other	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	0.087 0.060
Religious consumption and Hindu	Control Variables: Gender AgeM Race Married Children UrbanRural Education Income A Spiritual Life Devout	Sig.	0.071 0.125
Commitment religious	Gender & AgeM & Race & Married & Children & UrbanRural & Education & Income & Spirituality & Devout & RelCons3	Sig..	-0.100 0.030

TABLE IV  
Regression analysis. Commitment to fair trade

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SE of the estimate
1	0.158	0.025	0.023	0.943
2	0.220	0.048	0.045	0.933
3	0.263	0.069	0.064	0.923
4	0.294	0.086	0.079	0.916

Model 1, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist.

Model 2, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Nonreligious.

Model 3, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Nonreligious, Religious consumption.

Model 4, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Nonreligious, Religious Consumption, Other.

TABLE V  
Regression analysis. Use of religious beliefs in consumption behavior

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SE of the estimate
1	0.217	0.047	0.045	0.688
2	0.277	0.076	0.073	0.678
3	0.303	0.092	0.087	0.673
4	0.343	0.118	0.111	0.663
5	0.371	0.137	0.129	0.657
6	0.403	0.162	0.153	0.648
7	0.422	0.178	0.167	0.642

Model 1, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist.

Model 2, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Protestant.

Model 3, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Protestant, ChristianOther.

Model 4, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Protestant, ChristianOther, Other.

Model 5, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Protestant, ChristianOther, Other, Hindu.

Model 6, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Protestant, ChristianOther, Other, Hindu, Catholic.

Model 7, Predictors: (Constant), Buddhist, Protestant, ChristianOther, Other, Hindu, Catholic, Jewish.

purchase decisions. From the correlation analysis, the religious were not as inclined as the non-religious to buy fair trade. Looking at the individual religions, Buddhism had a positive influence on the consumption of fair trade, whereas Protestantism and Catholicism did not. From the regression analysis, the best way to predict if people were going to buy fair trade was to know if they were Buddhist, non-religious, or if they used religion as a criterion in their purchase behavior.

It appears from the ANOVAs that Hindus and Buddhists used their religious beliefs more commonly as a criterion in consumption decisions than other religions. From the correlation analysis, the only religious group that had a positive relationship with the religious-based consumption construct was Buddhism. Buddhism was also the best predictor of whether a person used religion as a criterion in decision-making followed by Protestant and Christian-other. In fact, all religions to one degree or another were useful in making this prediction.

In summary, it seems that the non-religious may be more inclined to buy fair trade than the religious. Buddhists appear to be the most likely of the religiously affiliated to buy fair trade and Protestants and Catholics are the least likely. That is not to say of course that Protestants and Catholics do not buy fair trade, because they clearly do. What has also emerged from the analysis is that most respondents in this study did not buy fair trade simply because of religious group membership – simply because they were Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, for example. The link between religion and fair trade is not passive. Simply belonging to a religion is not enough to encourage fair trade consumption; it is the religious beliefs people hold that are important. This is evident from this study because to one degree or another all religions were positive predictors of the use of religious beliefs as a factor in consumption decisions, which is a factor that influences fair trade consumption, highlighting the indirect influence of religion on fair trade consumption.

What is very clear from this study is that the link between religion and fair trade is very very weak, which begs the questions, why so and what can be done to affect change in correcting injustice and even the economic playing field when institutions as big as religions cannot? The link between belief and action is clearly weak and evanescent. What is

needed is a method of concrete techniques that can be induced and implemented that will enable people to learn concrete ways and methods with which to act. No matter how eloquent the religious documents are, no matter how theologically supported they remain, until education is implemented against a measurable behaviors, the link, though critical, will remain embryonic.

### **Recommendations**

It remains the role of value-based researchers to point out what they appear to have discovered and to provide real-world remedies that church leadership of any denomination may not be able to provide because of their multiple involvements. Further, the churches have lost much of their power to influence. It has been replaced by the multi-national and transnational corporations, which are driven by the profit motive. Hence, further research requires a movement forward into that profit-oriented world with a potential approach wherein profit can be married to virtue in a way that enhances all rather than enhance a few at the price of the greater world.

There are many complex motivators and de-incentives that propel behavior as well as much that is preconscious and/or unconscious. However, when the behaviors arise to the current critical levels of impact, more than exhortation is required. Perhaps “closer to the bone” is the following observation by Petru Dumitriu:

Evil is working from ten to twelve hours a day; it is child labor, back-breaking work, the agonizing task, the workaholic obsession – all Evil. Unemployment at the same time as Butter Mountains – Himalayas of butter kept in store and going bad to the tune of millions, Everests of jam flushed down the drain, cattle killed off...and thrown into the common bone yard to keep prices up.

The laws of free trade and the Common Market praised to high heaven (while millions die of starvation in the Sahara, in Bengal or the Horn of Africa) and extolled by people who keep our noses to the grindstone so that we can pay our taxes – those taxes with which they finance the destruction of the fruits of our labors – yes, that is what Evil is. Evil is all that is stupid, and the joyful acceptance of stupidity by those who

profit by it, and by those who do not suffer because of it. (Dumitriu, p. 56)

It may appear out of place for researchers and academics to comment on the “good” or “evil” of practices and whether behaviors are morally and/or ethically compelled rather than discretionary. However, given the state of the world’s economy as well as the planet itself, the exhortation of the encyclical is not enough to complete the circle of moral demands. Of course, it is not the role of an encyclical to provide a template for behaviors but, rather, to suggest general observations and concerns within a theological and scriptural framework. However, implementation is critical unless these important documents are to be assigned to the “historically interesting” collections of many libraries. What is needed is a moral imperative and a template to assist “seekers” to implement and concretize their beliefs into behaviors. The authors are currently working on developing this universal and international template currently in research based at Kellogg College, University of Oxford.

It is, in short, a time to speak of “the Good” as well as Evil, or the absence of the Good. There seems little point in religious belief and observation that does not emerge into the day to day that the believers operate within. The template enables people to act in ways consistent with their articulated beliefs. Further, the template can open new educational methods to those of good intentions but lack any realistic method of implementation.

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