

# Different work ethics shaped national attitudes

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

The Protestant work ethic has always been applied with a fair amount of elbow grease to the fabric of American life.

Hard work, self-discipline and pleasing God are admirable qualities that seem to transcend all religious boundaries. They are considered catalysts spurring a capitalist society to success.

"I grew up in a strict Catholic family and work was extremely important," said the Rev. Robert Schaden, a Catholic priest and pastor at Schoolcraft College's Newman House. "Just because I'm Catholic and I grew up in a strict Catholic family doesn't necessarily mean it wasn't."

But what about, say, a Catholic ethic? As unusual as the concept sounds, a researcher at the University of Michigan believes there is one. In this ethic, an emphasis tends to be placed on "good works rather than work," according to an ongoing study by U-M social work professor John Tropicman.

"We all have a little bit of the Protestant ethic and a little bit of the Catholic ethic," Tropicman said. "It's all a question of balance."

Tropicman points out several differences between the Protestant and Catholic outlooks on life, work, wealth and family. Some of the findings could be described as sweeping generalizations.

**DISTINCT FEATURES** separate the Catholic ethic from its Protestant variety, according to Tropicman's study:

- Wealth is not considered an indicator of character.
- Although work is necessary, it's not a sacred obligation.
- An emphasis is placed on family ties, perhaps due to the importance of the historical holy family.
- A stronger tradition of institutionalized charity and relief programs.
- Historically more accustomed to hierarchical organizations dispensing important goods or services.
- More accepting of a cycle of sin and redemption than is true with the Protestant ethic.

Rather than doing a sectarian depth-chart between Protestant and Catholic traditions, Tropicman—who is Catholic—is interested in seeing how both have had an impact on public policy regarding social welfare programs in this country.

He has written several articles on the religious-based ethics affecting social welfare policies. He is also writing a book.

Max Weber's 1904 book "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" examines that tradition's influence on a vigorous free-market society.

In the process, Tropicman believes the Protestant ethic might have helped stifle the development of social welfare programs in this country.

**NOT UNTIL** the Social Security Act of 1935 did the United States implement some type of public assistance program. By then, the composition of the country's population had changed—mainly due to immigration of people who were Irish, Italian and Jewish.

He cites two examples where the U.S. government vetoed legislation

for social programs in the 1890s.

One was for a bill requesting land from the federal government for mental health facilities for the indigent. President Franklin Pierce overturned the request in 1854. Also, Tropicman notes legislation for pensions for Civil War veterans were also canceled as well as plans to provide help for the migration of slaves to the North.

He believes his findings indicate elements of the Catholic tradition have stimulated the welfare state.

Scholarly intentions aside, though, Tropicman's study also stimulates debate.

By saying the Catholic tradition is more understanding of people in poverty and has a strong tradition might imply Protestant tradition does not. Not so, says Tropicman.

He cites the Quakers, the Social Gospel Movement of the 19th and 20th centuries and the Bull Moose Party as examples of charitable works rooted in Protestant tradition.

**'In the Catholic tradition, money is viewed as something like a bowling score. Some of us have a high bowling score, some of us don't have a high score.'**

— John Tropicman

says Carol Savage, director of Christian Service at St. Edith Catholic Church.

"You won't find that (a strong outreach) in every parish," Savage said. "We're all called to do that but we're not all doing it."

"I think we have a lot to learn from all our Christian brothers and sisters... If you look back, it was the Methodists who were more apt to have social programs and addressed the needs of the disadvantaged in the country."

Attitudes toward wealth would seem to be consistent in a capitalist country. However, those exposed to

Catholic traditions tend to have a different view, according to Tropicman.

"The Protestant ethic places an emphasis on advancement," Tropicman said. "Within the tradition, money is a sign of good character. Within the Catholic tradition, money has instrumental not transcendental value. It has a secular not spiritual meaning."

"In the Catholic tradition, money is viewed as something like a bowling score. Some of us have a high bowling score, some of us don't have a high score."

## Scout earns Eagle rank

Andrew Bouchard recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout at a court of honor conducted by Troop 110 at Our Lady of Sorrows Church. He was awarded his rank by scoutmaster Dan Stoecklin.

State representative Jan Dolan and Joe Derck, a local naturalist, spoke during the ceremony. Eagle Scout Edwin Sempowski read the Eagle charge, and Eagle Scout Jonathan Bouchard, Andrew's brother, made the presentation.

As part of his Eagle service project, Bouchard established two deer feeding stations in Heritage Park.

He is the son of Ronald and Maureen Bouchard of Farmington Hills. His parents gave him a framed collection of the Scout ranks and merit badges he has earned.

Bouchard is a sophomore at Farmington High School. His hobbies include tennis and remote-control cars. He plans to major in engineering in college.



## Nedrosciks mark 50th anniversary

John and Henrietta Nedroscik of Farmington Hills celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 18. They are the owners of Thompson Glass Co., Novi. They have three sons, John, Robert and Richard and five grandchildren.

A reception is planned for Oct. 19 in the Farmington Elks Club.

## LTU offering special program

High school juniors and seniors considering careers in architecture or fine art can attend a precollege architecture and interior design program from Jan. 11 to May 9 at Lawrence Technological University, Southfield. Registration is now taking place.

Students must have a B average to attend the 17-week program. It includes classroom instruction, lectures and studios in architecture and interior design. Courses are taught by faculty in the College of Architecture and Design. There will be guest lecturers, museum and gallery visits and field trips to Lawrence Tech's Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Afton House in Bloomfield Hills.

Cost range from \$70-\$120, based on course content. A limited number of full tuition scholarships are available.

High school students must complete an application; send a letter of recommendation from a high school instructor, director or counselor and include a high school transcript. There is a \$20 non-refundable application fee. Students will earn college credits that they may apply towards their freshman year.

Lawrence Tech is located on West 10 Mile Road at Northwestern Highway. For details, call the university's admissions office, 356-0200, Ext. 3169.

## New chapter in the life of the real Nancy Drew

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The Drews' children are son Mitt, 17, and daughters Anna, 15, and Maggie, 12. For many years, when the kids were small, she did painting and drawing and began to show her work in galleries. "I have had 42 one-woman shows, all on the side. I feel the mothering is number one, even now," Drew said.

Her original paintings sell for up to \$2,500, but in the Nancy Drew shop her witty designs can be bargains at \$24 for a T-shirt, or \$1.25 for a greeting card from recycled paper.

"A LOT OF what I say hits a nerve," she said of her work. "I'm connecting well with a lot of women but even some cool men." Three years ago, she started a single-panel cartoon called "A

Fine Line" in the Chicago Tribune's Tempo Woman on Sundays. (The newspaper has plans to syndicate the entire weekly section.)

Drew also developed her line of clothing, but it was, "Wholesale—like gallery work," she said. "I designed for other people. There was not a lot of control." She went retail when, "I decided to go directly to my customers."

Drew still has some wholesale customers, who buy her clothes, cards and coloring book. Among them is It's the Bitch in Birmingham.

Her clothes are not designed for a specific age. "Age is where you are in your thinking. We have things for babies, and teenager (who are big customers)," she said. "It's fun to see a woman in her 60s and 70s who has enough confidence to wear them."

THERE ARE six Real Nancy Drew shops throughout the United States. Katie Canham of West Bloomfield is regional operations manager. She travels to all the stores and just set up a new store, which opened Oct. 1 in Minneapolis.

"The first store I did was at Orchard Mall (in West Bloomfield). That store (which opened in October 1990) moved and opened here, in April," she said at Twelve Oaks.

She also was involved in opening the shop in Chicago, which moved to Chicago Place in fall 1990, and the Aspen store, which opened in winter 1991. Canham oversees all the shops including one in Harbor Springs, the first to open, in summer 1990, and in Naples, Fla., which opened in fall 1990.

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