

May 19, 2011

**THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS:
SCIENTIFIC, THEOLOGICAL, AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY ON THE
LOVE OF GOD, NEIGHBOR, AND SELF**

CONCLUDING NARRATIVE REPORT

On behalf of my colleagues Stephen G. Post and Philip L. Reynolds (the principal project architects) as well as Timothy P. Jackson, Michael McCullough, and Michael J. Perry (the principal project advisors), I am pleased to submit this final report on the above-referenced project.

1. Background and Project Purpose. Academic talk about “happiness” has exploded over the last two decades, especially with the rise of the field of positive psychology. But much of the new positive psychology and other social science discourse on happiness has been largely disconnected from the millennium-long theological, philosophical, and jurisprudential inquiries into the meanings and measures of happiness, which have also experienced a resurgence in recent years. Various forms of eudaimonism or “virtue ethics” in moral philosophy, drawing on Aristotle and the Stoics, have become prominent again in philosophy. Various new forms of “agapism,” “peace studies,” and “love ethics” have emerged among Christian and Jewish theologians and ethicists, along with a keen new Western interest in Buddhist and other Asian traditions of well-being. A new interest in the historical meaning and modern application of the iconic phrase “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in the American Declaration of Independence and early constitutional texts has emerged in legal, jurisprudential, and human rights circles. But each of these discourses has remained mostly isolated from the others and from much of the new positive psychology and social science literature on happiness.

One principal aim of this project was to bring together these various discourses on happiness to discern what each had to learn from the others and to appreciate differences and convergences. To that end, we took as our initial focus the epithet “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence as an “unalienable right” – looking backward and forward at how this idea has been developed, theorized, implemented, and institutionalized. We spent the first half of the project building a common grammar and common library of key sources, consulting with experts, and identifying the lapses and lacunae in the study of happiness that required new scholarship. We spent the last half of the project developing and deliberating together over a set of freshly commissioned books and research articles that filled gaps in the literature and played to the strength of our participants.

The second principal aim of this project was to foster more holistic and realistic public, if not popular, understandings of the meanings of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in all its varieties. We pursued this aim in part through the production of 19 new books, and more than 100 new articles and essays commissioned by the project; in part, through a series of public lectures on the pursuit of happiness in interdisciplinary perspective; in part through six new courses developed on this topic; in part through a major international conference on interreligious understandings of happiness featuring His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, Professor Seyyerd Hossein Nasr, and the Venerable Matthieu Ricard.

2. Personnel. The project drew on the services of 20 Senior Fellows, 6 additional commissioned authors, 12 professional consultants, and 9 additional public conferees. The project was supported throughout by the 4 professional staff members of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion and a team of 9 graduate level research assistants.

a. **Senior Fellows.** The driving intellectual engine of this project was a score of Senior Fellows, representing the fields of theology, law, ethics, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, biology, and philosophy. Detailed biographies and summaries of their research for this project are provided on our Law and Religion Center website (www.cslr.law.emory.edu):

- Julia Annas (Philosophy, Classics -- Oxford/Arizona): eudaimonism in classical and modern forms
- John Bowlin (Theology, Ethics -- Princeton Theological Seminary): the appropriation and transformation of philosophical eudaimonism by major Christian thinkers
- Michael J. Broyde (Law, Judaism -- Emory): discipline, community, and happiness in the Jewish tradition
- Sidney Callahan (Religion, Psychology -- freelancer in New York): the findings of positive psychology from the broader perspectives of religion, ethics, and social critique
- Ellen Charry (Ethics, Jewish-Christian Theology -- Princeton Theology Seminary): the development of a new Christian theology of happiness called “Asherism” and its comparison to eudaimonism and love ethics
- Edward Craighead (Psychiatry, Clinical Psychology -- Emory): experimental and educational work on the prevention of early-onset depression as a key step in the development of happiness
- Robyn Fivush (Psychology, Family Studies -- Emory): the role of memory and narrative in family coherence and in recovery from trauma
- Eric Gregory (Religion, Philosophy -- Princeton): Good Samaritanism writ global and its moral and institutional implications
- Carl Holladay (New Testament Studies -- Emory): the tradition of beatitudes in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament

- Timothy P. Jackson (Theological Ethics, Religion and Science -- Emory): suffering and happiness in Simone Weil and Etty Hillesum; political agape as a new form of Christian political theory
- Corey Keyes (Sociology, Buddhism -- Emory): subjective well-being as a measurable and improvable factor in health practices and policies
- Michael McCullough (Psychology, Religion -- Miami): evolutionary approaches to religion, well-being, revenge, and forgiveness
- Carol Newsom (Hebrew Bible -- Emory): hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to happiness in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament
- Michael J. Perry (Law, Philosophy -- Emory): the pursuit of happiness and its implications for freedom and welfare rights at domestic and international law
- Stephen Pope (Ethics, Catholic Social Teachings -- Boston College): the relationship of science to Christian eudaimonism and virtue ethics, and on the competing models of well-being
- Stephen Post (Bioethics, Positive Psychology -- SUNY, Stonybrook): doing good to/for others as a gift of/to God, neighbor, and self
- Philip Reynolds (Historical Theology, History -- Emory): the Christian eudaimonism of Thomas Aquinas; marriage as a site of happiness
- Jeffrey Schloss (Biology, Philosophy of Science -- Westmont): construing happiness in evolutionary biology and its implications for ethics, law, and policy
- John Witte, Jr. (Law, History -- Emory): the original meaning of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in the Declaration and its implications for religion and law, church and state
- Charlotte van Oyen Witvliet (Experimental Psychology -- Hope): physiological and psychological responses to forgiveness and empathy

These Senior Fellows met together in 7 roundtable conferences during the course of the project. Each Senior Fellow gave periodic public lectures at various universities and professional society meetings, participated in the culminating international conference, and prepared new books and articles supported by the project. Six Senior Fellows developed new courses on the project theme.

Each Senior Fellow was paid a discrete stipend for each meeting attended, each public lecture delivered, and each new document written for the project -- with payments tendered only when that discrete contribution to the project was complete and accepted, or under consideration, for publication. This “work for hire” ethic, while inevitably rankling to some, has proved to be the most effective way to induce high quality and high volume participation. A few Senior Fellows ultimately could not come through with final books; we did not pay them for their writing but instead reached out to other authors to write for the project.

Philip Reynolds served as general director of the project and convener of the roundtable conferences, with ongoing consultation with Stephen Post, Timothy Jackson, Michael McCullough, and Michael Perry. John Witte served as Principal Investigator of the project, and convener of the public events. Each was paid a stipend for their time and contributions.

- b. **Consultants.** Particularly in the early stages of the project, as we sought to map the literature in the field and the lacunae in scholarship, we drew upon various experts to apprise the group of specialized literatures on happiness. Each of these consultants made presentations at one of the roundtable conferences and often supplied a trove of research materials and research leads to the group. Some offered public lectures as well. Each of these consultants was paid a one-time stipend for their contribution. These consultants included:
- Patrick Allitt (American history and religion – Emory)
 - Daniel S. Bowling (Well Being in the Legal Profession – Duke)
 - Don S. Browning (Theological Ethics, Religion and Psychology – Chicago)
 - Aurelian Craitu (Sociology, Religion and Communism – Indiana)
 - Frances Smith Foster (Afro-Protestant Family History – Emory)
 - Ruben Habito (Buddhism – Southern Methodist University)
 - Jonathan Haidt (Evolutionary Biology – Virginia)
 - Timothy Jackson (Demography; Urban Planning – Oxford)
 - David Myers (Positive Psychology – Hope)
 - Jean Porter (Philosophy, Ethics – Notre Dame)
 - Paul Rahe (American History, Political Theory – Tulsa)
 - Brent Strawn (Old Testament – Emory)
 - Steven Tipton (Sociology of Religion – Emory)

We also drew on a team of 9 research assistants – drawn principally from the Theology and Graduate Schools at Emory -- who supported various Senior Fellows in their research and writing. Each of these assistants was paid at an hourly rate.

- c. **Additional Commissioned Authors.** As the project unfolded, the Senior Fellows and project leaders identified several clusters of happiness themes that deserved deeper exploration but proved beyond the ken of any one of them. Rather than tax the entire group of Senior Fellows with discussion of these new themes, we commissioned a new set of authors to write a volume in conversation with them.
- One cluster of themes concerned the place of happiness in the Bible viewed comprehensively and in canonical context. We commissioned a new anthology on *The Bible and the Pursuit of Happiness*, comprised of 15 fresh essays, edited by Emory Old Testament scholar Brent Strawn. This group, which included four of the project Senior Fellows, met once to deliberate draft outlines and chapters, and the book has now gone to

- press. Each contributor was paid a stipend for the meeting and chapter, and the editor paid a further stipend.
- A second cluster of themes concerned the pursuit of happiness and holiness in constitutional law, particularly under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. We decided to draw on the expertise of five constitutional law scholars – Kathleen Brady (Villanova), Richard Garnett (Notre Dame), Ira C. Lupu (George Washington University), Joel A. Nichols (St. Thomas), and Robert W. Tuttle (George Washington). We commissioned fresh new volumes or new sections in volumes in progress that took up the legal and constitutional challenges of religious liberty and the pursuit of (religious) happiness both by individuals and groups. This effort yielded five new volumes. Each author was paid a stipend for their commissioned final manuscript.
 - A final cluster of themes that deserved further exploration concerned the essential role of the family as the first school of love, happiness, and well being both for spouses and children. This is a particularly vital theme in the Christian tradition, informed as it is by both biblical and classical teachings. We decided to make this a more pronounced theme in a major work already underway on *Christian Marriage and Modern Marriage Law*, by Don Browning (Chicago) and John Witte, which is focused on the Protestant tradition. We commissioned a volume by Philip Reynolds on *How, When and Why Marriage Became a Sacrament*, which emphasized the spiritually salutary dimensions of marriage and family life for Christian believers historically and today. We also added an Orthodox Christian perspective on marriage, centered on the unique doctrine of “theosis,” in a commissioned volume, *Christian Marriage and Family at Bay: An Orthodox Assessment* by Christian ethicist Vigen Guroian (Virginia). This initiative added three more volumes to the project. Each author was paid a stipend for their commissioned final manuscript.

2. Publications. The project supported the production of 19 new books, which are currently published or in press. The list of titles and their publishers are set out below. The project also supported the production of more than 100 scholarly articles, especially by the (social) scientists in our group for whom articles in peer-reviewed journals are the principal scholarly medium; new articles supported by the project keep trickling in each month, and will continue to do so over the next year or two. And the project supported occasional op eds and popular articles published in print and electronic newspapers, magazines, and websites. All of these titles are described in detail on our Center website: www.cslr.law.emory.edu, which we will continue to update with the latest rounds of project publications.

Each of the new books, listed below, will be the subject of a book launch – featuring new brochures, news stories, public lectures, and where apt press conferences when the books are released.

- Julia Annas, *Intelligent Practical Virtue* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming)
- April L. Bogle, ed., *The Pursuit of Happiness in Interreligious Perspective* (forthcoming)
- John Bowlin, *Counting Virtues: The Difference that Transcendence Makes* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming)
- Kathleen Ann Brady, *Religious Freedom and the Pursuit of Holiness* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming)
- Don S. Browning and John Witte, Jr., *From Private Order to Public Covenant: What Place for Christian Marriage in Modern Marriage Law?* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming)
- Michael J. Broyde, *Innovation in Jewish Law and Religious Life* (Urim Publishing House, 2010)
- Sidney Callahan, *Becoming Happy, Becoming Good* (Orbis Books, 2011)
- Ellen Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010)
- Richard W. Garnett, *The Jurisprudence of Religious Freedom: Religious Organizations and their Place in a Well Ordered Society* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming)
- Eric Gregory, *What Do We Owe Strangers? Globalization and the Good Samaritan* (under consideration at the University of Chicago Press)
- Vigen Guroian, *Christian Marriage and Family at Bay: An Orthodox Assessment* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming)
- Timothy P. Jackson, *Political Agape: A Defense of Prophetic Liberalism* (under consideration at the University of Chicago Press)
- Ira C. Lupu and Robert W. Tuttle, *Secular Government, Religious People* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, forthcoming)
- Stephen Pope, *Fullness of Life: The Science of Well-Being and the Ethics of Virtue* (Georgetown University Press, forthcoming)
- Stephen Post, *The Hidden Gifts of Helping: How the Power of Giving, Compassion, and Hope Can Get Us Through Hard Times* (Jossey-Bass, 2011)
- Philip L. Reynolds, *Thomas Aquinas and the Ethics of Hope: A Study of Christian Eudaimonism* (forthcoming)
- Philip L. Reynolds, *How, When, and Why Marriage Became a Sacrament* (forthcoming)
- Brent Strawn, ed., *The Bible and the Pursuit of Happiness* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming)
- John Witte, Jr. and Joel A. Nichols, *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment*, Third Edition (Westview Press, 2011)

3. Public Events.

a. **Public Lectures.** Each project Senior Fellow was paid to deliver up to three public lectures on the project theme at colleges, universities, and professional

society meetings. That initiative yielded a total of 41 public lectures on the project theme throughout North America and Western Europe.

The Center for the Study of Law and Religion also sponsored a series of public lectures on the project theme at Emory. Each of these lectures -- some freestanding, some clustered with others -- was free and open to the public, widely advertised in advance, videotaped and posted on our center website and on iTunes university. Several of the larger lectures and distinguished lecturers featured brochures, news stories, and articles on our Center website. Average attendance at each lecture was 250 people drawn principally from the Emory and Atlanta communities. Public lecturers were paid a one-time stipend for their lecture and an additional stipend if their work yielded a final publication. The public lecturers supported, in whole or in part, by the project were:

- Enola Aird (Institute for American Values)
- Patrick Allitt (Emory)
- Robert Bellah (Berkeley)
- John Bowlin (Princeton Theological Seminary)
- Daniel L. Bowling (Duke)
- Michael J. Broyde (Emory)
- Stephen L. Carter (Yale)
- Ellen Charry (Princeton Theological Seminary)
- Vincent Cornell (Emory)
- Edward Craighead (Emory)
- Frans de Waal (Emory)
- Jean Bethke Elshtain (Chicago)
- Robyn Fivush (Emory)
- Frances Smith Foster (Emory)
- Eric Gregory (Princeton)
- Timothy P. Jackson (Emory)
- Corey Keyes (Emory)
- Scott Kugle (Emory)
- Deborah Lipstadt (Emory)
- Martin Marty (Chicago)
- Michael McCullough (Miami)
- Lobsang Tenzin Negi (Emory)
- Carol Newsom (Emory)
- Michael J. Perry (Emory)
- Philip L. Reynolds (Emory)
- Leah Ward Sears (Georgia Supreme Court)
- Krista Tippett (Speaking of Faith)
- Tibor Varady (Central European University/Emory)

b. Final International Conference

The culmination of the project was the "Interfaith Summit on Happiness," held October 16-17, 2010 on the Emory campus. The conference included a series of

public presentations and conversations on happiness and well being in comparative confessional and professional perspective.

The highlight and kickoff of the conference was a public conversation about the meanings and measures of happiness with the Dalai Lama, Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (the United Kingdom), Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori (Episcopal Church), and Professor Seyyed Nasr Hossein (George Washington University), with Kristi Tippett (Speaking of Faith/Being) as moderator. In the course of the conference, each of these participants, plus The Venerable Matthieu Ricard (Shechen Monastery, Nepal), gave a full public lecture with responses from project Senior Fellows.

More than 5,000 persons from around the world attended the conference. The conference brochures, videos, and media stories -- including a large special feature of Krista Tippett's show and website "Being" -- are posted or linked on our Center website and on iTunes. The conference proceedings are being finalized and are slated for publication as a volume.

4. Final Project Accounting. The Grants and Contracts Office will tender separately the final accounting for this project. The grant was designed as a 1:1 match between the John Templeton Foundation and a combination of other funds, both from Emory University and those contributed to Emory University, for this project. These matching funds included a grant of \$125,000 received from The Institute for Research on Unlimited Love in support of this project.

The accounting report shows a small balance of project funds at hand that we are using to launch and promote the project books and other publications as they come forth – through new brochures, news stories, public lectures, press conferences, and ongoing website revisions.

The accounting report also shows a small balance of matching funds owing from Emory. But this balance does not reflect the ample costs incurred by Emory in hosting His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his entourage and paying for the Dalai Lama's participation in the aforesaid international conference. The President's Office at Emory University has graciously absorbed those costs out of its own budget and has not charged our Law and Religion Center or this project for those costs. We have not been able to ascertain the exact value of this contribution to the project budget, but by any calculation it well exceeds the small balance showed as still owing.

5. Summary of Deliverables. Over the course of five years, the project has involved and yielded the following:

- Personnel
 - 20 senior fellows gathered in 7 roundtable conferences
 - 12 professional consultants
 - 6 commissioned authors

- 9 graduate assistants
- 4 professional staff
- Events
 - 29 public lectures at Emory, each averaging 250 attendees
 - 41 public lectures elsewhere by Senior Fellows
 - 1 international conference, with 5000 plus attendees
 - 6 new courses at Emory and elsewhere
- Publications
 - 19 new volumes
 - 100 plus scholarly articles
 - 100 plus news stories, op eds, and popular essays

This has been a highly successful and deeply edifying project that has built sturdy new bridges of interdisciplinary and interreligious dialogue about the meanings, measures, and methods of attaining happiness. This project has yielded a series of new public conversations, publications, and networks on which other scholars and institutions can continue to build as we all work toward greater realization of “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness” for everyone.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Center for the Study of Law and Religion, I wish to express my profound thanks to the John Templeton Foundation and the Institute for Research on Unlimited love for the generous support of this project. We hope we shall have occasion to collaborate anew on another project.

Respectfully submitted,

John Witte, Jr.
Director, Center for the Study of Law and Religion
Principal Project Investigator