
BOOK REVIEWS**BUILDING CULTURES OF TRUST**

BY: MARTIN E. MARTY

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Martin E. Marty reflects on trust in the public sphere in *Building Cultures of Trust*. He begins by claiming that those who are old enough to remember pre-9/11 United States also remember their notions of security at that time. Post-9/11, he argues, these notions for our generation have morphed into conspiracy theories, mistrust, and war, encompassing a long list of culpable, blame-worthy institutions and situations.

In this context, Marty invites readers to think about creating new cultures of trust in which people learn to count on other members of community by understanding that community members will keep commitments. Marty states his thesis: "...the development of cultures of trust will hold more promise and can draw on the energies of more citizens if there is a concentration on the building blocks of society" (43). He addresses cultures and their subcultures in three areas—science, religion, and public life—to develop his model.

Marty's case study, the public mistrust displayed between many scientists and religionists, begins by examining definitions of trust in the religio-secular world. Chapter 3 investigates biblical and theological narratives in the Judeo-Christian spectrum that illustrate trust and mistrust, faith and fear. Chapter 4 explores humanistic philosophy, invoking thought from Plato, Hobbes, Hume, Kierkegaard, Kant, and Onora O'Neill, about a millennia-long discourse on the nature of trust. Marty raises an important assertion here from his historical survey: the greater the sense of security or assurance, the less need for trust.

Chapter 5 engages the case study, public scientific and religious debate. Mistrust occurs between these two worlds,

Marty asserts, because each makes the mistake of offering irrelevant conclusions by applying a category mistake (*ignoratio elenchi*), based on misplaced rhetoric for the purpose of persuasion. In other words, the argument itself becomes a category mistake when it functions on premises that are not related directly to the issue at hand. Marty claims that it would be more helpful for building trust when each representative gives distinctive voice to a mode of experience in a mutual conversation that is at its core open and hospitable. Chapter 6 speaks to the nature of such conversation, formulating it as following a question wherever it may go—in the mode of dialogue or civil discourse. Marty relies on English philosopher Michael Oakeshott and Roman Catholic theologian David Tracy to articulate the significance and qualities these conversations might exhibit. Chapter 7 describes what happens when conversations between science and religion move specifically to the public square, where conversation becomes controversy. Marty takes on politics, theorizing that good example (one who sheds light), and cultivation of trust through binding customs of behavior and honoring contracts in public life are the components of trust-building necessary for fruitful human interaction.

Marty ends his work with the “how to” chapter. He cautions that building communities of trust is difficult and incremental work. He reminds us that universes of discourse in the private and public sphere overlap and affect each other. Again, relying on Oakeshott, Marty claims that creating a meeting place in discourse requires a “distribution of ideas and their convergence,” perhaps inconclusive, unending, or even playful, while at the same time contributing to human good. Argument, inquiry, and information are components of the conversation but may not be the most captivating. Dialogue creates deeper understanding, forming meeting places where disciplines uphold their integrity and acknowledge their weaknesses. For example, science and religion are interacting enterprises, working to discover the mechanism and meaning of the universe. Civil discourse might weave together a more significant, deeper pursuit of both enterprises for the common good. Marty ends with an outline of the *Religion and*

Public Discourse document, developed at Park Ridge Center in Chicago, which lists behavioral commitments that promote effective civil discourse. The epilogue is a playful narrative that drives home his thesis.

Marty shows noteworthy research initiative in his book, though he spends a significant amount of space defining terms and introducing a rationale for his method before he actually tackles the approach and substance of his thesis. The book is a massive historical and literary survey about the evolution of trust and community, interlaced with current political, social, and scientific narratives as supporting information for each chapter's focus. At times the argument gets lost in the detail of a well-read author who is interested in everything. Nonetheless, Marty's conclusion about meeting places and civil discourse for the sake of the common good, illustrated by the science-religion conversation, makes a convincing case for our efforts to bring about a more humane, trusting world.

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