

RELIGION IS THE KEY TO SOCIAL CAPITAL

Recently, the Pew Research Center unleashed a study on the issue of which values are the most important to transmit to children.

Eighty-one percent of conservatives think it is especially important to teach children about religion, but only 26 percent of liberals feel the same way. Among those who are consistently liberal, 42 percent are religiously unaffiliated, compared with only 6 percent of those who are consistently conservative.

Disaggregating by education yields striking results. College graduates, as compared to those with some college and those with a high school education or less, are less likely to stress obedience, religious faith, and being well-mannered.

We know from previous data that those who are the least charitable are the most liberal and the most secular, and that those who are the most willing to give to others—in terms of donations, voluntarism, and giving blood—are people of faith. In terms of social capital, then, it is in society's interest to abet religion. It is the faithful who contribute the most to others, even if their liberal-secular counterparts feel the best about empathizing with their plight.

The tax code which rewards people of faith for making contributions to their church and synagogue is not only rational, it makes sense to increase the benefits.