

# FAITH AT WORK

**Economic Flourishing, Freedom to Create and Innovate**



**Sen. Tim Scott**



**Gov. Sam Brownback**



**Dr. Larry P. Arnn**



**Dr. Art Lindsley**



**Diane Paddison**



**Dr. Albert R. Mohler, Jr.**



**Rev. Samuel Rodriguez**



**Hugh Whelchel**

 INSTITUTE FOR  
**FAITH, WORK  
& ECONOMICS**



# FAITH AT WORK

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## Are there economic implications in the Creation story?



By Hugh Whelchel

**W**e do not believe that the Bible explicitly endorses capitalism or any other economic system. Yet the Bible has much to say about economic principles, and as Christians, we should embrace its wisdom as we make economic choices in our everyday lives. It should also lead us to embrace systems that are more closely in alignment with the principles expressed in the Scriptures.

In our search for economic principles in the Bible, we need to begin with the story of Creation found in the first two chapters of Genesis. Here we see God's normative intentions for life. We see life as "the way it ought to be." Man is free from sin, living out his high calling as God's vice regent in a creation that is "very good."

There are three major economic principles laid out in Creation:

### • Creativity and freedom

Genesis 1:26 tells us humanity is made in God's image. God's creativity is one of his central attributes revealed in the Creation story. God created everything we see around us out of nothing. As Pastor Tim Keller writes, "God was an entrepreneur. He brought something out of nothing. He brought order out of chaos. Why did he do it? He did it not because he had to; he did it because he wanted to. He did it for the joy of doing it."

While we can't create something out of nothing, being created in God's image still means that men and women are free to imaginatively use their

unique talents and abilities and the raw materials of creation to make things that glorify God, serve our needs and provide for the needs of our neighbors.

This is why J.R.R. Tolkien called man a subcreator. Tolkien would also rightly state that one of the ways man glorifies God is through the subcreation of works that echo the true creations of God.

### • Stewardship and ownership

God gave humanity dominion over the earth to steward with authority, responsibility and care. In Genesis 1:28, we are told that one of the things we are created to do is to subdue the earth. The Hebrew word, translated "subdue" in verse 28 (Hebrew *kabash*) in that context, means to make the earth useful for human beings' benefit and enjoyment.

Stewardship implies an expectation of human achievement. If God entrusts me with something, then he expects me to do something with it, something worthwhile, something that he finds valuable. God has entrusted us with certain resources, gifts and abilities. Our responsibility, as Dr. Ken Boa, president of Reflections Ministries, writes, "is to live by that trust by managing these things well, according to his design and desire."

As God's stewards, we do not own anything outright — everything belongs to God. Yet as his image-bearers, we possess subordinate ownership. These property rights are subject to the requirements of stewardship. God gives us real responsibilities and real decision-making capabilities. We are therefore accountable to God for how we use everything entrusted to our care.

Look at the Eighth Commandment, "Thou shall not steal." It implies personal property rights. It should not surprise us that there has never been a culture in the history of the world that prospered over time without strong property rights. It is also important to recognize that it is not society that has "ownership" of goods, but rather individuals.

### • Work

We read in Genesis 2:15, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." Man was created to work. Work is a pre-fall ordinance, a part of God's good creation. It was intended to be the gracious expression of creative energy in the service of others. From a biblical perspective, work is not primarily a thing one does to live but the thing one lives to do.

Cleric John Stott described work as

"the expenditure of energy (manual or mental or both) in the service of others, which brings fulfillment to the worker, benefit to the community and glory to God."

### Creation and economics

Dr. Amy L. Sherman and Dr. James W. Skillen suggest, "Careful thinking about economics begins with the focus on the Bible's big story. A biblical perspective on economic life doesn't come from random proof-texting. Rather, it is rooted in queries about God's intentions for his people and all he has made."

Economic decisions are responses to God's call to stewardship. They should be made in the light of the moral principles laid out in Scripture.

The free market, more than any other system, not only embraces these three biblical principles, but also requires them if the system is to work at all. A free market encourages men and women to create to their fullest potential, giving them the opportunity to glorify God in the process.

The character traits that are valued in the Bible — honest labor, creativity, investment and thrift — are those valued and rewarded under a free market system. The Bible approves of wealth gained through industriousness and self-control, traits that are important for success under free enterprise.

Christians down through the centuries who understood these economic principles laid out in the Creation story have shaped, changed and created flourishing by the work of their hands. It is not what they believed but what they did that transformed our institutions, communities and families. We need to do likewise.

*Hugh Whelchel is executive director of the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics ([www.tifwe.org](http://www.tifwe.org)) and author of "How Then Should We Work? Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work" (WestBow Press, 2012). The Institute for Faith, Work & Economics (IFWE) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) Christian research organization committed to promoting biblical and economic principles that help individuals find fulfillment in their work and contribute to a free and flourishing society.*





# 'If you are the problem, you are also the promise'



By Sen. Tim Scott

**G**od, faith and the power of prayer are truly remarkable. My unwavering relationship with our Heavenly Father has kept me going during my lowest of lows, and has emboldened my hope of brighter days ahead.

The story of my family perfectly captures the essence of how powerful the presence of God, hope, and a strong mother and mentor can be in defining

someone's future.

I would be remiss not to begin my story by talking about my grandfather, who left school in the third grade to pick cotton in South Carolina.

He toiled day in and day out to provide for his family. My mother went on to share the same work ethic. I remember her working 16-hour days to be able to keep food on the table for my brother and me. It was there, in our small house in North Charleston, where I learned the importance of faith, hard work, and the simple, but sometimes forgotten, concept of living within your means.

I often look to Proverbs 16:3, "*Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.*" He has always been by my side, even when I was drifting in the wrong direction. In my freshman year, I found myself on the verge of flunking out of high school. I failed English, Spanish, world geography and civics. I was a poor kid, living in a poor neighborhood, with low self-esteem and no expectations that this world would unfold in such a brilliant way. As always, God was watching over me and put someone in my path who would change my life forever.

While working a part-time job at a

movie theater, I befriended the owner of a local Chick-fil-A franchise, and he became my mentor. John Moniz taught me I was the only one who was in control of my future. "If you don't like where you are, change it. It's not your mother's fault because she's working. It's not your father's fault because he's not around. If you are the problem, you are also the promise." He taught me to embrace personal accountability. I woke up to a new future, a new reality and new opportunity.

Regrettably, John died a few years later. The night before his funeral, at the age of 19, I wrote my personal mission statement to honor his life. I committed myself to impacting a billion people throughout my lifetime with the notion of hope. I redefined the way I looked at success. I started to live by the words in Colossians 3:23, "*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.*"

My motivations did not lie in material items. My happiness was not tied to a job title. My worth was not measured by how much money I had. Instead, I was committed to serving God. I wanted to be a good person who would dedicate myself to positively impacting the lives of others. It was then that life seemed clearer,

simpler and more focused.

I also came to learn the importance of setting goals and having personal confidence in my potential. I wrote down my dreams, goals, aspirations, and then doubled them. I believe more often than not kids live down to the lowest level of expectations. My mother would tell me growing up, "Shoot for the moon, and if you miss, you'll be among the stars." Her words could not have been more accurate, and I urge everyone to take the time to create a personal path.

Our nation certainly faces challenges. We have nearly 48 million Americans who are living in poverty. My family's story shows what is possible in America. We have gone from "Cotton to Congress" in one lifetime.

I can't promise you the path will be easy, and at times it may seem downright impossible. But when you think you can't go on, I ask you to consider Hebrews 12:1, "*And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*" Set goals, work hard and if you trust in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, anything is possible.

.....  
Sen. Tim Scott, South Carolina Republican, has served in Congress since 2013.

## 'Devotion to high purpose' undergirds success



By Dr. Larry P. Arnn

The promise of religion has much more to do with the next world than with this one. None of the great religions can be pursued seriously except upon this view. They also promise benefits in this world.

What makes for achievement, satisfaction and happiness?

Every human action involves thinking and desiring, and every human achievement is a product of ability and willingness. All serious human achievements require sustained excellence in both. That means we must learn to want the right things and to think rightly about

them.

People who achieve this are said to have good characters, an interesting word that comes from the Greek term that means to etch or engrave. Your character is engraved in you, something indelible, something placed there by experience and long and intentional practice.

Successful people are typically hard workers. They think hard and clearly under pressure, face risk or pain without panic, deny themselves immediate or debilitating pleasures. It takes time and application to develop these qualities.

What can sustain the effort that produces this excellence? It takes many things, but the most obvious is devotion to high purpose. That is what religion is about.

In the first philosophy, God is the perfect being. So He is also in Christianity and Judaism, and in those religions we are created in His image. We are animals, true enough, but we are rational animals. This means we can understand what kinds of things things are. Therefore, we can give them names. This is how we talk. We recognize things by their kind because we know the attributes that make up the kind. These essential attributes are their good. Without our ability to see this, we could not distinguish man

from beast or man from God or even a cow from a moose.

Aristotle writes that our unique relations with other humans, especially our political relations, are born in this understanding of what things are and our ability to communicate that with one another.

This argument has its place in the Bible, too. God told Adam to give names to the beasts. In the Bible, God speaks directly but to a few, and they are the most blessed human beings. He could speak to them because they were like Him, even if inferior, in their ability to speak and to understand.

If one aims for something high, he is more likely to rise. Also he is more likely to cultivate good desiring and good thinking. In the first philosophy, and in Christianity and Judaism, God is the highest thing. In those religions, we are created in His image and we are called to be like Him as fully as possible in this world to prepare for the next.

We are necessitous creatures: We must work to live, and God commands us to do so. If work is understood as a mission and a service, then the dignity of work is increased. The motive to do it well is multiplied. The motive to deny oneself lesser pleasures is increased, to give into fears decreased. This is quite

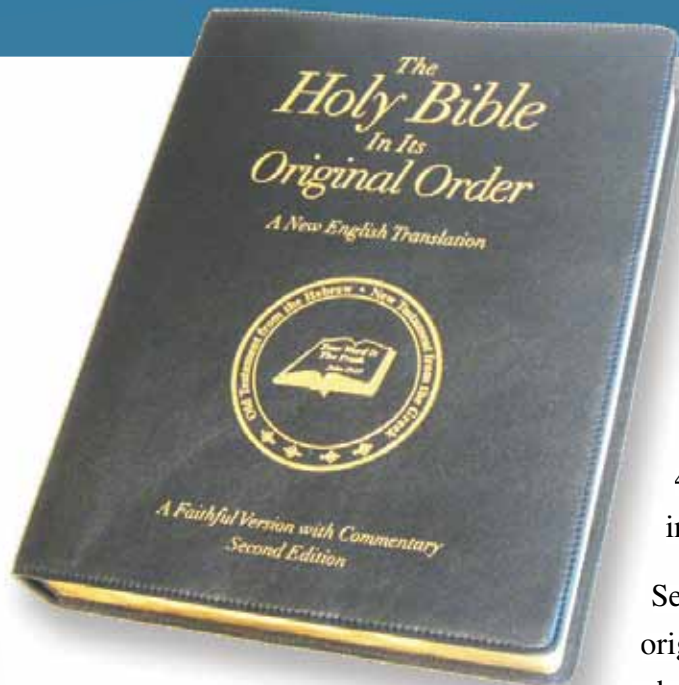
apart, but also swelled by, the blessings or the sanction promised in the afterlife.

The Founders of our country achieved for the first time the regime of freedom of religion. It is at the center of all their achievements. But also they thought that religion was essential. The greatest of the Founders, George Washington, said in his parting words to the nation: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. ... And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."

George Washington was among the most moral of our national ancestors. He saw the standard of morality in the whole "course and economy of nature." He saw it finally in God. People who see that have the best reasons to live well. And they do.

.....  
Larry P. Arnn, Ph.D., is the 12th president of Hillsdale College. He is on the board of directors of The Heritage Foundation, the Henry Salvatori Center of Claremont McKenna College and the Claremont Institute, and is the author of "Churchill's Trial: Winston Churchill and the Salvation of Free Government."

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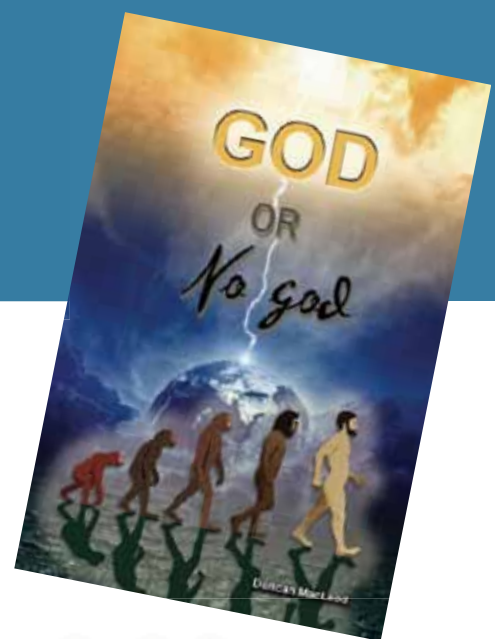
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# 5 'incredible innovations' that combat poverty



By Dr. Arthur C. Brooks

I remember the first time I saw real poverty. It was the early 1970s, so I would have been 7 or 8 years old. Flipping through a copy of National Geographic magazine, I found a heartbreaking photo. It showed a malnourished African boy, about my own age, with flies on his face and a distended belly.

I had never seen poverty like that before. True, by today's standards, my childhood neighborhood in Seattle would be considered austere. As far as I know, my parents were the only ones in our working-class neighborhood with a college education. Some of our neighbors relied on food stamps. Most of the families were led by single parents.

But compared with that photo in National Geographic, my neighborhood seemed like Beverly Hills.

The tragic image provoked two sensations in me. The first was helplessness. There was really nothing I could do for the boy besides offering up some prayers or maybe sending my allowance to UNICEF. Even as a little kid, I grasped that anything I could personally do would be inadequate.

After helplessness came indignation. It was not fair that I was loved in my home in Seattle while that boy was starving to death in Africa through absolutely no fault of his own.

I grew up, went to school, found a job and started a family. But that image stayed with me. Not infrequently, I would look back and wonder: What happened to that boy? Of course, there is no way to know his specific fate. But more generally, I wondered: What happened to desperately poor people like him? Was life better? Or worse?

We know the answer. Poverty still exists, of course, both in Africa and right here at home. But on the whole, life has gotten much better for the world's poorest people since I was a kid. The percentage of people in the world living on \$1 a day or less — a traditional measure of starvation-level poverty — has fallen by 80 percent since 1970, adjusted for inflation.

When I was a child, more than one in four people around the world lived on

that amount or less. Today, only about one in 20 live on that little. This is the greatest anti-poverty achievement in world history.

So how did this remarkable transformation come to pass? Was it the fabulous success of the United Nations? The generosity of U.S. foreign aid? The brilliant policies of the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank? Stimulus spending and government redistribution?

No, it was primarily none of those things. Billions of souls have been able to pull themselves out of poverty thanks to five incredible innovations: globalization, free trade, property rights, the rule of law and entrepreneurship. By the way, these five things were all made possible by the historically anomalous peace after World War II that resulted from America's global diplomatic and military presence.

When I was a kid, when we Americans saw the world's poor, they saw us, too. We saw their poverty; they saw our freedom and our prosperity. They threw off the chains of poverty and tyranny by copying our American ways. It was the free-enterprise system that not only attracted millions of the world's poor to our shores and gave them lives of dignity, but also empowered billions more to pull themselves out of poverty worldwide.

The ideals of free enterprise and global leadership, central to American conservatism, are responsible for the greatest reduction in human misery

since mankind began its long climb from the swamp to the stars.

This system has been America's gift to the world. Do we have the courage to celebrate it and defend it? Do we have the fortitude to reform its shortcomings and work harder to ensure that its blessings reach everyone — without losing sight of the tremendous opportunities that free enterprise brings within reach of our most vulnerable neighbors?

The true benefits of free enterprise and democratic capitalism are not material. They are moral. They are manifest in the lives of the men, women and children in the United States and around the world who have seized opportunities to build prosperous, safe and secure lives — opportunities that could easily never have existed. But there is more work to do. There are billions more who are hungry for the same opportunity.

We must remember the world-changing principles that have served us so well. We must find creative ways to apply those principles to public policy. And we must extend to these brothers and sisters of ours the same ladder that has benefited us so immensely.

.....  
Arthur C. Brooks, Ph.D., is president the American Enterprise Institute. Parts of this essay are adapted from his 2015 best-seller, *"The Conservative Heart: How to Build a Fairer, Happier, and More Prosperous America"* (Broadside Books).



By Daniel Garza

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights — that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

This powerful expression of freedom was written in recognition that we are accountable to God and that rights are given to man from God, not by government — that no temporal power can exercise authority over the individual's

## The case for faith and a free market: 'It is better to share abundance than scarcity'

conscience or aspirations.

It was a daring declaration when you consider that the United States of America was at the time a fragile, upstart nation emerging into a world of scarcity and hunger, where millions were subjugated to the scourge of slavery worldwide, and almost all humankind lived under appallingly inhuman, statist oppression.

While the bold American experiment was tempered by a bloody civil war that almost ripped the young nation asunder, we have since triumphed over the fascist and statist powers that pulled America into two world wars. Through it all, our free market economic system resulted in an unprecedented scale of innovation in products and services that altered the lives of mankind, produced wealth no other society had ever experienced and made us the strongest nation in world history.

When we look across the arc of our nation's history, we see that Americans

are capable of achieving amazing things when they are free and empowered to do so. I know this as a proud son of parents who worked hard, sacrificed and risked their savings in a small business. With nothing but fourth-grade educations, they were able to successfully achieve their own American dream. Yet for far too many, government policies, no matter how well intentioned, have made matters worse.

In modern times, more and more Americans have unwittingly relinquished their freedoms and self-determination to career politicians. Millions have ceded their fate to a raft of government programs and entitlements administered by a powerful central government.

Sadly, in extending their hands to accept temporary assistance — to weather tough times — millions have become accustomed to not working. This cycle of dependency has had ruinous effects on marriage, families and economic security.

The progressive message comes wrapped in doublespeak, with phrases like "income equality," "fair share," "health care for all" and other platitudes that sound well-meaning.

But when we look beyond the clichés, we see that these ideas translate into higher taxes, a bigger role for state bureaucracies and a message that replaces aspiration for a better life with an envy that helps no one.

Going considerably beyond the basic, natural rights enshrined in our founding charters, elitists push their social agenda. The Obama administration, for example, has pursued a program of comprehensive collectivism: ever-expanding government control, unsustainable deficits and growth — choking private commerce with regulation and government-knows-best policies. Instead of empowering individuals and families, more and more power and money has

» see **GARZA** | C7

# Invention and discovery generate wealth



By Michael Novak

**A**t the beginning of the 19th century, only duchesses wore silk stockings; by the end, even working girls did. At the beginning of that century, few had eyeglasses; by the end, eyeglasses were in frequent use. Dental care advanced somewhat (much more so, however, in the 20th century). Longevity rose steadily, and infant mortality began to decline (again, much more so in the 20th century).

Moreover, during just the past 30 years, two of the nations on earth with the largest number of poor persons — China and India — liberated more than a half billion of their citizens from poverty.

This was the swiftest, largest advance out of poverty in history. These nations used the very secrets uncovered by Adam Smith: private ownership and personal initiative.

What is the cause of the wealth of nations? At root, it is invention and discovery — such as the invention of the pin machine, which Smith describes in his very first chapter of “The Wealth of Nations.” It is the use of the mind in organizing work efficiently (with less wasted time and effort), and in finding new ways

of doing things. It is supplying the incentives that prompt people to do things with energy and desire, rather than being coerced into what they are doing.

The new economy in which we live is often called “the free market economy.” But markets are universal. Markets were central during the long agrarian centuries, through biblical times, in all times. For this reason, the term “the market economy” or even “the free-market economy” somewhat misses the mark.

More accurate is the “initiative-centered,” the “invention-centered,” or in general the “mind-centered economy.” More than anything, *mind* is the cause of wealth today. The Latin word *caput* (head) — the linguistic root of “capitalism” — has inadvertently caught the new reality quite well.

“The free economy” captures only part of the secret — it emphasizes the conditions under which the mind is more easily creative, in the fresh air of freedom. Freedom is a necessary *condition*, but the dynamic driving *cause* of new wealth is the initiative, enterprise, creativity, invention — which use the freedom.

Freedom alone is not enough. Freedom alone can also produce indolence and indulgence. To awaken slothful human beings out of the habitual slumber and slowness of the species, the fuel of interest must normally be ignited. One must move the will to action by showing it a route to a better world. Since humans are fallen creatures, mixed creatures, not angels, the fuel of interest is a practical necessity. The fire of invention lies hidden in every human mind, the very image of the Creator infusing the creature. To ignite it, one must offer incentives, a vision of a higher, better human condition, not only this-worldly, but also nourishing the expansion of the human soul and easement of bodily infirmities.

There is a natural desire in every human being, although it is often slumbering, to better his or her condition.

And it is good for a woman to liberate herself and her whole people from the narrower horizons within which they find themselves. It is good for humans to catch glimmers of new possibilities for human development.

This, or something very like this,

to put that at risk, to stop clinging to the safe things of the past, and to set off bravely toward inventing new futures. It is a spirit of risk. It is a spirit of adventure. It is a spirit of creativity. It is a spirit that incites dreams, and in a quiet undertone murmurs, “Why not?”



**“The free economy” captures only part of the secret — it emphasizes the conditions under which the mind is more easily creative, in the fresh air of freedom.**

is the famous, celebrated and usually misunderstood “spirit of capitalism.” This is not a spirit of greed or avarice, which are grasping and small, not creative. It is an *esprit*, a gift of the spirit rather than of the body.

It is sometimes found even in a single isolated human breast (as in that of Robinson Crusoe, in the famous parable). But it is also capable of being lit like a prairie fire across an entire culture, and transforming its entire attitude toward life.

The spirit of capitalism is far from being entirely materialistic, even miserly. Far from it. This spirit teaches people to turn away from what they now have,

The spirit of capitalism belongs more to the human spirit than to the relatively inert flesh and matter of the past.

.....  
Michael Novak is former ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the author of numerous books, including “The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism” (1982) and his most recent, “Social Justice Isn’t What You Think It Is” (2015). This essay is excerpted from “Creation Theology in Economics: Several Catholic Traditions,” which appeared in “Culture Matters in Russia — and Everywhere” (Lexington Books, 2015).

## GARZA

From page C6

gone to Washington, D.C.

Fighting poverty through work, generated by a free market economic system, is essential to sustain a free society. Ours is the only system the world has ever known that so effectively improves the human condition — not only in the United States but wherever it has been adopted. It gives the individual independence from government control. It strengthens our communities and families and liberates us to propagate endless moral, spiritual and charity-related

activities of our own choosing.

Still, having said that, we must also recognize that many are facing major disadvantages. But instead of looking to government as the solution, we must encourage organizations, churches and individuals in our own communities to lend a hand in times of need. In fact, the Bible commands us to help the poor and the vulnerable.

At The LIBRE Institute — and our sister organization, The LIBRE Initiative — we understand that many Latinos are at a major disadvantage in a free market system. They may not possess a driver’s license or be able to speak English or have a high school diploma.

That is why we are committed to mobilizing other Latinos in our communities to join in our efforts to address these deficiencies, develop a person’s skills and abilities and empower them with knowledge that will better position them in the marketplace — so everyone can achieve the American dream.

For the millions of Americans of faith, we believe we are called to lift up our fellow man. God asks us to lend a hand to our brothers — to those in need. That call must be answered by individuals with the freedom to act or not — not just by some faceless collective.

This is because the call goes out to each of us as individuals.

It’s also because we’ve seen that, as a practical matter, it is better to share abundance than it is to share scarcity, and it is these free market systems that create the resources to lift us all together.

Bible-believing Christians must do more than ever before to rally in the defense of free markets, self-reliance and a limited government. It is the best way to answer our call to lift the poor.

.....  
Daniel Garza is president and chairman of The LIBRE Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves as a trusted resource in helping Hispanics grow more prosperous and lessen their dependency on government.



# 12 theses for a Christian understanding of economics



By Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr.

**R**egrettably, many American Christians know little about economics. Furthermore, many Christians assume that the Bible has nothing at all to say about economics. But a biblical worldview actually has a great deal to teach us about economic matters. The meaning of work, the value of labor and other economic issues are all part of the biblical worldview. At the same time, we must recognize that the Christian worldview does not demand or promote a particular economic system.

Because this is the case, Christians must allow the economic principles found in Scripture to shape our thinking while recognizing that we can act in light of those principles in any economic, cultural or generational setting.

## 1. A Christian economic understanding has God's glory as its greatest aim.

For Christians, all economic theory begins with an aim to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31). We have a transcendent economic authority.

## 2. A Christian economic understanding respects human dignity.

No matter the belief system, those who work show God's glory, whether they know it or not. People may believe they are working for their own reasons, but they are actually working out of an impulse that was put into their hearts by the Creator for his glory.

## 3. A Christian economic understanding respects private property and ownership.

Some economic systems treat the idea of private property as a problem. But Scripture never considers private property as a problem to be solved (see, for instance, the Ten Commandments). Scripture's view of private property implies it is the reward of someone's labor and dominion. The Eighth and 10th

Commandments teach us that we have no right to violate the financial rewards of the diligent.

## 4. A Christian economic understanding takes into full account the power of sin.

Taking the Bible's teaching on the pervasive effects of sin into full account means that we expect bad things to happen in every economic system. A Christian economic understanding tries to ameliorate the effects of sin.

## 5. A Christian economic understanding upholds and rewards righteousness.

Every economic and government system comes with embedded incentives. An example of this is the American tax code, which incentivizes desired economic behaviors. Whether they work or not is an issue of endless political recalibration. However, in the

property and not reward investment.

## 7. A Christian economic understanding seeks to reward and incentivize thrift.

In a fallen world, money and investments can quickly be distorted to idolatrous ends. For that reason, thrift is an important issue in the Christian worldview. In a fallen world, abundance one day can turn into scarcity the next. Thrift may be what provides survival in times of poverty.

## 8. A Christian economic understanding upholds the family as the most basic economic unit.

When thinking about economic theory embedded in the beginning of the Bible, the dominion mandate is central, but so is the divine institution of marriage. The pattern of leaving and cleaving described in Genesis 2 is fundamental to our economic understanding.



Christian worldview, that recalibration must continue upholding and rewarding righteousness.

## 6. A Christian economic understanding rewards initiative, industry and investment.

Initiative, industry and investment are three crucial words for the Christian's economic and theological vocabulary. *Initiative* goes beyond action. It is the kind of action that makes a difference. *Industry* is human work done corporately. *Investment* is part of the respect for private property found in Scripture.

Investment, as it turns out, is as old as the Garden of Eden. That which accrues value is honorable, and the impulse to accrue that value is honorable. Thus, a Christian economic theory indicts anyone who will not work, not respect private

Adam and Eve were the first economic unit. The result is that the family (biblically defined) is the most basic and essential unit of the economy.

## 9. A Christian economic understanding must respect community.

Most secular thinkers and economists begin with the community and then move to the family. However, thinking from larger to smaller economic units does not work in theory and fails in practice. Beginning with the family unit and then working out toward the community is a much smarter option. The doctrine of subsidiarity — which emerged out of natural law theory — teaches that meaning, truth and authority reside in the smallest meaningful unit possible.

If the family unit is deficient, no government can meet the need of its

citizens. When the family is strong, government can be small. When the family is weak, however, the government must compensate for the loss. By focusing on the family, we respect and better the community.

## 10. A Christian economic understanding rewards generosity and proper stewardship.

Christians who are committed to the economics of the Kingdom and to the good of the next generation must live with a future-oriented financial perspective. We each have the responsibility, whether we have a lot or a little, to see that our generosity endures far beyond our life spans.

Spirited generosity, which is so clear in Scripture, is essential to a Christian economic worldview.

## 11. A Christian economic understanding respects the priority of the church and its mission.

Christians must embrace economic priorities that the rest of the world simply will not understand. Christians must invest in churches, seminaries and international missions. These are distinctive Christian financial commitments. Our ultimate financial commitment is not to ourselves or to our own investments but to the Kingdom of Christ. Thus, Christians should always be ready to experience upheaval in economic priorities and arrangements because urgent kingdom issues can intervene at any moment.

## 12. A Christian economic understanding focuses on eschatological judgment and eschatological promise.

This life and its resources cannot deliver ultimate joy. The Christian worldview reminds us that we must live with the recognition that we will give an account to the Lord for our stewardship of our resources. At the same time, Christians must look to the eschatological promise of the New Heavens and New Earth as our ultimate economic hope. We must lay up treasures in heaven and not on earth.

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By John Stonestreet

**A** couple of years ago, The Huffington Post's blog "Wait But Why" created "Lucy," an imagined embodiment of today's emerging adult.

Lucy is what the article calls a GYPSY, short for Generation Y Protagonists and Special Yuppies.

Lucy is destined to be unhappy.

From their earliest years, GYPSYs like Lucy, born from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s, have been told that they are special, that they can be whatever they want to be and that they should just "follow their passions" when choosing a career.

As many millennial observers have noted, GYPSYs struggle with a sense of entitlement.

According to the blog, "The GYPSY needs a lot more from a career than ... prosperity and security. ... Where the Baby Boomers wanted to live the American Dream, GYPSYs want to live Their Own Personal Dream."

This is, as the HuffPo's blogger points out, a recipe for unhappiness.

In rare situations when reality exceeds our expectations, those convinced of the inherent goodness of their own personal dreams will be happy. But when reality falls short, as is most often the case, these dreamers will be unhappy, even depressed.

**Short of this awareness, we risk "Christianizing" a sense of entitlement. Instead of asking "What is God's Will for my life someday?" we should be asking, "What does God want me to do next?"**

Reality will never match the dreams GYPSYs have been told to expect.

Christians are guilty of inculcating false expectations to their young as well. For at least a couple of generations, Christian colleges and other educational institutions, with the

noble intention of communicating the biblical concept of "calling" being more than full-time ministry jobs, have taught students to look at their own giftedness as the key (sometimes the only key) to discovering "God's will." I must confess my own guilt in this regard.

Of course, there's certainly truth to the idea that the Lord has gifted us in unique ways to serve Him and that we can discover these gifts through our passions and use them for His glory. Remember Olympian Eric Liddell's wonderful line from "Chariots of Fire"? "God has made me for a purpose, for China. But he's also made me fast, and when I run, I feel God's pleasure."

While the biblical picture of calling and vocation includes our giftedness, it also includes things like sacrifice, persecution and an awareness of the needs of my neighbors. Jesus said that those who follow him carry crosses. Paul said that anyone who wishes to follow Christ *will be* persecuted. (Remember, Liddell died in a Japanese prison camp.)

It's really only Christians in the West, especially America, who have had the luxury of dwelling on the question, "What has God made me to be, and what is my calling?" Unfortunately, along the way, we've missed other lessons about calling that our brothers and sisters around the world are forced to learn.

The Protestant reformers understood calling to be not primarily about passion, but as a commitment to glorify God in whatever station we find ourselves. It may be your calling right now to be a student, or a mom or a dad, or a minimum-wage employee simply having just enough to make a living. Whether directly connected with our passions or not, God calls us first and foremost to do the next thing well, to His glory, with all of our might.

Short of this awareness, we risk "Christianizing" a sense of entitlement. Instead of asking, "What is God's Will for my life someday?" we should be asking, "What does God want me to do next?"

In Acts 17, St. Paul says that God

determines the exact times that people live and the boundaries of their dwelling places. Thus, whether we inherit a culture of economic downturn in which many can't find a job or a culture in which jobs are so plentiful we truly can "follow our passions," we accept either as being from God's hand. Our calling — whatever culture we find ourselves in — is to live fully engaged in this world, regardless of the particular circumstances.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Bravely take hold of the real, not dallying now with what might be. Not in the flight of ideas but only in action is freedom. Make up your mind and come out into the tempest of the living." Amen. These are good words for every generation.

.....  
*John Stonestreet is president of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview and author of "Restoring All Things: God's Audacious Plan to Change the World Through Ordinary People."*



# Young Americans, entitlement and the Christian vision of work





**By Dr. Jonathan T. Pennington**

In the early 21st century, there are few ideas that can be identified as universal. Few ideas span multiple disciplines of human knowledge, from philosophy to economics, from religion to world health policies, from ethics to psychoanalysis, from medical practice to jurisprudence, from trade policies to energy management to music performance, from water treatment to watercolor instruction.

Human knowledge and culture have exploded so thoroughly in diversity and specialization, especially in the Modern period, that few universals or unifying themes remain. There is certainly beauty and richness here, but nothing universal.

Such massive diversity is seen not only in the contemporary state. When one moves from a synchronic to a diachronic analysis, considering views and ideas across time, the hope of finding any consistent idea seems hopeless and naive. Human experience, culture and knowledge are too vast to expect one to find much consistency. Diversity and change appear to be the only recognizable unified and steady ideas.

Yet, remarkably, there is one meta-theme or meta-concept that appears with remarkable tenacity and consistency across times and worldviews. This concept has staying power and universal voice because it addresses what is most basic and innate to all of humanity, despite the diversity of race, culture and values. It is a concept that proves to be the motivating force and end goal of all that humans do and think.

This idea or theme can be identified

as human flourishing.

Human flourishing alone is the idea that encompasses all human activity and goals because there is happiness. These are not merely cultural values or the desire of a certain people or time period. The desire for human flourishing motivates everything humans do. All human behavior, when analyzed deeply enough, will be found to be motivated by the desire for life and flourishing, individually and corporately.

The Bible speaks to the issue of human flourishing in very significant ways. But this is not unique among ancient or current philosophies, religions or worldviews.

What is unique, and what is revelational and authoritative for the Christian, is that Holy Scripture understands human flourishing to be a function of God's redemptive work in the world, the very core of his relation toward his creatures. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, God is at work redeeming his broken, sinful and rebellious creatures. From the promise of redemption in Genesis 3:15 through the climactic vision at the end of the book of Revelation, God reveals himself to be actively and graciously redeeming his people, saving them from oppression, forgiving their disobedience and dishonoring acts, and leading them into a time and place of his full presence.

The biggest metaphor or image to describe this work is God's kingdom or reign. From beginning to end of Holy Scripture, God is a king who is establishing his perfect heavenly reign on the earth through his chosen people, now those who are in Christ. His kingdom is a time and place of righteousness; that is, the time and place where the world is set to right, both individually and corporately.

This beautiful understanding of the message of the Bible is not novel or unknown. But what has often been missed in our biblical and theological thinking is that all of this truth is intimately and organically woven together with the theme

of human flourishing and well-being.

As we saw above, to be aligned with God's kingdom is to be a wholehearted person. As we grow in this reality, we increasingly experience flourishing as described in the Old Testament as "shalom." Moreover, the very way that God's kingdom and reign are described is with these same concepts.

All this means that at its core and in its very essence, God's saving work, his redemptive activity and his goal for humanity and all creation is precisely this: that we flourish fully, even as he himself flourishes perfectly, completely and with overflowing abundance.

This idea of human flourishing must be rediscovered as a central part of the Bible's teaching on salvation and redemption.

God is not unconcerned about our well-being and happiness. Peace, happiness, blessedness, health, joy and abundance of life are the consistent messages of Scripture and the goals of God's work. We should cease thinking of spirituality and godliness as something that has nothing to do with human well-being and flourishing — including in a physical, economic, psychological and relational sense.

A related implication is that this understanding helps us make the most sense of many portions of the Bible, including well-known sections that have not been perceived as related to human flourishing.

One of the biggest and most important examples is the most famous section of Scripture, the Sermon on the Mount. When we go back and reread the Sermon in light of the whole Bible's emphasis on flourishing, it makes much more sense and takes on a far deeper meaning. From its opening concatenation of blessing (ashre /makarios) statements through its emphasis on the blessings of teleios/wholeness to its final image of being like a strong house that can weather storms and stand with dignity, the Sermon on the Mount offers us a vision of what true human flourishing

can look like. It is found through God's gracious and revelatory coming in the Son, Jesus, whose accomplished mission is to establish God's heavenly reign on earth.

With this vision filling our eyes and hearts, we may turn our gaze outward to the world and the work of Christ's Church.

If God's goal in redemption is the restoration of our full humanity and our God-centered human flourishing, then there is no doubt that the mission of the Church — God's people on earth — should be the same.

Our theological reflections and their practical outworking must be to bring true human flourishing to individuals and society as a whole. This must be motivated, informed and colored by the reality of God's coming kingdom, centered on Jesus the Son and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Without this anchoring, the pursuit of human flourishing is not biblical.

But this spiritual understanding does not make it less physical and practical. Seeking social justice, racial equality, economic flourishing and peace ("Makarios (blessed) are the peacemakers," Matthew 5:9) is not an optional part of the Church's mission, nor a minor alleyway.

These are practices that testify to the reality of God's coming reign and are in alignment with what God himself is doing. How precisely to go about promoting this human flourishing in society will always be a matter of debate among theologians, pastors, economists, psychologists and politicians. But whether this is the mission of the Church should never be a question.

Jonathan T. Pennington, Ph.D., is associate professor of New Testament interpretation and director of research doctoral studies at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He can be reached at @DrJTPennington. The full version of this paper can be read at <https://tifwe.org/resource/a-biblical-theology-of-human-flourishing-2/>.



# Shelving the ‘Greed Myth’ and other economic illusions



By Dr. Jay W. Richards

Since 1990 extreme poverty has been cut in half worldwide and is continuing to plummet. The Brookings Institution projects that this kind of poverty might more or less disappear by 2030. Globally, infant mortality, malnutrition and illiteracy are all declining.

How did this happen? More global trade, more economic freedom and more innovation. Free markets, in other words.

Unfortunately, many Christians and other people of faith still think there's something unsavory about a free market economy (or what some call capitalism) and pine for some unrealized alternative. In the meantime, they support economic policies that do more harm than good.

This is a tragic mistake, based not so much on a flawed moral vision as on economic ignorance. The good news is that you don't need an advanced degree in economics to sort things out. You just need to learn to ask — and properly answer — eight simple questions, and to recognize the economic myth that corresponds to each question.

## 1. Can't we build a just society?

In seeking a more just society, we must avoid the “Nirvana Myth,” that is, comparing the market economy with an unrealizable ideal.

Though the kingdom of God is already present in some sense, we can't fully bring it about ourselves. That's

God's job.

So when we ask whether we can build a just society, we need to ask: Just *compared to what*? It doesn't do anyone any good to tear down a society that is “unjust” compared to the kingdom of God if that society is *more* just than any of the ones that will replace it.

## 2. And then what will happen?

We all want to do the right things for the right reasons. Economically, though, only *what* you do is important, whatever your reason.

That's why, when it comes to economic policy, we have to avoid the “Piety Myth” — focusing on our good intentions, rather than on the real and often-unintended consequences of an act or policy.

Well-meaning people have supported all manner of bad policy — price and rent controls that create shortages, high minimum wage laws that harm the poorest of the poor, foreign aid that funds dictators — for noble motives. The motives didn't change the result.

To avoid this, we should always ask, about any act of policy: *And then what will happen*?

## 3. Doesn't a free market foster unfair competition?

In 2016 the two leading presidential candidates treat free trade as a dog-eat-dog competition, where winners always create losers.

This is the “Zero-Sum Game Myth,” which leads many to think that the government should “protect” domestic businesses, raise tariffs on imported goods and somehow redistribute wealth.

But while some competition is a part of *any* economy, an exchange that is free on both sides, in which no one is forced or tricked into participating, is a win-win game. When we buy bananas from Nicaragua far more cheaply than we could grow them ourselves, that doesn't create a harmful “trade deficit.” We give them dollars we value less than the bananas, and they give us bananas they value less than the dollars. We're both better off as a result. That's a win-win.

## 4. If I become rich, won't someone else become poor?

A similar idea leads people to think

of the wealth in a free economy as a fixed amount of material stuff — money in safes or gold bars in a vault. Since two firms competing for one customer can't both get the customer's money, we might think the whole economy looks that way: Peter gets rich by impoverishing Paul.

A common image of this “Materialist Myth” is a pie. If one person gets too big a slice, someone else will get just a sliver.

But this isn't how a free economy works. Over the long run, the total amount of wealth in free economies grows. The “pie” doesn't stay the same size. In a genuinely free market, someone can get wealthy, not merely by having someone else's wealth transferred to their account, but by creating new wealth for themselves and others.

## 5. Isn't capitalism based on greed?

Friends and foes of a free market often claim that it is based on greed. In truth, Adam Smith and other free market thinkers did not believe this “Greed Myth.” Rather, Smith argued that a properly functioning market can channel not only legitimate self-interest but even greedy motives into socially beneficial outcomes. And in a fallen world, that's just what we should want.

Rather than inspire miserliness, a free market encourages enterprise. Entrepreneurs, including greedy ones, succeed by delaying their own gratification, by investing their wealth in creative but risky ventures that may or may not pan out. Before they ever profit, they must first create.

## 6. Has Christianity ever really embraced free markets?

In several places the Bible condemns charging interest on money. So for centuries Christians, along with pretty much every traditional culture, forbade charging interest on money loans.

But eventually the West developed banking systems with deposited money. They charged interest on their loans to offset risk, and they also paid interest to the depositors for the risk they assumed. This system allowed wealth to be created much more quickly than it had been before. Christians eventually realized that such loans were different from an ancient Hebrew charging interest to his poor

kinsman on money that wasn't doing anything anyway.

Still, some Christians continue to treat banking, and any work with money, as if it were the root of all evil. That's the “Usury Myth.” The *love* of money may be the root of all evil, but money itself is not.

## 7. Doesn't capitalism lead to an ugly consumerist culture?

Many Christians hear “capitalism” and they think “ugly.” This confuses capitalism with consumerism, which we might call the “Artsy Myth.”

In truth, the sorry symptoms of consumerism aren't unique to capitalism. Rather, they derive mostly from the materialist worldview that seems to be everywhere. What sets capitalism apart from other economic systems is not consumption, but rather the requirement that some wealth be saved, risked and invested. That means that consumerism is, in the long run, contrary to free market capitalism.

## 8. Do we take more than our fair share? That is, isn't our modern lifestyle causing us to use up all the natural resources?

It's true that since there's a finite amount of oil, at some point we will run out if we keep consuming it at current rates. But the “Freeze-Frame Myth” — which says things will stay the same — won't happen. Long before oil becomes really scarce, oil prices will rise so high that it will no longer be an economical form of energy. That high price will encourage explorers, inventors and entrepreneurs to seek out new forms of energy to replace oil. This is what has happened historically with every resource.

We don't just use resources. Using the raw materials God has created, we create new resources. That's why economist Julian Simon once said man is the “ultimate resource.”

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Jay W. Richards, Ph.D., is an assistant research professor at the Busch School of Business and Economics at The Catholic University of America, executive editor of *The Stream* and a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute. For more on economic myths, see his book, *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem* (HarperOne, 2010).



# Economic freedom, opportunity ease poverty



By Trey Dimsdale

**T**he poor will always be with us, but such a sobering reality does not free us from an obligation to work to alleviate the ravages of poverty. On the contrary, Jesus' statement only serves to remind us that every generation will face the question of how best to fulfill our holy obligations to them.

It is clear that many in the present generation have taken notice of the plight

of the poor and are moved by genuine compassion to advocate for the poor, provide for their needs and seek to lessen the suffering caused by their circumstances.

The challenge, however, is to wed this compassion to action that works. The poor don't need what they often receive from the affluent: secondhand clothes, free Thanksgiving meals and taxpayer-funded government aid. The poor, whether in the developed or developing world, need opportunity. They need the freedom to address their own poverty in their own context.

The poor and rich alike share in the image of God. Each person is created with inherent value because of God's imprint on them. Being created in the image of the Creator may mean many things, but two things that accompany the unique status of "image bearer" are 1) privilege and 2) responsibility. As a child of God, each person is entitled to enjoy the goodness of the Creator's world, but is also charged with the responsibility to cultivate it to bring forth God's good gifts. For many poor people, the good intentions of the affluent have robbed them of the privileges that are their birthright and frustrated their attempts to take responsibility in the Father's good creation.

Economic freedom is what the poor need. They need the social and economic infrastructure to become creators — creators of culture, business, wealth and jobs. They need societies in which no man, by virtue of birth or power, is above the law. They need private property and the legal infrastructure to protect it. They need access to the currents of global trade. They need these things because only the development of local economics can lift the poor out of poverty. Government-to-government aid can't do that. A pair of free shoes, a bag of rice or shirts imprinted with the logo of last year's football champions can't do that either. In fact, all of these things represent the well-meaning but misguided attempts to ease poverty. In reality, these things simply create dependency.

It is not that material aid is never appropriate. But material aid is the solution to a social problem distinct from poverty. When disease or natural disasters strike and disrupt or even destroy, the impulse to give necessities is appropriate. An influx of water, medicine and food after earthquakes and floods will save lives, but this is a solution to a temporary problem. Too much of our concern for the poor is expressed as if we are responding to an

emergency, when in reality this provision of simple necessities, which is often erratic and unpredictable, undermines the type of entrepreneurial creativity required to develop a self-sustaining economy where people can flourish. Even in the developed world, the poor often enter vicious cycles of dependency with no hope of escape unless they can be empowered and freed to work creatively to provide for their own needs.

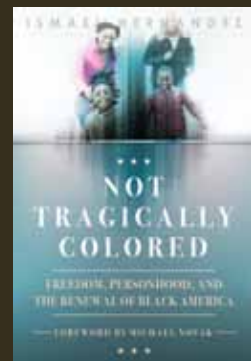
If you truly desire to help the poor, be a voice for them and demand the economic liberty that is a necessary precondition for them to fulfill their own natural vocation as image bearers who are free to enjoy the fruits of their own labor rather than subsist on the fruits of yours.

*Trey Dimsdale, J.D., is director of program outreach at Acton Institute. He has completed the course work for a Ph.D. in ethics and is actively involved as a board member and adviser for the National Faith & Work Association, the Lausanne Movement's Workplace Forum and an organizer of a program in the Balkans that seeks to equip unemployed and underemployed young people to launch new businesses.*



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By Dr. Anne R. Bradley

**S**ome say income inequality is the defining issue of our time. One of the most famous tweets ever came from Pope Francis, who wrote, “Inequality is the root of social evil.”

This is a complex issue that requires solid economic thinking. Does the fact that some people are fabulously wealthy inherently mean there is less for the rest of us? The answer, as always, is that it’s nuanced and complicated. It depends on how the rich earn their wealth: Do they serve their fellow man or plunder them?

As an economist, I would say that the defining issue of our time is not that some are extremely wealthy but that some remain extremely poor. People don’t die because of income inequality — they die because they are malnourished, do not have access to clean water and lack ways to use their God-given human creativity. We know how to be rich; the defining issue of our time is that some don’t get to experience the benefits of high incomes.

Our job is to figure out how to change that.

Income inequality can reflect theft and abuse of power, and in those situations, we must stand up and stop it. However, income inequality (different incomes among different people with different skills and preferences) is a natural part of the human condition, and when a result of well-functioning, voluntary trade protected by a rule of law, it can be the sign of a vibrant society full of opportunities for the rich and the poor.

This is because those in the lowest income brackets should expect lots of income mobility over time, and their position at the bottom continues to improve — because they do not stay at the bottom.

It’s complicated, like much of the rest of life. Discerning what aspects of income inequality are inherently unjust is necessary for fostering productivity and thwarting theft and corruption.

#### • Income inequality and theft

Historically, income inequality has been a sign of theft by the rich from

others. It has also indicated an absence of modern market trade and access to trading partners.

Old Testament scholar Dr. Walter Kaiser suggests that in the Old Testament, most income inequality was the result of theft and political corruption.

He states: “Generally, it was very difficult to escape the conditions of poverty in Old Testament times, where markets were small and sporadic and income mobility was largely unlikely, unlike modern conditions. ... Those who achieved wealth and riches and became socially strong could use that position of strength to oppress those of another class, namely the poor (Amos 2:7, 4:1, 5:11). The rich did not oppress the poor simply because they were rich but because they were sinners. Part of this oppression could be seen in an insatiable hunger for more land (Amos 8:4, Isaiah 3:15).”

“This, in turn, led to driving the poor off their inheritance (Micah 2:2, Isaiah 5:8-10). As the prophets warned, Yahweh was sure to see such that outright disobedience of his law was punished (Amos 2:13-15).”

Kaiser makes an important point in the first line of the above quote: In the days and times of the Old Testament, the vast global markets we have today did not exist. These markets have transformed the lives of everyone for the better, not just the rich.

Nothing can compare to the seemingly trivial aspects of our daily lives that we take for granted. The razor we use, the microwave, the dishwasher and the refrigerator are just some of the modern miracles we hardly think about. In this country even those in the lowest

income quintiles have access to them.

The miracle of market trade is that we are alleviated from having to produce these things, or some crude substitutes for these items, all on our own. In contrast, a lack of trading partners forces us inward — to rely on ourselves for things that we are not good at doing.

Prior to A.D. 1500, life was a struggle for survival, and many needs for most people went unmet. Those who were rich were most often political leaders who lived off the backs of the population. They often acquired their riches through theft and oppressive tax confiscation, keeping nations and people poor. Yet even those who were able to live off the backs of others were not rich in the terms that you and I are today.

#### • Income inequality and flourishing

What has changed over time is not the nature of man, but the institutional arrangement that fosters acquisition of income through the service to another rather than through pillaging.

This massive transition is new in human history. Only in the last 200 years has the West largely made this institutional shift, and massive prosperity for all income brackets is the result.

An understanding of how wealth is generated is important:

- Without voluntary trade and value creation (people serving other people through trade), large-scale wealth creation and prosperity are impossible.

- When people can use political power to acquire income, wealthy people had automatic power and could oppress others.

- The advent of modern markets takes away that historic power of the

wealthy because they have to serve us to maintain high levels of income.

The advent of modern market trade brought on by increasing specialization has brought us to the shift from surviving to thriving. It represents a historical and global transformation in the ability of individuals to earn higher levels of income and wealth, and to do so through value creation, product and service innovation and the overall service of humanity.

Did you know that over 100 million people in the U.S. have air conditioning in their homes? Or that 99 percent of families living at or under the U.S. poverty thresholds have a refrigerator? These things are incredibly important for our standard of living. It’s even more important that in a wealthy country like the U.S., the poor have access to them.

#### • More income mobility

In this world of greater flourishing, we also observe greater levels of income inequality. This occurs because customers in markets value things differently, and that value is reconciled with the scarcity of resources required to produce the things we need and want.

The benefit is that all levels of income — particularly those of the poor — are constantly increasing in a prosperous society, a phenomenon known as income mobility.

This means that if you are born poor, you are not necessarily destined to stay poor.

Income inequality is not necessarily a sign of poverty in a flourishing society. Income inequality deals with how income is held over a society.

Unless everyone is exactly equal, there will always be a top and a bottom. What matters is how the folks at the bottom fare and whether they have opportunities to use their God-given creativity and skills to give them income mobility.

Rather than directing our energies toward the biggest incomes, perhaps our focus should be directed toward how we can help those trapped in poverty in this country — those who are born poor and stay poor. This will provide a useful map of how to help the least of these.

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# Freedom is key to creating wealth, prosperity

By Jack Kemp

*The following is an abridged version of a speech titled “The Nature and Cause of the Wealth of our Nation,” given April 21, 1994, by Rep. Jack Kemp of New York, a Cabinet official in the George H.W. Bush administration and 1996 Republican vice presidential candidate.*

Too often in our descent into the policy minutia of budget and trade deficits, fiscal and monetary policy, we overlook the broader and bigger picture.

Experts spend endless hours perfecting econometric models to forecast GDP figures and interest rate projections, but neglect to consider how “wealth” is created, how jobs come into being and “how the world really works.” They frequently debate statistics like the national savings rate but show little interest in learning how entrepreneurs turn their ideas into new products, new businesses, new jobs and new wealth.

The key, then, to creating wealth and prosperity is allowing people freedom — freedom to work, to save, to trade, to own property, to take entrepreneurial risks, knowing that they will be rewarded for their efforts.

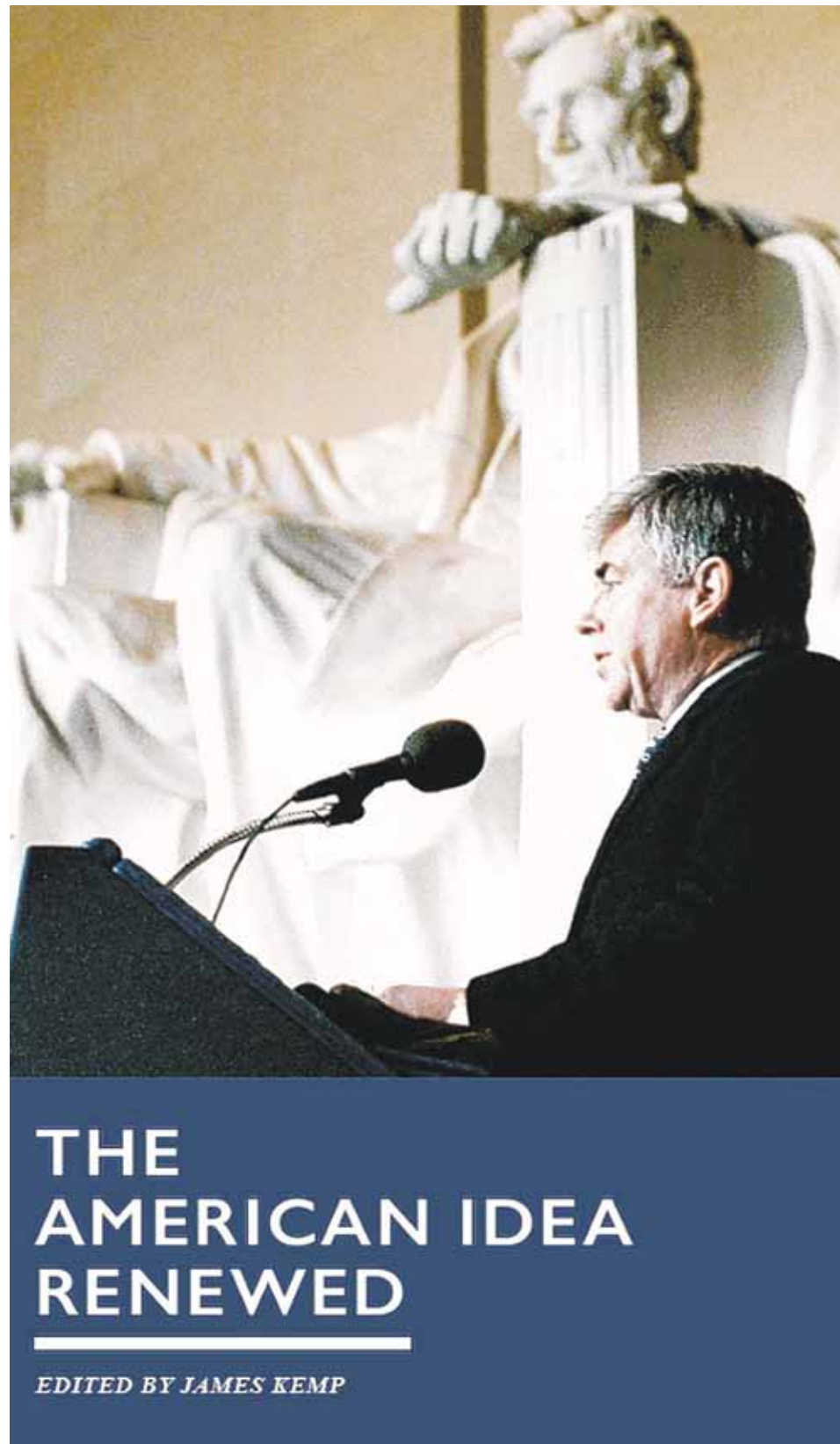
Our greatest assets are not the wealth we see around us, but in the potential which is unseen in the economy of the human mind. It is the minds and talents of a free people — not their material resources — which is the source of all wealth. Sir Winston Churchill once said, “The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.”

This manifest destiny of the mind is the greatest liberating force in history. It is transforming the global economy. And it is also rendering impossible any great nation’s withdrawal into a protectionist cocoon.

An economy based on entrepreneurial capitalism is the only system capable of responding to the dynamic challenges of the worldwide market of the 21st century. Government planning and industrial policies cannot succeed in high-technology markets, where the premium is on innovation rather than administration.

America must step back for a moment and recall what is at stake. The words of Tom Paine are as true today as when our nation was founded: “Those who seek security at the expense of freedom end up with neither.”

The elimination of risk will not bring security. ... It will bring stagnation. Risk is the source of all innovation. It is the



**Our greatest assets are not the wealth we see around us, but in the potential which is unseen in the economy of the human mind. It is the minds and talents of a free people – not their material resources – which is the source of all wealth. Sir Winston Churchill once said, “The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.”**

precursor to every new enterprise that is launched and every new product that is brought to market. The story of successful entrepreneurs is almost always the story of failure after failure overcome by sheer determination. Our economic policy should be designed to encourage, not stifle, risk-taking. We need to reward the successful entrepreneur while recognizing that true freedom requires having the freedom to fail, but to pick yourself up and try again.

The arrival of the Information Age requires political leaders to finally jettison the zero-sum ideologies of the past, when economics was still “the dismal science.”

There are a series of bedrock principles that I believe will define success or failure as we enter the new millennium. Nations which practice these principles will prosper; nations which don’t will stagnate or decline. The principles include:

- A policy of free trade to expand existing markets and break open new ones to U.S. goods and services.
- A currency that is sound, stable and honest, so that interest rates can come down and savings and property are not confiscated through the corrosive effects of inflation.
- A tax system where rates are low, and economic growth and upward mobility — not redistribution of wealth — are the primary goals; one that rewards, not punishes, risk-taking, investing and working.
- A fiscal policy that restrains the encroachment of government upon private enterprise caused by spending and regulation.
- And a welfare system that rewards working, saving and marriage, instead of punishing productive human activities.

We stand at a critical but exciting crossroads in the history of our nation and the world. The Information Revolution is well underway. America’s inherent entrepreneurial spirit has put us on the leading edge of this revolution, and the eyes of the world are on us.

At this remarkable watershed in history, we must not miss the chance to begin an era of lasting peace, prosperity and boundless opportunity by realizing all the blessings of freedom through free markets, free enterprise and free trade for all.

*Excerpted from “The American Idea Renewed” (Sudden Change Media, 2016), courtesy of the Jack Kemp Foundation.*



# C. S. Lewis on selfishness vs. self-interest



By Dr. Art Lindsley

**J**ohn Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods, claims business is under attack today. Speaking to the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce in February, he said, “Humanity has been lifted up by business, and yet it has been completely hijacked by its enemies who create a narrative that business is selfish and greedy and exploitative.”

Business provides good context for thinking biblically about selfishness, self-interest and greed. Are all business people selfish? Certainly not.

Moreover, selfishness is not exclusive to the business world. There are selfish teachers, physicians, pastors and firefighters. Selfishness is an equal opportunity employer.

The more pressing question, however, regards self-interest. Is self-interest necessarily selfish?

The Bible tells us not to follow our flesh or our hearts because they are prone to selfishness and sin (Proverbs 4:23; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7:18).

The Bible also calls us to care for the poor and live a life of self-sacrifice (Matthew 25:35; John 15:13). How should Christians understand selfishness?

C.S. Lewis wrote much about the tension between self-interest and selfishness, offering renewed clarity on these topics. To Lewis, there is a huge difference between self-interest and selfishness, and there is a proper place for self-interest in our lives.

When Lewis first came to faith, he did not think about eternal life, but focused on enjoying God in this life. Lewis later said that the years he spent without the focus on heavenly rewards “always seem to me to have been of great value” because they taught delight in God above any prospect or reward. It would be wrong to desire from God solely what he could give you, without delighting in God himself.

Lewis never disparaged the place of heavenly rewards, but he saw that the paradox of reward might be a stumbling block for some. On the one hand, the purest faith in God believes in him for “nothing” and is not primarily interested in any benefits to follow. On the other hand, the concept that we are rewarded for what we do is taught in numerous biblical passages and presumably is a positive motivation for doing what is good.

Certainly, a sole focus on rewards might pander to selfishness. Lewis discusses this paradox in “English Literature in the Sixteenth Century”:

“Tyndale, as regards the natural condition of humanity, holds that by nature we can do no good works without respect of some profit either in this world or in the world to come .... That the profit should be located in another world means, as Tyndale clearly sees, no difference. Theological hedonism is still hedonism. Whether the man is seeking heaven or a hundred pounds, he can still but seek himself, of freedom in the true sense — of spontaneity or disinterestedness — nature knows nothing. And yet by a terrible paradox, such disinterestedness is precisely what the moral law demands.”

One way to resolve the tension between believing for nothing and believing for reward is to realize that self-interest is not the same thing as selfishness.

Some maintain that Mark 8:35-36 is Lewis’ most quoted passage of Scripture. Jesus appeals to self-interest as a motive for self-denial, saying, “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel shall save it. What good is it for a

man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?” We are being encouraged to truly “save” our lives and not “lose” our lives or “forfeit” our soul. The appeal is to our own self-interest.

Unless we have a sufficient reason to sacrifice something we love, the cost will always be too great. Lewis expresses this dilemma in the last paragraph of “Mere Christianity”:

“The principle runs through all life from top to bottom. Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favourite wishes every day and the death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.”

It is not in our self-interest to be selfish. Rather, self-denial is in our self-interest.

Lewis argues elsewhere that self-interest does not necessarily make our motives impure. He says in “The Problem of Pain”:

“We are afraid that Heaven is a bribe, and that if we make it our goal we shall no longer be disinterested. It is not so. Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart that they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to. There are rewards that do not sully motives. A man’s love for a woman is not mercenary because he wants to marry her, nor his love for poetry mercenary because he wants to read it, nor his love of exercise less disinterested because he wants to run and leap and walk. Love, by its very nature, seeks to enjoy its object.”

When we are lost in wonder, awe and praise of God, we can become more joyful and less self-conscious. When we are focused on God, we are not focused

on self. Lewis summarizes this un-self-conscious experience: “The happiest moments are when we forget our precious selves ... but have everything else (God, our fellow humans, the animals, the garden and the sky) instead.”

In this experience, we are pursuing our own joy, but not selfishly.

In Lewis’ classic sermon, “The Weight of Glory,” he articulates this same dilemma between selfishness and self-interest (“disinterestedness”).

In that context, he gives what has become my favorite C.S. Lewis quote: “Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink, sex, and ambition, when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

We might not pursue our own self-interest strongly enough. We often settle for selfish desire and deprive ourselves of “infinite joy.” We are all too pleased with the meager pleasures we get, and say “NO” to greater, higher, infinite pleasure. The more we pursue our own true self-interest, the more we will glorify God. It is in our self-interest to give up lesser pleasures that may satisfy for a while, but sooner or later lead to “hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin and decay.”

The distinction between self-interest and selfishness seems to be so blurred in current public discourse that self-interest nearly means selfishness. But Lewis clearly believes that self-interest was not necessarily selfish, and that selfishness is not in our self-interest. If we pursue our own self-interest, we will deny ourselves and choose eternal life, and true life in the present. To condemn selfishness is in our legitimate self-interest.

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# What I didn't learn in business school



By Ken Eldred

**A**rmed with Stanford undergraduate and MBA degrees and a fairly new Christian faith, I founded a business in the mid-1970s with \$5,000 and a grocery bag of computer connector parts. Inmac started on the idea of selling computer accessories by mail order and expanded from there.

I led the business for 20 years until it was sold to another public company in 1996. At one point we had 1,500 employees in 10 countries and \$400 million in annual sales.

Over the course of my years in business, there were a number of questions I was forced to ask about faith and work. I expand upon them in my book, "The Integrated Life," but I'd like to focus on one question here: Where do successful business principles really come from?

Truth is truth, no matter where you find it, and indeed, business schools have discovered some truths in their work.

But what I didn't learn in business school is that good business principles didn't originate in the halls of academia; they are in fact biblical principles. There are a lot of biblical values business schools won't touch or teach, and these, likewise, prove to be successful business principles. The Scriptures are highly relevant to successful business.

Many folks operate under the faulty assumption that they can't afford to act according to biblical attitudes and values at work. They might think, "Aren't those who operate morally playing against a stacked deck? How could I possibly make it without cutting corners, engaging in dishonesty and treating employees dispassionately?"

We really need to rethink that point of view. Business success that results from following biblical principles should not be surprising. As President Grover Cleveland noted, "Business is not the less prosperous and successful

if conducted on Christian principles."

*Amorality* is becoming more and more the predominant moral foundation in the Western world today. The question is not whether something is right or wrong but whether it's legal or illegal. The legal system takes the place of personal morality and values, and anything that is legally defensible is acceptable.

When business is conducted from an amoral foundation, trust and loyalty are foreign concepts. Promises can be broken "when necessary" if there's no legally binding contract. Lawyers

oversight and checks. Transactions are simplified and the cost of doing business decreases.

Personal character was touted as the overriding success factor in the first 150 years of the United States, notes Stephen Covey. Benjamin Franklin and others espoused virtues such as integrity, temperance, humility, courage and fidelity.

Today, a personality ethic has replaced personal character. Success is seen as a function of dressing right, understanding corporate politics, speaking eloquently and excelling in social

a follower of Jesus: integrity/truthfulness, accountability, loyalty/faithfulness, trust, commitment, order/cleanliness, hope. He has a lot to say *about what should characterize our interactions* with our fellow man: honesty, humility, service, respect/dignity, justice/fairness, grace/compassion, forgiveness, consideration, trust, accountability, interdependence, love. And he has a lot to say *about what qualities should describe our work*: service, excellence, diligence, value, quality.

We find some of these values lauded by business scholars, but others are



find loopholes and devise maneuvers around inconvenient laws. The result is a cold, calculating and bleak business environment in which employees find very little comfort and customers operate in suspicion of the fine print. It's no wonder people are upset with this type of "capitalism."

A business environment that operates according to a *moral* standard provides the decidedly best foundation for capitalism to thrive. People and companies exhibit values such as service, integrity and loyalty because they are morally right, not because the law mandates them. (It does not.)

The human spirit thrives in a moral business environment. When others are known to operate under an absolute moral standard, trust follows. There is less need for security,

situations. The business suit, not one's character, is the measure of a man. But personal character is no less a success factor than before, as Covey and others are rediscovering. Character is the long-lost ingredient of successful capitalism, and biblical values are the underlying values of the character ethic. Lord Brian Griffiths concludes that the Judeo-Christian faith, "which sees business as a vocation or calling, so that a career in business is perceived as a life of service before God, is a most powerful source from which to establish, derive, and support absolute moral standards in business life."

I have also come to recognize that the Bible is that all-important source of the values and principles of successful business. God has a lot to say *about what personal traits should mark*

rarely if ever addressed in business education. Some are captured in the law of the land, but most are not. As Jesus taught, our actions are to go well beyond what's mandated by the legal code — even in business.

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*Ken Eldred served as CEO of Inmac, a public company he founded. He has assisted in the founding of several other successful public companies, including My Software and Ariba Technologies, and remains involved in ventures in the United States and abroad. Ken holds BA and MBA degrees from Stanford University and was a Visiting Fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution. His latest book, "The Integrated Life" (www.integrated-life.org), explains how to connect one's faith and work.*



# Are riches and righteousness necessarily at odds?

By Dr. David Kotter  
and Dr. Joshua Greever

**A**s the 2008 financial crisis receded, U.S. household wealth rebounded by this year to the astounding record of \$89 trillion.

In contributing toward this milestone, many people feel a lingering uneasiness, that the accumulation of such wealth is somehow unrighteous.

At first glance, even the Bible seems to provide contradictory assessments about wealth.

For example, Israel's prophets decried the rich as unrighteous, yet the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob individually possessed great wealth. Jesus commanded the rich young ruler to sell all of his possessions and give to the poor, yet Jesus himself rose out of a tomb provided by the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea.

To resolve this apparent conundrum, we examined every case in the Bible where an individual was identified as having substantial material possessions and the means of acquiring these goods was disclosed. We found that in the 21 cases meeting these criteria, the means of acquisition was a reliable indicator of whether a person received approval or disapproval.

On one hand, riches were condemned if one party gained at the expense of another, a situation economists call a "zero-sum game." On the other hand, wealth was commended if it was accumulated through "positive-sum games," which economists describe as mutually beneficial, voluntary transactions. Though stewardship and orientation of the heart are also biblically significant, a focus on the means of acquisition can lead to helpful insights in an exponentially changing economic environment.

In a biblical context, farming grain would be a quintessential example of a positive-sum game.

A farmer uses only seeds, sunlight, land and labor to harvest a wealth of wheat in a way that does not directly harm other farmers. Shepherding sheep was likewise a common positive-sum game in the ancient world. Mining, digging wells, crafting leather and engaging in voluntary trade were further examples of mutually beneficial activities.

From this perspective, it is clear the patriarch Isaac became wealthy through a positive-sum game: He



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sowed in that land and reaped hundredfold in the same year. The Lord blessed him, and the man became rich and gained more and more until he became very wealthy (Genesis 26:12-16).

Job was likewise recognized by the Lord himself as a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:8). The text specifically indicates that his vast wealth was generated from the positive-sum herding of sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys, such that Job was

"the greatest of all the people of the East" (Job 1:1-3).

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla as tentmakers by trade (Acts 18:1-4). This occupation created wealth through manufacturing and value through trade. Other positive examples of wealth include the prophet Samuel, King Hezekiah and landowner Boaz.

On the other hand, an example of a zero-sum game in the ancient world would be moving a boundary stone in

an agricultural field so that one party gained exactly as much as another lost.

Other examples include oppression of widows and orphans, or outright stealing. James condemns rich people for the zero-sum practice of fraudulently employing workers and oppressing others through the court system: "Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts," and "Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court?" (James 5:4; 2:6)

Achan was called out by God and condemned to death for stealing portions of the plunder after the Battle of Jericho (Joshua 6:19, 24; 7:13-26), and King Ahab was likewise condemned by God for stealing the vineyard of Naboth (1 Kings 21:17-19), just as the sons of Eli were condemned for stealing the sacrifices of worshippers (1 Samuel 2:13-16; 4:15-18).

What can be concluded from these biblical examples?

First, there is no inherent reason to feel uneasy when increasing household wealth through positive-sum games because this is commended throughout the Bible. Work is intrinsically valuable for human beings, and earning a competitive wage or an honest profit is instrumentally valuable for creating the wealth that cures poverty.

Second, accumulating riches through zero-sum games or illegal means is universally condemned in the Bible and should be avoided even today.

The Bible addresses other important considerations, such as stewardship of possessions and care for others, such that greedy motives and a health-and-wealth mindset are also wrong.

Finally, the means of acquiring possessions is a consistent indicator of whether wealth will be commended or condemned by God.

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By Rev. Samuel Rodriguez

**P**residential candidates, elections and even political parties come and go, but one issue has forever been, and will continue to be, at the forefront of a majority of American minds: the economy and jobs. Even as the ethnic face of America has evolved from one generation to the next, this constant has always been with us. In fact, a Gallup poll taken this year confirmed this again.

But if you're Latino, it's easy to get discouraged when looking around at some of our brothers and sisters toiling away at blue-collar, minimum-wage, manual labor jobs, barely scraping out a living. This is honorable and noble work, to be sure, but financial prosperity it is not.

It's also easy to fear that prejudice, racism and bigotry could block our path to upward mobility. Our people wonder, "Is the American Dream still alive and well for us and our children?"

The answer to that question depends upon how we approach the future.

You see, Scripture tells us, "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." It also affirms that for those of us who believe, we are co-heirs with Christ. We were not made to be slaves, as the Israelites were in Egypt, but sons and daughters of God the Father — image bearers of God and therefore stakeholders in the world we inhabit, in America itself.

Let's pause here for just a moment.

It's incredibly important to remember that these are revolutionary ideas that have quite literally reshaped and reconstituted the arc of human history. In many ways, they form the basis for the modern Western world, economics, the rule of law and our understanding of democracy itself.

For Latino Americans, these ideas have the power to transform generations.

In the coming years, the sons and daughters of immigrants will see their parents' often-meager beginnings in America alongside their irreplaceable

progress afforded by their hard work, sacrifice and selflessness. They will be in awe of where they are, considering from whence they came. But they will also compare their situations to those of more affluent ethnic communities, and they will doubtless want more. You see, hard work is not enough, even though Latinos have that in spades.

And here lies the fork in the road.

Down one path is a cycle of generational poverty, the idea that we are victims of a system rigged against us. We will be tempted to believe that the government is somehow responsible for our well-being and owes us financial assistance, entitlements and subsidies.

Down the other path is financial mobility, ownership, prosperity and generational momentum. In a word, freedom. It's the difference between merely surviving and truly thriving.

These are not republican or democratic ideas. As I said, they have always been at the forefront of the American psyche and they transcend political

affiliations. After all, free enterprise and freedom are inseparable concepts. They are human and universal desires because we were made this way by God's own design. Ask the single mother on food stamps if she would prefer instead a decent-paying job, where she could save money and get ahead. Contrary to what some would have you believe, the answer would

almost always be: "I want a job."

The same is true for those living in our ghettos and inner cities, and it is certainly the case for us Latinos.

As a Christian, I fundamentally believe that the government can't give me something God has already prom-

ised. My identity as an image bearer of God far outweighs my circumstances, my bank account or my ethnicity.

Although God does not promise me success, wealth or fame, he does accept me. In the same way America doesn't guarantee Latinos or anyone else prosperity but it does accept — or should accept — those who are willing to roll

up their sleeves and reach for their own piece of the American dream.

It is my heart for the Latino people in this country that our faith, which is inextricably linked to our community, will be the key to unleashing all the creativity, passion and hard work we have as a people, that the next generations living in America will be blessed by the unparalleled opportunities this country can provide, that we will skip full generations in our upward mobility.

Our future will be bright indeed, if we embrace the path of free enterprise, the path of freedom — and if we deny the lie that government has do it all for us.

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**Our future will be bright indeed, if we choose to embrace the path of free enterprise, the path of freedom — and if we deny the lie that government has do it all for us.**



# WHY NOT SOCIALISM?

## Defending the free market



**By Rev. Robert A. Sirico**

Why not socialism?

A right use of freedom has tended to encourage human dignity, creativity and flourishing.

But why should we care about those things? Why value human creativity? Why even believe that human beings possess dignity and rights?

The economic system I espouse assumes, rather than defends, the value of all these things — something easy to miss because most of us share these sentiments.

The religious foundation with which

I was imbued as a child, and to which I returned after a spell in the wilderness of liberal activism in the 1970s, eventually allowed me to reach a place where I finally could speak the words of St. Augustine from my own heart: “*Sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova, sero te amavi*” — Late have I loved you, O Beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved you.

I came once again to know that there was a God and that he was personal. I knew that the world was formed by his design and infused with his purpose and that he fashioned the human race in his likeness, etching into us his own nature. And I knew that he wanted to be known by this world and that he had revealed himself in the person of his son, Jesus Christ, who established a church on the earth to carry forth this message.

It wasn’t that the Catholic Church I grew up in had officially endorsed the prudential judgments of the free market thinkers I had come to embrace. The Catholic Church does not — and never has — “taught economics.”

Rather, its focus is on the principles that ought to inform how we think about and act in economic life. But the Catholic faith, as I began to dust it off and rediscover it, did provide solid reasons for valuing many of the things these free

market thinkers sought to sustain and encourage.

We are made in the image of a Creator to be creative (like him). The God we see operative in the first pages of the Bible is not a passive entity. He engages, indeed engenders, the world. And at the summit of this creation are the beings created in his very likeness and image: the human family.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the first words spoken to man and woman constitute a calling to a similar creativity: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”

My radical friends and I back in 1970s California spoke often of justice. But surely it is not merely justice that any of us seek in society or in our lives. Justice — treating people as they deserve to be treated — is a fundamental civil and moral requirement. But by itself, it is a meager necessity.

What we really want is a society that is just, yes, but also one that is suffused with charity and mercy — virtues that no legislature can produce or enact, virtues that can raise up armies of men and women who are prepared to go out and tend the vulnerable at great personal sacrifice.

After all, at the Last Judgment, when each of us will stand before God, I doubt

any of us is going to be demanding justice. I, for one, will plead for mercy.

If justice and mercy are to thrive in our society, I understand now we need to protect the institutions of liberty — “the delicate fruit of a mature civilization,” as the Victorian statesman and historian Lord Acton called it. We must work strenuously to safeguard the liberty that our security and prosperity depend on.

What happens when we have our prosperity but lose our meaning? What happens when we lose a sense of ourselves as transcendent beings? What happens when we are no longer able or inclined to defend the institutions and ideas that have enabled our prosperity and still guarantee our freedom?

Karl Marx was wrong. Civilizations are not directed by any fatalistic process of dialectical materialism. God is in his heaven, and free men still walk upon the earth. Class envy and class warfare can, have and will again give way to class encounter and cooperative creativity within a competitive marketplace.

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The Rev. Robert A. Sirico is president of the Acton Institute in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This essay is excerpted from “Defending the Free Market” (Regnery Publishing Group, 2012).



**By Lawrence W. Reed**

“A man who chooses between drinking a glass of milk and a glass of a solution of potassium cyanide does not choose between two beverages; he chooses between life and death,” wrote Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises. “A society that chooses between capitalism and socialism does not choose between two social systems; it chooses between social cooperation and the

disintegration of society.”

Such clarity is badly needed today. In spite of socialism’s sorry track record, millions of well-meaning people think it’s a virtual synonym for compassion.

But socialists themselves are constantly retreating from their own handiwork. It’s socialism until it doesn’t work, then it was never socialism in the first place. It’s socialism until the wrong guys get in charge, then it’s everything but.

Socialism never seems to have any theory of wealth creation, only fanciful schemes for its reallocation after somebody goes to the trouble of creating it.

Oxford Dictionaries (whose slogan is “Language Matters”) defines socialism as “a political and economic theory of social organization that advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole.”

## Why not socialism?

What is meant by “the means of production, distribution and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole”? If you own a convenience store, are you supposed to put to some public vote the decisions about what to stock the shelves with or whom to hire for the night shift?

What about this “regulated by the community as a whole” stuff? Have you ever known a regulatory body to be everybody in town or all 325 million people in the country? Don’t such bodies end up being some handful of people with political power?

Even with a dictionary at hand, I find myself scratching my head and asking, “What the heck is socialism anyway?” Maybe it’s just an imaginary thing that somebody hopes it is, even if it never turns out that way when it’s tried.

Just when you think you see socialism, even when its architects claim that’s what they were up to, socialists

redefine it rather than admit to its failures. Venezuela is the latest in a long line of socialist experiments. Now that the dismal verdict is in, however, socialists are in denial about what it was that was tried and whether or not it failed. In other places, where a less-radical version of socialism may seem to work, it’s actually the capitalism those places still have that creates real wealth and pays the bills.

Socialism isn’t happy thoughts, wishful thinking, mere good intentions or children sharing their Halloween candy with one another. In a modern political, economic and social context, socialism isn’t voluntary. You can’t opt out. Its central characteristic is the concentration of power for these purposes: central planning of the economy, government ownership of property and the redistribution of wealth.

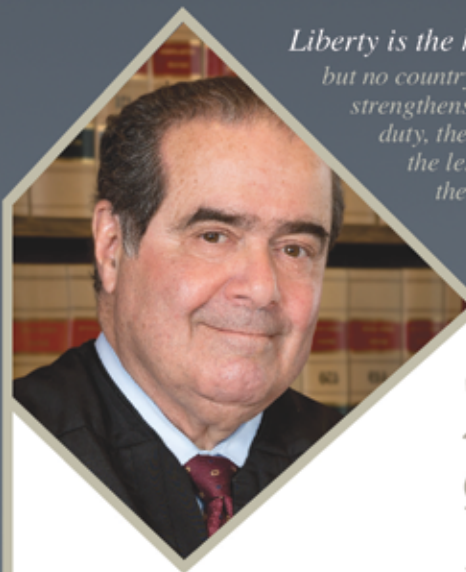
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# Acting on the ‘God moments’



**By Dr. Jesse Miranda and Fred Oaks**

**A**s the plane began its descent into the Los Angeles airport, I saw thick columns of smoke billowing up from the city. That day in 1992, the Los Angeles riots opened my eyes and heart to the needs of my community. As the overseer of 50 churches in the area, I was haunted by questions about the strife that had overtaken my city: “Why is the city on fire? *Where is the salt and light?*”

As a pastor, my quest to better serve my community is deeply connected to my faith. In this context, the 1992 riots were a violent manifestation of the brokenness of the city. As I pondered the best way to address this need, I began to focus on the importance of Latino pastoral ministry that meaningfully speaks to the broader community.

Shortly after the riots, I transitioned from my position as a denominational officer to academia, where I spent the next two decades. While at Azusa Pacific University and Vanguard University, I taught racial-ethnic minority students, particularly those interested in theology and pastoral ministry. Although I enjoyed working with these students, I felt a nagging concern that the church was still failing to address the needs of the entire population.

Shortly after leaving Vanguard, I was interviewed by *The Economist* magazine for a special issue on Latinos



in America (March 14, 2015). Reading the article, I was struck by the journalist’s description of my community. In his estimation, Latinos can solve the demographic issues descending on industrialized countries: “America has been granted an extraordinary stroke of luck: a big dose of youth and energy, just as its global competitors are greying.”

As I felt the magnitude of my community’s potential contribution, my conviction deepened that Hispanic pastors and churches needed to better

equip people with an understanding of ministry that extends beyond the pulpit. As the Latino population rises, we will play an increasing role in the American family and our flourishing will be intimately connected to the flourishing of the broader community.

In the Latino evangelical community, we refer to experiences like the riots and the article as “God moments.”

In these moments, the Spirit directs us to act in response to a new and deeper apprehension of what it means for us to exercise God-honoring dominion in this world. In my case, these moments led me to expand churches’ capacity to promote human flourishing through whole-life discipleship, particularly surrounding work, economic freedom and development.

John L. McKnight, co-director of Northwestern University’s Asset-Based Community Development Institute, said that “communities are never built on needs and deficiencies, but rather on gifts and capabilities.” Today, the Jesse Miranda Center at Latin American Bible College is developing the gifts and capabilities of Hispanic pastors in Southern California by closing the divide between the sacred and the

so-called secular, between the Sunday worship experience and the Monday workday.

We are also closing the divides between cultures (North/South) and language (English/Spanish). By closing these gaps, we can engage more deeply with the community and promote its flourishing.

In addition to creating a new curriculum and certificate program promoting the integration of faith, work and economics, we will train six cohorts of pastors in Southern California — both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking — to better minister on issues surrounding vocation and economics. In this effort, we will draw on support and resources from Made to Flourish: A Pastors’ Network for the Common Good, an organization out of Kansas City that helps pastors encourage and equip their congregants to live integrated and flourishing lives.

All Christians are called to ministry by virtue of their baptism. The connection between faith, work and economics answered my questions about the involvement of the church in every area of life for the betterment of the community. By equipping God’s people for works of service, many of which will be offered through their paid and unpaid daily work, pastors can minister to the entire community in every aspect of their lives.

We can help to heal the broken city through our diligent work. As pastors and churches celebrate the contribution workers and entrepreneurs make through their labors, whole communities will flourish. “When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices” (Proverbs 11:10).

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Jesse Miranda, D.Min., is president of the Jesse Miranda Center for Hispanic Leadership, CEO emeritus of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference and executive presbyter for the General Council of the Assemblies of God. Fred Oaks is a director for the Faith, Work, & Economics Program at The Kern Family Foundation.



## REED

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It all comes down to persuasion versus force. Here’s what I mean:

Under capitalism, two Girl Scouts show up at your door and ask, “Would you like to buy some cookies?” You get to say yes or no.

Under socialism, two Girl Scouts show up at your door with an armed

SWAT team behind them. They say, “You’re going to eat these cookies, and you’re going pay for them too.”

If it’s not the use of force to shape society the way you want it, then socialism is nothing more than a nebulous fantasy. It’s a giant blackboard in the sky on which you can write anything your heart desires, and then just erase it when embarrassing circumstances arise.

So “why not socialism?”

Socialism preaches envy and theft and

delivers strife and conflict. It pits class against class. It cynically buys off one faction at the expense of another. It thrives on victimology and shuns personal responsibility. Its advocates are intellectual dope pushers — foisting addictive, soul-sapping dependency and paternalism on others. They concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the people whose character and naivete make them the most susceptible to corruption.

It’s the bottom line that most

effectively answers the question, “Why not socialism?” It’s force, pure and simple. If it were voluntary, it wouldn’t be socialism. It would be capitalism.

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Lawrence W. Reed is president of the Foundation for Economic Education in Atlanta and author of the recent book “Real Heroes: Inspiring True Stories of Courage, Character and Conviction,” published by ISI Books.



# Why I am no longer a socialist



By Ismael Hernandez

**H**e stood proudly laughing as I retrieved my red flag from a ditch. “Wave it, son!” he encouraged.

It remains a vivid recollection of a moment in a life dedicated to revolution. As I leaf through the pages of my father’s CO-INTELPRO file, over 50 years of revolutionary zeal reappear, reminding me of a life I loved that vanished about 14 years ago.

My father was a founding member of the Movement for Independence, the Marxist-Leninist precursor of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. Our family life was informed by the politics and assumptions of socialism — assumptions that explained our poverty and gave us purpose. My heart was sewn early with the thread of utopia, and my identity was suffused under a collective label that gave meaning to my life.

There were intoxicating promises of a grand new world devoid of antagonisms and social pathologies. We had a master plan to transform chaos into ease. As an embattled community, we sheltered ourselves under the mantle of the dream, and I was committed to becoming a faithful drop in the great wave of revolution — my dignity resided there. In fact, apart from that wave, as I saw it then, I was simply a particular but insignificant arrangement of cells in a diaspora of meaningless existence.

“America is the enemy of humanity!” my father used to rail and, naturally, I believed him. His life had been shaped by regrets transformed into grievances, as if a political alibi could shelter his psyche from experiences of pain. The litany of condemnations against “Yankee imperialism” became my catechism, and the meagerness of our existence nurtured my investment in rage. I soon learned to hate America, and my mind filtered everything through an “us” against “them” prism.

I will never forget the night when I saw the look of desperation on my mother’s face as she stormed outside to confront the men monitoring my father. I heard buzz of inquisitorial voices

mingled with her dejected cries. Later I learned who they were — intelligence officers of the Puerto Rican police working with the FBI, and I hated them. A deep hatred of all they represented grew within me with the force of a Caribbean hurricane that sweeps bare all in its path.

Though I blamed America for destroying my parents’ marriage and our lives, in reality socialism was the destructive force. But I would not learn this until many years later, away from the utopian allure of its grasp.

At this same time, God was becoming a vital factor in my life.

My mom regularly sent my siblings and me to Mass with friends, and those experiences shaped in me a sort of double consciousness. On one hand God; on the other my other faith: socialism. How to reconcile this dichotomous existence? By joining the Jesuit order, of course. This solution, joining the order in their embrace of liberation theology — which came to the fore during the mid-1980s amid the political turmoil brewing in Central America — was inspired by the Jesuits I had met, and I was accepted.

How I wanted to go to Central America to study philosophy and be a part of that revolutionary liberation. My drop had found its wave, I was convinced. I felt ever more certain of my decision when I learned I was to be sent to Sandinista Nicaragua, the heart of the revolution — a socialist’s dream come true.

But when seven Jesuits were murdered in El Salvador — close to the border with Nicaragua — the order, concerned for our safety, decided to send us to Fordham University in New York instead. Frustrated, I left the seminary and returned home. I’m not going to seminary in “the guts of the monster,” I thought to myself, realizing that perhaps I did not have a priestly vocation so much as I was destined to be a revolutionary.

At this point, I made the most beautiful “mistake”: I decided to come to America after all.

Curiously, I landed not at Fordham but at the University of Southern Mississippi. It was when my feet hit American soil — in the Deep South no less — that my lungs were filled with the air of freedom. For the first time in my life, I was able to challenge the safe and fiercely held assumptions of my ideology. Ideologies — political, racial or otherwise — are the result of pre-rational worldviews and prism-filtering phenomena. After some time in the U.S., I dared to try on a new filter, and a new landscape informed by liberty facilitated the experiment.

By the end of my first summer at the university, I contemplated the possibility of staying. I soon found myself troubled by heretical thoughts against socialism. The Berlin Wall had fallen and, in doing so, struck my consciousness. I still fought these thoughts with appeals to the last of all socialist excuses: “Socialism has never really been

tried.” Yet there was a new reality that spoke the language of dignity with new words — ones that made me realize that I was not merely an insignificant drop in a vast ocean.

I am no longer a socialist because I listened more and more to these words and the vital messages they conveyed — and I encountered the reality of American freedom and its constitutional primacy on the individual, which led to the realization that socialism is an anthropological mistake.

Socialism fails not because a particular approach fails, but because it is false in its foundational premises by misunderstanding humankind’s very nature.

I eventually discovered that I was unique and unrepeatable, not simply a drop in a collectivist wave. I have the moral capacity of self-realization because, made in the *imago Dei* (Genesis 1:26), I have the capacity to reason, to discover the truth and the volitional capacity to choose, to do what is good.

I was willed into being by God for my own sake. I am loved by God in the radical concreteness of my existence and ordered to personal communion with others. I can transcend the dynamisms inherent in my biological life and look to the heavens above.

It is in the exercise of dual capacity of reason and choice, I came to see, that my dignity could be found.

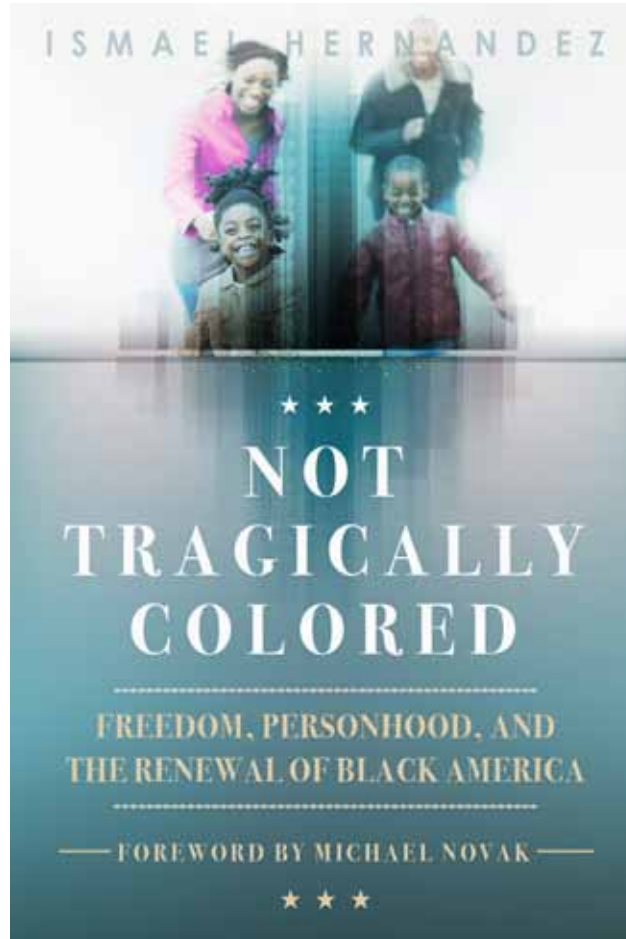
What is needed is a social and political context that protects, affirms and optimizes these individual capacities. This social context incentivizes dynamism, understanding, creativity and self-determination. Any collectivist understanding of the human person I previously had was nothing more than a cluster of inferiorities — an expansive, yet shallow, sea of sameness.

A few years ago I buried my father, who died a communist. At that time, I again silently sang the revolutionary songs in homage to the fallen warrior. I remembered his laughter when, by his side, I retrieved my red flag many years ago. I mourned his death, and I honor his life to this day.

I remember still his words toward the end of his life, “Don’t be a fence-sitter!” His example of leading a committed life is an important legacy that I have woven into my own coat-of-arms.

Now I fly the crest of God-given individuality and the shield of liberty. I am convinced that my father salutes this new and uniquely American flag as he looks on in contented approval.

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*Ismael Hernandez is founder of the Freedom & Virtue Institute and a faculty member at Acton University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is the author of “Not Tragically Colored: Freedom, Personhood, and the Renewal of Black America” (2016).*



# Does Acts 2-5 teach socialism?



By Dr. Art Lindsley

“A truly strange thing has happened to American Christianity,” says a writer at The Washington Post’s On Faith blog.

He says Christians who defend the free market are in a profound contradiction because Acts 2-5 is “outright socialism of the type described millennia later by Karl Marx, who likely got the general idea from the Gospels.”

Does Acts 2-5 really command socialism? A quick reading of these four chapters might make it seem so. Acts 2:44-45 says that immediately following Pentecost, “[A]ll who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”

Acts 4:32-35, referring to the early congregation, says: “Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ... There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”

Though these passages may sound like socialism to the average reader, such a superficial reading may miss what a closer examination of the text reveals. There are three major reasons why Acts 2-5 does not teach socialism.

## ● This is not an example of true communal sharing.

Acts 2-5 portrays a *spirit* of communal sharing rather than an actual commune. The people did not sell everything they owned to legal title, as those typically do in a commune. This is evidenced by the imperfect verbs used throughout the passages. Craig Blomberg says in his study “Neither Poverty Nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions” that “[Chapter 2] verses 43-47 are dominated by highly marked imperfect tense verbs, whereas one normally expects aorists [once-for-all

actions] in historical narrative. There is no once-for-all divestiture of property in view here, but periodic acts of charity as needs arose.”

This point is even clearer in Acts 4-5. The NIV translation of Acts 4:34b-35 says, “From time to time, those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet.”

Blomberg comments: “Again we have a rash of imperfect verbs here, this time explicitly reflected in the NIVs ‘from time to time.’ The periodic selling of property confirms our interpretation of Acts 2:44 above. This was not a one-time divestiture of all one’s possessions. The theme ‘according to need,’

occasional, in response to particular needs, not once and for all.”

There is also sufficient reason to believe that the early followers of Christ did not sell all they had, but rather occasionally sold part of their possessions and gave the proceeds to the apostles for distribution. For example, in Acts 5, Ananias sold a piece of property (v. 1) and kept a portion of the proceeds for himself and his wife, Sapphira. The problem was not that they were required to sell their possessions and give all of the proceeds of their land to the apostles, but that Ananias lied about the true price he received for the land (v. 7). Peter points out that he could give or keep the money as he saw fit (v.

Elsewhere in Scripture, we see that Christians are even instructed to give in just this manner, freely, for “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Even if the believers sold all their possessions and redistributed them among the community, this still would not prove socialism is biblical because the state is not the agent selling property to those in need. There is also plenty of indication that private property rights were still in effect; therefore, this would not even be considered socialism if the term was used to refer to a regulated system of community ownership.

## ● The narrative was not a universal command.

To prove Acts 2-5 commands socialism, you would have to show that this historical precedent is a mandatory prescription for all later Christians. You cannot get the imperative (all Christians should do this) from the indicative (some early Christians did this). The fact that some Christians “shared all things” does not constitute a command that all Christians should follow their example because it is not clearly taught in passages of Scripture elsewhere.

R.C. Sproul explains how Christians must interpret biblical narratives through the lens of broader Christian teaching: “We must interpret the narrative passages of Scripture by the didactic or ‘teaching’ portions. If we try to find too much theology in narrative passages, we can easily go beyond the point of the narrative into serious errors.”

The communal sharing in Acts 2-5 was not the practice of the early church in the rest of the New Testament, so it is clear that this practice is not a mandatory command. Thus, even if Acts 2-5 were socialism, it would hold nothing other than historical interest to later believers and would have no binding power on the later church.

Certainly, the communal sharing illustrated in Acts 2-5 was a beautiful picture of generosity and love. But it is impossible to show that these passages teach socialism given their temporary, voluntary and strictly narrative nature.



**Even if the believers sold all their possessions and redistributed them among the community, this still would not prove socialism is biblical, since the state is not the agent selling property to those in need. There is also plenty of indication that private property rights were still in effect; therefore this would not even be considered socialism if the term was used to refer to a regulated system of community ownership.**

reappears, too. Interestingly, what does not appear in this paragraph is any statement of complete equality among believers.”

John Stott affirms Blomberg’s conclusions on property in the early church, also underscoring Luke’s use of the imperfect tense: “Neither Jesus nor his apostles forbade private property to all Christians. ... It is important to note that even in Jerusalem the sharing of property and possessions was voluntary. ... It is also noteworthy that the tense of both verbs in verse 45 is imperfect, which indicates that the selling and giving were

4) but still lied to Peter and to the Holy Spirit (v. 5).

But even if, for the sake of argument, we grant that all believers sold all their possessions and redistributed them among the community, this still would not prove socialism is biblical. The next two reasons explain why.

## ● The actions in Acts were totally voluntary.

Socialism implies coercion by the state, but these early believers contributed their goods freely. There is no mention of the state in Acts 2-5.

Arthur W. Lindsley, Ph.D., is vice president of Theological Initiatives at the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics ([www.tifwe.org](http://www.tifwe.org)) and co-editor of “For the Least of These: A Biblical Answer to Poverty” (Zondervan, 2015). The Institute for Faith, Work & Economics (IFWE) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) Christian research organization committed to promoting biblical and economic principles that help individuals find fulfillment in their work and contribute to a free and flourishing society.



## Faith, economic freedom and innovation in the Latin world



By Ricardo Luna

Between 2010 and 2012, the Latin World Evangelical Alliance, or Confraternidad Evangelica Latina (ConEL), conducted a survey of 7,169 leaders of the evangelical church in seven countries of the Latin world.

We asked, “What is the greatest social challenge in the community where you live?” The top three responses were: Families in crisis, addictions and poverty.

Yes, poverty is still a great issue in communities throughout the Latin world. It is our view that the seeds of faith planted in the early 20th century established a worldview and lifestyle of progress in the culture. Now, in a continent with fragile democracies and high levels of corruption, we must be intentional in targeting and establishing a sustainable, market-based, integrity-driven harvest of poverty alleviation and economic progress.

### • Faith

At the start of the 20th century, Latin America was 1 percent Protestant or evangelical, but at the end of the 20th century, 12 percent to 14 percent of the continent was evangelical.

This includes countries and sectors where evangelical Christianity has reached levels of 40 percent to 55 percent of the population. This makes Latin America, along with Africa, home to the fastest-growing churches in the world during the last century.

These statistics point to the contribution by Latin evangelicals to the greatest change in the culture since our colonization in the 1600s. Individuals began to value the dignity of work and of the worker. Churches, at first resistant to community involvement, eventually became agents of change in their communities, adopting a social agenda to our eternal worldview. These represent the seeds of change in our culture.

### • Economic Freedom

According to the United Nations, since the year 2000, cooperation between government, business and civil society (including churches) has resulted in the greatest progress in the eradication of poverty.

Extreme poverty (meaning an income equivalent to less than \$1.25 a day) stood at 13 percent of the population in 1990, but was reduced to less than 1.25 percent by 2015. Chronic poverty among 1.9 billion people in 1990 was reduced by almost half — 836 million people by 2015.

This is an incredible accomplishment given our history:

- Colonized not to establish freedom,

but subservience to the colonizers.

- Military governments, whose primary focus was security, often at the cost of economic and social justice.

- Conservative governments, which often focused on progress for a ruling class, but not the nation and its citizens at large.

- Populist governments, which targeted economic justice, often at the cost of freedom, while establishing economic models that limited innovation and created dependency.

The result: bankruptcies in national economies.

Yes, over 70 million people joined the middle class since the year 2000, yet 120 million people — that is one in every five Latin Americans — still live in poverty.

There is progress, but corruption and greed continue to steal the dream of economic justice. According to a U.N. leader, “Latin America remains the most unequal region in the world” — and the most violent. Regarding poverty alleviation, it is not time to stop, it is time to accelerate.

### • Create and innovate with ConEL

While the seeds of change have been planted, it is time to unleash the power of the 500,000 potential community-based social transformation centers, known as local evangelical churches in the Latin world. This is why ConEL is actively promoting models of transformation with a DNA of integrity and sustainability, for targeted local and digital communities.

Consider the following:

- **Next generations:** We are sowing

in the next generation by reaching every Latin child who will become an adolescent between 2015-2030, or some 232 million children, according to U.N. statistics. Sustainable worldview and integrity starts with the children.

- **The Cloud:** The PreBanco App is currently being developed with a ConEL partner. It fights the culture of debt by promoting a culture of stewardship of every dollar or peso. It will permit people to easily sort their incomes into spending (70 percent), investing (20 percent) and giving (10 percent) through options in the app.

- **Governance:** Our partners in the government sphere have established a school of governance to teach worldview and public policy of sustainability and integrity.

- **Sustainable social change:** Our Colombian ConEL partners have established communities of sustainability and integrity in a culture of poverty and violence. There are currently 75 “Sowing Peace” microbusinesses in largely rural areas that are flourishing with investments of \$500 to \$2,500 each. Peacemaking and a sustainable economy are brothers.

Friends, we are grateful for seeds of change in the Latin world. We need to move to a harvest of economic sustainability and integrity. Our next dream? A city of transformation. Join us!

*Ricardo Luna is global vice president of ConEL (Confraternidad Evangelica Latina), the Latin World Evangelical Alliance.*

## Profits and an ‘economy of mutuality’



By Dr. Tom Nelson

Money is often seen as intrinsically bad or perhaps a necessary evil in the world. However, we must not forget the important role money plays in wealth creation and in facilitating the efficient exchange of goods and services.

Money and the trade it makes possible further the common good and greatly enhance our ability to love our neighbors — both local and global. Christian philosopher Dallas Willard reminded us, “Business is an amazingly effective means of delivering God’s love to the world by loving, serving and providing for one another.”

The idea of profit can, at first blush, seem problematic, but upon closer

reflection, we can see the importance of profit within an economic system.

When property rights are well-defined and contracts are consistently enforced, profits perform important functions within modern economies. Profits provide rewards for technological innovation and resource efficiency in delivering goods and services. In this sense, profits are important incentives for promoting research and development, enabling enterprises to discover superior products and better ways to meet the needs of people.

Within a modern economy, profits are also signaling mechanisms encouraging others to devote more resources in

particular market opportunities.

As a boy, I fished on one of Minnesota’s 10,000 lakes. When the fish started biting in one particular part of the lake, it didn’t take long for a crowd of boats to show up and take advantage of the promising opportunity.

Like fish that are biting, profits also draw crowds. Profits can and do at times bring out the worst in economic actors, but in many ways the profit mechanisms encourage people to look out for others and to serve them in better ways. Profits also are vital to government and nonprofit organizations because these

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# Flourishing requires belief in human potential



By Gov. Sam Brownback

**T**he promise of America is a dream.

It is not the promise of an easy life, material wealth or even a white picket fence.

Instead, the promise is one of freedom. It is the promise of a country where citizens are free to create their own futures, free to pursue their own successes, free to build their own lives. The promise of America is that the unique dignity and potential of each human life is allowed to prosper and flourish, free of government intervention.

This belief in the enduring capacity of people illustrates the need for economic freedom.

A central part of the American promise is the idea that with hard work, every person — regardless of age, background or religion — has the opportunity to succeed and achieve. Fundamental to this dream is that government remains small and limited, giving maximum freedom to the individual. The great potential of America lies not in her government, but in her people.

As governor of Kansas, I have worked to pass laws that recognize and respect the capacity of our citizens. The goal

was simple: institute laws and policies to incentivize growth, reduce regulatory red tape, and empower people to build a stronger economy. Trusting that Kansans should keep more of their hard-earned money — and, if given that freedom, individuals and businesses will succeed — we cut taxes.

We cut taxes for everyone who paid state income tax, enabling families to keep more of their wages to invest or spend as they see fit. We also completely lifted the income tax burden for nearly 400,000 of the poorest Kansans, giving the struggling among us relief and allowing them an opportunity to regain their economic footing.

The last piece focused on job creators, bringing the small-business income tax rate to zero. By unleashing these job creators, who employ nearly 70 percent of the Kansas workforce, we are encouraging growth and spurring new hirings, wage growth, business expansion and innovation.

The principles put into practice brought success; greater economic freedom for Kansans allowed for greater creativity and innovation. Last year alone, a record-setting 17,298 new businesses opened in our state. That figure represents thousands of Kansans now serving their communities with unique faculties and talents, in addition to the individuals they hire to join them in that mission. Last year marked the fifth consecutive record-setting year for new businesses in Kansas, despite a national decline in startups.

The story of a small business in Osage County, Kansas, illustrates how increased economic freedom bettered the lives of not only the entrepreneurs and their family, but eventually extends the benefits into whole communities. This particular family business served their clients through physical therapy

and chiropractic care. With tax reform now law and their income tax burden lifted, the owners were able to reinvest that money into their community, not only in their own business, but helping other local businesses grow as well. In the period from 2012 to 2016, they more than doubled the amount of money they could invest in their business and the

flourish.

But most of all, the promise of America requires a belief in human potential. The capacity to dream, innovate and prosper lies in every person. The imprint of each life bears unique talents and gifts. Economic freedom provides the space to realize that human dignity through work, innovation and creativity.



local economy of their small town by purchasing goods and services from 12 additional local companies.

With this greater economic prosperity, Kansans are able to build a stronger, brighter future for themselves, their communities and future generations yet to come.

A more free country with limited government and lower taxes means greater economic opportunity for more people. It opens the door for increased economic mobility and security, and the promise of a better future to more Americans. A belief in limited government is a belief that given the freedom and opportunity to succeed, individuals and families will

Every American should have the ability to build their own American dream. For every person, that dream looks different — a welder, a professor, a soldier, a businessman — but to become a reality, every dream requires hard work, passion and dedication. In short, the American dream requires the American spirit. We owe it to the next generation of Americans, born and unborn, to preserve a land where freedom and opportunity reign, so they too can live in a land of liberty where dreams are plentiful and spirit abounds.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback was elected in 2010 and won a second term in 2014.

## NELSON

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important sectors of society all depend on the economic engine of for-profit enterprises for their success.

While it is true that business and commerce often fall short of meeting the neighborly love standard, the importance of for-profit enterprises must not be minimized or discredited. Rather, I believe profit should be seen in the context of a more integral paradigm called the “economics of mutuality.”

One promising possibility for making the free market better is to move beyond approaches that look to the sole bottom line of profit and to move toward triple-bottom-line approaches, which take into account not only profit, but also

promoting the flourishing of people as well as the planet.

Yes, profit remains a key bottom line. But people and the planet become bottom lines as well.

Supporters of this kind of economics of mutuality are offering a salutary critique of the hyperindividualism and narrow focus of those free market systems that assert the sole purpose of business is to maximize shareholder profit.

One of the thought leaders promoting the adoption of a triple bottom line in business is Mars Inc.

The Mars company makes life more enjoyable not only by producing peanut M&Ms, but also by paving the way forward for many profitable business enterprises. For Mars Inc. and other for-profit companies, there is an increasing recognition of a more

complex bottom line than shareholder value only. Yes, there is a good and needed desire to sustain profitability for the long haul, but not without taking into account the resulting positives and negatives on people and the planet as a whole.

Mars board Chairman Stephen M. Badger II describes his all-in commitment to a free market system and his embrace of the economics of mutuality this way: “Clearly, then, Mutuality — creating shared value for all stakeholders through a form of capitalism and responsible business practices that defines success in much broader terms than profits for shareholders — has had a profound effect on Mars, and indeed my own life.”

I am hopeful that with business leaders like Stephen Badger, our free

market system can function better for the flourishing of all our neighbors and neighborhoods. The economics of mutuality align well with biblical wisdom for human flourishing and suggest good possibilities for enhancing the common good. A corporation is a good thing, but a corporation that has corporate social responsibility, not only to its shareholders but also toward the value supply chain of the local and global neighborhood, is even better.

Tom Nelson, D.Min., is senior pastor at Christ Community Church in Kansas City, Kansas, and president of Made to Flourish, a pastors’ network for the common good. This essay is taken from an excerpt from his book to be released in 2017 by InterVarsity Press.





By David Durell

Innovation and creativity are credited with much of the vast material wealth and cultural richness that has been built in the West.

There are multiple theories to explain this phenomenon, but in my experience, this dynamic stems from the nature of God, the first Creator.

As said in Genesis 1:1-5 New International Version (NIV): *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day.*

This God has creative energy so mighty that he merely needs to speak and the universe responds in creation. He creates *"ex nihilo,"* or out of nothing. The God of the Bible incarnates this creative impulse. Businesses, their leaders and associates create value from God's creation in the form of continuously improving products and services. Men seem compelled to create, and where there is political and religious freedom, humankind has flourished.

God asserts that he made man in his own image, a creator, in Genesis 1:26 (NIV): *Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

I grew up working for a family-owned company called UnionTools, a manufacturer of tools for lawn, garden, farm and industry. I worked in a factory during summer breaks and developed a deep love for manufacturing processes — forging, metal stamping, welding, machining, wood milling, etc.

Our own children were forced to take the occasional factory tour during our family vacations: Thos.

Moser furniture factory in Maine one summer, Boeing's wide-body airliner factory in Everett, Washington, on another.

The rapid pace of innovation on the factory floor validates the Genesis verse in which God said man would be a creator like him. Some create in the classroom. Some in the kitchen. Some in factories. Some create in the context of discipleship relationships.

And what do disciple-makers create? When they are successful, they create mature, replicating Christian saints. 2 Timothy 2:2 says that we are to "entrust the Word to reliable people who will be qualified to teach others."

In the last 30 years, Cummins Inc. created a fuel system and other ingenious innovations that improved the thermal efficiency of their engines. Their share of global market for diesel engines and its stock price have soared. Innovation transformed a fuel-thirsty, black soot-belching engine into one of the cleanest-burning, fuel-sipping power plants available in the market.

The most successful and creative business leader I have met, however, is Dr. R. Stanley Tam, who built a business in Lima, Ohio, called United States Plastic Corp.

Stanley loves Jesus Christ and may have been the first businessman

Spirit full credit, he was confident that, including the ministries he has helped to fund, the number has six figures. Mark 10:29-30 states: *"Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields — along with persecutions — and in the age to come eternal life."*

The economics of working for Jesus in this life are far more compelling than any job we may be hired to perform or even build for ourselves.

Jesus promises "a hundred times" return when we work for him. And according to this verse, these benefits accrue to Christ followers in this life and in the age to come, eternity or heaven. For the mathematicians in the crowd, that is a 10,000 percent return and, significantly, it not guaranteed by the FDIC. It is guaranteed by the same God whose power spoke the universe into existence.

Apostle Paul and Stanley Tam worked in an environment designed for manufacturing and innovation, but these men understood the Great Commission and decided to "create disciples of Jesus Christ" in the very midst of their factories.

Why? Because they agreed with God about what the most important product one can create: mature, replicating Christian saints, who are the raw material from which God builds the Church of Jesus Christ.

As Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) says, *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

David Durell lives in Columbus, Ohio, where he and his wife, Anne, are engaged with a growing team of local church, parachurch and marketplace leaders who are praying for Jesus to redeem their city. Dave attended Williams College. He and Anne raised three children who, by the grace of God, are all Christian disciple-makers. Anne and Dave help co-lead a home-based church affiliated with Xenos Christian Fellowship. Dave also serves on the board of trustees for Mission Columbus, Hillsdale College, The Acton Institute and Mercy Medical Center Cambodia.



**Businesses, their leaders and associates, create value from God's creation in the form of continuously improving products and services. Men seem compelled to create, and where there is political and religious freedom, humankind has flourished.**

St. Paul was a tent manufacturer, and I imagine he disciplined many young tentmakers into mature Christians in the midst of that very setting.

In my 35-year career in business, I have had the good fortune to observe several innovative businesses.

I worked for Cummins Engine Co., when it converted a product, which was almost outlawed by the Environmental Protection Agency in the 1970s for the tons of carcinogens diesel engines poured into the atmosphere, into the contemporary diesel engine, which, in certain cities, emits cleaner air from its exhaust than it breathes in.

to learn how to allow God to legally own his company; an innovation to be sure. We invited Stanley to Columbus seven years ago to speak to over 200 business people. He led 22 individuals to receive Jesus Christ as savior that afternoon, and it is safe to say that he has led many thousands to Christ over his long lifetime. Additionally, Stanley has generously funded dozens of ministries around the world to advance the gospel.

I asked Stanley that day as I drove him back to the airport how many people he thinks he may have helped lead to Christ, and while he gave the Holy

# ‘Mankind is our business’



**By Mike Sharrow**

In December 2005, I sat with my wife in a small Chicago theater watching a charming production of Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.”

I found myself unexpectedly moved. In the closing act, Ebenezer Scrooge has been wildly transformed from his greed-fueled life and is gushing in benevolence and generosity such that his old business advisers protest, “Ebenezer, you can’t keep giving like this — think about what it will mean for the business!”

To which Ebenezer passionately replies, slamming his fist on a desk, “From now on, mankind IS our business!”

Right then, something about his declaration moved me to a place of clarity and resolve. Emotion swelled within me; he was right.

What does faith in the marketplace have to do with a flourishing economy and prospering society? Everything.

In 1800 B.C., a rancher near Baghdad was commissioned to be the patriarch of a tribe intended to “bless all people of the earth.” We know this man as Abraham, and his descendants are the Jewish people from whom we receive the Bible, Jesus, Albert Einstein, Solomon, Steven Spielberg and even Bob Dylan.

Abraham was an agricultural titan with a fantastic portfolio of assets and hundreds of employees, but it was his faith that both prospered his enterprise and contributed to the flourishing of every community he engaged in.

Chinese economist Dr. Zhao Xiao researched capitalistic market societies for implications for China. In 2002, his “Market Economies With Churches and Market Economies Without Churches” proved a scandalous treatise, as it boldly concluded that the success of American capitalism greatly hinged upon the presence of faith and Judeo-Christian values to counterbalance the cannibalistic tendencies greed fueled in such markets.

Essentially, he wrote, if China wanted to leverage capitalism and flourish, it needed to simultaneously cultivate

religious fervor within the marketplace!

Any casual review of the last decade of “white-collar” crime, ethics scandals and corruption illustrates the dangers of free market forces devoid of values anchored in something greater than self-interest.

We recently engaged the Best Christian Workplace Institute to assess our own company culture around their eight dimensions of “flourishing.”

We were assessed around fantastic teams, life-giving work, outstanding talent, uplifting growth, rewarding compensation, inspirational leadership, sustainable strategy, healthy communication and overall engagement.

For over 20 years, we have evaluated thousands of C12 Group member CEOs against a “Tri-Value” model — economic, team and spiritual “value add.” All of these assessment dimensions are rooted in a faith system that calls for the type of robust stewardship that yields prospering economies, flourishing people and transformed communities.

A flourishing society and prosperous economy requires values unlikely to germinate in a schizophrenically partitioned society, where faith is somehow

excluded from the public square. We don’t need a secular marketplace devoid of faith. Our nation needs more authentic faith expression throughout the marketplace, with followers of Jesus effectively demonstrating the policies and priorities of His administration through every aspect of business.

A society where faith-fueled stewards in the marketplace demonstrate their faith in the products, processes and people they manage will be a flourishing one by all measures. The God of Abraham is in the people business and calls all followers in every sector of the marketplace to remember that “mankind is our business” — because it is His business!

We know the term “Puritan Work Ethic” because of how the early stages of the American Experiment was marked by entrepreneurial output that fueled our nation’s formative GDP. Beyond productivity, faith — rightly expressed with dignity and humility — yields desperately needed values, localized compassion, hope and stability.

Faith in the workplace led Trevor Bird to deploy Harley H.E.A.R.T. Programs across Harley Davidson dealerships in

Texas to see dozens set free from addictions. It led James Ruder to leverage L&R Pallets Service Inc., (Denver) to provide jobs and training to refugees from Southeast Asia. It’s why Jeff Jaime would lead Taurean, a cybersecurity firm, to impact the lives of hundreds of local foster children and at-risk families, and build wells in Africa.

These business leaders share a common faith, which fuels their values and leadership. Their employees, customers and entire communities are the beneficiaries of such businesses operated with a stewardship mindset.

Mike Sharrow is CEO for The C12 Group, the nation’s largest CEO & executive round table operator for Christians, serving 2,000 members across 32 states representing hundreds of thousands of U.S. employees and over \$65 billion in annual revenues. Through participation in over 250 peer advisory groups, thousands of leaders are committed to “building great businesses for a GREATER purpose.” Find out more at [www.C12Group.com](http://www.C12Group.com).





# Redefining business leadership as ‘stewardship’



**By Terence Chatmon**

**T**he Fellowship of Companies for Christ International is redefining the rules on business. Markets with a conscience thrive.

Most people would say that a business exists to produce shareholders’ value, or profits. This is a true statement of sorts, but can a nation thrive with this belief?

Let me propose a different view.

Business leaders who are integrating biblical principles in their lives and businesses learn that their companies exist for a greater purpose: to honor God, to create wealth and to support the community through Christian service. That is a different, or redefined, mission statement with eternal objectives.

There are many ways to serve the millions of people in grinding poverty. FCCI, for three decades, has equipped and encouraged Christian business owners to integrate their faith at work, lifting people up, and giving them hope and a future through the marketplace.

The core of America’s economy is

small business. Of the 28 million businesses accounted for in our records, 22 million are considered small businesses with fewer than 25 employees — but their impact holds up the arms of America.

Some may say that what makes America great is its vast military, education system and economy. In our opinion, what makes America great are small businesses, whose owners feel called to serve others more than themselves. Not for themselves, but for those who have been given to them to shepherd. These are our true warriors on the front lines of fighting poverty in this nation. These are our true influencers who are making America great again. These are our true shepherds caring for the flock, all for a greater purpose.

Is America in decline? Is the decay of our morals and values eating at the very

nerve system of this nation? Can any nation fulfill its constitutional responsibility with a heart for its people? To make America great again, we must start to care about its people again. We must start to care about small business owners who make America great.

Lives are changed when we see ourselves as stewards committed to a greater purpose than self, a greater cause than self. It all changes when our worldview and mindset commit it all to a greater purpose and something eternal. Proverbs 16:3 ESV says, “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”

One of the foundational principles of FCCI is that God owns it all, and we are stewards of what He has entrusted us with. We are to use our earthly resources for His glory, not ours. This is stewardship. A country cannot prosper without

this basic underpinning supporting it. Many Christians don’t have an accurate concept of what stewardship is all about. When we hear the word “stewardship,” most of us think about the program at church where we are asked to increase our contributions to the budget. Unfortunately, that is a narrow view.

“Stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, material possessions ... and all God’s gifts to us ... based on the conviction that these are a trust from God, to be used in his service, for the benefit of all mankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ’s redeeming love,” John Haggai wrote in his book “The Steward.”

Essentially, we are managers of God’s possessions, all of which He owns.

It is not the wallet but the heart of a man or woman that makes us strong. A heart redefined will make America strong, nurtured by principles that will shape the very core of our nation. No nation can thrive with an inward, selfish focus. We must look beyond ourselves and love something or someone other than self.



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*Terence Chatmon serves as president and CEO of Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, a fellowship of executive leaders in 139 countries. In his role, he is leading unprecedented efforts to equip and encourage leaders in small-, medium- and large-size companies. FCCI is known around the world for its global platform, world-class annual international conference, rich library of business leadership resources and transformational Kingdom Leader and Kingdom Company models. For more information, visit [fcci.org](http://fcci.org).*

## Aiming at abundant lives — and livelihoods



**By John Scott**

As the second-generation owner of a commercial construction company near

Washington, D.C., I have explored the driving force behind my work. I prayed for a vision and landed on this: Use your influence to create environments where people can experience abundant life.

Since that time, I have been working toward creating a place where our people can work in an environment that resembles what God intended.

We are not a Christian company, but I do pray that God’s “kingdom will come on earth as in heaven” in our organization. As a construction guy, I am pretty practical, and I live with the end in mind. The Bible says that in the end all things will be perfect and as they were intended.

I believe that abundant life means that we are growing and becoming who we are created to be. So what does that mean

for a construction company? We boil it down to three commitments:

1. Employee development.
2. Repeat relationships.
3. Operational excellence.

These three commitments lead to both our individual and our corporate growth.

Frankly, 90 percent of our employees don’t know the spiritual “why?” behind our commitments. What they do know is that doing business with these at our core is satisfying.

### • Employee development

Practically speaking, we have about 90 employees who are developing professionally, educationally, relationally and spiritually if they choose. We have annual learning goals for each employee to help

them develop. We believe that everyone should be working, growing, becoming — moving toward his or her potential. Each supervisor is responsible for the growth of his employees. Success is measured by team development and team member growth.

### • Repeat relationships

Our core value of commitment to relationships is based on the belief that good relationships are important. If we are going to be with each other forever, then how we deal with others takes on a different perspective today. Our customers, architects, engineers, subcontractors, co-workers — all are important and all these relationships should be nourished.

» see **SCOTT** | **C30**



# Leveraging the workplace for greater good



By Diane Paddison

**O**n the Feb. 13, 2015 episode of ABC-TV's "Shark Tank," my friend, Liz Bohannon, and her husband, Ben, presented their Ugandan-based footwear company — Sseko Designs — to the famous board of billionaire investors.

The pitch started well, as Liz built consensus by saying that they "believe passionately that business has a role in making the world a better place," to which the Sharks responded, "I love it!"

But ultimately, the Sharks declined to invest, arguing that the best model for philanthropy is to be hyperfocused on profits above all else, so that you can get rich and then give back, and not "bake in social impact from Day One," as Sseko has done.

As the former COO of two Fortune 500 and a Fortune 1000 companies and now founder of 4word, the only global nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting, leading and supporting Christian women in the workplace to achieve their potential, I often get asked which model is the better model for philanthropy.

The answer to the question, to me, is simple. Both models can be effective, but long-term success in either requires the same three ingredients: hard work, organizational flexibility and personal responsibility.

For example, I met a dear friend in Dallas, Brittany Merrill Underwood, through the Laura Bush Women's Initiative. Brittany was so moved by a chance encounter with a Ugandan woman caring for 24 children in her home that she moved to Uganda after graduating college to build an orphanage to give a home to abandoned children.

While she was successful, she realized through the process that building an orphanage proved to be a high-cost, limited-return endeavor. Without diverting from her original mission, she radically redirected her multiyear, not-for-profit organization from a bricks-and-mortar construction strategy toward a strategy of training, employing and empowering local women. What she had discovered was that by investing in women over buildings, her organization could have a far broader impact and enable women and mothers to care for thousands more children than her orphanage could hold.

The result is Akola — which means "to work" — a not-for-profit jewelry enterprise that produces goods that can be found anywhere from her storefront in Dallas to the glass case in Neiman Marcus. And Akola's reach has spanned from national to international, employing women abroad in Uganda and at home in Dallas with the same original mission in mind — taking care of children who could not care for themselves.

Stories like Liz's and Brittany's are unique, but they are not alone in founding social impact-focused business models. Many are familiar with TOMS shoes, which donates a shoe for every shoe purchased, or Whole Foods, which is the first certified organic grocer in the United States.

As before, these examples, whether socially focused, for-profit or other, share the same three ingredients for success, but the major difference — and this is the key — is that the degree of organizational focus on a social cause is directly proportional to the personal investment by the organization's leadership in the cause.

In my own experience, I have worked in various corporate models on social

issues, from the board room to the basement. I worked for years as a woman in a male-dominated industry. At times, I took my lumps, and over time, I decided that I wanted to make a change to lead and support people in situations similar to mine. As I grew within the Trammell Crow Company, I started a corporate diversity initiative that has, I am proud to say, outlived my tenure and continues today. I loved my job, and as a COO, I was passionate about leading and building teams.

calls to working from my home office, but I am grateful that it did. I have for a long time championed and supported the same cause that 4word supports successfully.

Now, as I meet people who ask me which model of philanthropy is correct, I tell them that there are several that work with the right mix of dedication, flexibility and personal responsibility. More importantly, I challenge them to choose their cause and to fight for it, so that whether their path follows Liz's or Brit-



Liz Bohannon leads fashion company Sseko Designs, which empowers women in Uganda and East Africa to further their educations and support their families. Image courtesy of 4wordwomen.org.

After several years, however, I decided — like Brittany — that my passion and my talents were necessarily limited if I stayed inside a single corporation, both because of the limited impact of our work and the level of commitment my leadership shared to the cause I care so much about. So, after much thought and prayer, I decided to start 4word-women.org to support the 71 percent of women with children under the age of 18 who work outside the home.

I never imagined my career would lead me from the Wall Street earnings

tany's or mine, they can leverage their workplace for the good of others.

Diane Paddison is founder of 4word (4wordwomen.org), the only global organization serving Christian women in the workplace. She is the author of "Work, Love, Pray" and the former member of the Global Executive Teams of two Fortune 500 and one Fortune 1000 companies. Josh Campbell, a real estate executive, assisted with this article.

## SCOTT

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We don't get to burn bridges. Relationships are hard. Construction is especially messy and full of conflict, but if we can work to enhance our relationships, then we are working to bring the "kingdom" to earth. We are absolutely not perfect, but we are trying.

### • Operational excellence

Operational excellence is the third

commitment that we pursue. Of course, we want to be excellent. We want to be the best. We want to reach our potential as builders, estimators, accountants, project managers, carpenters and laborers. Becoming excellent, mastering what we have learned, and reaching our potential is honoring to God. For the most part, our people are not considering God when working toward excellence, but I think God made excellence something that we naturally want to achieve, no matter our beliefs. Being excellent is what God intended for us.

How do we do all of this?

We measure employee development, we measure repeat-customer and architect relationships, and we measure our excellence by profits, quality and project schedules. We promote our people based on these measurements.

Again, our employees are not all in sync with me regarding the "why" behind our commitments. However, for those that are interested in pursuing spiritual things, we have a corporate chaplain who holds monthly Bible studies, leads a weekly prayer time and provides mentoring.

What is the abundant life for our people? Growing, having great relationships, being excellent and becoming who they are created to be.

John Scott is president and CEO of Scott-Long Construction, Inc., a general contracting firm in the Washington, D.C., area. The firm specializes in building "projects that make a positive impact on the community," including health care, senior living, and faith-based and other community projects. John lives in Virginia with his wife and three children.



# Popcorn and lemonade sales point Detroit to fiscal health



## By Pastor Christopher Brooks

I have had the privilege of being born, raised and shaped by Detroit. Seeing the world through the lens of this beautiful but broken city has framed my view of human flourishing in ways that are truly amazing and counterintuitive.

For example, I am convinced that some of the best economists are urban youth.

That may seem like a ridiculous statement to some, but for those of us who have experienced the hood firsthand, we know that it is true. Inner-city youth may not be Ivy League-trained, but they have several strategic advantages over the rest of us. They are economic innovators who are blessed with an inexhaustible creativity, boundless faith in spite of their difficult circumstances and an unmatched intuitive adaptability to the market environment and cities they occupy.

Take, for example, Josh Smith, who was a bright and budding 9-year-old growing up in the heart of Detroit in 2012, when the city first publicly announced that it was on the brink of insolvency. Detroit had run out of money and the mayor had no more political options in front of him.

Although Josh had not pored over the city's financial statements and did not possess the vantage point of Detroit's highly paid accountants, he did see the condition of the neighborhood park directly across the street from his home. Josh knew that the once-picturesque park, which was now rendered dysfunctional due to blight, was not going to be fixed by a government that had no money.

So this young urbanite did something that was innate and economically savvy: Josh started a business.

Driven by a love for his neighborhood and financial common sense, he divined that the best thing he could do as a citizen of Detroit was earn a profit by selling a product that met the needs

of his neighbors.

He launched an enterprise that sold popcorn and lemonade that summer, and it was massively successful. Folks from around the metro Detroit region heard about this 9-year-old businessman and his entrepreneurial endeavor and came to buy his product. His business was thriving, and his Christian upbringing motivated him to donate the profits he produced to the redevelopment of the neighborhood park where he and his friends wanted to play.

Josh Smith's story gained national attention. It attracted and inspired people from around the world to invest, launch businesses and use entrepreneurial thinking to help solve the stagnant prob-

a small group of government planners, no matter how well trained they may be. This is because the knowledge needed to make smart and efficient financial decisions is too vast and multifaceted for a handful of political leaders to amass.

Hayek was convinced the best thing that could happen for communities to flourish was for individuals to engage in unencumbered markets of exchange, where they could buy and sell products, services and productivity at price levels set by their own economic assessments of the value of these goods. It was the unleashing of entrepreneurial enterprises that brought real and sustainable profit, as business leaders intuitively made adjustments to meet the needs of

fallen in love with the economic imagination of John Maynard Keynes, who promoted an interventionist approach to producing prosperity that featured an economy that was stimulated by a hyperactive government.

Hayek was a prophet of sorts. He announced to a world gripped by socialism on one side and enticed by interventionism on the other that neither could produce a strong and sustainable economy. He prophesied that socialism was untenable and doomed to fail nearly six decades before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ultimate demise of communism around the world. He predicted that the inevitable outcome of interventionism would be a boom-and-bust cycle that would leave high unemployment and even higher interest rates in its wake.

Hayek knew that flourishing depended on the acceptance of the idea that economic knowledge was disbursed among the many and not held by the few, contextualized to local communities and mostly intuitive to the individual.

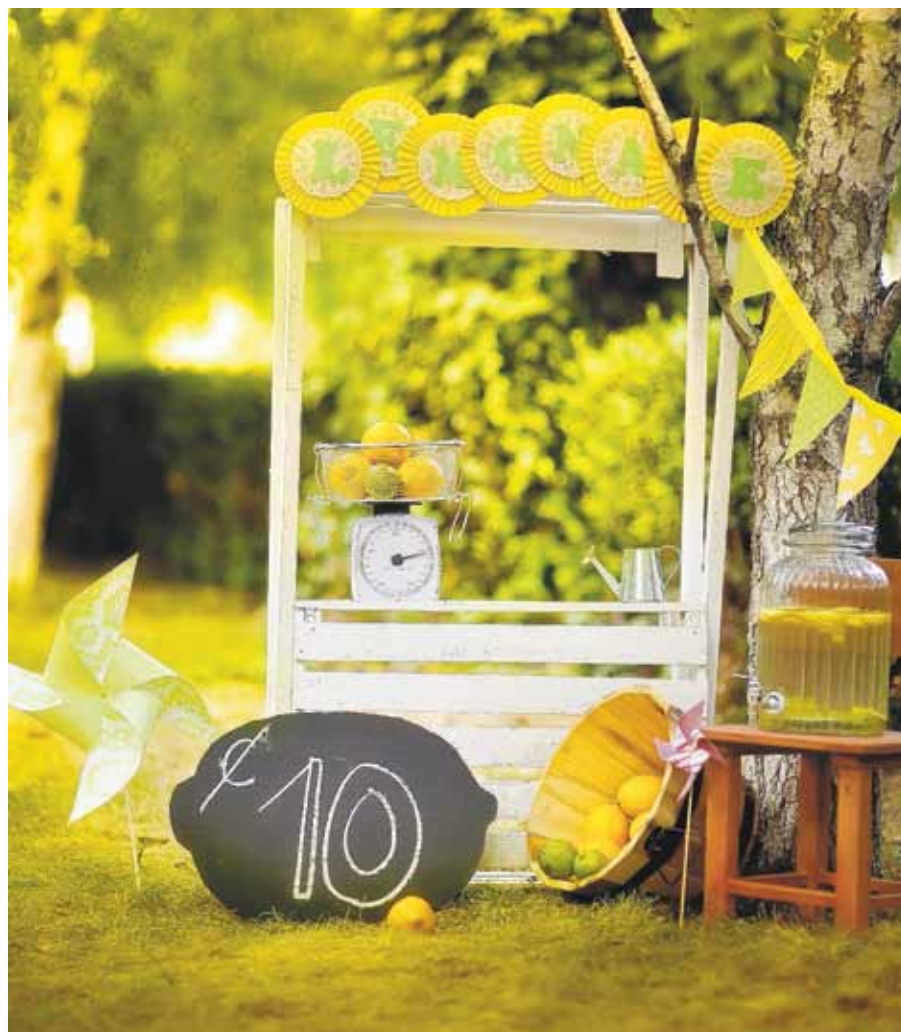
The duty of any prophet, which is so often undesirable but undeniably necessary for social transformation, is to go against the mainstream.

This is the legacy and brilliance of Hayek. He believed that enterprising individuals, who were free to unleash their entrepreneurial spirit on a community, could fix what government had broken.

Hayek didn't have the privilege of being born, raised and shaped by my Detroit, and he never had the blessing of meeting Josh Smith. But I am convinced that if he had heard of what this young urban business leader did in the face of his city's bankruptcy, Hayek would be pleased.

Detroit is now on the rise and experiencing a renaissance driven by an explosion of small businesses and a cutting back of government. This is proof that Austrian Economics is not simply beneficial for solving large-scale geopolitical problems, but it is also good for the hood!

Pastor Christopher Brooks is senior pastor of Evangel Ministries, a thriving 1,600-member church in the heart of Detroit, and author of two books, "Kingdom Dreaming" and "Urban Apologetics." He is also the daily host of two radio program, "Equipped for Life," aired daily on the Salem Network at 1500 AM, and a national live talk show, "Equipped with Chris Brooks," airing daily on Moody Radio. He was appointed Campus Dean of Moody Theological Seminary's Michigan Campus in 2013, and can be reached at @equippedradio.



lems of Detroit.

Detroit stood on the brink of bankruptcy as a result of government mismanagement, but Josh knew intuitively that business could fix what government had broken.

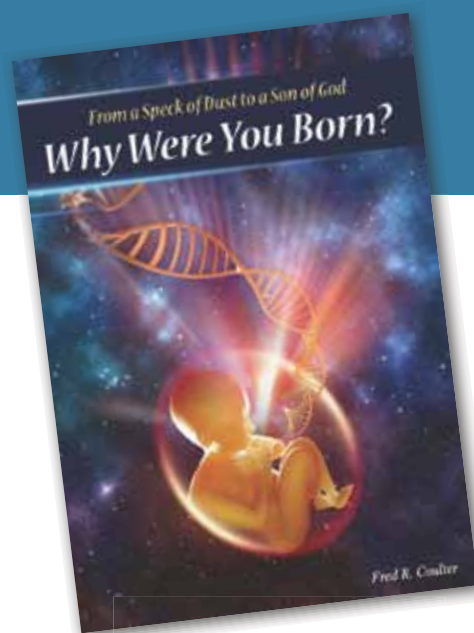
Without realizing it, Josh was employing the central principle of what many refer to as Austrian Economics.

This school of economic thinking was championed by the famed economist F.A. Hayek, who believed that economies are far too complex to be engineered by

their neighbors.

It is worth noting that Hayek sought to mainstream Austrian economic ideas during a time when it was unpopular to do so.

The mid-20th century was marked by two other competing schools of economic thought that were far more widely accepted than free market economics. Eastern Europe saw the rise of Marxist Communism, which brought with it a heavy-handed socialism that initially seemed altruistic. The West had



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# Are you asking the big questions?

DOES LIFE HAVE *eternal purpose*? Or is human existence a mere fleeting moment in time?

This is the age-old question, the *big question*, that has always challenged man—*Why were you born?* Frankly, most people go through life never seriously addressing this question.

Christians carelessly assume their destiny lies in heaven; Eastern religions teach an assortment of reincarnation ideas; and Jews theorize with considerable uncertainty about paradise and the possibility of life in new age. But it's all rather vague; indeed, no one

seems *certain* about human destiny. Fred Coulter's new book, *From a Speck of Dust to a*

*Son of God—Why Were You Born?*, answers this intriguing question with authority—and it

has nothing to do with *going to heaven*. In fact, Coulter shows from the Bible that God's purpose for mankind is *far greater* than even today's Christian has dared to imagine! Are you ready for this

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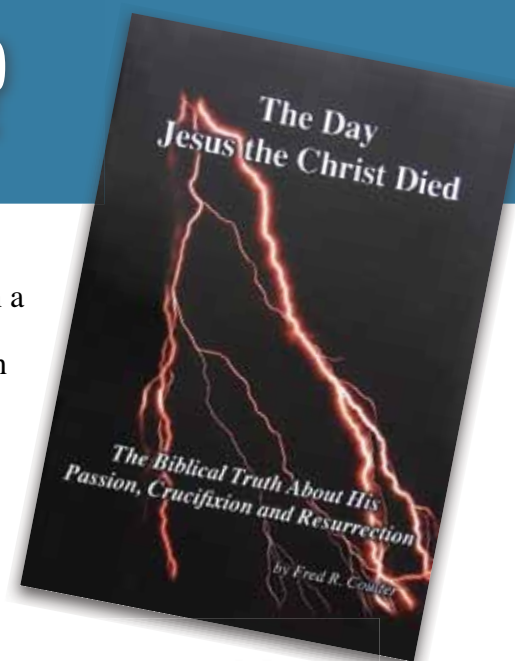
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