

# RELIGION & LIBERTY

November and December • 2002 A Publication of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty Volume 12 • Number 6

## Toward Integrating Work and Faith



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**R&L:** *You have written many books and articles on the subject of "living out faith at work." What do you conclude to be the largest impediment to practicing a life of faith in the workplace?*

**Nash:** If I had to pick one thing, the biggest impediment seems to be a lack of spiritual imagination. There has been so little explicit role modeling on how to do this that the world of work can seem far removed from all of the problems and settings in which we normally learn to practice faith and in which the church reinforces the practice of faith. In other words, we learn to imagine the profile of a person of faith at church, with our families, in prayers for peace, in social action to alleviate the plight of the poor. But none of

those things occur within a business setting. This results in a kind of cramped imagination about faith at work.

**R&L:** *You mentioned a lack of proper role modeling. Who should be the role models? Business people who exhibit this spiritual imagination or are you thinking of someone else?*

**Nash:** The real issue here is that the role modeling has to come more strongly from within the business setting itself,

which means business leaders. That does not mean the "in your face" role modeling of somebody always wearing religion on his or her sleeve. Role modeling is more about engaging in behavior that is compassionate, consistent with conscience, and has some sense of purpose beyond greed or material gain. When people exhibit these behaviors in a tough business environment, others resonate with their values and leadership. But this is not necessarily a totally secular activity just because no one mentioned religion. These are qualities consistent with people of faith who have spiritual strength and a religious worldview that is relevant to their work.

**R&L:** *In your most recent book, Church on Sunday, Work on Monday, you indicate that many business people professing*

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE** ☉ **Articles:** "Views of Wealth in the Bible and the Ancient World" by Scott B. Rae, and "Living Truth for a Post-Christian World: The Message of Francis Schaeffer and Karol Wojtyła" by Eduardo J. Echeverria ☉ **Review Essay:** "Hot Topics in Economics" by Rodolpho Carrasco ☉ **Editor's Review:** *The Creation of Wealth: Recovering a Christian Understanding of Money, Work, and Ethics* ☉ **In the Liberal Tradition:** John Ronald Reuel Tolkien ☉ **Column:** "A Subtle Threat to Freedom" by the Rev. Robert A. Sirico ☉ **Plus Book News.**

*religious faith experience a “radical disconnection between Sunday services and Monday morning activities, describing a sense of living in two worlds that never touch each other.” What are the causes and effects of this “radical disconnection?”*

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***It is important that churches and congregations begin to develop the expertise and resources for looking at economic issues—not so that the clergy may become economic experts, but so that they can understand how they can support their congregation in these matters.***

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**Nash:** We interviewed both the clergy and business people about the sense of connection in the interchange they were having with each other over questions of business activity and its religious content. We found that these two groups were talking past each other, and we discovered an intriguing set of basic causes for this disconnect. The first was a seismic difference in their worldview about the meaning of capitalism and profit. For the clergy, profit was a clear sign of “me-first” self-interest, materialistic and therefore not Christian. To the businessperson, profit was a result of actions that were partially other-oriented combined with le-

gitimate pursuit of self-interest, like serving a customer, or creating jobs, or donating part of the proceeds to charity. The second major difference was present in their language. The clergy’s language reflects what I would call a subtrac-

tive approach. They would solve problems by emphasizing taking away things, such as money, from the “haves” as a means of providing benefit to the disadvantaged. The business people used an additive language. They would speak of providing jobs and creating valued services and products to increase standard of living. There were

also turf battles about who had the ultimate authority over moral economic interpretations. Finally, there were deep differences in their role modeling. Clergy identified with suffering and outward weakness, business people with leading and strength. We urgently need to understand these differences and address them. The business people tended to stereotype clergy as failing to understand business, and church professionals tended to stereotype business people as failing to care. Right from the start, they have no common ground from which to address important religious concerns about business.

**R&L:** *Based on your research, what do you consider to be the prevailing opinion of the clergy regarding business and of business people regarding the church?*

**Nash:** While I stress that not everyone characterized it this severely, many of the business people we interviewed considered the clergy to be fuzzy-minded, impractical, using big words that do not really apply to anything, and thinking they have solutions based on theories lacking feasibility that they see in the media. The clergy had a real concern that business represented the promotion of materialism through things like advertising and that business people were really rewarded for being out for themselves. Each of those worldviews contains an element of truth. Unfortunately, plenty of confirmation for these stereotypes exists. But still these are only partial pictures that have not been well thought through on either side. Business people and the clergy really need to listen to each other, so that their actual voices can begin to fill in that picture with the depth of their faith and experience. It is important that churches and congregations begin to develop the expertise and the resources for looking at economic issues—not so that the clergy may become economic experts, but so that they can understand how they can support their congregation in these matters.



**RELIGION & LIBERTY**  
*A Publication of the Acton Institute for  
the Study of Religion and Liberty*  
Volume 12 • Number 6

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Letters and subscription requests should be directed to: *Religion & Liberty*; Acton Institute; 161 Ottawa Ave., n.w., Suite 301; Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

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**R&L:** On what do the clergy and business people base their opinions?

**Nash:** The clergy tend to form their opinions on a couple sources of knowledge. One is advertising and media portrayals of business people. These portrayals are usually romanticized caricatures (as villains or heroes) that are not encountered quite the same way in the business world. Real

people have more nuances than that. The second way is through economic positional statements from the denomination, seminaries, or theologians in which business is treated at a macro level in absolute terms. These positional statements tend to be rather anti-business. The whole issue revolves around an impression that a person who is for capitalism is against the worker. It can become a crypto-communism of sorts. For the business people, the source of in-

## John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892–1973)

*“You can make the Ring into an allegory of our own time, if you like: an allegory of the inevitable fate that waits for all attempts to defeat evil power by power”*

J. R. R. Tolkien was professor of Anglo-saxon and English language and literature from 1925-59 at Oxford University. Tolkien is most famous for his books *The Hobbit* (1937), *The Lord of the Rings*, which entails the three volumes entitled *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King* (1954-55), and *The Silmarillion* (1977), all of which are set in the mythological world of Middle-earth. Tolkien was a devout Catholic who both remembered and experienced times when religious freedom was not completely guaranteed in the United Kingdom. Faith, for Tolkien, as his literary biographer Joseph Pearce reports, “was not an opinion to which one subscribed, but a reality to which one submitted.” In fact, Tolkien’s relationship with C. S. Lewis, Tolkien’s friend and colleague at Oxford, was instrumental in bringing a disillusioned Lewis back to the Christian faith. Tolkien’s faith is as central in his Middle-earth books as his concern to preserve freedom. Before becoming the distinguished professor, Tolkien served in the British army during the First World War. Tolkien’s first-hand experiences in World War I instilled in him an immense preoccupation with, if not a generalized anxiety about, the rise of totalitarianism.



The evil of totalitarianistic power is one of the central themes in *The Lord of the Rings*. As Tolkien himself explained, *The Lord of the Rings* is a story “cast in terms of a good side, and a bad side, beauty against ruthless ugliness, tyranny against kingship, moderated freedom with consent against compulsion that has long lost any object save mere power, and so on.” The basic plot of *The Lord of the Rings* involves the epic quest to destroy the One Ring, in which is contained the power to rule all of Middle-earth. While the characters and events of *The Lord of the Rings* generally defy precise allegorical parallels, the One Ring easily symbolizes the corruption and tyranny that result from having unchecked political power. The One Ring confers on its wearer the power to rule Middle-earth, but also imposes an inescapable slavery to maintain this power at any cost. At one level, *The Lord of the Rings* allegorizes the progression of a tyrant. Beginning as a ruler, even a well-intentioned one, he or she becomes ruled by the spasmodic hunger to acquire yet more power and the insatiable desire to squelch all freedom. The tyrant then becomes as enslaved as his or her subjects, all of whom exist in a state of commonplace bondage repugnant to any expression of virtue.

*Sources: Alberto Mingardi & Carlo Stagnaro, “Tolkien on Power,” <http://www.mises.org/fullstory.asp?control=899>; Jessica Yates, “Tolkien the Anti-Totalitarian,” in Patricia Reynolds & Glen H. Goodknight eds., Proceedings of the J. R. R. Tolkien Centenary Conference (Keble College, Oxford, 1992) (Altadena, CA: The Tolkien Society and The Mythopoeic Society) 1995.*

formation is very different. They do not read denominational statements, but are encountering pastors who either show no interest in their business life or preach sermons that continually blame business for promoting a cultural materialism that has harmful effects on children and family dynamics. Business peoples' other key source of religious points of view on the economy has been through investor groups that represent various religious communities. For a long time, most of these investor groups honed in on a single issue that they opposed and recommended subtracting this activity from a company's strategy. Not surprisingly, they were perceived as anti-business. Church management practices reinforced this perception. Some business people climbed on their high horses, citing the many examples of financial mismanagement and poor bookkeeping in churches, bad benefits policies, sexual and gender discriminations, and racial segregation as reasons to disregard the clergy's views on business. Why listen to an incompetent practitioner? Even the social services provided by a corporation appeared more competent than poorly executed church programs.

**R&L:** *At the end of the book, you propose a new integration model in which the church and business can work together. How does this integration model work and what is it meant to achieve?*

**Nash:** We have tried to suggest strategies that are sensitive to the very important problem of not appearing to undermine diversity in the corporation, a requirement by law and supported by all whom we interviewed who said, "I'm spiritual but religious at work." The first step is to avoid espoused presentations of religion in the workplace—claims of membership, religious labels, sectarian symbols and practices only set up fences between believers and nonbelievers. Rather the model calls for the church to promote a personalized, catalytic level of religion, offering lessons and support for business people's experience of God and personal tests of faith in the workplace. This means dignifying rather than denying their identity as business people. Under this model the church should be close, but not too close to business. As history has proven time and time again, the church tends to become corrupted when it is too directly involved in a business' economic interests. Every pastor should not start weighing in on every economic decision at his or her congregants' businesses. The church should also be a foundational resource in

helping business people and the community in general understand the life and practical methods of daily prayer before, during, and after work. The business community have great interest in foundational religious matters, such as the

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***We see a business community seeking to find the sacred self at work, support community, operate in harmony with the patterns signifying a world that is working rightly from a religious point of view. For churches to support this search, they must conduct a radical revisiting of the practices that are silencing dialogue about faith and work.***

concept of calling or the nature of grace, but less interest in having the clergy tell them specifically what their policy should be on a particular issue, such as labor relations in Asia.

**R&L:** *Is there anything that the clergy and business people can offer each other in terms of their respective work responsibilities?*

**Nash:** We found that many clergy consider management tasks their least favored part of their responsibilities. They find themselves responsible for managing human resources, budgets, planning, and buildings and facilities, but they dislike it immensely. We asked how often their faith perspective helped shape that management process. They looked at us like we were out of our minds. They had never before articulated the issue that way. We asked if they ever saw management as an occasion of service to others. Walking into most church buildings as a stranger, it is challenging to try to find a particular room, a receptionist, or even the church's office door. The stranger feels confirmed as an outsider until some initiate shows him or her around. A simple act of greeting strangers can seem to be a trivialized dramatization of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, but it is actually a very important indicator of a general attitude. At a business institution people tend to go out of their way to receive strangers well, posting clear signs and encouraging employees to greet, help, and direct strangers. Obviously, the business setting displays the attitude of service. The clergy tended to interpret this by pointing out that the only reason businesses display such a stranger-friendly environment is because they are after the strangers' money. Rather than dismissing the service techniques of good businesses, most churches could



learn a lot from human resource and facilities management practices in business.

Another area business people can offer a lot to churches is in conflict resolution. The clergy generally dislike and avoid conflict inside a congregation, ending up with horrible staff problems or an atmosphere of hostility between differing factions in the church. Business people have often developed techniques for resolving those kinds of internal conflicts early. Business people tend to be good peacekeepers, voicing opposing views and coming to practical solutions.

Conversely, clergy can help business people in many ways. They can provide an opportunity for the exploration of faith by expressing interest, encouragement, and asking well-informed questions. They can share a sense of concern over common management issues or community problems without going straight for the other person's pocketbook. They can show up at meetings of lay groups in which they discuss their faith and work, bless the high schoolers entering their first job and help them understand the role that hope and love must play for work to be creative. Over time it is easy for business people to round every edge just for the sake of peace in the corporation, even though the corporate health suffers when wrong-doing is present. Clergy can help reawaken the voice of conscience in the hardened corporate survivor, but rarely through scolding.

We see a business community seeking to find the sacred self at work, support community, operate in harmony with the patterns signifying a world that is working rightly from a religious point of view. For churches to support this search, they must conduct a radical revisiting of the practices that are silencing dialogue about faith and work.

**R&L:** *In Believers in Business, one of your former books, you interviewed many evangelical Christians who were chief executive officers of large companies. How did their worldview help or hinder their ability to manage a profitable enterprise?*

**Nash:** It both helped and hindered in a good way. Faith really made a positive difference in these executives' business relationships. It helped them treat people at all levels of an organization equally and, thereby, avoid perpetuating the aristocratic or plutocratic hierarchy that pervades so many business cultures. For a number of these executives, the whole purpose of business was filtered through the screen of "am I working out the purposes of the Lord?" They had the idea that their purpose as business executives was not only to turn a profit, but to do something that actually created value in society for other people. This realization helped them significantly in making difficult choices about what business to

go into, how much debt to incur, what employee policies to institute. It gave them the strength to take the heat and not blame others when things turned sour. Many proved to be ahead of their time, because they were able to anticipate a market need and were not afraid to try to address this need. I happen to believe capitalism—when it is played fairly by the law—rewards value creation. Over and over again I saw this principle as manifest in these executives' lives. Their faith also made a difference because of its orientation, tending toward seeing God even in the small details. So these people were extraordinarily thorough and accurate in what they did. They saw this as part of the discipline of their faith and that, of course, was a performance advantage for them. I should also emphasize that not every practice traceable to some people's religious worldview is good business practice. There are plenty of examples of marketplace lying and cheating in the name of the Lord. Those we interviewed were particularly critical of such "believers" in business. Just because a person is holding himself or herself accountable to God does not mean he or she is not accountable for the book-keeping too.

**R&L:** *You suggest that these executives face creative tensions involving their faith and their business practices. What was considered to be the most significant tension in terms of its potential to cause a businessperson to compromise his or her faith?*

**Nash:** The one they felt most strongly was the obligation to bear witness. They defined witnessing as a literal professing of their faith—explicitly attributing responsibility for every decision to Jesus and implying that anyone who disagreed was wrong. Their common sense would caution them that these explicit statements were probably going to be counterproductive and they searched for other witnessing strategies. But that was a great tension for them. Some tried to resolve this tension by concluding that witnessing does not have to be in explicitly talking about Jesus, but it can also be in living out faith in Jesus. Then if somebody asks them who they are and where they come from, they use that occasion as the opportunity to talk about their faith. Another huge tension they felt was the business emphasis on short-term thinking. A religious worldview stretches to infinity. They felt that to be pressured so sharply within an economic system for quarterly results was really working against the cosmic harmony that they were seeking in their business lives. ☉



# Views of Wealth in the Bible and the Ancient World

*Scott B. Rae, Ph.D.*

Think back to the last time you heard someone from the pulpit in your church talk about money, the Bible, and your spiritual life. On those occasions when pastors venture into this area, the focus is often and rightly on matters of the heart and one's attitude toward money and possessions. But in that emphasis often lies an unexamined assumption that goes something like this: Given that the Bible focuses on attitude, not accumulation per se, that materialism is fundamentally about attitude, not amount, and that the human heart has not changed since the Bible was written, little significant difference exists between people in biblical times and people today when it comes to money. Hidden in that assumption is the notion that the ancient world and the world of today are also similar when it comes to money, wealth, and possessions. Though it is true that the fundamental nature of the human heart has not changed since biblical times, it does not follow that the financial world of the Bible and that of today have limited significant difference between them. In fact, it would be difficult to imagine two worlds that are more different from each other.

The Bible's teaching on wealth and economics was set in an ancient economic system that was quite unlike the system of today. That does not mean that the Bible has nothing of relevance for today's economic world, only that we must use the Bible carefully when applying its general principles of economic life to current times. As many biblical scholars have suggested, a direct application of many biblical commands relating to economic life would be impossible today, because the system to which those commands were addressed has dramatically changed. Rather, we are seeking from Scripture general principles or norms that govern economic life and can be applied to different economic arrangements. Of course, some commands apply directly, for which the differences between the ancient world and today's society do not affect the application of the text. For example, the repeated admonitions of Scripture to take care of the poor remain directly applicable, even though the means by which that is done may have changed. By contrast, the Old Testament commands the people of God to keep the Sabbatical year, in which the land was to lie fallow for one year in seven (Lev. 25:1-7),

the year of Jubilee, in which on the fiftieth year all land was returned to its original owners (Lev. 25:10-17), and the right of redemption, in which property had to be returned to an impoverished family member in order to give him or her the opportunity to make a living (Lev. 25:47-55). These principles cannot be directly applied today, because they were written to a society that revolved around subsistence agriculture, not a modern information age economy in which very few people are tied to the land to make their living. Rather, we must glean a general principle from each of these commands that can be applied to the different setting of today.

At first glance, the Bible appears to condemn the accumulation of wealth. Classic passages of Scripture such as "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Luke 18:25) and "blessed are the poor" (Luke 6:20) suggest that possession of wealth is suspect while poverty is virtuous. These texts should be balanced by others that present wealth in a different perspective. These include the sayings of the Old Testament wisdom literature that regard wealth as God's blessing to be enjoyed (Eccl. 5:18-20) and a result of one's diligence (Prov. 10:4-5). Similarly, in the New Testament, while Paul counsels Timothy to keep wealth in proper perspective (1 Tim. 6:6-19), Paul acknowledges that God gives liberally to his people for their enjoyment (1 Tim. 6:17). Yet this acknowledgment is balanced by admonitions not to trust in one's wealth because of the temptation to arrogance and of the uncertainty involved in retaining wealth (see also Eccl. 5:8-6:12), and thus, conversely, to be content with one's economic station in life.

The Bible distinguishes between possession of wealth and love of wealth. Only the latter is condemned (1 Tim. 6:10). The love of wealth and desire to become wealthy bring a variety of temptations and have the potential to shipwreck one's spiritual life (1 Tim. 6:9). Yet the members of the early church and the crowds who followed Jesus entailed the socio-economic spectrum from the poor to the wealthy. From what we know of Jesus' background and his trade as a carpenter, it would appear that he lived a modest middle class lifestyle in contrast to many portrayals of him in poverty. It does not

appear that the possession of wealth per se is problematic in Scripture, but hoarding one's wealth when surrounded by poverty is a sign of selfishness and greed. Throughout Scripture, the wealthy are condemned for their callousness to the needs of the poor (Amos 4:1-4; James 2:1-7). The early days of the church were characterized by an extraordinary generosity toward the poor, many of whom constituted the majority of the membership in the early church (Acts 2:43-47). Though the pattern of the early church did not involve a socialistic style of holding property in common, it did involve

sons why the Bible so frequently condemns exploitation of the poor. In these cases, literally, the rich became richer at the expense of the poor, and when someone was wealthy, more often than not, they had acquired it through some immoral means. Thus, the wealthy were viewed with suspicion and great emphasis was placed on the potential temptations of becoming wealthy, because the ancient world had so few morally legitimate avenues to acquire great wealth.

Though it is certainly true that the poor continue to be exploited, in the market system the zero-sum game type of

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economic system no longer exists. The market system is in various stages of development in different parts of the world, but

heightened sensitivity to the needs of the poor. Though the Bible affirms the right to private property, this right is not absolute. It is tempered by the reality that all property belongs to God and that we are trustees or stewards of God's property. God has entrusted his property to us both for our personal needs and enjoyment and for use to achieve God's purposes (such as meeting the needs of the poor).

The pursuit of wealth in the ancient world was fraught with potential problems, which made it easy to view those who possessed wealth with moral and spiritual skepticism. Though the temptations facing the pursuit of wealth today should not be minimized, some important differences exist between the modern and ancient economic systems that may partially account for the strong cautions about wealth. For example, in the ancient world, as a general rule, people became wealthy differently than in today's market system. The ancient economic system was largely centered around subsistence agriculture with limited commerce and trade. Real estate was the predominant productive asset. The ancient economy is best described as what is called a "zero sum game." The pool of economic resources was relatively fixed, so that when one person became wealthy, it was usually at the expense of someone else. Stated differently, the economy was like a pie. When someone took a larger piece, someone else received a smaller piece. This set up numerous opportunities to attain wealth abusively by theft, taxation, or extortion. One of the most common instances of this abuse was for those who had resources to loan money to the poor at terms they could not repay, requiring what little land the poor owned as collateral. Then when the debtors inevitably defaulted, the lender appropriated their land. The debtors became tenant farmers or slaves or were reduced to dependence on charity. This form of taking advantage of the poor occurred regularly in the ancient world and is one of the rea-

sons why the Bible so frequently condemns exploitation of the poor. In these cases, literally, the rich became richer at the expense of the poor, and when someone was wealthy, more often than not, they had acquired it through some immoral means. Thus, the wealthy were viewed with suspicion and great emphasis was placed on the potential temptations of becoming wealthy, because the ancient world had so few morally legitimate avenues to acquire great wealth.

Though it is certainly true that the poor continue to be exploited, in the market system the zero-sum game type of economic system no longer exists. The market system is in various stages of development in different parts of the world, but in more mature market systems, the economy is anything but a zero-sum game. In modern industrial economies, the economic pie itself is constantly increasing. Wealth is being created instead of simply being transferred. In fact, every time a company makes a profit, wealth is created and the size of the pie grows larger. For this reason, the rich can become wealthy while at the same time the poor can also be better off. That is why the incomes of the poor can and have increased at the same time as the wealth of the rich accumulates, though admittedly at very different rates. Someone like Bill Gates or Warren Buffet simply having extraordinary wealth does not mean that the poor are necessarily worse off. Nor does it necessarily follow that Gates' or Buffet's wealth was gained at the expense of someone else. In a modern market economy, wealth is constantly being created, so that it is possible for someone to become wealthy without necessarily succumbing to the temptations about which Scripture warned. Today's market economy makes it far easier to be wealthy and virtuous than did the agricultural subsistence economy of the ancient world.

Of course, the same admonitions about not succumbing to the temptations that accompany the pursuit of wealth directly apply today, as do the commands to share generously with those in need. One's attitude toward and generosity with one's wealth are fundamentally conditions of the heart that have not changed since the ancient world. Regardless of one's level of wealth, one is still expected to depend on God, not on money for one's hope, to share God's heart for the poor, and to be generous toward those in need.

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# Living Truth for a Post-Christian World: The Message of Francis Schaeffer and Karol Wojtyła

*Eduardo J. Echeverria, Ph.D.*

To my knowledge, the evangelical Protestant Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984) and the evangelical Roman Catholic Karol Wojtyła (1920-) never met. Francis Schaeffer, founder of L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland, was a Christian intellectual and cultural critic, practical theologian, author, noted speaker, and evangelist, whose ministry in the last half of the twentieth century incited worldwide study and discipleship centers. Karol Wojtyła (1920-) is a philosopher, university professor, theologian, priest, bishop, cardinal, author, noted speaker, evangelist, and, last but not least, the man who became Pope John Paul II twenty-five years ago.

These two great Christian pastors probably would have liked each other as well as deeply appreciated each other's vision of the Christian life, each marked by intellectual vigor, theological substance, doctrinal orthodoxy, compassion, and a love for people. For them, Christian spirituality is based on the biblical affirmation that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:11) over the whole of life, including culture, and that the whole of life is under God's blessing, judgment, and redeeming purposes.

Both Michael Novak and James I. Packer have made comparisons between Schaeffer and Wojtyła, but neither Novak's nor Packer's analysis shows exactly where Schaeffer's and Wojtyła's visions of the Christian life are alike. My aim is to present some common themes in Schaeffer's and Wojtyła's thought. I derive these themes from two important books: Schaeffer's 1969 book *Death in the City*, recently republished, and Wojtyła's book *Sign of Contradiction*, consisting of his sermons at the annual Lenten Retreat in March 1976 to Pope Paul VI and his co-workers. The vision Schaeffer and Wojtyła express may be summed up in five propositions, each of which is essential to an authentically Christian engagement with contemporary post-Christian culture.

## **Creation, Fall, and Redemption through Jesus Christ**

Schaeffer and Wojtyła consider the Christian faith to be a total worldview, because it embodies the truth about the whole

of human life. At the core of this view is an interlocking set of life-orienting beliefs regarding the Creation, Fall, and Redemption. God created the world good. Indeed, the creation, especially humans who are its crown, actually manifests God's goodness. This manifestation of goodness is God's thesis, his affirmation, his yes to the creation (Gen. 1:31).

Now all creation is fallen through original sin. Human nature has lost its original harmony, and humans are wounded at the very root of their being, estranged from God, from themselves, and from their fellow humans, such that to be human means to be sinful, prone to sin, the violation of God's will and purpose. This sinfulness denies God's thesis and

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*Without God, no basis exists for morality, meaning ...  
knowledge, or truth. Humans cannot reject God and pretend as  
if everything remains the same without him.*

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has its beginnings in Genesis 3. God's response to sin is yes but also no. Yes, because God, full of love, mercy, and grace, does not abandon the fallen creation. Indeed, Genesis 3:15 contains the first proclamation of the Messiah, the *proto-evangelium*. But also no, because God, judging humans in the light of his perfect justice and holiness, is the author of the antithesis, of the sign of contradiction between good and evil, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. As stated by Wojtyła, "[h]ere, in the third chapter of Genesis, at the very beginning of the Bible, it becomes clear that the history of mankind, and with it the history of the world with which man is united through the work of divine creation, will both be subject to rule by the Word and the anti-Word, the Gospel and the anti-Gospel."

The Redemption, accomplished through Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, abrogates the antithesis between sin and creation. God's original thesis is not only reasserted and reestablished, but also enriched, fulfilled, and perfected. The Redemption restores the very heart of human nature, causing the rebirth of the human self in Christ (Col. 2:13; 2 Cor.



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*...penetration into the religious dynamics at work in history is integral to understanding contemporary culture and society. Of course, such analysis does not deny the importance of the economy, social and institutional changes, and psychological and cultural aspects to historical study. Rather, this analysis only acknowledges that religious outlook drives the inner logic or dynamic of history.*

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5:17). For Schaeffer and Wojtyła, the redemption in Christ becomes a vision of cosmic redemption for the whole creation, including society and culture, restoring all life to its fullness before the Fall. As Schaeffer writes, “Christian[s] should never give any onlooker the right to conclude that Christianity believes in the negation of life. Christianity is able to make a real affirmation [of life], because we affirm that it is possible to be in a personal relationship to the personal God who is there and who is the final environment of all He created .... Therefore, since God made the whole man and is interested in the whole man, the salvation which [Saint] Paul preaches is a salvation which touches the whole man ... [including] culture ... which flows from people’s relationships with each other.”

### **Judgment in History: Word and anti-Word, Gospel and anti-Gospel, Love and anti-Love**

Lord Acton observed that the key to interpreting history is religion. Christopher Dawson agrees, concluding “the religion of a society expresses its dominant attitude to life and its ultimate conception of reality.” Thus, penetration into the religious dynamics at work in history is integral to understanding contemporary culture and society. Of course, such analysis does not deny the importance of the economy, social and institutional changes, and psychological and cultural aspects to historical study. Rather, this analysis only acknowledges that religious outlook drives the inner logic or dynamic of history.

That Schaeffer and Wojtyła agree with this analysis is reflected in their similar approaches to understanding the fundamental choices of humans in history as being either their radical affirmation or denial of God. The deepest dynamic of history is, then, the struggle between Word and anti-Word, Gospel and anti-Gospel, City of God and City of Man. This affirmation and denial reflect two kinds of love, referred to by Saint Augustine as “love of God carried as far as contempt of self” or “self-love reaching the point of contempt for God.” Anti-Word, anti-Gospel, and anti-Love all refer to denials of God throughout history. These denials manifest a

deliberate turning away from the knowledge of God that results in the death of the city, with its fragmented, lost, and disoriented individuals, in the culture of death, with its practices of abortion, euthanasia, and cloning, and, ultimately, in the death of humans. The intellectual, moral, and religious consequences of this denial pervade every area of life. Without God, no basis

exists for morality, meaning, the dignity of human beings, knowledge, or truth. Humans cannot reject God and pretend as if everything remains the same without him. In Wojtyła’s words, “[t]he tragedy of atheistic humanism ... is that it strips man of his transcendental character, destroying his ultimate significance as a person.” Similarly, Wojtyła adds, citing the Second Vatican Council, “when God is forgotten the creature itself is unintelligible.” Schaeffer agrees, stating “[m]an, made in the image of God, has a purpose—to be in relationship to the God who is there .... Man forgets his purpose, and thus he forgets who he is and what life means.” Without God, therefore, humans self-destruct in nihilism.

It should not be overlooked that our culture is under the judgment and wrath of God. This means, as described by Schaeffer, that “God is a God of grace, but the other side of the coin of grace is judgment. If God is there, if God is holy (and we need a holy God or we have no absolutes) ... there must be judgment.” God’s wrath is his holy displeasure at sin. Schaeffer explains that one way that God works in history is to judge humans by “allowing cause and effect to take its course in history.” While humans are lost, fragmented, and disoriented, they are also great. Schaeffer notes that “man is not just a chance configuration of atoms in the slipstream of meaningless chance history.” Rather, humans are responsible for their choices, which are measured against the pure holiness and goodness of God’s character. In this light, Schaeffer indicates that “God works into history upon the basis of *His character*, and He continues to do so.” Even now God’s judgment is at work in history (Rom. 1:18). Furthermore, Wojtyła adds that “Christ’s eschatological discourse [Matt. 25:31-46] makes it clear that at the final consummation of the history of man and the world the ‘self-love reaching the point of contempt for God’ will still be present, and that type of love will reap its own harvest of definitive condemnation ....”

### **True Knowledge of Humans Depends on True Knowledge of God**

Schaeffer and Wojtyła share a Christ-centered worldview.

True self-knowledge is not attainable without true knowledge of God. Here Wojtyła cites the Second Vatican Council, “[t]he truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light ... Christ ... by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear.” Schaeffer defines this calling as follows: “Our calling is to enjoy God as well as glorify Him. Real fulfillment relates to the purpose for which we were made—to be in reference to God, to be in personal relationship with Him, to be fulfilled by Him, and thus to have an affirmation of [the whole of] life.”

Christianity is life affirming. This is one aspect of the Good News that applies through all generations, but especially now given that the worldview of naturalistic materialism dominates contemporary culture. Schaeffer sums up the worldview of naturalistic materialism by explaining that what is ultimately real “is purely material, everything being reduced to mass, energy, and motion,” with humans being just the chance product of matter in motion. Schaeffer then draws the logical conclusion that “[o]ur generation has nobody home in the universe, nobody at all.” This outlook begets the death of humans. Hope of purpose, significance, love, conscience, rationality, beauty, sociality, and communication,

for dignity is the blood of the Son of God.” Human dignity is then grounded and perfected through the Redemption.

These beliefs are true to reality, as stated by Wojtyła: “The dignity proper to man, the dignity that is held out to him both as a gift and as something to be striven for, is inextricably bound up with truth .... Truthful thinking and truthful living are the indispensable and essential components of that dignity. Thus it is truth that makes man what he is .... True knowledge of himself, of the world, of God; truth in conscience, truth in knowing, truth in believing.” Schaeffer wholeheartedly shares Wojtyła’s emphasis on the importance of truth for our Christian witness, evangelism, apologetics, and scholarship.

### **The Love, Mercy, and Justice of God**

Schaeffer and Wojtyła affirm orthodox Christian teaching that the mystery of the Redemption abrogates the antithesis between sin and creation. The Catholic priest prays during Mass: “In love you created man, in justice you condemned him, and in mercy you redeemed him through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Redemption is the meaning of the saving death of Jesus Christ. In Wojtyła’s words, “He suffered ... in all the mystery of His Person, in all the indescribable depth

of His nature as God-man, the one and only subject and the one and only author of redemption of the world.” Through the mystery of the Redemption, the love of the Father is expressed in the gift of the Son and communicated through the movement of the Holy Spirit. For Wojtyła, God’s revelation of himself on the cross manifests his justice

and mercy, his holiness and love. The mystery of the Redemption, Wojtyła adds, germinates from the confrontation between two kinds of love, “love of God carried as far as contempt of self” and “self-love reaching the point of contempt for God.” Jesus Christ’s death on the cross is an expression of supreme love, of love’s victory, of that “love of God carried as far as contempt of self.” Wojtyła affirms that in Christ’s death “finally, lies the full truth about man, about man’s true stature, his wretchedness and his grandeur, his worth and the price paid for him. ‘God loved the world so much that He sacrificed His only Son’.”

Wojtyła’s Augustinian description of this mystery originates in the biblical understanding that the Redemption presents the antithesis between disobedience and obedience, between sinners and the just. Saint Paul contrasts the disobedience of the first Adam with the obedience of the second Adam (Christ): “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through

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*Christianity is life affirming. This is one aspect of the Good News that applies through all generations, but especially now given that the worldview of naturalistic materialism dominates contemporary culture.*

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things that make humans uniquely human, become ultimately unfulfillable and, therefore, meaningless. Thus, humans, being unfulfillable, are dead.

The truth is that humans are meaningful by nature, significant, indeed, intrinsically good, because created by God, in his image, albeit they are now in ruin and broken as a consequence of the Fall. Because of humanity’s historic, space-time fall, humans are alienated from God, and, in turn, from themselves, others, and from nature. As suggested by Wojtyła, the Christian faith substantially heals all these alienations, because “everything that is essentially human and constitutive of man is summed up in the mystery of Christ.” Wojtyła further adds that Christ is the “revealer of the full mystery of man and of human dignity .... The incarnation of the Son of God emphasizes the great dignity of human nature, and the mystery of redemption not only reveals the value of every human being but also indicates the lengths to which the battle to save man’s dignity must go .... The price paid

the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19). Wojtyła explains that “[t]he full dimension of the obedience of Christ is determined by the Word and by Love, just as the disobedience of the first man has its source in the anti-Word and anti-Love .... Jesus Christ took upon Himself the burden of this problem and solved it by going to the root of it. Man first became unjust when he be-

Schaeffer’s differing orientations as to ecclesiological doctrine, they agree that the church should be a “sign of contradiction” in this contemporary culture that has abandoned, both intellectually and practically, its biblical moorings. The church’s missionary mandate includes the dissemination of the whole truth in Jesus Christ, who is, as noted by Wojtyła, “both the light that shines for mankind and at the same time

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***...salvation demarcates two radically different ways of living one’s life. On the one hand, humans can live an unredeemed life, in darkness, being lost, remaining in the grip of sin, and bound by the power of death. On the other hand, humans can live a redeemed life by accepting the gift of being found, of life, of light, of grace made possible through the Redemption.***

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came disobedient to the Creator. For that reason Christ became obedient unto death, thus bequeathing to mankind His own justice to serve as an inexhaustible fount of justification before God.”

Sin violates the will and purpose of God, fostering a wrong relationship with him. He is holy and righteous and thus the perfect judge of sin. Schaeffer ponders the question: “Is all lost now that I have sinned?” He answers with a resounding “No!,” stating that “God has provided a propitiation, a substitute. The whole of God’s answer [to my moral guilt] rests upon the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. Because of who He is, His death has infinite value; it can cover every spot; it can remove true moral guilt ... in the presence of God as the perfect Judge of the universe.” Salvation, then, removes true guilt before God, effecting the forgiveness of sin.

Because sin is a cancer affecting the whole human, the broader effect of salvation is to make humans whole again, healing their relationships with God and others. Salvation emancipates humans from the power, stranglehold, and bondage of sin. Salvation prompts a conversion, call to holiness, and sanctification of the whole human existence, grafting Christ’s Lordship through the whole of life. Finally, salvation demarcates two radically different ways of living one’s life. On the one hand, humans can live an unredeemed life, in darkness, being lost, remaining in the grip of sin, and bound by the power of death. On the other hand, humans can live a redeemed life by accepting the gift of being found, of life, of light, of grace made possible through the Redemption.

### **The Church as the Sign of Contradiction**

In spite of the Catholic Wojtyła’s and the Protestant

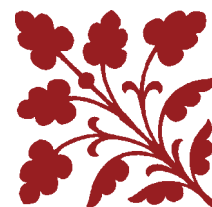
a sign of contradiction.” Wojtyła further adds that Jesus Christ is not only revealed as the light of the world, but also as “that sign which, more than ever, men are resolved to oppose.” Schaeffer rightly indicates that the church ceases being that sign of contradiction in one of two ways: “[O]ne is to compromise the truth, and the other to have a dead orthodoxy.” The truth is compromised when the church’s message degenerates from the full doctrinal position of historic Christianity to become merely an “echo of the world.” Schaeffer pronounces orthodoxy dead at the time it becomes a “dull, dusty, introverted orthodoxy given only to pounding out the well-known clichés.” Instead, a dynamic orthodoxy that evinces a living faith in the truth of Christian beliefs is needed. Orthodoxy also turns ugly when Christians lack compassion. Saint Paul teaches that orthodoxy without love is empty (1 Cor. 13:2). However, love without orthodoxy is blind.

### **Conclusion**

The five tenets expressed in *Death in the City* and *Sign of Contradiction* can be summed up as: Creation, Fall, and Redemption through Jesus Christ; judgement in history according to Word and anti-Word, Gospel and anti-Gospel, Love and anti-Love; true knowledge of humans depends on true knowledge of God; Love, Mercy and Justice of God; and the church as a sign of contradiction. Each of these tenants exhibits a similarity of thought between Schaeffer and Wojtyła and an ecumenical worldview that is essential to an authentic engagement of contemporary culture.

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# Hot Topics in Economics

*Rodolpho Carrasco*

**B***ulls, Bears & Golden Calves: Applying Christian Ethics in Economics* by John E. Stapleford (Intervarsity Press) is both a reference for Christian thinking on specific economic topics and a helpful companion to the major economics texts of our day. The list of chapters reads like a recipe for staying up all night in group debate or private turmoil (depending on your inclination): environmental stewardship, legalized gambling, debt relief for less developed nations, population control, pornography, immigration. The only hot issue missing from *Bulls, Bears* is a chapter on CEO Compensation.

If these topics are on your personal radar, you will be pleased to find that there are portions in the book where the analysis becomes, well, exciting. That is an odd thing to say about an economics book. Do not misunderstand me—*Bulls, Bears* can be somewhat of a dry text at times, especially in the early chapters where moral and practical frameworks are erected. But as *Bulls, Bears* progresses, Stapleford and IVP emphasize distinctions that will please a new generation of students who take an Introduction to Economics course. *Bulls, Bears* is by design a readable and engaging supplement to the primary economics texts (for example, those written by Gwartney, Mankiw, Mansfield, McConnell, Miller, Samuelson, or Stiglitz) used in universities in the United States. That means that the average student slogging through Samuelson's *Economics* can turn to this text for down-to-earth application of economic principles from a Christian worldview.

True to form for many of the books that IVP publishes, each chapter ends with three or four discussion questions. The discussion questions are certainly engaging. Because the book majors in two things that most humans avoid mixing (religion and politics—politics in the sense that solutions to economic problems invariably have political components), the discussion questions light the proverbial powder keg. I can see the heated debates forming now:

Ch. 5: Countries, individual companies and individual persons have become wealthy through the exploitation of other countries and individuals. Should, such as in the case of African-Americans or former European colonies, reparation be made? If so, what form should the reparation take?

Ch. 10: Is the protection of endangered species a biblically mandated responsibility for Christians?

Ch. 15: Respond to the charge that immigrants flood the labor market.

I know these questions are hot button issues because of my discussions with many Christian students on secular campuses. They are under a form of siege. The environment of political correctness is so weighted toward “progressive” or “liberal”

worldviews that few Christians hear both sides of the free enterprise story. Many young Christian leaders can articulate their opposition to injustice wrought by business and capitalism, but cannot explain the upside.

I knew the environment was tilted when I was an undergraduate at Stanford in the late 80's and protesters marched around campus shouting, “Hey, Hey! Ho, Ho! Western Culture's got to go!” Back then I managed to

block out the noise from the protests and finish my homework. A few years ago I re-engaged the campus animus the hard way by lecturing to college students on the role of free enterprise in fighting poverty. Among many Christian students I encountered resistance and disappointment. Many could not believe that I, as an urban minister and a voice for justice and racial reconciliation, could openly endorse the free enterprise system as mankind's best socio-economic hope for advancement. Some openly questioned if I was an “authentic” urban minister.

This past summer, however, I saw that many of these campus Christians are not so much in opposition to free enterprise as they are demanding the logic and examples that make the case. In a long lunch with a campus ministry friend, I was asked to explain how the thing that “exploits the poor in

***Bulls, Bears, and Golden Calves: Applying Christian Ethics in Economics***  
by John E. Stapleford

Intervarsity Press  
224 pp. Paperback: \$15.00



the Philippines” could at the same time raise the national standard of living and lift millions out of poverty. My friend sat patiently and asked clarifying questions. I shared examples of how developing nations are benefiting from business development and global trade. We talked about efforts by wealthy Christians in the West to invest ethically. We reviewed stories that demonstrate how the market has brought about necessary reforms (the removal of Suharto in Indonesia, for example).


By the end of the discussion my friend and I concluded that future discussions, seminars, workshops and conferences on Christian ethics and economic globalization should give equal time to explaining the upside of free enterprise. To businesspeople and business students that sounds like a no-brainer. But outside of business settings such equal time is an aberration. I prayerfully anticipate that future “application points” for college students will go beyond “storming the gates in protest” and “buying only fair trade coffee” to “helping churches in developing nations buy and own land” and “supporting the efforts of nations like Mexico to stimulate their economies via aggressive business development.”

*Bulls, Bears* will aid this type of equal time initiative. For the most part each chapter gives a balanced overview of a given topic, the Scriptures that address this topic, and a thoughtful set of conclusions. The chapter on poverty and distributive justice gives a biblical view of poverty, analyzes the nature of poverty in the United States, reviews the church’s historic responses, and discusses what individual Christians can do.

The text has some important downsides. Some chapters

are tilted, particularly the one on environmental stewardship, which reads like a United Nations pamphlet that fails to address the compelling reasons for the United States to reject the Kyoto Protocol and other “sustainable development” gambits. Another chapter includes no examples of what Christians are already doing to wage economic war against pornography.

Finally, another important chapter is missing (besides the one on CEO compensation): skepticism toward statistics. We are a people awash in statistics, but that does not mean we understand them any better. Students of free enterprise and economic globalization need guidance in analyzing data put forth as fact by the media. For example, the *New York Times* recently played loose with purported evidence of global warming in Alaska. The blogosphere found the fallacies in the data in less than a week, rendering the facts that formed the basis for the original argument in the *New York Times* inconclusive.

As an overall starting point for intelligent, Christian engagement of today’s hot economic topics, *Bulls, Bears* is welcome. One chapter at a time could be stimulating fodder for a study or discussion group. For ongoing students of economics and faith, this text is a useful primer, survey, and reference tool. 

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## Book News


### J. R. R. Tolkien’s Sanctifying Myth: Understanding Middle-earth

Bradley J. Birzer

ISI Books

245 pp. Hardcover: \$24.95

Bradley J. Birzer emphasizes a level of depth present in the mythology of J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth stories that many who read *The Lord of the Rings* (or see the movies) may not fully appreciate. Birzer reminds the reader that Tolkien did not write these stories about Middle-earth just as a diversion from his laborious work as a philology professor. One day while Tolkien was grading papers, he wrote “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit” (the opening

sentence of *The Hobbit*) without any clear idea of who or what a Hobbit was. These types of experiences caused Tolkien to believe that he was recording a myth that God had entrusted to him, a myth that encapsulated and portrayed truth about the human condition and human beings’ relationship to God. Thus, the Middle-earth stories may occur in a fabled land and feature events devoid of actual time-space historicity, but those stories describe the soil and turmoil of contemporary earth and society more penetratingly than the newspapers or history books. In an interview, Ian McKellan, the actor who plays Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* films directed by Peter Jackson, commented that “the *Lord of the Rings* is a mythology. It’s a fairy tale. It’s an adventure story. It never happened—except somewhere in our hearts.” *Sanctifying Myth* affirms that the stories of Middle-earth do in fact take place in our hearts by demonstrating how Tolkien knew that our hearts are the place where truth is found. 

***Creation of Wealth:  
Recovering a Christian  
Understanding of Money, Work, and Ethics***  
**by Fred Catherwood**

Crossway Books, 208 pp. Paperback: \$14.99

**Editor's Review**


The prosperity and way of life in many countries of western civilization (namely Germany, Holland, Switzerland, England, and the United States of America) have existed for a few hundred years now. Much like those who lived in the Roman Empire, the sheer force of this history may persuade contemporary members of secular society to feel invincible against the demise of this prosperity and way of life, demanding it as a birthright rather than accepting it as a delicate heirloom. Rather than embracing the qualities that have brought about this prosperity, Fred Catherwood in *The Creation of Wealth: Recovering a Christian Understanding of Money, Work, and Ethics* notes that contemporary secular society has replaced these qualities with two basic assumptions: good and evil have no absolute definition and a moral order of right and wrong is unnecessary to underpin the laws of the land. Catherwood dedicates *The Creation of Wealth* to describing how these current assumptions of secular society are antithetical to the prosperity we currently enjoy.

Catherwood tracks the current prosperity of western civilization to the tireless and diligent efforts of merchant classes arising during the sixteenth century in western Europe. These merchants developed habits of work ethic and saving based on their theology, taking Christ's parable of the talents and other biblical admonitions to live wisely and diligently to heart. They perceived of squandering their time, talents, and resources as a breach of their duties as God's stewards. Thus, these individuals lived in meager homes and worked hard to develop lasting business relationships with other merchants, always conserving their assets rather than spending them and cultivating a relationship of trust based on their common moral worldview. Successive generations shared the moral worldview and ardent faith of their ancestors, moving to or remaining in countries that did not severely restrict their trade practices—Prussia, Holland, Switzerland, England, and the Thirteen Colonies. Essentially, these individuals conducted themselves in a trustworthy, thrifty, and assiduous manner, because they knew that God expected them to behave this way.

As the many personal experiences of Catherwood as an accountant, business executive, and politician included in *The*

*Creation of Wealth* suggest, contemporary society presents a startling contrast. People who have business dealings no longer trust each other, relying on litigation and other legal remedies to settle their differences. Corporate executives in publicly traded companies tend to focus on short-term gain rather than long-term prosperity, because shareholders have become too impatient to wait for return on their investment, therefore

making these companies subject to hostile takeover bids. Rather than fix this unrealistic shareholder expectation, corporate executives simply make certain to have a “golden parachute” in place that will protect them if such a hostile takeover does ensue. Instead of focusing on growth through exporting and production, the United States and British governments have sustained their countries' growth by incurring huge trade deficits and now must expend a staggering amount of resources to finance their debt. Individuals tend to live outside of their means, forsaking the meager lifestyles of their ancestors in favor of the hedonistic principle “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.” God and theology are not only out of the picture, but scorned as outdated and subversive concepts. Many members of contemporary secular society lack the fundamental understanding that we are working for and living in a kingdom that is not solely defined by the immediate or phenomenal.

While Catherwood's apocalyptic assessment for western civilization—“secular humanism does not have a leg to stand on, and if we cannot see through its dangerous errors, it will be the death of Western society”—may seem overly anxious, Catherwood cites plenty of anecdotal evidence that indicates his apparent pessimism about the future of western civilization is not altogether unfounded. The use of this anecdotal evidence lends a degree of authenticity to the guidance Catherwood offers in *The Creation of Wealth*. Even so, some readers may find this anecdotal evidence inadequate to support Catherwood's economic conclusions, especially those involving the superiority of the “Rhine Model” and other continental European economic practices. But that should be taken only as a minor criticism of an otherwise excellent and extremely relevant book. In addition to emphasizing the source of western civilization's prosperity, Catherwood also provides provocative commentary on how a Christian should conduct his or her financial and business affairs in this contemporary secular society. Anyone, Christian and non-Christian alike, who is serious about creating or sustaining the prosperity of western civilization should read *The Creation of Wealth*. 

## A Subtle Threat to Freedom



Conventional understanding may tend to gloss over the distinction between the concepts of community or society and of state or government. Many in the popular media often use the words *community*, *society*, *state*, and *government* interchangeably. The common usage of these terms introduces a fallacy with potentially dire consequences. Communal or social obligations are those that all people have in common. This does not mean that every social obligation is, or should be, enforceable by the state or government. While honest debate may ensue about exactly what constitutes a communal or social obligation, before that debate can begin in earnest, a distinction must be made

between society and the state. Failing to recognize this distinction introduces the specter of a totalitarianistic outlook. Of course, this outlook may not be fully developed or implemented as totalitarianistic at this particular moment, but a confusion of terms can sufficiently lay a philosophical foundation arable for totalitarianism. Said another way, blurring the meanings of the words *community* or *society* together with those of *state* or *government* establishes the philosophical footings upon which a totalitarian regime may gradually be erected.

The communal, social response or reality is represented and defined by cooperation that people have with one another. This cooperation is based on shared mores, values, and customs. It is never coercive. The defining element of a social relationship is this shared, non-coercive cooperation. Robert Nisbitt, a sociologist, makes this distinction in a slightly different way. Nisbitt indicates that a distinction is to be drawn between authority and power. Both authority and power are forms of constraint. But Nisbitt notes that power is a form of constraint based on something external to the person being constrained. That is to say that power is coercive. Authority is a form of constraint that causes a person to be restricted in action or decision based not on something external, but rather on something internal to the person being constrained.

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*...power exercised continually without authority eventually develops into the totalitarian nightmare.*

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A simple illustration demonstrates this difference. A man wakes up on a beautiful Saturday morning, takes out his golf clubs, and dresses for his outing. His wife looks at him without saying a word. Her look is enough for the man to become concerned that he has done something terribly wrong, but he is not sure exactly what it is. So he asks, "What's the matter, honey?" She replies, "Did you forget that today was my sister's wedding?" No more words are needed. The man meekly switches his shorts and collared short-sleeve shirt for his suit and tie. What caused the man to discontinue his golfing plans? It would not seem to be coercion, but instead the mutual submission that a husband and a wife have to each other. The man and his wife are about the same project. He has a mutual allegiance with her. The presence of this basic mutuality is the difference between authority and power. Sometimes authority, especially moral authority, can motivate people to act far more sacrificially or heroically than any act of power or legislation could ever accomplish. Thus, it is imperative to distinguish community and society, which are institutions of authority, from state and government, which are institutions of power. Power, not authority, corrupts absolutely, and power exercised continually without authority eventually develops into the totalitarian nightmare.

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*The Rev. Robert A. Sirico is a Roman Catholic priest and the president of the Acton Institute.*

“The times call for courage. The times call for hard work. But if the demands are high, it is because the stakes are even higher. They are nothing less than the future of human liberty, which means the future of civilization.”

—Henry Hazlitt—