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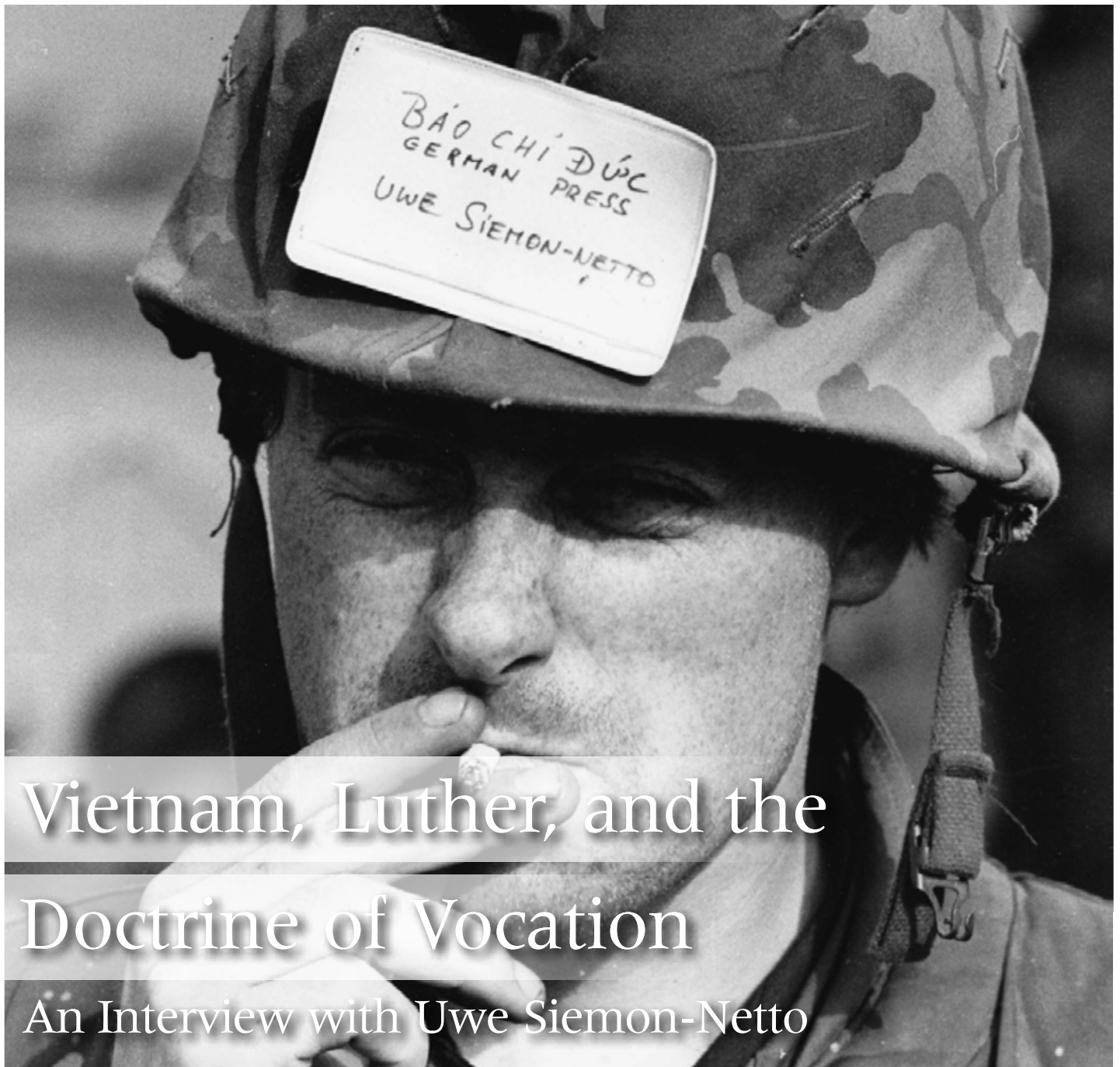
Religion & Liberty

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Vietnam, Luther, and the Doctrine of Vocation

An Interview with Uwe Siemon-Netto

A Journal of Religion, Economics, and Culture

Editor's Note



In getting to know Uwe Siemon-Netto, I learned that one of his most admirable qualities is his willingness to speak his mind and stand clearly for truth amid a drifting and compromising culture. I'm sure he'd think nothing of my complimentary view of his character given all he has seen and accomplished. His life reminds me of the popular song "I've Been Everywhere," first made popular in America by the country singer Hank Snow. Siemon-Netto has been all over the world as a journalist covering many of the biggest and most chaotic events of the 20th Century.

As readers will see in this issue's interview, Siemon-Netto's life in journalism

gives him added insight as a theologian. As a journalist and theologian, he sees deeply into many of the problems that plague the media today. As somebody who enjoys studying military history, I appreciate Siemon-Netto's willingness to discuss what has become a narrow and flawed history of America's war in Vietnam. He covered the war as a reporter for five years and has written an excellent memoir titled, *Triumph of the Absurd: A Reporter's Love for the People of Vietnam*. As a leading Lutheran theologian, his insight and study of Luther's doctrine of vocation is, I would argue, essential for today's culture.

After reading an excellent piece on John Milton and liberty in the *Journal of Markets & Morality*, I asked the author, David Urban, to offer us a version for *Religion & Liberty*. Urban is a professor of English at Calvin College and delves into Milton's elevation of virtue as a chief requirement for liberty.

Mark S. Latkovic reviews Charles Murray's *The Curmudgeon's Guide to Getting*

Ahead and Matthea Brandenburg reviews *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to End Poverty* by Nina Munk. The book by Munk is a thorough examination of the problems with aid and high minded theories for ending poverty in Africa. Writing in *Barron's*, William Easterly titled his review "The Arrogance of Good Intentions."

For "In the Liberal Tradition," R&L profiles the Lebanese diplomat Charles Malik [1906-1986]. Malik drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and served as the president of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Many of you have had the chance to visit our new and impressive headquarters. Acton's Kris Mauren provides an update on the capital fundraising campaign that made our move possible. He also touches on some new investments that will expand Acton's outreach thanks to our many generous supporters.

Ray Nothstine

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Cover Photo: Uwe Siemon-Netto during the Battle of Hue in Vietnam in 1968.
Photographer: Hilmar Pabel.

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Vietnam, Luther, and the Doctrine of Vocation

An Interview with Uwe Siemon-Netto

Uwe Siemon-Netto is the founder and executive director emeritus of the Center for Lutheran Theology and Public Life in Capistrano Beach, California. He is also a regular contributor to English- and German-language publications. Siemon-Netto, a native of Leipzig, Germany, has been an international journalist for over 50 years. His assignments have included the U.S. Civil Rights movement, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the Vietnam War (over a period of five years), the Arab-Israeli Six Day War, and China's Cultural Revolution.

In mid-career, he turned to theology, earning his M.A. from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and his Ph.D. degree in theology and sociology of religion from Boston University. His published works include The Acquittal of God, Duc: A Reporter's Love for the Wounded People of Vietnam, The Fabricated Luther, and One Incarnate Truth, The Christian Answer to Postmodern Confusion, as well as his latest, a memoir, Triumph of the Absurd: A Reporter's Love for the Abandoned People of Vietnam. He recently spoke with managing editor Ray Nothstine.

R&L: *You've covered so many notable events related to the rise of totalitarianism in the 20th century. Are we in danger of forgetting the lessons from many of these events?*

Uwe Siemon-Netto: Unfortunately, yes. Next April we are going to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Fall of Saigon. Let's start there. The North Vietnamese defense minister Vo Nguyen Giap said, "The enemy do not possess the psychological and political means to fight a long-

drawn-out war." (Giap was talking about Western democracies) He proved that right in Vietnam, which America needlessly abandoned causing millions of South Vietnamese to be executed, tortured to death in reeducation camps, driven to drown as they fled their country as Boat People, deprived of their liberty, health, and well-being. Giap has had attentive students: Iran, North Korea, Al Qaida, the Taliban, and now, Putin. In Vietnam, the U.S. has shown that when it gets tired or bored with a conflict, it will get out, using any oblique means to do so. Look at Afghanistan: The U.S. and NATO are behaving like a house owner leaving a note on his front door saying, "We are on vacation and won't be back until Oct. 10. The code for our alarm system is 021133, and we are taking the dog with us." This is demented. No thought is given to what will happen to Afghan women after our soldiers are gone.

Vietnam was covered in a completely different way than previous conflicts and wars where America was a participant. After the Tet Offensive, Walter Cronkite essentially opined,

"The war is lost." How did that event change the media in America?

You are touching on the essence of my Vietnam memoir, *Triumph of the Absurd*. Let's step back: I covered Têt in 1968, first in Saigon, and then in Hué, where I was in the thick of the battle as a war correspondent. I saw a mass grave with the bodies of hundreds of women, chil-



Vietnamese refugees wait to be taken aboard the amphibious command ship USS BLUE RIDGE. They are being rescued after spending eight days at sea.

Author: P.H2 Phil Eggrain. Image from Wikimedia Commons

dren, and old men and witnessed an American camera team refusing to film this scene saying, "We are not here to spread anti-Communist propaganda." Like other real combat correspondents, I had just witnessed how the South Vietnamese, Americans, and their other allies defeated the Communists at Têt.

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John Milton on Liberty, License, and Virtuous Self-Government

By David V. Urban

The notion that genuine liberty is predicated upon virtuous self-government was an accepted ideal among many of the United States' founders. During the Founding era, this ideal was perhaps best expressed in a 1791 letter by the Irish-born British parliamentarian Edmund Burke, who wrote: "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites . . . It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

Burke's convictions and concerns were anticipated by the English poet and Interregnum statesman John Milton (1608-74). Throughout his writings, Milton addressed the idea of genuine liberty or freedom over against the self-indulgence that he sometimes called "license," a self-indulgence that inevitably leads to tyranny from within and from without.

For Milton, the distinction between liberty and license is first and foremost a theological matter, for true liberty comes from Christ giving believers freedom from the sin that brings about licentious indulgence. Such liberty, once gained, frees the individual to live according to a mature, self-regulating Christian conscience. Milton articulates this explicitly in *On Christian Doctrine*, his posthumously discovered theological treatise:

Christian Liberty means that Christ our liberator Frees us from the

slavery of sin and thus from the rule of the law and of men, as if we were emancipated slaves. He does this so that, being made sons instead of servants and grown men instead of boys, we may serve God in charity through the guidance of the spirit of truth.

"For Milton, the distinction between liberty and license is first and foremost a theological matter, for true liberty comes from Christ giving believers freedom from the sin that brings about licentious indulgence."

Milton's understanding of Christian liberty emphasizes the individual Christian's ability to self-govern by exercising liberty of conscience according to the Spirit's guidance, within the context of obedience to the Word of God. But Milton also warns against the slavery of sin, a slavery brought about by the perverted exercise of liberty that he considered license.

Milton's discussion of liberty, license, and virtuous self-regulation is perhaps most explicit in his regicide tract, *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, written just before the January 30, 1649 execution of King Charles I. In this tract's opening paragraph, Milton asserts: "For indeed none can love freedom heartily, but good men; the rest love not freedom, but license; which never hath more scope or more indulgence than under Tyrants." According to Milton, "bad men" are "all naturally servile," they desire "to have the public State conformably governed to the inward vicious rule, by which they govern themselves," and they "color over their base compliances" with "the falsified names of *Loyalty*, and *Obedience*." In sum, Milton argues that tyrants and bad men get along quite well because bad men, loving license, governed by vice, and incapable of self-regulation, do not threaten tyrants but contentedly submit to them as long as they do not disturb their self-indulgence. By contrast, tyrants "fear in earnest" those men "in whom virtue and true worth most is eminent." Such virtuous men are subject to those tyrants' "hatred and suspicion." Self-regulating, virtuous persons threaten tyrants because, loving liberty and goodness, they recognize that tyrants obstruct the freedom to live according to a virtuous conscience.

Five years later, in *Defensio Secunda* (1654), Milton urged the English Commonwealth Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, and British citizens in general, to work to be a nation characterized by the liberty of virtuous

self-government. As his tract concludes, Milton tells his countrymen that “to be free is precisely the same as to be pious, wise, just, and temperate, careful of one’s property, aloof from another’s, and thus finally be magnanimous and brave”; moreover, “to be the opposite to these qualities is the same as to be a slave.” Milton tells his audience that if they hope to avoid slavery, they must “learn to obey right reason and to master yourselves.”

After the 1660 Restoration of Charles II to the throne, marking the collapse of Britain’s republican experiment, Milton retreated from active politics, concentrating on completing his greatest long poems, including *Paradise Lost* (1667, rev. ed. 1674) and *Paradise Regained* (1671). But his conviction that virtuous self-government offers true freedom and that license precipitates the loss of liberty, remained acute.

Paradise Lost’s most significant discussions concerning matters of liberty, license, and self-regulation take place in the conflicts between Satan and the angel Abdiel—loyal to God and generally interpreted as a character with whom Milton specifically identified—at the beginning of Satan’s rebellion against God. Satan mocks Abdiel, seeking to turn on its head the Miltonic distinction between liberty and license, suggesting that those who join his rebellion against God are supporters of “Liberty” (6.164), and calling the angels who remain loyal to God those who

*through sloth had rather serve,
Ministering Spirits, trained up in Feast and Song;
Such hast thou armed, the Minstrelsy of Heaven
Servility with freedom to contend.* (6.166-69)

Significantly, Satan here describes the

loyal angels with various characteristics of license, including “sloth” and the self-indulgence implied in their participation in “Feast and Song.” Presenting a picture of license similar to that which Milton presents in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, Satan argues that those who maintain “Servility” to a tyrannous monarch do so for its ease.

But Abdiel’s response turns the tables on Satan, distinguishing between legitimate service to God and servitude to an unworthy ruler:

*Apostate, still thou err’st, nor end wilt find
Of erring, from the path of truth remote:
Unjustly thou depriv’st it with the name
Of Servitude to serve whom God ordains,*



Satan, as drawn by Gustave Doré, in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

*Or Nature; God and Nature bid the same,
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thy self not free, but to thyself enthralled;
Yet lewdly dar’st our ministering upbraid.* (6.172-82)

Abdiel’s implication is clear: true liberty, not servitude, comes from serving the true God, whereas servitude is to serve the unworthy ruler. But Satan’s lack of true freedom is accompanied both by Satan’s license and his failure, for all his show of liberty, to govern himself rightly. With relation to God, the

best self-governance is willing obedience to God, as Abdiel himself exemplifies. But Satan is “not free” because he exemplifies “servility to a wicked self”; he is “to [him] self enthralled,” and, consequently, he shall be bound by “Chains in Hell” (6.186).

The connection between license, the failure to govern oneself, and the loss of liberty for the human race as a whole is shown explicitly in the final book of *Paradise Lost*. There, the fallen but now repentant Adam is instructed by the archangel Michael concerning the future of the human race. In a particularly useful passage, Michael speaks to Adam concerning the tyrant Nimrod, who presided over the building of the Tower of Babel and who worked “to subdue / Rational Liberty” in men (12.81-82). Michael tells Adam:

*Since thy original lapse, true
Liberty
Is lost, which always with
right Reason dwells
Twinned, and from her
hath no dividual being:
Reason in man obscured, or
not obeyed,
Immediately inordinate
desires
And upstart Passions catch
the Government
From Reason, and to
servitude reduce*

*Man till then free. Therefore since he permits
Within himself unworthy Powers to reign
Over free Reason, God in Judgment just
Subjects him from without to violent Lords;
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom: Tyranny must be,
Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes Nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But Justice, and some fatal curse annexed
Deprives them of their outward liberty,
Their inward lost.* (12.83-101)

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In this crucial passage, Michael notes that reason and liberty, inextricably joined, are both lost when men give themselves over to license, being ruled by their passions instead of wise and virtuous self-government. The inevitable result of the failure to self-govern is to be subjected to tyranny, something which, Milton suggests, is the deserved state for those who exchange liberty for license.

The idea that those who fail to self-govern through wise virtue will be subjected to tyranny is seen again in *Paradise Regained*, Milton's poetic retelling of Satan's tempting of Jesus in the desert as recorded in Luke 4:1-13. Late in this brief epic, Satan exhorts Jesus—usually called “the Son” in the poem—to free the Romans from the “servile yoke” (4.102) of the vile emperor Tiberius Caesar and to, with Satan's help, rule them himself. But the Son refuses, stating that God did not send him to free

*That people victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal, who once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate,
conquered well,
But govern ill the Nations under yoke,
Peeling their Provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood enured
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts
exposed,
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily Scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These thus degenerate, by themselves
enslaved,
Or could of inward slaves make outward
free? (4.131-45)*

Here the Son—another character with whom Milton strongly identified—makes clear that the various fleshly indulgences of

the Roman empire brought about their subjection to a tyrannical ruler, the deserved result for exchanging liberty for license. There is obvious irony that the Romans, having become lascivious themselves, are subject to the licentious Tiberius. Having rejected the virtuous self-governing that characterized the Roman Republic, the Romans are now unfit for liberty, and the Son recognizes the illogicality of attempting to free from without those who, like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, are enslaved to themselves.

By contrast, the Son of *Paradise Regained* is



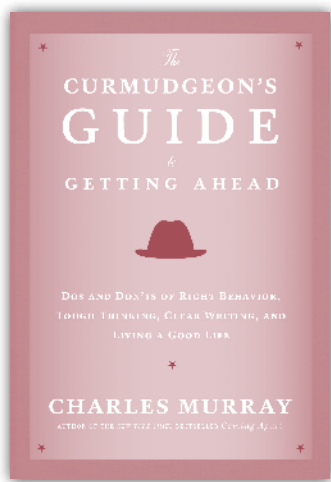
Illustration for John Milton's "Paradise Lost" by Gustave Doré, 1866. Image from Wikimedia Commons.

free to resist Satan's tyranny because he is himself the ultimate model of virtuous self-rule, exemplifying the principle of self-government he describes as he rejects one of the evil one's fleshly temptations: “Yet he

who reigns within himself, and rules / Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more [than] a King” (2.466-67). The Son goes on to describe the absurdity of one who aspires to rule over others even as he is “Subject himself to Anarchy within, / Or lawless passions in him which he serves” (2.471-72). Even as the Son is portrayed as the exemplar of faith and self-control, Milton suggests that those who trust, obey, and imitate him will know true liberty.

The ideal of self-governance remains a popular dimension of the American psyche. But the idea that the freedom of self-governance must be based on virtue now seems largely quaint, and one may reasonably ask if Americans desire not liberty but rather license. From Milton's perspective, freedom from governmental tyranny was predicated upon freedom from the licentious self, even as usurpation of one's rational virtue by self-gratifying license was the prelude to tyrannical outside rule, a view Milton held consistently throughout his life. Indeed, writing the year before his death in his final prose tract, *Of True Religion* (1673), Milton warned explicitly that England was at risk of falling under the judgment of God, a judgment that would manifest itself in a tyrannous government that would rule over the nation. This risk, Milton argued, was due in no small part to the moral license so prevalent in the nation: “Pride, Luxury, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Cursing, Swearing, bold and open Atheism,” Milton wrote, were “every where abounding.” His final admonition to his countrymen to avoid such judgment was straightforward: “amend our lives with all speed.”

This essay is a condensed version of a longer article appearing in the spring 2014 issue of the Journal of Markets & Morality. David V. Urban is an associate professor of English at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich.



A Curmudgeon's Counsel for the Workplace and Life

Review by Mark S. Latkovic

Review of *The Curmudgeon's Guide to Getting Ahead* by Charles Murray (Crown, 2014), 140 pages; \$17.95.

If you've ever wondered what a libertarian curmudgeon's guide to life, love, and making a living might look like, well look no further. Charles Murray, the social scientist and best-selling author of such books as *Losing Ground* (1984) and *Coming Apart* (2012), has given us such a book in *The Curmudgeon's Guide to Getting Ahead*. Aimed at those in their 20s or those approaching those years, much of the book's advice is just as applicable to someone in their 30s or 40s, or someone, like me, in their 50s. Interestingly, the book started off as a kind of workplace advice column – really a series of blogs on the American Enterprise Institute's intranet – for interns and the like at the Washington, DC think-tank where Murray, now 71 years-old, has worked since 1990, turning out one provocative and controversial book after another.

Murray gives sound tips on exactly what the book's subtitle indicates: how to write well, think well, act well, and live well. Each of these areas is challenging, of course, especially for those going from college to adult life. What's remarkable about the book is how nicely Murray is able to compress so much good counsel into 140 pages. Murray, who isn't particularly religious (he calls himself an agnostic), respects religion, however, and very much encourages the reader to take it seriously too, even if he may have had a

secular upbringing (Wait a minute. Let me scratch that "very" in the proceeding sentence. Murray says we should rarely use it!). He just doesn't evangelize for a specific faith. That's fine with me, a Catholic conservative, in a book of this nature.

"Although Murray is a libertarian who believes, accordingly, in the maximization of personal freedom, he has no trouble at all *judging* – indeed he says it's necessary and unavoidable – that certain behaviors are 'vulgar, unseemly, dishonorable.'"

Much of the soundness of Murray's little guide-book can be attributed to the fact that he takes an Aristotelian approach to living the good life. So, he includes discussion of what is necessary for living that life, for example, the *cardinal virtues*, and what that life is all about: *happiness* (Tips #29—#35). That's refreshing to see in a self-help book, where those topics are rarely treated or treated poorly. But to call Murray's book a "self-help" book misleads. Murray dishes out some bracing "no excuses" advice (He is a *curmudgeon* after all!). No tattoos or body piercings.

Dress appropriately. Get rid of "like" as a filler word when you speak. Use words properly. Leave home early and get a job – any job – particularly one that involves serving others. Change how you view time vis-à-vis your career. Acquire and develop the aforementioned moral virtues. Get married – and this might surprise some – try doing so in your 20s. Choose a religious faith and live its traditions. For a cinematic portrayal of the kind of life Murray thinks worth living, the reader is encouraged to watch *Groundhog Day*, a wonderful piece of pop culture, now over 20 years-old, on what it means to lead a fulfilling and happy life (He notes it's much easier than slogging through the *Nicomachean Ethics*!).

For this moral theologian, Murray's distinction, in tip #27, between being *nice* and being *good* is crucial. Anyone can be nice (It can be a "one-off" act), but to live a good life over the long haul necessitates the consistency and coherency that a good *character* provides – and that comes from having the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. Another key Murray distinction is that between "can do" and "may do." Although Murray is a libertarian who believes, accordingly, in the maximization of personal freedom, he has no trouble at all *judging* – indeed he says it's necessary and unavoidable – that certain behaviors are "vulgar, unseemly, dishonorable." Good for him. Young people swim in a sea of relativism and subjectivism today. But Murray is willing to affirm an objective moral

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order. And he wants you to affirm it too.

Murray hopes that his tips will help you to climb the corporate ladder, to get that promotion, to be successful in your chosen profession, and, most importantly, to be happy in life. But he reminds you that along the way, many of your bosses, managers, supervisors, etc. will be “closet curmudgeons” like him. So, for example, you will have to avoid “sucking up,” using first names (unless given permission), and bad manners. Murray also offers advice on how to properly use (or not use!) strong language (e.g., f-bombs), write emails, and deal with bad bosses. Possibly his best advice for those just starting out today: don’t think of yourself as *entitled* and don’t think it’s too difficult to “stand out.” The “successful curmudgeons” will notice you! But I also welcomed Tip #29: “Show up.” Show up for family, vocation, community, and faith. That is, don’t neglect these four central dimensions of human existence.

Much of your happiness, Murray argues, will depend on two accomplishments: finding “work that you enjoy” and finding “your soul mate.” This is so true. And Murray’s book is a fine guide to doing both. It should get you thinking about those two areas in ways you may have never done so before. It did so for me. But there’s also much fun packed into all this serious advice.

So you can see that Murray’s book is more than a career guide on how to “get ahead” – to help you avoid those lethal workplace mistakes that can either prevent you from being hired or even get you fired. It’s also a practical toolkit for how to lead a worthy and worthwhile life as you’re getting ahead. It’s ideal for your son or daughter whose transitioning from their late teens to young adulthood, for book study groups, or high school business and vocational courses. I read it in two sittings during the evening hours. I hope you read it too.

Mark S. Latkovic is Professor of Moral and Systematic Theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Mich.

Double-Edged Sword: *The Power of the Word*

Colossians 3:1-4

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory

One of the greatest truths about the incarnation is that the Father looks upon us just as He looks upon His Son, Christ Jesus. He does not condemn us or desire to punish us, but rejoices that humanity through the person and work of Christ has been joined into the Trinitarian relationship.

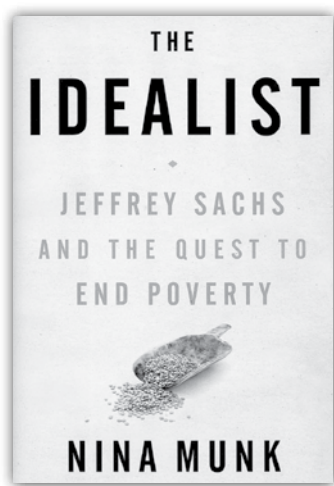
Sometimes we wrongly think of the incarnation as a temporary event, that Christ put on human flesh for only His time on earth. But even now he is clothed in our humanity and is seated at the right hand of the Father. In the person and work of Christ, eternity was joined with humanity.

The Good News in Christ is that we’ve already been accepted. Scottish theologian Trevor Hart declares:

‘Vicarious humanity’ picks up on the idea that in Jesus, God stands in for us in all aspects of life, that it’s not simply in His death that He takes our place and does what we can’t do, it’s in His faith too, in His obedience, in His responses to the Father. At each point God, as it were, looks at us through Him and in Him and together with Him, and not standing isolated on our own.

Our broken world needs more emphasis on Christ. The real danger in life is using our temporal time on earth for our own self-centered agenda. Too many people act and behave as if this life is their only hope, but the Apostle Paul tells the Church at Colosse, to set their minds the eternal foundation and promises. In 1st Corinthians 15:19, Paul reminds us, “If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”

Many people and sadly even some church leaders today act as if the agenda of Christ is to bless them and bestow upon them earthly blessings, but it’s essential for the body of believers to study the rich doctrine and heritage that has been taught to them by the Apostles and Church Fathers. To grow in grace it is essential that we also partake in the sufferings and death of Christ. We should all relish to be more like Christ and make Him the central facet of our lives, so that we will be revealed in Him and united in Him.



Ambition Meets Complexity in Sub-Saharan Africa

Review by Matthea Brandenburg

Review of *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs And the Quest to End Poverty* by Nina Munk (Doubleday 2013) 272 pages; \$26.95.

Jeffrey Sachs, the world-renowned professor of economics and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Millennium Development Goals, makes a bold claim: Extreme poverty can be eradicated and the means for doing so may not be as difficult as we imagine.

In *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to End Poverty*, contributing editor at *Vanity Fair* and journalist Nina Munk details the six years she spent following Jeffrey Sachs around Africa, tracking the development of his Millennium Villages Project, a \$120 million effort that began in 2005, aimed at reducing poverty through an integrated approach.

Through the project, 15 impoverished areas in Sub-Saharan Africa were selected to receive large infusions of foreign aid and develop sustainable agriculture, water and energy, education, health, and business infrastructure. The hope was that these models could then be replicated to completely eradicate extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa and eventually the world.

The Millennium Villages Project served as the vehicle to test Sachs's utopian thesis: "that with enough focus, enough determination, and enough money we can 'end the suffering of those still trapped in poverty.'" Munk describes Sachs as hav-

ing the gift of "reducing huge and complex issues to their essence." He is no doubt a brilliant man, having received tenure as a Harvard University economics professor at age 28 and advised the development strategy of numerous economies in turmoil. Sachs's new plan was appealing and people wanted to believe his approach would alter the *status quo* and decisively transform impoverished lives. After all, who wouldn't want to believe that poverty could be eradicated?

Sachs's extraordinary commitment to help the poorest of the poor is laudable. Yet his direct, simplistic approach leaves much room for questioning, especially in terms of its perception of the very people it is intended to help. Through his adamant belief in the power of financial aid to lift people out of poverty, his plan seemingly overlooks the capacity of the poor to be protagonists of their own development, and instead assigns the developed world the responsibility of "saving" those in poverty.

On a practical level, it is important to consider the track record of foreign aid and its relative ineffectiveness in jumpstarting prosperity. "Since the 1960s, more than \$700 billion in foreign aid has been poured into Sub-Saharan Africa, yet the region is poorer than ever," states Munk. Sachs however believed that if foreign aid had failed it was because enough hadn't yet been committed to the developing world.

Munk's account of Sachs's work in the millennium villages highlights the stark reality

that many of the challenges in Africa are too complex to be overcome by an increase in money and goods. In response to Sachs's promises of great advancement through the millennium villages, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni warned him, "You know, in these countries of Africa, we have many problems. This is not India or China. There are no markets. There is no network. No rails. No roads. We have no political cohesion." Attempting to create these features, without fully knowing and accepting the reality on the ground and the cultural underpinnings of a region, can prove to be a recipe for failure. The remains of well-intentioned, yet incomplete or dysfunctional development projects that litter Sub-Saharan Africa serve as the evidence.

But to Sachs's credit, the Millennium Villages Project staff was composed not only of foreigners, but also indigenous African experts who spoke the local language and knew the cultural implications of their respective areas. Appointed to lead the millennium villages at the ground level, these experts were eager to help their respective areas and gladly welcomed the increase in attention and infusion of resources provided through the project.

Ahmed Maalim Mohamed, the head of the millennium village in Dertu, Kenya, aimed to create a livestock market in the village so that the pastoralists of Dertu could have the opportunity to buy and sell their animals without traveling to other cities, the closest being 60 miles north. But despite Mohamed's efforts and prompting, the

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people of Dertu showed minimal interest in developing the area on their own. Dertu, an area prone to floods, droughts, and tribal violence, and lacking markets, roads, and electricity, served primarily as a pass-through point for pastoralists due to its water source. Its few inhabitants were content to remain dependent on the aid of international organizations or travel to other areas to meet their needs. Mohamed was frustrated but recognized the dilemma. “What can we do? We cannot enforce. We try to explain. We want to empower. But no one can come and change them if they do not want to change themselves.”

Despite this reality, the initiative turned the pastoral landscape of Dertu into a sort of “shanty town,” which encouraged people to stay and collect free goods instead of moving on to other more connected areas, as they had done before. The area appeared more developed, with a few small businesses, a hospital with increased care capability, and even tin roofs (a sign of wealth in rural Africa). While these advancements provided the people of Dertu hope for a better future, they were fueled by financial dependency, not sustained wealth creation. What would happen when the Millennium Villages Project ended and the flow of cash ceased?

In Ruhiira, Uganda, the other millennium village profiled by Munk, Sachs, and his team decided that the maize crop should be developed through a \$300,000 donation of high-yield seeds and chemical fertilizer to increase food output and diversify agricultural production. The villagers begrudgingly complied, though it was not a common crop in that part of Uganda and was actually considered very low quality. “Prison food,” they called it.

The production of corn was very successful, resulting in a large surplus. However, this excess corn could not be properly stored and consequently attracted vermin. Moreover, there were no markets in the region that wished to purchase this excess maize, and the farmers ended up selling the maize for far less than the cost of input.

Sachs, described by Bono as the “squeaky wheel that roars,” nonetheless barreled on with his poverty alleviation strategy, despite the advice from others to slow down and evaluate the potential impact of these decisions. Though warned by major donor agencies that his proposal to distribute free anti-malaria bed nets to all Tanzanians was a “hand out not a hand up” and an unsustainable approach that would destroy local bed net producers, Sachs continued the push, lobbying the president of Tanzania and the World Health Organization (WHO). His efforts culminated in the issuance of WHO official guidelines calling for the mass distribution of “free or highly subsidized” insecticide-treated mosquito nets to all Africans at risk for Malaria. Appealing to emotion, Sachs would say in speeches, “Either you leave people to die or you decide to do something about it.” He created the impression that if you opposed his aid strategy then you must be apathetic, cold-hearted, or simply do not consider saving the poor from curable conditions to be a moral obligation.

In the wake of Sachs’s actions, the prevalence of malaria cases in Africa dropped considerably and progress was visible in the millennium villages. Through the project, classrooms were built, wells and latrines were dug, nurses were recruited, and the livelihood of the people had visibly improved. It would be unfair to consider Sachs’s efforts a complete failure and Munk does not make this claim. Yet it is difficult to determine whether this progress would’ve inevitably occurred without Sachs’s involvement and whether it was bolstered by the parallel benefits of globalization and trade that are sweeping the developing world. In fact, the millennium development goal of halving global poverty had already been achieved in 2010, five years earlier than projected. According to a 2013 article published by *The Economist*, “Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people living in extreme poverty fell by half as a share of the total population in developing countries, from 43 percent to 21 percent—a reduction of

almost 1 billion people.”

While poverty alleviation advances should be celebrated, it remains a vast and urgent problem. Sachs places considerable emphasis on this point. But as Munk’s book illustrates, the way individuals and groups approach poverty matters. There is a difference between charity and development, and the best initiatives involve the people they are attempting to help. If locals are not directly involved in the initiatives aimed at improving their situation, then legitimacy and trust, determining factors of enduring success, may be diminished. When the Millennium Villages Project ends in 2015, the intention is for local governments to assume the responsibility of funding and maintaining the villages. However, David Siriri, the head of the millennium village in Ruhiira, seriously doubted the efficacy of this proposal. Referring to the Ugandan government, he questioned, “The government has even failed to cover its basic budget, so where will they find additional money for Ruhiira?”

The situation of the millennium village in Dertu looked no more promising. The Kenyan government had a development plan of its own and when the people of Dertu heard that their haphazard Millennium Villages Project settlements were to be destroyed and replaced by the government’s version of progress, there was great dissatisfaction. Conflict broke out and the government land surveyors were chased out of town. “Without a formal government survey, there could be no land titles or property rights, and without land titles or property rights, nothing of permanence could be built in Dertu,” describes Munk. The Millennium Villages Project’s lack of coordination with the government’s property structure undermined the legitimacy of the project and hindered the prospect of any long-term development.

Though Sachs’s actions were well intentioned and demonstrated deep concern for the poor, his poverty alleviation strategy

was rather impersonal with expert development theories drafted in New York, and funds and resources pouring into Africa from afar. During the six years Munk spent shadowing the Millennium Villages Project, Sachs himself visited Dertu only twice, each time for no longer than two or three hours.

An important lesson highlighted in Munk's book is that an understanding and appreciation of complexity breeds humility. If you believe poverty is complex, then you accept that a particular approach to remedying it will not always be the right one, or one that fits every situation. This is not to excuse complacency or inaction, but to encourage greater investment in discernment and in immersing oneself in the cultural landscape before acting. Listening to those entrenched in poverty and recognizing their gifts may be slower and less glamorous than the approach favored by Sachs, but may contribute to more holistic, enduring results.

While the Millennium Villages Project runs through 2015, it remains to be seen if the promised results will be achieved. However in the two villages profiled by Munk, there was no evidence to suggest that the progress produced would continue long term. There was no sustainable industry or reason for people to develop markets in these villages.

Jeffrey Sachs didn't just set out to save the lives of a few thousand people; his plan was much more ambitious than this. His goal, as Munk stated in a 2014 Hudson Institute lecture, was to "change the tide and fortune of an entire continent." Through the Millennium Villages Project's introduction of money and resources in Africa, peoples' lives were improved. However, seeking to help people realize their inherent capacity to be creative, productive members of sustainable communities is an altogether different objective that may have eluded Sachs's project.

Matthea Brandenburg is a research assistant at the Acton Institute.

How Much Progress has Acton made with its Capital Campaign?

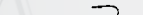
In the Winter 2012 issue of *Religion & Liberty*, I discussed Acton's decision to seek a new downtown headquarters. Our growth over the last few years has been phenomenal. In the FAQ column from 2012, I briefly mentioned our Acton@25 Capital Campaign. This initiative not only secured our move to 98 E. Fulton but allowed us to make the kind of investments that will enhance our current work while continuing to expand. For those of you have been able to visit our new building, you have seen firsthand the potential the technology and space provides in helping us reach new audiences.

Currently, one of the key final phases to our capital campaign is the completion of a fully functional media and recording studio. For us there will be a lot of added media value with the use of live-streaming technology. Some of that was on display during our “Faith, State, and the Economy: Perspectives from the East and West” event which was simulcast live in our Grand Rapids office. There were 239 attendees in Rome and 47 people attended the satellite event at the Acton Building in Grand Rapids. Additionally, the conference was broadcast live online with 834 viewers from 56 countries. The streaming simulcast allowed for viewers in Grand Rapids to interact with lecturers in Rome.

Much of the studio work has already been completed. Our television studio is already fully functional. In the last few months, Acton has made over 20 national and worldwide television appearances. We have a plan in place to grow all of these numbers.

We are also looking into utilizing the roof of our building as additional space for special events. We still have 54 seats in the Mark Murray auditorium that can be permanently reserved by name. This initiative is an important revenue stream for our building and events.

To date the capital campaign has raised \$11,601,000 towards our goal of \$12,500,000. Thank you to our many supporters that have placed their confidence in Acton as the organization to help promote the free and virtuous society.


Kris Alan Mauren
Executive Director

The Allies took heavy losses, yes, but they smashed the North Vietnamese and Vietcong, killing more than 40,000. Hanoi would never have recovered from this massive military defeat had not Cronkite irresponsibly declared this war unwinnable before 20 million viewers. This prompted President Lyndon B. Johnson to say, "I have lost Cronkite, I have lost Middle America." It is shocking that Cronkite is still venerated as the model journalist. He committed an arrogant act of journalistic malpractice, and so have other media personalities, though certainly not all. Most American and European combat reporters did a brave and honorable job covering this conflict where it was actually fought: not in Saigon's bars and New York newsrooms but in the jungles, rice paddies, and streets of South Vietnam.

How did your experiences in Vietnam and elsewhere shape your decision to study theology?

The stench of death remained in my nostrils for years after I left Vietnam. In my nightmares I saw the bodies of those beautiful women in mass graves, and these images are coming back now that I have reached old age. This, compounded with my ghastly experiences as a managing editor having to deal with a sizable minority of extreme leftists on my staff, made me, formerly a hedonistic fellow, reflect about my vocation as a journalist. Being a cradle Lutheran, this automatically drove me to Luther's doctrine of vocation. According to Luther, Christians have a divine assignment to serve their neighbor out of love in their many everyday endeavors as reporters, editors, pho-

tographers, but also as parents, citizens, or wherever they are placed.

What is the role of a journalist in a free society and how should one view the vocation of journalism?

In the free society, you have an interlocking chain of vocations. Let's start with the voters. They are the sovereigns of a democratic nation. Their vocation is to elect public officials who then have their own vocations. But the voters must exercise their vocation not only as an act of self-interest but also with a loving concern for their fellow-citizens, their neighbors. The voters must base their decisions on infor-

media today! They don't, and that's catastrophic. This is why I have grave premonitions for the chance for survival of democracy as we know it.

How has Luther shaped your view of work and what do people who are not as familiar with Luther need to know about him?

He has taught me how to lead a Christian life as a participating resident in this fallen world. Luther does not suggest that I do this as a holy roller but by my willingness to serve my neighbor quite simply in my regular work. According to Luther, I thus render the highest possible service to God,

and am a member of the universal priesthood of all believers in the secular realm, which Lutherans call the left-hand kingdom. What people need to know about Luther is that his message is hugely practical and uncomplicated: By grace through your faith in Jesus' work on the cross, a Christian is already a redeemed citizen in Christ's realm. This frees the Christian to roll

up his sleeves to get to work in the secular realm, where God is hidden and acting through His masks. We are these masks, including us journalists. In God's secular kingdom, we have to do nothing particular other than to serve our neighbor *in vocatione* (in our vocations), not *per vocationem* (through our vocations), as long as we do this out of a loving concern for our neighbors. That's what God has created for: to be His cooperators, His partners, in the ongoing process of creation. This is so wonderfully practical, so down-to-earth. It makes a huge amount of sense, except to narcissists.



Walter Cronkite of CBS interviewing Professor Mai of the University of Hue in Vietnam.

mation, which they can only get from responsible reporting, not the gobbledygook of self-important pundits, to use a great term coined by Rupert Murdoch, but from men and women who honestly research facts. When I started my career with the Associated Press in Frankfurt more than half a century ago, one of my superiors once slapped a manuscript around my chops, shouting, "Keep your irrelevant opinion to yourself! It's not your vocation to opine! Tell the readers what they need to know, not what you want them to think!" Oh, do I wish editors of this type still manned the slots of the Western

How can a Lutheran view of vocation promote and benefit views that support a free market and free society?

Let me answer this question the Jewish way – with a counter-question: How can a free and free-market society survive

“If our world, including the business and political world, seems in disarray and sometimes in a state of disintegration, this surely is a consequence of warped attitudes vis-à-vis our fellow human beings.”

without this sense of vocation? It would return to the state of chaos that existed prior to Creation. Is it not better business for the entrepreneur to love those who constitute his market rather than to view them with belligerence and cynicism? If our world, including the business and political world, seems in disarray and sometimes in a state of disintegration, this surely is a consequence of warped attitudes vis-à-vis our fellow human beings. The Lutheran view on vocation is neither socialist, nor collectivist, nor utopian. It only redirects the minds of entrepreneurs, workers, managers, business people, shopkeepers, and others away from themselves and toward their fellow human beings. From a free-market perspective, this sounds like a promising program.

You are working on an update to The Fabricated Luther. What is the most prominent myth or false belief when it comes to Luther?

Since World War II there have been two charges against Luther: First that he was Hitler's spiritual ancestor because of his alleged anti-Semitic views. This is nonsense because anti-Semitism is a racist category that didn't exist in the 16th century. Racism emerged with the Enlightenment. As a young man, Luther wrote wonderful tracts about the Jews.

Sadly, he wrote horrible things about them late in life. But this was a theologically motivated anti-Judaism, refuted by many of his horrified followers in his lifetime. It was even suppressed by the Lutheran church in Germany for nearly three centuries and dug up by people who were not even predominantly Lutheran. Let's not forget that Hitler, Himmler, and many other Nazi leaders were lapsed Catholics; please note the word *lapsed* here. If Luther was the spiritual ancestor of the Holocaust, how come it occurred in Germany and not in the much more uniformly Lutheran lands such as Denmark, Sweden, Finland, or Norway?

Secondly, and more importantly, William L. Shirer, Thomas Mann, and more recent scribes have accused Luther of having turned the Germans into a nation of quietists, yes-men, and cowards by urging them to remain loyal subjects to their rulers, in keeping with Romans 13.

This is the main focus of my study where I show that Luther had developed a very sophisticated theology of resistance to tyranny, and that leading lights of the resistance against Hitler acted in keeping with Luther's teachings. My best witnesses are

You've argued that Luther's view on vocation is the best remedy for what you call the "Narcissist epidemic." How is that so?

Remember last year's *Time* cover story titled, *The Me, Me, Me Culture*? Narcissism is not just an epidemic but, on my reading, a dangerous false religion whose adherents attempt the impossible: to sit on their own altars and at the same time kneel in front of them worshipping themselves. This is a lethal and destructive faith, that is seen in the abortion genocide that leads to moral chaos and threatens to undo the order of creation. They focus exclusively on the Me, and this will end in what is called in Hebrew, *tohu wa-bohu* — the destruction of created order. In chaos, no freedom or free-markets are possible.

You can't even be an effective entrepreneur with narcissism. You're too self-serving; there's no purpose to your entrepreneurship. How can you possibly look towards the other? Once the spirit of enterprise is crushed by the spirit of me, then the entire concept of freedom, the entire concept of ordered liberty is destroyed. Human life itself would end its meaning and ultimately perish. Luther's view on vocation turns our head in the opposite different



Carl Goerdeler, the former mayor of my hometown, Leipzig, and civilian head of the German resistance who was hanged by the Nazis, and Eivind Berggrav, the former Lutheran bishop of Oslo and primate of the Church of Norway.

attraction: to the other, the neighbor. This is why I believe that it imperative for all denominations to study this doctrine — in Sunday school, catechism, confirmation classes, adult and senior forums. It is none other than a prescription for societal health. ■■■■

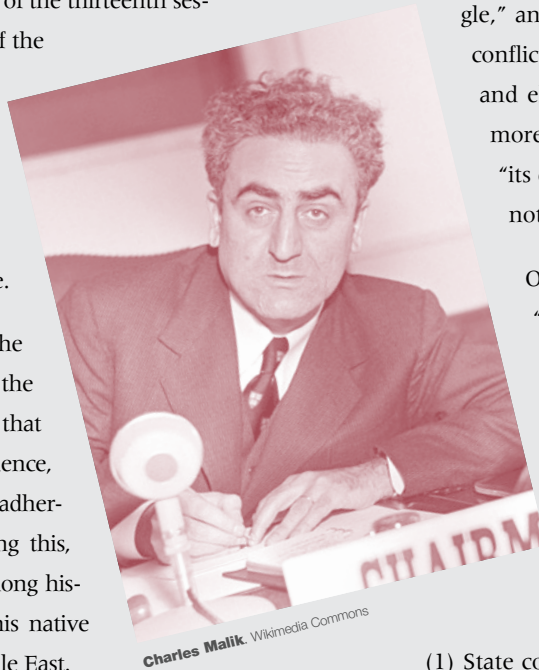
Charles Malik [1906 – 1987]

The greatest thing about any civilization is the human person, and the greatest thing about this person is the possibility of his encounter with the person of Jesus Christ.

Lebanese academic, philosopher, theologian, and diplomat Charles Malik served as a drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as president of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. His life's work emphasized the centrality of individual rights over collectivism, that humanity's most treasured possessions are the mind and the conscience.

For Malik, freedom included the right to become in addition to the right to exist. It was on this basis that he defended freedom of conscience, significantly including religious adherence and conversion, attributing this, in part, to the influence of the long history of religious tolerance in his native Lebanon in the Levantine Middle East.

Malik called the "leaders of industry and finance" in the United States "the creators and stewards of the greatest economy the earth has ever known," emphasizing their vocation to use their gifts for the common good. While Malik had some optimism about U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society efforts, as a devout, Eastern Orthodox Christian he emphasized the priority of "the gifts of the spirit," which "are attitudes of the soul which even the cleanest neighborhood, the most wholesome school surroundings, the finest educational equipment, the most immaculate cities, the most prosperous economy, the most secure financial status, the most just society, nay, even the greatest of Great Societies, cannot by themselves ensure." Indeed, his resolute rejection of materialism was also one of the most salient features of his adamant efforts against Communism.



At the 1960 Founder's Day commemoration at Saint Louis University, Malik delivered a speech titled, "The Tide Must Turn." Materialism, collectivism, and secularism, he claimed, blaze the trail to Communism, which is characterized by "emphasis on human desire," "derivation of all ideas and all norms and all valuations from the sheer economic struggle," an "interpretation of history as the product only of conflicting class interests," inciting "all that is primitive and elemental and unformed to rise against all that is more perfect, more developed, more sure of itself," and "its doctrine that in the end there is nothing, nothing, nothing, save atoms in motion."

On the other hand, Communism cannot rise where "the sacredness of the individual human soul" is recognized," he declared. "The Communist state is everywhere a police state." The people depend on the state for social, cultural, political, and spiritual information, formation, and orientation, "upon food conceived, concocted and administered by the state alone."

Communism, to Malik, has eight chief markers:

(1) State control of education for Marxist indoctrination; (2) strict atheism; (3) domination of all political rhetoric by economics and the class struggle—the workers will revolt and win; (4) cold, hard collectivism; (5) stern totalitarianism of the Communist Party; (6) imperialist worldwide ambition; (7) advancement via brutal force; and (8) "a military-nuclear-economic-political might second to none."

To defeat Communism, one must believe that war is unnecessary, combat only the Communist Party rather than the people themselves, and provide real alternatives to Communism. "Not to believe in the possibility of such genuine alternatives," wrote Malik, "is to believe that Communism ... is here to stay; to believe that the rollback is either impossible or undesirable; to sit back and accept the sham of peaceful coexistence; in short, to betray the cause of freedom by believing and acting on the belief that not all men are fit to be free."



Lightening Our Burdens

Recently, a 14-year-old in Michigan carried his younger brother on his back for 40 miles. The younger brother (Braden) is afflicted with cerebral palsy, and his big brother, Hunter, wanted to bring awareness to the disease

while trying to raise money for medical research. Over the course of two days, the brothers completed their journey, which they called the “Cerebral Palsy Swagger.”

A cynic might look at this and say, “So what? What did the kid prove? His little brother still has cerebral palsy, and he didn’t even raise that much money.”

I am not a cynic. (I admit to occasionally being cynical, but I am not a cynic.) These brothers accomplished quite a bit. The younger brother was not simply “along for the ride,” but an active participant. There is something about him that moved his older brother to do this in the first place, but the younger boy also had to make sure he kept his brother comfortable, encourage him, and make the trek as easy as possible. He was an inspiration, champion, and a cheerleader.

The older brother dared to be bold in his love. He was willing to carry his brother for 40 miles (think about that: forty miles!) because he wanted others to notice the toll a disease had taken on his brother’s body. He set aside his own comfort to literally bear his brother’s burden.

A couple of years ago, I had the pleasure of co-authoring a book with Jeff Sandefer, an entrepreneur and educator from Texas. The book is titled, *A Field Guide for the Hero’s Journey*. We wanted to give practical advice on how to live a heroic life, using classic literature and our own experiences to illustrate what such a life might look like.

One of the topics in the book is about choosing companions for our lives’ journey. If we want to live a good, purposeful, creative, and brave life, whom must we surround ourselves with? I recounted this story from a time when I

was studying in Italy, staying at a monastery:

One day in the garden of the monastery, where I was reading, I notice two elderly ladies making their way through the flowers, negotiating the unsteady cobblestoned path, pausing from time to time over this or that flower or cluster of greenery.

As I watched them I realized something amazing which I might have missed if there were distractions: One of the ladies was rather badly crippled, and while she was able to walk, it would have been very perilous on the unsure footing of the garden. The other woman was a bit younger, and steady on her feet; but she was blind.

Together, they experience a lovely Italian garden that neither could have negotiated alone.

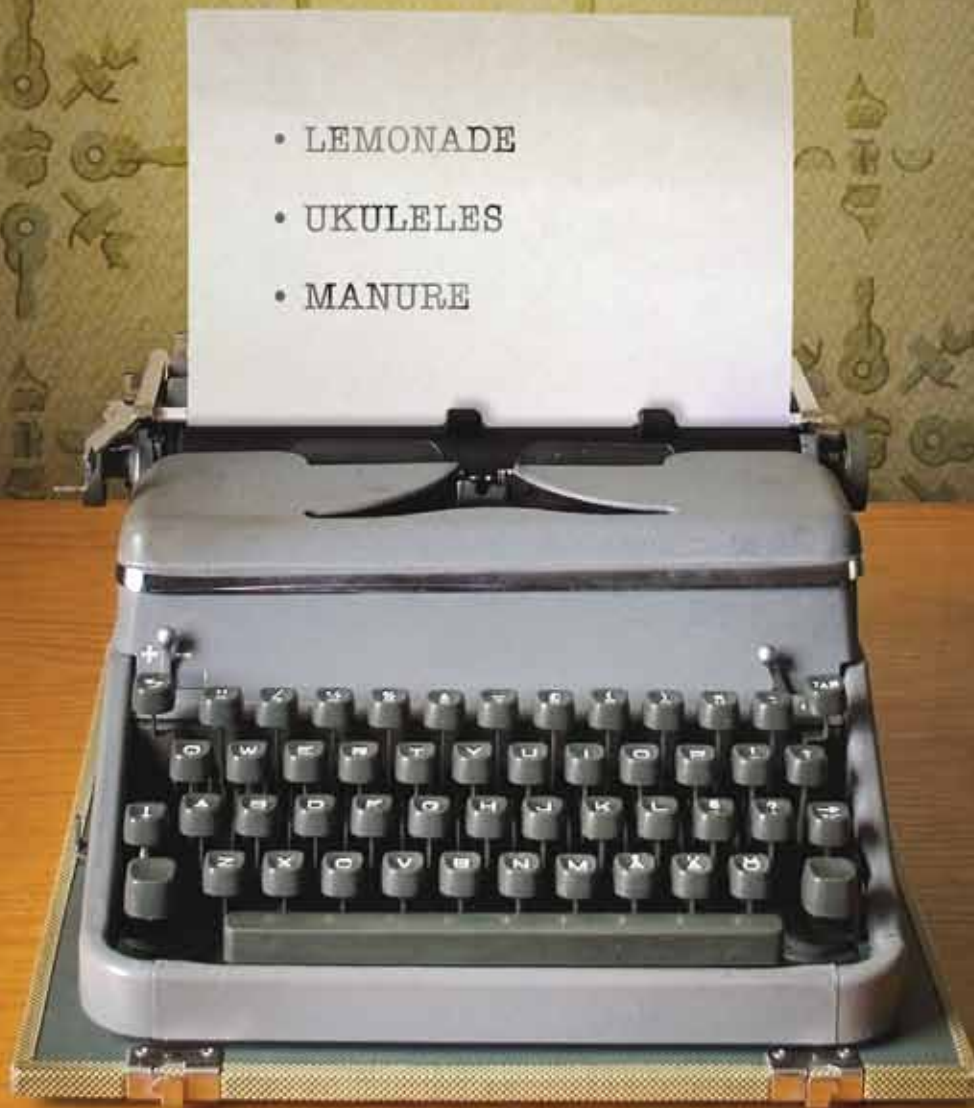
A burden shared is a burden lightened. Like any truth, it is deceptively simple, but utterly complex. We are too often afraid to share our troubles and problems with others. Perhaps it is pride that keeps us from sharing; it may be that we think we’re being a nuisance. We also fail to reach out when we see others in distress. We tell ourselves not to intrude, or that we couldn’t possibly be of any real help. The brothers, Hunter and Braden, know such thinking for what it is: a folly, a lie, a sham.

Christ Himself tells us: *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”* (Mt. 11:29-30) It is easy to believe that the yoke we share is a burden. Hunter and Braden Gandee can tell you: there is nothing burdensome about sharing our trials, asking for help and being willing to carry another’s problems. It is the way our lives are intended to be, and is it truly the only way for us to live lives that are good, purposeful, creative, and brave.

Rev. Sirico is president and co-founder of the Acton Institute.

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