

# ANTHROPOLOGY AND ECONOMICS

How sound economic policy reflects  
biblical anthropology

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# Abstract

- This presentation examines the relationship between a biblical anthropology and sound economic policy. It analyzes Christian care for the poor in relation to an entitlement mentality. Properly defined, an entitlement mentality is a refusal to provide for oneself or one's family combined with the expectation of receiving financial support from others. A biblically sound economic policy does not reward vice. Rather, it upholds justice for those who refuse to work. This paper will also offer an examination of how a biblically sound economic policy should address those unable to care for themselves. According to the New Testament, the early church cared for its poor by placing care for widows and orphans at the highest strata of religious virtue. However, even this was carried out with exceptions. A biblically sound economic policy recognizes the economic impact of immorality as it relates to poverty. In order to restrain human depravity, economic policy should first recognize human depravity and establish reasonable restraints against it while maintaining room for human freedom. Such is the tension in formulating a biblically grounded economic policy. Central to this idea is placing a high priority on care for the poor by differentiating those poor by circumstances (the majority of Jesus's hearers), and poor by choice. Circumstances include highly predatory taxation systems, despotic regimes, religious persecution, and dysfunctional bureaucracies. Choices include gluttony (neglecting physical health), laziness (neglecting basic self-discipline), immorality (disregarding biblical morality), self-indulgence (pursuing unnecessary luxuries), and economic naivety (neglecting basic financial principles). Yet Christians should act in mercy and generosity with their personal finances while extolling virtue through actively meeting the needs of the circumstantially poor, rejecting covetous class-warfare, rejecting an entitlement mentality, and extolling diligence. In addition, Christians should advocate the principles of Proverbs by encouraging diligence, thrift, resourcefulness, and virtue while eschewing unnecessary debt. In conclusion, this presentation will evaluate economic policy with the following criteria: First, does this policy recognize personal property rights? Without property rights, the poor are shut out of the free market system and the global economy. Second, does this policy encourage or discourage personal responsibility? Third, does this policy oppress the circumstantially poor?

- Thesis: Christian care for the poor should not support an entitlement mentality. Properly defined, an entitlement mentality is a refusal to provide for oneself or one's family and having the state of mind where one sees themselves as entitled to financial support from neighbors or government. Simply put, an entitlement mentality is where one expects fine dining without the willingness to work even for the basic necessities of life. The Apostle Paul writes, "*But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever*" (1 Tim. 5:8, ESV). A biblically sound economic policy does not reward vice/sinful behavior (laziness) but rather, upholds justice for offenders who, Warren Wiersbe identifies as, "The biggest thieves of all are the lazy people who could work but won't, the people who consume what others produce but produce nothing for others to use. The ' sluggard ' and the ' slothful man ' are mentioned at least seventeen times in Proverbs, and nothing good is said about them."

- Warren Wiersbe, *Be Skillful: Proverbs* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1996), in *Logos Library System* [CD-ROM].

- On the other hand, a biblically sound economic policy must address the issue of provision for those unable to care for themselves. According to the New Testament, the early church cared for its poor (Rom. 12:13; Ac. 6:1-6).
- Care for widows and orphans was the highest evidence of religious virtue (Jas. 1:27).
- Regular assistance for widows (Ac. 6:1).
- However, this was even with exceptions. In order to receive church assistance, widows must be “true widows” (1 Tim. 5:3):
- At least 60 years old (1 Tim. 5:8).
- A woman of one man (1 Tim. 5:9).
- Having a reputation for good works (1 Tim. 5:10).
- Raised children (1 Tim. 5:10).
- Shown hospitality (1 Tim. 5:10).
- Washed the feet of the saints (1 Tim. 5:10).
- Cared for the afflicted (1 Tim. 5:10).
- Devoted herself to every good work (1 Tim. 5:10).
- Relatives = primary caregivers. Church = last option (1 Tim. 5:16).

# Forms of government and the Bible

- Dissimilarity: Theocracy vs. Democracy/Republic/Autocracy
- Similarity: Biblical principles that transcend every form of government or economy.
- Personal responsibility: Jennifer Roback Morse argues, “Without self-governing, self-restraining individuals, the scope of government will necessarily grow.”

- Jennifer Roback Morse, *Love & Economics: Why the Laissez-Faire Family Doesn't Work* (Dallas: Spence Publishing Company, 2001), 7.

# Imago Dei and Depravity

- Millard J. Erickson notes, “The basis for the work ethic is to be found in the very nature of what God created us to be.”
  - Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 535.
- Biblical texts reveal an awareness of both the intrinsic value of the *imago dei* as well as human depravity (Gen. 1:27-28; Rom. 1:18-32). An economic policy that refuses to acknowledge the *imago dei* will result in a cheapening of human life as evidenced in totalitarian or Communist regimes.
- On the other hand, an economic policy that refuses to acknowledge human depravity will eventually break down from an unsustainable level of greed, laziness, corruption, and selfishness. An economic policy that assumes the nebulous and dangerous “innate goodness of man” will eventually become top heavy with an ever-increasing number of consumers and a dwindling number of producers.
- Therefore, a biblically sound economic policy will recognize that persons have intrinsic worth by way of elevating the value of life over property as well as setting up safeguards against inevitable abuse of the system stemming from human depravity.
- “*There is no safety for honest men but by believing all possible evil of evil men.*”
  - Edmund Burke

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 249. <http://www.tsowell.com/quotes.html>

# Anthropology & Society

- Millard J. Erickson:

Our approach to the problems of society will also be governed by our view of sin. *On the other hand, if we feel that humanity is basically good, or at worst, morally neutral, we will view the problems of society as stemming from an unwholesome environment.* Alter the environment, and changes in individual humans and their behavior will follow. If, on the other hand, the problems of society are rooted in radically perverted human minds and wills, then the nature of those individuals will have to be altered, or they will continue to affect the whole.

# A biblically sound economic policy recognizes the following tier of addressing poverty

## 1. Family (Central structure of society)

- Economic incentives for marital fidelity and disincentives for infidelity. Ex. Covenant marriage, 1 year separation before finalized divorce, Child tax credit, tax incentives for marriage vs. cohabitation.

### \*Economic impact of immorality:

- Divorce & unwed mothers cost an estimated \$112 billion annually in the U.S. (“Study: Divorce, unwed parenting cost taxpayers billions,” *USA Today*, April 20, 2008,

[http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-04-15-fragmented-families\\_N.htm?csp=34](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-04-15-fragmented-families_N.htm?csp=34)

## 2. Church (Local community)

- Tax-exempt incentives.

## 3. Government (State and national community)

- Distance from the need increases the possibility for abuse of the system. Rome - Bethlehem / D.C. - Amarillo, TX



# Human Community (Government)

- John R. Sachs, “This is what makes us different from other animals which exhibit what may be called herd instinct, or insects like ants and bees which seem to exhibit society-like structures. For us humans, the matrix of interpersonal relationships is not just a factual, instinctual given. It is not merely organic or evolutionary. It is personal and therefore intentional. Human community must be desired, chose, created, and worked for.”
  - John R. Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity: Basic Christian Anthropology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 37.
- In order to restrain human depravity, community/government/collective human relationships must first recognize human depravity and establish safeguards against it while maintaining a respect for the sanctity of human life. Such is the tension in formulating a biblically grounded economic policy.

# The test of civilizations/governments/ economic policies

- “Cultures can be judged in many ways, but eventually every nation in every age must be judged by this test: *How did it treat people?*” - Francis Schaffer & C. Everett Koop

- *Whatever Happened to the Human Race? Exposing our Rapid Yet Subtle Loss of Human Rights* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1978), 15.

- “You cannot separate economics from ethics” - Craig Mitchell, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Criswell College (former Chair of the Ethics Department, and Director of the Richard Land Center for Cultural Engagement, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas) Craig Mitchell, (CNETH 4373, *Ethics and Public Policy*, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, January, 2007).

- *A nation's economic policy or activity reflects their theology & anthropology:* “There is always a moment in the story of great powers when their own citizens become their own worst enemies-not so much in the form of homegrown terrorism as in the form of the citizenry thinking and living at odds with what it takes for the nation to thrive.” - Os Guinness

- Os Guinness, *A Free People's Suicide: Sustainable Freedom and the American Future* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2012), 13.

# Goal of public policy

- Plato, “To hate what one ought to hate and to love what one ought to love: this is true education.”

- Carl J. Richard, *Twelve Greeks and Romans who Changed the World* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 102.

- Karl Marx - Redistribution of wealth

- Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore, ed. Joseph Katz (New York: Pocket Books, 1964), 94.

- John Feinberg, “For the Christian committed to the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, God is the starting point for everything else we think and do.”

- John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 37.

- Paul - Reward those who do good; punish those who do evil (Rom. 13).

# Biblical overview of the role of government

- 1) Government is instituted by God – 13:1-2; John 19:9-11 For what purpose?
  - 2) Government is to punish those who do evil (Role of justice) – 13:2-4
  - 3) Government is to reward those who do good – 13:4
  - 4) Christian should obey the law so long as it conforms to God's Law – 13:5-7
- Why should Christians obey the law when it conforms to God's Law?
    - a. To avoid punishment – 13:5
    - b. Because of conscience sake – 13:5
  - 5) Christian choices in the political realm should be characterized by love – 13:8-10

Q: Is there a place for Christian disobedience to the law?

A: When man's "Law" violates God's Law.

# How does one apply such principles in public policy?

## 1. High priority on care for the poor

- Deut. 15:7-11 *7If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, 8 but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. 9 Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, 'The seventh year, the year of release is near,' and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and you be guilty of sin. You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. 11 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'*
- James 2:14-17 *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

# 1. High priority on care for the poor

- Deut. 14:28-29 *At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. <sup>29</sup> And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.*
- Exodus 23:10-11 *For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, <sup>11</sup> but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.*
- Lev. 19:9-10 *When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. <sup>10</sup> And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.*
- Exodus 23:6 *You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit.*

# 1. High priority on care for the poor

- Amos 5:12 *For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate.*
- James' indictments against favoritism within the church (James 2:4-5).
- Millard J. Erickson observes, "Jesus himself was one of the poor . . . The fact that Jesus' family offered "a pair of doves or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:24) rather than a lamb is an indication of their poverty...Concern for the poor lay at the very core of his ministry."
  - Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 567, 568.
- Thus, concern for the poor should take center stage in a biblical approach to economics.

## 2. Christian history yields a robust care of the poor:

- Orphanages
- Hospitals
- Animal rights & eradication of slavery in the British Empire - William Wilberforce



### 3. Two classes of poor:

#### a. Poor by circumstance: Majority of Jesus' hearers

- 3<sup>rd</sup> world Christians who experience predatory taxation.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> world Christians who experience religious discrimination.
- 1<sup>st</sup> world Christians born into poverty
- 3<sup>rd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> world physically or mentally handicapped persons incapable of providing for themselves.
- Historical consideration: New Testament injunctions to care for the poor are within such an oppressive regime.
- Yet OT provision for the poor involved active participation by those who received benefits: actually harvesting their own grain (Lev. 19:9-10).
- If the poor are always going to be in the land, why does the writer of Deuteronomy place such emphasis upon the need to continually give to the poor? This could be a foreshadowing of grace. Deut. 15:11 *For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'*

## b. Poor by choice:

- **Gluttony: Neglecting physical health**

Proverbs 23:20-21 *Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, <sup>21</sup> for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.*

- “Preventable illness makes up approximately 80% of the burden of illness and 90% of all healthcare costs.”

- Raja Jagadeesa, M.D., “Preventable Illness at Core of U.S. Health Costs,” *ABC News*, October 3, 2007. <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Diet/story?id=3683683&page=1#.UaegUOB4Rq9>
- [http://www.preventdisease.com/worksite\\_wellness/health\\_stats.shtml](http://www.preventdisease.com/worksite_wellness/health_stats.shtml)

- **Laziness: Neglecting basic self-discipline**

Prov. 6:9-11 *How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? <sup>10</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, <sup>11</sup> and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.*

Proverbs 20:13 *Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread.*

2 Thess. 3:10 *For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.*

Ephesians 4:28 *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.*

- **Immorality: Neglecting basic biblical morality**

Prov. 6:26 *For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.*

- Self-indulgence in unnecessary luxuries:

Proverbs 23:21 *for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.*

Proverbs 28:19 *Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.*

- Short-sightedness: Neglecting basic principles of saving

Prov. 6:6-8 *Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. <sup>7</sup> Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, <sup>8</sup> she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.*

Prov. 10:5 *He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.*

Prov. 13:18 *Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.*

Prov. 28:19 *Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.*

4. Christians should act in mercy & generosity with their own finances while extolling diligence & the “Proverbs Principle”:

- a. Actively give to the circumstantially poor
- b. Reject covetous class-warfare
- c. Reject an entitlement mentality
- d. Extol diligence & hard work – The Protestant work-ethic
- e. The “Proverbs Principle”
  - Avoid unnecessary debt.
  - Encourage diligence, thrift, resourcefulness, and virtue.

“It is true, I cannot prevent the introduction of the poison (opium); gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes; *but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people.*” - Daoguang, Emperor of China (1844).

# Addressing poverty

- a. Most liberals & conservatives want to alleviate address poverty; they just disagree on the proper method.
- b. Rejection of welfare from the federal government does not amount to lack of care for the poor.
  - Fallacy: Centralized government is the only or most efficient entity capable of alleviating poverty.
  - Fact: Governments are notoriously inefficient when compared to private charities or organizations.

Michael D. Tanner (*Cato Institute*) writes:

Observers have known for a long time that the surest ways to stay out of poverty are to finish school; not get pregnant outside marriage; and get a job, any job, and stick with it. That means that if we wish to fight poverty, we must end those government policies—high taxes and regulatory excess—that inhibit growth and job creation. We must protect capital investment and give people the opportunity to start new businesses. We must reform our failed government school system to encourage competition and choice. We must encourage the poor to save and invest.

- More importantly, the real work of fighting poverty must come not from the government, but from the engines of civil society. An enormous amount of evidence and experience shows that private charities are far more effective than government welfare programs. While welfare provides incentives for counterproductive behavior, private charities can use their aid to encourage self-sufficiency, self-improvement, and independence. Private charities can individualize their approaches and target the specific problems that are holding people in poverty. One definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Perhaps that's something to keep in mind the next time we hear a call for more welfare spending.

- Michael Austin writes, “Compassion is *in*. Celebrities champion compassionate causes. Bono, U2’s lead singer, has been instrumental in bringing attention and aid to those in Africa who suffer deeply due to grinding poverty, AIDS, and unfair trade policies. Other celebrities such as Julia Roberts, George Clooney, and Tom Brady have joined in this fight through their involvement with the ONE campaign. A Christian account of compassion will focus on the sick and the poor. Our moral exemplar in this regard is of course Jesus Himself, who was moved with compassion at the suffering of those He encountered in His earthly ministry (Matthew 9:35-37; Mark 6:30-44). However, compassion will also be relevant to our relationships with family, friends, and others who are perhaps suffering in other ways. Many of us tend to think of compassionate actions as good things to do, but not in the sense that we are morally required to do them. We often think of compassionate acts, especially as they relate to the poor, as supererogatory acts of charity.[1] My claim is that exemplifying the virtue of compassion in our everyday lives is a matter of justice, rather than an optional matter of charity. *The basic reason that compassion is an obligatory matter of justice, apart from the biblical injunctions, is that human beings have great value as image-bearers of God...*

[1] I am using “Charity” here in its contemporary sense, rather than in the sense used in some older translations of the Bible in which charity is the translation given for agape.

- ...A variety of answers have been given to this question, but for our purposes, it is enough to point out that being made in God's image means that we are God's representatives, and that we are representational of who God is. [2] We are free, relational, morally responsible, self-conscious beings. We reflect and represent who God is as human persons made in His image. God is the locus of ultimate value, and we, as human beings created in His image and to reflect His character, share in that value. This has important implications for ethics generally, and the virtue of compassion specifically. Given that all human beings are made in the image of God, all human beings possess a basic dignity, a fundamental value such that they have a conditional right to have their basic needs met.[3] *Hence, in some contexts, especially when a person's basic needs are at stake, showing compassion is an obligatory matter of justice rather than an optional matter of charity.*"

[2] Robert L. Saucy, "Theology of Human Nature," in *Christian Perspectives on Being Human: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, J.P. Moreland and David M. Ciochi, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), pp. 17-52.

[3] The right is conditional because we may forfeit it. For example, if I am able to work and work is available, but I choose not to do so out of sloth or for some other bad reason, it does not follow that others are obligated to help meet my basic needs.

<http://www.epsociety.org/library/articles.asp?pid=113&mode=detail> A Brief Sketch On Compassion by Michael W. Austin, An Ongoing Series of Sketches from the Contributors of *Being Good: Christian Virtues for Everyday Life*, co-edited by Michael W. Austin and R. Douglas Geivett (Eerdmans, 2012).



- Conclusion: Christian care for the poor should not support an entitlement mentality or reward sinful behavior but rather, be effective only for those unable to care for themselves or fit the biblical requirements of circumstantial poverty.

How does the Imago Dei factor  
into economic policy?

# Imago Dei

- Jean-Paul Sartre - “*What men have in common is not a “nature” but a condition, that is, an ensemble of limits and restrictions: the inevitability of death, the necessity of working for a living, of living in a world already inhabited by other men. Fundamentally this condition is nothing more than the basic human situation, or, if you prefer, the ensemble of abstract characteristics common to all situations...Of all things in the world, reason is the most widely shared; it belongs to everybody and to nobody; it is the same to all. If reason exists, then there is no French truth or German truth; there is no Negro truth or Jewish truth. There is only one Truth, and he is best who wins it.*”

Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 60, 111.

# Marxist Anthropology

1. Humans are basically good.
2. Man's "reason is blocked by social, political, and religious barriers and artificially created rules."
3. "When these rules disappear, a new day would dawn for the human race."
4. Humans are the highest beings in the universe.
5. Humans exist for the benefit of the State.

William J. Miller, *The Meaning of Communism* (Dallas: Silver Burdett Company, 1976), 16.

# Marxist Education

## Ardent educational atheism:

“The basic task of communist education and overcoming the survivals of religiousness in our present condition is to prove to the pupils the complete contrast and complete irreconcilably between science, the real and correct reflection of the objectively existing world in the consciousness of people-and religion as a fantastic, distorted and, consequently harmful reflection of the world in the consciousness of the people.” - People's Education

*People's Education* (Moscow, USSR), April 1949. Cited in Sleeper, *A Lexicon of Marxist-Leninist Semantics*, 101.

# Marxism: The Family

1) Family is the enemy of the State worldview: “[Family] deprives the worker of revolutionary consciousness.”

- The State vs. The Family

2) School replaces home: “School becomes literally a home.”

- Upbringing of children is the duty of society, not the parents.

3) Sexual promiscuity is not to be considered a vice.

1. Akeksandra M. Kollontai, *Communism and the Family* (New York: Andrade's Bookshop, 1920), 10 Cited in H. Kent Geiger, *The Family in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 1970), 51.
2. V. Yazykova, *Socialist Life Style and the Family* (Moscow, USSR: Progress Publishers, 1984), 7.
3. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* 40 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 6:502.

Cited in, David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times: The Collision of Today's Competing Worldviews* (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Press, 2006).

# Criticisms of Marxist Economics

1. No incentives
2. Stifles productivity
3. Reduces efficiency
4. Eliminates competition

## *Marxist Morality: Russia*

“Russia’s corruption can be directly traced to the destruction of morality and belief in God by the Communists. If you don’t believe that you will be held accountable by God then you can abuse fellow human beings with reckless abandon.”

- Christof Zellenberg, President,  
*The Europa Institute*





# Historic Christian views: Private Property

- Aquinas - *Is Private Property Legitimate?*
  - 1) “First, everyone is more concerned to take care of something that belongs only to him than of something that belongs to everyone or to many people.”
  - 2) “Secondly, human affairs are more efficiently organized if the proper care of each thing is an individual responsibility. There would be confusion if everyone took care of everything in a disorganized fashion.”
  - 3) Third, peace is better preserved among men if each one is content with his property. So we see that quarrels frequently arise among those who hold a thing in common and undivided... Therefore private property is not against natural law but it has been added to natural law by the inventiveness of human reason.”

# Historic Christian views: Profit

- Aquinas answers the question by appealing to Aristotle's division of economic activity: *Q. 77.4. Fraud: Is it legitimate to sell something more than its cost?*
  - 1) 'Natural and necessary' - "It consists in the exchange of one commodity for another, or of a commodity for the money to buy what is needed for life."
  - 2) 'Money for Money' - "The other kind of exchange of money for money, or money for goods, is not concerned with the needs of life but making money, and this is the exchange in which tradesmen engage. According to Aristotle the first kind of exchange is praiseworthy because it serves natural needs but the second is rightly condemned since in itself it is motivated by greed for money which has no limit but tends to increase to infinity..."
  - 3) 'The baseness of business' - "It follows that trade in itself has a certain quality of baseness since it does not of its own nature involve an honorable or necessary end."

# Historic Christian views: Profit

- Aquinas taught that lending money is inherently sinful - “To receive interest (usury) for lending money is unjust in itself for something is sold that does not exist, and this obviously results in an inequality which is contrary to justice.” - Paul E. Sigmund, trans., ed., *St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 74.
- Christendom’s convenient use of Jewry & usury: Accursed, they followed a cursed but indispensable vocation; being unable to own land or serve in the army, they trafficked in money, which a Christian could not undertake without defiling himself. Thus the original curse was soon reinforced by an economic curse, and it is above all the latter that has persisted. Today we reproach the Jews for following unproductive economic activities, without taking into account the fact that their apparent autonomy within the nation comes from the fact that they were originally forced into these trades by being forbidden all others. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that it is the Christians who have *created* the Jew in putting an abrupt stop to his assimilation and in providing him, in spite of himself, with a function in which he has since prospered... Thus, to know what the contemporary Jew is, we must ask the Christian conscience. And we must ask, not “What is a Jew?” but “*What have you made of the Jews?*” (Also, see pp.132-133).

- Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 68-69.

# Contemporary challenges

- William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden* – Foreign aid does not work because it provides no incentive for the people to work. Many say, “The West should save the rest.” Easterly holds that the majority of Western aid has been misused and has not solved any of the real problems of poverty. Easterly laments, “This is the tragedy in which the West spent \$2.3 trillion on foreign aid over the last five decades and still had not managed to get twelve-cent medicines to children to prevent half of all malaria deaths. The West spent \$2.3 trillion and still had not managed to get four-dollar bed nets to poor families. The West spent \$2.3 trillion and had not managed to get three dollars to each new mother to prevent five million child deaths...It's a tragedy that so much well-meaning compassion did not bring these results for needy people.”
  - William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4.
- Hernando De Soto, *The Mystery of Capital* – The reason why capitalism doesn't work in the rest of the world is that of property rights. There is no legal system that recognizes landowners. De Soto argues, “One of the greatest challenges to the human mind is to comprehend and to gain access to those things we know exist but cannot see.” - Hernando De Soto, *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else* (New York: Basic Books, 2000),

# Poverty, depravity, & incentives

- “Redistribution through the coercive power of the state breeds dependence. The creation of the welfare state in developed countries has bred a new class which is to a greater or lesser extent dependent on the state for employment, education, health, housing, benefits, security and status. In Third World countries, the same dependency syndrome has appeared. If food is brought in, why produce it? If bureaucracy can profit from handing out aid, why encourage domestic production? If personal wealth can be obtained through holding political office, why bother to set up new enterprises? If agricultural output must be sold to a government monopoly buying agency, why bother to innovate and seek out new markets?”

- Brian Griffiths, *The Creation of Wealth* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 12. In, Ronald Nash, *Poverty and Wealth: The Christian Debate Over Capitalism* (Westchester, Ill: Crossway Books, 1986), 189-190.

# Adam Smith on the function of government

1. The duty of protecting society from invasion
  2. The duty of protecting every member from oppression from others/provide a level playing field.
  3. The duty of keeping up public works through tolls.
- “Kings are always the greatest spendthrifts in society.” - *On the Wealth of Nations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869), 350, 585.

(Smith began with moral philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/smith-moral-political/>)

**Conclusion:** What happens when a government's economic policy consistently exceeds this scope? The market breaks down. When there is no accountability to see if each person is doing their job, then the whole society breaks down.

# John Locke on Natural Law & Markets

- John Locke: Natural rights come from natural law. Three rights in particular:
  1. Life
  2. Liberty
  3. Property
- When kings changed, so would the laws. One's life and liberty might be compromised dependent on whether the king was Protestant or Catholic. Locke argues, based on natural law, the State cannot take these things without just cause. Locke writes, "It is also evident that absolute dominion (whoever exercises it) is completely incompatible with civil society just as slavery is completely incompatible with rights to life, liberty, and property."
- John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government: A Translation into Modern English* (Manchester: Industrial Systems Research 2009), 220.
- Locke also writes, "The state of nature has a natural law governing it that everyone is obliged to obey. That law is reason, and it teaches that all human beings are equal and independent and that no one ought to harm the life, health, liberty, or possession of others. All human beings are the work of one omnipotent and infinitely wise maker. They are the servants of this one sovereign master, and sent into the world by his order to do his business. They are his property because they are his workmanship - and that property is there to last during his and not some other person's pleasure." Ibid, 107.
- Thomas Jefferson, heavily influenced by Locke, developed this theme further as seen in the *Declaration of Independence*, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."
- Public policy had come full circle with the *Imago Dei* in public policy.

# John Stuart Mill

- Mill is for a flat tax and against a progressive tax because it was not right.
- A progressive tax provides a disincentive for people to be virtuous and efficient.
- Virtue maximizes the good.
- There are always people trying to arrange the government in a way that is not in line with the best interest of others.
- In Communism, the state controls all production and distribution.
- John Stuart Mill to Alfred Marshall.
- It was Marshall who sought to turn economics into a subject apart from moral philosophy. It is Marshall's student who makes the next step.
- The student's name was John Maynard Keynes who writes a book called, *The General Theory*.



# John Maynard Keynes

- Socialism: Redistribution of wealth through the democratic process.
- John Stuart Mill to Alfred Marshall.
- Marshall sought to turn economics into a subject apart from moral philosophy.
- Marshall's student makes the final step for Socialism coming full circle in the West.
- His name is John Maynard Keynes, author of, *The General Theory*.
- Keynes develops a system where the government takes much more of an active role in the economy. The economy is like a machine that can be controlled by adjusting interest rates.

# Contra Keynes

- *Austrian School of Economics*: Strongly advocated free markets. One of the leaders is Ludwig von Mises whose student, Friedrich von Hayek, was a contemporary of Keynes.
- *Chicago School of Economics*: Strongly advocated free markets but believed governments could control markets by regulating the money supply.
- Heavily influenced by Friedrich von Hayek.

# Karl Marx

- Contemporary of John Stuart Mill
- Marx opposed Adam Smith's free market system.
- Marx's Influences
  1. Marx's father's "conversion" to the Lutheran church
  2. Abuse of employees
  3. George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
- Marx heavily influenced by Hegel's metaphysical idealism: Everything depends upon the mind and history is moving to some terminal point.
- Marx borrows the idea of dialectical materialism (A utopian Communist/Worker's State) where redistribution of wealth via violent revolution was the goal. Over throw the bourgeois and the State would seize all the means of production. Lenin dubbed heavy industry, "The commanding heights" of the economy.
- Result: Removal of God from the economic structure of society results in morality becoming completely subjective.
- What does it mean to be human?
  1. Traditional - Homo Sapiens: "Man the Wise"
  2. Marx - Homo Faber: "Man the maker/worker"

"The philosophers hitherto have only interpreted the world in various ways: the thing is, however, to change it." - Karl Marx William J. Miller, *The Meaning of Communism* (Dallas: Silver Burdett Company, 1976), 17. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/>

# Dialectical Materialism

Q: Does Marx ascribe theistic attributes to matter?

*“[T]he atheism of dialectical materialism is concerned with very much more than a mere denial of God...[I]n dialectical materialism...the higher is not, as such, denied; the world is interpreted as a process of continual ascent, which fundamentally extends into infinity. But it is supposed to be matter itself which continually attains to higher perfection under its own power, thanks to its indwelling dialectic. As Nikolai Berdyaev very rightly remarks, the dialectical materialist attribution of “dialectic” to matter confers on it, not mental attributes only, but even divine ones.”*

- Gustav A. Wetter

# Marxism as a Religion

Bertrand Russell:

*The greatest danger in our day comes from the new religions, communism and Nazism/ To call these religions may perhaps be objectionable both to their friends and to their enemies, but in fact they have all the characteristics of religions. They advocate a way of life on the basis of irrational dogmas; they have a sacred history, a Messiah, and a priesthood. I do not see what more could be demanded to qualify a doctrine as a religion.*

- Bertrand Russell, *Understanding History* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), 95.

# Marx Facts

- Formed the *Communist League* with Friedrich Engels.
- The organization unraveled a few years later because Marx could not tolerate any opposition or questioning of his positions.

- Miller, *The True Meaning of Communism*, 17.

- Refused to acknowledge the desire for change in British society
- British factory inspectors' brutal honesty on how factory owners tried to evade the law
- No future transparency in Communist societies.
- Any "inspection" into the abuses of a Communist government usually meant death or exile.

*"The first thing a man will do for his ideals is lie."* -Joseph A. Schumpeter

- Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 43n.

- Anna Politkovskaya (1958-2006): Old ideas/ways die hard.

# Marx: Societal Problems &

- Problem: Law favors the ruling class
- Problem: Religion as “**Solutions**”  
The opiate of the masses”
- Problem: The “Means of Production” that drive productivity and growth are owned by the ruling class and not in the hands of the State.
- Solution: Ban private property and nationalize all production.

“The theory of the Communists may be summed up in one single sentence: Abolition of private property” - *The Communist Manifesto*

“In fact, the abolition of private property is, doubtless, the shortest and most significant way to characterize the revolution in the whole social order which has been made necessary by the development of industry - and for this reason it is rightly advanced by communists as their main demand.”

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/11/prin-com.htm> #14.

“From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”

# Marxist Goals

1. Abolition of Private Property
2. Heavy Progressive Income Tax
3. Abolition of Rights of Inheritance
4. Confiscation of Property Rights (emigrants & rebels)
5. Central Bank (centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly).
6. Government Ownership of Communication and Transportation
7. Government Ownership of Factories and Agriculture
8. Government Control of Labor
9. Corporate Farms and Regional Planning (told where to live-zones)
10. Government Control of Education.

Q: Why did Marx advocate a heavy progressive income tax?

A: So that the State could most effectively confiscate private property thereby denying the citizens the economic flexibility necessary for a free society.



# Marxist Goals of Morality

1. Religion is harmful to society “opiate of the masses...”

Thus, religion is to be abolished

**Question 22.** *Do Communists reject existing religions?*

**Answer:** All religions which have existed hitherto were expressions of historical stages of development of individual peoples or groups of peoples. But communism is that stage of historical development which makes all existing religions superfluous and supersedes them.

2. Morality from religion is harmful to society. Thus, religious morality must be abolished.

- MECW Volume 6, p. 92; Friedrich Engels, June 9 1847; First published: in *Gründungsdokumente des Bundes der Kommunisten*, Hamburg, 1969. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/06/09.htm#12>

# Why eliminate private property?

- Virtually all economic freedoms stem from free speech and private property.
- Marx believed that eliminating private property would remove exploitation.

“We shall not grow wiser before we learn that much that we have done was very foolish.” - F. A. Hayek

- Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, ed. Bruce Caldwell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 237.

“I doubt whether it is possible to overestimate the influence which ideas have in the long run.” - F.A. Hayek

- F.A. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science* (Glencoe, IL.: The Free Press, 1952), 206. In, Ronald Max Hartwell, “Capitalism and the Historians,” *Essays on Hayek*, ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 73.

What is the danger in the State trying to  
“balance the economic scales?”

- “Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.” - C. S. Lewis
- The fundamental flaw of Marxism/Communism/Socialism is its failure to properly understand human nature.

## Conclusion: Tenets of biblically sound economic policy

1) Does this policy recognize personal property rights? Without property rights, the poor are shut out of the free market system and the global economy. Biblical support ‘Thou shalt not steal.’

Q: At what point does one’s property become forfeit for what the government says is for the “common good” of society?

2) Does this policy encourage or discourage personal responsibility? “*Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need*” (Eph. 4:28).

3) Does this policy oppress the circumstantially poor?

# Conclusion: Tenets of biblically sound economic policy

- Moderation: “I can only wear one suit” - Albert Schweitzer. Rev. James E. Doty, “Nobel Winner Schweitzer Lives Simply, Inspiringly,” *The Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), A-20, Wednesday, July 13, 1955.
- Missions:
  - Chuck Colson states, “Culture is most profoundly changed not by efforts of huge institutions, but by individual people.”
    - Charles Colson, *Kingdoms in Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 255.
  - Carl F.H. Henry writes, “Individual regeneration is not only a chief but an indispensable means of social reform.”
    - Carl F.H. Henry, *Perspective for Social Action: Part II*, p. 15. Cited in Budziszewski.
  - Richard Wurmbrand observes, “In the United States and other countries there are now so many poverty programs which do not work. St. Francis of Assisi’s program worked. He became poor and influenced many rich men to give away their money, not in heavily borne taxation, but in jubilating love.”
    - Richard Wurmbrand, *100 Prison Meditations: Cries of Truth From Behind the Iron Curtain* (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Books, 2000), 22.