

Downward Mobility and Trickle-Up Economics: A Trinitarian Reflection on Money and Power¹

Description: This talk will build on Carl F. H. Henry's landmark 1947 work, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, and James Montgomery Boice's 1998 article, "Our All-Too-Easy Conscience." Evangelicalism as an institution has struggled to address the structures of racism and poverty, and has often uncritically embraced money and power as means to pursue problematic versions of upward mobility and the American Dream. In view of the political and cultural challenges the movement has faced in recent years,² and in view of the ongoing recession, the time is ripe for us to reevaluate our kingdom allegiances. Rather than being known for desiring power politics and material prosperity that fail to challenge racialization³ and economic disparity, we ought to be known for holding true to God in Christ—the downwardly mobile God. Drawing from a communal and cruciform model of Trinitarian thought, Paul Louis Metzger calls for "trickle-up economics." This economic strategy involves developing social businesses among the poor to take ownership of their communities, as reflected in the works of John M. Perkins and Muhammad Yunus.

Taking Back America, Losing Out on Wall Street and the City of God

In 1998, James Montgomery Boice wrote an article titled "Our All-Too-Easy Conscience." It was a play on Carl F. H. Henry's *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. Boice said that Henry, in his 1947 work, had put his finger on a matter that was disturbing many fellow evangelicals: "Evangelicals had been avoiding the great social issues of the day, above all racism and the plight of the poor and we were uneasy about it somewhere deep in our inmost thoughts and hearts."⁴

¹A few selections within this article are taken from my volume, *Consuming Jesus: Beyond Race and Class Divisions in a Consumer Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). This essay builds upon the work in *Consuming Jesus* in a way that bears on the subject of money and power from a Trinitarian perspective.

²See for example: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/opinion/sunday/the-decline-of-evangelical-america.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1 (accessed on 1/20/2013).

³Racialization signifies the impact of race on various networks of relationships, opportunities, and experiences in society. It bears upon such spheres as education, healthcare, job placement, urban planning, and place of living, among other things.

⁴James Montgomery Boice, "On My Mind: Our All-Too-Easy Conscience," *Modern Reformation* 7, no. 5 (September/October 1998): 44.

In his historic manifesto, Henry called the fundamentalist-evangelical movement to rigorous theological reflection and social engagement: "Fundamentalism is wondering just how it is that a world-changing message narrowed its scope to the changing of isolated individuals."⁵ Later Henry writes, "Whereas once the redemptive gospel was a world-changing message, now it was narrowed to a world-resistant message. Out of twentieth-century Fundamentalism of this sort there could come no contemporary version of Augustine's *The City of God*."⁶

Boice notes that the time had come for another book to be written, this time "The Easy Conscience of Modern Evangelicalism." Boice was referring to Martin Marty's claim that the most worldly people in America at the end of the twentieth century would be the evangelicals.⁷ Boice concurred with Marty's assessment: "We have fulfilled his prophecy, and it is not yet the year 2000." Boice argued that evangelicals have fixed their gaze on gaining the kingdom of the world and "have made politics and money our weapons of choice for grasping it."⁸ In addition to raising concerns about pop psychology and the like replacing sound biblical doctrine, he lamented the evangelical movement's preoccupation with "success, wonderful marriages and nice children," in addition to being fixated on "numerical growth and money."⁹ Troubled that evangelicals cared very little for "getting right with an offended God," Boice exhorted them to take seriously the words of the prophet Amos, who spoke the following words to a culture much like the present: "Woe to them who are at *ease* in Zion." Boice said that fellow evangelicals should become uneasy about their complacency and comfort. One area where this complacency is evident is the evangelical community's failure in the inner cities of America: "I would like us to become uneasy about our failure to establish strong churches in America's inner cities, where the breakdown of American culture is so obvious and the needs of the people are so great."¹⁰

It is important to point out that ministries such as World Vision emerged from within evangelicalism in the middle and late twentieth century to address such pressing concerns as poverty around the world. Moreover, increasing efforts are in place to address global

⁵Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947; reprint, with a foreword by Richard J. Mouw, 2003), p. 14.

⁶Henry, p. 19.

⁷Boice, p. 44.

⁸Boice, p. 44.

⁹Boice, p. 44.

¹⁰Boice, p. 44.

poverty. Evangelicals are making great headway here. However, as a movement, evangelicalism has largely failed to address the pressing structural race and class problems in the United States.¹¹ In a forthcoming book titled *The Evangelicals You Don't Know, USA Today* religion columnist Tom Krattenmaker applauds the efforts of what he considers a new breed of Evangelicals who are more compassionate in their outlook and engagement of the poor. Still, Krattenmaker raises the concern of many that while Evangelicals are engaging increasingly in charitable enterprises toward the poor, they are not advocating for political policies that would fight against the structures that make and keep people poor.¹²

Are we as a movement fixated with middle class values? Perhaps. George Marsden has claimed that the fundamentalist reaction around the time of the Scopes Monkey trial did not spell an apolitical orientation or the abandonment of social policies. Rather, it signified fixation on conservative middle-class American social values common around the time just prior to the great Scopes-Monkey controversy's emergence.¹³

As is well known, the Scopes Monkey trial in Dayton, Tennessee back in 1925 served as a key symbol of the fight between creation and evolution in America. It also had an enormous

¹¹Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided By Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹²Tom Krattenmaker, *The Evangelicals You Don't Know* (Lanham, Maryland: The Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2013). In view of this assertion, it is worth noting what a 2012 article in *The Economist* claims: "The vast majority of evangelicals oppose gay marriage. They are more likely than non-evangelicals to oppose extra funding for public education, unemployment benefits and aid to the poor, both within and outside America. And a poll taken by the Public Religion Research Institute in 2010 showed that nearly half of all white evangelicals favour deporting illegal immigrants." "Lift Every Voice," *The Economist*, May 5th 2012 (See <http://www.economist.com/node/21554201> {accessed on 1/20/2013}). See also The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's analysis of the connection between the Tea Party and white Evangelicals. "The Tea Party and Religion," February 23, 2011 (analysis written by Scott Clement and John C. Green). "They draw disproportionate support from the ranks of white evangelical Protestants." "Americans who support the conservative Christian movement, sometimes known as the religious right, also overwhelmingly support the Tea Party. In the Pew Research Center's August 2010 poll, 69% of registered voters who agreed with the religious right also said they agreed with the Tea Party. Moreover, both the religious right and the Tea Party count a higher percentage of white evangelical Protestants in their ranks (45% among the religious right, 34% among the Tea Party and 22% among all registered voters in the August 2010 survey). Religiously unaffiliated people are less common among Tea Party or religious right supporters than among the public at-large (3% among the religious right, 10% among the Tea Party and 15% among all registered voters in the August poll). <http://www.pewforum.org/politics-and-elections/tea-party-and-religion.aspx> (accessed on 1/21/2013).

¹³George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism — 1870-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 93.

impact on Fundamentalist-Evangelicalism's transformation and development.¹⁴ If the results of the trial in American society were indicative of reality, the creationists lost, even though they won the court case. While Darwin has gone on trial repeatedly in Evangelical circles over the years, I am not sure the same thing could be said regarding free market economics. As intense as the debate over creation and evolution was at the time, Marsden's claim suggests perhaps that a more subtle debate was (and is still) raging over the biblical creation narrative as it pertains to the market. While it became very difficult for orthodox Christians to espouse any form of evolutionary thought, the same may not have been the case for those who held to the survival of the economic fittest doctrine.

With this point in mind, I often see bumper stickers with a Jesus fish and a Darwin fish devouring one another. But I have never seen a bumper sticker depicting a Jesus fish fighting for its life with a Donald Trump fish. Regardless of how Charles Darwin or Donald Trump view(ed) Jesus or the Bible, they represent dominant systems of thought and life respectively: evolution-survival of the fittest; and market economics-survival of the economic fittest.

Could it be that what Boice and others address speaks to a much larger problem than the historic divide between creationists and evolutionists? Could the worldliness and materialism that has run so rampant in our society, including within Evangelicalism, speak to a fixation with a different narrative—that of the market? Such is the claim of Gordon Bigelow, who draws from such works as Boyd Hilton's volume, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). If Bigelow is correct, it is not religion or the biblical narrative, but economics that offers the dominant creation narrative in our day, including for Evangelicals. Here is what Bigelow claims:

Economics, as channeled by its popular avatars in media and politics, is the cosmology and the theodicy of our contemporary culture. More than religion itself, more than literature, more than cable television, it is economics that offers the dominant creation narrative of our society, depicting the relation of each of us to the universe we inhabit, the relation of human beings to God. And the story it tells is a marvelous one. In it an enormous multitude of strangers, all individuals, all striving alone, are nevertheless all bound together in a beautiful and natural pattern of existence: the market. This understanding of markets—not as artifacts of human civilization but as phenomena of

¹⁴Marsden writes, "It would be difficult to overestimate the impact" of this trial "in transforming fundamentalism" (Marsden, p. 184). The fundamentalists' cultural loss to the evolutionists, modernity and liberal theology led to a seismic shift and a volatile reaction.

nature—now serves as the unquestioned foundation of nearly all political and social debate.¹⁵

If Bigelow is correct, and I believe he is, in asserting that economics (in particular, the model generated by the “neoclassical” school of economics) is the cosmology and theodicy of our contemporary culture, wouldn’t Evangelicals consider challenging it with the same kind of passion that went into the fight with Darwinian evolution? For Bigelow, Evangelicalism as a movement could not be an outspoken opponent because it often assumes the free (and unregulated) market economics narrative as gospel truth and embraces it with blind faith, just like many other institutions and groups in our society.¹⁶ According to Bigelow, Evangelicals don’t simply assume the market’s gospel truthfulness. They champion it. In his estimation, Evangelicals have been responsible for cultivating the sense of scientific certainty around markets. If he is accurate, the movement has been far more successful in generating support for the evolutionary supremacy of the market system than it has in challenging Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. But would it not be difficult to challenge genetic determinism and natural selection if the movement is conflicted, promoting an equally deterministic and naturalistic system?

¹⁵Gordon Bigelow, “Let There Be Markets: The Evangelical Roots of Economics,” *Harper’s* 310, no. 1860 (May 2005): 33.

¹⁶A naïve regard for human nature that involves an Ayn Randian quality of confidence in rational self-interest to keep everyone in check has pervaded our country’s approach to the economic system for years. Former head of the Federal Reserve Board Alan Greenspan was summoned before Congress in 2008 to talk about the financial meltdown and problems with his handling of the economy. Greenspan had been of the unswerving mindset that there was no need for government’s foreign intervention because the invisible hand of the market would regulate itself through competitive ventures based on companies’ self-interest. Testifying before the Congressional Committee for Oversight and Government Reform on October 23, 2008, Greenspan responded to a line of questioning by Committee Chairman, California Democrat Henry Waxman. Greenspan told Waxman and the committee: “I made a mistake in presuming that the self-interest of organizations, specifically banks and others, were such that they were best capable of protecting their own shareholders and their equity in the firms.” See “Alan Greenspan Explains ‘Mistake’ behind Global Meltdown: What Went Wrong on his Watch as Fed Chairman?” in *European Affairs*: vol. 10, num. 1-2, Winter/Spring, 2009 (<http://www.europeaninstitute.org/2008120224/Winter/Spring-2009/alan-greenspan-explains-mistake-behind-global-meltdown.html>; accessed on 2/10/2013). Greenspan’s successor at the Fed, Ben Bernanke, shared Greenspan’s shock and disbelief that “In order to make profits for their shareholders so that they (the CEO’s and investors at these firms) could receive their bonuses and dividends (which were in the millions and tens of millions in some cases), agents at ‘too big to fail’ institutions engaged in increasingly irresponsible behavior.” See the C-Span video of the 2008 Financial Crisis and Systemic Risk, Ben Bernanke Testimony, September 2, 2010 (<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/295300-1> (accessed on 2/10/2013)). I wish to thank my colleague Steve Longan for bringing the Greenspan and Bernanke testimonials to my attention. On the point of deregulation or unregulated markets, Muhammad Yunus writes, “In the developed world, governments usually perform their regulatory tasks reasonably well, although starting in the 1980s, conservative politicians have taken every opportunity to undermine government regulations.” Muhammad Yunus with Karl Weber, *Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), p. 7.

With this in mind, Evangelicalism must concern itself with combating the survival of the economic fittest today, for the story of the market, more than any other narrative, eclipses the biblical narrative. When framed naturalistically and non-communally, it impacts negatively holistic community, devalues human life as sacred and does not safeguard the poor and with it ethnic minority groups, given how race and class tend to track one another in America.¹⁷ To this subject, we now turn.

Taking Back the Biblical Narrative from the Market's Eclipse

How does the market's eclipse of the biblical narrative shape our view of human worth and identity? How should we re-envision life in view of the biblical narrative and its attentiveness to human flourishing, especially in the case of the most vulnerable populations? In this section, we will focus on how the market is often used to commodify life and how a Trinitarian model of communion challenges this framework that so often destabilizes ethnic minority communities and the poor. Later, in the final section, we will discuss what economic life might look like today in view of the biblical narrative and how it calls for human flourishing that includes privileged concern for the poor and ethnic communities that are so often marginalized. There we will call for a capitalism of a higher order, as we draw from the work of Evangelical civil rights leader, John M. Perkins and the Nobel Peace prize winner, Muhammad Yunus.

¹⁷This is not simply a problem for Evangelical Christians or Christians in general. It is a problem for all people, especially people of the Book. Jonathan Sacks, who served as the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, writes: "The fatal conceit for Judaism is to believe that the market governs the totality of our lives, when it in fact governs only a limited part of it, that which concerns the goods we think of as being subject to production and exchange. There are things fundamental to being human that we do not produce; instead we receive from those who came before us and from God Himself. And there are things that we may not exchange, however high the price. Jonathan Sacks, "Markets and Morals," *First Things*, No. 105 (Aug./Sept. 2000): 28. See also Michael J. Sandel's work, *What Money Can't Buy: the Moral Limits of Markets* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2012). Sandel argues that we have shifted dramatically over the past three decades due to market triumphalism's rise. We have gone from having a market economy to becoming a market society, where nearly everything is up for sale based on thinking—faith—that markets provide the primary means to achieve the public's good. According to Sandel, while the market economy is a valuable and effective tool for organizing productive activity, we have crossed the line. Not everything should be viewed as a transaction. Where do markets serve the common good, and where do they crowd out other important values and goods? Markets should not govern personal and public relations, including education, health, national security, etc. The financial crisis has caused us to back up and reevaluate the ability of markets to solve all problems.

In keeping with Bigelow's statement, human identity is defined in individualistic and non-relational terms.¹⁸ Moreover, human worth is not inherent. Human being is a commodity. The market narrative defines worth contractually and pragmatically: production, sales, purchases, and consumption. That which does not benefit the market is ignored and deemed inferior, perhaps even abandoned.¹⁹ Some modern individualists—evangelical or otherwise—go so far as to conceive of human significance through the lens of productivity and consumption. Now if human identity is construed as "I produce and consume; therefore, I am," and if "all social relations . . . can in principle be exchanged as commodities"²⁰ (both of which are often implicit identity claims today), what ultimately is the point of being loyal to family and nation? What is one to make of those who virtually abandon their families to climb the corporate or ecclesiastical ladder, or those corporations who abandon their countries for tax breaks and shelters overseas? What happens to social solidarity? As with all commodities awaiting transaction, family and nation are valuable to

¹⁸In his work on Jonathan Edwards, Robert Jenson writes, "America's communal entity has been undone by the practiced supposition that we can be free only by treating one another and regarding ourselves as inertial masses, bouncing merely casually against each other in public space." Robert W. Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 150. Jonathan Edwards called for the restructuring of the heart as well as social relationships. Regarding the latter, he spoke prophetically against the economic injustices bound up with the market system, which was emerging as a dominant force in his day. For example, Edwards called it fraud when merchants charged more for products than was necessary for providing them with an equitable income, and he called it extortion when merchants raised the cost of items based on poverty-stricken people's dependence on such products. And far from seeing the benefits of wealth as a sign of God's favor, he claimed that God often bestows riches on those he loathes the most. See page 143 of Jenson's work, *America's Theologian*, on Edwards' estimation of the market. See also the following treatises by Edwards: "The Sin of Theft and of Injustice" and "The Peace Which Christ Gives His True Followers" in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2, with a memoir by Sereno E. Dwight, revised and corrected by Edward Hickman (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust; first published, 1834; reprint, 1979), pp. 220-26 and 89-93 respectively.

¹⁹"The market . . . promises to make the consumer king, and encourages us to think that we are in charge. But the market charges a high price in return, namely, the increasing commodification of human life itself. To take just one example, as genetic knowledge becomes more complete and available to consumers through law, prospective parents will be subject to pressure to screen their pregnancies in order to screen out inefficiencies such as mental retardation, genetic disorders, etc." R. Kendall Soulen, "'Go Tell Pharaoh,' Or, Why Empires Prefer a Nameless God," in *Cultural Encounters: A Journal for the Theology of Culture* 1, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 54-56.

²⁰Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 1997), p. 27. The Industrial Revolution also played a role in the emergent commodification of human life. The Industrial Revolution certainly increased production (often for the benefit of society), but it also separated the worker from his or her work. The worker became a cog in the system, playing a part, but never having ownership of the goods and services produced and provided. The worker experienced alienation, and still does so today. Marx took it further than I am doing here, seeking to deconstruct capitalism itself. For Marx's discussion of alienation, see the sections on this theme in David McLellan, ed. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

the extent that they serve useful purposes.²¹ The only value for anyone, including the poor and marginalized ethnic communities, is how they benefit the market—that is, what can be gained from them.²² When church growth models include justice packages as techniques

²¹A recent *Economist* article explores the longstanding debate on whether firms should focus their attention on shareholders or stakeholders: "The economic crisis has revived the old debate about whether firms should focus most on their shareholders, their customers or their workers." "In an article in a recent issue of the *Harvard Business Review*, Roger Martin, dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, charts the rise of what he calls the 'tragically flawed premise' that firms should focus on maximising shareholder value, and argues that 'it is time we abandoned it.' The obsession with shareholder value began in 1976, he says, when Michael Jensen and William Meckling, two economists, published an article, 'Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behaviour, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure', which argued that the owners of companies were getting short shift from professional managers. The most cited academic article about business to this day, it inspired a seemingly irresistible movement to get managers to focus on value for shareholders. Converts to the creed had little time for other 'stakeholders': customers, employees, suppliers, society at large and so forth. American and British value-maximisers reserved particular disdain for the 'stakeholder capitalism' practised in continental Europe." "A New Idolatry," *The Economist*, April 22, 2010; <http://www.economist.com/node/15954434> (accessed on 1/20/2013). Shareholders are stakeholders in corporations, but not all stakeholders are shareholders. While shareholders own portions of companies through owning stocks, stakeholders are concerned about the performance of companies based on various factors, not just the appreciation of stocks. Stakeholders can include employees, customers, suppliers, bondholders, and the general public. According to a May 8, 2009 entry at *Investopedia*, "The new field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has encouraged companies to take the interests of all stakeholders into consideration during their decision-making processes instead of making choices based solely upon the interests of shareholders. The general public is one such stakeholder now considered under CSR governance. When a company carries out operations that could increase pollution or take away a green space within a community, for example, the general public is affected. Such decisions may be right for increasing shareholder profits, but stakeholders could be impacted negatively. Therefore, CSR creates a climate for corporations to make choices that protect social welfare, often using methods that reach far beyond legal and regulatory requirements" (<http://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/08/difference-between-a-shareholder-and-a-stakeholder.asp#ixzz2HbNHKW1W>; accessed on 2/9/2013). See the debate, "'Stakeholders vs. Shareholders': Haas faculty debate 'Whom exactly should business serve?'" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ1x8jKLWDg>; accessed on 2/9/2013).

²²In the award-winning AMC television series, *Mad Men*, which is based in the 1950's and '60's, the only times the advertizing firm featured in the show demonstrates concern for the African American community is when it believes such concern will generate more sales for their corporate clients. The opening segment of the series begins with Don Draper talking to an African American waiter in a bar, asking him about his preferred brand of cigarette and developing an ad line as a result of the conversation. Don Draper's interest in the man is only economic. He expresses displeasure with the head waiter for intruding in their conversation because of the latter's concern over his waiter talking with Draper. The head waiter's racial concerns annoy Draper because they keep him from his work; Draper's racial attentiveness is economically driven, though not in the same way as the head waiter. Draper is trying to gain customers; the head waiter is trying not to lose a customer. Later, ad men show interest in African Americans and their community's interest in a brand of TV sets. Still, at another point, these Madison Avenue ad men make clear their frustration over the civil rights movement. Their interest is not shaped by wanting to see the African American community flourish, but by wanting to benefit economically from them and everyone else who comes across their path.

and tools to bring in seekers, it is only a matter of time when such churches will discard those justice packages. Why? Depending on their prophetic import, those justice packages can prove too costly—alienating many consumer-oriented seekers from coming and/or long-term members with the biggest wallets from staying. The result in each circumstance is alienation from community.

So, where do we go both theologically and economically? A Trinitarian communal reflection that accounts for money and power and concerns itself with identifying with those in the margins is in order. A Trinitarian ontology of communion signifies that life is not ultimately about production and consumption, which ultimately leads to the fear of scarcity,²³ but loving and just communion with others, including through our work.²⁴

This is no small order given the great deal of talk about identity formation being conceived in terms of production and consumption in American society today. Such talk is found inside the American church as well. In fact, a noted pastor has called on men to be real men by moving from being merely consumers to being producers.²⁵ Whether we are talking

²³On the fear of scarcity, see Walter Brueggemann, "The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity," *The Christian Century*, March 24-31, 1999, p. 342.

²⁴The Industrial Revolution played a role in the emergent commodification of human life. The Industrial Revolution certainly increased production (often for the benefit of society), but it also separated the worker from his or her work. The worker became a cog in the system, playing a part, but never having ownership of the goods and services produced and provided. The worker experienced alienation, and still does so today. Marx took it further than I am doing here, seeking to deconstruct capitalism itself. For Marx's discussion of alienation, see the sections on this theme in David McLellan, ed. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁵Mark Driscoll claims, "The marketing sweet spot for many companies is young men ages eighteen to thirty-four. These guys don't know what it means to be a man, and so marketers fill the void with products that define manhood by what you consume rather than what you produce...Men are supposed to be producers, not just consumers. You're defined by the legacy, the life, and the fruit that come out of you, not by what you take in. But most guys are just consumers." Driscoll speaks of relational qualities: "Paul says a man is 'the image and glory of God' (1 Cor. 11:7). He is to reflect the truth, goodness, love, and mercy of Jesus, his God and Savior. He is the glory of God... Men, you are to be creators and cultivators. God is a creator and a cultivator and you were made to image him. Create a family and cultivate your wife and children. Create a ministry and cultivate other people. Create a business and cultivate it. Be a giver, not a taker, a producer and not just a consumer. Stop looking for the path of least resistance and start running down the path of greatest glory to God and good to others because that's what Jesus, the real man, did." While Driscoll attends to relationships, the predominant emphasis is framed in terms of production and consumption categories. Mark Driscoll, "The World Is Filled with Boys Who Can Shave," in *The Washington Post*, August 22, 2010. (http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/mark_driscoll/2010/08/the_world_is_filled_with_boys_who_can_shave.html; accessed on 2/9/2013). Even the parable of talents (Matthew 25:14-30), where Jesus calls us to be good stewards and multiply resources and dividends, must be viewed in the context of the entire gospel, which involves loving one's neighbor sacrificially as oneself. The text that follows highlights concern for those most in need (the hungry, thirsty, strange and alone, naked, sick and imprisoned) and their relation to Jesus (See for example Matthew 25:42-46).

about men or women, we need to move beyond thinking of humans as mere producers and consumers and approach human identity and the church in communal terms. So, instead of separating people into classes such as producers and consumers, we must encourage everyone to move toward being "communers."²⁶

Of course, we consume even as we produce, and everyone produces and consumes in some manner. However, we must never reduce our communal identity as humans and as the church to acts of production and consumption. Why? I maintain that the Bible teaches that we are created in the image of the triune God who creates us as an overflow of holy, loving communion; God's purpose is to create and, after the fall, to transform us so that we can share in the glory of this loving, holy communion in the divine life for all eternity (Gen. 1:26-27; Jn. 17). Creation and production are not the ultimate categories. They point beyond themselves to something even more profound—communion with God and one another. The power of production and consumption are not foundational, but rather the power of loving communion.

Another reason why we must speak in more communal terms rather than reductionistic terms involving mere production and consumption is that the latter categorization scheme leads to a bifurcation of humanity and destructive power dynamics. When we move from communitarian categories to producer and consumer distinctions or divisions we destroy the possibility of experiencing profound relationality. Relationality always involves reciprocity and mutuality. It is never unidirectional.

I will offer three examples of how this bifurcation affects us. If, for example, we define noble people as those who produce, it leads to a devaluing of those who consume their products. Related to this point, do not producers need consumers to consume what they produce? Does that not entail the need for fostering at least two classes of people? The producers—the elect or naturally selected by their own survival instincts—will "enslave" or at least corral others to be consumers so that they can make their own election or natural selection sure. In the church culture today, there is at times a tendency to identify entrepreneurial creativity with a greater sense of personal worth and identity. Many

²⁶The same goes for talk of being purposeful. Our purposefulness flows from our relational ground rather than the other way round. Thus, as important as being purposeful is, we need to move beyond a "purpose-driven" to a "being-driven" framework. See chapter one of Brad Harper and Paul Louis Metzger, *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009). For an example of the other emphasis, see Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995). While Warren's five purposes are certainly biblical (see pp. 103-107), and while he is right in claiming that all too often our work for God crowds out our worship of God (p. 103), he needs to make clear that our purposeful worship and love for God flows out of God's loving us into being *as* his people. In addition to *Exploring Ecclesiology*, another work that develops a communal ontology is John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, new edition (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 2004).

Evangelicals rightly challenge consumerist tendencies and greed, but our production proclivities can still enforce an "us" and "them" mindset: those who produce the best justice packages for those in need of food and other necessities should not be seen as having the most worth; as important as these justice entrepreneurs are, we all have worth as we share life and resources with one another. We all have something to offer when we view matters relationally. Those who have the least "stuff" often have the most to teach us relationally, for they have learned the secret of the meaning to life: the fullness of life is experienced not in the abundance or creation of possessions, but in the abundance of communal presence.

Besides noting the problem of enforcing and reinforcing two classes of people by way of productivity, we can easily move in the opposite direction by promoting a state of affairs where those who consume the most win. This problem often has economic as well as ethnic dimensions. The developed world—which generally is very white—consumes an inordinate percentage of the world's resources, while the non-white developing world with its human and natural resources is used increasingly as the field to produce the goods for these enlightened, developed world consumers.²⁷

Beyond considering class and race issues, we must also account for matters of gender. If women stay home, that does not mean they are not producing. While husbands may be the breadwinners in some homes, they are not alone in cultivating family life. To many people, housewives and househusbands do not appear to contribute to the bottom line, if we think simply in production and consumption categories. As Lesslie Newbigin has argued, "According to the 'post-Enlightenment project,' 'all human activity is absorbed into labor. It becomes an unending cycle of production for the sake of consumption.'" According to this view, "what does not enter the market is ignored." Thus the homemaker is set to the side as insignificant because her or his work does not benefit the market (while the "gambling syndicate, arms salesman and drug pusher" do).²⁸ But when we think communally, we find

²⁷Cynthia Moe-Lobeda also speaks of human value and race in terms of buying power: "Human worth is placed in relationship to buying power," where humanity is defined in terms of "homo economicus, consumens, et dominans" (the economic, consuming, and dominating creature). She illustrates this point by drawing attention to the value associated with "Euro-Americans" more successfully controlling and dominating the planet's resources than "people of color." As a result of such dominance and control, they are esteemed as being inherently more valuable and more fully human and therefore have more human rights. . . ." Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Healing a Broken World: Globalization and God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), p. 60. I agree with Moe-Lobeda's cultural analysis, but I would argue that its setting up of "Euro-Americans" and "people of color" as the two poles of oppressor-oppressed is too general; such a generalization diminishes and is harmful to the larger point of economic oppression. Economic oppression can and does transcend ethnic and racial boundaries. There are whites who oppress whites (i.e., "white trash"), even people of color who oppress whites and blacks.

²⁸Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 30-31.

that breadwinners in families are not the only ones producing. It is much more constructive to think in terms of sharing. From the standpoint of sharing, everyone is needed—husbands, wives, and children. Everyone matters because everyone shares in communal life together.

We do not exist because we think, produce, or consume. In place of Descartes' "I think. Therefore, I am," and Macy's and Wal-Mart's "I shop. Therefore, I am," we must think in terms of "We are loved by God and one another. Therefore, we are." We exist ultimately because we are loved by God. God calls us to be communers—to respond to God's love by loving God and others in return (Mk. 12:30-31). As we move toward viewing life and people in communal terms, it will have a profound bearing on how we approach a variety of subjects. Most importantly, it will help us move from treating other people as objects, and see them as human subjects who really matter. In effect, it leads to a just love.

Dr. John M. Perkins' model of Christian community development is grounded in God's communal love. Not only has he been known for calling for integration and redistribution, subjects to which we will return, but also he shares the vision of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that the civil rights movement's long-term goal was the flourishing of the reconciled and beloved community in which everyone would share.²⁹ Foundational to this aim is God's overflowing love that leads God's Son to relocate from heaven to earth to be with us and reconcile us to himself and to one another in and through the Spirit who binds us in love. Relocation and reconciliation lead to redistribution.

What are required today are social prophets, like Perkins, who proclaim the benefits of social profits through social businesses. Perkins, who influenced Boice, has claimed that prophetic voices must call the American church to repent of its capitulation to the free-market system, which "has made America unfairly rich and is creating massive poverty."³⁰ Free-market capitalism is very good at making money, but it is not very good at distributing it. Christians, on the other hand, have been called to *redistribute* our wealth, talents, and goods. Such thinking requires moving beyond individualism and entitlement thinking to social solidarity rooted in the economy of grace manifested in God's action in Christ.

Individualism and entitlement thinking cheapens our society. It cheapens the individuals who demand special privileges and things they do not deserve. What are we entitled to as Americans, whether we are rich or poor or somewhere in between? What are we entitled to as American Christians, whatever our socio-economic status? As Americans, are we entitled

²⁹See the connection between King and Perkins in Charles Marsh's work, *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice, From the Civil Rights Movement to Today* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

³⁰John M. Perkins, "Stoning the Prophets," *Sojourners* (Feb. 1978): 8.

to universal health care? Are we entitled to malnutrition and disease? As Christians, are we entitled to certain religious privileges not awarded to others based on being here first? Keep in mind that we weren't here first. The First Nations or Native Americans were here first, and the land was taken from them. As my late great Lakota Sioux friend Richard Twiss said, "The reason why they call it the land of the free is because they never paid us for it." So, how are we dominant or majority culture Americans and American Christians entitled to special privileges for something we did not earn or buy, and in some cases, actually seized?

It is very hard for people to pick themselves up by the bootstraps if they do not have any, as one African American pastor said. It is also very difficult for people to pick themselves up, if their kneecaps have been broken one too many times, as a white ivy league academic told me. As Perkins has shared countless people, he needed other people's help to get going and get ahead. He especially needed God's help. He's so grateful that God and others provided. How about you and me? Are we grateful for the level of success to which we have attained? Do we realize that others have made it possible for us to be where we are and that we did not do it alone?

In one sense, none of us are entitled to anything other than God's judgment. We do not deserve God's grace. That's why we are all indebted, and in more than one way. We are indebted to God and others and we demonstrate it by caring for others who don't deserve our compassion, just as we don't deserve God's grace (See Matthew 18:21-35; while the passage is about forgiveness, Jesus makes use of imagery bound up with forgiving economic debts; the same principle applies). Grace and gratitude change the conversation. Rich and poor and everyone in between move beyond entitlement thinking when grace is in our hearts, our homes, and in the public square. Together we become a people with a whole lot of class who redistribute our wealth freely because of our shared need.

While God deserves our best and is entitled to everything, he laid down his life and gave everything to us. God's economy is one of self-giving love, not of getting as much as one can for oneself. God sacrifices himself for the other, even and especially when the other doesn't deserve it or even care. God is not the God who climbs the ladder, but who demonstrates his glory in downward mobility (See Philippians 2:6-8) and trickle up economics that make it possible for all of us to experience the riches of his grace (See Ephesians 4:7-13; while the passage is about spiritual gifting in the ecclesial body bound up with Christ's descent and ascent, it reflects the heart of a God who gives good gifts to people in various ways in view of his mercy in Christ and who makes it possible for them to be good stewards of his grace³¹).

³¹This is a great Pauline passage on gifts. Here Paul frames consideration of the gifts in communal terms. As my colleague and *Exploring Ecclesiology* co-author Brad Harper claims, God gives gifts to us through persons, such as teachers, not teaching. The gifts cannot be seen as commodities. When God gives his grace, it

Downward mobility is truly upward mobility in view of Jesus, who was lifted up on the cross in his hour of glory (John 12:23-33). Such downward mobility which is truly upward speaks to the upside down nature of God's kingdom. In place of those attempts at taking back America from our enemies, Jesus calls us to lay down our lives for our enemies, those who are different from us and for those in the margins, as we take up residence ourselves in these spheres. Just as Jesus died to divine entitlement and privilege, we must do the same with white privilege.

Individual responsibility is important, but not enough. We are all responsible, and must all be engaged on a personal level. Even so, it is not enough. The recession should help all of us see this to be true,³² as the documentary *The Line* makes clear. Social solidarity is essential.

is the person of Christ, who also gives us persons as gifts as teachers, etc. Going further, the Spirit, too, is personal and is the gift of grace through whom God's very love is poured out into our hearts (See Romans 5:5; see also 1 Corinthians 13, which appears in the context of the discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14; see also Jonathan Edwards' "Treatise on Grace" for his discussion of the Spirit as the personal grace of God; Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on Grace and Other Posthumously Published Writings*, ed. Paul Helm {Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1988}). Evangelicals tend to view gifts as commodities of production rather than as communal persons who produce relational fruit. To return briefly to Ephesians 4, I wish to draw attention to a point on this passage made by my colleague Daniel Somboonsiri in personal correspondence. According to Somboonsiri, Paul's argument in this passage provides a beautiful view of economics broadly defined in light of the Trinity. When Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8, he likely does so from an Aramaic Targum which portrays God giving gifts to men, rather than the LXX or MT which speak of men giving gifts to God. Somboonsiri draws attention to Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 42, *Ephesians* (Dallas, Texas: Thomas Nelson, 1990), pp. 242-243, in this context. According to Somboonsiri, the apostle's midrash combines the two texts to reveal that, through union with God, what is given to God is also for the body of Christ. If true, this combination provides a beautiful image of the Trinity engaged, not in consumption, but in communal sharing for the benefit of all. God has not consumed or hoarded what has been given to him by humanity. Neither is the church to hoard and consume what has been given by God, but rather to share with anyone in need (Ephesians 4:28).

³²According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 50 million Americans are living in poverty (See "Census: U.S. Poverty Rate Spikes, Nearly 50 Million Americans Affected," CBSDC/AP, November 15, 2012; <http://washington.cbslocal.com/2012/11/15/census-u-s-poverty-rate-spikes-nearly-50-million-americans-affected/>; accessed on 2/11/2013). The 2011 U.S. Census figure for those living in poverty was 46 million (See "Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011," United States Census Bureau, September 12, 2012; http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb12-172.html; accessed on 2/11/2013). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, the U.S. ranked third-highest in poverty among developed nations in 2011; Turkey and Mexico were the only developed nations whose rates were higher. According to the Office of Management and Budget, "and updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, the weighted average poverty threshold for a family of four in 2011 was \$23,021." "Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011," September 12, 2012; United States Census Bureau; http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb12-172.html; accessed on 2/11/2013). There are scores of other people who rise above this line but who are finding it very hard not to fall. I have found that poverty does not respect age or hard work or place. Concerning age, more than one out

Thus, as stated above, we need social prophets and social capital/businesses. To the subject of social prophets calling for a capitalism of a higher order that involves such things as social capital/businesses, we now turn.

Taking on Board a Capitalism of a Higher Order

Prophetic words are needed. Attention must be given to the doctrine of original sin and sin's horrors,³³ including structural evil which involves such problematic forces as the racialization of our world. An alternative vision of life must be championed in place of the Randian utopia of individual, rational self-interest, which does not account adequately enough for an understanding of the social world³⁴ and which also undercuts altruism. So, too, there is a need to challenge the scarcity thesis, the claim that value is bound up with supply and demand, and the utilitarian maxim that an action's outcome alone dictates its goodness or not. Consequences alone do not determine the value of an action. Moreover, it is important to critique the utilitarian claim that the aim is happiness for the greatest

of every five young children lives in poverty in the U.S., the wealthiest nation on earth ("More than 1 in 5 U.S. children poor, Census says," Reuters, November 17, 2011; <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/17/us-usa-poverty-children-idUSTRE7AG2C920111117>; accessed on 2/11/2013). Regarding hard work, the U.S. Bureau of Labor claims that more than 7 million Americans are working two or more jobs in the effort to make ends meet. About place, suburban poverty has now surpassed urban poverty. This kind of information is available at the resources listed above and in the documentary, *The Line* (<http://www.thelinemovie.com/>; accessed on 2/11/2013). We are not simply dealing with information about percentages, but about real people's lives—people like us. Perhaps we presently think that it is only lazy people, or people with no education, or people who don't have the necessary experience who face poverty. Perhaps the only time that we will take it to heart that poverty is no respecter of persons is when we come to realize that falling below the poverty line could happen to us. *The Line's* story of individuals like "John"—a hard working, well-educated man who had done quite well financially until the economic floor beneath his feet gave way—suggests that it could happen to anyone.

³³While Bigelow blames the doctrine of original sin for some of the historic problems with Evangelicals' historiography concerning economics, the doctrine of original sin can go a long way in speaking of how all of us are at fault and morally responsible and culpable. On this doctrine, one cannot go hastily in the direction of blaming the victim. Bigelow, "Let There Be Markets;" see <http://harpers.org/archive/2005/05/let-there-be-markets/> (accessed on 9/26/2013). See also William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim*, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

³⁴Bigelow claims, "The core assumption of standard economics is that humans are fundamentally individual rather than social animals. The theory holds that all economic choices are acts of authentic, unmediated selfhood, rational statements reflecting who we are and what we want in life. But in reality even our purely 'economic' choices are not made on the basis of pure autonomous selfhood; all of our choices are born out of layers of experience in contact with other people. What is entirely missing from the economic view of modern life is an understanding of the social world." Bigelow, "Let There Be Markets;" see <http://harpers.org/archive/2005/05/let-there-be-markets/> (accessed on 9/26/2013).

number of people. This utilitarian approach to ethics often (consciously or unconsciously) leaves the poor and marginalized out of the picture in favor of white supremacy. We must guard against white supremacy theology and speak out in favor of equity and justice for all, which will entail a capitalism of a higher order.

In a 2006 interview with *America: The National Catholic Review*, James Cone called on white Protestant and Catholic theologians to speak out on white supremacy, claiming that white theologians remained largely silent on the subject. He reasoned that "white supremacy is more deeply entrenched now than that it was in the 1960's and early 1970's." People were more cognizant of it then due to the work of Dr. King and others. The church's finest hour in addressing racism was at that time. Cone adds,

But now, having confronted it years ago, they think they have made the racial situation better, whereas in some ways it is worse. It is like a new form of racism, in that it accepts the tokenism of a few blacks in churches, educational institutions and government in order to make people think everything is fine on the racial front. But just look at the statistics about the African-American community with regard to imprisonment, health care, education and employment. We are worse off today in areas like these. So I want to challenge white theologians and their churches to speak out in a sustained and prophetic way about racial injustice.³⁵

White Evangelical theologians and churches can learn a lot from fellow Evangelical Dr. John M. Perkins, who preaches and teaches that handouts do not help restore people's dignity. Nor a system that keeps people down. He teaches that people should work and work hard. He also teaches that the government should work hard for the people in need to help them move toward sustainability. Perkins calls on the government and investors and communities to make it possible for the poor to own the economic pond.³⁶ In this way, we move beyond holding onto a sense of entitlement—whereby we are entitled to positions of power in our community-building exercises and transactions—to surrendering unwarranted ownership of the title so that others can rightfully take the credit.

What does ownership of the pond by the poor look like? It is not enough to give hungry people fish to eat; nor is it enough to teach them how to fish. Perkins says that the "give people a fish and they'll eat for a day" line was the motto of 1960s community development, and the "teach people to fish and they'll eat for a lifetime" line was the 1970s

³⁵"Theologians and White Supremacy: An Interview with James H. Cone," in *America: The National Catholic Review*, November 20, 2006 (<http://americamagazine.org/node/147942>; accessed on 2/9/2013).

³⁶See such works of his as *Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993); John M. Perkins, *With Justice for All*, with a foreword by Chuck Colson (Ventura: Regal Books, 1982); see the section entitled "The Strategy," which includes chapters 6-18.

motto. Though the latter is a marked improvement on the former, neither one goes far enough to meet the "enormous challenges of the urban poor today." For Perkins, the approach needed today involves asking the question, "Who owns the pond?" He goes on to say: "The fact that young men felt no remorse for torching businesses in their own community during the Los Angeles riots indicates how little was at stake in their eyes. I imagine they would have felt differently if these businesses had been owned by neighbors, family members, and friends."³⁷

Ownership is not simply a matter of owning the title; it is also about ensuring that the poor with whom we become partners in rebuilding communities have a sense of accomplishment. We can accomplish many things in life if we don't care who gets the credit. The key to explosive and long-term community-development vitality is to ensure that the people in a depressed community fully believe that they are responsible for repairing the foundations and walls of their community. Perkins gets at this idea when he quotes a Chinese poem:

Go to the people
Live among them
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build on what they have:
But of the best leaders
When their task is done
The people will remark
"We have done it ourselves."³⁸

We all have a share in God's estate. As a result, Christians and churches can work together in particular areas of need; that is, affluent and poor churches can together take ownership of depressed communities.³⁹ Following Perkins's lead, churches can help form "local

³⁷Perkins, *Beyond Charity*, 119.

³⁸Chinese poem as quoted in John M. Perkins, "What Is Christian Community Development?" in John M. Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), p. 18.

³⁹Pastor Mark DeYmaz talks about churches being involved in significant community transformation in *Real Community Transformation: From Rhetoric to Results for the Glory of God*, a Leadia production at the Leadership Network (http://leadnet.org/blog/post/mark_deymaz_talks_about_real_community_transformation; accessed on 2/11/2013).

enterprises that meet local needs and employ indigenous people."⁴⁰ This will involve giving the poor the capital they need (and cannot get due to recurring redlining) to take ownership of property and keep the money in the community. Churches can also become partners together to foster ownership of businesses among the local people. Such actions will mean giving wealthy individuals the opportunity to invest in something of greater value than the stock market. For as Jesus said, whatever you do for the least of his brothers, you do it for him (Matthew 25:40).

The John M. Perkins Foundation⁴¹ and the Christian Community Development Association⁴² also provide models of people and organizations coming alongside and working among the poor so that they can also take ownership of their economic futures rather than be dependent on charity and terrorized by poverty.

Muhammad Yunus's work,⁴³ while criticized and under scrutiny in his home country, is a sterling example⁴⁴ of the kind of program that needs to be implemented in various quarters among the poor around the world. Yunus champions social businesses. A social business is "designed to meet a social goal." He goes on to say that a social business

pays no dividends. It sells products at prices that make it self-sustaining. The owners of the company can get back the amount they've invested in the company over a period of time, but no profit is paid to investors in the form of dividends. Instead, any profit made stays in the business—to finance expansion, to create new products or services, and to do more good for the world.⁴⁵

The driving, motivating force behind the market for Christians should not be to acquire greater wealth but to redistribute the wealth and resources acquired so as to benefit all people, especially the poor (Pope John Paul II makes a similar claim in his critique of the

⁴⁰Perkins, *Beyond Charity*, p. 120.

⁴¹www.jmpf.org (accessed on 2/9/2013).

⁴²www.cdda.org (accessed on 2/9/2013).

⁴³www.muhammadyunus.org (accessed on 2/9/2013).

⁴⁴Liam Black, "Muhammad Yunus: the model social enterprise leader?" in *Guardian Professional*, September 12, 2012 (<https://socialenterprise.guardian.co.uk/en/articles/social-enterprise-network/2012/sep/12/muhammad-yunus-social-enterprise-leader?CMP>; accessed on 2/9/2013).

⁴⁵Yunus with Weber, *Creating a World Without Poverty*, p. xvi.

free market in *Centesimus Annus*, 1989).⁴⁶ We need to consider more ways to establish micro-enterprises among the poor. Such enterprises do not use people to build the economy, but rather build the economy around people, especially those most vulnerable, assisting them in moving toward sustainability in their communities.

Taking Hold of the City of God

At the outset of this essay, mention was made of Carl F. H. Henry's lament that an other-worldly and world-resistant Fundamentalism could not give rise to a contemporary version of Augustine's *City of God*. Nor can a worldly Evangelicalism, as James Montgomery Boice argued. Let the words of their and our Evangelical forebear, Jonathan Edwards, in *The Great Awakening*, lead the way in calling us to a vision of a capitalism of a higher order, and call us to live in view of the day when the city of God becomes the city of the new humanity.

Edwards's words in *The Great Awakening* refer back to the heads of Israel's tribes, who contributed their wealth to build the tabernacle in Exodus 35:21-29: "These are the days of erecting the tabernacle of God amongst us." Just as the goldsmiths and merchants rebuilt Jerusalem's wall (Nehemiah 3:22), so the days are "not very far off, when the sons of Zion shall come from far, bringing their silver and their gold with them" to God and the "Holy One of Israel,"

. . . when the merchants of the earth shall trade for Christ more than for themselves, and their merchandise and hire shall be holiness to the Lord, and shall not be treasured or laid up for posterity, but shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing; and when the ships of Tarshish shall bring the wealth of the distant parts of the earth, to the place of God's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious. . . . The days are coming, when the great and rich men of the world shall bring their honor and glory into the church, and shall as it were strip themselves, to spread their garments under Christ's feet, as he enters triumphantly into Jerusalem. . .⁴⁷

Will the merchants of the various churches rise up in solidarity to overcome the market forces, to contribute their wealth to build the tabernacle? Will the sons and daughters of Zion rebuild the city wall, and will the merchants trade more for the selfless Christ than for

⁴⁶http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html (accessed on 2/9/13).

⁴⁷Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, ed. C. C. Goen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 514-15.

themselves and thus welcome Christ in as he turns Nineveh and Babylon into the New Jerusalem? I pray that these days are "not very far off."

Only when Christians and churches unite as one church and partner with those outside the church to contend for the same moral objectives will God's people begin to become now what they are destined to be in God's future — the beloved community, a city on a hill, whose light illumines the world,⁴⁸ where the kings and nations bring their splendor and glory into the church. That day will dawn only when churches, their leaders and members consume Christ and are consumed by Christ. Only then will they cooperate with one another to take captive the market forces and relocate, reconcile, and redistribute their wealth for the sake of Christ, where the city of God becomes the city of the new humanity.

⁴⁸Jonathan Edwards, "Peaceable and Faithful Amid Division and Strife," in M. X. Lesser, ed., *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, vol. 19, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 674.