

defenders of the dynamics of capitalism.

Muller wishes to emphasize that not all intellectuals fit into the group “whose interest it is to work up and organize resentment, to nurse it, to voice it and to lead it.” Another of the Frankfurt school theorists, Max Horkheimer, finally realized after World War II that much of contemporary anti-Americanism had taken on the function of anti-semitism providing excuses for aggressive and mindless scapegoating. On this score things have not changed very much in recent years. Muller very briefly links up this kind of resentment to the attacks of 9/11 but does not develop it. Anti-semitism and anti-Americanism have once again joined full circle. ■

A Declaration of Interdependence: Why America Should Join the World

Will Hutton. 2003. New York: W. W. Norton. ISBN: 0-393-05725-9. \$27.95.

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Will Hutton is chief executive of the United Kingdom’s Work Foundation and columnist for the *Observer* in London, where he was formerly editor in chief. I first became aware of his work in the mid-1990s, when an Olivet alumnus referred me to his book, *The State We’re In: Why Britain Is in Crisis and How to Overcome It*, a critique of British economic policy under the Conservative governments of Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and John Major. While I never ran across a copy of this volume, I recalled his name when Daniel Schorr, in a National Public Radio commentary in the spring of 2002, made reference to his more recent book, *The World We’re In: How America Violates Its Own Ideals*, which eventually reached “the top ten nonfiction best-seller list in Britain” (p. ix). *A Declaration of Interdependence* is the American edition of *The World We’re In*, with some chapters updated and rewritten and others deleted.

In the preface to the American edition, Hutton writes that while *The World We’re In*

attacks Euroskepticism and makes the case for European integration around a reassertion of common European values, *A Declaration of Interdependence* tries to do the parallel job in the United States—insisting that America’s interests are still best served by strengthening and modernizing the multilateralist approach that followed World War II (p. x).

At first glance, this might appear to be a book that would hold little professional interest for readers of this journal, especially if one does not share Hutton’s social-democratic perspective on the appropriate nature of economic institutions and policies in a free society. Having read this volume, however, and having used it in an upper-division undergraduate class as a supplemental text, my conclusion is that Hutton addresses several issues in a thought-provoking manner that are definitely of concern to Christian economists.

The first issue is the role of religious faith, specifically Christianity, in the formation of the American version of democratic capitalism, as opposed to its European variants. Hutton makes the following argument in the book’s first chapter, which opens his critique of American economic, social, and foreign policy:

Early settlers believed that America was a holy country with a special divine providence. The same belief is still alive today, giving American Protestantism its particular evangelical and highly personalized character. . . . As a result, America’s religious culture, or at least its dynamic element over the last twenty years, has stressed the morality of individual self-interest and self-help. Social and public initiatives of the type widely supported in Europe and by liberals in the United States are seen as inimical to morality because they minimize individual responsibility (p. 28).

One might be inclined to dismiss the previous statement as an overly simplistic interpretation of the role of Christianity in the shaping of American society, especially since it (1) only focuses on evangelical Protestants, and (2) does not acknowledge the diversity of social thought even within the evangelical community. Hutton’s perspective, however, does focus the reader’s attention on the enduring debate over the viability of the state as an instrument of justice and specific forms of public stewardship, as well as on the question of whether American Christians tend to view these issues in a manner that is fundamentally different than believers in other countries.

This discussion is intrinsically connected to a second argument, which is Hutton’s view as to what constitutes an appropriate “social contract” and “infrastructure of justice.” This argument is outlined in the book’s second chapter, in which Hutton presents his view of the contrast between European and American civilization. He relies heavily upon John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice*. Hutton’s examination of these matters raises some interesting questions, as reflected in the following quotation from the second chapter:

If there is to be a social contract, then there has to be a collective agent that can organize it – and there has to be a public space within which the social contract’s character and structure can be debated. In short, there has to be a state, and the state has to be part of a wider public discourse in which its actions can be publicly discussed, evaluated, and held to account by the citizenship at large. For any European—or indeed any Rawlsian American—this is a pretty tame lowest common denominator of agreement (pp. 58–59).

Should the state occupy all of the public space to which Hutton makes reference in the previous statement, or is there a role for the voluntary associations of civil society in his vision of the social contract? Why can’t non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of all types constitute an important part of the infrastructure of justice? While Hutton does not make any critical references to the participation of NGOs

in what he calls the “public discourse,” his inclination to regard “public” as being synonymous with “governmental” is revealed by his characterization, at a later point in the book, of British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s “third way” as “a delusion” (p. 210). In criticizing the attempt to form partnerships between the public and private sectors in order to achieve certain social objectives, Hutton states forthrightly that in areas such as health care and education, “the advocacy and defense of the public realm is important in itself” (p. 210).¹ How might we, as Christian economists, respond to this conclusion as an expression of our commitment to public justice and faithful stewardship?

Chapters 3–5 reflect the rather familiar (and not terribly original) argument from the conventional left that American society is saturated with inequality and greed, although Hutton does take American “liberals” to task in the third chapter for what he regards as passive resignation in the face of the “conservative” onslaught. In the judgment of this reviewer, chapters 6–9 are more interesting, even if one does not accept Hutton’s overall thesis. Chapter 6 is entitled “The Globalization of Conservatism,” and its thrust is reminiscent of Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz’s argument that some proponents of globalization have associated this phenomenon with “accepting triumphant capitalism, American style.”² Chapter 7 explores the “special” relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States, with Hutton maintaining that Britain should align its economic policies and institutions more closely with its colleagues in the European Union than with the United States. Chapter 8, entitled “Europe Works,” presents a challenging case, based largely on case studies of successful European enterprises, for what Ronald Dore has characterized as “stakeholder,” as opposed to “shareholder,” capitalism.³ Chapter 9 extends some of the arguments presented in the two previous chapters while drawing distinctions between the various forms of European capitalism, especially the difference between what Hutton calls the “Rhineland capitalism” of Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands, and the social-democratic framework shared by the Scandinavian nations.

At the end of the book, Hutton asserts that there are three crucial domestic battles which must be “won” in order for the United States to “rejoin the world.” U.S. citizens must: (1) attack the Wall Street view of wealth creation as short-term financial engineering; (2) insist that the United States offer a robust social contract, one in which the bottom 50 percent of Americans are offered a fair chance and protected against life’s unavoidable hazards; (3) struggle to relegitimize the public realm and see to it that America, above all else, lives up to its own criteria of democracy.

The third “battle” identified by Hutton raises some compelling issues. What does it mean to “relegitimize” the public realm? Is it possible to affirm this goal *without* necessarily signing on to Hutton’s definition of “the public realm” or his specific views on economic policy? What are the implications of this discussion for the actual or potential responsibilities of public institutions which are multinational in nature?

One final thought: from an educational standpoint, this

volume proved to be quite effective in encouraging students to consider arguments that they may not have previously encountered. Hutton’s prose is rather polemical at times, especially in the book’s early chapters, but on the whole, I concluded that it was a valuable addition to the instructional design of my course.

Endnotes

- 1 An interesting discussion of the issues associated with public-private partnerships in the delivery of social services is provided by Minow (2002).
- 2 Stiglitz (2003), p. 5.
- 3 Dore (2000), p. 10.

References

- Dore, Ronald.** 2000. *Stock Market Capitalism, Welfare Capitalism: Japan and Germany Versus the Anglo-Saxons*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Minow, Martha.** 2002. *Partners, Not Rivals: Privatization and the Public Good*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E.** 2003. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton. ■

Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions

Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen. 2003. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 0-8308-3227-0. \$16.00 (paper).

Reviewed by Scott Brunger, Maryville College (TN).

Having been a second-generation missionary, I jumped at the opportunity of reviewing *Great Commission Companies* and was not disappointed, though I have further questions about them. I recognize that when my father helped launch the Hong Kong Products Fair in the early 1950s, it encouraged entrepreneurship that eventually created jobs for the million Chinese refugees who poured into the city-state raising its population to three million. Their entrepreneurship helped the churches in Hong Kong whose real estate by 1997 was worth more than all the foreign contributions made throughout their history. God can certainly work through business as well as other ways.

The book’s preface suggests that globalization is part of God’s plan: “Globalization is helping undo the modern dichotomy between spiritual and worldly professions, in part by bringing business of all sizes into countries that are in desperate spiritual and economic need” (p. 6). To their credit the authors recognize the world’s desperate poverty by citing World Bank statistics on the proportion of the global population living on less than one dollar a day and the challenge of persistent religious persecution under globalization (pp. 68–70). They are aware of the problems of globalization, though not critical of the role of secular