

Foundations

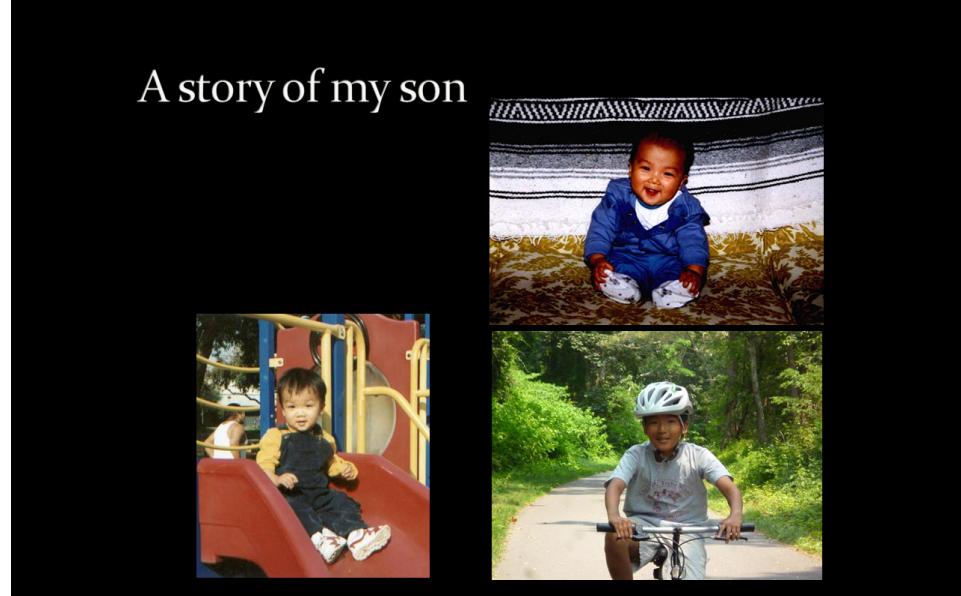
Genesis 1 – 11

What's More Important to God: The Individual or the Social Order?

Genesis 1:1 – 11:26

Introduction: A Crisis in Judgment

A story of my son



I'd like to introduce you to my son John. John was born in September of 2000, so he is 11 years old now. The bottom right picture is the most recent – here he is riding his bike at Cape Cod this past summer. He's a really fun kid. I'd like to show you the second photograph ever taken of John. It's his second ultrasound, here.

A story of my son



In May of 2000, John was in the womb of my wife Ming. We went into Brigham and Women's Hospital for our 19 week ultrasound. While we were there in the hospital, the nurse also pointed out that John's ultrasound pictures revealed spots on his heart. That is correlated with Down's Syndrome. I've known a few kids with Down's Syndrome and their parents, so I had a pretty good idea of what that would involve, but I was in a bit of a shock. I

don't think any parent expects or hopes for their child to be mentally handicapped. We also live in a lower income, higher crime area of Boston doing things like community organizing and such, so having a special needs child would have impacted us in some other ways. We wondered if we would have to move out, at some point? Maybe we should move to L'Arche, the Christian community dedicated to people with developmental challenges? Now the nurse recommended an additional test, which is called an amniocentesis, on our next visit. It's where they can sample the fluids in the umbilical cord to determine with more accuracy whether the child would have Down's Syndrome. But when we went back, my wife Ming said, 'No thanks. We don't want to do the amnio.' They asked, 'Isn't it important for you to know?' Ming said, 'No. We would keep the baby either way.' The nurse and gynecologist were both surprised. The gynecologist said, 'May I ask why?' Ming said, 'Well, we're Christians who try to take Jesus seriously and he would love this child, so we will too, even if he's not what we expected.' They were surprised because in their experience, most people would do the amnio, and if the test was positive for Down's, most of them would get an abortion. I later learned that in the U.S., 92% of Down's Syndrome babies are aborted.¹ I'm guessing that the number in a highly career-driven place like Boston and Cambridge is closer to 100%. But in any case, this means we are using abortion not for birth control, but child selection. Perhaps it's a different flavor of the child selection happening in China. It turned out that John did not have Down's.

My story illustrates many tensions, but above all, the classical tension: The tension is, 'Are you important because you're a person, no matter what? Or are you important because you have potential abilities, or proven abilities?' That second belief system, broadly speaking, is called utilitarianism. We try to figure out, 'How do you get the greatest good for the greatest number? Is there a greater good against which people can be measured? Who is fit to survive? Who can survive?' These types of questions come from John Stuart Mill, the father of utilitarian ethics.

People: Instrumental Value?

- John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873), father of utilitarian ethics



Unfortunately, if you are a utilitarian, you have been poorly represented recently, by villains.

¹ See <http://www.voicesforlife.net/2010/02/staggering-92-of-down-syndrome-babies.html>. Also http://abcnews.go.com/Health/w_ParentingResource/down-syndrome-births-drop-us-women-abort/story?id=8960803

People: Instrumental Value?



In *The Lord of the Rings*, Saruman sides with Sauron based on utilitarian calculations. He calculates that human beings can survive under Sauron, in a limited way, in a fate that is better than total destruction. So in Saruman's mind, it was better to side with Sauron. He said that the task he and the other wizards were given to protect human beings could be understood in a new way. The end was the same; only the means changed, and the ends justified the means. In the *Harry Potter* books, the young Dumbledore and Grindelwald wanted wizards to rule over Muggles 'for the greater good,' and so does Voldemort. But the deeper problems with utilitarianism are showing up.

People: Instrumental Value?

- "The greatest good for the greatest number?"
- You cannot maximize two variables at once
 - J. von Neumann and O. Morgenstern (*Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1947, p. 11)
 - Implicit in the theory of partial differential equations, D'Alembert (1717 – 1783)
- What is 'good'?
- What is the 'greatest number'?

First, you cannot actually maximize two (or more) variables at once. That means you can't solve the greatest good for the greatest number. This was clearly stated by J. von Neumann and O. Morgenstern (*Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1947, p. 11), but the principle is implicit in the theory of partial differential equations, dating back at least to D'Alembert (1717 – 1783). Not only do you have to define the 'good', which utilitarianism does not do by itself, but you have to take one or the other: the greatest good or the greatest number. That's why the 'greatest number' tends to get connected to a probability of who are 'the strongest' or 'the most productive' or 'the loudest' and so on. That's why you could, under utilitarianism, side with a partial genocide as long as you know some people will survive. Some people apparently have more instrumental value than others. Other people are just worth less.

Engagement Between Stories: The Christian Story and the Ancient Near Eastern Stories

So do people have intrinsic value? On what basis? It is hard work to think this through. It's even harder work to apply whatever convictions you develop. I want to speak about this as a Christian, but for those of you who are not Christians, I'm hoping for your partnership, because these issues that are challenging us today are big, and I'd like to take a posture of learning in addition to a posture of discussion and debate. This affects all of us, so it's important to me to make this a question.

Let me explain why the Christian tradition sees each individual person as precious and having intrinsic worth, not instrumental worth. It is because each person is loved by a loving God and invested with His image. This has huge implications. I'll give one example that relates to my story and the story of how children were treated:

People: Intrinsic Value?

- 'Medical historians have pointed out, for instance, that the care of defective newborns simply was not a medical concern in classical antiquity. The morality of the killing of sickly or deformed newborns appears not to have been questioned until the birth of the Christian church. No pagan writer – whether Greek, Roman, Indian or Chinese – appears to have raised the question whether human beings have inherent value ontologically, irrespective of social value, legal status, age, sex and so forth. The first espousal of an idea of inherent human value in Western civilization depended on a belief that every human being was formed in the image of God.'

(Vinoth Ramachandra, *Subverting Global Myths*, p.99)

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² Vinoth Ramachandra, *Subverting Global Myths: Theology and the Public Issues Shaping Our World* (Downers' Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), p.99

People: Intrinsic Value?

- Human beings bear the ‘image of God’, from Genesis 1:26 – 27
- Genesis 1 – 11 develops the meaning and application of this image-bearing
- Genesis 1 – 11 compares with other views of humanity, especially the literary peer group

That phrase, ‘image of God’ comes from Genesis 1, and how Genesis tells us how important that is. Genesis 1 – 11 is a foundational piece of literature. It is the foundation for the rest of the Hebrew Bible, the entire New Testament, and some of the most important pieces of literature in the Western tradition. But not only that: It is foundational to our understanding of the biblical God and His heart for humanity. What I’m going to do is compare Genesis 1 – 11 to three major stories from the Ancient Near East that are contemporaries to it.

Stasinos’ Cypria (European)	Atrahasis (Babylonian/Akkadian)	Zoroastrian Avesta (Old Iranian)	Genesis 1 – 11 (Hebrew)
Problem: Overpopulation, wickedness, earth burdened	Creation (1.1-351): the work of the gods and the creation of humans	Creation: Ahura Mazda tells Yima (human) to be king over creation	Creation (1:1-2:3): God creates the world and humans and blesses them
First Threat: Zeus sends the Theban War; many destroyed	First Threat (1.352-415): Humans numerically increase; plague from the gods to limit overcrowding; Enki’s help	First Threat: Overpopulation; Yima asks the earth goddess Armaiti to expand herself	First Threat (2:4-4:26): Genealogy of heavens and earth; the Fall; God promises victory to the seed of the woman; Cain kills Abel and settles in a city; God preserves Seth
Second Threat: Zeus plans to destroy all by thunderbolts; Momos dissuades Zeus	Second Threat (II.i.1-II.v.21) Humanity’s numerical increase; drought from the gods; Enki’s help	Second Threat: Overpopulation; Yima asks the earth goddess Armaiti to expand herself	Second Threat (5:1-9:29): Genealogy of Adam to Noah; human violence; God destroys the world through the flood; God preserves Noah and family
Third Threat: Momos suggests that Thebis marry a mortal to create Achilles and that Zeus father Helen of Troy; war results between the Greeks and the barbarians	Third Threat (II.v.22-III.vi.4): Humanity’s numerical increase, Atrahasis Flood, salvation in boat	Third Threat: Overpopulation; Yima asks the earth goddess Armaiti to expand herself	Third Threat (10:1-11:9): Genealogy of Shem, Ham, Japheth; Tower of Babel and dispersion

Resolution: Many destroyed by Trojan War, earth lightened of her burden	Resolution (III.vi.5-viii.18): Numerical increase; compromise between Enlil and Enki; humans cursed with natural barrenness, high infant mortality rate, cult prostitution (to separate sex and procreation)	Resolution: Ahura Mazda sends a deadly winter with heavy snowfall to punish overcrowding; Yima told to build a three storied enclosure to survive; humanity destroyed outside while a boy and girl born in enclosure every 40 years	Resolution (11:10-26): Genealogy of Shem; introduction of Abram (In 11:27ff., God calls Abram out of Ur to begin Israel.)
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Comparison of Stories: Genesis

- Similarities:
 - a fivefold structure
 - problems caused by humanity
 - a concern for population
 - divine judgment of some sort
- Differences:
 - “All other traditions view population control as the solution to urban overcrowding. Genesis offers dispersion, the nomadic way of life. Genesis 1 – 11 then constitutes a rejection of...civilization itself, if its continuance requires human existence to be treated as a contingent good. For Genesis the existence of a new human was always good.”

(Kikawada & Quinn, *Before Abraham Was*, p.38)

Notice the similarities. Genesis 1 – 11 seems to be aware of the other stories surrounding it. How can we tell? Because similar elements are there: a fivefold structure, problems caused by humanity, a concern for population, divine judgment of some sort. But Genesis 1 – 11 seems to turn the tables on all those other stories because it reverses the meaning of those stories. Notice the differences. Let's look at ethics. What do the first three stories say the big problem is? Overpopulation: don't have big families! That's amazing, isn't it? Way back then, 4,000 years ago and more, they worried about overcrowding. That's because they lived in cities, which are built on having a powerful class control the agriculture class. So we see that attitude today, don't we? Some wealthy Americans say, ‘Look at those Latinos. Look at their big families. Why don't they stop being so Catholic?’ That's why these other stories recommend barrenness, cult prostitution, and all these other ways to separate sex from procreation. This is by no means a debate that's over!

But isn't overpopulation a real issue? Not yet, and not for a while. The problem of hunger and starvation is a political problem, and therefore, underneath that, a moral and spiritual one. We simply do not want to feed everyone. Each American consumes as much as 32 Kenyans, for example.³ We would prefer to have lots of people die so that a minority of people can have lots of options.

³ Bryan Walsh, “Why the Real Victim of Overpopulation Will Be the Environment”, *TIME* magazine 2011 October 26, http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2097720_2097782,00.html ‘In fact, the world is physically capable of feeding, sheltering and enriching many more people in the short term. Between 1820, at the dawn of the industrial age, and 2008, when the world economy entered recession, economic output per person increased elevenfold. Life expectancy tripled in the last few thousand years, to a global average of nearly 70 years. The average number of children per woman fell worldwide to about 2.5 now from 5 in 1950. The world's population is growing at 1.1 percent per year, half the peak rate in the 1960s. The slowing growth rate enables families and societies to focus on the well-being of their children rather than the quantity. It's not sheer population growth that is stressing out the planet — it's what those people are producing and consuming. It's notable that much of the concern over population growth tends to focus on sub-Saharan Africa and the developing world. That may be where population is growing fastest, but poor Ugandans and Nigerians use a tiny proportion of the world's resources compared with rich Westerners, even if our populations have begun to stabilize. Here's how Jared Diamond — of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* fame — laid out the issue in 2008: ‘The population especially of the developing world is growing, and some people remain fixated on this. They note

Speaking of moral and spiritual problems, that is what the biblical story identifies as the big problem. Human pride, greed and violence – the problem is our character, our inability to make room for another person. We see this in two ways. First, if you compare the flood story of Genesis 5:1 – 9:26 to the Atrahasis Epic, we see the difference. In the Atrahasis Epic, the reason for the flood is overcrowding. Some other flood stories from around the world, since they exist in almost every culture, also say that. In Genesis, though, the reason for the flood is human violence and bloodshed; it's about human character, not human overcrowding. Second, what do the first three stories defend? Cities, the symbol of power in the ancient world. What does God's story attack? Cities, symbolic of civilization. The first three stories defend civilization at the expense of the individual. God's story starting from Genesis 1 – 11 defends the individual at the expense of civilization. In fact, Kikawada and Quinn argue, "This command [to be fruitful and multiply], so long familiar to us, is in its cultural context utterly startling, as unexpected as the monotheism."⁴ They conclude: "All other traditions view population control as the solution to urban overcrowding. Genesis offers dispersion, the nomadic way of life. Genesis 1 – 11 then constitutes a rejection of...civilization itself, if its continuance requires human existence to be treated as a contingent good. For Genesis the existence of a new human was always good."⁵

The bottom line is that every human being matters to God. Not just some, not just the ones with 'potential,' not the good-looking ones, the rich ones, or the strong ones, but every single one. This text is the touchstone for that. So there is a Jewish proverb that says, 'If the perfect society can be created with the death of one innocent child, the cost would be too high.'



From Genesis to Jesus

- Christian ethics mirrors God's immense willingness to make personal sacrifices for the smallest person

Jesus affirms it and even takes it further because his ethics, like loving your enemy, reflect God's immense willingness to make personal sacrifices for the smallest person. Jesus' ethics cannot be transmuted into a social order. His ethics are simply designed to reflect his character. Among Christians, no one put it better than C.S. Lewis who said:

that populations of countries like Kenya are growing rapidly, and they say that's a big problem. Yes, it is a problem for Kenya's more than 30 million people, but it's not a burden on the whole world, because Kenyans consume so little. (Their relative per capita rate is 1.) A real problem for the world is that each of the 300 million people in the U.S. consumes as much as 32 Kenyans do. With 10 times the population, the U.S. consumes 320 times more resources than Kenya does."

⁴ Isaac Kikawada and Arthur Quinn. *Before Abraham Was*. Ignatius Press, San Francisco, p.38.

⁵ ibid, p.51

People: Intrinsic Value?

- 'If individuals live only seventy years, then a state, or a nation, or a civilization, which may last for a thousand years, is more important than an individual. But if Christianity is true, then the individual is not only more important but incomparably more important, for he is everlasting and the life of a state or a civilization, compared with his, is only a moment.' (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)



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The Apologetics Question: Who Wrote Genesis 1 – 11?

One of the reasons why I believe the Bible has a supernatural origin is that it's so hard to explain from standard sociology. Who invented these ideas? Was it in someone's interest to say this? The 'ruling class' of a 'civilization'? Hardly! And if we say that the powerful would have controlled literacy and publishing and written stories, then you're left with a very deep puzzle: Why would anyone powerful have said this? And how do you get a universal ethical concern? From Israel on behalf of the whole world? Does anyone else say that? If a story CAN be explained by sociology, then it's probably just a myth. If a story CAN'T be explained by sociology, then it might actually be TRUE!

So when someone says, 'I think religion is just invented; it fills a cultural need; blah blah blah,' I would respond by asking the question, 'Really? Is this what anyone in the Enlightenment has ever really done?' Even in the most idealistic nation, the United States, which claims to have a biblical and Enlightenment heritage, we pay lip service to this ideal, but we don't actually do it. Our commitment to capitalism actually erodes our commitment to democracy. And once again, compare Genesis 1 – 11 with the literature of its neighbors: When everyone else was saying that you need some form of controlled death, making the weak and the poor and the unborn expendable, here you have Genesis saying every single person is valuable in the sight of this unusual God. That is unusual. I don't think Genesis 1 – 11 has a merely human origin.

Discussion Groups

But I'd like you to discuss how caring for the poor can be done in your major and career field. I'm going to break us up into four fields. In each of these fields, there is a systemic problem that hurts the poor.

- Education: The problem in education is that public schools are funded by local property taxes. That is why rich neighborhoods have amazing schools while most poor neighborhoods have struggling schools. They have worse buildings, gyms, computers, bathrooms, workshops, and sometimes teachers. This system reproduces class and racial inequality. Educator Jonathan Kozol writes in his book *Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, that segregation of black children is at its highest level since 1968, when we were trying to dismantle segregated schools because of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The question for you is: What are you going to do about this? Will you advocate for more equal funding? Will you teach in a public school? What?
- Health related fields (pre-med, nursing, science research): One problem in health is that 90% of the world's health care resources go to serve 10% of the world's population. We fund research into rich

people's diseases, but very few people study malaria and other tropical diseases, which would benefit millions of people. I understand that is how 'the market' allocates resources. But we are called by Christ to do more than 'the market.' So the question is: Will you serve a disadvantaged population? Will you address health care disparities? In addition, there are problems with how our industrial food system makes us sick. Because of fructose, for instance, we have obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and so on. So if you become a doctor, say, and are not doing something – however small – about the food system, then you are profiting from a system that is making people sick. That's an integrity problem.

- Business and finance: The central problem in business and finance is that the central objective is making profits for a few people who are shareholders, and not benefiting other people who are not shareholders. The video documentary *The Corporation* says that the corporation externalizes costs to make someone else absorb them. So it is with advertising products directly to children, making food with no nutrition, making lots of plastic which is killing us, making other bad products like soda and tobacco that hurt people, destroying the environment, and so on. For those of you going into business, you can wrestle with so many ways of caring for the poor, like microfinancing and microenterprise development, or financial reform in the U.S. to reign in Wall Street, or bringing employment to people in inner city Boston or a developing country, to thinking about just prices or fair wages, or measuring the social impact of the business, and maybe even the spiritual impact as well. In some ways, there are tons of ways to be creative in caring for the poor in business.
- Civil rights and human rights law: The problem in law and policy is that we only have a system of citizens' rights. We do not have human rights. For all our talk about human rights, we just don't have them, and we probably never will. We have only ever had citizens' rights. The U.S. started with giving citizens' rights to white, land-owning males, and everyone who was not in those categories had to fight to be included. But we are called by Christ to fight for all people's rights: the unborn, the immigrant, the citizen of another country like Iraq and Afghanistan. What does it mean to care about Iraqis and Afghans? That will produce tensions because most U.S. citizens only think about using their tax dollars to protect themselves. But we are called by Christ to do it. So the question is: What will you do on behalf of the unborn, the immigrant (including the illegal immigrant), and citizens of other countries?

So, as you break up into your groups and discuss this more with people who are learning the same things, please share things that you've learned in class or outside class that have inspired you. I know there are great stories that some of you have heard about, or organizations you've heard about. Let's benefit from each other's learning and help each other take a practical step. Maybe this will shape what summer internship you take. And maybe that will shape your future.

As you talk, I'd like for you to keep in mind that we are growing into this. No matter who we are, Christian or not, we don't have all the practical answers. This is not a contest to see who cares the most. If you don't know that much, that's okay. You can say so. This is an opportunity to learn. I look forward to learning what you've learned. In fact, to some degree, any idealist is a hypocrite, and any Christian is a hypocrite in some way or another. But this is for our development. My hope is that as we talk, we will find that God grows our heart just a little bit more. May we desire to be *God's image-bearer* more and more.

So please break up into groups by industry, and we will give you a hand out. Read the handout on how there is a structural problem that affects the most poor and vulnerable people. Talk about any ideas you have that counteract the problems listed on the handout. And if you are aware of other structural problems against the poor and vulnerable in these industries, please mention those too and let that be part of the discussion.

Education and Educational Policy

1954: The Supreme Court (*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*) reverses *Plessy* by ruling that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional, arguing that separate *is* unequal.

1974: The Supreme Court (*Milliken v. Bradley*) rules that desegregation, ‘in the sense of dismantling a dual school system,’ did not require ‘any particular racial balance in each ‘school, grade or classroom.’’ The Court also emphasized the importance of local control over the operation of schools. Justice William Douglas dissented: ‘Today’s decision … means that there is no violation of the Equal Protection Clause though the schools are segregated by race and though the black schools are not only separate but inferior… Michigan by one device or another has over the years created black school districts and white school districts, the task of equity is to provide a unitary system for the affected area where, as here, the State washes its hands of its own creations.’

2005: ‘Public school resegregation is a “national horror hidden in plain view,” writes former educator turned public education activist Kozol (*Savage Inequalities, Amazing Grace*). Kozol visited 60 schools in 11 states over a five-year period and finds, despite the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*, many schools serving black and Hispanic children are spiraling backward to the pre-*Brown* era. These schools lack the basics: clean classrooms, hallways and restrooms; up-to-date books in good condition; and appropriate laboratory supplies. Teachers and administrators eschew creative coursework for rote learning to meet testing and accountability mandates, thereby “embracing a pedagogy of direct command and absolute control” usually found in “penal institutions and drug rehabilitation programs.”⁶

‘Like most states, New York funds schools with property taxes. Inevitably, this leads to inequities among poor and affluent jurisdictions: the higher the property values, the better the schools.’⁷

Separation of white and minority students has increased since 1988. Experienced, better-paid teachers cluster in schools with the most privileged students, a phenomenon that quietly channels public money away from schools in poverty-prone areas.⁸

‘Largely because of the persistence of residential segregation and so-called “white-flight” from the public school systems in many larger urban areas, minorities often attend comparatively under-funded (and thus lower quality) primary and secondary schools. Thus minority children are often less prepared to compete for slots in competitive universities and jobs. While efforts to dismantle segregation in our nation’s schools have enjoyed some success, segregation remains a problem both in and among our schools, especially given rollbacks in affirmative action programs.’⁹

⁶ From the Publishers Weekly review of Jonathan Kozol’s book *Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, Crown Publishing: 2005

⁷ PBS documentary *Beyond Brown*, http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/legacy/money_summary.html

⁸ summarized from Paul Hill and Kacey Guin, co-authors of the University of Washington study published in the journal *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, October 2003

⁹ Initial Report of the United States to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,” September 2000, p.18

Health Care and Health Policy

'Fructose is a poison...[yet] high fructose corn syrup has found its way into hamburger buns, pretzels, barbecue sauce, and ketchup, almost everything. We are being poisoned by this stuff...every processed food. We are up to 141 pounds of sugar per year per person... We weigh 25 pounds more today than we did 25 years ago...Chronic fructose exposure leads to: hypertension, myocardial infarction, dyslipidemia, pancreatitis, obesity, hepatic dysfunction, fetal insulin resistance, habituation if not addiction.'¹⁰

'Multinational pharmaceutical companies neglect the diseases of the tropics, not because the science is impossible but because there is, in the cold economics of the drugs companies, no market. There is, of course, a market in the sense that there is a need: millions of people die from preventable or curable diseases every week. But there is no market in the sense that, unlike Viagra, medicines for leishmaniasis are needed by poor people in poor countries. Pharmaceutical companies judge that they would not get sufficient return on research investment, so why, they ask, should we bother? Their obligation to shareholders, they say, demands that they put the effort into trying to find cures for the diseases of affluence and longevity—heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's. Of the thousands of new compounds drug companies have brought to the market in recent years, fewer than 1% are for tropical diseases...In the corporate headquarters of major drug companies, the public relations posters display the image they like to present: of caring companies that bring benefit to humanity, relieving the suffering of the sick. What they don't say, is that, so far, their humanity has not extended beyond the limits of the pockets of the sick.'¹¹

'Throughout Africa, the privatization of health care has reduced access to necessary services. The introduction of market principles into health care delivery has transformed health care from a public service to a private commodity. The outcome has been the denial of access to the poor, who cannot afford to pay for private care.... For example ... user fees have actually succeeded in driving the poor away from health care [while] the promotion of insurance schemes as a means to defray the costs of private health care ... is inherently flawed in the African context. Less than 10% of Africa's labor force is employed in the formal job sector. The privatization of health care in Africa has created a two-tier system which reinforces economic and social inequalities.... Despite these devastating consequences, the World Bank and IMF have continued to push for the privatization of public health services.'¹²

¹⁰ Dr. Robert Lustig, Professor of Pediatrics at UCSF, *Sugar: The Bitter Truth*, July 2009, video lecture on youtube

¹¹ Isabel Hilton, *A Bitter Pill For The World's Poor*, The Guardian, January 5, 2000

¹² Ann-Louise Colgan, *Hazardous to Health: The World Bank and IMF in Africa*, Africa Action, April 18, 2002

Business, Finance, and Corporate Policy

'Economists refer to shareholders' tendency to ignore the costs of corporate behavior – pollution is the usual example – that doesn't harm the shareholders themselves (or harms them much less than the benefit the shareholders receive) as an 'externality' problem.'¹³

The Internet has fueled the explosion of child pornography. It was almost completely eradicated before the Internet. It is now becoming more brutal and graphic, and is growing.¹⁴

'The United Nations tells us that by 2025, two-thirds of the world's population – more than five billion of us – will lack access to water. The World Bank has predicted that the wars of tomorrow will be fought over water. How is it possible that the water crisis could explode within a single generation? There are many causes: growing use and abuse of water by water-intensive industries such as mining, paper and power generation; growing populations and a growing need for irrigation; a spread of industrial pollution fouling lakes and rivers, especially in developing countries; and spreading droughts induced by climate change.'¹⁵

'In *Race Against the Machine*, MIT's Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee present a very different explanation. Drawing on research by their team at the Center for Digital Business, they show that there's been no stagnation in technology -- in fact, the digital revolution is accelerating. Recent advances are the stuff of science fiction: computers now drive cars in traffic, translate between human languages effectively, and beat the best human Jeopardy! players. As these examples show, digital technologies are rapidly encroaching on skills that used to belong to humans alone. This phenomenon is both broad and deep, and has profound economic implications. Many of these implications are positive; digital innovation increases productivity, reduces prices (sometimes to zero), and grows the overall economic pie. But digital innovation has also changed how the economic pie is distributed, and here the news is not good for the median worker. As technology races ahead, it can leave many people behind. Workers whose skills have been mastered by computers have less to offer the job market, and see their wages and prospects shrink. Entrepreneurial business models, new organizational structures and different institutions are needed to ensure that the average worker is not left behind by cutting-edge machines.'¹⁶

¹³ David Skeel, *Icarus in the Boardroom*, p.203

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, antichildporn.org, familysafemedia.com, British Internet Watch Foundation, U.S. Dept. of Justice

¹⁵ www.stopcorporateabuse.org/cms/page1353.cfm

¹⁶ Erik Brynjolfsson, professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management, Director of the MIT Center for Digital Business, and Andrew McAfee, principal research scientist at the Center for Digital Business in the MIT Sloan School of Management. They are co-authors of *Race Against the Machine: How the Digital Revolution is Accelerating Innovation, Driving Productivity, and Irreversibly Transforming Employment and the Economy*, October 2011; see also Tom Ashbrook, WBUR, <http://onpoint.wbur.org/2011/11/02/when-machines-do-the-work>)

Law Pertaining to Civil Rights and Human Rights, International and Domestic

After World War II, the U.S. set out to control much of the world's wealth. George Kennan, one of the chief architects of this order said, '[The U.S. has] about 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population. In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships that will permit us to maintain this position of disparity.'¹⁷ This began a long string of CIA operations, often overthrowing democratically elected leaders, in: Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954, The Congo 1960, Iraq 1963, Brazil 1964, Indonesia 1965, Ghana 1966, Cambodia 1970, Chile 1973, Nicaragua 1981.

'Those [U.S. agricultural] subsidies make it possible to export millions of tons of food so cheaply that native farmers in places such as Jamaica can't possibly compete. By guaranteeing U.S. farmers a minimum payment for commodities such as corn, rice and soybeans, the government encourages overproduction. That drives down the market price, forcing even higher subsidies and creating surpluses that can be shipped to Jamaica and elsewhere... There is no doubt, by the way, that farm subsidies are corporate welfare par excellence. Although the program began as a way to aid poor family farmers in the 1930s, by last year nearly three-quarters of the money went to the richest 10 percent of American farmers. Recipients of five- and six-figure farm subsidy payments included John Hancock Life Insurance Co., Chevron, banker David Rockefeller, and basketball star Scottie Pippen. Even former Enron chairman Kenneth Lay collected a few bucks.'¹⁸

In 1989 the Supreme Court handed down a still-cited major decision, *City of Richmond, Virginia v. J.A. Croson Co.*, which knocked down a local Richmond program designed to remedy some past discrimination against black and other minority businesses with modest set-asides. The high Court ruled in favor of a white-run construction company, the plaintiff, which argued that the municipal government had unconstitutionally set aside some local contracts for small minority companies. The Court ruled that the Richmond government had not made a compelling case for remedying antiblack discrimination, even though the government defendant's statistics showed that in a city whose population was one-half black, less than 1 percent of city government business went to black-owned firms. Similar philosophical and legal arguments against significant remedial action for systemic racism have been reiterated by the plaintiffs and justices in other federal court cases since this important case. Several subsequent cases have built on this precedent to weaken even modest affirmative action programs.¹⁹

¹⁷ George Kennan, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948. Report by the Policy Planning Staff, Washington, DC: General Printing Office, 1976, pp 524 – 525

¹⁸ Andrew Cassel, *Why U.S. Farm Subsidies Are Bad for the World*, Philadelphia Inquirer Monday, May 6, 2002.
<http://www.commondreams.org/views02/0506-09.htm>

¹⁹ Joe R. Feagin, *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), p.83