

What Would It Mean to “Make America Great Again”?



By Steven Yates

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“Because we have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion, avarice, ambition, revenge or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.” –John Adams (1798)

“And this is progress? You must be joking! Me, I’m looking for any kind of hope!” –Peter Hammill (British singer, songwriter), “The Future Now” (1978)

From “Free Trade” to Dystopia: A Very Brief History of the Past Forty Years.

This article can be taken as complementing Devvy Kidd’s [informative article](#) of April 29. She focused on so-called free trade agreements that decimated America’s manufacturing base starting in the 1990s. These abominations turned many thriving cities into ghost towns where the only employers are government, fast food joints, and the local Walmart – unless Walmart corporate bureaucrats hundreds of miles away decided that the store wasn’t profitable and closed it.

Those able to leave such places, did. Those who remained saw them become havens of substance abuse, despair, and suicide.

How often must it be said? “Free trade” enables corporate leviathans to do as they please “voluntarily” (having purchased the political class) while everyone else pays the price.

Another result is the diminished quality of everything, as well as ease of use. When I was a child (1960s), my parents bought some top-of-the-line Ethan Allen furniture. I still have some of it. It’s over 60 years old, and in very good condition (a coffee stain here or there).



Back then, things weren’t just *made in America*, they were *built to last!*

Try finding *anything* of that quality today unless you’re in an antique store.

Buy a chair at Walmart. It’s in bagged-up parts when you take it out of a cheap cardboard box. You have to figure out how to assemble it. (I did this back around 2000 before I’d learned all this. The assembly instructions were in Chinese!) Often there’s a part missing, or which doesn’t fit properly. Assuming you get it assembled, cheapness is evident the first time you sit on it. If it lasts six months, you count yourself lucky.

Build-in obsolescence is now a mainstay of mass consumer goods. All made in cheap-labor hellholes. American makers of, e.g., quality furniture, could not compete with foreign

slaves. This is also true of automobile components and it's true of electronics. My first home PC bought in the late 1980s lasted twelve years. Most laptops start disintegrating after about two years. Corporations discovered they could bleed consumers for money this way. Consumers get dependent on an item. When it breaks down (having been designed that way), they're forced to buy the "upgrade."

Devy spelled out the consequences of "free trade" and suggested some remedies. I hope I can enhance the discussion by reminding readers of the *body of ideas* that went into building a once-thriving civilization. We've all but *lost* this body of ideas ... a reason *why* corporate leviathans feel justified in doing as they please to line their pockets as possible, including locating operations in cheap-labor hellholes and transforming the American workplace into a dystopia of Amazon drones, Uber drivers, etc.

The West's Christian Foundation.

Whether we like it or want to admit it or not, Western civilization rose on a Christian foundation. This is not a cliché. It is a profound truth that needs to be shouted from every rooftop.

God exists. He created the universe, and men and women in His image. As Aquinas observed, He left us "two books": the book He *revealed*, and the book of *nature*.

The book He revealed contains moral law, based on how His universe is designed to work. God doesn't *force* us to obey His law. But if we don't, the fact that the world operates according to those rules automatically works against us. *Our* choices, not His!

Since God created us in His image, we are finite renditions of His infinite *Logos*: we possess a rational (if fallible) capacity for apprehending how our surroundings work and how to use what we find in nature to improve our lot.

As Sir Francis Bacon put this: "*Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed.*"

Respect for nature and its operations precedes *technique*: employing specific means to achieve specific ends, applying physical principles. If we do not respect nature, again this works against us. A lot is packed into that. It should give *serious* environmentalists everything they claim they want. Unfortunately, most seem to be pagans, not Christians.

We are social beings. Nowhere in Scripture nor in the world we inhabit is there any sense that we were designed for prolonged solitude. Our need to get along calls for rules for ordering our lives, families, businesses, and societies, including governance. Some call this the *social contract*.

Imperial Economics and the *Real* Great Replacement.

Where did we get the idea of – what should I call it? – *imperial economics*? The idea that there are economic transactions and then there is window dressing, so that economics trumps everything else.

It came as a consequence of what I've begun calling the *Real* Great Replacement: when *materialism* (or *naturalism*) replaced Christendom as the West's dominant worldview.

According to materialism, God doesn't exist. Ancient peoples invented Him. Materialism's advocates usually aren't that blunt (except for the New Atheists of our time). But beginning around the late 1700s and proceeding through the 1800s, first intellectuals and then some commercial men became operational if not outright atheists.

The problem: the entire edifice of thought on which Constitutional government depended required a Christian worldview, in which men and women had *intrinsic value* because they were created in God's image.

This worldview *limited* worldly power – especially governmental power but also corporate power (and the *enhanced* powers that emerge when the two seamlessly integrate!).

Its ethics grounded *natural rights*: rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness, best sought, obtained, and enjoyed in a spirit of gratitude for what God has done and for what He has given us.

This edifice developed in stages with the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, and eventually our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution.

The worldview behind these was not always spelled out in black and white, like I've done here, because readers of these documents *could assume it*. It permeated their culture. Their authors *would not have understood a world where the prevailing mindset was otherwise*.

Exactly what happened has been the subject of libraries!

Our innate falseness, despite our having been created in God's image, worked consistently against us. All too many of us never sought God.

Hence as we learned that we could *explain* parts of the world and *use* what we learned to our advantage – using our own minds and hands – it went to our heads.

Enlightenment philosophers didn't just turn against ecclesiastical authority, they turned against the authority of God himself.

"I have no need of that hypothesis," physicist and astronomer Pierre LaPlace put it (late 1700s). This became the hallmark of later Enlightenment philosophy. Although such philosophy began in France and Germany, it soon crossed the English Channel and infiltrated the Anglo-American world.

Obviously I can only tell a portion of the story of the Real

Great Replacement (for more, readers are invited to consult my book *What Should Philosophy Do?* available from Amazon and its publisher; links below).

Nietzsche and Modernity's Breakdown.

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche provided an important pivot. Nietzsche was among the first to realize that once a civilization rejected God's existence and authority, it would be compelled to reject everything God's existence and authority gave meaning to. That meant every trapping of Christian and Christian-derived morality had to go.

Equality? There's no equality in nature (there's no equity, either).

Nietzsche called for a "revaluation of all values" and predicted an "advent of nihilism." He urged the development of a morality for *life in this world exclusively*, given the materialist assumption that our entire existence is limited to whatever number of years fate allots us. Then we become worm food.

Such a morality could only be based on one's capacity to survive and advance one's interests: health or vivacity, strength, prowess.

Nihilism derives from the Latin word nihil, meaning *nothing*. But no person and no society truly believes in *nothing*. We just aren't wired that way.

In practice, we created *surrogates* for God, I like to call them. An obvious surrogate for God is the totalizing state. Another is The Science. A third is money. Possibly the most common, which the third often serves, is: Self.

The twentieth century portrays results of the erosion of a morality based on principles not of our creation. What was supposed to evolve smoothly into a Utopia of Modernity, a

civilization based on science, technology, commerce, universal education, and a firm belief in the inevitability and goodness of secular progress, blew up into history's most destructive war up to that point in 1914.

We see effects of that war on our collective psyche in Dadaist art and in the troubled characters of Ernest Hemingway's great novels.

Western powers botched the aftermath of the Great War, as it was then called, setting the stage for the even more destructive World War II. And if the Nazis murdered millions, Stalin in the Soviet Union murdered millions more. Mao's body count would exceed Stalin's!

Genocide is a likely consequence of life after the Real Great Replacement, in which human life has no intrinsic value because we are highly-evolved animals instead of beings created in God's image. Human life can be eliminated if inconvenient. Don't think just of the Nazis. Think also of the pro-abortion American death culture.

What the Nazis and Communists did are extreme cases, of course, and it is not as if there were no previous genocides in this fallen world where, despite the dominance of a Christian worldview, those in power got drunk on it. But there remained hope of Transcendence.

Hegel and the Fate of Liberalism.

Modernity served up three fundamental political economies: communism, fascism, and liberalism (and combinations of these). We should also consult G.W.F. Hegel, who lived a century before Nietzsche. Hegel wrote of *masters* (or *lords*) and *slaves* (or *bondservants*), and the clash between them as history's chief driver. Each had its own mode of consciousness. Hegel's followers diverged into "right wing" Hegelians with a "master-oriented" moral and societal code, versus "left wing" Hegelians who purported to side with the

“slaves.”

The former of these led eventually to Hitler. The latter, to Marx and to Soviet and Maoist Communism.

Liberalism, the third, prevailed in the Anglo-American world. It strove to combine materialism with a natural-rights / libertarian view of society. This has proven unsustainable. Liberalism moved leftward until we arrived at the version found in today's Democrat Party.

Underwriting the political economy of liberalism was the autonomy of *homo economicus*, a primarily self-interested secular agent pursuing secular goods, wealth, pleasures, in an expanding global marketplace.

The trouble is, beings created in God's image are by their nature *not* designed for total autonomy. Most, if not all, will adopt one of the above surrogates, or turn to whatever secular authority they find, offered by a political movement, a guru-led cult, the worship of Self, or just the lure of the Almighty Dollar.

Since in this world what counts is power, and money is the path to power, we end up with globalism and the “free trade” world Devvy Kidd criticized.

This is the ultimate unsustainability of liberalism.

That is, all three modern political economies fail.

Under liberalism's professed autonomy for women, over 60 million unborn babies have been aborted. How's that for genocide? Both men and women have been “freed” from Christian-based marriages and families. Both pursued career over marriage and family. One in two marriages now ends in divorce. The birth rate is falling all over the West. Both sexes find themselves emotionally isolated, screen-addicted, compulsively trying to avoid the reality of growing older and possibly

dying alone.

This is what liberalism has done.

It's Worse: Modernity to Postmodernity; From Justice to Antiwhite Racism.

Modernity as sketched above has "evolved" into postmodernity. In postmodernity, we have not just a totally subjective ethic, but *reason itself is dismembered*.

Recall Hegel's division between the consciousness of the master and the consciousness of the slave. The former (straight white males, collectively) "repress" the latter (everyone else). Our perceptions and reasonings are all shaped by "biases" (of race, "gender," etc.).

Thus the ability to trust our senses and their capacity to yield knowledge is gone. It's all a "social construct." In practice, science becomes The Science (epistemic authoritarianism, not scientific method). Technique is used to encircle and enslave, usually to help individuals and corporations make more of the Almighty Dollar in the matter described in the first section: also the perversion of the marketplace into a deliverer of porn, mind-altering drugs, even trafficked human beings (mostly girls and women but not limited to them!). Legality? What's that? There's the 11th commandment: "Thou shalt not get caught!"

Efforts to provide justice and equal opportunities for those previously denied them are hijacked until they attack the "oppressors" (the very open antiwhite racism we now see).

"Education" under such dystopian conditions indoctrinates and subordinates; it doesn't enhance genuine *learning* which must be done on one's own if at all. Those doing it quickly become isolated and turn cynical.

Language itself is now weaponized so those in power can use it

for thought control, by labelling opinions they disapprove of *misinformation, conspiracy theories, threats to democracy, etc.*

The edifices of freedom, including free speech, freedom of inquiry, a free press, the right to disagree, the sense of obligation we once had to participate in civil discourse, and whatever obligations we have to each other; also property rights; were all manifestations of a Christian worldview.

It is significant that this philosophical and legal structure *did not emerge anywhere else in the world!* Other peoples developed *crafts*. They did not develop *science*.

When the Christian worldview goes away, this all goes away, piece by piece. Or is perverted into forms its original architects wouldn't recognize if they could come back.

A Real Dictator Coming?

You get the economic results Devvy Kidd wrote so informatively about, rationalized through such locutions as "free trade" and "free markets at work," having destroyed careers, ruined lives, undermined communities, and eventually sowing the seeds of armed revolt among that element of the immiserated peasantry not prone to self-destruction.

The kind of revolt that puts a potential dictator into power if he can convince enough people he can clean up the mess.

I hope it's obvious that I'm not talking about Donald Trump.

Trump turns 77 next month. One way or another, in a few years he'll be gone. But the problems that put him in the White House back in 2016 will still be around.

He might have a successor, who will have all his strengths (especially charisma) but none of his weaknesses (lack of focus, inability to respond effectively to crises which hurt him badly when the globalists unleashed COVID, an inability to

shut his mouth when doing so would be wise).

This person might be very self-disciplined. Those around him as well. *He and they will be everything the presently-terrified globalist-leftist elites accuse Trump and MAGA of being.*

Those struggling to hang onto an intellectually discredited leftist-liberal elitism and “globalization” will have done this to themselves!

So, What Would It Mean to *Make America Great Again*?!

Don't *merely* vote for Trump, although four more years of Democrat rule will be more disastrous than the past three-and-a-fraction.

Start restoring a Christian worldview. This is Biblical (Mark 6:15). Note for those interested that materialism as a philosophy of nature as well as of humanity has major drawbacks that have nothing to do with anyone's “religious convictions” (I discuss them in chapter 5 of my book).

Today, those trying to do this are maligned as *Christian nationalists*: combining Christianity with America First!

If what I'm describing here is Christian nationalism, then so be it! I am beyond caring what label its enemies pin on it!

Recently I happened to catch clips from a video in which some bimbo (on MSNBC, I think) described Christian nationalists as “*believing we get our rights from God and not from the government!*”

She found this *horrifying*, like something out of Stephen King.

I found myself laughing hysterically at her palpable terror.

We *must* assert that rights come from God and not government. All we have to do is look at what has happened as a result of

relying on the opposite assumption for well over half a century now.

What government gives, government can take away!

Even Libertarians figured this out!

It can (and should) be made obvious to grade school children. Which is why Founders such as John Adams understood the need to keep government on a short leash. If there must be a political class and that class recognizes that it answers to Someone higher than itself, then all might be well. When its members believe otherwise, they tend to become dictators.

Corporations aren't necessarily better. Some are worse! "Free trade" agreements were promoted by corporate lobbyists and well-moneyed think-tankers in NGOs who had the political class bought and paid for. I don't know how many Libertarians fully grasp this, or the failure of *everything-is-economics* imperialism.

Economics-before-everything has given us, over various decades, Big Tobacco, Big Oil, Big Media, Big Pharma, and Big Tech. All have based "marketing" (i.e., propaganda) on the assumption of a mass to be controlled, so that mass will spend money it does not have on things it does not need.

Political economy is downstream from culture, and culture is downstream from the prevailing worldview. To illustrate: if we look at the cultural trends (in e.g., popular music) that existed during, say, the Great Depression, or afterwards, we find beauty! We find elegance! Despite the suffering that characterized those years!

Or compare *classic cars* to the monstrosities being turned out today. (Paul Craig Roberts [recently did this.](#))

Or just go to the 1970s, before the really massive cultural deteriorations had set in. Compare the rock music of that era,

often with intelligent and thoughtful lyrics, to what passes for popular music today: “vocalists” who can’t utter three lines without at least one f-bomb.

A lot of today’s art, architecture, fashion, is just *ugly* and *repellant*.

In the 1970s girls and women did not cover their bodies with tattoos, pierce their noses and faces, dye their hair green or purple, or curse like sailors which many “career women” do today quite liberally!

So what would it mean to truly Make America Great Again?

It would start, as I said, with a restoration of the Christian worldview, and since our dominant institutions are probably beyond hope, any Great Restoration must start outside them and proceed person to person, writer to reader, parent to child, teacher to student, group to group, until we can rebuild families and rebuild a basis for stable, prosperous communities in which all will recognize the intrinsic value of all their members and work out the policy implications.

The latter, I submit, will include a lot of what self-identified liberals of old *said* they wanted, in arenas such as housing, health care, nondiscrimination, and so on. It will have extracted the antiwhite racism and the “gender” fluidity/confusion of wokeness. It will leave us in no danger of falling under a world government, or of “transhumanism.” Recognizing God means realizing we are not God, we are not entitled to rule others as if we were; but neither are we an autonomous mass of *homo economicus* able to make up our own “rules” as we go along.

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Steven Yates is a (still recovering) ex-academic with a PhD in Philosophy. He taught for more than 15 years total at several universities in the Southeastern U.S. He authored more than 20 articles, book reviews, and review essays in academic journals and anthologies. Refused tenure and unable to obtain full-time academic employment (and with an increasing number of very fundamental philosophical essays refused publication in journals), he turned to alternative platforms and heretical notions, including about academia itself. In 2021 he moved to Chile. He is married to a Chilean national.

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Steven Yates's book *Four Cardinal Errors: Reasons for the Decline of the American Republic* (2011) can be ordered [here](#).

His philosophical work *What Should Philosophy Do? A Theory* (2021) can be obtained [here](#) or [here](#).

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