Journal of Markets & Morality
Volume 25, Number 2: 301–314

A Christian Humanist Critique of Our Post-Pandemic, Technocratic Economy

Steven McMullen
Department of Economics and Business
Hope College

Our economic and political system is at the heart of a cultural crisis. This crisis is best understood as a slow retreat into an anti-institutionalist individualism. We see a steady decline of social trust and less investment in the institutions that have provided a structure for social life. The result is an increased reliance on the state and on commerce to pattern social life and meet human needs. I argue that this crisis is partially the result of a pattern of economic trends toward greater prosperity, greater specialization, and concentrated economic power. In this environment, our private and public life is increasingly subject to technocratic control, either by government or by private enterprise. C. S. Lewis warned of the dehumanizing tendencies of the technocrats of his era. Similarly, Solzhenitsyn warned of a kind of corruption he saw in the public retreat from morality. I argue that this technocratic move is not entirely bad, but following a Kuyperian line, that a less technocratic order would have to include a public commitment to limiting the exercise of power both by the state and by firms.[1]

Introduction

The global pandemic has been tragic on a historic scale, and has caused an extraordinary level of political and economic conflict and uncertainty. In tumultuous times like these, it is sometimes useful to look backward. In his most recent book, Alan Jacobs invites us to explore the thinking of a cluster of humanists all writing about similar themes at a turning point in history.[2] C. S. Lewis, T. S. Eliot, Jacques Maritain, W. H. Auden, and Simone Weil all faced the end of World War II with a similar intellectual preoccupation. All of the great social forces of

their day reeked of rationalist technocratic hubris: the industrial rationalism of Fordism in the Allied industrial world, Nazism/eugenics in the threat from Axis powers, and Soviet Communism to the east. In response, they appealed to a kind of Christian humanism to resist the allure of technocratic control. They argued for an investment in other's humanity, through liberal humanist education, to build the kind of moral capital that would be needed to resist the reductionism they saw in their age.

Today, we face a very different, but analogous, cultural situation. The huge shock of the COVID pandemic and economic crisis have been revealing. In the United States at least, we have found ourselves unable to maintain our solidarity with one another. Between the racial justice protests, the contested election, and all of the ill will around public health measures, this has easily been the most socially and politically tumultuous couple of years in many decades. It is worth delving deeper, and investigating the kind of cultural crisis that has been building slowly for decades, which I believe has set the stage for our current moment.

I will argue that our economic and political culture is plagued by individualism and anti-institutionalism. We see this in the failures of important social institutions and also in a decreased commitment to those institutions. People are far less likely to devote a portion of their lives to the organizations of civil society or to those communal forms of life, like families, that provide a lasting social structure and function. This anti-institutionalism is reinforced by broad economic trends of increased wealth, specialization, scale, and concentration. The result of this, moreover, is a heavy reliance, both in the public sector and private sector, on technocratic control of autonomous individuals. Thus, while the early twentieth-century demons of Communism, Nazism, and eugenics have been mostly beaten back, the technocratic impulse is as strong as ever.

For the purposes of this article, I will be focusing on technocracy as any exercise of power that uses rationalist and scientific methods to structure human interaction with the goal of changing people's behavior. In this way of thinking, economists hold a privileged position among the chief technocrats of our age. Because of this, it makes sense to pay close attention to economics if we are concerned about a dehumanizing technocratic culture.

This article explores our technocratic and cultural crisis in four parts. First, I will try to offer an analysis of the crisis we face today that feeds our contemporary technocratic moment. Second, I will offer an argument that this crisis is partially caused by our particular economic circumstances. Third, I will examine the concerns about this kind of technocracy expressed by these humanists writing in the 1940s. Fourth, I will try to offer an anti-technocratic (or at least *less* technocratic) agenda for economists and policymakers, loosely inspired by Abraham Kuyper.

Anti-Institutionalism

It is almost trite to note that we are living in a fractured culture with declining trust, declining solidarity, and a strong anti-institutionalist streak. Social scientists use the term "institutions" to mean many different things, but I am particularly concerned with how people are ascribing less value, and offering fewer commitments, to the forms of social organization that have traditionally offered structure to communities and encouraged solidarity. This includes political institutions, families, churches, community organizations and non-profits, and even commercial institutions.[3]

First, consider one of the bedrock social institutions: the family. Marriage rates bounced around erratically in the twentieth century until about 1980 when they settled into a remarkably steady decline to historic lows. In the last forty years we have gone from over ten marriages per thousand people to less than seven.[4] We also have seen a dramatic decrease in fertility. The total fertility rate in the United States is now well below replacement, and it is unlikely to increase in the near future. Women are delaying having kids and having fewer.[5]

It is not just families that seem to be in decline. Even before the pandemic, we have been far less likely to be involved in any kind of civil society institution or church. Weekly church attendance has fallen consistently since about 2009 among all ages, and religious identification has also fallen.[6] Among churches, the story is similar. Those who identify with a particular Protestant denomination fell from 50 percent in 2000 to only 30 percent in 2016. While much of that decline was a rise in nonreligious people, there was also an increase in those identifying as Christian, but not with any particular tradition.[7]

Church and family are important, but there are other worrying signs as well. Trust in most social institutions is declining. People are joining fewer organizations of all kinds and are less likely to know their neighbors.[8] Across many domains, people are disengaging and opting out of the anchoring institutions that used to define social life. Connections through social media are on the rise, but they do not produce the same social goods, and usually do not involve personal commitments to organizations or to an identity.

Economic Causes

There are likely a variety of causes for this anti-institutionalism. For example, one could examine the move toward a more national (rather than local) focus in our culture and politics.[9] Since my focus here is going to be on economics, however, it is worth noting that this anti-institutionalist trend is particularly alive and well

in economic life. In fact, our economic structures might be a big part of the problem, even if those structures are also ultimately responsible for our prosperity.

First, consider the fact that we have become, as a society, far wealthier over time. Our wealth allows us to be more independent, more consistently autonomous, and to lean less on civil society for important goods. In economic terms, earning a high wage means that the opportunity cost of doing anything outside of your occupation is high, and that could dissuade participation in community initiatives. Wealthy people also have the disposable time and income to really contribute to local communities, however, so the overall effect is a complex empirical question.[10] Branko Milanovic argues that concentrated income and wealth allows the elites to not worry about whether they live in a functioning country, or a functioning local community. Moreover, he argues that our wealth allows us to increasingly pay for things that we would not have paid for before. Household activities are more likely to be commercialized—daycare, cooking, laundry, taking care of the elderly, and so forth. Over time more of our lives are commercialized and individualized than they would have been a decade ago.[11]

This wealth has changed the family. In an earlier era, marriage was an economic necessity. Today marriage is not an economic necessity to the same degree. And this is not just because women are working in larger numbers, though that is part of it. It is not just because the government provides a more generous safety net—the benefits available to single, childless adult males are not that significant. Much more than these things, it is because capitalism has succeeded. Household services, outsourced to the market, are now much cheaper than they were fifty or seventy-five years ago, when regularly eating at restaurants would have been more of a luxury. Meanwhile the labor market and education system have opened up to women and provided dramatically better economic opportunities. It is simply cheaper and easier to run a household alone, today, than it used to be.

Wealth can also undermine a person's material dependence on their community. A missionary who worked in a very poor part of the world once described to me the way in which the people he worked with helped each other out in hard times. In my ignorance, I thought it was remarkable that a community so poor would also be so generous. He corrected me, noting that community solidarity was, quite simply, the only way to survive. Everyone shared what they had in this small village in anticipation that they would never be able to support themselves over the long term entirely on their own. In that context, the local community offered a social safety net and insurance system. We can debate whether such an arrangement is better or worse than a good insurance policy and a generous welfare state, but there is no doubt that depending on the local community for

one's livelihood draws people together, whereas shifting to Blue Cross Blue Shield for one's insurance makes a person feel more autonomous.

The second big economic trend operating in the background is increased specialization. Individual workers often have more specialized education, work at more specialized jobs, use more specialized tools, and work for more specialized firms. This is a natural and healthy development and is the source of most productivity gains over long periods of time. Adam Smith, in his most famous passage, attributed great gains in wealth to this practice of specializing and trading with a larger market.[12] This broad trend toward greater specialization, however, also has the effect of splintering jobs and firms and communities into smaller groups with narrower functions. With few exceptions I am neither a customer to my neighbors, nor are they my customers. This means that our economic lives no longer offer us a natural set of personal relationships, connections, or loyalties.

Specialization also applies to firms, not just people. Even as firms grow, they have become increasingly narrow. It is common, for example, for a large company to contract out maintenance and cleaning staff, IT services, legal services, HR, and even accounting. The allure is obvious: the outside firm can focus on doing maintenance, IT, or HR really well, and a medium sized firm can focus more of their efforts and attention on their core business. This probably makes these firms more efficient. The dark side of this trend, however, is that none of these other functions are completed by company employees. They do not get the same benefits package or pay, nor do they and the company they serve have any kind of long-term relationship. The result is that this outsourcing becomes a barrier to any kind of solidarity with the workers who do the lower-skill jobs at a firm.[13] The contracting firms, moreover, gain efficiencies by exercising better technocratic management of a big network of workers. Truck driving pays a living wage, but is notoriously difficult work explicitly because of the demands the job places on the workers. As one driver explained it, "You are supposed to get a day off after every seven days of driving, but companies prefer that you stay out sixty days and then just take a few days off. I gained sixty pounds because it's a sedentary life. You just drive, sleep, drive, sleep. Companies don't treat you like a human. You are just a machine that makes money for them."[14]

This specialization is partly driven by scale. Just as our culture is increasingly national in scope, so too are the markets we participate in. For many people, the labor market they participate in is national, and it is normal to move for a new job. More importantly, though, the firms we work for are getting bigger, on average, and they often operate in a global market. This separates those firms from any strong connection to any particular local community. For our recent history at least, small business as a share of GDP has steadily declined. More

worrisome to economists, though, firms seem to be concentrating their power. We see this in a number of ways. Most measures of market concentration in the economy are increasing, which means that firms have a larger market share and fewer competitors. Profit margins are increasing, and this increase is faster than productivity growth.[15] This disparity gives the firms more power to manipulate prices, worker contracts, and product offerings and gives everyone they interact with less power to push back.

Rise of the Market and the State

In the vacuum left by the decline of these traditional institutions, we find greater dependence on the two pillars of our common life that have easily scaled up: government and commerce. If we do not find our social support in the local community, an employer might be able to make up the difference with generous benefits, in-house HR programs, and a good insurance policy. Alternatively, we might note that people are "falling through the cracks" and vote to expand the number of services provided by the state. Either way, we end up turning to the bureaucratic and technocratic order for more and more of the essentials in our life. Conservatives might be deeply concerned that people are now more dependent on the state for health insurance, but progressives will be equally concerned that a firm could arbitrarily fire a worker and in doing so, deprive the person of their health insurance. Either way, our health is subject to a technocratic machine that no one likes but we cannot live without.

This story is told as a failure of liberalism by Deneen, who argues that our dominant liberal ideology has slowly undermined the worldview that made sense of thicker community and human connection. Individualism, he argues, has slowly hollowed out our communities from the inside, and we no longer have any institutions that can resist the encroachment of the market and the state.[16] My understanding is less ideological and more technological. As most of our important economic and social institutions scale up, the inevitable result is concentrated power that can only be managed and exercised via technocratic means. This is why governments and firms are the real technocratic strongholds. They are the institutions that most competently engage in rationalist manipulation of human behavior. If our access to important goods and relationships is increasingly mediated by the state or the market, we will find larger swaths of our life heavily shaped by technocratic logic. It is worth thinking deeply about what this means for our common life.

Christian Humanists' Technocratic Concerns

This crisis was perhaps not foreseen by Jacobs' cadre of humanists, but their concerns about the technocracy of their age were prescient.[17] From the vantage point of the 1940s it was easy to see some dramatic cultural changes. The old European aristocracy had been permanently replaced with a new ruling class with a meritocratic and technocratic ethos. More concerning, perhaps, it was easy to see the way in which rationalist and scientific ideologies had remade the world with grand and violent ambitions and amazing displays of scientific power. Against this backdrop, it makes some sense that the final enemy in one of C. S. Lewis's novels was a research organization with an elitist technocratic vision.[18] Lewis's protagonist slowly gets drawn into an organization that pursues scientific progress for its own sake, unmoored from ethics and ultimately evil.

For these humanists, the problem with this technocratic impulse was threefold. First, it was essentially a claim on power. In a provocative line, Lewis has one character note, "What we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with nature as its instrument."[19] Even at their best, a technocrat is always striving to exercise power more effectively to bring about some end. Second, technocracy tends to promote a reductionist view of humanity. A rationalist vision of humanity is inevitably flatter, more predictable, and less interesting than actual people. Third, the technocratic order tends to become an end, rather than a means, displacing the moral order and traditions. On this last point, Jacques Ellul is particularly vocal, arguing that technique and progress can easily become an idol that reshapes the world.

Once we have accepted a technocratic regime, it is easy to judge human behavior and traditions based on whether they fit with that regime. Technocracy thus creates its own counterfeit moral order for society. In a world of relations dictated by contracts, the faithfulness to a contract can replace moral obligations that normally govern those relationships. Those contracts, moreover, start to cleave to whatever regulations are placed on the relationship, particularly if competition creates pressure toward uniform minimal adherence to a legal standard.[20] Solzhenitsyn critiqued the culture of the West in similar terms. Whereas in the past, he argued, the law had been designed to reflect an eternal higher morality, in our modern technocratic system, the law is a replacement for any higher moral norm.[21] This dependence on law is the inevitable result, moreover, of pulling the real human relationships out of human affairs. He wrote, "Whenever the tissue of life is woven out of legalistic relationships, this creates an atmosphere of spiritual mediocrity that paralyzes man's noblest impulses."[22]

In this world, it makes sense that a truck driver is required to spend a certain amount of time off the road in any twenty-four-hour-period, and that a trucking company will schedule their drivers in such a way that those breaks happen with great precision. But the law does not specify that the driver' breaks should occur anywhere near a hospitable place to stop, near any family, or at an hour that would allow a healthy sleep schedule. Forced to sleep at rest stops and truck stops at odd hours for weeks on end, drivers become dependent on chemicals to sleep and to stay alert, and often find that their legally required rest time is full of other kinds of work. Trucking has never been a glamorous business, but the technocratic efficiencies wrung out of our transportation networks have made these jobs less humane than they were twenty years ago.

For a variety of reasons, the discipline of economics offers an attractive language and logic for public affairs because it fits so well into our technocratic age. Economists do their best to avoid strong value claims, and instead commit their studies to the pursuit of more mundane goods that are usually not a matter of political controversy: prosperity, jobs, health, education, and a healthy environment.[23] To a policy-maker or the manager of a firm, economics offers a way of understanding human behavior that is rationalistic, scientific, and data-driven. The simple vision of rational human behavior also offers a readily available manner of manipulation that seems benevolent. Provide people with the incentives to behave according to your plan, and the rational agent will comply. This helps explain the ascendance of economics. If you want to exercise power effectively and efficiently, economists can give you the conceptual tools you need to do so.

A Less Technocratic Economic Life

Now that I have painted a picture of an economic and cultural crisis, it behooves me to explain how it might be solved. Let me start by stating the obvious argument for not solving the problem at all. The rise of technocratic manipulation in the management of business and government are an inevitable result of the scale of modern life. There is a straight line between the rationalism that drove industrialization and the wealth of the modern world. And that rationalism is still at the heart of our modern economy. Without our decentralized networks of exchange and manufacturing at grand scale, we would be very poor. I cannot imagine a government of 300 million people, moreover, that does not have a real technocratic streak, just as I cannot imagine Tyson delivering cheap chicken tenders to the entire country without a similar degree of technocratic management. While there is much that we should change, most of us would not be willing to pay the price that we would have to pay to live in a more humanely scaled world.

Our only option is to figure out how to live in a modern technocratic world in a way that resists its dehumanizing, atomizing, and polarizing tendencies. There are two broad ways in which I think we can proceed in that project. First, in our families, we can choose to live differently. There are local institutions that connect people in important ways that need people to just show up. It could be a local nonprofit, a small business, or your local government. Even more importantly, invest in your local church congregation. The local church, when it is a healthy part of the body of Christ, is a perfect antidote to the cultural problems I have described here. At its best, the Church provides people with a vision for a higher calling for humanity and a supportive community. A church can offer an identity that is not individualistic and cuts across the ideological identity markets that divide us so dangerously.[24]

There is another way to respond to this crisis of individualism, anti-institutionalism, and technocratic management. That is to work so that our political order is less technocratic and centralized. To lay the conceptual groundwork, it helps to turn to an institutional architect from an earlier era in my own religious tradition. Abraham Kuyper had an organic vision of society in which different institutions developed to serve very specific functions in public life. As such, a healthy society would be one in which many different institutions flourished in their own right, and one in which different communities were able to develop their own distinctive communal life. This is most directly expressed in his signature theory: sphere sovereignty.[25] For Kuyper the state had a special role as the institution that intervened to preserve the health of the entire order, but the state should never colonize or control the work of other parts of society. A key role for the state, in this way of thinking, is to limit the scope of the market, in particular, so that it does not undermine other institutions. A Kuyperian institutional pluralism would run counter to the technocratic ethos, since it would place limits on the use of power to directly manipulate individual behavior. There are three ways this could be expressed I will describe here: encouraging pluralism, limiting government micromanagement, and building a new antitrust movement.

First, Kuyper helped create an order in which a number of different quasi-religious institutions could arise, all with the blessing of the state. In the United States, we could move in this direction, to a degree, by rediscovering federalism. Some of our culture war disputes might be deescalated if we found a consistent way to let different states and different localities come to different decisions.[26] In a similar vein, we could embrace policies like school vouchers, which allow government funding to go to private religious schools. While the debate about the impacts of voucher programs is fierce, they offer a way to decentralize education power, which is often subject to culture war power struggles.

If we are disciplined about pushing decision-making to the local level, there will be a natural pushback. United States history is full of corrupt localities using even small amounts of power to limit the rights of minorities. There is a difficult balance to strike between guaranteeing basic rights for the whole population, while also allowing states and localities to imagine very different ways of living together. If we can strike this balance, it might make a small step toward decreasing the need to exert power in a top-down manner.

A second avenue for limiting technocratic manipulation would be to take aim at the state's penchant for micro-managing our lives through incentives and tests, such as, principally, with the tax code and in the welfare state. Our redistributive system is riddled with judgements about what forms of life deserve tax breaks, which ones warrant tax penalties, and which households need an income boost. I am sympathetic to, and have argued for, a generous welfare state.[27] It would be a refreshing change of pace, however, for the government to simplify the provision of the safety-net and simplify the tax code dramatically. Doing so could increase participation in programs, make the programs more effective, and also make administration more efficient. A strong commitment to the design of simpler programs and taxes also limits the degree to which our leaders can use these laws as mechanisms to grant favors to political allies.

The last way would be to embrace a more aggressive antitrust movement. American antitrust law has traditionally focused on preventing mergers and acquisitions when the resulting company would have enough market power to raise prices. It is possible that this approach is too narrow. The monopolies that people really worry about today often are not firms that have product market power. We have come to see the possibility of market dominance and cultural power in firms that do not increase consumer prices.[28] Alternatively, scholars have come to focus more on market power over employees.[29] Labor market power has the same impact on overall prosperity that other kinds of market power do, but it has an even greater footprint when it comes to firms' power over individuals' lives. There is a raft of small changes we could make to increase competition and options for workers in labor markets.

Conclusion

The crises we face today are different than those at the end of World War II, but the impulse for technocratic solutions to our problems continues unabated. In Jacobs's estimation, the technocratic movement we face today looks less like industrial totalitarianism and more like scientism.[30] We place our trust in science and technology to solve all of our problems. Because we idolize science

and progress, it is natural for our institutions to try to manage the increased scale and complexity of modern society by investing in bureaucracy and technocratic management. The messiness of local communities has been replaced by a more reliable, more efficient, and less human corporate sector and state. On balance this shift may have more benefits than costs. It has brought us considerable wealth. The cultural costs must be reckoned with, however, particularly in a society that is becoming more individualistic and more hostile to traditional institutions each year.

None of these changes that I suggest are simple. None would really turn the tide on the crisis we face, and each of them could have significant costs. What I am trying to highlight is the possibility of a change in mindset. An economics discipline that was as concerned with the concentration of power as it was with substitution effects could be a force for good in this dimension. A less technocratic economy would be one that has greater respect for individual judgement and tradition, and also more suspicion of concentrated power. It would have to start with the premise that neither material efficiency, nor individual autonomy, are the highest goals we can aim for in our common life. In the end, though, the prospects for a less-technocratic economic and political life depend on a reassertion of those spheres of life that are not mediated through the market or the state. Ultimately, the church needs to be open to the opportunity to build new kinds of institutions that will provide some social grounding in this new world. The era after World War II saw a rush of institutional investment that was, in retrospect, staggering. We could do it again, but the institutions we need in the coming era will have to offer belonging and character formation to a polarized and geographically rootless population.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was prepared for the Symposium "Toward a Humane Post-Pandemic Economics" convened by AEI's Initiative on Faith and Public Life and the Kern Family Foundation in January 2022.

2. See Alan Jacobs, *The Year of Our Lord 1943: Christian Humanism in an Age of Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

3. Scholars such as Yuval Levin and Robert Putnam have done a great job describing the contours of this big cultural trend. Yuval Levin, *A Time to Build: From Family and Community to Congress and the Campus, How Recommitting to Our Institutions Can Revive the American Dream* (New York: Basic Books, 2020); Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

4. See Patrick T. Brown, "U.S. Marriage Rates Hit New Recorded Low" (Washington, DC: United States Joint Economic Committee, April 29, 2020), https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/2020/4/marriage-rate-blog-test.

5. See Phillip B. Levine and Melissa S. Kearney, "Will Births in the US Rebound? Probably Not" (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, May 24, 2021), https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2021/05/24/will-births-in-the-us-rebound-probably-not/.

6. See "Signs of Decline & Hope Among Key Metrics of Faith," State of the Church 2020, Barna Group, March 4, 2020, https://www.barna.com/research/changing-state-of-the-church/.

7. See Frank Newport, "More U.S. Protestants Have No Specific Denominational Identity" (Washington, DC: Gallup, July 18, 2017), https://news.gallup.com/poll/214208/protestants-no-specific-denominational-identity.aspx.

8. See Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

9. This part of the argument is somewhat speculative, but partly for technological reasons, newspapers have been on the decline for years, and the successful papers that are left tend to be owned by national corporations or be situated in very large cities. There is not a big enough customer base anymore to support real local reporting in most communities. The result is that it is far easier for most people to find out what is happening in Washington than in their local city council. Perhaps related, in the political realm, the distinctiveness of local politics has diminished, and local political races have started to line up along national political lines. Candidates for national office will engage in fundraising nationally, not just in their districts, and will do so by trying to gain national attention. In a globalized world with easy communication, we might feel more connected to people and events that are a long way from our home. As local communities become less central to our lives, our attention is drawn

toward events, media, and organizations with a national or international reach. When our attention and our peers are spread out, it does not make much sense to invest in thick local connections.

10. Susan M. Chambré, "Has Volunteering Changed in the United States? Trends, Styles, and Motivations in Historical Perspective," *Social Service Review* 94, no. 2 (June 2020): 373–421, https://doi.org/10.1086/708941.

11. See Branko Milanovic, *Capitalism, Alone: The Future of the System That Rules the World* (Cambridge: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 2019), chap. 5.

12. See Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Blacksburg, VA: Thrifty Books, 2009).

13. See David Weil, *The Fissured Workplace: Why Work Became So Bad for So Many and What Can Be Done to Improve It* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2017).

14. Heather Long, "America Has a Massive Truck Driver Shortage. Here's Why Few Want an $80,000 Job," *Washington Post*, May 28, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/05/28/america-has-a-massive-truck-driver-shortage-heres-why-few-want-an-80000-job/.

15. See David Autor et al., "The Fall of the Labor Share and the Rise of Superstar Firms," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 135, no. 2 (May 1, 2020): 645–709, https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjaa004.

16. See Patrick J. Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

17. See Jacobs, *The Year of Our Lord 1943*.

18. See C. S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* (New York: Scribner, 2003).

19. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 178.

20. See Steven McMullen, "When Does Market Activity Undermine Morality?" paper presented at the Southern Economics Association Conference, Austin, TX, 2021.

21. See Camryn Zeller and Steven McMullen, "The Moral Critique of Consumerism in Solzhenitsyn's Economic and Political Thought," *Journal of Markets & Morality* 25, no. 2 (2022): 76.

22. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," in *East and West* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 48.

23. See Steven McMullen, "Objectivity and Ethics in Economic Methodology: Dialogue with Theologians," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 31 (2019): 73–92.

24. Another institution that is worth investing in is a Christian liberal arts college. It is no accident that Alan Jacobs observed each of his wartime humanists thinking about education. A Christian humanist education, offered in a community small enough to lean on real relationships and accountability, is probably the second-best investment we can make in a young person. These institutions are facing real challenges in the United States, and it is possible that, fifty years from now, they will be closed or will have been entirely assimilated into the technocratic model offered by the large state technical university. This is a moment in which a renewed investment could make a real difference for these institutions.

25. See Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism, The Stone Lectures of 1898* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2009).

26. See David A. French, *Divided We Fall: America's Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2020).

27. See Steven McMullen and James R. Otteson, *Should We Redistribute Wealth? A Debate* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

28. Consider that Amazon, Google, and Facebook collectively control 65 percent of online advertising revenue. They also control access to huge swaths of media. This kind of monopoly does not impact consumer prices, but can still give them other avenues to exercise real power.

29. See Suresh Naidu, Eric A. Posner, and E. Glen Weyl, "Antitrust Remedies for Labor Market Power," *Harvard Law Review* 132 (2018): 536–601, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3129221.

30. See Alan Jacobs, "Crisis & Christian Humanism with Alan Jacobs," interview by Cherie Harder, Online Event, July 10, 2020, https://www.ttf.org/portfolios/online-conversation-crisis-and-christian-humanism/.