

Figure 1: Individual charitable contributions for each county in the U.S.

FPE Scholars Research *The Geography of Generosity*

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Throughout the past two decades, academics and policymakers have warned, with increasing vigor, Americans are coming apart as social capital is weakening across American communities. While several characteristics such as volunteerism, participation in the labor force, marriage rates, and even charitable giving are waning, not all communities are experiencing the deterioration. Indeed, several researchers have created measurements of social capital to assess the health of counties and states. Considering the importance of philanthropy as both a measurement of community health and a necessary input for nonprofit organizations, existing research

has yet to focus upon the link between location and charitable giving. Working with FPE Scholars, Collin Bastian and Noa Nakao, we investigated the degree to which location drives philanthropy across all counties in the United States.

Using itemized tax return data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), we first constructed a series of descriptive maps to assess philanthropy in United States counties. Figure 1 reports aggregate individual charitable contributions for each county, where expectedly, we find total giving tends to be higher in wealthier counties. Figure 2 (as seen on page 3) depicts giving as a proportion of adjusted gross income (AGI), a measurement of generosity that represents the percent of income given to charitable organizations.

When focusing on generosity, as opposed to the sum of contributions, we find a more surprising pattern; namely, generosity tends to be lower in coastal and cosmopolitan counties. However, generosity is not necessarily associated with an urban-rural divide. Instead, we find that as the

continued, p. 3



David C. Iglesias

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Former President Bill Clinton's famous dictum "It's the economy stupid" still resonates. At the time this newsletter was initially written, the economy was roaring for an unprecedented 11 years. Unemployment was at historic lows and the Dow Jones almost reached an astounding 30,000, capping off a bull market that started in March of 2009. And then came COVID-19, the Corona virus which resulted in a dramatic end of the bull market and an era of the unknown—how long will it last, how many sectors will be affected and what impact will the virus have on the economy? With massive unemployment numbers resulting from the pandemic, the country is facing a foe it hasn't faced since the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918. While the economy is likely to recover once the pandemic has run its course, it will doubtless take the lives of a huge number of people.

Many years ago I asked the governor's chief of staff what issues voters cared about. Without any hesitation, he responded, "The economy, crime and education. The order may change, but the top three issues don't." He should have known since he'd run for Congress and had been around partisan politics most of his adult life. I've thought a lot about his comments over the past 25 years. In early 2020 we are in a different era since the crime rate is low and voters' views on education now center on whether graduating from college has a sufficiently large ROI to make it worthwhile and whether college loan forgiveness is viable politically or financially. I suspect that health will be the most pressing topic since it directly affects the economy.

2020 is an election year and we are firmly in the "silly season" as a former Justice Department appointed official friend of mine used to call it. At FPE we brought to campus scholar James Otteson from Wake Forest who spoke convincingly on the failure of socialism—the event was well attended with lots of questions. Due to the closure of Wheaton's campus because of COVID-19, Robert Woodberry '87, will be rescheduled for next academic year. Woodberry will speak on the measurably good effects of Christian missionary work on a country's political economy. The erudite economics professor Ken Elzinga will be speaking on C.S. Lewis' views on the market—also rescheduled for next year.

In this era of many unknowns, I think of Psalms 91:5-7, "You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness nor the plague that destroys at midday." ★



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religious devotion of a county increases, the county has a larger percent of income given to nonprofit organizations.

The main contribution of our work was to build a statistical model using multiple variables that predict charitable giving in a county. We use existing research findings from the philanthropy literature to motivate our variable selection for the statistical models. Specifically, we assess county demographics such as income, unemployment rates, education, age, marriage rates, partisanship, and other characteristics. Important for this study, we include measurements of religious identity and levels of religious devotion.

Our statistical model allows us to measure the extent to which each characteristic positively or negatively predicts generosity. For example, generosity increases as the religious devotion in a county increases, however, increasing unemployment rates negatively affects generosity. These statistical results are used to find each county's predicted level of generosity. We then calculate the difference between predicted generosity and the actual giving as a proportion of AGI for each county. This final calculation is used to create a performance map as shown in Figure 3. The performance map depicts the difference in observed generosity and the generosity one would expect from the county given its specific characteristics.

The color of the county represents whether the county is more or less generous than what the statistical model predicts. Counties marked by deep red are more generous while counties colored in light yellow are less generous than their predicted values. If demographics alone explain the generosity of a county, we should see little variation in the performance map. However, we find rich difference in actual giving compared to predicted giving. This suggests that some aspect of individuals' philanthropy is connected to their location and the community in which they live.

We further identify specific counties in each state that are notable for their performance against expectations. Specifically, Table 1 lists the top over-performing and under-performing counties for each state.

This research, supported by the Wheaton Center for Faith, Politics and Economics, is important to academic research

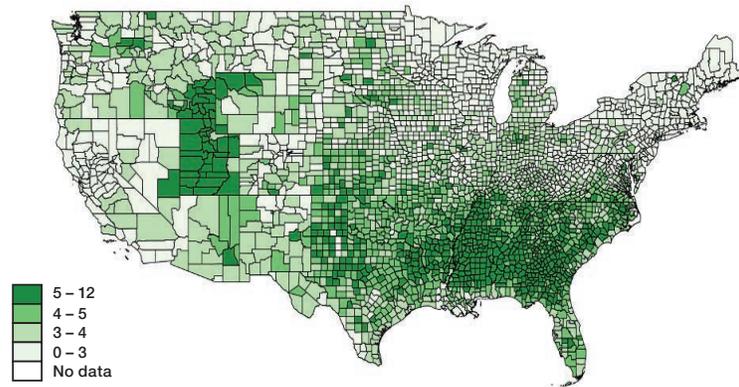


Figure 2: Giving as Percentage of AGI

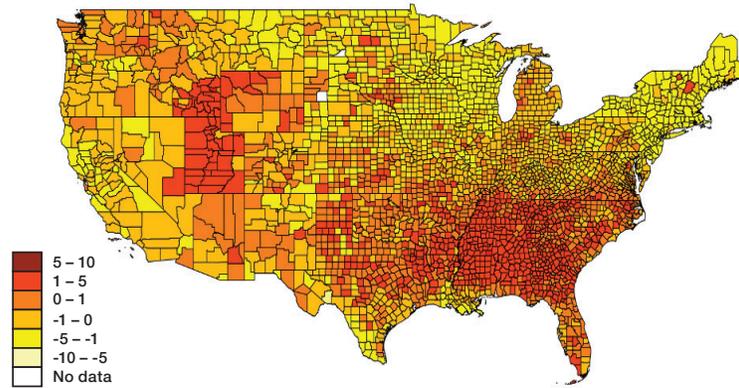


Figure 3: Giving per AGI: Actual minus Expected

| State | Top Over Performing County | Top Under Performing County | State | Top Over Performing County | Top Under Performing County |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alabama | Clay County | Baldwin County | Montana | Silver Bow County | Treasure County |
| Alaska | Southeast Fairbanks Census Area | Lake and Peninsula Borough | Nebraska | Logan County | Blaine County |
| Arizona | Graham County | La Paz County | Nevada | Lincoln County | Humboldt County |
| Arkansas | Benton County | Izard County | New Hampshire | Grafton County | Stratford County |
| California | San Mateo County | Colusa County | New Jersey | Cape May County | Stratford County |
| Colorado | Conejos County | Cheyenne County | New Mexico | De Baca County | Hudson County |
| Connecticut | Fairfield County | Windham County | New York | Saratoga County | Union County |
| Delaware | Kent County | New Castle County | North Carolina | Chowan County | Clinton County |
| Florida | Gadsden County | Miami-Dade County | North Dakota | Barnes County | Currituck County |
| Georgia | Floyd County | Lanier County | Ohio | Holmes County | Rolette County |
| Hawaii | Maui County | Hawaii County | Oklahoma | Major County | Putnam County |
| Idaho | Madison County | Adams County | Oregon | Wallowa County | Sherman County |
| Illinois | Schuyler County | Calhoun County | Pennsylvania | Lancaster County | Lackawanna County |
| Indiana | Wabash County | Perry County | Rhode Island | Bristol County | Kent County |
| Iowa | Sioux County | Monona County | South Carolina | Hampton County | Dorchester County |
| Kansas | Kiowa County | Elk County | South Dakota | Hanson County | Carson County |
| Kentucky | Carlisle County | Martin County | Tennessee | Haywood County | Clay County |
| Louisiana | East Carroll Parish | Evangeline Parish | Texas | McMullen County | Terrell County |
| Maine | Hancock County | Somerset County | Utah | Rich County | Grand County |
| Maryland | Prince George's County | Cecil County | Vermont | Lamoille County | Essex County |
| Massachusetts | Suffolk County | Hampden County | Virginia | Martinsville City | Fairfax City |
| Michigan | Missaukee County | Iron County | Washington | Whitman County | Lincoln County |
| Minnesota | Pipestone County | Mahnomen County | West Virginia | Mercer County | Clay County |
| Mississippi | Noxubee County | Hancock County | Wisconsin | Door County | Forest County |
| Missouri | Taney County | Carroll County | Wyoming | Teton County | Crook County |

Table 1: Top over-performing and under-performing counties for each state

and to those organizations dependent upon charitable contributions. Identifying total giving and generosity for American counties is a first step to determine why one location is more philanthropic than another. A second step is comparing actual generosity to a prediction from statistical modeling. However, there is work left undone in ascertaining the reason some communities are more (or less) generous than what even their demographics would predict. ★



Interview with Greg Adams

*Former COO, Tennessee
FPE Chairman of the Board*

You worked for IBM for over 37 years, why did you decide to work for the State of Tennessee after your corporate career?

In the late 80's I was in an accountability group with four dear friends in Knoxville, TN. While an IBM move took me away from the group, we still remained close. Twenty-two years after I physically left the group, one of the members was elected the Governor of Tennessee. That night, I texted Governor Haslam my congratulations and prayer support. He responded with a request to consider coming to Nashville and help him improve the operations of the state. Government service was not something on my radar after IBM, but he planted a thought. Over the next two and a half years, my wife and I worked through this calling on our lives and the impact another move would have, while Governor Haslam and I explored the job description of the first Chief Operating Officer in Tennessee State Government history. I thank both of them, especially my wife, for their support in this calling.

What exactly did you do as COO for the state government and how did that differ from a COO for the private sector?

The Governor tasked me with working with our twenty-three departments in making sure their operations were running as effective and efficient as possible. We followed the corporate model of the utilization of a COO with the Governor playing the role of the CEO. While overseeing the day-to-day operations I kept him fully informed. I also worked with him and our finance commissioner on our annual operating plan and also with the departments on their long-term strategies.

Since this was the first time Tennessee had a COO, what “best practices” did you bring to get started?

Most important was the foundation “practice” of defining the mission/vision of an organization. Governor Haslam first conducted a top to bottom review of each of the departments and the consistent action item was the opportunity to improve service to our citizens. From this came the start of Customer Focused Government (CFG). It was not just a program, but also a mindset that we would focus on delivering to our citizens the best possible service at the lowest possible cost. As we thought about service, it became evident that services was our core business. Services became our construct and we cataloged them (almost 1000) and established metrics and baselines for each service offering. The third leg of our communication triangle was to think about the State as an enterprise, not twenty-three individual departments. This allowed us to integrate and unify the efforts of the departments to achieve talent, innovation and cost synergies that the individual departments could not effectively manage on their own.

What were some of your top successes?

Thinking of state government as an enterprise allowed us to deliver dramatic savings and improved customer service. We adopted a Shared Services approach and consolidated seventeen processes/functions including information technology, accounting and procurement. We eliminated one hundred and seventy department logos



and created one to support the whole State, which is delivering almost ten million impressions/month across all our social media platforms. Probably most significant was the implementation of a 'pay for performance' employee evaluation and compensation system that drove significant improvements in employee morale and productivity.

What was your biggest challenge?

Our twenty-three departments are large autonomous organizations run by talented commissioners with very challenging missions and big expectations from our citizens. When you go to a shared services model, centralize a number of functions, and take away the corresponding budgets and headcount, commissioners are concerned. They are held accountable for results, but now they do not directly manage key functions that they need to help them deliver those results. We therefore spent a significant amount of time on phased implementation plans, communications, reviews, and metrics on the weekly performance of the functions that were being consolidated. Corrective actions were taken immediately and as you would expect, there were many.

How did your faith impact your role as COO?

My faith was essential in this role. I was not prepared for the scope and breadth of services that citizens count on the state to provide. From adoption to foster care to education to health care to schools to safety, etc. We deal with the deaths of citizens every day. I saw employees do amazing things for people in need and then saw people trapped in hopeless situations. My faith gave me the strength to not be overwhelmed by these situations and the success, failure, or criticism from the press and the

public that came with them. My identity in Christ helped keep pride in check during times of success, and helped me work through frustration, sadness and vengeful thoughts during times of adversity.

I remember a brochure saying “Tennessee is in a better place today than it has been in its 222-year history.” How so?

Under Governor Haslam, \$575 million was cut in recurring spending, state government was shrunk, the budget balanced every year, the state's savings account was tripled and Tennessee has been awarded AAA bond ratings the last two years. Tennessee's unemployment rate has reached the lowest level in state history. Since 2011, Tennessee students have been the fastest improving in the country in academic achievement and high school graduation rates are at an all-time high. Tennessee is the first state in the nation to offer high school graduates and adults two years free community or technical college as part of the Governor's Drive to 55 initiative.

Is business a good preparation for public service?

People in business daily define problems, create solutions, define work plans to deliver those solutions and then put in place project management disciplines to make sure the solution is delivered on time. This problem-solving process is exactly what people in public service do every day. If every businessperson could do a two to five-year stint in public service sometime during their work career, it would make a significant positive impact on how effective and efficient our society could run. ★

During the twentieth century, a succession of economists believed they had decisively refuted socialism as a system of political economy. From Ludwig von Mises to Friedrich Hayek, and from Milton Friedman to James Buchanan, they argued that centralized economic planning could not succeed in allocating our limited resources well or efficiently, and would inevitably lead to shortages, oversupplies, and decreasing prosperity. They took the failures of attempted socialist economies during the twentieth century as evidence that they were right.

And yet, increasingly many people today support centrally planned economies, and even claim to support socialism itself. Why? Did the economists miss something? Why did they believe that socialism would not work?

Over the last 100 years, over two dozen countries have attempted to implement socialist economies. The list includes not just the Soviet Union, Cuba, and North Korea, but Yugoslavia, Albania, Poland, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Romania, Venezuela, Somalia, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and many others.¹ Countries in nearly every continent, with virtually every climate represented, with varying histories, cultures, languages, and traditions have tried—and consistently failed. In every case, the economies declined or collapsed, suffered reductions in prosperity and growing poverty, and in most cases eventually abandoned the attempts. Of course, the depressing results were not just in declining wealth: some 100 million innocent people have been killed by their own governments in the name of socialist, communist, and Marxist ideals.²

With a track record like that, it is indeed puzzling that so many people want to try again. Some supporters of socialism claim, however, that those were not authentic attempts at socialism. They were instead dictatorships that merely arrogated power to their leaders instead of serving the people and the common good that socialism champions. If we could get the right people in charge, and get the right motivations and institutions in place,



THE RISE OF

By James R. Otteson

then, supporters argue, we would see the benefits socialism promises.

But what exactly is socialism, and how is it supposed to work? The key to understanding socialism is, perhaps surprisingly, not contained in its aspirations. Socialism envisions a classless society of moral equals and reduced material inequality, a society that enjoys a wider sharing in its prosperity and that treats all people with dignity and respect. Those are worthy goals that many would endorse—which perhaps helps explain its appeal. The question, however, is how to achieve those goals. A system of economics is not merely an ivory-tower theory, after all,

¹ See Paul Hollander, *From Benito Mussolini to Hugo Chavez: Intellectuals and a Century of Political Hero Worship* (Cambridge University Press, 2016) and *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society*, 4th ed. (Routledge, 2017); and Kristian Niemietz, *Socialism: The Failed Idea that Never Dies* (Institute for Economic Affairs, 2019).

² See Matthew White, *The Great Big Book of Horrible Things: The Definitive Chronicle of History's 100 Worst Atrocities* (Norton, 2012).



DEATH AND SOCIALISM

but implicates a society's actual institutions and affects its people in very real and practical ways.

The question of how to achieve its goals presents the real key to understanding socialism, and to seeing how it differs from other systems.³ The practical mechanism for achieving socialism's goals is through centralized economic decision-making. It proposes, that is, a person, or group of persons, who will make society's economic decisions, including how its resources will be allocated, what industries it will have and not have, what its labor relations and policies will be, and so on. A market-based economy, by contrast, proposes decentralized economic decision-making, allowing individuals to make choices in their own cases based on their own schedules of value, their own goals and desires, and the opportunities and the constraints they face.

A socialist economy will thus have a national plan: its leaders will decide what are the proper values that the entire society will serve, and it will organize its economic activity in the service of those values. By contrast, a market-based economy will have no overall plan—except, perhaps, increasing prosperity, which may be laudable but is open-ended—and will instead allow individuals to form partnerships and associations, and engage in trade and transactions and exchanges, largely according to their own individual desires, wishes, and values.

Which approach is better—centralized or decentralized? We live in a world of limited resources, meaning that we cannot put our resources of time and treasure toward all good ends simultaneously. Thus, choices must be made, and there will always be tradeoffs: if we put resources in

³ See James R. Otteson, *The End of Socialism* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

one direction, it means those same resources cannot at the same time go in another direction. If we cannot, alas, have everything we want, how are we to decide where our limited resources should go?

This question reveals a weakness of socialist centralized economic decision-making: centralized decision-makers, however expert, do not and cannot know what the best use of others' resources is.⁴ Because they do not know all the citizens in their country, do not know citizens' changing values, goals (including moral goals), and desires, and do not know the opportunities and constraints they face, centralized decision-makers inevitably make mistakes: they put too many resources in some places, leading to oversupplies, and too few resources in other places, leading to shortages. This is not necessarily because they are unintelligent or immoral, but, rather, because wise allocation of resources depends on detailed, particularized knowledge of individuals' situations—which centralized decision-makers simply do not have.

Individuals are of course not infallible in their own cases, and hence they too will inevitably make mistakes. But their knowledge of their own situations is far greater than is that of distant leaders, who likely know nothing of them or their situations. For that reason, letting individuals make decisions in their own lives is far likelier to lead to good outcomes than if centralized decision-makers made them for them.

That is exactly the prediction that the historical attempts at socialist economies have borne out.

That does not mean, of course, that a market-based economy will be perfect. Far from it. In a world of limited resources, however, and of imperfect beings, perfection is unfortunately not on offer. Perhaps the best we can hope for instead is real, if gradual, improvements in the material conditions of increasingly many people. That is what has taken place in market-based economies. People are

now wealthier, have longer life expectancy, have better access to food, shelter, healthcare, and education, and thus greater opportunity to construct for themselves lives of meaning and purpose, than at any other time in human history. And the more market-based a country's economy is, the better its people—all its people, across all income and wealth classes—fare.



SOCIALISM'S GOALS ARE APPEALING, BUT THE CENTRALIZED MECHANISMS IT REQUIRES TO ACHIEVE THEM HAS PROVED, AFTER MULTIPLE ATTEMPTS, NOT TO MATCH ITS ASPIRATIONS."

Socialism's goals are appealing, but the centralized mechanisms it requires to achieve them has proved, after multiple attempts, not to match its aspirations. By contrast, for all their faults, markets have enabled billions of people to ascend out of their previous conditions of poverty. Just as a medical doctor should pay attention to what has worked and what has not worked when treating a patient, political economists should also pay attention to what has worked and what has not worked in improving people's lives and conditions. By comparison with other systems of political economy, market economies have outperformed every other attempted system, including socialist systems, on virtually

every measure of human well-being we have studied, and the contest has not been close.⁵

Though we have a long way to go to achieving universal prosperity, and we have many problems yet to be addressed (let alone solved), the large and growing body of evidence suggests that socialism, despite its attractive aspirations, will not help—and, indeed, would likely make things worse. Perhaps those twentieth-century economists were on to something after all. ★



Professor Otteson spoke to the Wheaton campus and community on Socialism this past February. To view the entire lecture go to the Resource Center on our webpage at wheaton.edu/FPE

⁴ See Friedrich Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society," *The American Economic Review* 35, 4: 519–30.

⁵ See the Heritage Foundation's 2019 *Index of Economic Freedom*, available here: <https://www.heritage.org/index/>; the Fraser Institute's *Economic Freedom of the World: 2018 Annual Report*, available here: <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/economic-freedom/map?geozone=world&page=map&year=2017>; and Deirdre McCloskey, *Why Liberalism Works: Why True Liberal Values Produce a Freer, More Equal, Prosperous World for All* (Yale University Press, 2019).



Daniel Forkner at the Price Waterhouse office, Warsaw, Poland.

My ISI (FPE Abroad: International Study Program) Experience

By Daniel Forkner

Formerly known as Iron Sharpens Iron (ISI), we have changed the name of our program to FPE Abroad: International Study Program to honor Bob Bartel, who began this program in the B/EC department and led the trip, with his wife Shirley, that greatly impacted Director, David Iglesias' college experience. Daniel's trip took place under the ISI title.

Tell us about your jobs since college. What are a few things you have learned since you left?

I am currently working with Investortools, Inc, which is a financial software company located in Colorado Springs. We produce, customize, and support software dedicated to the fixed-income financial market. As a Client Service Associate, I am engaging clients on workflow, building reports, advising on system usage, and overall building and maintaining of client relationships. I have discovered how to deliver an excellent service to clients by continually enhancing my ability to translate between client needs and the technical capabilities of our products.

What were some of your most memorable experiences on your summer study abroad program?

Iron Sharpens Iron is a unique program because students have the opportunity to engage directly with individuals in the marketplace and political world. Specifically, I enjoyed visiting with Haitong Bank in Warsaw, Poland. The group learned about the intricacies of the Polish financial markets and how they might be different from those of the United States.



TOP PHOTO Chicago Council Event on Eastern Europe, Chicago, IL
BOTTOM PHOTO Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC), Warsaw, Poland

How did your trip expand your understanding of the interaction between the political and economic worlds?

Through our many business and political visits, I was able to see how different countries in Europe approached economic solutions differently from each other and from the United States. It was interesting to see the cause and effect of different government policies regarding the economy.

How did your trip prepare you for your life after Wheaton?

I was asked about my ISI trip in every single job interview that I attended. This did not surprise me because I had placed it in the top section of my resume to show off this incredible program. ISI not only made me more valuable to a company, but it also made me a more interesting person, which, believe it or not, is a huge part of being hired! Several peers of mine at Wheaton had abroad experiences, but none had experiences quite like Iron Sharpens Iron. ISI gave me real stories to tell potential employers, which really helped me shine apart from other candidates.

How did you benefit from the opportunity to interact more closely with Wheaton faculty?

Building relationships with the Wheaton faculty on the trip was no doubt a highlight. Personal interactions and conversations exposed me to new learning that wasn't necessarily part of a curriculum, but rather simply because I was engaging with very smart people.

How did your courses with Center Director, David Iglesias prepare you for life after college?

Iron Sharpens Iron, Faith & Market Mentorship, and National Security all made me into a more well-rounded candidate for employment. The diverse wealth of knowledge and experiences of Capt. David Iglesias shared with me were enormously beneficial for my own development. He cares deeply for his students.

What advice would you give to students considering participation in our summer political economy program?

The treasure chest of experiences, knowledge, and stories you will gain from an Iron Sharpens Iron program is like no other. Your thinking will gain depth, your analysis will sharpen, and your character will grow. The point of a Wheaton College education is to develop valuable members of society and Christ's kingdom. Iron Sharpens Iron does that in a way that no other program at Wheaton can, which is why it is one of, if not the most valuable experience that I had at Wheaton.

FPE News



FPE ABROAD: INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAM

FPE Abroad plans to travel to Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Norway the summer of 2021 to study market-based capitalism with robust social program support. Sample meetings include Cargill salmon farm, Statoil HQ, and a Norwegian Supreme Court Justice. It will also be interesting to explore the impact of Sweden's different approach to COVID – 19.

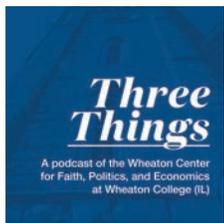
Estimate Program Cost - \$6,300

Includes - 8 credit hours, one month of campus meals and lodging, all other travel and meals, except for international flight and weekend meals.



CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. AMY E. BLACK

Dr. Amy E. Black, Professor of Political Science at Wheaton College, and Michael Wear, founder of Public Square Strategies have published a report for The Trinity Forum on "Christianity, Pluralism and Public Life in the United States: insights from Christian Leaders."



THREE THINGS FPE PODCAST

Hosted by David Iglesias, Director of the Wheaton Center for Faith, Politics and Economics, Three Things explores modern issues surrounding faith, politics, and economics -- or three things our parents taught us not to talk to strangers about. Join us for discussions about these topics in a measured, civil, and thoughtful way.

We have our own website for the series as well. Visit threethings.libsyn.com for easy access to each of our episodes including our very first with Captain Iglesias and Dr. Doug Drevets and a 2-part interview with Floyd Kvamme, prominent tech pioneer, venture capitalist and advisor to George W. Bush in science and technology!

COMING
THIS FALL

SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

(as gathering guidelines permit)



FORMER U.S. ATTORNEY
GENERAL JOHN ASHCROFT

PUBLIC SERVICE

U.S. Attorney General (2001-2004)
United States Senate (1995-2001)
Governor, Missouri (1985-1993)

AUTHOR

*Lessons from a
Father to His Son* (1998)

*On my Honor: The Beliefs that
Shape my Life* (1998)

*Never Again: Securing and
Restoring Justice* (2006)



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MISSION STATEMENT

The Wheaton Center for Faith, Politics and Economics exists to advance the training of Wheaton College students and the greater community in the understanding of market economies, representative democracies, limited government and the redeeming effect of the Christian worldview on the practice of business, government and politics.