

# Opinions

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## Will we ever learn?

Recently the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) published a synopsis of Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*. (You can find it on my always public Facebook page or on my equally public page at MeWe.) Written in 1944 during the slaughter of World War Two, Hayek expressed in this work his deep skepticism toward economic collectivization (socialism / communism) shared by most Western world leaders at the time.

The so-called Cold War that followed World War Two already loomed on the horizon even in 1944. Our Soviet allies under the genocidal Josef Stalin were rolling their tank divisions toward what would become East Germany. Once conquered the Soviets would stay there until the collapse of the Berlin Wall during the Reagan administration in 1989.

Western academics, especially in the U.S., seem to have given little attention to Stalin's deliberately created famine of 1934-35 in Ukraine (called the "Holodomor") aimed at, and resulting in, the death of an estimated two million "kulaks" (farmers, some owning as little as 8 acres of land). Such brutality is characteristic

of the sort of economic policy Hayek addresses in his book. As the computer tech people today say, that kind of thing in respect to collectivism is "a feature, not a bug." The reason is that the circumscription of freedom to the extent required by socialism never happens without bloody coercion.

Hayek's purpose in writing was to defend the institution of private property. He was far from the first to do so of course. Deuteronomy 19:14 (ESV) admonishes, "You shall not move your neighbor's landmark which the men of old have set." Hayek expands somewhat on our understanding of the practical significance of the institution of private property. And the relevance of his exposition to us three quarters of a century later isn't that hard to see.

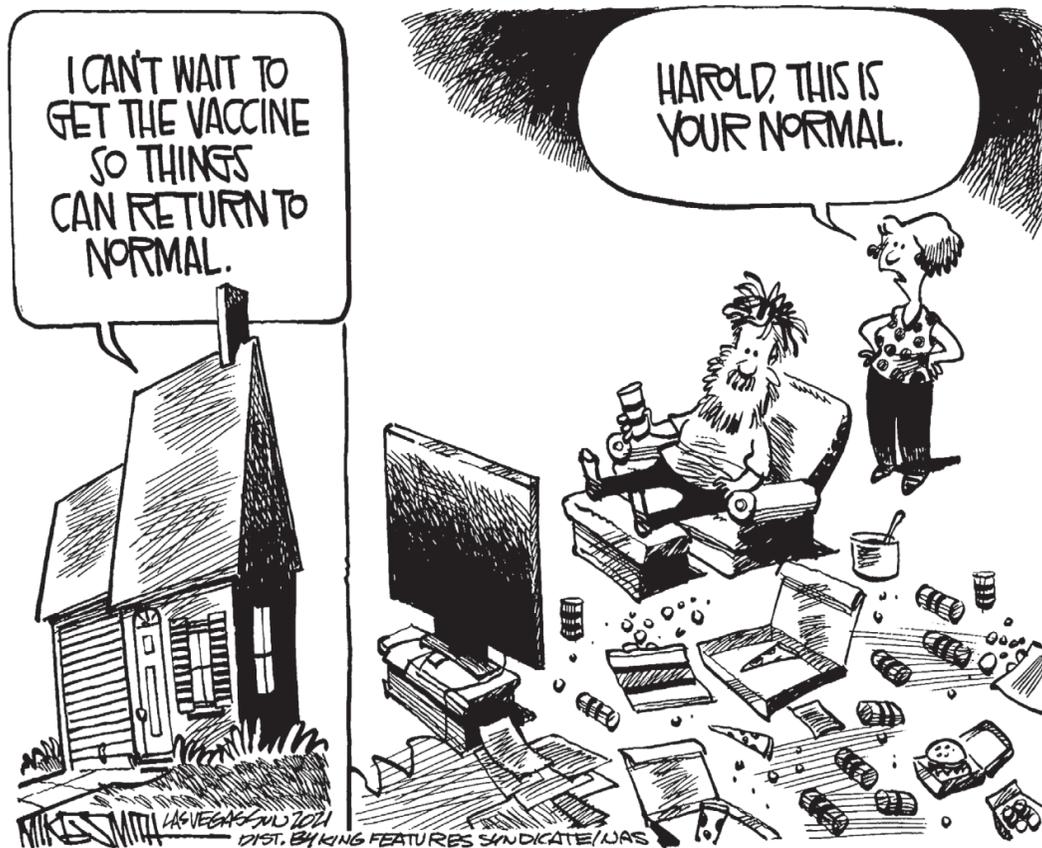
Hayek maintained that "What our generation has forgotten is that the system of private property is the most important guarantee of freedom, not only for those who own property, but scarcely less for those who do not." The rioters who for months this past year destroyed and seized the property of others did so in disservice to their own freedom. And, of course,

to ours also.

Perhaps the hardest lesson is this: "The economic freedom which is the prerequisite of any other freedom cannot be the freedom from economic care which the socialists promise us and which can be obtained only by relieving the individual at the same time of the necessity and the power of choice: it must be the freedom of economic activity which, with the right of choice, inevitably carries the risk and responsibility of that right."

It's reasonably obvious that without the right to fail, we can never enjoy the right to succeed. Wanting someone to take care of us is not uncommon and there are times and circumstances in which the loss of some measure of freedom is the reasonable price to pay for that care. However, in general, as Hayek said, "To decentralize power is to reduce the absolute amount of power, and the competitive system is the only system designed to minimize the power of man over man."

It seems almost self-evident that we are most likely to lose everything only when we are unwilling to risk anything.



## JEB Tales

Featuring Thomas "Tommy" Estis, PhD, LPC, LPMFT, LAC

On this date 47 years ago, Catherine and I ascended the steps of a small country church, Mount Hermon Baptist Church, Jonesville, LA. She was reared Southern Baptist; and I was reared with alcoholic influences and very little if any church. The people were believers in the possible or potential despite the challenges. The minister, Kenneth Whittle, had a heart of gold and was also, one who saw the potential in an individual. One of Catherine's friends played the piano. Tommy Germany was my best man. Keith Baker stood skeptically looking on. Acie and Millie Murray, would treat us to a dinner afterwards. We were broke!

Catherine purchased a bride's maid dress from Montgomery Wards for \$40 to serve the purpose of a wedding dress. Our wedding bands were \$40 total. The first month's rent was \$100; that was the biggest expense. I stood there scared with only a pocket full of dreams to offer this young teenage girl. Catherine was her attractive self, naive at the time, but very attractive. Her red hair, creamy complexion, and those blue eyes stole my heart after the fourth date. The blue eyes reminded me of the horizon where the sea and the sky seem to meet. It has been said that once one discovers the horizon the search is over. That was certainly true for me.

Some saintly soul in the church had prepared

the wedding cake. The church people provided the wedding services. We descended the steps of that small country church as husband and wife beginning our journey of becoming one, living together, sharing, working together, honoring each other, becoming united, looking out for each other, complimenting each other, celebrating each other, becoming inseparable only by death. Thank God for God and "small country churches" with people who reflect the faith, love, and hope of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, I would have never become the person Christ intended me to be, the husband I needed and wanted to be, and the pocket full of dreams would have perished. Thank God for God; thank God for 47 years; thank God for my wife! Happy Anniversary, Catherine!

Matthew 19:26 reminds us "With God all things are possible." Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created". The word created also reflects defined. God has not only created us but has defined us. That may be our number one mission in this life. Discover and live the God given definition of who we are to be. Zechariah 4:10 begins with "Do not despise these small beginnings". Everything and everyone have a starting point, even two teenagers standing at a wedding altar committing their lives and love to each other. Deficits in our childhoods can be the origin of dreams and determination. Catherine utilized hers and secured a Ph.D.

## By John Ed Bartmess, Jr.

She is department head of a program at ULM that assists poor children in being able to go to college. Me? I secured a Ph.D. and work with alcoholics and addicts in securing recovery. God is the Great Dream Maker. What dream or identity is within you that God can empower you to discover and be lived?

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