

# Walking *with* Wisdom

*A Devotional Journey for Fathers and Sons*



TRACING THE LEGACY OF WISDOM  

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FROM DAVID TO SOLOMON

**Walking with Wisdom: A Devotional Journey for Fathers and Sons**  
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## INTRODUCTION

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When I think about wisdom being passed down from one generation to the next, I picture Solomon growing up in David's house. He would have watched his father at celebrations and through difficult challenges, gaining wisdom simply by hearing stories of past victories and failures. He witnessed the faith that shaped David's life. While God gave Solomon the gift of being the wisest to have ever lived, Scripture doesn't say he was born with it. I imagine that he, like most of us, learned to interpret knowledge, apply it, and live it out through his father's example. In the same way, fathers and sons today grow through the lives they share, the lessons they learn, and the faith that is modeled in ordinary and defining moments alike.

My own life is marked by the wisdom of my father, Jim. He taught me Scripture, guided me with his humor and insight, and helped me understand not only when to speak but when to stay silent. I would not be the man I am without him, just as he was shaped by the generation before him. My sons, Benjamin and Noah, are being shaped similarly, and even my son-in-law is now part of this ongoing responsibility to pass on wisdom as he looks to raise a family with my daughter. Through the years, simple truths

have become guiding principles for us, including one I've coined since reading *StrengthsFinder* more than twenty years ago: too much of a good thing is a bad thing. Lessons like this have become part of our family's language, shaping how we live and lead.

This devotional is written for fathers and sons, but also for any man seeking to grow in wisdom. You may read it on your own, walk through it with your son or father, or share it in a small group. A man can respond as both a father and a son, while younger men can engage it as mentees even when the "father" in their life is not related but influential. In my life, that came from men like Dick Hardel, Wayne Hastings, and Bill McAtee.

*Walking with Wisdom* unfolds across five parts, each building on what came before. **Part 1: Learning to Trust** establishes the foundation every man needs: confidence in God's character, patience in waiting, and rest in His presence. **Part 2: Growing in Wisdom** moves inward, examining the heart, cultivating humility, and developing the self-control that shapes mature character. **Part 3: Becoming a Man of Character** applies that inner work outward through integrity, speech, and the relationships that test who we really are. **Part 4: Walking with Others** expands further into community, exploring friendship, forgiveness, justice, and generosity. Finally, **Part 5: Stewarding Your Life** brings the journey full circle, addressing how we lead, work, plan, and ultimately pass wisdom to the next generation.



Each day follows a consistent structure. The selected Scripture pairs a passage from David's Psalms with one from Solomon's Proverbs. THE CONNECTION weaves their voices together, showing how the son learned from the father and applied that wisdom in his own words. In the FOR THE FATHER section, the elder goes first, encouraged to apply the Scripture to his own life before teaching his son. In the FOR THE SON section, the younger is invited to first reflect before responding and think before acting, with space for personal application and response. Both sections end with a prayer, giving fathers and sons words to bring their thoughts before God. Each day closes with a WISDOM TO SHARE, a new common language for you and your father or son, a single line worth remembering, embracing, and passing on. A lined page follows for prayer and reflection on the day.

These readings are designed to stand alone or spark meaningful conversations, providing an opportunity for reflection, guidance, and shared growth. My hope is that, as we look to David and Solomon, we will walk together in the strength of the Lord and in the wisdom He provides, becoming men who lead, love, and live with purpose across every generation.

Walking with you,

*Jeremy*





PART 1

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# LEARNING TO TRUST









DAY 1

# TRUSTING GOD WITH EVERY STEP

## DAVID'S WISDOM

Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.

– *Psalm 37:3–5*

## SOLOMON'S WISDOM

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

– *Proverbs 3:5–6*



## THE CONNECTION

David's life was filled with both triumphs and failures. Anointed as king, David lived as a fugitive hiding in caves while Saul pursued him. Twice he had the chance to kill Saul and end his suffering, and twice he refused, trusting God's timing instead of seizing control. When his son Absalom rebelled and drove him from Jerusalem, David fled without fighting back, leaving the outcome in God's hands. Yet through it all, he learned to trust the Lord as the one who never failed him.

Solomon, his son, inherited this legacy of wisdom, not just in wealth or knowledge, but in the posture of the heart. He grew up learning from his father's example as David navigated the consequences of both obedience and failure.

Where David sang of committing his path to God, Solomon taught that trusting God with the heart is the only way to make sense of the path ahead. Together, they give us a blueprint for faith: let go of the need to understand everything, and lean into the God who understands all things.

Whether you're leading your family or guiding generations after you, or just growing up yourself, this trust is not passive. It's a daily choice to surrender, to walk with God through uncertainty, and to show others how to do the same.



## FOR THE FATHER

**Apply:** Regardless of your age or stage of fatherhood, whether you have toddlers or adult children, your example still matters. Think of a time when trusting God cost you something: a business decision where integrity meant financial or positional loss, a friendship that you had to let go, or a family crisis where you had to wait instead of fix. Share that story. Your scars may be your son's compass.

**Teach:** Share a specific time when trusting God cost you something but proved faithful. Don't just ask about his uncertainty, let him see yours first. Then ask: "In what areas or situations do you feel uncertain right now?" and "What would it look like for you to trust God instead of trying to control it?" Faith often begins with being honest about where we don't trust Him enough.

**PRAY:** *Father God, I don't always have the answers. Thank You that I don't need to. Help me live a life that points to You, not just with my words, but with the steps I take each day. May my children and those around me see my life as a reflection of my trust in You.*



## FOR THE SON

**Reflect:** Being a son is a part of who we are, regardless of our age. Sometimes everything is going well and it's comfortable, other times it feels like a weight. In what areas of your life are you still trying to lead without letting go? Maybe in your relationships where you try to control the way things turn out? Are you chasing a career for financial security over a calling? Do you overthink every option before deciding? What would trusting God more mean to you today?

**Respond:** If your father is present, take a moment to thank him for a time in your life where he showed trust in God. If he's gone or never offered that example, thank God for His fathering presence. Then write down one specific area where you'll practice trust instead of control. Check back in a few days and see what happens when you loosen your grip.

**PRAY:** *Lord, I want to trust You more than I trust myself.*

*Remind me when I want to take control that my strength comes*

*through surrender. Help me carry forward the wisdom I've received from my father, from others, and from You.*



*Trusting God through surrender strengthens our faith.*

[illegible]



DAY 2

# THE FEAR OF THE LORD

## DAVID'S WISDOM

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

— *Psalms 111:10*

## SOLOMON'S WISDOM

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

— *Proverbs 9:10*

## THE CONNECTION

David recognized that reverence for God stands at the foundation of all true wisdom. His fear of the Lord wasn't rooted in terror, but in awe and respect before a holy God. David acknowledged and understood his rightful position under God, and this awareness shaped every decision, word, and act of worship.

Solomon grew up with the Ark of the Covenant as a centerpiece of his father's reverence. He heard all the stories

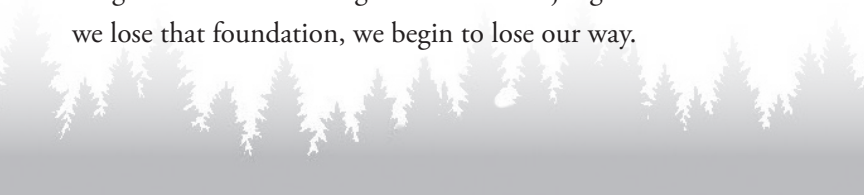




of its triumphant arrival in Jerusalem and the dangers of carelessly handling what God had declared holy. Uzzah, who transported the Ark from the Judean hill country, was struck dead when he reached out to steady it. The stories told of David's patient response, leaving the Ark with a trusted caretaker while he prepared to complete the journey properly. David didn't question God's justice or demand an explanation. On the second attempt to return the Ark, he made sure they carried it according to God's instructions, not human convenience. David's awe for God's holiness shaped how he approached everything, even acts of worship that seemed well intentioned.

Solomon took this truth as the cornerstone of his own understanding. While David modeled worshipful reverence, Solomon defined it as the starting point for knowing the Lord. Knowledge without reverence becomes pride. Understanding without awe becomes arrogance. Solomon took the posture of his father's worship and gave it structure for the generations that followed.

Together, their voices form one message across time: the fear of the Lord is where wisdom starts. When we honor God's holiness and approach Him with reverence, knowledge becomes insight and understanding becomes sound judgment. And when we lose that foundation, we begin to lose our way.



## FOR THE FATHER

**Apply:** Consider moments when your decisions were guided more by confidence in yourself than reverence for God. Maybe it was a business decision where profit trumped integrity, a parenting choice driven by pride rather than seeking God's direction, or a situation in which you treated something holy too casually. How did those choices unfold? Wisdom does not come from experience alone, but from recognizing your rightful position before a holy God.

**Teach:** Ask your son: "What does it mean to fear God without being afraid of Him?" Share a story from your life when awe for God helped you choose correctly, even when it cost you something. Maybe you had to honor God's standards when it wasn't convenient, or you had to acknowledge His holiness in a way that humbled you. Let him see that reverence is strength, not weakness.

**PRAY:** *Lord, teach me to live with holy reverence for You. Let my confidence rest not in my understanding but in*



*Your wisdom. May my son see in me a heart that honors You above all else, and may that reverence guide every part of my life. Help me*

*remember my rightful position before You in all I do.*

## FOR THE SON

**Reflect:** What does “fear of the Lord” mean to you? How is it different to being scared? Think about people you respect deeply: What makes you listen to them? Maybe it’s a coach whose standards push you to be better, a teacher whose knowledge and understanding command attention, or a mentor whose character makes you want to follow their example. Now consider this: Do you approach God with that same kind of respect? What would it look like to honor His holiness in your everyday choices, to recognize who He is and who you are before Him?

**Respond:** Spend a few minutes thanking God for who He is. Name His attributes: His holiness, His power, His justice, His mercy, His faithfulness. Don’t ask for anything. Just acknowledge who He is and your position before Him. Let your prayer be one of reverence rather than a string of requests. The more you know Him, the more wisely you’ll walk with Him.

**PRAY:** *Father, help me to see You as holy and good. Teach me to walk in awe of who You are. Let my respect for You shape how I live, speak, and choose. Give me wisdom that begins with the fear of the Lord.*



*The fear of the Lord is where wisdom starts.*

## PRAYER AND REFLECTION

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# AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

HOW PROGRESSIVISM  
BROUGHT ABOUT AN ISLAMIST INVASION



MICHAEL YOUSSEF

# **AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE:**

## **How Progressivism Brought About an Islamist Invasion**

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# PROLOGUE

## AFTER SATURDAY, SUNDAY



**O**n Wednesday evening, May 21, 2025, a gunman approached the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C., and unleashed a hail of bullets at a thirty-year-old Israeli man, Yaron Lischinsky, and his twenty-six-year-old Jewish-American girlfriend, Sarah Milgrim. He reloaded, then shot the young woman execution-style as she tried to crawl away.

When police examined the body of Yaron Lischinsky, they found an engagement ring in his pocket. He was planning to take Sarah Milgrim to Jerusalem in a few days to introduce her to his parents and propose to her. The couple had met while working at the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

Yaron Lischinsky was a devout Christian. Raised in both Israel and Germany by a Jewish father and a Christian mother, he spoke German, Hebrew, English, and Japanese. He would often engage with friends in hours-long conversations about Christian theology. One of Lischinsky's Christian friends, Mariam Wahba, said that Lischinsky "didn't just want to understand the world. He wanted to mend it."<sup>1</sup>

The lives of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim were cut short by a radical gunman shouting, "Free, free Palestine!" and "I did this for Gaza!"

What kind of man was the killer? He was neither a Muslim nor a Palestinian, as you might expect. He was an American-born Progressive activist from Chicago who had been radicalized by

leftist propaganda. For years, he had been active in the Chicago protest scene, usually ranting about the police and big corporations.<sup>2</sup>

Why would an activist of the Progressive left adopt the murderous passions of a radical Islamist? On the surface, it seems to make no sense. After all, the most cherished causes of the Progressive left include equal rights for women and social acceptance for gays, lesbians, and transgender people. On these issues, Progressives and Islamists are 100 percent opposed to each other. Yet the Progressive left has adopted the Islamist Palestinian cause as its own. How is this possible?

In fact, the murderer of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim exemplifies the devil's bargain between radical Islam and radical Progressivism. In the coming pages, I'll show you how this unholy alliance came to be—and what it means for our future.

## A CIVILIZATION UNDER ASSAULT

Our civilization is under assault from radical, political Islam. And our civilization is under assault from the radical, secular left. Both of these movements seek our submission and our destruction—and they have joined forces.

Radical, political Islam is bent on sweeping away Western civilization and imposing a global caliphate. The radical Progressive left is bent on sweeping away Western civilization and imposing a Marxist paradise, without “capitalism,” without “colonialism,” and without Christianity and the nuclear family. The Islamists and the leftists have bonded over their shared hatred of Western Judeo-Christian values.

There is a proverb among radical Islamists: “First the Saturday people, then the Sunday people”—or more simply, “After Saturday, Sunday.” This means that, after those who worship on Saturday (the Jews) are eliminated, those who worship on Sunday (the Christians) will be next. Radical Islamism, which has long threatened our civilization from the far side of the globe, has now spread its tentacles throughout our society. The threat is no longer “over there”—it's *here*.

The goal of radical Islamism is to build a seventh-century global caliphate atop the rubble of our civilization.

We are under a combined assault from Islamists and leftists—and our leaders are either too afraid or too passive to confront the threat. These two ideologies reject peaceful coexistence with the rest of the world and demand the complete submission of their enemies. As Christianity withers in many corners of Europe and America, the radicals scurry into the vacuum. In Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and America, enclaves of unassimilated Muslims are springing up and radical leftists are seizing political power.

But there is hope. I have written this book as a wake-up call for the Christian Church—and for all of Western society. There is work you and I *can* do—work we *must* do—to preserve our Judeo-Christian heritage and our civilization for generations to come.

Would you like to know more? Would you like to hear about the hope I have for the future of our society? Then roll up your sleeves, turn the page, and let's get started.



# 1

## THE RED-GREEN OMNICAUSE



In 2019, *Time* magazine named sixteen-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg its “Person of the Year”—the youngest person ever to be so honored.<sup>3</sup>

When Greta Thunberg reached her early twenties, she turned her attention to a new cause: Palestinians in Gaza. In May 2024, seven months after Hamas killed, raped, and kidnapped hundreds of Israelis in the October 7 invasion, Thunberg wrapped herself in a black-and-white Hamas keffiyeh and protested at the Eurovision Song Contest in Malmö, Sweden. “Shame on you!” she shouted, angered by contest organizers for letting an Israeli singer perform.

In response, the humanitarian organization Stop Antisemitism labeled Thunberg “antisemite of the week.” Liora Rez, the group’s founder, said, “Greta’s hatred of the world’s only Jewish nation eclipses her love of the environment. Despite Israel being a global leader in tackling climate disasters and rushing to aid in crises worldwide, Greta sides with their homicidal terrorist enemies.”<sup>4</sup>

In June 2025, Thunberg traveled to Sicily and boarded a 59-foot sailboat, the *Madleen*, along with activists from other countries. Their stated goal was to slip through Israel’s naval blockade and deliver humanitarian aid to people in Gaza. The *Madleen* was quickly intercepted and the passengers were taken to the Israeli port of Ashdod.<sup>5</sup> Israeli authorities called the *Madleen* a “selfie yacht” engaged in “Instagram activism.” The Israelis noted that boat’s cargo amounted to “less than a single truckload of aid.”<sup>6</sup>

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz ordered Thunberg and her shipmates to a screening room to watch a video. The video began rolling—and Thunberg and her friends realized it was video footage shot by Hamas terrorists during their murder spree on October 7, 2023. Thunberg and the other activists rushed out of the room, refusing to watch the video.

Katz said, “The antisemitic flotilla members are turning a blind eye to the truth and have proven once again that they prefer the murderers to the murdered and continue to ignore the atrocities committed by Hamas.”<sup>7</sup>

I don’t blame Greta Thunberg for being morally confused. By all accounts, she has been well indoctrinated but poorly educated. After viewing a climate-change video in the fifth grade, she went into a deep depression. She stopped eating, speaking, and playing the piano. She was diagnosed with autism and obsessive-compulsive disorder. At age fifteen, she skipped school to protest in front of the Swedish parliament building.<sup>8</sup>

Now that Greta Thunberg is an internationally known climate activist, it’s not surprising that other woke activists would want to exploit her fame for their own benefit. I genuinely feel sorry for her. Radical activists have hijacked her passion to “save the planet” and have twisted it into genocidal hatred. She’s been captured by a mindset that fuses every secular-left cause into a single concoction of misguided activism.

This mindset is called “the Omnicause.”

## UNDERSTANDING THE OMNICAUSE

The term “Omnicause” was created by Iowa accountant Alysia Ames. In her X.com profile, she writes, “I coined the term ‘omnicause’ in frustration with the left pretending every cause is actually the same thing because I want the left to be smart and win!”<sup>9</sup>

British journalist Hadley Freeman explains the Omnicause this way: “The Omnicause is, simply, every cause you must care about if you’re A Good Progressive, rolled into one, because everything in the world is connected. So trans rights are connected to

Palestinian rights are connected to environmental concerns, and any self-respecting progressive who cares about one has to care about the other two.”<sup>10</sup>

When we watch the news, we may see protesters with signs that read “Gays for Gaza!” or “Queers for Palestine!” And we can’t help thinking, “Don’t these protesters know that Hamas would happily torture and kill them because of their homosexuality?”

In 2016, Hamas tortured and executed Mahmoud Ishtiwi, the commander of Hamas’s fierce Zeitoun battalion, over unproven accusations that he was a practicing homosexual.<sup>11</sup> If a top Hamas general can be brutally executed on the mere *suspicion* of being gay, what chance would a “queer” campus protester from America have in Gaza?

But don’t expect logic from those captured by the Omnicause. Yes, the alliance between the radical left and radical Islamists is irrational. Yes, it causes gay people to side with Islamists who would kill them as soon as look at them. Yes, it causes feminists to side with Hamas terrorists who have murdered and raped Israeli women.<sup>12</sup> But these internal contradictions don’t bother those who are dedicated to the Omnicause.

In 2024, *The Wall Street Journal* opinion writer Andy Kessler penned a column headlined, “The ‘Omnicause’ Is Collapsing.” He wrote, “Did I see climate warrior Greta Thunberg wearing a kaffiyeh? Sure enough. . . Welcome to the Omnicause. If you protest one thing, you protest everything—intersectional inanity. Like ‘Queers for Palestine,’ which makes as much sense as ‘Chickens for KFC.’ Fortunately, the Omnicause is beginning to collapse under the weight of its logical fallacies.”<sup>13</sup>

I’m afraid Mr. Kessler’s optimism is mere wishful thinking. The evidence shows that, if anything, the Omnicause is growing bigger, more vocal, and more extreme in its views.

In June 2024, one of the most bizarre events in human history took place on the streets of Philadelphia: Kaffiyeh-wearing pro-Palestine marchers collided with a rainbow-banner-waving Pride March. Gay marchers proclaiming “Love, Unity, and Visibility” on their shirts seemed baffled by hostile people holding signs reading,

“Long Live the Intifada!” and “Kill Hostages Now!”<sup>14</sup> The absurdity of this scene would be hilarious if it were not so tragic.

The Omnicause will never collapse under the weight of its logical fallacies, because leftist and Islamist ideologies don’t care about logic. No less an authority than the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture has declared that “objective, rational, linear thinking” is a “white value” to be distrusted and rejected.<sup>15</sup> Unreasoning passion and emotion drive the Omnicause—not logic.

## THE RED-GREEN ALLIANCE

Journalist Eli Lake, host of the *Breaking History* podcast, uses a different term to describe the Omnicause: the Red-Green Alliance. “Red” refers to the political left, including Progressives, Socialists, and Communists. “Green” is the color most closely associated with Islam and is commonly seen on its flags and banners. The term “Red-Green Alliance” refers to the paradoxical coalition between the secular left and fundamentalist Islamists who have bonded over their shared hatred for Western, Judeo-Christian values.

To illustrate this strange marriage between Islamists and Western leftists, Lake cites this example: “The Democratic Socialists of America simultaneously support making New York a national hub for transgender youth medicine but also want to globalize the intifada [rebellion]. It supports the bleeding edge of social progressive values while throwing its full support behind the fanatic fascists who filmed their mass murder of Jews and proudly posted the videos to Telegram.”

Lake traces the origins of the “cognitively dissonant” Red-Green Alliance to the Iranian revolution of 1978 and 1979. Leftist journalists and politicians fawned over the exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who seemed poised to replace the authoritarian (but pro-Western) Shah of Iran. Receiving reporters at his home-in-exile in France, the Ayatollah sat cross-legged under an apple tree and gave scores of media interviews. Leftist reporters, seeing and hearing only what would confirm their biases, portrayed the Ayatollah as (in Lake’s words) “a pious democrat, perhaps even a progressive figure.”



Andrew Young, President Jimmy Carter's UN ambassador, predicted that the Ayatollah would go down in history as "a saint."

Any of these journalists or government officials could have read the Ayatollah's 1970 book *Islamic Government*, which spelled out his hatred of the West, his loathing for democracy, and his desire to impose Sharia law on the world. But no one bothered to read it.<sup>16</sup> When the Shah fell and the Ayatollah came to power, he plunged Iran into a dystopian nightmare of oppression, mass executions, the subjugation of women, and more.

When the aggressive ambitions of the Islamists meet the wishful thinking of the secular left, the result is a Red-Green Alliance, an intersectional Omnicause that leads the world down a path of enslavement, destruction, and death.

## A SHARED HATE

The term "Omnicause" may be new, but the Omnicause mindset is a very old idea. At many times and in many regions of the world, leftist movements have sprung up and called themselves "Popular Front" movements. These range from the Spanish Popular Front of the 1930s to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine today. A Popular Front movement is an alliance of dissimilar causes that join together to defeat a common enemy. A slogan often heard in Popular Fronts is "No enemies to the left, no friends to the right."<sup>17</sup>

Famed American journalist Whittaker Chambers wrote in his book *Witness* about his time in the Communist Party in the 1920s and 1930s, before he became disillusioned by Stalin and Soviet Communism. He wrote that when people became captured by the Popular Front mindset, they could no longer see reality as it is because they had "substituted the habit of delusion" and they "became hysterical whenever the root of their delusion" was brought to light.

"The Popular Front mind," Chambers wrote, ". . . told the nation what it should believe; it made up the nation's mind for it. The Popular Fronters had made themselves the 'experts.' They controlled the narrows of news and opinion. . . . The nation heard in their fatal errors the voice of those having authority."<sup>18</sup>

Whether you call it the Omnicause or the Red-Green Alliance or the Popular Front mind, the self-contradictory leftist mentality maintains its perverse grip on America and across the Western world. The “fatal errors” of the Popular Front mind have tightened their stranglehold on “the narrows of news and opinion,” as well as our universities, many of our most influential corporations, and all levels of most Western governments. That’s why our universities, news media, and other elite power centers are much farther to the left than the culture.

It makes no rational sense for feminists and LGBTQ activists to ally themselves with radical Islamists—yet they do, and they see no contradiction. They are in the grip of the delusion of the Omnicause, the psychosis of the Popular Front mind. The secular left and radical Islamists have one thing in common: shared hate. Both hate Christianity. Both hate the Jews and the State of Israel. Both hate Judeo-Christian morality. Both hate the United States. Both hate Western civilization. They ignore their irreconcilable differences because of their shared hate.

I remember marveling when the Progressive Left made a patron saint out of Linda Sarsour, a radical Islamist who advocates Sharia law for American society. In 2015, *The New York Times* published an effusive profile of Sarsour, calling her the “Brooklyn homegirl in a hijab.”<sup>19</sup> The *Times* piece neglected to mention that Sarsour’s pro-Sharia advocacy is completely opposed to American democracy, First Amendment freedoms, human rights, feminism and equality for women, and just about every other cause Progressives hold dear.

As I write these words, we are witnessing the merger of the Progressive left with radical Islamism in an election for the control of one of the greatest cities in the world—New York City.

## **JIHAD BY DEMOCRACY**

On November 4, 2025, New York City voters chose thirty-four-year-old Zohran Mamdani as the mayor of New York City. A member of the far-left Democratic Socialists of America, the aggressively anti-capitalist, anti-Western Mamdani became the chief executive

of the most important hub of finance and commerce in the Western world. Born in Uganda of Indian Muslim parents, Mamdani immigrated to the United States at a young age. He attended Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, where he cofounded the first Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapter on that campus. (The Anti-Defamation League and other Jewish advocacy groups have accused SJP of promoting anti-Semitism.<sup>20</sup>)

Zohran Mamdani is a practicing Twelver Shia Muslim.<sup>21</sup> What does that mean?

Islam is divided into several sects, most notably the Sunni and Shia sects. Twelver Shiism is the largest branch of Shia Islam, and is defined by its belief in twelve divinely ordained Imams (rightful successors to Muhammad). Twelver Shia Islam is the most extreme, anti-Western branch of Islam, and it is the official state religion of Iran.

In his public statements, Mamdani downplays his own Twelver beliefs. He achieved victory by shrewdly wrapping the poison pill of Islamism in a sugar-coating of “free” giveaways and socialist income redistribution: taxing millionaires and billionaires, freezing rents, establishing government-run grocery stores, providing free childcare and bus transportation, defunding the police, opposing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and more.<sup>22</sup>

Mamdani’s father, a political science professor at Columbia University, specializes in “decolonization studies.” Zohran spent most of his life absorbing his father’s far-left, Marxist views. His policy statements come straight from the anti-Western doctrines of “Third-Worldism,” which is rooted in grievances against formerly colonial nations.

Zohran Mamdani’s well-documented hostility toward Israel is partly explained by this mindset. Third-Worldists divide the world into oppressors and the oppressed. Jews have been persecuted and oppressed by the Babylonians and Assyrians in Old Testament times, the Romans in New Testament times, and the Nazis during the Holocaust. Yet Third-Worldists irrationally treat the Jews as “oppressors.” Though the Jews are indigenous to Israel, Third-Worldists call Jews who return to their ancient homeland “colonizers.”

Mamdani won by pandering to voters too young to understand the horrors of socialism. I grew up in Egypt under the Islamo-socialist regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council of Egypt. His military-socialist dictatorship controlled every aspect of our lives. I couldn't wait to escape from Egypt and find freedom in the West. I wish I could share my firsthand knowledge of socialism with Mamdani's voters.

One of Mamdani's winning strategies was to stoke his voters' suspicions that the system was rigged against them by the rich and powerful. Asked on NBC's *Meet the Press* if "billionaires have a right to exist," he replied, "I don't think that we should have billionaires because, frankly, it is so much money in a moment of such inequality. And ultimately, what we need more of is equality across our city and across our state and across our country."<sup>23</sup>

To people who don't know any better, Mamdani's "no billionaires" goal sounds perfectly reasonable. Who could argue against "equality"? But Russian chess master Garry Kasparov grew up under socialism in the Soviet Union, and he observed, "Capitalism's unequal distribution of prosperity is far better than socialism's equal distribution of misery."<sup>24</sup>

Zohran Mamdani is the embodiment of the strange union of radical Islamism and radical far-left Progressivism. During his campaign, Mamdani refused to say whether he believes Israel has a right to exist, and he refused to distance himself from the phrase "Globalize the intifada"—a rallying cry associated with murder and violence against Jews around the world.<sup>25</sup>

After Mamdani won the Democratic primary, his supporters at victory parties around the city chanted, "Globalize the intifada!" Mohammed el-Kurd, the Palestinian correspondent for the far-left magazine *The Nation*, tweeted his election-night thoughts about Mamdani's victory: "Consider the intifada globalized."<sup>26</sup>

## THE TAQIYYA DOCTRINE

During Zohran Mamdani's *Meet the Press* interview after the election, an NBC host asked him, "Do you condemn that phrase,

‘Globalize the intifada?’” He adroitly fended off the question, saying, “That’s not language that I use. The language that I use . . . [is] grounded in a belief in universal human rights. . . . I don’t believe that the role of the mayor is to police speech.”<sup>27</sup>

Mamdani’s clever answer is what political observers call a “dog whistle”—a subtly crafted political message that sounds reasonable to most voters but conceals a hidden message that only Mamdani’s Islamist voters can hear. He is tacitly telling them, “You know I can’t openly support violence against Jews, but when I refuse to condemn it, you know I’m one of you.”

An Islamic doctrine called *taqiyya* (meaning “prudence” or “concealment”) permits a Muslim to deceive his enemies until he gains the upper hand. While I can’t look into Mamdani’s heart and judge his motives, his Twelver Shia belief system clearly permits deception in order to get elected. In fact, as former Muslim, Imtiaz Mahmood explains that *taqiyya* “glorifies and sanctifies falsehood as a moral duty. . . . Western people have a hard time accepting that such a thing is possible, despite it being as basic to Islam as charity is to Christianity.”<sup>28</sup>

Amjad Taha is a political analyst from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) who warns that Islamists are waging jihad (struggle) against the West by using our democracy against us. Soon after Zohran Mamdani won the New York City mayoral primary, Taha posted on X, “When a Muslim Brotherhood-influenced, Marxist-flavored politician becomes mayor of a once civilized city, that’s not democracy; it’s like handing the keys of Solomon’s Temple to Nebuchadnezzar and expecting a prayer service. . . . If New York has truly fallen, if Zohran Mamdani becomes mayor, prepare to watch churches turn into jihadist campuses.”<sup>29</sup>

Days before Mamdani’s election, Taha warned that Islamists had also used democracy to gain control of other countries. He posted, “Democracy is not a universal solution. Yes, democracy has its merits, but it also has serious flaws. One of them is that, under its name, Islamist extremists and Muslim Brotherhood terrorists can become prime ministers or congressmen. . . . When democracy was tried in Gaza, it gave power to Hamas. In Egypt, it brought the Muslim

Brotherhood. In Libya, it handed the country to militias. . . . If your version of democracy empowers terrorists, then your system is not enlightened, it is infected.”<sup>30</sup>

## USEFUL BUT IGNORANT

The Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin is said to have coined the term “useful idiot” to describe people who are easily manipulated into thinking they are fighting for a noble cause. He saw such people as unwitting tools to accomplish his goals. By the time they realized they had been duped, it would be too late. Lenin’s “useful idiots” were usually executed when they ceased to be “useful.”

I don’t like the term “useful idiot” to describe passionate young activists like Greta Thunberg, because she’s definitely *not* an idiot. She’s intelligent and articulate—but she’s woefully misguided and indoctrinated. In fact, many of the kaffiyeh-clad activists protesting on campuses across the country have only a vague notion of what they are shouting about. As UnHerd columnist Mary Harrington observed, many young protesters are “mostly there for the vibe.”<sup>31</sup>

An online video shows protesters at New York’s Columbia University chanting, “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free!”—a slogan that calls for the elimination of all Jews from the land of Israel. In the video, a reporter stops one of the protesters, a young woman, and asks, “What does ‘from the River to the Sea’ mean?”

The protester exuberantly replies, “It means that Palestine should be free. It should be autonomous.”

“What river?”

The young woman looks perplexed—and a little shaken. “Um—okay. That expression is not anything—”

“No,” the reporter presses, “there’s an actual river and an actual sea.”

“Yeah, I’m aware. Um—”

“But what river, what sea?”

“That river that literally, um, is beside Israel and the Palestinian territories.”<sup>32</sup>

Clearly, this intelligent, articulate young woman has no idea that the phrase she's been chanting refers to the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea—and the chant is a code for genocide.<sup>33</sup>

Another online video shows two anti-Israel activists, both college-age women, being interviewed during a noisy protest at New York University. The interviewer asks one of the young women to explain the goal of the NYU demonstration.

The protester says, "I think the main goal is just showing our support for Palestine and demanding that NYU stop—" She pauses and gropes for words—then confesses, "I honestly don't know all of what NYU is doing."

The interviewer asks, "Is there something that NYU is doing wrong?"

"I really don't know. I'm pretty sure they're—" She pauses again, grimacing with embarrassment, and turns to her friend. "Do you know what NYU is doing?"

"About what?"

"About Israel. Why are we protesting—here at NYU specifically?"

The friend shrugs and says, "I wish I was more educated."<sup>34</sup>

I agree! I wish these two passionate young college students were more educated. Sadly, they have been indoctrinated instead. They are intelligent young women attending an elite university, but they have been duped into the role of "useful idiots."

Our civilization is infected by two toxic ideologies that have joined forces. In their shared hatred for Western values, the secular left and radical Islamists have forged an unholy alliance. Looked at logically, their alliance seems doomed to collapse under the weight of its internal contradictions. But once you understand that these two movements are united by a shared hate and a common enemy, their alliance makes diabolical sense.

In the coming pages, we will see example after example of this unholy alliance changing the face of Western democracies and threatening Western civilization.





# THE AMERICAN IDEA

*Rediscovering the Words That Built a Nation*



SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL  
COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

FEATURING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
THE U.S. CONSTITUTION · THE BILL OF RIGHTS  
AND SUMMARIES OF ALL 85 FEDERALIST PAPERS





# THE FEDERALIST NO. I

## *Introduction*

Alexander Hamilton, October 27, 1787

Federalist No. I opened the series of essays that came to be known as The Federalist Papers. Written by Alexander Hamilton, it set the stage for the debate over ratifying the Constitution. Hamilton argued that the people of the United States faced a choice without precedent: whether they could establish a lasting republic through reflection and choice rather than accident or force.

*To the People of the State of New York:* Because of the weakness of the current government, you are called to consider and decide on a new Constitution for the United States. This is a decision without precedent. For the first time, a nation has the chance to determine, through reflection and choice, whether free people can establish effective government, or whether they must always rely on accident and force.

This choice carries immense weight. The outcome will determine the future of the people of the United States, and it will influence whether liberty can endure in the world. The debate will not be calm. Passions, prejudices, and personal interests will drive many to distort the truth. Some who oppose the

Constitution will do so from honest conviction, but others will disguise ambition and self-interest as zeal for the people's rights.

*“A dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people than under the forbidding appearance of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government.”*

In the essays that follow, the arguments will be laid out clearly. First, why union is essential to the political safety and prosperity of the people of this country. Second,



why the Articles of Confederation are inadequate. Third, why the Constitution provides a government strong enough to secure liberty without endangering it. Finally, why this government is both a republic, meaning a government of the people through elected representatives, and suited to the particular character of the United States.

The future of the Union depends on this decision. Without a stronger central government, the states risk falling into conflict with one another or becoming vulnerable to foreign influence. Citizens are urged to approach the debate with fairness and reason, seeking not private advantage but the public good.

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*Reflection and Choice:* Federalist No. I underscored the gravity of choosing a new constitution. Hamilton warned that disunion and weakness threatened liberty, and that only a federal republic could safeguard the people of the United States. He also cautioned that ambitious leaders would disguise self-interest as zeal for the people's rights, urging citizens to resist passion and prejudice in favor of reasoned judgment.

That challenge has persisted for centuries. The test Hamilton described—whether reflection and choice can overcome accident and force—confronts every generation. His warning about demagogues cloaking themselves in popular rhetoric remains urgent in every era. His appeal to unity over faction speaks directly to the preservation of the republic.

The question is no longer whether the Constitution should be ratified. The question is whether we will approach our own political debates with the seriousness Hamilton demanded by consistently placing the common good above personal advantage, resisting manipulation, and exercising genuine deliberation rather than partisan reaction. Self-government remains fragile. It survives only when citizens choose reflection over impulse, reason over passion, and the long-term health of the republic over short-term gain.

This choice is not a relic of the past. Every generation must make it anew if the nation is to survive.





# THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

The **People, Places, and Moments**  
That Shaped the **World's Greatest Book**

**Museum of the Bible, Washington DC**





*Daniel's Answer to the King,*  
painting by Briton Rivière,  
1890. Manchester Art Gallery.



# THE LIFE OF DANIEL

## FAITH UNDER FIRE

### THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL

The Book of Daniel begins with the fall of Judah to Babylon, which unfolds in stages. According to the Bible, Daniel is part of the first wave of captives; they are taken to Babylon, some 500 miles away. Historians place the first wave of exile/deportation to Babylon around 600 BC, shortly before Jerusalem and the Temple are thought to have been destroyed. In this narrative, Daniel spends about 70 years there, enduring the whole period of Jewish captivity, and becomes a respected prophet and leader. Already as a teenager, Daniel gains the attention Babylonian officials. But how does this come about?

The victorious king, Nebuchadnezzar, orders his chief of staff to select a group of young Israelite men to train in the language and literature of the Babylonians. They are to:

- Descend from royal lineage
- Have no physical defects
- Be handsome
- Be well-educated and intelligent
- Be versed in every branch of wisdom
- Be competent to serve in the king's palace

Several Jewish youths meet these qualifications, including Daniel. They study together for

three years and then are appointed to the king's court—reflective of known practices in antiquity with foreigners.

This honor comes with strings attached. They receive a daily royal ration of Babylonian food and wine. While others might be flattered by this treatment, it represents a problem for them. The food menu conflicts with Jewish dietary laws, and partaking of it would violate their covenant with God. Daniel therefore asks the palace master to provide him and his Jewish companions a much simpler diet of water and vegetables.

Afraid that he will lose his head if his charges lose weight, the palace master objects. So Daniel proposes a test. Daniel and his companions will eat their kosher diet for ten days. Then the palace master can compare them with the non-Jewish men eating all the rich royal rations. If Daniel and his friends are healthy, they can continue with their special diet; if not, they must go back to the royal rations. Reluctantly, the palace master agrees. Ten days later, Daniel and his friends pass the test. From that point forward, they are allowed to eat as they choose without interference. At the end of their educational and training period, the Bible tells us that the king finds the young men ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his Interpreting Dreams

### Things Heat Up

Not long after, Daniel and his friends face another test. The king has an enormous golden image made, and he requires everyone to bow down and worship it. Those who refuse will be thrown into a blazing furnace. Daniel's three Jewish friends—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—refuse to comply with the order, since doing so would violate one of the basic commitments of their faith.

Generations before Daniel's time, according to the Bible, the Ten Commandments given to Moses included strict rules on this topic. "You must not have any other god but me. You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind, or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them" Deuteronomy 5:7-9 (NLT).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are not afraid of the consequences of their actions: "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace," they tell the king, "the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set

up" Daniel 3:17-18 (NLT). Furious, Nebuchadnezzar has the furnace heated seven times hotter than normal and orders his soldiers to throw the young men into the fire.

### The Writing on the Wall

Then Daniel's story jumps forward. Years later, a king named Belshazzar is sitting on the throne.

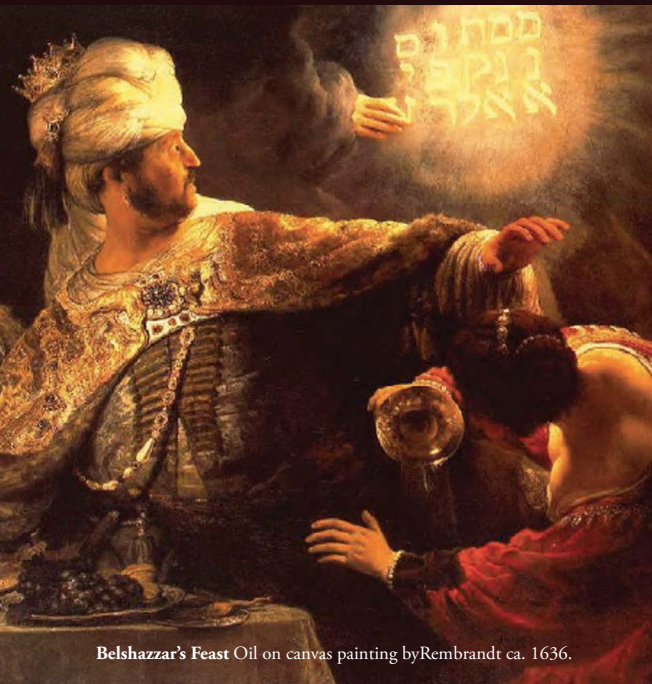
### LIFE IN EXILE & DIASPORA

Several collections of cuneiform texts from Mesopotamia mention Jews in exile. While the Assyrians typically deported and scattered people they conquered, the Babylonians tended to keep people groups together. The Babylonians provided them land to work, and then imposed taxes or mandatory periods of service. This raised revenue for the empire. Documents from these exiled communities include rental contracts, grain and date deliveries, tax collections, and more. Records from Babylon show rations being provided to the exiled king of Judah, Jehoiachin.



As the Bible tells the story, during a royal feast, a drunken Belshazzar brings out vessels looted from the Temple in Jerusalem, items considered sacred by the Jewish people. The king lets the bawdy crowd drink from the vessels as they flaunt and praise their Babylonian deities.

Suddenly, they see fingers of a human hand



Belshazzar's Feast Oil on canvas painting by Rembrandt ca. 1636.

## INTERPRETING DREAMS

The Book of Daniel says that soon after becoming king, Nebuchadnezzar has dreams that trouble him. He wants to know what they mean. So he challenges his entire court of wise men and astrologers to recount the dream and its interpretation (Daniel 2:5). They respond that the task is impossible. The king decrees that they all be executed. According to the Bible, the meaning of the king's dream is revealed to Daniel in a vision. Daniel is brought to the king and tells the king both the dream and its meaning. Astonished at Daniel's words, the king rewards him by making him ruler over all of Babylon. At Daniel's request, three of his friends also receive important positions of leadership.

writing on one of the palace walls. Again, no one can interpret what is written, so Daniel, by now an old man, is summoned. He tells King Belshazzar that his haughty behavior is offensive to the God of Israel. The writing on the wall spells out a message no king wants to hear: "This is what

these words mean," Daniel tells him: "Mene means 'numbered'—God has numbered the days of your reign and has brought it to an end. Tekel means 'weighed'—you have been weighed on the balances and have not measured up. Parsin means 'divided'—your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians" Daniel 5:26-28 (NLT). In the biblical account, that night Belshazzar is killed, and a leader named Darius the Mede takes over.

## Daniel in the Lions' Den

Now, Daniel's life takes place under King Darius the Mede. An edict goes forth commanding all citizens to worship Darius. Daniel refuses and continues praying to the God of Israel. As punishment, he is thrown into a den of lions, even though Darius vainly tries to save him. Daniel's enemies, who had set him up for this, correctly remind the king that according to the "law of the Medes and the Persians" (6:15) his own royal decrees cannot be changed or revoked.

This raises the question: what kind of lion would Daniel have encountered? The Persian lion, also known today as the Asiatic lion, at one time roamed freely throughout the Ancient Near East, including present-day Israel. Today, however, these "biblical lions" are almost extinct. Only about 200 still exist in the wild, all of them confined to a small forested region of western India.

As the story goes on, Daniel survives his night with the lions unscathed. In the morning, he informs the nervous king that God had shut their mouths. After releasing Daniel, the king arrests Daniel's enemies and family members, and throws them to the lions. They are all devoured instantly. Then, according to the Bible, Darius issues a royal decree that everyone is to respect the God of Daniel.

## Longing for Jerusalem

According to the biblical text, some four centuries after David establishes Jerusalem as the



capital of Israel, Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians, and it falls hard. Zedekiah, the last person in history to sit on David's throne, is warned by the prophet Jeremiah not to resist the invading Babylonians. But Zedekiah listens instead to his advisers, who are counting on the support of Egypt. After Zedekiah and his forces hold out in the walled city of Jerusalem for 18 months, the city finally falls around 586 BC.

Because of the king's lengthy (and ultimately futile) resistance, Zedekiah's sons are killed before his eyes, his officers are executed, and he is blinded and taken in chains to Babylon. Then the Babylonian commander destroys the Temple, the royal palace, and the homes of all the prominent citizens. The Temple furnishings and treasures are carried back to Babylon. This catastrophic loss forms the backdrop for the faith and longing that define the Book of Daniel, which is where we find this chronology.

## Daniel and the Three Kings

To appreciate the impact of Daniel's life, it helps to look across the reigns of the three kings he served. Traveling back through time, we meet the Jewish people in a foreign land. Their deep sorrow and burning passion to return home to Jerusalem influences their faith and culture for generations to come.

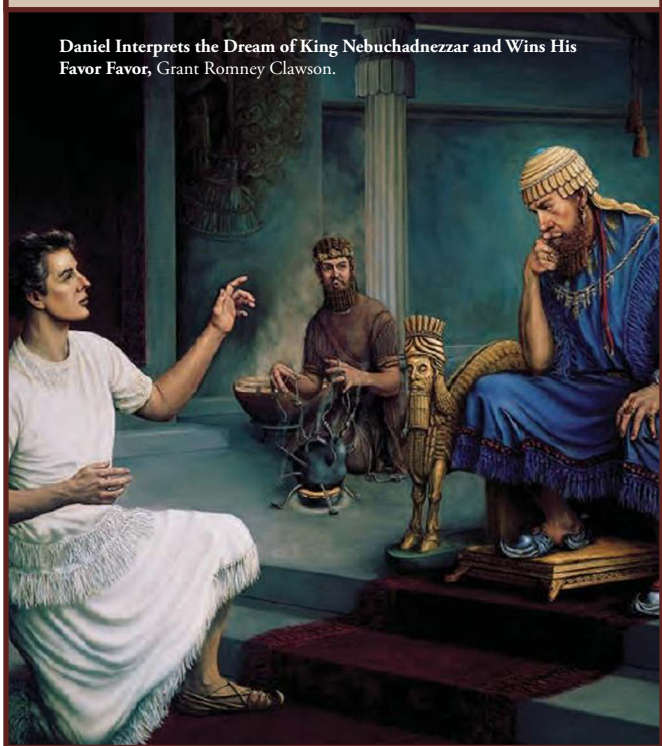
One striking part of the story of Daniel and his fellow exiles is their ability to attain influential positions in foreign kingdoms. The Book of Daniel emphasizes the power of God in the diaspora, outside of Canaan, particularly with three powerful rulers:

- **Daniel 4** ends with King Nebuchadnezzar lifting his eyes to the heavens and proclaiming Daniel's God to be supreme.
- **Daniel 5** relates the story of another ruler, King Belshazzar. Yet even when Daniel gives this king the terrible news that "God

## THE FIERY FURNACE

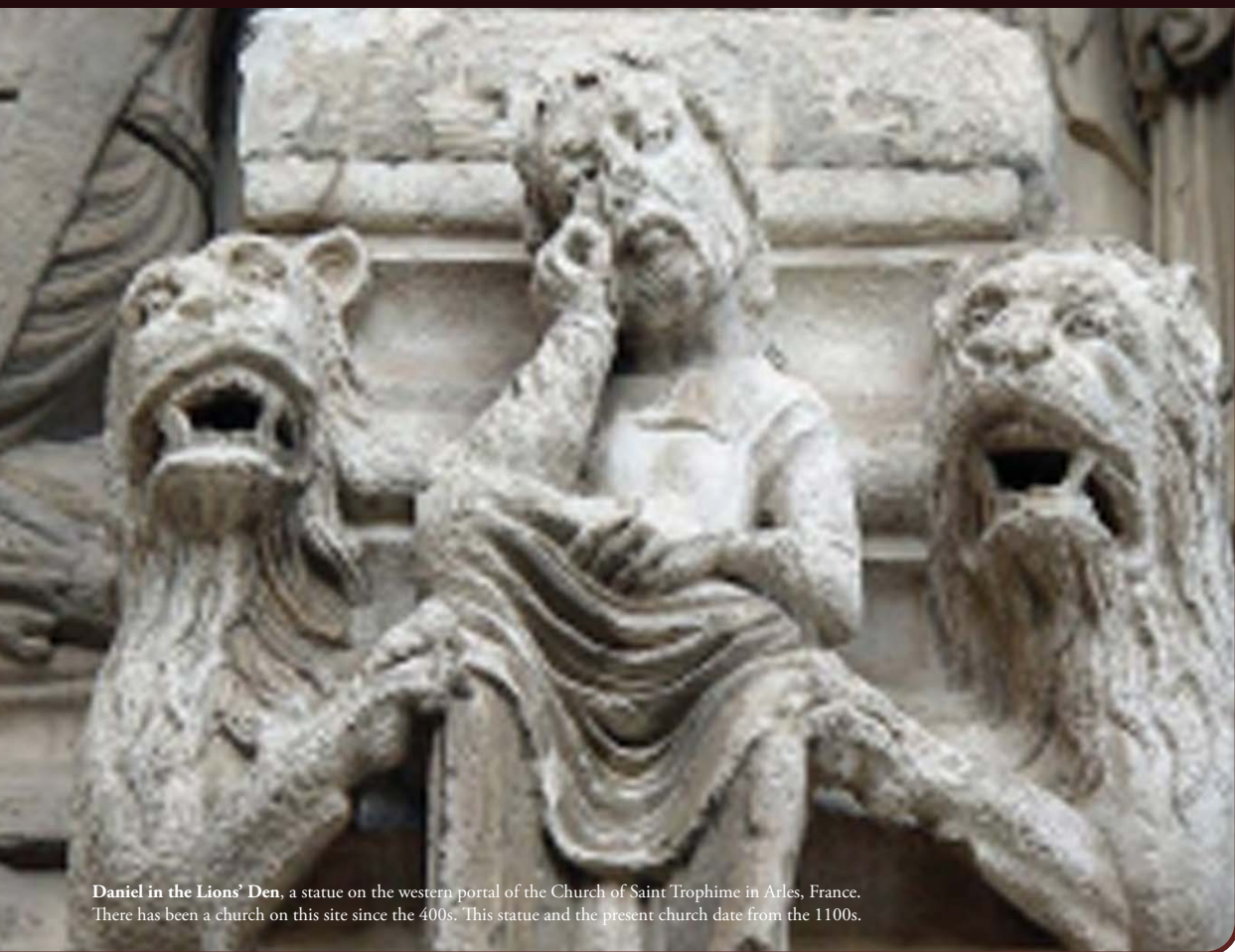
The king then notices four people in the fire, all walking unharmed. (He marvels that the fourth looks like a divine being.) Nebuchadnezzar calls the three men out of the furnace. According to the Bible, "The fire had not touched them. Not a hair on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched. They didn't even smell of smoke!" Daniel 3:27 (NLT). Convinced of the power of their God, the king says, "There is no other god who can rescue like this!" Daniel 3:29 (NLT). Nebuchadnezzar orders that no one in the empire may speak against this God, under penalty of death.

Daniel Interprets the Dream of King Nebuchadnezzar and Wins His Favor Favor, Grant Romney Clawson.



has numbered the days of your reign and has brought it to an end" (Daniel 5:25, NLT), the king does not harm him.

- **Daniel 6** brings us the famous scene of Daniel thrown into a den of lions. Though



**Daniel in the Lions' Den**, a statue on the western portal of the Church of Saint Trophime in Arles, France. There has been a church on this site since the 400s. This statue and the present church date from the 1100s.

he has ordered this punishment, King Darius is overjoyed to find Daniel alive the next day, orders him released, and decrees that “in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel” (6:26, NIV).

### **What's in a Name?**

The Book of Daniel has some of the most memorable names in the Bible: Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Nebuchadnezzar. You probably wouldn't give your baby one of those names today. But neither did the mothers of the first three. Daniel and his friends were assigned new Babylonian names by the chief of the Babylonian officers: “Daniel was called Belteshazzar. Hananiah was called Shadrach. Mishael was called Meshach. Azariah was called Abednego” Daniel 1:7 (NLT). Their Jewish names carried a reference to

the God of Israel. Names ending in “el” stand for Elohim (God) and names ending in “yah” are a testimony to Yahweh (YHWH).

The big challenge facing Daniel and his fellow Jewish exiles in the great Babylonian Empire is that of retaining their faith and identity. A primary component of your identity is your name. With changes in one's life or circumstances often came a change in name. As foreigners assimilating in Babylon, they receive Babylonian names.

The name Daniel remains popular for boys and also girls (in the form of Danielle). This Hebrew name means “God is my judge.” Though some vestiges of Hebrew remained, most abandoned it for Aramaic. Although biblical Hebrew was well preserved in ancient texts, most remarkably the Dead Sea Scrolls, it wasn't until the 1930s and

the establishment of Israel in 1948 that it began to be reintroduced as a common language.

## Apocalyptic Literature

Much of the Hebrew Bible tells the stories of



Assembly and transport of the Tabernacle.

the ancient Israelites. An important thread in those stories is the covenants made between God and the patriarchs, prophets, and kings. Some elements of those covenants pertain to past or present times, others to the future. Full of dreams and visions, the Book of Daniel challenges the Jewish people to look forward. It is a major biblical example of what scholars call apocalyptic (or revelatory) literature.

Apocalyptic literature deals with hidden knowledge and, within the context of the Bible, often relates to the future. Today people tend to associate the word apocalyptic with ideas—often frightening ideas—about the end of the world. However, Daniel’s “apocalypse” provides a sense of hope, a revelation of better things to come.

Some apocalyptic literature envisions a time when the power of evil will be broken, and the purposes of God for humanity and the cosmos are worked out.

## Summary

While exiled to a foreign land, Daniel and his

## DANIEL’S ANSWER TO THE KING

Daniel was thrown into a den of hungry lions for praying to God, thus disobeying a royal decree designed by his enemies especially to ensnare him. The Bible says the Lord sent an angel to shut the mouths of the hungry cats so they could not harm him.

## ARAMAIC

About half of Daniel (2:4–7:28) is written in Aramaic rather than Hebrew, the main language of the Old Testament (the two languages are closely related). Aramaic originally was spoken by the Arameans, who resided in northwestern Mesopotamia. Over time, Aramaic spread and became the second-most-used language of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, and the administrative language of the Persian Empire.

## VOCABULARY

**Ration** [*noun*]: a fixed portion of food

**Kosher** [*adjective*]: permissible to eat according to Jewish law

**Assimilate** [*verb*]: to absorb one culture into another, so the original is hardly recognizable and no longer unique

companions are portrayed as steadfastly choosing to live according to their faith in God, even in the face of almost certain death. The Bible claims that the young Jews are saved from a fiery furnace. It portrays Daniel at a later stage walking out of a den of hungry lions without a scratch. These examples encouraged the diaspora Jewish communities to have faith in the present and hope for the future.





# The Real Race Revolutionaries

How Minority Entrepreneurship  
Can Overcome America's Racial  
and Economic Divides

BY ALFREDO ORTIZ



SECOND EDITION  
REVISED & UPDATED



**The Real Race Revolutionaries: How Minority Entrepreneurship Can Overcome  
America's Racial and Economic Divides, Second Edition**

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*To my mother, Gloria,*  
who taught me to never back away  
from a challenge just because it seems huge  
but rather to push into it, head-on, and never give up.







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## **FOREWORD: ENSURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HOME DEPOTS**

**N**o one has experienced entrepreneurship's ability to help minorities improve their economic circumstances more than me—and that's not only because I'm 93 years old.

I saw the power of entrepreneurship firsthand after co-founding The Home Depot, a company that revolutionized the home improvement industry and empowered millions of disproportionately minority Americans to realize their entrepreneurial dreams. My experiences have led me to believe preserving and expanding entrepreneurship is the key to advancing America's racial and economic equality.

I was born to Jewish immigrant parents and grew up poor in tenement housing in Newark. I dreamed of becoming a doctor and eventually got accepted into Harvard Medical School. This feat was especially impressive given the widespread anti-Semitism and quota system medical schools used to deny Jewish applicants at the time. But despite this accomplishment, my family couldn't afford the tuition.

Minorities today encounter similar hurdles to succeeding in competitive industries such as medicine, law, and finance. Asians continue

to face *de facto* quotas at American universities. Black and Brown Americans often have fewer resources and connections. Many minorities come from bad neighborhoods, broken families, and terrible public schools.

Entrepreneurship offers all Americans—no matter their background—a side door to achieving financial independence and the American Dream. It's still difficult for a minority high school graduate from Newark to excel in corporate America—but entrepreneurship gives them another path. Entrepreneurship rewards goods and services that the market values, independent of the SAT scores, financial resources, or personal pedigrees of the people selling them.

I ended up in the home improvement industry. I worked my way up the corporate ladder only to be fired by a capricious boss. Afterward, I was unemployed at 49. I had every reason to be bitter. But I turned to entrepreneurship, which made my life's second act far better than I ever could have imagined.

With almost no money, I had the idea to start a hardware store, a lumberyard, and a garden store all in one. What began as a single store in Georgia grew to over two thousand locations nationwide and made me a billionaire in the process. Only in America could an ethnic minority from a poor immigrant family have a success story like mine.

The financial rewards pale in comparison to the emotional rewards of seeing how The Home Depot has helped countless others become financially independent through entrepreneurship. The Home Depot democratized the home improvement, landscaping, and building trades so that anyone willing to work up a sweat and learn some basic skills could immediately start a sole proprietorship or small business servicing the nation's 80 million homeowners.

You can observe the entrepreneurs that The Home Depot helped spawn driving around town in their well-loved trucks full of tools

and material. Many of these entrepreneurs are minorities. They don't consider themselves victims of racial wealth or income gaps; in fact, they are actively overcoming racial economic disparities through their work.

This phenomenon isn't only occurring in the building and landscaping professions. In almost every part of the economy, you'll find entrepreneurial minorities breaking through difficult circumstances to achieve and live the American Dream. Accelerating this process is the key to closing racial economic divides still plaguing the nation.

Unfortunately, the nation is moving in the wrong direction, erecting numerous hurdles to entrepreneurship. The Home Depot wouldn't have succeeded if it had started in today's climate of big government regulations and taxes that disproportionately burden small businesses. The Home Depot almost went bankrupt several times in its first decade, and today's policy environment would have tipped us into insolvency—as it does to countless entrepreneurs each year.

The biggest victims of bad government policy aren't the elite; they will always be able to get into good schools and get their foot in the door of corporate America. The people hurt most by big government are minorities, those who often already face disadvantages in becoming economically independent.

President Ronald Reagan said, "Freedom . . . is never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by way of inheritance; it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation<sup>1</sup>"

In 2013, I founded the Job Creators Network to fight for freedom and educate the public about how taxes, regulations, and reckless spending negatively impact American entrepreneurship and broader societal well-being.

Alfredo Ortiz has done an excellent job leading the Job Creators Network (JCN) in this battle. With him at the helm, JCN has defended

small businesses from bad government policies and ushered in free-market reforms that make starting and growing small businesses easier. In this book, he persuasively makes the case that the government must do less, not more, to allow minority entrepreneurs to achieve the American Dream and overcome racial economic disparities.

Celebrating the stories and successes of minority entrepreneurs can generate the public support needed to defend the free-market economy against big government threats. These ordinary entrepreneurs are the heroes of modern-day America, even if they are frequently treated as villains by government officials who siphon their resources to fund their latest social policy aims.

This book asks you to treat minority entrepreneurs with the respect they deserve, and to consider how bad public policy prevents them from surviving and thriving. A newfound respect for minority entrepreneurs, who have done so much with so little, can provide the societal foundation needed to ensure the next generation of Home Depots. It can lay the groundwork for even more minority entrepreneurship success stories than I've seen in my lifetime.

Entrepreneurship is freedom. There is no dichotomy between the two. By defending the former, we can preserve the latter for generations to come.

Bernie Marcus

Co-Founder and Former CEO, The Home Depot

Founder, Job Creators Network

Atlanta, January 2023

## INTRODUCTION: THE BUSINESS OF AMERICA IS SMALL BUSINESS

I was recently in an Atlanta bookstore and came across a title marketed to grade-schoolers called *Sylvia and Marsha Start a Revolution*. The book's cover depicts two women of color. According to its Amazon description, the book is "a playful introduction to trans identities," telling the story of "the transgender women of color who fought for LGBTQ+ equality." The moral of this story and so many others like it: kids, especially minority kids, should pursue social activism and "revolution" to make the world a better place.

My thought was: Why can't this book be *Sylvia and Marsha Start a BUSINESS* and feature a tale of entrepreneurship? Starting a business is the real revolutionary act that minorities can take to empower themselves and their communities. Entrepreneurship can bring financial independence and hard-earned confidence. In fact, minority entrepreneurship is a far better vehicle to overcome racial and economic divides than activism.

Want to start a real revolution that truly improves people's lives? Start a business. While it doesn't make newspaper front pages,

minorities across the country are doing just this—starting businesses at historic rates and eliminating racial and economic divides through entrepreneurship. This is the message that we should be sending our kids.

### **A CONFLICT OF VISIONS: ACTIVISM VERSUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The debate about the better way to achieve racial economic equality—via activism or entrepreneurship—isn't new. The Black intellectuals W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington clashed over this question while advocating for racial equality at the turn of the twentieth century. Du Bois argued that activism and political power were the best way for Black Americans to attain racial equality, while Washington contended that entrepreneurship was the better approach.

Du Bois believed capitalism to be inherently racist and became a member of the Socialist Party of the United States. He argued that Black schools should teach the liberal arts to develop an elite Black leadership class. He also called on Black Americans to increase their protests and political influence.

Washington, by contrast, believed Black Americans should harness the power of capitalism to become economically independent. He called on them to pursue industry, thrift, education, and property to attain financial security that would usher in social equality.<sup>2</sup> Of Washington, the historian C. Vann Woodward wrote, “The businessman’s gospel of free enterprise, competition, and laissez-faire never had a more loyal exponent.”<sup>3</sup> Washington pushed for Black schools to focus on trades and entrepreneurship to teach students the skills they needed to earn a living.

Intellectuals and the media have celebrated Du Bois’s political approach while Washington has been accused of selling out Black interests. Today, Du Bois’s spiritual descendants, including Black



intellectuals Ta-Nehisi Coates and Ibram X. Kendi, are similarly feted for their political activism.

Yet with time, Washington's entrepreneurial approach has proven the better way to overcome racial and economic divides. Black political dominance in major American cities in recent generations has not translated to racial economic equality. In fact, minority residents in these areas often face high crime and a dearth of economic opportunity. By many economic measures, Barack Obama's presidency was detrimental to Black Americans. Sadly, America's first Black president's anti-capitalist policies *reduced* entrepreneurship avenues for the most vulnerable Americans.

In contrast, Black Americans and other minorities are quietly overcoming racial economic disparities by heeding Washington's call to entrepreneurship. These are the forgotten minorities of

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These real race revolutionaries eschew media glory for actual racial progress.

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America's racial story. Their incredible economic achievements are largely overlooked by society today. These real race revolutionaries eschew media glory for actual racial progress.

These minority entrepreneurs follow in the footsteps of Madam C. J. Walker, a Black entrepreneur who became the country's first self-made female millionaire in the early twentieth century. Born immediately after the Emancipation Proclamation—the first in her family not born into a life of slavery—Walker went from a poor plantation worker to a successful business owner in her lifetime.

Like many minority entrepreneurs today, Walker capitalized on a gap in the market. Since most Americans at the time did not have indoor plumbing, they often developed scalp infections. To remedy this problem, Walker developed a haircare system that proved immensely popular with her customers. She leveraged the power of advertising, demonstration, distribution, and multilevel marketing to grow her company nationwide.

“I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South,” recalled Walker. “From there, I was promoted to the washtub. From there, I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there, I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations. I have built my own factory on my own ground.”<sup>4</sup>

Beyond developing a successful cosmetics business that catered to Black American haircare, Walker also empowered tens of thousands of Black associates who traveled door-to-door selling her products and earning high commissions. She worked incredibly hard to succeed and overcome her difficult starting circumstances. “When I was a washerwoman, I was an excellent washerwoman,” said Walker. “I always took pride in my work and knew that hard work was important.”<sup>5</sup> Today’s growing population of successful minority entrepreneurs overcoming racial economic disparities serve as the spiritual descendants of Madam C. J. Walker and Booker T. Washington.

## **MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS INCREASINGLY THE BUSINESS OF AMERICA**

President Calvin Coolidge said, “The chief business of the American people is business.”<sup>6</sup> I’d edit this statement to say the business of America is *small* business, and increasingly *minority* small business.

The United States is home to 36 million small businesses,<sup>7</sup> including over 6 million with employees.<sup>8</sup> Small businesses drive employ-

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Small businesses are modern-day alchemists: They create value where it didn’t exist before. They turn water into wine.

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ment, innovation, and economic growth. Nearly two-thirds of new jobs are created by small businesses.<sup>9</sup>

Small businesses are modern-day alchemists: They create value where it didn’t exist before. They turn water into wine. Their economic impact reverberates throughout their communities and supplier networks.

Americans' living standards and well-being are directly correlated to the health of small businesses. That's precisely why I've dedicated my professional life to fighting for entrepreneurs as the president and CEO of the nation's leading small business advocacy organization, the Job Creators Network (JCN). We are protecting the backbone of the economic powerhouse that is the United States of America.

American small businesses were dealt an enormous blow by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing government restrictions on business activity. Millions of companies across the country were forced to close, many never to return. Small businesses that survived the challenges of COVID-19 went on to face numerous economic headwinds including historic inflation, stagflation, recession, and the constant threat of new regulations and taxes during the Biden administration. With the reelection of Donald J. Trump, there have been concerted efforts by the President to countermand Biden's egregious economic policies, but for lasting change, much will need to be codified by the legislature.

There's never been a more critical time to fight for small businesses. Fighting for small businesses means fighting for racial minorities. Over my career as a businessman and advocate, I've seen firsthand how minorities are capitalizing on entrepreneurship opportunities to ascend from difficult circumstances to enter the middle class. Entrepreneurship can therefore also improve racial income equality.

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Minorities are disproportionately entrepreneurial [. . . and] tend to have average incomes and wealth that exceed those of White Americans.

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Minorities are disproportionately entrepreneurial, starting businesses far more often than their White counterparts. Though you won't read it in the mainstream media or hear about it from progressive politicians who practice identity politics, minority entrepreneurs tend to have average incomes and wealth that exceed those of White

Americans. In the pages that follow, I will make the case that promoting minority entrepreneurship is the most effective way to overcome racial economic disparities.

**THE BEST WAY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP  
CLOSE RACIAL ECONOMIC DIVIDES IS TO DO LESS**

Ironically, big government policy proposals, often made in the name of helping disadvantaged minorities, threaten to block this pathway to racial income equality. Progressives routinely claim that our economic system, which has generated the most vibrant minority middle class in history, is systemically racist and in need of structural reform. In reality, it's the progressives' own policies that make it harder for minorities to succeed.

Consider which business has a more difficult time contending with a \$15 minimum wage: the neighborhood dry cleaner, or the downtown law firm? Who is more impacted by inflation caused by deficit spending and easy monetary policy: the owner of a local barbecue joint, or the CEO of a financial services company? Which entrepreneur is more affected by runaway gas prices caused by progressives' opposition to traditional energy: the landscaping business that operates out of a 2005

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The best antidote to the remaining vestiges of racism is the free-market system that rewards entrepreneurs of all backgrounds based on merit, not identity.

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Toyota Tacoma, or an internet entrepreneur who works from his home laptop? And so on—you get the idea. The best way to accelerate minority entrepreneurship and overcome racial economic gaps is for the government to do less, not more.

Progressives claim the moral high ground on racial issues, assuming their policies help overcome racial divides, but the free-market small business economy is indisputably helping minorities reduce racial

income equality through their own volition. In fact, the best antidote to the remaining vestiges of racism is the free-market system that rewards entrepreneurs of all backgrounds based on merit, not identity. Small businesses and their defenders are the ones who genuinely deserve moral authority on race issues.

This book grew from the 2022 congressional testimony I gave before the US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee in a hearing on the barriers facing minority-owned small businesses. I explained how bad government policy—not racism—is the biggest barrier to minority economic opportunity. I pointed to real-world stories of minority small businesses struggling to contend with government burdens.

My perspective was met with backlash from congressional Democrats who tried to steer the discussion to proposed “solutions” involving new racial equity government programs and regulations. One congressman even implied my argument—based on a decade of defending countless small businesses nationwide—was “ignorant.”

As the saying goes, when all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. And when you’re a progressive politician, every societal issue, including racial economic inequality, must have a big government response. If I gave the same testimony to today’s Trump-era Congress, I might experience a different response. But even with the recent passage of laws that support small businesses, there remains a vast political divide within our nation with radically different socio-economic objectives, and it is minority small business owners who experience the shifting winds first and most deeply.

## **I KNOW THE POWER OF MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP FIRSTHAND**

Throughout this book are stories of successful minority immigrants who overcame significant challenges to improve their economic situations—a group I’m fortunate to be a part of.

My parents came to the United States from Mexico City over 50 years ago to pursue the American Dream. My dad was a tailor, my mom, a housekeeper. They struggled at times throughout my childhood. I remember mom bringing us to St. Rose Church of Lima in Chula Vista, California, to distribute USDA milk and cheese to needy families. After a day's work, we brought our share home too. Every time, we went home last.

They've both passed on, but the values my parents instilled in me—hard work, grit, and gratitude—helped me become a successful small business owner. I've lived the challenges and opportunities facing minority entrepreneurs firsthand. Millions of minority entrepreneurs from Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East come here for the same reasons my parents did: to participate in America's free-market economy, which rewards ingenuity, hard work, and customer service over credentials, family connections, and skin color.

America's vibrant opportunity economy allowed me to succeed at the highest levels of business. Prior to leading JCN, I was vice president of sales at CSM Bakery, a company that supplies baked goods to major retailers nationwide, and a business consultant at Boston Consulting Group. I later founded my own business strategy and development company called Grupo MAS, which the Zyman Group subsequently acquired. I have also held executive positions at Georgia-Pacific and Kraft Foods, where I was responsible for product innovation.

These experiences enabled me to better understand the daily challenges facing small businesses. I saw up close how small businesses are at a competitive disadvantage because they lack the economies of scale, preferential purchasing agreements, and profit margins of their big-business counterparts. As a result, bad government policy naturally impacts small businesses to a far greater degree. That's especially true for minority entrepreneurs, whose companies tend to be less profitable and more precarious.

Having experienced my own, and witnessing countless minority small business success stories over the years, I firmly believe that expanding entrepreneurship opportunities is the best way to close America's racial economic gaps.

## **THE CASE FOR MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

In this book, I make the case for minority entrepreneurship and call on the government to, simply put, get out of the way.

Chapter 1 draws on anecdotal and empirical research to discuss how minorities are already overcoming racial economic disparities through entrepreneurship. I show how entrepreneurship is also helping minorities indirectly by providing job opportunities and skills that lift up communities and generate higher financial returns.

Chapter 2 challenges the progressive argument that racial economic differences are a product of racism. I argue that the free market, which is truly anti-racist, is the best way to eliminate racism that remains in our country.

Chapter 3 explains America's minority entrepreneurship advantage, highlighting how minorities have voted with their feet by coming to the United States over other developed countries to pursue their dreams. I point to high pay rates, low taxes, free-labor markets, and an established culture of entrepreneurship to explain America's minority entrepreneurship outperformance.

Chapter 4 addresses the biggest threats facing minority entrepreneurs, namely well-intended government policies that have only made it more difficult for them to achieve the American Dream. Progressive policy solutions such as tax increases, new labor and environment regulations, and new social programs would kill these small business golden geese and exacerbate racial economic inequality.

Chapter 5 offers public policy solutions to accelerate minority entrepreneurship including making small business tax cuts permanent, ending inflationary deficit spending, recommitting to traditional energy sources, and eliminating pointless regulations. In stark contrast to progressives, I argue the government is the problem, not the solution to racial economic equality.

Chapter 6 concludes with the choice facing this country: Will we move toward socialism or capitalism? Will we remember the forgotten men and women who run small businesses, or treat them as a means to progressives' social ends? The answers to such questions will deter-

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If the United States chooses to sacrifice its remarkable economic opportunity in the name of racial progress, it will get neither. However, if we recommit to defending the free-market small business economy, we will get both.

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mine whether America's small business economy survives intact, and whether we can continue progressing toward real racial economic equality.

If the United States chooses to sacrifice its remarkable economic opportunity in the name of racial progress, it will get neither. However, if we recommit to defending the free-market small business economy, we will get both.

Minorities can close today's racial economic gaps through entrepreneurship—but to be able to do so, the business of America must remain small business.