Acton University 2024

**Course: Case Studies on Effective Compassion**

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Outline:

**General Purpose:** The purpose of the lecture is to sketch the ideas and philosophies behind the issues related to poverty alleviation and human flourishing. An emphasis will be placed on the ideas presented in my book Rethinking Charity. Examples of charity work used by ministries in America will be provided.

**Outline:** What is poverty, after all? The determinants of poverty, when explored systematically, show us that poverty-alleviation is a complex question that requires careful examination based on principles. This vision challenges the hegemonic and static biologistic view of how to address poverty prevalent in both policy and action. But how can we outline this complexity usefully?

It is important to briefly touch on the historical roots of the concept of race as they developed and gave way to theories of the effects of race relations in America—that is, the sociology of race. Our approach to poverty is parasitic to an anthropology, a vision of the human person that is the methodological matrix for the understanding of social processes. The main purpose of the lecture is to outline the main ideas behind a sound anthropology and offer concrete examples of how to attend the problem focused on integral fulfillment.

Americans are compassionate, as compassion has been primarily understood for quite some time. They donate generously and volunteer. But there is a systemic sonnet ringing within our ears and narrowing the alternatives we have within the constraints of transactional systems of care that misuse that immense good will. The main false assumption is that the state has the primary responsibility for the care of the poor. There seems to be a unitary vision of society that elevates the state as the soul of compassion for the nation, with basic communities within society taking a secondary role and even becoming subsidiaries of the state. Those invested with a strong and wholesome desire to help those in need have a task. They should convince themselves that *the creation of wealth is a spiritual exercise*.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Recommended Reading: (These are recommended for further study. The short talk is not an attempt to summarize the ideas in these works not is necessary to read the books in advance):**

*Not Tragically Colored* by Ismael Hernandez

*Rethinking Charity* by Ismael Hernandez

*The Conservative Heart* by Arthus Brooks

*When Helping Hurts* by [Steve Corbett](https://www.thriftbooks.com/a/steve-corbett/203961/) and [Brian Fikkert](https://www.thriftbooks.com/a/brian-fikkert/203960/)

1. See Theodore Roosevelt Malloch, *Doing Virtuous Business: The Remarkable Success of Spiritual Enterprise* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 3; and Michael Novak, *Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life* (New York: Free Press, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)