**Rethinking Charity Outline**

Acton University 2025

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*“To die, and thus avoid poverty or love, or anything painful, is not the part of a brave man, but rather of a coward; for it is cowardice to avoid trouble, and the suicide does not undergo death because it is honorable, but in order to avoid evil.” ―* Aristotle*,* Nicomachean Ethics p.74

**Overview:**

An examination of the concept of charity in our present situation in the United States and how our assumptions about poverty and certain ideologies often impede a better understanding and keep us within very narrow, biologistic, and transactional alternatives that often miss the deeper human need.

**General Topics treated:**

Conventional versus substantial ways of looking at charity and poverty.

Things we tell ourselves about poverty and the poor and about how to better address problems become “conceits.” We examine various conceits in modern America where it comes to poverty.

Asking the right questions about poverty and our service to the poor. We examine some of those questions.

The role of ideology and narrative creation in poverty alleviation. What is the main narrative impeding progress?

Structuralism, reductionism, “blaming the victim” and other narratives

The creation of wealth as a spiritual exercise

Aristotle and the “divided line of affections” and poverty

Where to go to transcend false alternatives and tired narratives

Books:

*Rethinking Charity* by Ismael Hernandez

*Not Tragically Colored* by Ismael Hernandez

*The Tragedy of American Compassion* by Marvin Olasky