

What to Do with the Rest of Your Life

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***The situation: Is it really a Gray
Tsunami?***

Aging as a Demographic Challenge

- Canadians have added 25 years to their life in the last century
 - In 1921, life expectancy was 57 years of age
 - In 2011, life expectancy is 81.7 years of age

Life expectancy measures how long someone would be expected to live if *every* year of their life was spent in 1921 or 2011. There is no accounting for progress that decreases mortality rates.

11/09/2012 - Edward Marks, blog.edwardmarks.com/post/31337304505/life-expectancy-doesn't-measure-how-long-youre

OUTCOME VS. COST: GLOBAL HEALTH CARE

FROM HIGH-TECH SURGERIES to groundbreaking HIV treatments, medical innovation has dramatically improved health outcomes since the 1960s. In wealthy nations, health care spending has risen, and lives have been lengthened. But the United States follows a slightly different pattern, with skyrocketing health expenditures and a much slower increase in life expectancy. Unequal access to treatment and poor preventive care for many U.S. residents may partly explain the difference, analysts say.

BY ALBERTO LUCAS LÓPEZ AND RYAN T. WILLIAMS

LIFE EXPECTANCY 1980
(Average at birth)

In 1980, U.S. life expectancy was similar to those of other developed nations, as was spending on health care.

78 -
77 -
76 -
75 -
74 -
73 -
72 -

HEALTH EXPENDITURE
1980 → 2015
(per person per year, in U.S. dollars)

Over 35 years, other nations put caps on medical prices and spending to guarantee access to most of their residents, while the U.S. allowed expenditures to go unchecked.

90,000
80,000
70,000
60,000
50,000
40,000
30,000
20,000
10,000
1,000

UNITED STATES

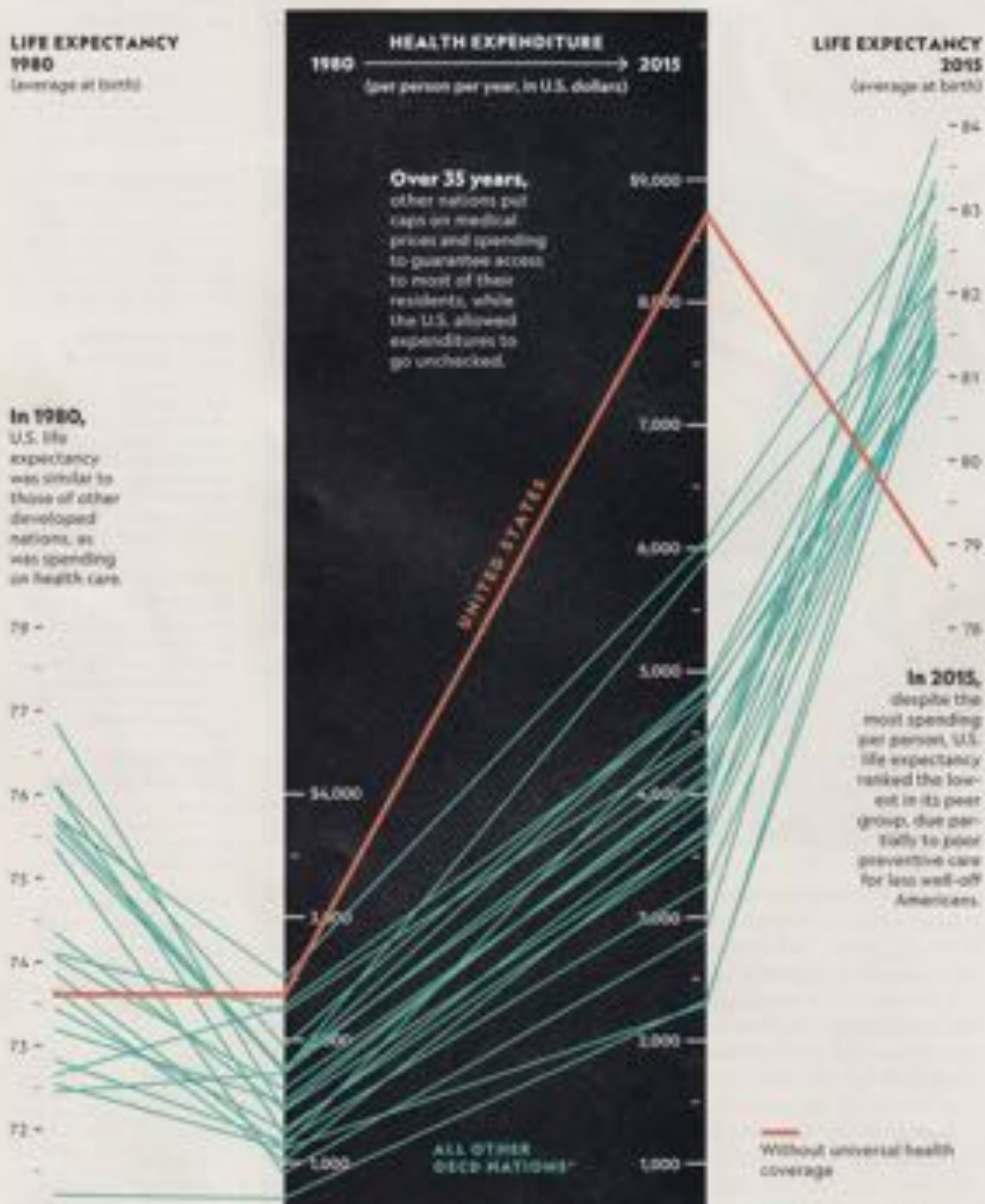
ALL OTHER OECD NATIONS

LIFE EXPECTANCY 2015
(Average at birth)

In 2015, despite the most spending per person, U.S. life expectancy ranked the lowest in its peer group, due partially to poor preventive care for less well-off Americans.

Without universal health coverage

84
83
82
81
80
79
78



- Seniors can expect to live from 10 – 20 years after retirement from paid employment in reasonable health and comparative affluence
 - Source: Blaine D, Higgs P, Hyde M. *et al* Life course influences on quality of life in early old age. Soc Sci Med 2004582171-2179.2179
- Courtesy, Sharon Simpson, Director, Mennonite Services “Healthy Aging” —presentation at Aging Matters, Regent College Summer School, 2017

Aging as a Health Challenge

- The average Canadian can expect to live roughly 10.5 years with some level of disability.
- The last four years in the Stevens family (Gail 81, Paul 82)

Aging as a Ecclesiastical Challenge

- The graying of the church!
- In the coming decades the church is facing a challenge similar to the first century—in the care of widows and single women (who refused arranged marriage) and in times of plagues.
- See E.H. Oliver, *The Social Achievements of the Christian Church* (Regent Publishing reprint, original, 1930)

Psalm 92

- “The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar in Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God.
- They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green.”

***Vocational Growth:
Reframing Retirement***

R. Paul Stevens

Retirement Yesterday

- Work till you die
- Or Die soon after retiring
- Or depression: The disease is called “delayed postretirement disorientation syndrome accompanied by depression and dysfunction.” (Dwight Hervey Small, *When Christians Retire: Finding New Purpose in Your Bonus Years* [Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000], 22-3.)

Biblical Perspectives

- ***(1) There is only once reference to retirement in the Bible and that is for Levites (retire at 50) Numbers 8:23-26.***
- ***(2) Post-Major Career must not be a life of Sloth***

Case Study Frank

- Frank is retiring from being a CEO of a manufacturing company. At his retirement dinner he reflects on the future. He hopes, he says to keep his hand in the company, doing some consulting on a limited basis. But he also wants to take up some entrepreneurial activity on a part-time basis. Now that he will be substantially free from the necessity of working for a living, and with his considerable assets solidly in place,

Case Study Frank

- he wants to do what he has always dreamed of (but never felt he had time while on the corporate treadmill)--to work in ministry in the local church. Perhaps some of his work will be in the Third World to which he hopes to travel annually. He and his wife hope that retirement will give them the opportunity to finally get "their life into a single seamless integrated whole."

Case Study Nathaniel

- At the dinner honouring Nathaniel similar accolades were made for his service as senior sales manager of a paper company. But Nathaniel made a stunning announcement. He plans to abruptly change the course of his life. He has one simple plan for the coming years. He wants to learn how to die. To that end he wants fewer possessions; for, as Cicero put it,

Case Study Nathaniel

- "can anything be more absurd in the traveller than to increase his luggage as he nears his journey's end?" He has, he says, much reading he needs to do. He hopes to write some reminiscences for his children. And he wants to learn the art of contemplative and intercessory prayer. He intends to begin every day with these words from a prayer by John Baillie:

-

Case Study Nathaniel

- “Forbid, O Lord, that my thoughts today should be wholly occupied with the world's passing show. Seeing that in Thy lovingkindness Thou has given me the power to lift my mind to the contemplation of things unseen and eternal, forbid that I should remain content with the things of sense and time.

Case Study Nathaniel

- Grant rather that each day may do something so to strengthen my hold upon the unseen world, so to increase my sense of its reality, and so to attach my heart to its holy interests that, as the end of my earthly life draws ever nearer, I may not grow to be part of these fleeting earthly surroundings, but rather grow more and more conformed to the life of the world to come.”

Discussion

- 1. If you were present at these two retirement dinners how would you react?
- 2. What fears does each person reveal? Is Frank turning from a life that has not satisfied? Has Nathaniel had his fill and is now tired--or simply gazing more steadfastly at the One from whom the delights of this life have come?

Biblical Perspectives

- ***(3) God calls us (each one) and we do not retire from our callings (to love God and neighbour in specific ways) Eph 4:1***
- ***(4) Scripture points to a sabbatical year of rest, reflection and reinvigoration—a possible model for the beginning of renewal.***
 - “Where is there a good school for forty-year-olds?” (or fifty or sixty-year-olds) facing the next season of their life. Carl Jung (Tom and Hazel at Regent)
 -

- “We can think of aging as a kind of ‘natural monastery’ in which earlier roles, attachments, and pleasures are naturally stripped away from us.”
- Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*, 26.

Reframing Retirement

- Reframing means looking at things in a new way, ***shifting our “attitude about a situation from pessimistic to optimistic,”*** says Lewis Richmond.
 - Lewis Richmond, *Aging as a Spiritual Discipline: A Contemplative Guide to Growing Older and Wiser* (New York: Gotham Books, 2012), p. 57.

Reframing Retirement

- ***1. First, retirement, whether voluntary or involuntary, is a useful shock.*** It is a trauma that can be productive of a re-evaluation of one's life. Eugene Bianchi explains, "This apparently negative challenge may be just the thing necessary to dislocate rigid, ingrained patterns of behavior."

- What have I really done with my life up to now? What contribution to family, neighbour, to the world and the environment do I still want to make? What is the meaning of my life? What am I actually living for? What is most important in my life?



Stages of Purpose

What do I want to be when I grow up? (preteens)

Why do people want me as a friend? (teens)

How will I do my living? (twenties)

What qualities do I want to centre my life around? (thirties)

Stages of Purpose

What is my legacy? (seventies)

Why do I get up in the morning? (sixties)

What difference am I making in my world? (fifties)

What do I want to become? (forties)



Discussion

- What are the questions you are asking at this stage in your life?

Discussion

- What are the questions you are asking at this stage in your life? (3 minutes)
- What do you hear are the questions of people who are older than you?

Reframing Retirement

- ***Second, retirement (in the formal sense) can become a time of significant personal growth.***

Reframing Retirement

- ***Retirement can open up possibilities of work, voluntary or remunerated that fits one's gifts, talents, personality and life experience.***

Bianchi speaks of this as turning our working life into something more than a mere career, to a religious experience, something which he calls a contemplative approach to work.

(Bianchi, *Aging*, 62.)



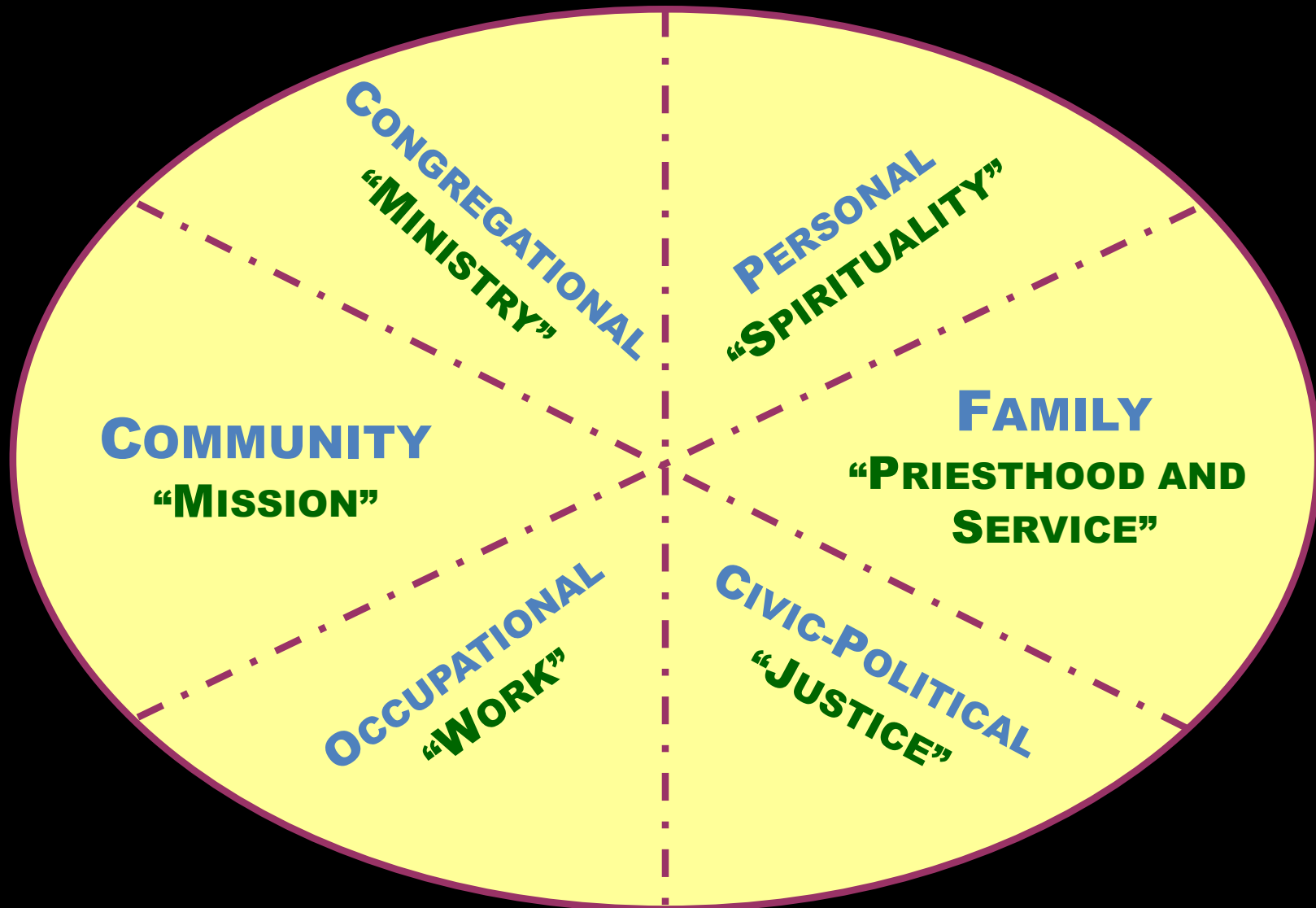
Reframing Retirement

- *Fourth, retirement can become a critical time to re-evaluate one's vocation.*

VOCATION=CALLING

- For there to be a callee there must be a **CALLER**
- Before we are called to do something we are called to **SOMEONE** (calling is primarily to do with salvation)
- The call of God is **COMPREHENSIVE** – to the whole of life

A COMPREHENSIVE CALLING belonging, being and doing



Reframing Retirement

- ***Formal retirement can become a time when we make a transition, as Zalman Schachter-Shalomi describes it, from ageing to sage-ing.*** The potential of mentoring the next generation, in the workplace, in the family, in the church or synagogue opens up possibilities of older people become elders in the biblical sense of people noted for wisdom and experience who can be sought out for advice, help, support and direction.

Why we should work until we die

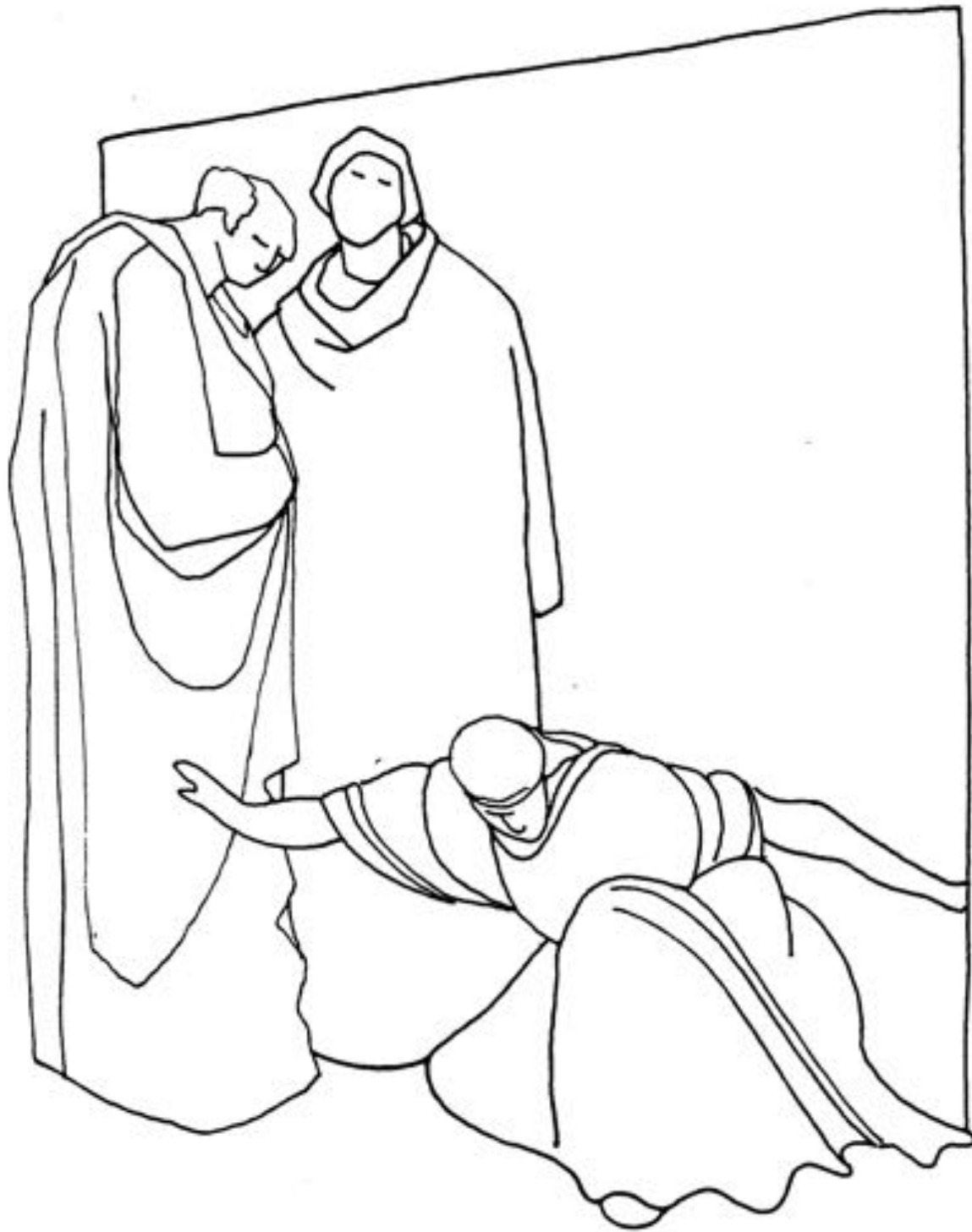
- (1) We are ***made to work*** (Gen 1:26-28)—part of what it means to be made in the image of God (who is a worker)
- (2) Work is ***basically good for us*** (gets us out of ourselves, expresses talents and gifts—we are made both for being and doing)

Why we should work until we die

- (3) Work is a ***practical way of loving our neighbour***
- “By creation, human beings are social beings, never intended to live alone. Because of our social nature, we are specialized (each person is in one sense unique), interdependent and, therefore, necessarily dependent on exchange. Exchange is built into our very nature. And this is business.”
- Kenneth S. Kantzer, “God Intends His Precepts to Transform Society,” in Richard C. Chewning, ed., *Biblical Principles & Business* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1989), 24.
-

Why we should work until we die

- (4) Work is one of the ways we ***advance the Kingdom of God*** bringing God's shalom and enhancing human life.



THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The rule of the
Sovereign

plus

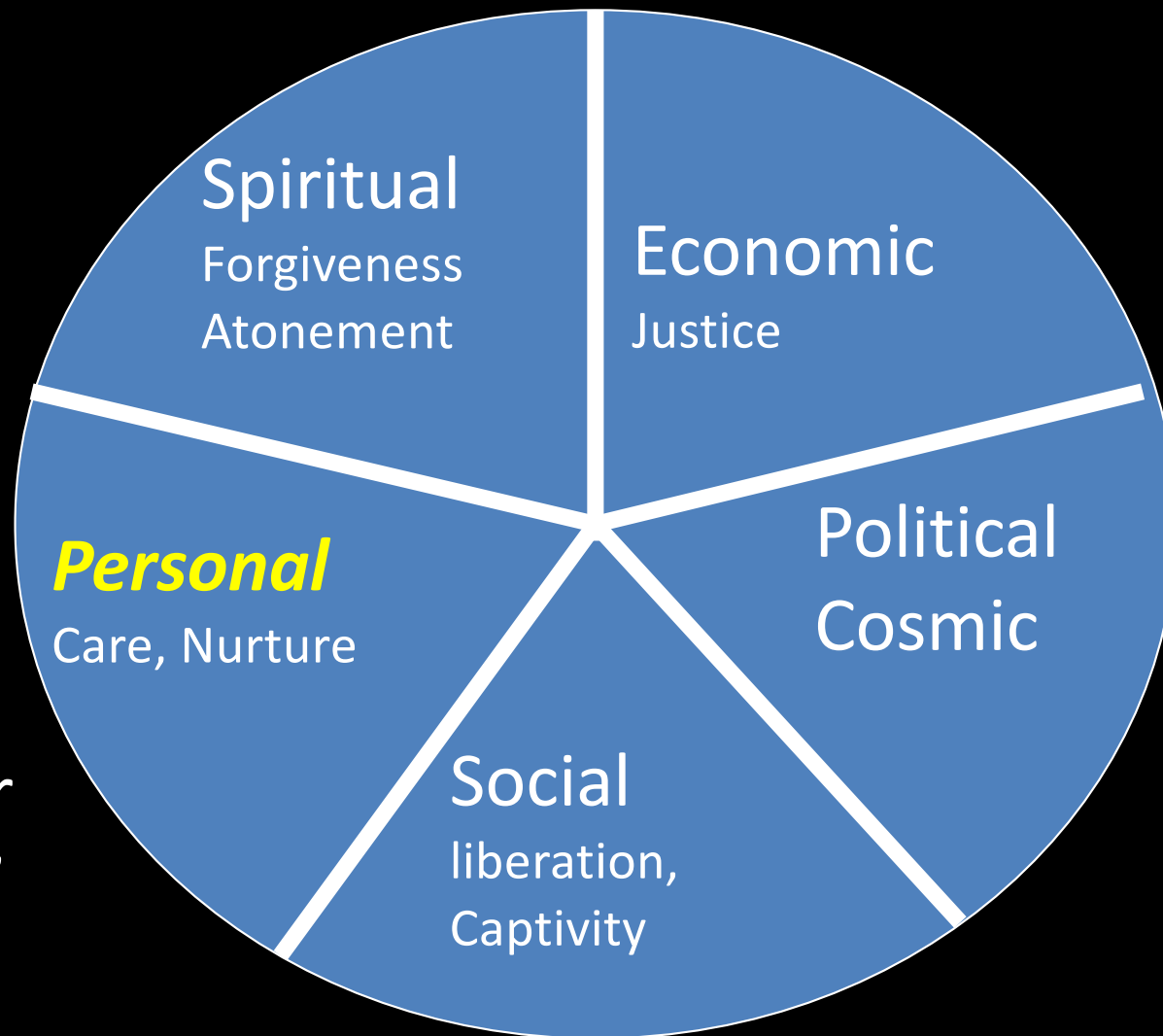
the response of
the people

God's Saving Rule (kingdom) in Christ

"Your sins are forgiven" Mk 2:9

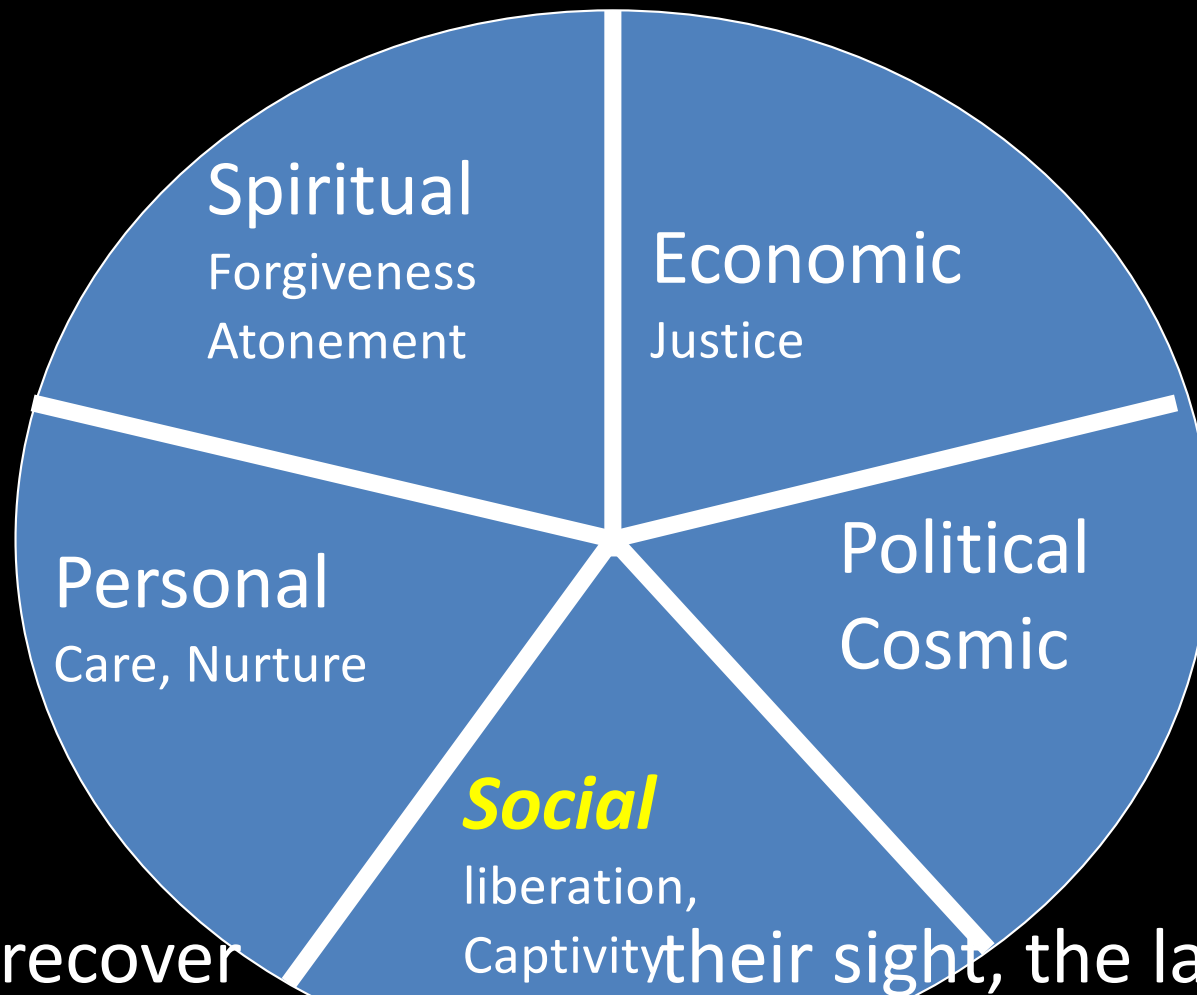


God's Saving Rule (kingdom) in Christ



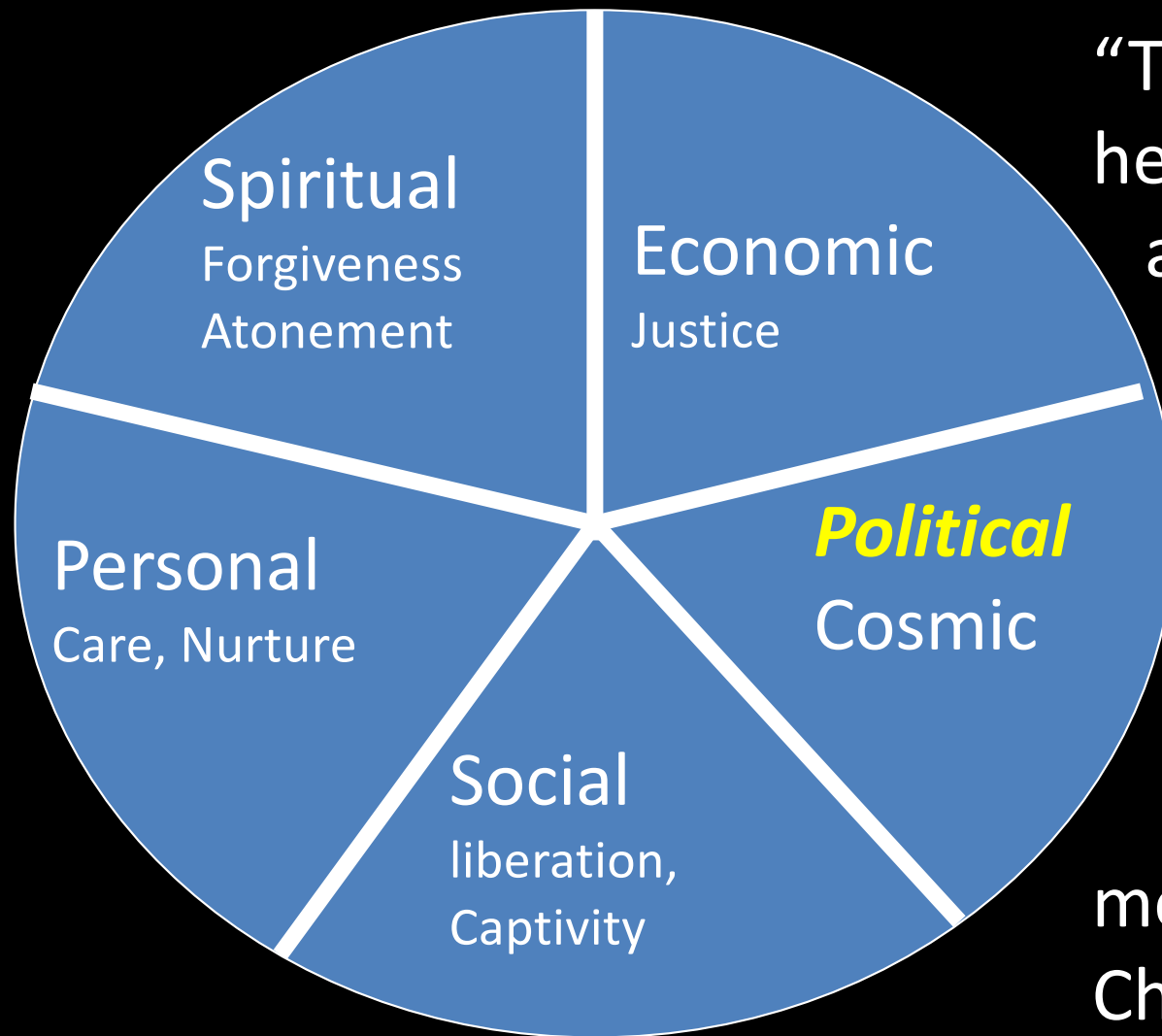
“I will give
you rest for
your souls”
Matt 11:28

God's Saving Rule (kingdom) in Christ



“The blind recover their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the poor are hearing the good news” (Matt11:5)

God's Saving Rule (kingdom) in Christ



“They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders”

Matt 23:4

“He overturned the table of

money

Changers.”

Matt 21:12

God's Saving Rule (kingdom) in Christ



“If I have cheated anybody...I will pay back four times the amount”
Zaccheus
Luke 19:8

Why we should work until we die

- (5) Work is the main context in which we ***grow spiritually***
- “I’m prepared to contend that the primary location for spiritual formation is the workplace.”
- Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 127.

Possibilities

- ***Walter Wright “Entrepreneurment”***
- “Entrepreneurment can embrace a portfolio of activities/work, some done for pay, some for service, some pro-bono and some for love.... With this concept leaving a full-time job is only one more move of realignment, something we have been doing since we were teenagers.” (email June 2014)

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