

Neighborly Economics Summary

Peter Block, 9.25.18

In other times, our culture, our way of being with each other, the way we spend our days, were constructed by Emperors, Popes, Generals and Public Officials.

Our cultural way of being is now constructed by the CEO's of privatization and their language and branding of the free market consumer economy. The narrative of this economy is that productivity, convenience, scale, speed and cost are the dominant values and constitute success. These values, born out of the modern economy, have now spread into our souls and blanket any endeavor, including efforts in service of humanity and the common good. Best described as the tools of empire, this is a modern re-performance of Pharaoh's Egypt.

We cannot end poverty, stop the immigration crisis, produce health, care for the planet, create well-being or end violence using the narrative and tools of empire; to bow to practicality, to count on the language of being practical, goal oriented, measurement minded, desirous of scale, asking how long will this take and where is it working is the language of empire. This is the wish to return to Egypt. Our task is to create ways of being together based on an alternative economy which confront and re-frames this dominant economic narrative.

If we depart from the dominant narrative of the "free market", we need a place to go. The Exodus into the wilderness away from Pharaoh is a metaphor for our journey. When viewed from within the context of empire economics, the wilderness appears to be a place of no visible means of life support. Very inconvenient. What was discovered in the wilderness was the means of life support which we can call neighborliness. It was a gift minded. It was based on associational life. Out of this came commandments of neighborliness. Paralleled in Islam were Sharia laws banning usury and devoting one third of the land to the common good. This is neighborhood economics.

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Please join us for a webinar with John McKnight, Walter Brueggemann and Peter Block on Tuesday, October 2, 1:00p ET, "Departing the Consumer Culture, Into What." More details are here: <http://www.abundantcommunity.com/home/events.html>