

Essay from the bold pastor

#186 - Caring for People, Piketty and Gates -

Thomas Piketty, the author of “Capital in the Twenty-First Century” which sold 1.5 million copies worldwide, visited Japan this spring. In capitalist societies where the capitalization rate is higher than the economic growth rate, the average annual earning rate of capitals is 4 to 5 percent while annual increase rate of income and production is 1 to 2 percent at most. Therefore, it was inevitable that the centralization of capital and the inequality of income distribution worsened. And so, Piketty claims, “The world should join hands in taxing more on the riches.” What is intriguing is that the billionaire Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, said “I totally agree!” in his blog in spite that he is repeatedly criticized in the book. This is the word from someone who has already donated over 30 billion dollars for education and the world’s disease control and prevention.

Meanwhile, Gates realizes that the wealth earned by someone who started a business from scratch and the wealth earned through inheritance are not the same. How the wealth is used also varies. It can be spent on corporate investment, charity donation, purchase of luxury items, and so on. So, he warns against generalizing wealth. This comes across clearly to Japanese people who are witnessing how all the urban agglomeration comes down to the profits of landowners in Tokyo due to the concentration of land capital. The number of individuals and companies that own large-scale lands in the Tokyo metropolitan area is 14,502. As is well known, the lands these people own accounts for 30.8 percent of all the residential area in the sector.

By the way, CAF (Charities Aid Foundation), an UK organization that releases the “World Giving Index” conducts an annual survey in 135 countries worldwide on how many people in a given country have helped others, made a donation, or done any volunteer work in the last several months. Last year, US and Myanmar ranked first while Japan ranked 90th, which was the third worst in East Asia next to China at 128th and Cambodia at 108th.

This may be surprising, but there is a number of capitalists in the Bible. Some are good, and others are bad. One of the most honorable among them was Job, but even he loved wild parties. Yet...

“When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular custom.”
Job 1:5

Also... ***“ because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them.”***
Job 29:12

As these verses indicate, what characterizes his behavior was his worship of God and service to the weak. The former alone would be religion and the latter alone would be charity, but what combines these two is the Jesus Christ who manifested gospel. As he cared for people, he sacrificed himself on the cross for this extremely unequal world and saved mankind. It is not until you owe him respect that the act of caring for people becomes possible.

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