

Nothing is as Successful as a Free, Market-Driven Society

December 12, 2013



by [Randy Bright](#)

Sometimes there is so much in the news to absorb that it is like drinking water from a fire hydrant.

And depending on where you look for news, it can be depressing...if you allow it to be.

It helps to have an open mind when you read the news, and it is obvious there are people out there with the greatest of intentions.

But it also points to the fact that, at least in America, we are losing sight of what freedom and American exceptionalism is all about. We do not have a shortage of people who are innovators, but what we do have is a shortage of innovators who believe that their innovative ideas don't need the force of law and regulation to make people accept them.

For example, I think that an electric car is a great idea – when it can be done without charging their batteries with fossil fuels. I am not against burning fossil fuels, but I do think that there will be a time when technology makes solar energy more feasible than fossil fuels. In the meantime, I don't think it is a coincidence that we have natural gas, oil and coal to meet our energy needs until we come up with something better.

To me, that is a balanced, logical approach, and it works well with market economics. Without giving any examples, I think we all know that there are extreme views on both sides.

Which leads me to my initial point about headlines. It is not hard to see how people want us to think.

I've seen numerous articles about how we should give up our cars and ride bicycles instead. One is an article entitled Buyer Sought for Melbourne's Bike Scheme. Melbourne developed its Bike Share program using taxpayer funding, but now is seeking a private company to buy them out and run the company in conjunction with its public transportation network.

Within the same article, the program is touted as a huge success while saying that their little-used bikes are in mint condition.

That makes me ask the question, was it really a huge success, or was they just saying it was to attract a buyer?

And on one hand, it seems good that the city wants it to be run privately, but if there was such a huge market for such a thing, why didn't a private enterprise do it in the first place? Was it because their laws didn't allow it, or was it because private enterprise saw no demand for it?

Here's another headline – Large Companies Prepared to Pay Price on Carbon.

The article says, “More than two dozen of the nation's biggest corporations, including the five major oil companies, are planning their future growth on the expectation that the government will force them to pay a price for carbon pollution as a way to control global warming.”

The article goes on to describe how Koch Industries is not among them, and that it is “ramping up an already-aggressive campaign against climate policy”, and that “The divide, between conservative groups that are fighting against government regulation and oil companies that are planning for it as a practical business decision, echoes a deeper rift in the party, as business-friendly establishment Republicans clash with the Tea Party.

Really? The last time I looked, establishment Republicans were not business friendly at all and the Tea Party hasn't embraced global warming. I think most would acknowledge that if a company believes something will be forced upon them, right or wrong, it is prudent to plan for it. Doing so is not an admission that global warming is true.

Here's another one.

The meaning of #Black Friday. Photos taken of empty parking lots at shopping venues are shown to prove that large parking lots designed for peak shopping seasons are not necessary.

Now I am having a hard time believing the photos were taken on Black Friday, because everywhere I went that day, the parking lots were full.

Nevertheless, the complaint of the article was that our zoning codes mindlessly require parking minimums, and that the way to solve this problem is for all cities to repeal their minimum parking requirements. Unfortunately, the cities that are doing so are actually establishing parking maximums rather than allowing a market driven business to build what they feel is the appropriate amount. At least I could agree with the writer of this article that government should not be able to force “business owners to allocate scarce capital to unproductive uses.”

When all is said and done, all of us need to become critical thinkers and exercise integrity in logic rather than simply picking a side and seeing only what we want to see.

Nothing bears up to that kind of scrutiny better than a free, market-driven society.

Randy W. Bright, AIA, NCARB, is an architect who specializes in church and church-related projects. You may contact him at 918-582-3972, rwbrightchurcharch@sbcglobal.net or www.churcharchitect.net. ©2013 Randy W. Bright © 2013 Tulsa Beacon