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the

WRS Journal

Western Reformed Seminary, Tacoma, Washington

Volume 15, Issue 1

February 2008

Is Capitalism Biblical?



*John Wanamaker,
Presbyterian Elder
and Christian
Businessman*

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Special 25th
Anniversary Issue:
"Seminary:
Foundation for
Ministry"**

EDITOR'S NOTES: FROM JOHN A. BATTLE

All the world is watching as the United States elects its new president. American policies bring great impact to everyone. One area of great importance is economic policy. Many candidates seek votes by promising new and increased government programs, taking a greater share from the private sector. Other candidates want to shrink the role of government in the economy. Is there a biblical position on government and economics? Does the Bible favor capitalism, or socialism? Or is the Bible neutral? We believe the Bible supports and requires godly government, including the protection of private persons' lives and properties—the free enterprise or capitalistic system.

In this issue of the *WRS Journal* we define, defend, and discuss the capitalist system as it relates to the Bible and to Reformed theology. In the first article I demonstrate how capitalism is supported by the Reformed confessions, particularly the Westminster Standards. Two exegetical articles follow: Chris Lensch details the relation of Israel to the Promised Land, especially as shown by the Year of Jubilee command, and I provide a detailed study of the concept of property in the Old Testament, along with the rights and responsibilities of private ownership.

For the application section we hear two voices from the past. Carl McIntire, one of the founders of the Bible Presbyterian Church, describes the duties of the civil government as the protector of liberty; and the seventeenth-century Puritan and Presbyterian writer Thomas Watson offers his classic exposition of the Eighth Commandment, "You shall not steal." Finally, Pastor Jim Huff reviews two excellent books that defend the biblical idea of property and economics.

We pray that this issue of the *WRS Journal* will bless and strengthen all Christians to stand for biblical principles in these times of political decision.

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