

PUBLIC  
LECTURE SERIES  
2013



PROVIDENCE  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# What's a Christian to think?

toward a Christian view  
about market globalization

Bruce Duggan  
Director



a disclaimer:

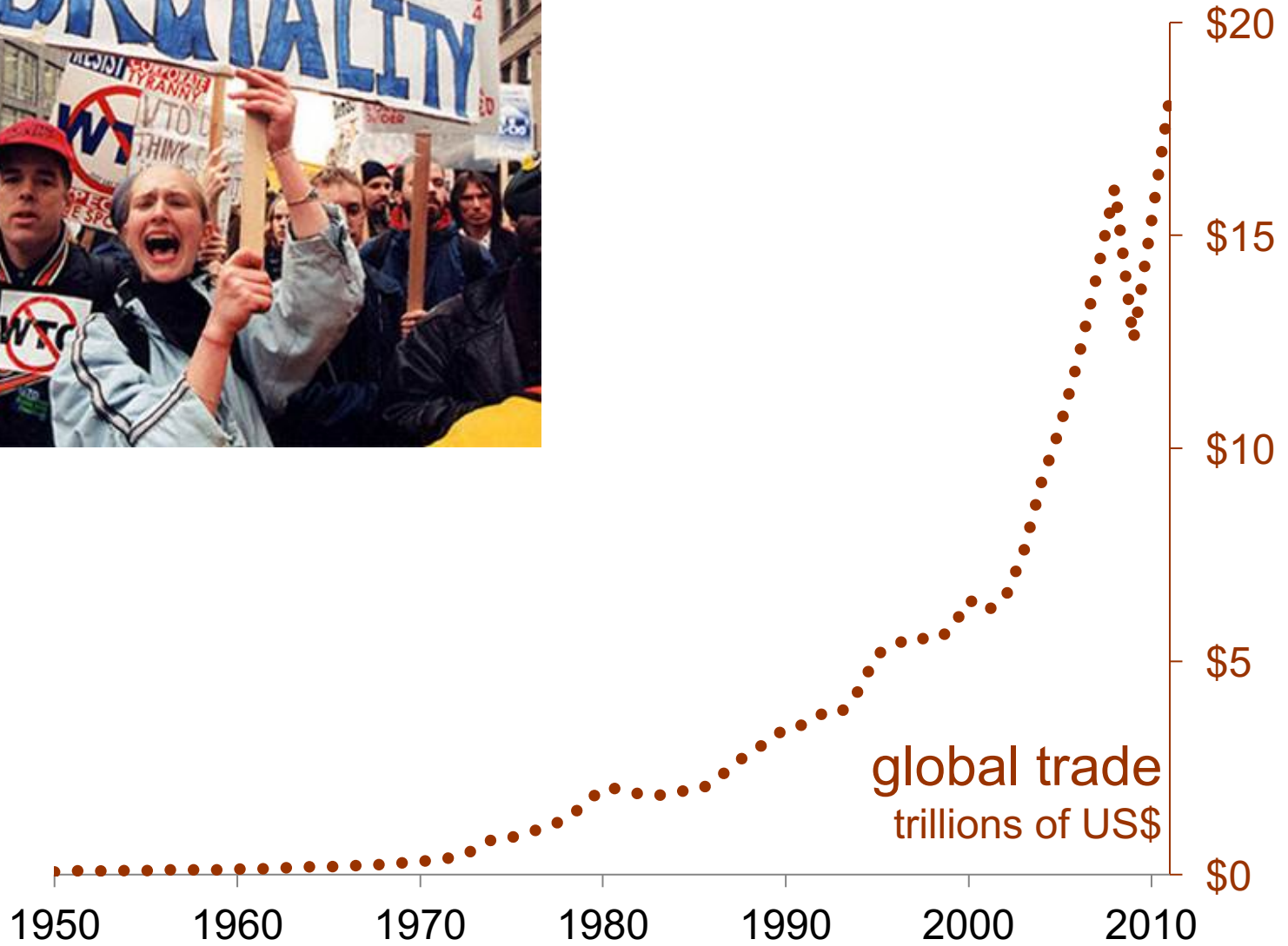
➤ this isn't a class

informed opinion

toward a Christian view  
about market globalization

“The worldwide movement  
toward economic, financial, trade,  
and communications integration.”





# A Short Survey

1. When considering buying a good or product, what characteristics do you prefer it to have?

local



global

known



unknown

small



big

hand-made



machine-made

natural



artificial

“LOCALIST”

“GLOBALIST”



# A Short Survey

2. Think of what you've consumed in the last 24 hours.



Where do those goods or services fall on these continuums?



# A Short Survey

3. How close are your stated preferences to your actions?



“LOCALIST”

“GLOBALIST”



# A Short Survey

3. How close are your stated preferences to your actions?

What does this dichotomy reveal about us?



...what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate....Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?



Romans 7, NASB





# What are we to think?

2 possible views:

- we are oppressed
- we are compelled



# Possible Views

## we are oppressed

The author of Ephesians writes: 'Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the power of this dark world...'

This is the language the American and British governments have used about terrorists, but...it is used more appropriately of the structure of world trade, and especially of the MNCs [Multi-National Corporations]...

Timothy Gorringe

*Principalities & Powers: A Framework for Thinking about Globalization*



# Possible Views

we are oppressed

- and, simultaneously, we oppress



## World Council of Churches

A worldwide fellowship of 349 churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service

In focus

*International Ecumenical Peace Convocation*

*Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*

[English] Deutsch Français Español Русский

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**PEACE**

OVERCOMING VIOLENCE

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

HUMAN RIGHTS

MIDDLE EAST PEACE

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EUROPEAN YOUTH HEARING ON POVERTY, WEALTH AND ECOLOGY

AGAPE CONSULTATION: CHIANG MAI DECLARATION

ASIA-PACIFIC YOUTH HEARING ON POVERTY, WEALTH AND ECOLOGY

You are here: WCC > Resources > Documents > WCC Programmes > Public witness: addressing power, affirming peace > Poverty, wealth and ecology > Neoliberal paradigm > Dossier: Economic Globalization - A critical view and an alternative vision

Document date: 1.08.2001

## Economic Globalization - A Critical View and an Alternative Vision

### Dossier 6

Prepared by the Justice, Peace and Creation team of the World Council of Churches

This document is available [in pdf format](#)

This is the 6th dossier in a series on Globalization: The previous were:



Justice, Peace and Creation team, World Council of Churches • Economic Globalization - A Critical View and an Alternative Vision Dossier 6

# Possible Views

we are oppressed

- and, simultaneously, we oppress

These people are trading in human misery. Elliott Associates are picking over the bones of the Peruvian economy like a pack vultures. It may be just business to them but to the children of Peru it is school books, medicines and clean water.

This is the reality of globalization, the true nature of the global market.

Gorringe



# Possible Views

we are oppressed

- and, simultaneously, we oppress

we are compelled

American demand for goods and services is not organic. That is, the demands are not internally created by a consumer....

[D]emands are created by advertisers and the "machinery for consumer-demand creation" that benefit from increased consumer spending.

John **Kenneth** Galbraith  
*The Affluent Society*



# Possible Views

we are compelled

Americans are beyond apologizing for their lifestyle of scorched-earth consumerism....

Time was, decadence on this scale was something to fear.... But somehow....[w]e have decided not to avoid decadence but to embrace it.

Harry Flood

“Manufacturing Desire,” *Adbusters*



# Possible Views

we are compelled

I say that 'consumerism' is a piece of false consciousness, and indeed a tool for our continued and growing enslavement.

Rupert Read  
*One World Column*



# Possible Views

we are compelled

Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him...

Friedrich Engels  
*Letter to Franz Mehring*





# Possible Views

we are compelled



THE STORY OF  
**STUFF**

37 million views



# Possible Views

we are compelled



**Thou Shalt Have No  
Other Gods Before Me.**



**Buy Nothing Day  
November 26th**



# Possible Views

we are oppressed

- and, simultaneously, we oppress

we are compelled

- our desires have been manufactured desires
- we are suffering from false consciousness

I disagree.



# Why do I disagree?

1. flawed application of biblical texts
2. “false consciousness” is a flawed idea
3. globalization is not oppression



# 1. flawed application of biblical texts

1a. Ephesians 6:12 (the “principalities and powers” text) isn’t about human institutions

1b. biblical texts don’t see global trade as wrong



# 1. flawed application of biblical texts

## 1a. Ephesians 6:12 isn't about human institutions

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12 NASB



# 1. flawed application of biblical texts

## 1b. biblical texts don't see global trade as wrong

- Solomon
  - Tyre
  - nard
  - purple cloth
  - grain
- trade in luxuries
- trade in necessities



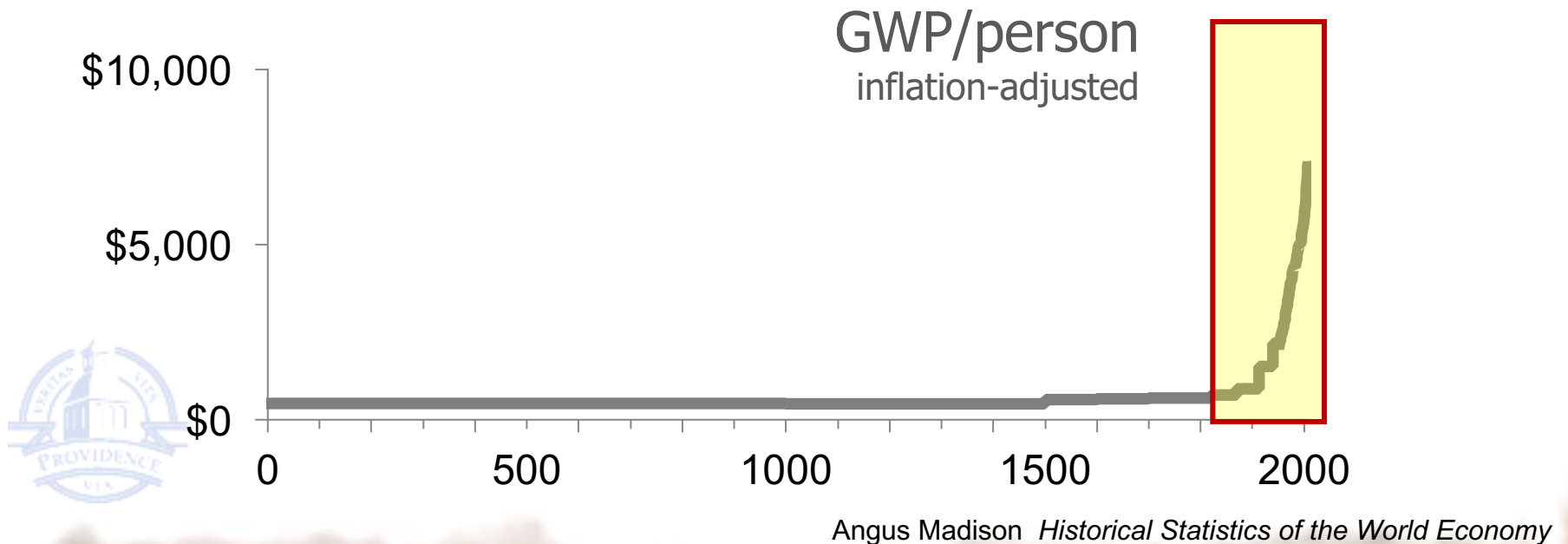
# Why do I disagree?

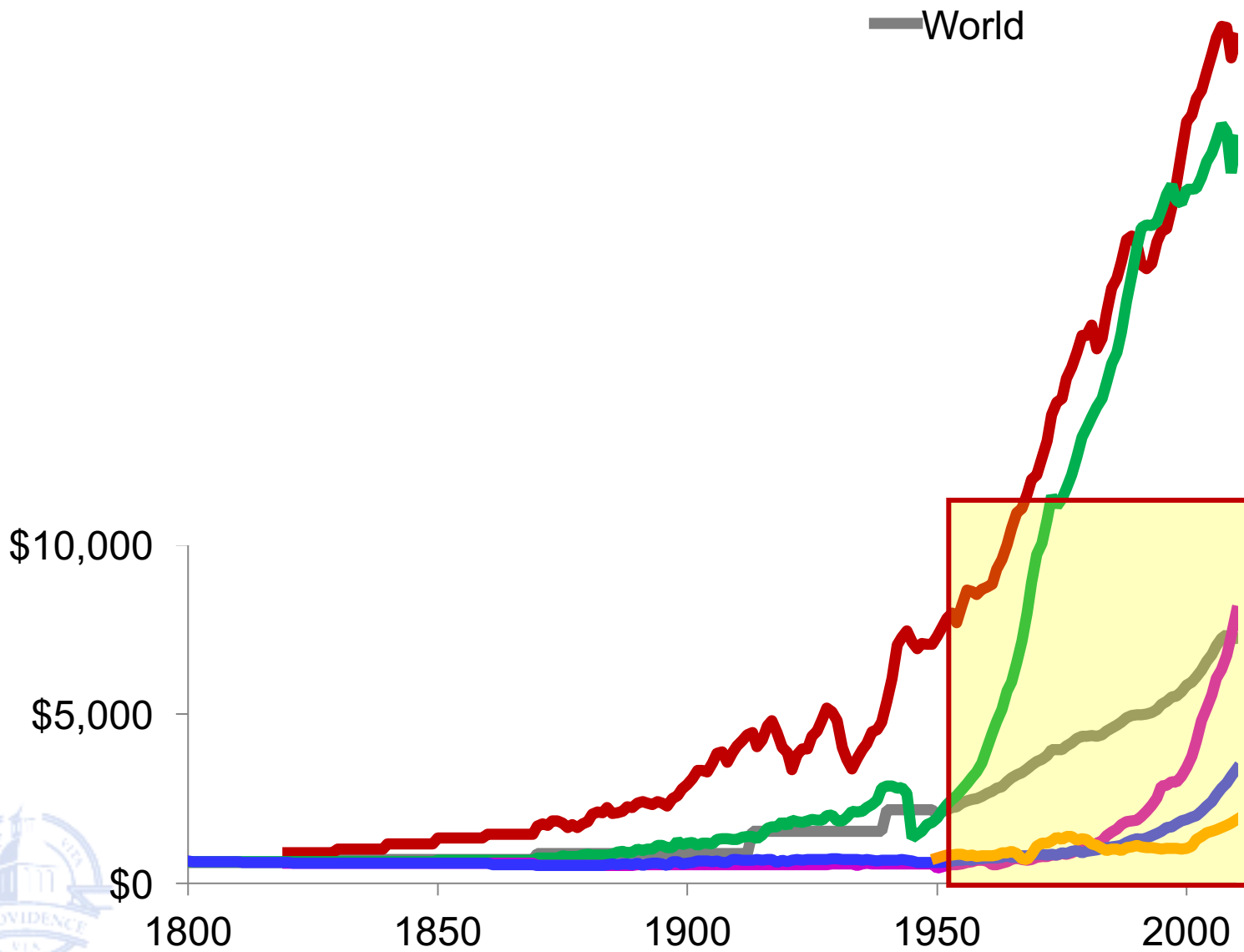
1. flawed application of biblical texts
2. “false consciousness” is a flawed idea
3. globalization is not oppression
  - benefits outweigh harms

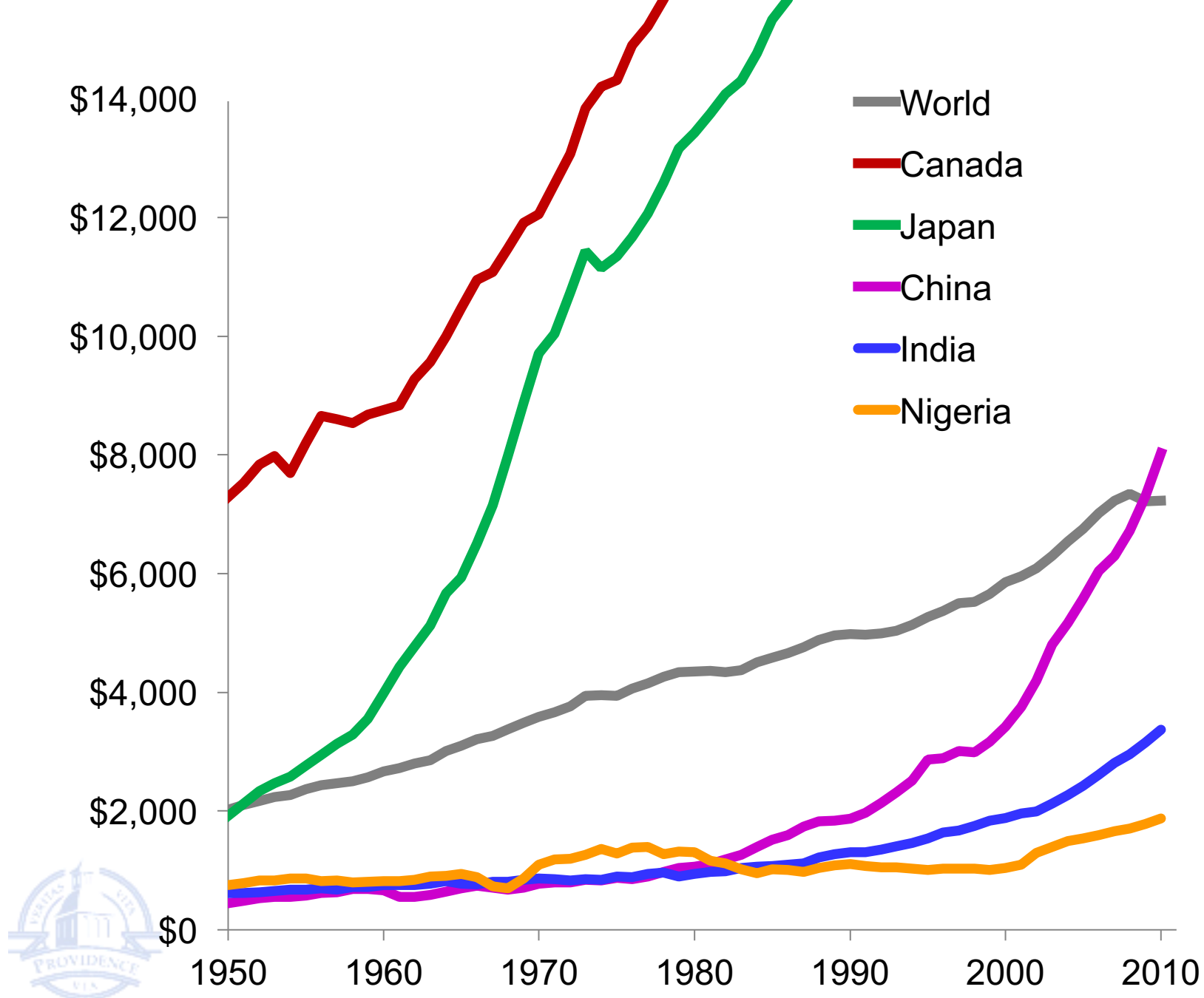




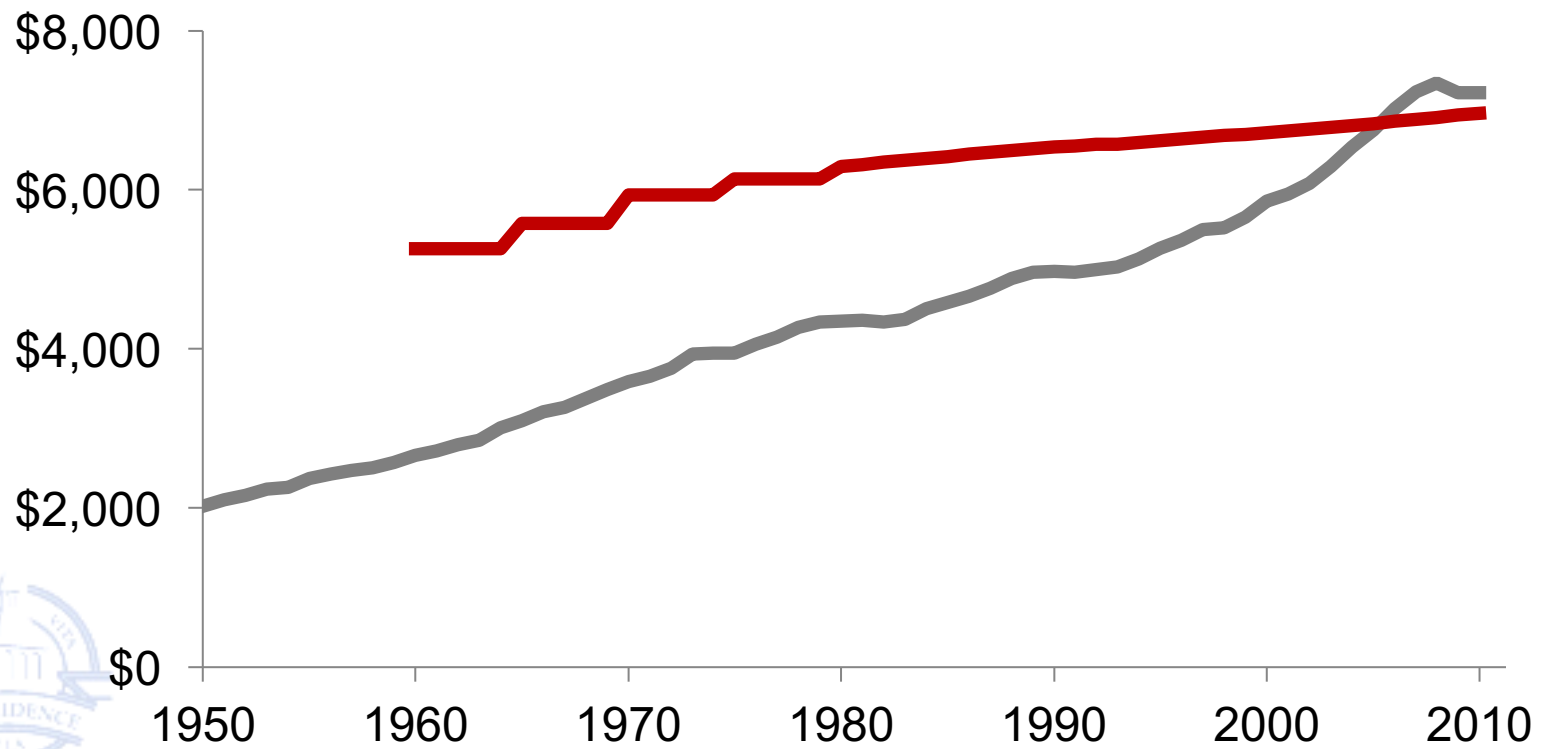
# GWP (Gross World Product)







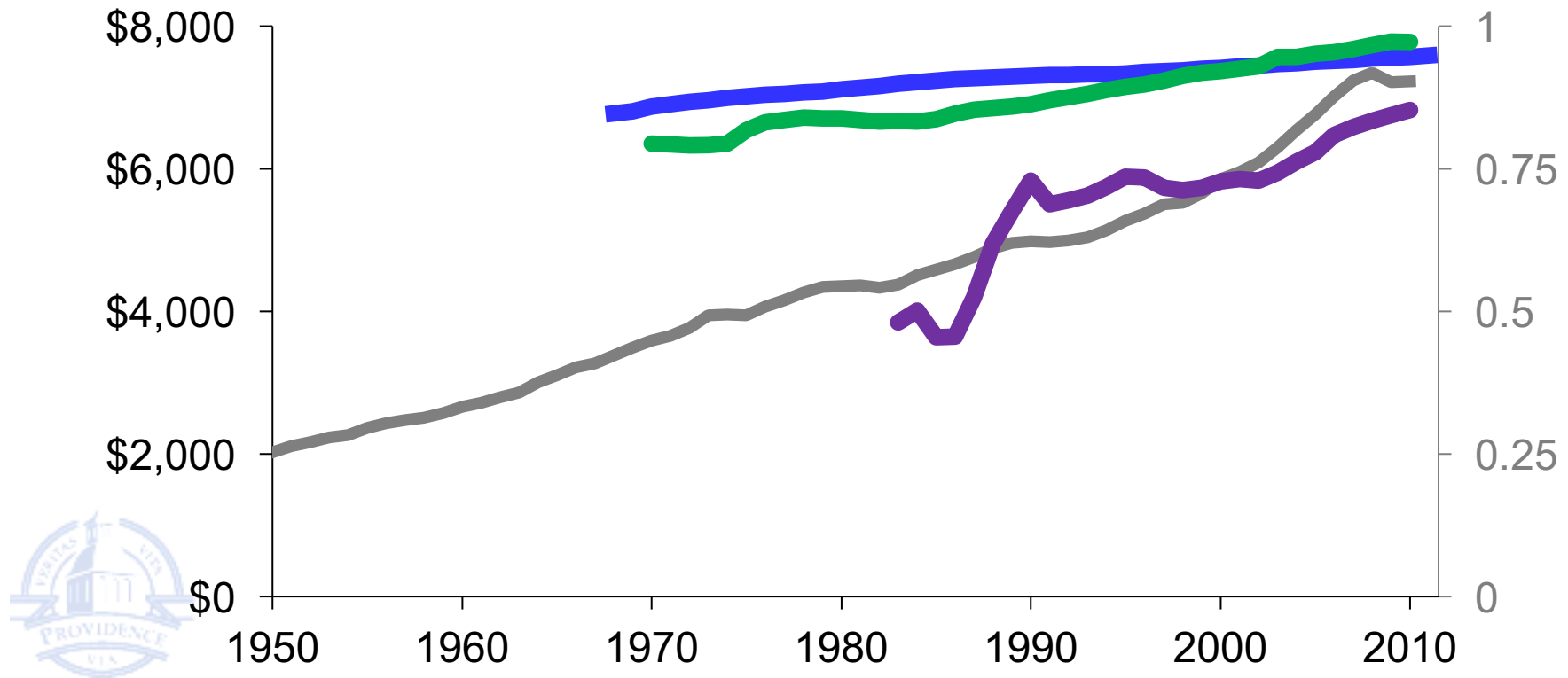
life expectancy

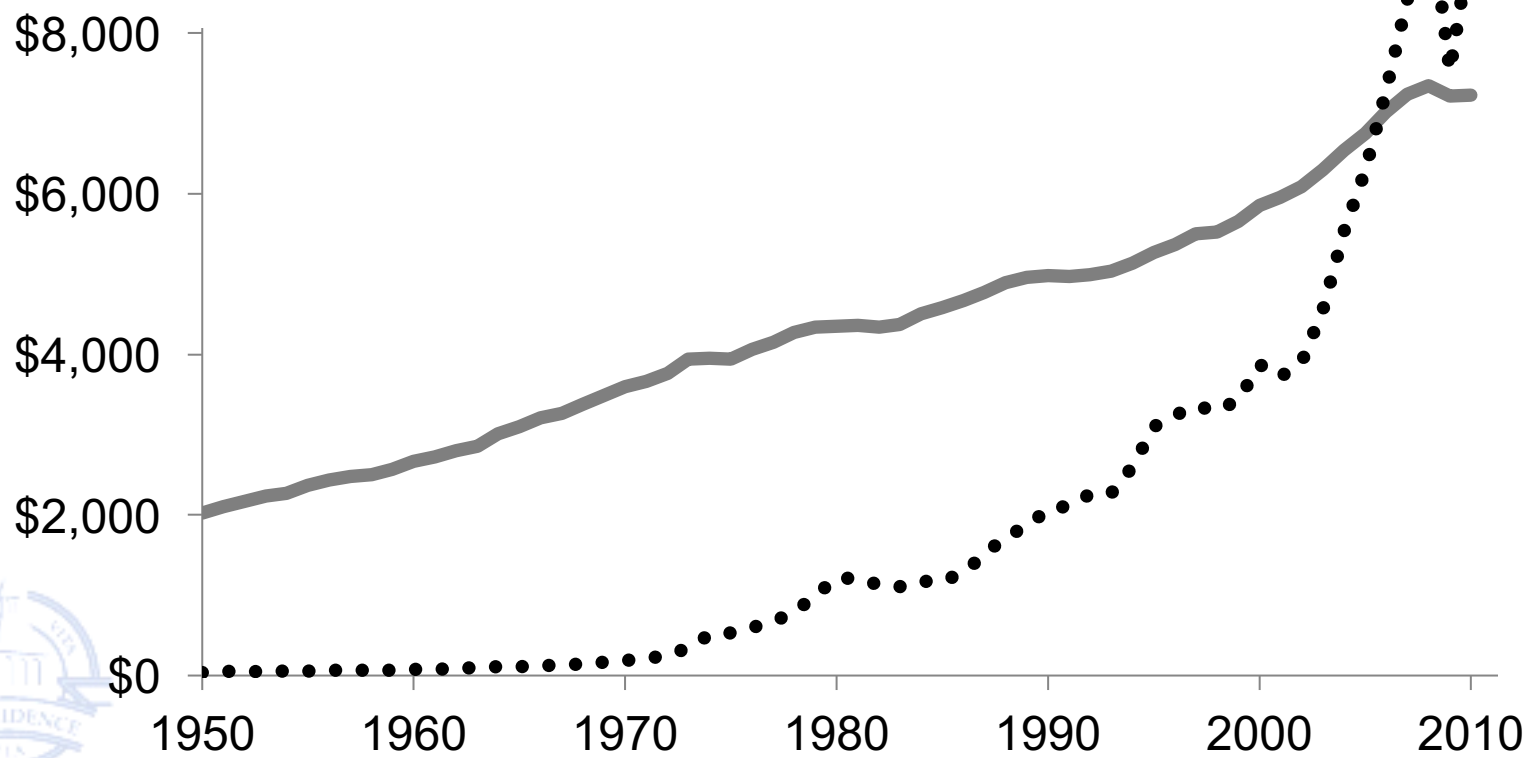


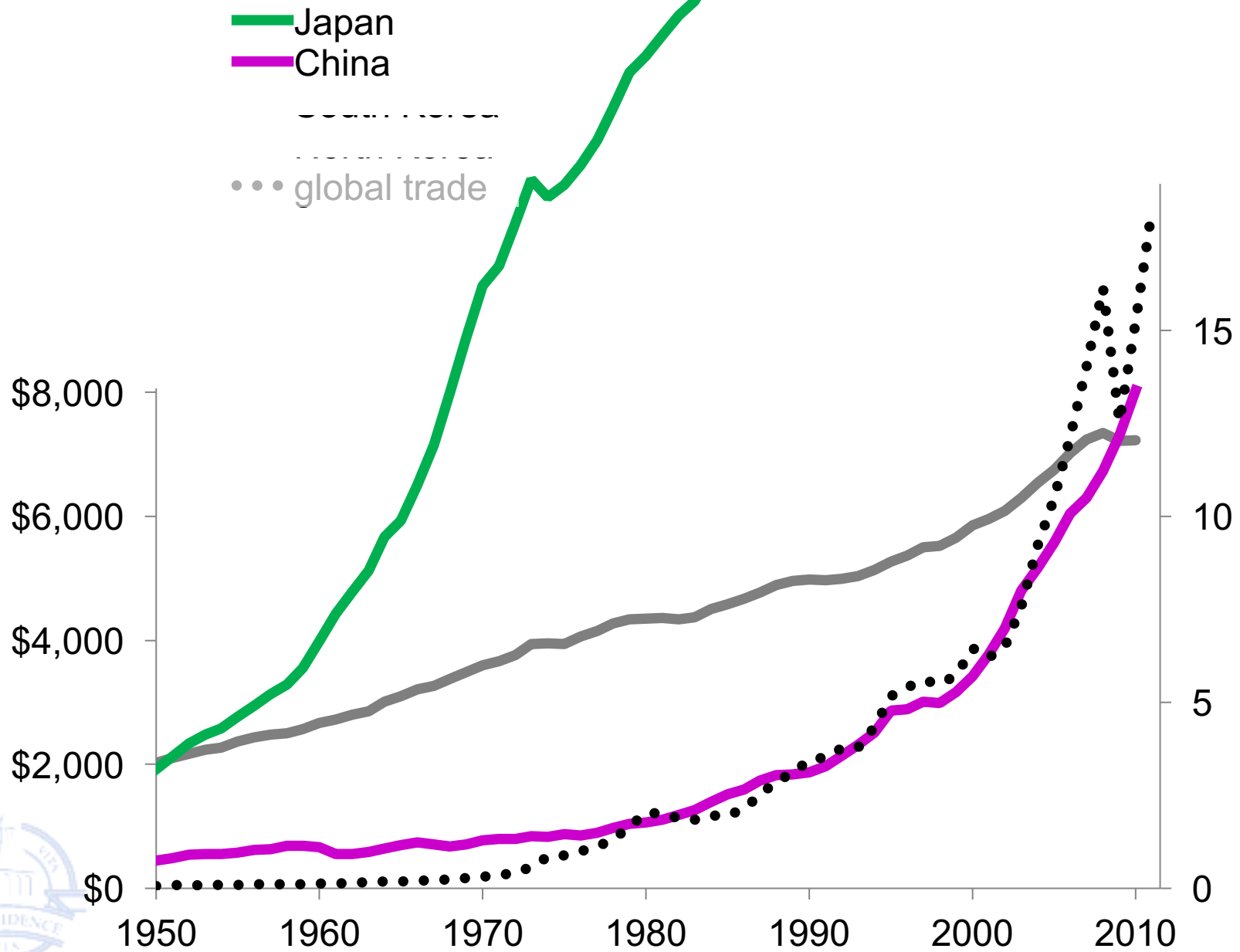
child survival to age 5

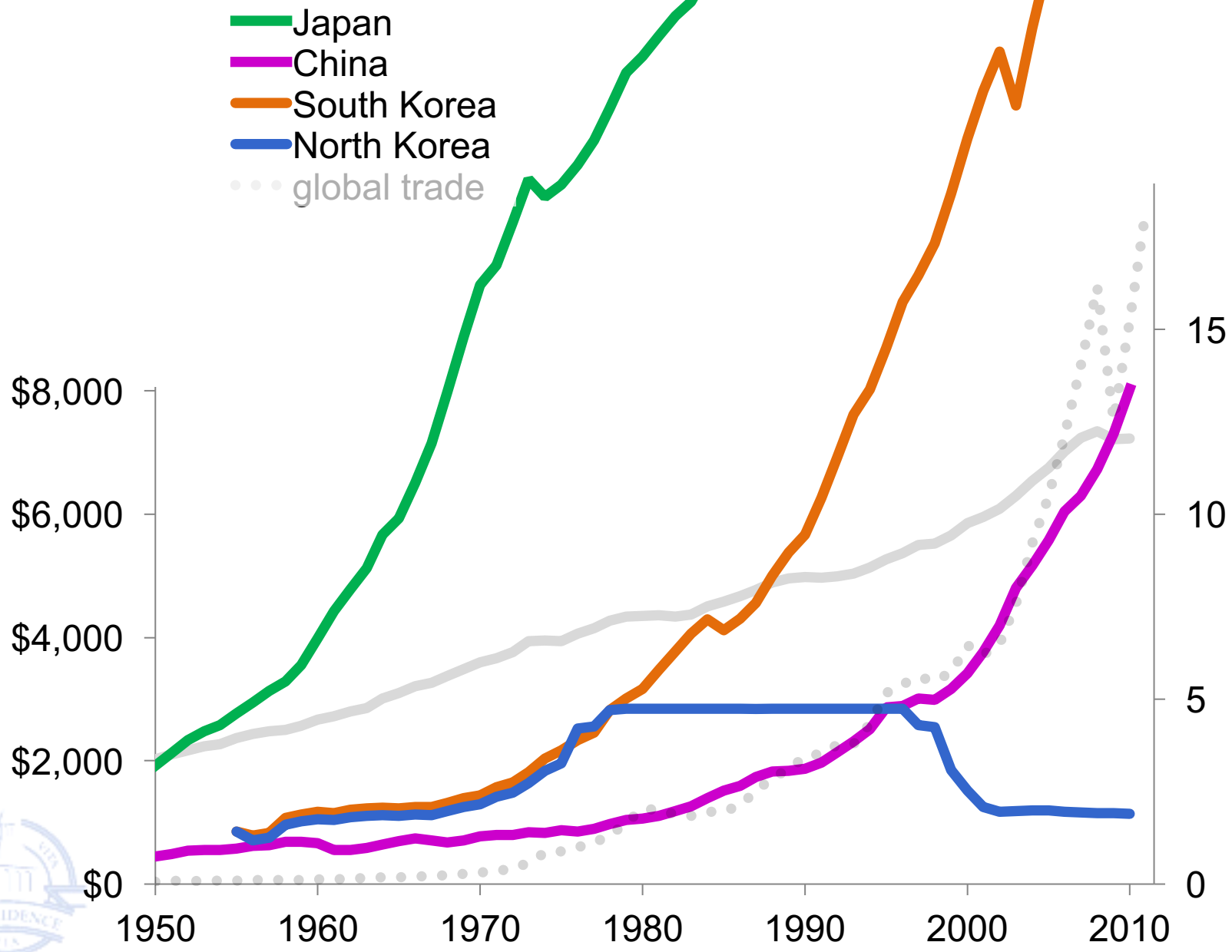
ratio of girls to boys in school

measles immunization











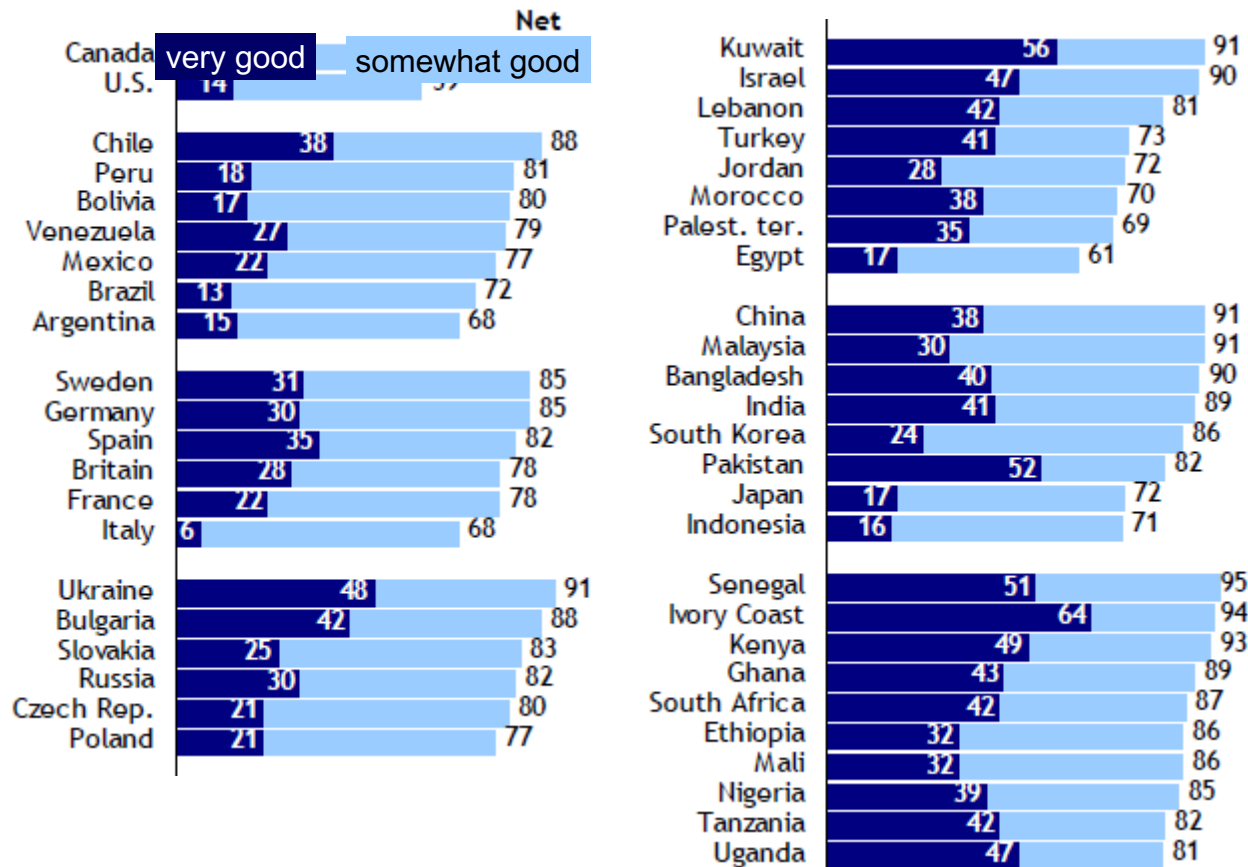
# Why do I disagree?

1. flawed application of biblical texts
2. “false consciousness” is a flawed idea
3. globalization is not oppression
  - benefits outweigh harms
    - correlated with (and perhaps causally related to)
      - wealth creation
      - poverty reduction
      - health improvements
      - education improvements



# The Pew Global Attitudes Project

Growing trade ties between countries are...



# objections

## > globalization harms the poor

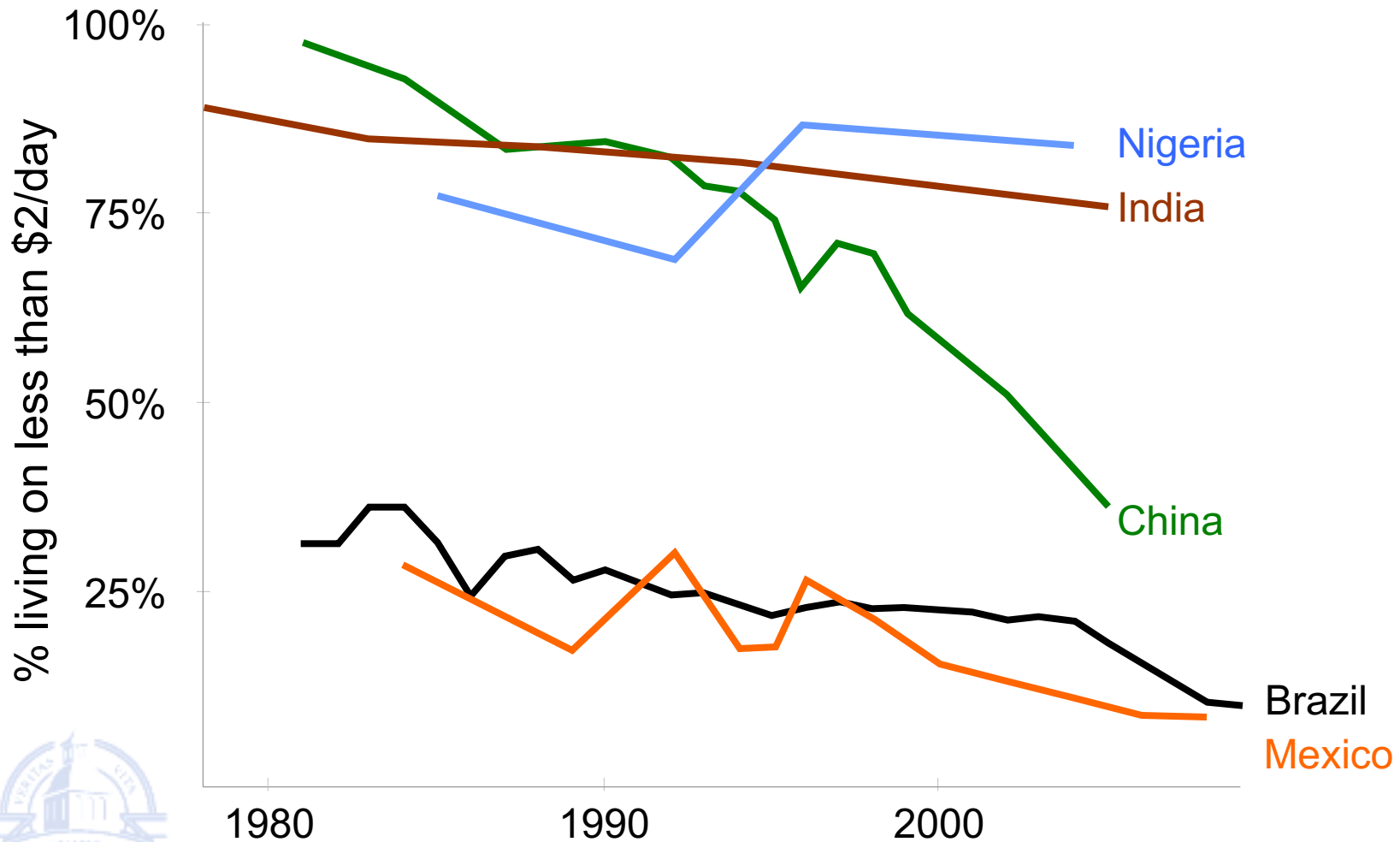
1. the poor get poorer
2. sweatshops trap the poor in permanent poverty
3. child labour flourishes
4. globalization exacerbates inequality

## > globalization is unsustainable

5. won't we hit a wall?



# 1. the poor get poorer?



## 2. sweatshops trap the poor?



# 3. child labour flourishes?

International

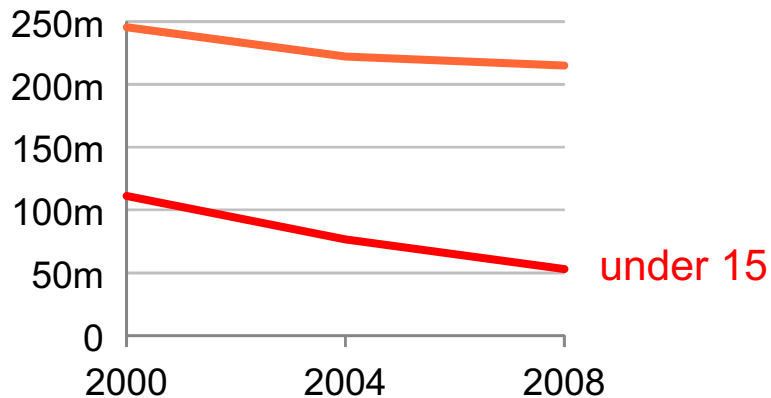
- International  
Child Labour

•2010

•“Ac

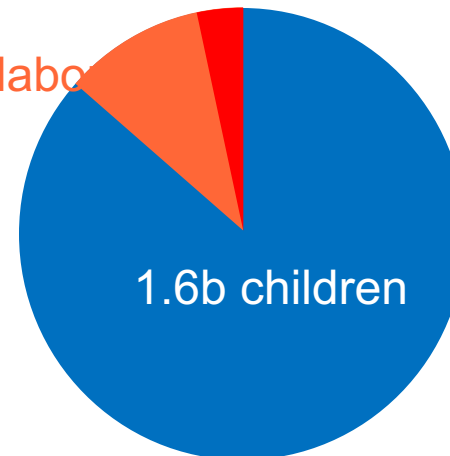


### 3. child labour flourishes?



53m under 15

215m child labor

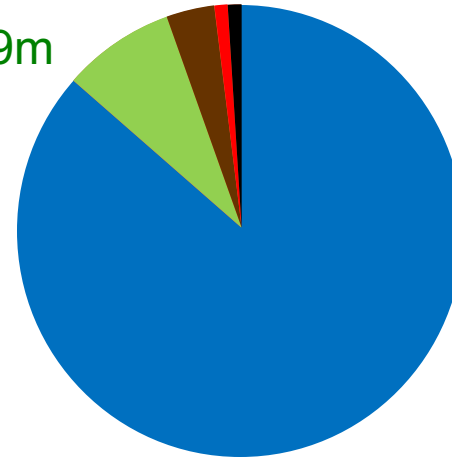




### 3. child labour flourishes?

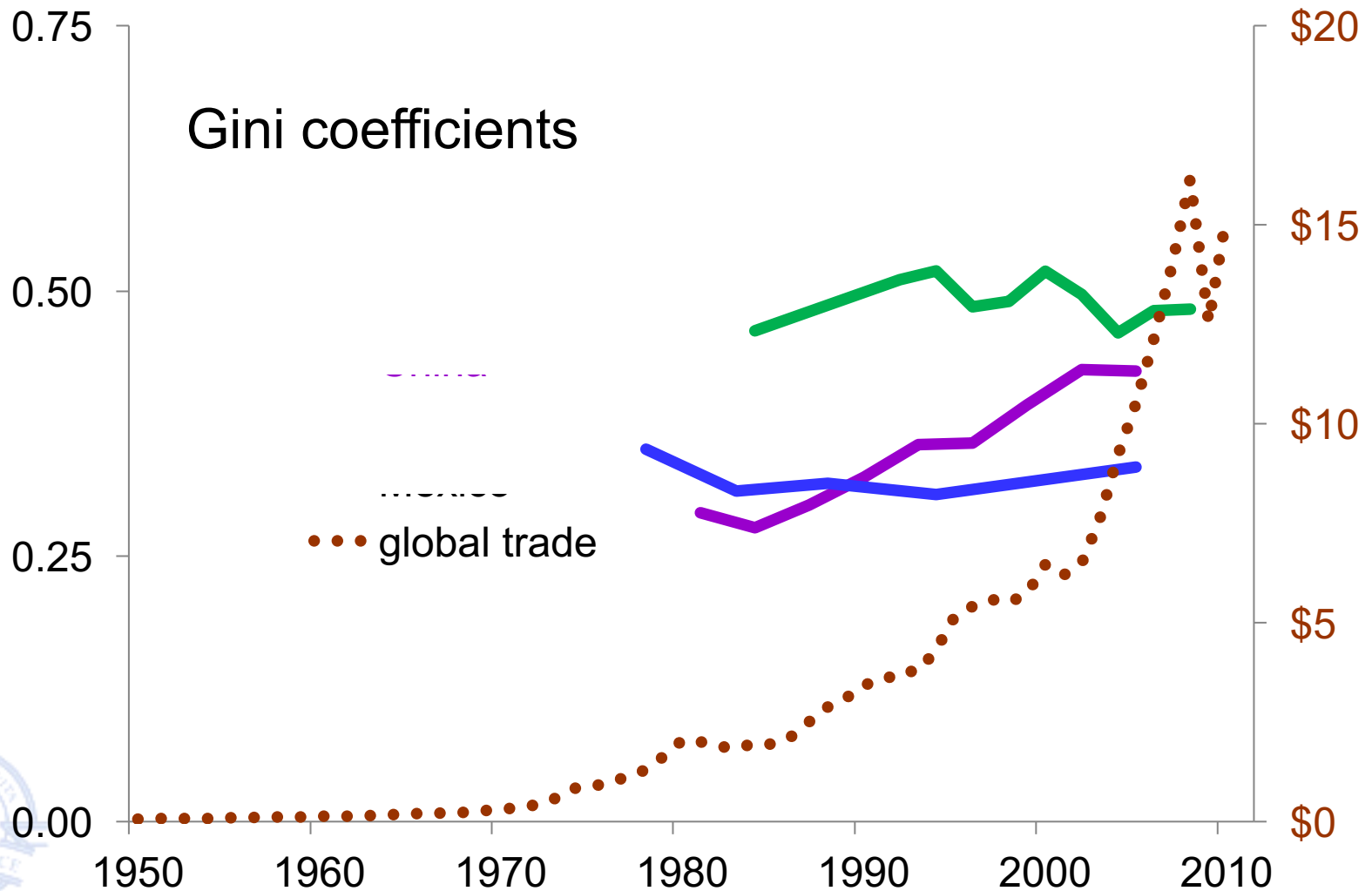


industry 15m  
services 55m  
agriculture 129m  
not defined 16m



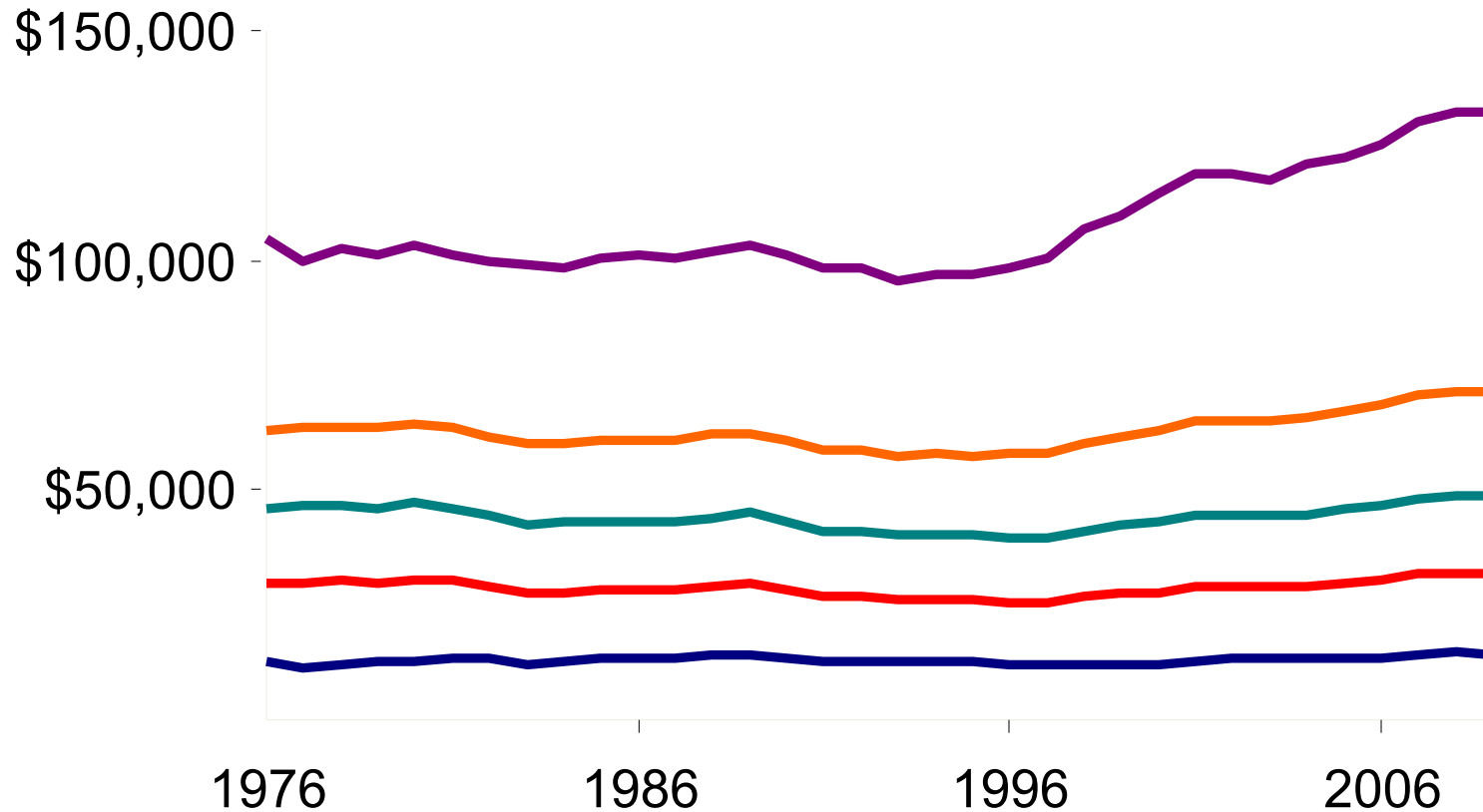


# 4. exacerbates inequality?



## Wikipedia Gini since WWII

## 4. exacerbates inequality?



## 4. exacerbates inequality?



# 5. we'll hit a wall?

Thomas Malthus

- *An essay on the principle of population...*
  - 1798; 1826

Paul (and Anne) Ehrlich

- *The Population Bomb*
  - 1968

Meadows *et al.*

- *The Limits to Growth*
  - 1972; 2004



## 5. we'll hit a wall?



Paul & Ann Ehrlich

The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death...

*The Population Bomb*, 1968

Most of the people who are going to die in the greatest cataclysm in the history of man have already been born.

"Eco-Catastrophe!", 1969

Due to a combination of ignorance, greed, and callousness, a situation has been created that could lead to a billion or more people starving to death.

*The End of Affluence*, 1974



# 5. we'll hit a wall?

there is a wall

- actually, there are at least 4 walls
  1. consumption of non-renewable resources
  2. pace of consumption of renewable resources
  3. pollution
  4. inequality

but we can avoid it



# 5. we'll hit a wall?

there is a wall

- actually, there are at least 4 walls
  1. consumption of non-renewable resources
  2. pace of consumption of renewable resources
  3. pollution
  4. inequality

but we can avoid them

- a topic for another time, but...





# Avoiding the Walls

## 4. inequality

- natural
- “natural” doesn’t mean
  - good
  - unchangeable



# Avoiding the Walls

## 3. pollution

- we're slowly realizing:
  - it's not possible to throw anything away
- Biblical concepts of stewardship are particularly relevant to this issue
- change is
  - difficult
  - possible



# Avoiding the Walls

## pollution

- pollution in China



2013



# Avoiding the Walls

pollution

- pollution in China



2013



# Avoiding the Walls

## 3. pollution

- pollution in Chicago



1911





# Avoiding the Walls

## 3. pollution

- pollution in Chicago



1941



# Avoiding the Walls

## 3. pollution

- pollution in Chicago



2012



# Avoiding the Walls

## 2. pace of consumption of renewable resources

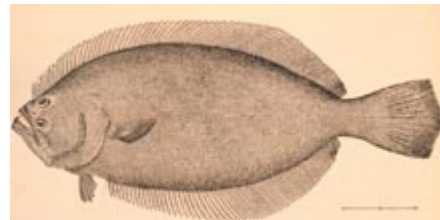
- stock management

- challenging to resolve problems of

- ownership
- management
- pricing

- solutions

- quotas
- agreements





# Avoiding the Walls

1. consumption of non-renewable resources
  - disconnect wealth creation from non-renewables consumption
  - shift from goods to services
    - happening already
  - substitute renewables for non-renewables
    - the fundamental challenge of our time



# Avoiding the Walls

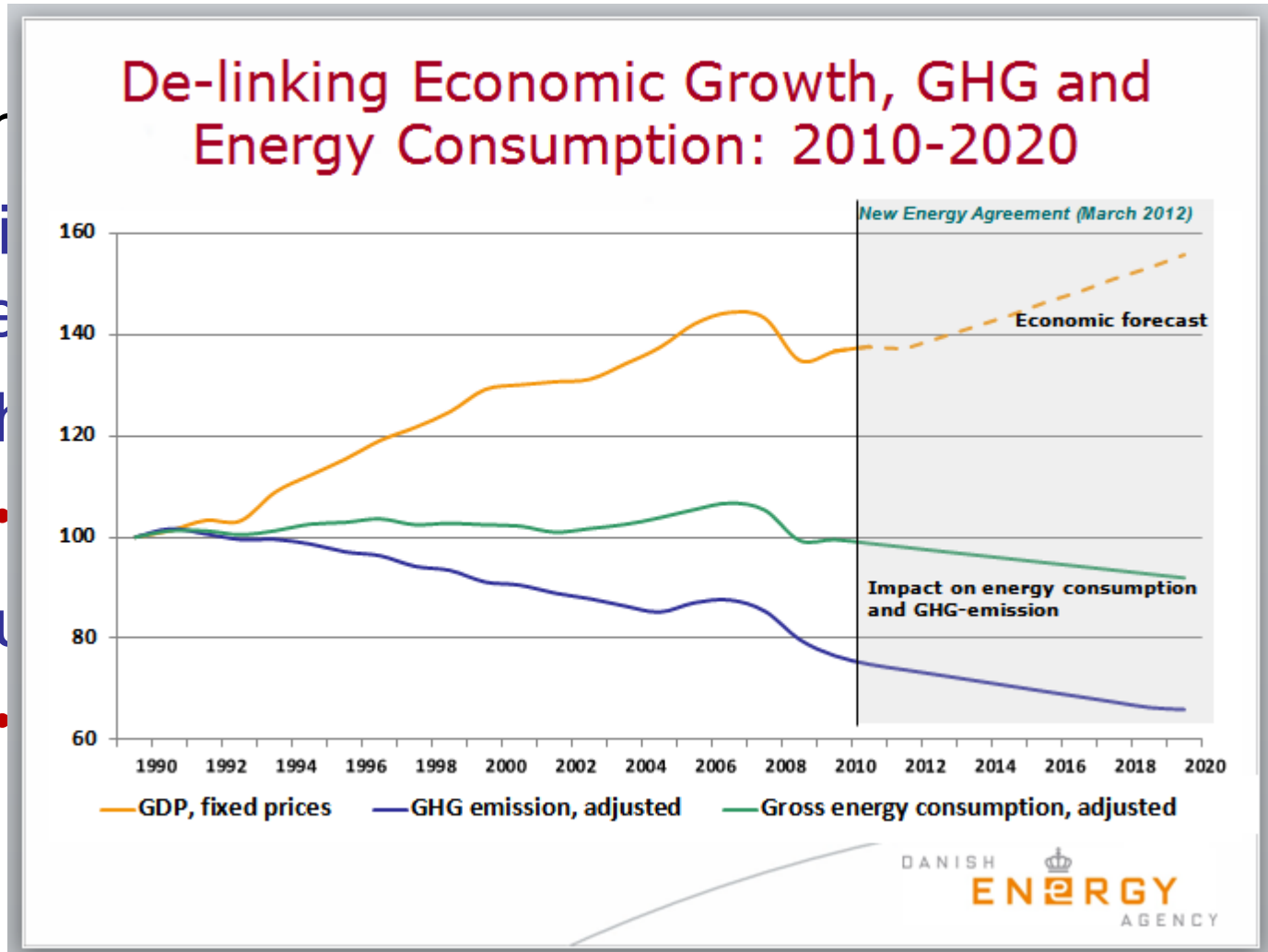
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# Avoiding the Walls

1. consumption of non-renewable resources
  - disconnect wealth creation from non-renewables consumption
  - shift from goods to services
    - happening already
  - substitute renewables for non-renewables
    - the fundamental challenge of our time



# So why the mismatch?

## “LOCALIST” PREFERENCES

local

known

small

hand-made

natural

## “GLOBALIST” ACTIONS

global

unknown

big

machine-made

artificial





localist

distance trade in luxury goods

globalist

capitalism

now

50,000

40,000

30,000

20,000

10,000



# So what should we do?

learn from the best sources you can find

think rigorously

act focus on what matters most

1. consumption of non-renewable resources
2. pace of consumption of renewable resources
3. pollution
4. inequality



# What's a Christian to think?

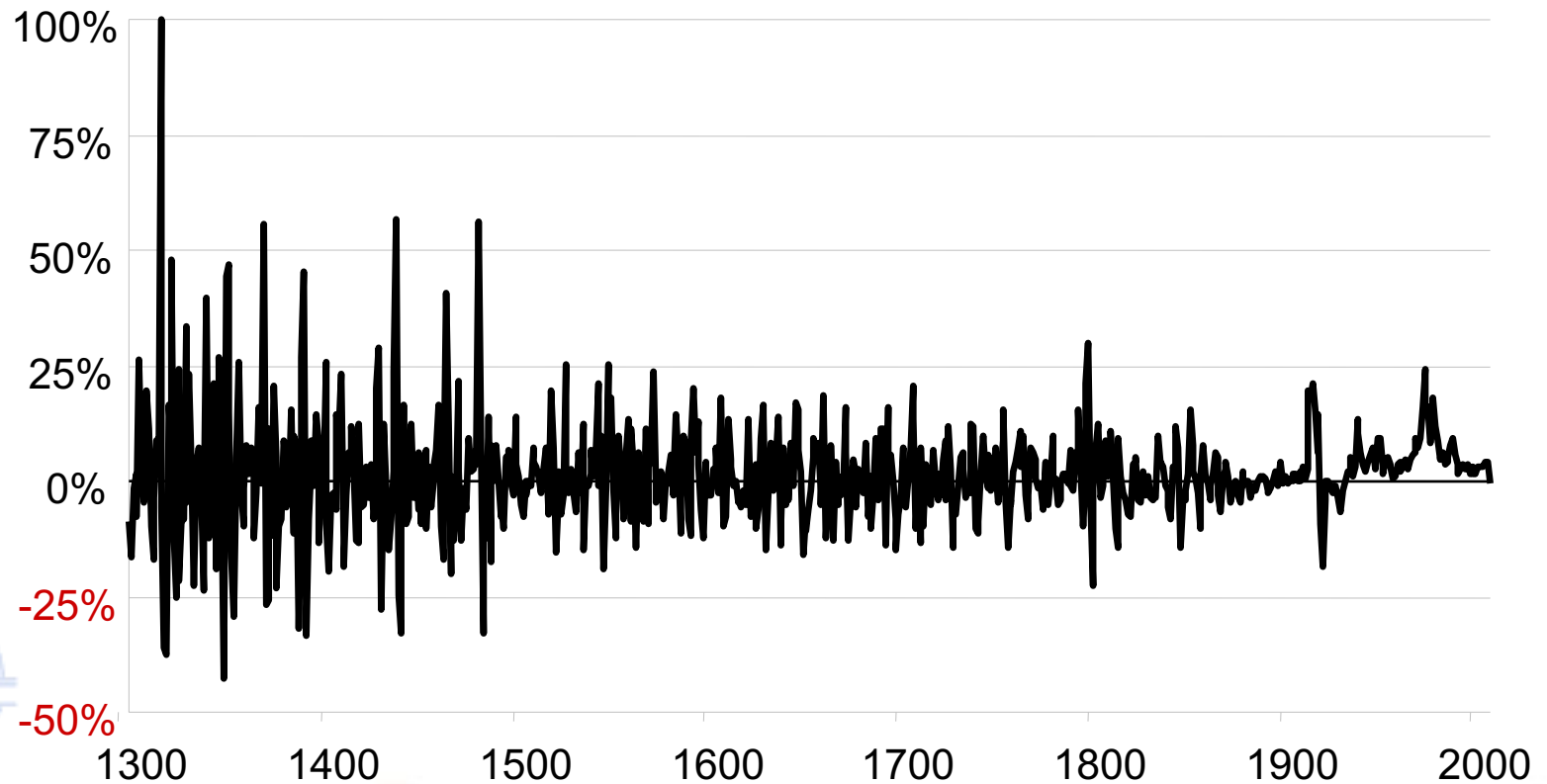
a Christian view about globalization







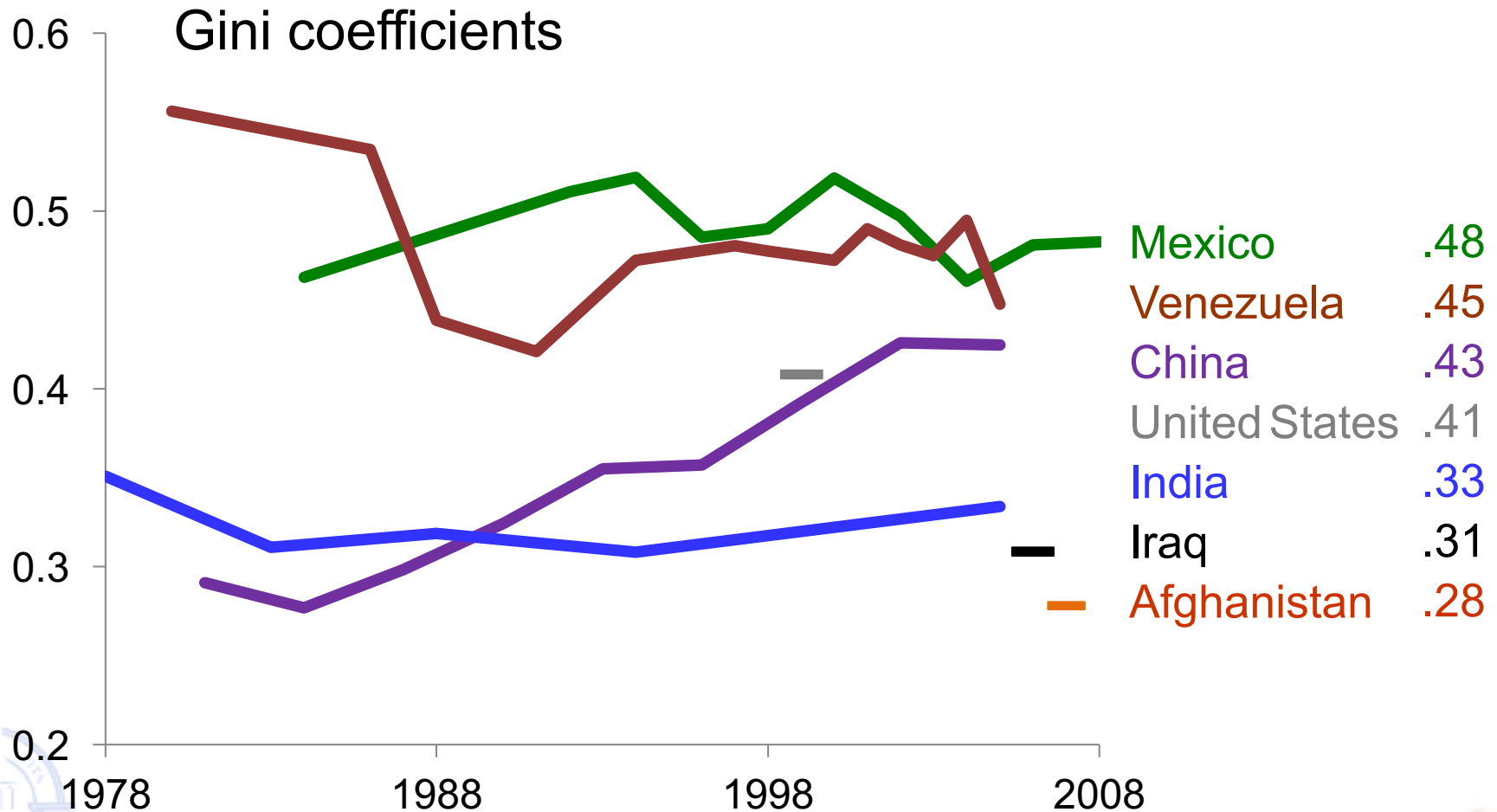
# Inflation



# Quinoa



## 4. exacerbates inequality?







# Avoiding the Walls

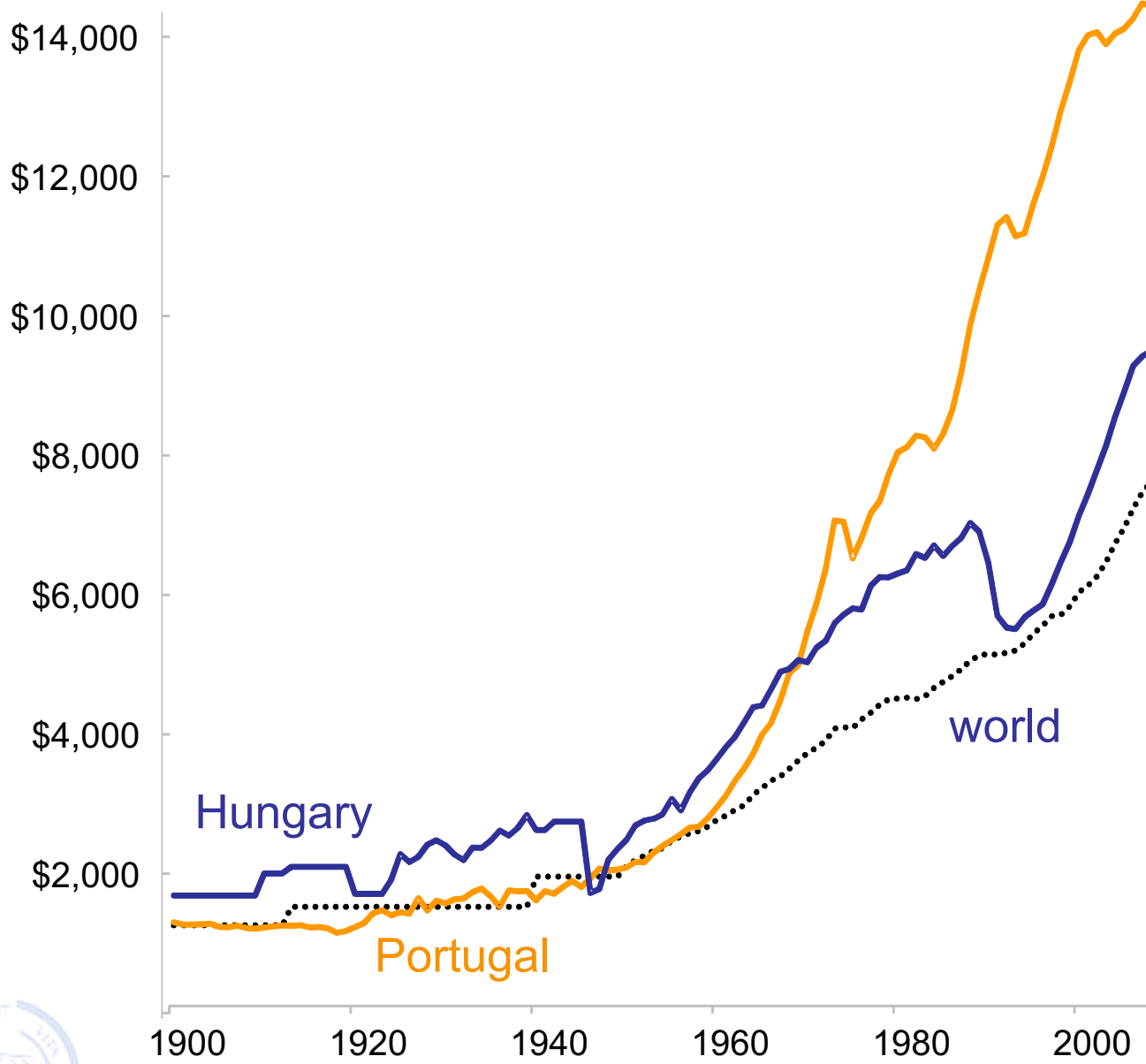
## 3. pollution

- pollution in Chicago

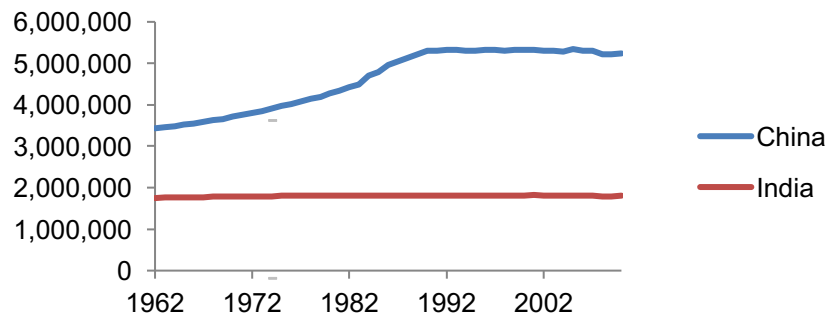


1905

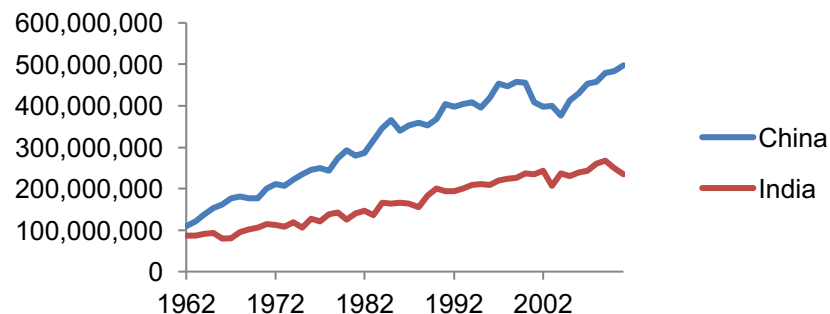




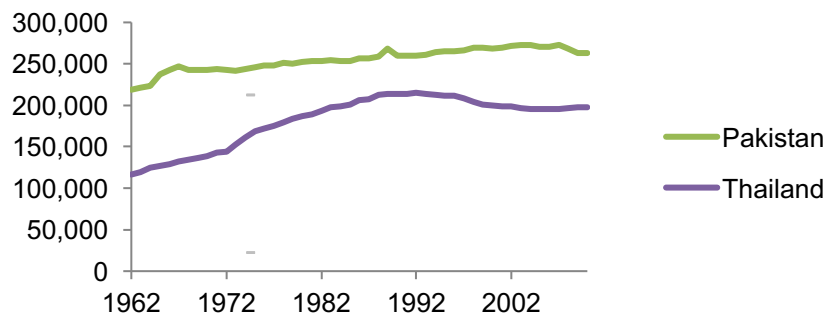
### Agricultural Land (sq. km)



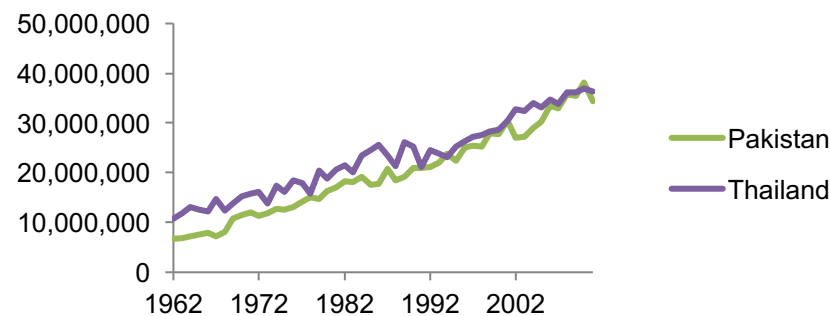
### Cereal Production (metric tons)



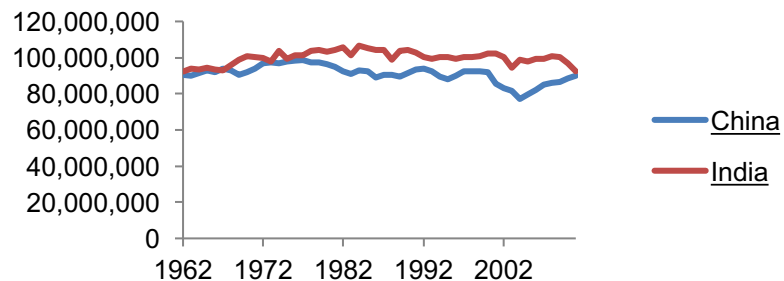
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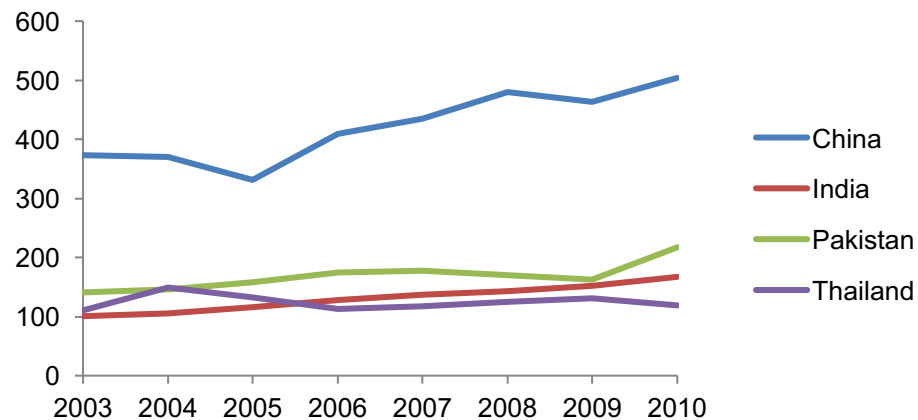
### Cereal Production (metric tons)



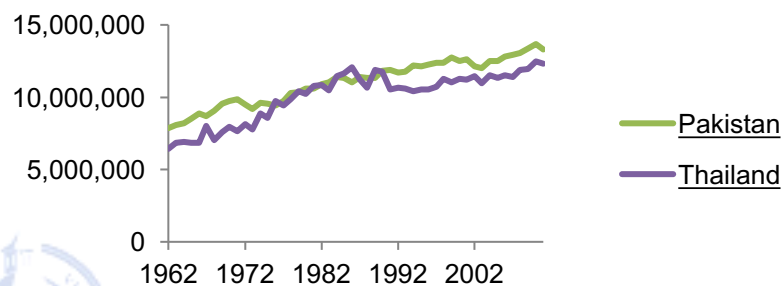
## Land Under Cereal Production (hectares)



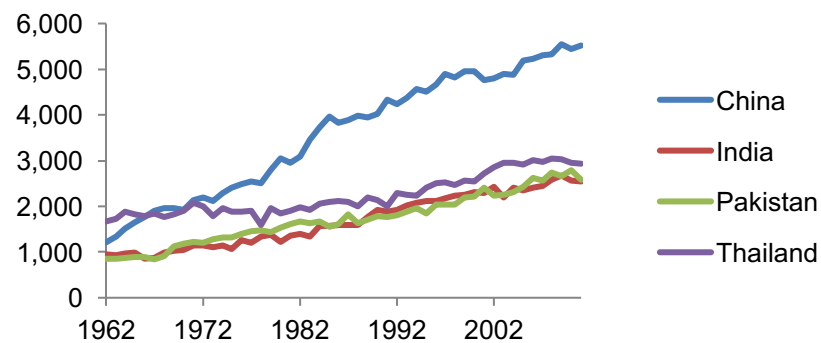
## Fertilizer Consumption (kilograms per hectare of arable land)



## Land Under Cereal Production (hectares)



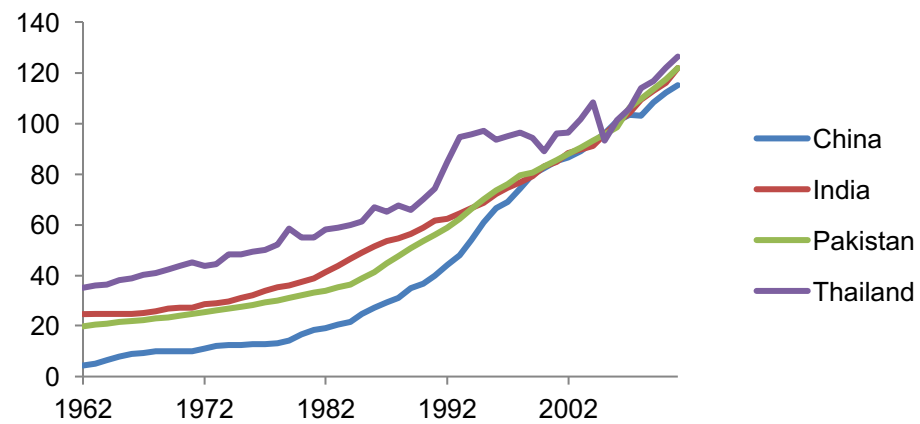
## Cereal Yield (kg per hectare)





## Livestock Production Index

(2004-2006 = 100)



~5,000 BCE



Vesna Dimitrijevic and Boban Tripkovic "Spondylus and Glycymeris bracelets: trade reflections at Neolithic Vinca-Belo Brdo" 2006



~2,500 BCE





Under capitalism, man exploits man. Under communism, it's just the opposite.

John Kenneth Galbraith



For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

•Ephesians 6:12 KJV



# Possible Explanations

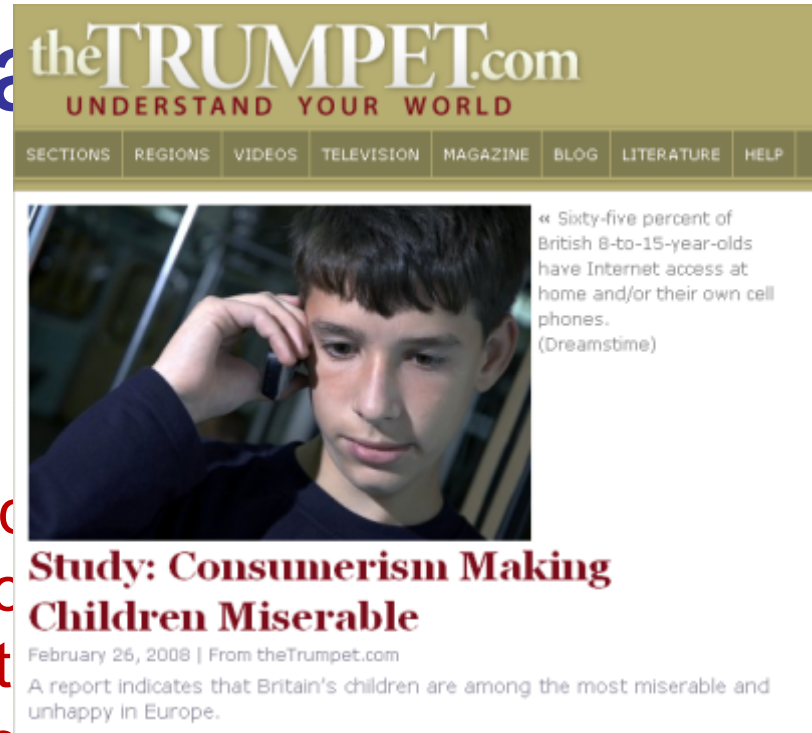
## We are oppressed

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Ephesians 6:12 KJV



# Possible Explanations



We are compelled

•[The study] concludes that the pressures of consumerism and failure to protect children from these pressures is partly to blame for the mental health problems among young people.

- *The Times*, quoted in *The Trumpet.com* 2008





# But Won't We Hit a Wall?



## “Malthusian”

The power of population is so superior to the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race. The vices of mankind....are the precursors in the great army of destruction; and often finish the dreadful work themselves.

But should they fail in this war of extermination, sickly seasons, epidemics, pestilence, and plague, advance in terrific array, and sweep off their thousands and ten thousands.

Should success be still incomplete, gigantic inevitable famine stalks in the rear, and with one mighty blow levels the population with the food of the world.

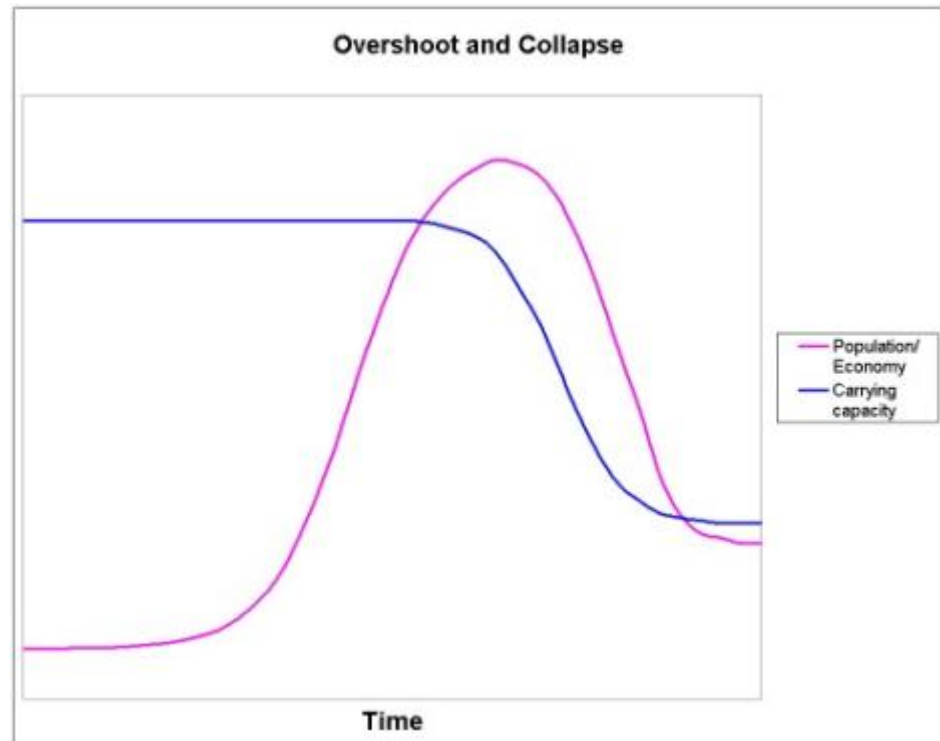


# But Won't We Hit a Wall?

Meadows *et al.*

- *The Limits to Growth*

- 1972; 2004



# But Won't We Hit a Wall?

Thomas Malthus

- *An essay on the principle of population...*
  - 1798; 1826

Paul (and Anne) Ehrlich

- *The Population Bomb*
  - 1968

Meadows *et al.*

- *The Limits to Growth*
  - 1972; 2004



# Goal

an attempt at a Christian view about globalization

1. follower of Jesus

- biblical texts

- previous Christian thinkers

- Spirit

- mind

2. carried out in action



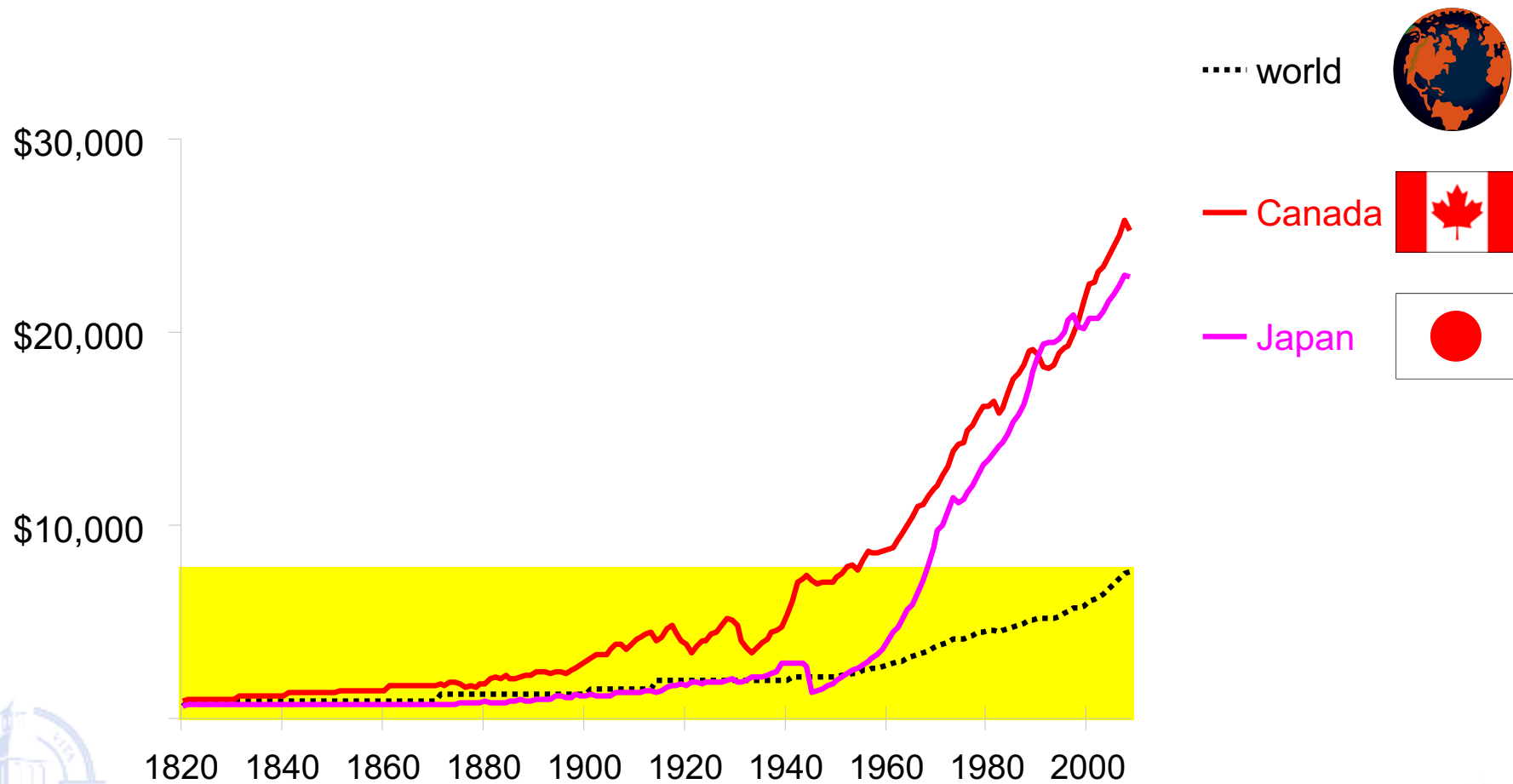
# Possible Explanations

## We are oppressed

[T]he capitalistic method[‘s]....one-sided control of economic power tempts to exploitation and oppression; it directs the production process of society primarily toward the creation of private profit rather than the service of human needs; it demands autocratic management and strengthens the autocratic principles in all social affairs; it has impressed a materialistic spirit on our whole civilization.

Rauschenbusch *ibid*





# Goal

## a Christian view about globalization

### globalization, *n.*

Text size: A A

View as: [Outline](#) | [Full entry](#)

Quotations: [Show all](#) | [Hide all](#)

**Pronunciation:** Brit. /ˌgləʊbəlɪˈzeɪʃn/ , /ˌgləʊbəlɪˈzeɪʃn/ , U.S. /ˌglɒnbələˈzeɪʃ(ə)n/ , /ˌglɒnbəlɪˈzeɪʃ(ə)n/

**Forms:** 19- **globalisation**, 19- **globalization**.

**Etymology:** < **GLOBAL** *adj.* + **-IZATION** *suffix*, perhaps after French *globalisation* (1904). Compare slightly earlier **GLOBALIZED** *adj.* and later **GLOBALIZE** *v.* Compare also **MONDIALIZATION** *n.* ([Show Less](#))

The action, process, or fact of making global; *esp.* (in later use) the process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale, widely considered to be at the expense of national identity.

[Thesaurus](#) »  
[Categories](#) »



# “Global” trade in food

[A]t Myra in Lycia....the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it....

Acts 27 NASB





# A Short Survey

3. Consider all the things you carried with you into this room—including your clothing.

local

global

personal

impersonal

small

big

hand-made

machine-made

natural

artificial

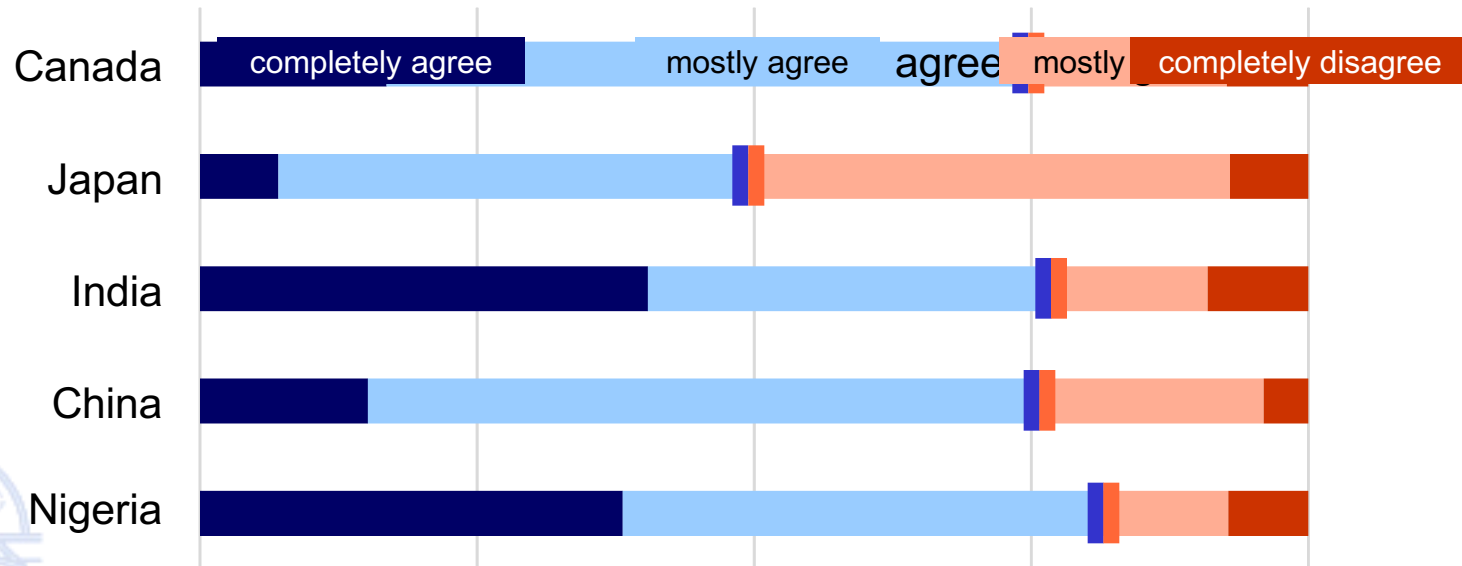
What percentage of those things are over on the left, and how many on the right?



# The Pew Global Attitudes Project

Q.18a Please tell me whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree or completely disagree with the following statements:

a. **Most people are better off in a free market economy, even though some people are rich and some are poor.**



# Possible Views

## We are oppressed

[R]edemption will have to deal not only with the weakness of flesh and blood, but with the strength of principalities and powers. Beyond the feeble and short-lived individual towers the social group as a super-personal entity....

[T]hese super-personal forces....are to us what demonic personalities were to earlier Christian minds.

Walter Rauschenbusch *A Theology for the Social Gospel* 1917



# Possible Views

## we are oppressed

In the North we are no longer 'citizens' but 'consumers'.

To consume is to devour, to destroy. The consumer society is devouring the earth.

- Gorringe *ibid*



# Possible Explanations

We are compelled

- [In “Dallas” and “Dynasty”] virtuous characters are linked with true or sacred consciousness that arises from communalism and working with nature or land; evil characters are linked with false consciousness that comes from capitalism and the management of technology.
- Holbrook & Hirschman *The Semiotics of Consumption: interpreting symbolic consumer behavior in popular culture and works of art* 1993



# Possible Explanations

We are oppressed

We are compelled

- For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate....But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me....
- Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

- Romans 7:15-25 NASB



# “Global” trade in luxury goods

a woman annoints Jesus' head with nard

- Mark 14

Mary annoints Jesus' feet with nard

- John 12



# Encountering Trade

## “Global” trade in luxury goods

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

Acts 16:14-15 NASB





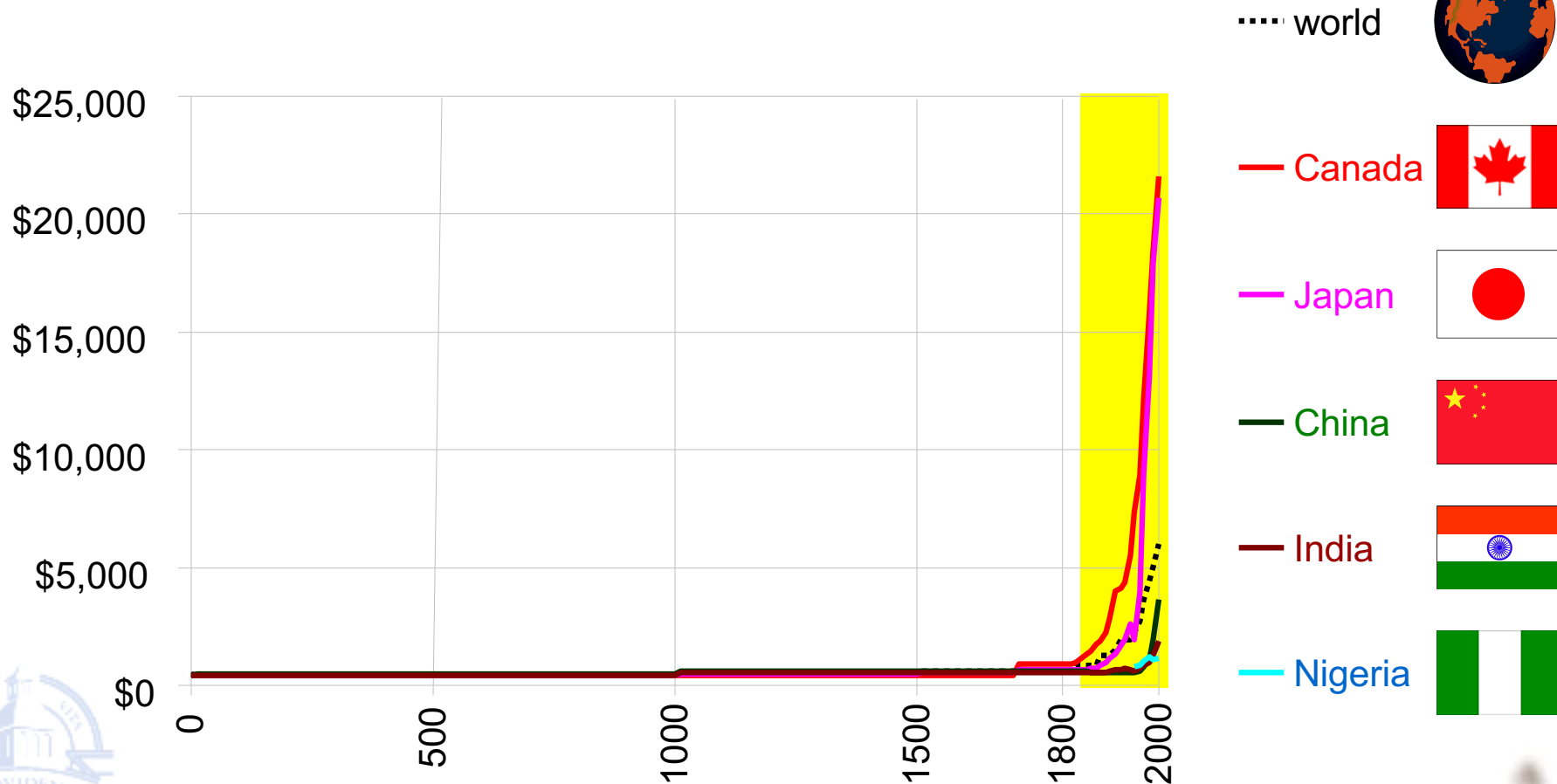
# “Global” trade?

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

James 4: 13-14 NASB



## inflation-adjusted per capita GDP



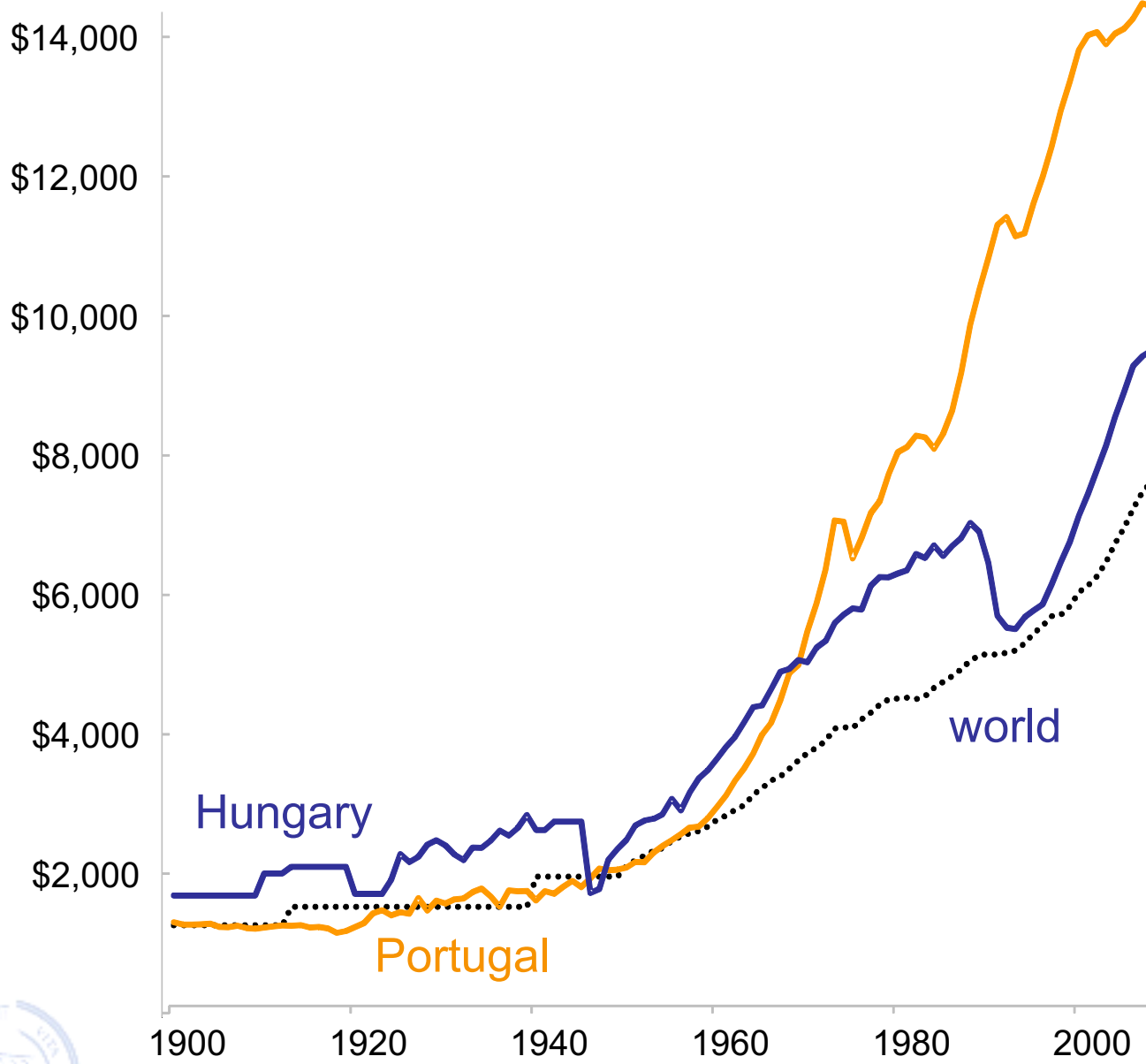
[H]aving a crowd of merchants coming and going...is inimical to good government.

[A] city ought to be a market, not indeed for others, but for herself.

Those who make themselves a market for the world only do so for the sake of revenue, and if a state ought not to desire profit of this kind it ought not to have such an emporium.

Artistotle *Politics* Book 7 part VI Translated by Benjamin Jowett





# Possible Explanations

We are compelled

- [In “Dallas” and “Dynasty”] virtuous characters are linked with true or sacred consciousness that arises from communalism and working with nature or land; evil characters are linked with false consciousness that comes from capitalism and the management of technology.
- Holbrook & Hirschman *The Semiotics of Consumption: interpreting symbolic consumer behavior in popular culture and works of art* 1993



# Possible Explanations

We are oppressed

We are compelled

- For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate....But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me....

- Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

- Romans 7:15-25 NASB



# Possible Explanations



We are compelled

•[The study] concludes that the pressures of consumerism and failure to protect children from these pressures is partly to blame for the mental health problems among young people.

- *The Times*, quoted in *The Trumpet.com* 2008



# Possible Explanations

## We are oppressed

[R]edemption will have to deal not only with the weakness of flesh and blood, but with the strength of principalities and powers. Beyond the feeble and short-lived individual towers the social group as a super-personal entity....

[T]hese super-personal forces....are to us what demonic personalities were to earlier Christian minds.

Walter Rauschenbusch *A Theology for the Social Gospel* 1917





# Possible Explanations

## We are oppressed

[T]he capitalistic method[‘s]....one-sided control of economic power tempts to exploitation and oppression; it directs the production process of society primarily toward the creation of private profit rather than the service of human needs; it demands autocratic management and strengthens the autocratic principles in all social affairs; it has impressed a materialistic spirit on our whole civilization.

Rauschenbusch *ibid*



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# Possible Explanations

We are oppressed

[G]lobalization is a form of imperialism...

Gorringe *ibid*



# Possible Explanations

We are oppressed

➤ and, simultaneously, we oppress

We are compelled

Engels → false consciousness → “education”

Paul → sin → grace



# Encountering Trade

## “Global” trade in luxury goods

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

Acts 16:14-15 NASB



# “Global” trade in food

[A]t Myra in Lycia....the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it....

Acts 27 NASB



# “Global” trade?

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

James 4: 13-14 NASB



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[A] city ought to be a market, not indeed for others, but for herself.

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