

The Five Realms of Power: An Introduction

[Paper No. 3 of the *Nehemiah Papers*]

I. M. Nehemiah © August 2010

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The five realms of power are Governance, Economics, Religion, Justice, and Love. The realms are not necessarily equally weighted. The balances among the five realms are fluid or dynamic. A balance of powers existing at one place at one time can be different from balances found simultaneously in different places and at different times for the same place. This dynamic in balance can be impacted by outside influences, for better or for worse. Also, the five realms of power apply to situations as diverse as nations, clubs, and households, with appropriately different balances.

Each realm has several expressions. For example, the expressions of the realm of governance include democracy, theocracy, monarchy, and dictatorships. One expression of each realm is dominant in America's culture: Democracy, Capitalism, Christian Faith, Law, and Caring. Other countries might have religious dominance of governance and justice. Even at the household level in America, the expressions can easily be different from the national expressions of one or more realms, as in despotic brutal control of everything, or in faith-based sharing of resources and responsibilities. The expressions and the balances can and do vary greatly.

Each expression has one or more "currencies" which represent the most tangible and quantifiable ways to measure the amount of power in each realm.

In the following table, the realms and expressions and currencies are overly simplified for this important introductory discussion of the key concepts. Later I provide a full Paper about each of the five realms in relation to America today.

TABLE OF REALMS, EXPRESSIONS AND CURRENCIES:

Realms of Power	Expressions in America	Currencies in America	Additional Expressions and Their Currencies
Governance:	Democracy	Influence by & upon Voters	Dictatorship w/ Edicts; Theocracy
Economics:	Capitalism	Money & other capital	Socialism w/ Labor; Feudalism
Religion:	Faith: Christian	Prayers & beliefs	Non-Christian faiths, prayers & beliefs
Justice:	Law	Enforcement	Anarchy w/ Brute force; Scriptures
Love:	Caring	Service (Helpfulness)	Selfishness w/ Self-service; Hate / Jealousy

The five realms of power are out of balance in America. The imbalances have already partially crippled America and are major factors in America's current crises and impending decline. These imbalances must be addressed to avoid cumulative, accelerating damage to the nation. There is little solace in knowing that all nations throughout history have had these challenges. Indeed, decline is inevitable, but decline does not need to be now in America. The key is to attain a proper balance between the five realms of power. Although this paper focuses upon America, everything I say has relevance to other nations and societies, whether rich or poor, powerful or weak, "good" or "bad," *etc.*

Multitudes of variations exist within every item in the above listing. Do not assume any black or white dichotomies. For example, capitalism in America today includes major components from socialist thought and practices. Likewise, no pure socialism exists anywhere on Earth. And there can be many corrupting influences that distort the expressions of governance, economics, religion, justice, and love. If you doubt that, just think of family relationships, whether your own or of a friend or of a character in a film or book.

Economics and Capitalism: (The second realm and its expression are discussed first because of their dominance in America.) Money is the “currency” of capitalism within the economics realm of power. And in America, the extraordinary power of money has tainted all other realms of power. Democracy in America is so overwhelmingly influenced by money that it is almost a mockery. Money in America severely impacts the legal system, many aspects of service, and even the religious fiber of our country. Therefore, several of the proposed solutions to the current crises are directly related to bringing the power of money under control. This is not an attack on capitalism and not against money. But today’s capitalism and the current abusive power of money should be modified in serious ways to become “Capitalism for the Twenty-first Century,” abbreviated as “Capitalism21” or simply “C21.” (There is more about Capitalism21 in Paper No. 5.)

Governance and Democracy: Democracy in America is based on the “currency” of votes for elected officials who then have further democratic functions to propose and vote on legislation, with the elected executive branch to implement those laws. Unfortunately, America’s democracy today is literally controlled by professional politicians repeatedly re-elected as “serial incumbents” who are severely influenced by money from both the left and the right. This situation is totally legal, not because it is correct or fair, but because the laws passed by serial incumbents have set the stage for this travesty of democracy under capitalist control.

Religion and Faith: Religion is the set of beliefs held by a person or society concerning the existence (or non-existence) and characteristics of some force greater than human beings, commonly referred to as “God.” In general, religion fosters ethical living and promotes many concepts of kindness and fairness among people. America was founded upon beliefs in the importance of ethical living, including the teaching of such values to each generation. In this aspect, the American manifestations of “church” and “state” are united, not separated.

On the other hand, faiths (which are the practiced or functional expressions of religions) start to go their own ways, preaching their particular flavors of worship and beliefs. Beliefs are the “currencies” of religion. The various faiths represent or bestow power to their believers, giving high value to *their* “currencies” while giving very little or no value to the beliefs held by other religions. To be the chosen people of the gods (or of the one true God) is the ultimate leveraging of power. In similar fashion, some ultra-liberals have a “god” named “permissiveness” wrapped in the rhetoric of “freedom,” even freedom to be offensive to others. When a person or nation believes that “God is on my side,” (or “freedom justifies my imposition of permissiveness”), many deeds for good or evil are accepted and justified, especially when coupled with money and votes. Unfortunately, extremist-Americans try to make the Republicans into arch-conservative fundamentalists and the Democrats into ultra-liberal sectarians, both with their serial-incumbents as high priests. We should marginalize both extremes and concentrate on our shared core values, as found in the “reasonable person standard” that is already part of American legal traditions.

Justice and Law: Justice is the concept that fairness should prevail. Justice is intended to be something desirable for people, but justice can be perceived in different ways. In order to

minimize the conflicts over different perceptions of justice, the people in power create rules. Laws are formalized rules to govern a nation or state or city or club. There can be great laws, good laws, poor laws, and unjust laws. A law created by a designated authority is not necessarily a fair law. Powerful people make laws, in part, to maintain their view of fairness. Laws in America too frequently tend to favor those individuals, groups, and businesses that have money and/or influence to affect voting in general elections or the subsequent actions (votes) of elected representatives. Fortunately, laws in America are forever subject to improvement, if done according to the laws about changing laws. The processes and decisions about what is and what is not allowed in America will be the ultimate battleground that will decide the future of our nation. Choose poorly and long-lasting decline will be upon us during our lifetimes. Choose wisely and greatness will continue or even expand (probably in somewhat different forms), and then future generations will take over the responsibility to preserve the nation. Proper democracy, appropriate capitalism, ethical beliefs, and a sense of caring service can combine to accomplish law-based justice to keep America on the correct path for all citizens to enjoy a more perfect union (with fairness). Be thankful that in America we still have time to choose our destiny. But it will not be easy, and it will require vast changes that impact everyone.

Love and Caring: Perhaps the truest expression of love is the caring that people are willing to give for the benefit of others. And the main currency of love and caring is service. Service can be almost synonymous with caring. Caring and service are wonderful for the personal and national psyche. They build character in men and women, young and old. There can never be too much caring or service. And yet, except for some minor efforts relative to environmental protection, almost nothing in current American capitalism (C20) favors love and caring. Caring must be a key component in Capitalism²¹. And service can be a major ingredient in America's recipe to regain and maintain its position in World leadership, and thereby avert crisis and decline. Do not expect financially motivated corporations to seriously embrace service until either a) the shareholders demand it (by their votes or their buy/sell decisions) or b) the democratically obtained laws require or reward service efforts, especially from those persons and companies that already have an abundance of valuable skills, time, money and other assets. Service can do much to prevent the decline of America. Please note: Instead of making government responsible for needed, valued, and dutiful service, consider redirecting some of that responsibility to well-to-do people and corporations with sufficient assets to provide services. There can be motivation by sticks (taxes) or carrots (meaningful recognition of service and allowed tax deductions). America should utilize the power of love and caring through their expression as "service as a currency" to be a major alternative and balance to the power of money. I present specific proposals in later papers.

About "currencies" and their present order of importance/influence:

"Money plus other capital" is the most important and most influential of the currencies today. This includes earned money (from actual labor), growth money (from capital assets), and received money (from loans or donors such as churches, concerned persons, or organizations). Money is the most tangible and easiest to quantify on the list of currencies. Even the other forms of capital (land, stocks, owned intangibles such as patents, *etc.*) are rather easily converted into dollar values. Paper No. 5 discusses the power realm of economics.

"Influence by Voters" as expressed in election results is also very quantifiable. In a democracy, voting represents a) the concept that the people control governance via an election of legislative representatives and executive officers, and b) the concept that these elected representatives vote for specific actions. Influence by and upon voters is episodic for the public,

occurring mainly at times of elections. But the frequent voting by elected representatives exposes them continually to pressures (“lobbies”). The ability to influence the votes of people is truly a great power, but to influence the votes of the elected representatives is even more powerful. Either way, the influence upon voting is heavily impacted by the other powers. When affected by the powers of money or beliefs, this currency of democratic power can be corrupted to become “Influence *upon* Voters,” that is, the ability to influence voters (or the representatives when they vote) to deliver a desired result through their votes. Therefore, “influence” acts as a two-edged sword that must be handled with caution. Just because voting took place does not mean that true democracy has occurred. Further comments are in Paper No. 4.

“**Prayers & beliefs**” have no measurable influence outside of the person or the community of believers unless it is expressed as money or as influence over voters. The longer name for this currency is “Prayers to God and Beliefs in God,” while the shorter name could be simply “God” (or “gods” to some religions). Beliefs are represented by the words and actions of members of specific faiths. There is no established “exchange rate” between different beliefs. You cannot exchange your experienced forgiveness or salvation for three purgatories, extra years on earth, or tangible assets. In contrast, you can exchange money, votes, enforcements, and service. Paper No. 6 discusses further the realm of religion and faiths.

“**Enforcement of laws**” for legally-defined justice is usually measured in negative or punitive terms of crime rates, arrests, convictions, prison occupancy, *etc.* It appears to be powerful, but enforcement is greatly affected by 1) variability of interpretation in the laws and 2) society’s on-and-off enthusiasm for enforcement. Laws are man-made, can be rescinded or amended at any time, and are frequently ignored by the people and/or not enforced by the authorities sworn to uphold them. Law enforcement is important because laws necessarily give structure to any true changes in the power balance of the three big currencies: money, vote-influence, and God. Enforcement does the bidding of the other powers. Enforcement of culturally defined “fairness” or service is almost non-existent except to infrequently denounce or bring shame onto the unjust. (For more, see Paper No. 7.)

“**Service**” can be quantified by counting hours and/or the intensity of service work, perhaps giving some additional value relative to the effectiveness and purpose of the effort. Service inspired by the power of love and caring is mainly a personal, internal force (unless backed up by money or another of the currencies). The use of service time to impact people relative to democratic issues is inclusive in the overlap with voter influence. At present, perception of service as a currency of the power of love and caring is minimal in America compared to other currencies of power(s). As an enforceable power separated from money and influence, service lacks power for enforcement.

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Analysis: The true importance of the five realms of power is their interrelationships, not their individual characteristics. That is why they have been introduced in one short Paper. Later, in Papers No. 4 through No. 8, I discuss each of the five realms separately in relation to America (and some aspects of the World). But in this current Paper, the interconnections and balances among the powers are the emphasis of importance. The following example illustrates this point.

In simplistic terms, socialism is based on labor as its most important “currency.” That labor (drawn from everyone according to his/her abilities) somehow gets transformed into everyone receiving life’s necessities (provided to everyone according to his/her needs). In a stable society, socialism has not shown advantages over capitalism, perhaps because housing, food, tickets for the bus, *etc.* are still tangible assets equivalent to “money,” the currency of

capitalism. Therefore, the differences between socialism and capitalism are bound up in the single realm of power called economics. Do not confuse Communist dictatorial control (governance) or atheistic practices (religion) in the former Soviet Union with economic issues of labor and capital. Soviet enforcement of laws (the realm of justice) was heavy-handed, and the realm of love/caring was very weak. In a comparison between the former Soviet Union and America today, the content and practices in the five realms are very different, but the **balance** among the five realms is surprisingly similar in that the economic realm dominates the other four realms.

So, when I speak of changing the balance among the five realms of power, I am not calling for socialism. Instead, for America, I am calling for these re-balancing efforts:

- 1) reduce the power of capital (by dethroning money as the measure of success),
- 2) redirect the power of democracy (by involving more voters and curtailing “serial incumbents”),
- 3) shift the emphasis within the power of faith (away from the extremes),
- 4) strengthen the power of law (toward compliance with laws against crime, drugs, waste, greed, *etc.*), and
- 5) elevate the power of caring (by providing additional meaning to life through good and meaningful service). This is where the greatest potential for change is found.

As you read the later Papers, please be aware that any single topic in isolation (such as compulsory national service for everyone) could at first appear illogical and ineffective, but becomes logical and effective when combined appropriately with other proposals. And remember that the synergy of proper combinations for balance among the five realms of power will need to be extremely powerful if we are to direct the destiny of America away from the impending decline.

Perhaps this discussion is not what you were expecting. This is not a standard “pat on the back” for America to keep going along its merry (and now failing) way. But I hope you see that my message is not one of despair, but is a message with hope and prospects for solutions.

As an adult American, you have some money, you can vote, you have personal beliefs, you are subject to laws, and (I hope) you have some time for expression of love and caring through meaningful service in your life. Look upon service as a fundamental and crucial duty in your expression of love and caring for America. All five powers within your life reflect the current power relationships within America. What we should all desire are shifts for synergistic combinations of these powers so that Americans and America can understand, avoid, and even reverse the impending decline.

I see paths for hope and prosperity in our future, but not in traditional ways. I am not a prophet of doom. Instead

I. M. Nehemiah

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