

The Nehemiah Postulates

[Paper No. 9 of the *Nehemiah Papers*]

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A “postulate” (noun) is a statement that someone claims to be true and upon which further discussion is based. The fifteen Nehemiah Postulates are summary statements upon which the prior and further writings are based. Although presented in the context of America, the Nehemiah Postulates are highly relevant to all affluent nations and all pockets of affluent people in other nations around the World.

Section 1: The Impending Decline of America (Postulates 1, 2, and 3)

1. A massive decline in the quality of life of Americans (and of people in other affluent nations) is highly probable in the coming few decades, perhaps very soon. The disruptive causes are not likely to include extensive warfare within the affluent homelands, but rather a severe economic downturn prompted by one or more of the following circumstances:

- a. Military & terrorist conflicts: One or more nuclear devices explode in major American or European cities, with long-term costly efforts toward retaliation, reconstruction and prevention.
- b. Economic upheaval: Defaults by foreign debtors; credit-card debts and mortgage mismanagements; loss of economic confidence as experienced during the Great Depression.
- c. Energy crisis: Peak oil becomes reality; major disruption in oil supply; fuel rationing.
- d. Environmental disasters: Earthquakes, deforestation, soil erosion, water pollution, and increasing ravages from global warming, including droughts, hurricanes, and rising sea level.
- e. Continuation without changes: “Business-as-usual” piles up national and personal debt while resource depletion reduces options for action while facing increased international competition. Add here the insidious advances of drugs, crime, selfishness, and the decline of family values.
- f. Combinations: Several of the above amplify each other in their downward spirals.

2. The diminished lifestyles of America’s lower and middle classes would be unpleasant or at least significantly inferior to “the good life” of today. We should expect:

- a. Housing: Limited winter heating; no air conditioning; foreclosures; shared housing.
- b. Infrastructure: Minimal repair on roads, *etc*; increasing breakdowns of services.
- c. Employment: Increased unemployment and under-employment; decreased income.
- d. Transportation: Higher costs of personal travel and of all transported goods.
- e. Political/military: Political instabilities that give rise to additional warfare.
- f. Health, education and welfare: Decline in well-being; less preventive medicine.
- g. Government response: Limited funds for large crises; acceptance of inflation.

3. The decline cannot be avoided by any of the standard measures being implemented by the American government or proposed by politicians campaigning in elections.

Even our tremendous technical capabilities cannot avoid the decline. The long-term overall advancement of the World can occur without America at the forefront of development and prosperity. The fundamental problems that must be confronted are found at the heart of American society. The current American variations of democracy and capitalism (C20) are critically flawed and need serious adjustment, but not abandonment. Otherwise these flaws will continue to suppress and hinder our great nation while others reach or even surpass us.

Section 2: Understanding Power in America (Postulates 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9)

4. The five realms of power are out of balance in America and around the World.

Each realm has several expressions, with one expression of each realm being dominant in America. Each expression has its own “currency.” The imbalances have already partially crippled America and must be addressed to avoid the impending decline. In a single table, the realms and expressions and currencies are overly simplified, but you will get the idea. Details are presented in Papers Nos. 3 through 8.

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:	Faiths: Christian	Prayers & beliefs	Non-Christian prayers & beliefs
Justice:	Law	Enforcement	Anarchy w/ Brute force; Scriptures
Love:	Caring	Service (Helpfulness)	Selfishness w/ Self-service; Hate / Jealousy

There are many variations in every item listed above. Do not assume any black or white dichotomies. For example, capitalism in America today includes major components from socialist thought and practices. Likewise, there exists no pure socialism anywhere on Earth. And there can be many corrupting influences that distort democracy, faiths, laws, and caring.

5. Economics and Capitalism: Money is the currency of capitalism within the Realm of Power called economics. But in America the power of money has tainted all of the 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 are directly related to bringing the power of money under control. Capitalism is not attacked. But it should be modified in serious ways to become “Capitalism for the Twenty-first Century,” abbreviated as “Capitalism21” or simply “C21.”

6. Governance and Democracy: Democracy in America is based on voting (usually by a disgracefully small percentage of the adult population) for elected officials who then have further democratic functions to propose and vote on legislation, with the executive branch to implement those laws. Unfortunately, America’s democracy today is literally controlled by repeatedly re-elected “serial incumbents” who are seriously 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 prior and current serial incumbents have set the stage for this travesty of capitalist-controlled democracy. The legislators’ allegiance to voting strictly along political party lines reveals party influence as an overriding factor affecting their freedom to be moderate, free-thinking, and representative of all the people in the political unit, not just those who voted for them. The rise of a responsible third major party might serve the nation well.

7. Religion and Faith: Religion is the set of beliefs of a person or society concerning the existence (or non-existence) and characteristics of some force greater than human beings,

commonly summarized by the word “god or God.” In general, religion fosters ethical living and promotes some concept of being nice to other people. America was founded upon beliefs in ethical living and notions that people should be good to one another, including the teaching of such values to each generation. In this regard, the American concepts of “church and state” are united, not separated. On the other hand, faiths (which are practiced religions) start to go their own ways, preaching their particular flavor of beliefs. The various faiths represent power to their believers. To be the chosen people of the gods (or of the one true God) is the ultimate claim of power. Likewise, the ultra-liberal non-believers have a “god” of 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,” many deeds for good or evil are accepted and justified, especially when coupled with money and votes. Unfortunately, extremist-Americans try to project the Republicans as arch-conservative evangelicals and the Democrats as ultra-liberal sectarians, both with their serial-incumbents as high priests. We should marginalize the extremes at both ends and concentrate on our shared core values, as found in the “reasonable person standard.”

8. Justice and Law: Justice is the concept that fairness should prevail. Justice is intended to be something desirable for people. In order to minimize conflicts over different perceptions of justice, officials in power create rules. Laws are formalized rules to govern a nation, state, city, formal organization, or club. There can be great laws, good laws, poor laws, and unjust laws. Just because some authorized body has made a law does not make it fair. Powerful people make laws, in part to maintain their view of what is to be allowed. Laws in America favor those individuals, groups and businesses that have the most money or influence to affect general elections or elected representatives. Perhaps the best thing about laws in America is that the people can take actions to change any of the laws, if done according to the laws about changing laws. And even the law-changing laws can be changed by a rare challenge to the Supreme Court or possible amendment to the Constitution by democratic vote.

9. Love and Caring: Perhaps the truest expression of love is the service that people are willing to do for the benefit of others. Service is wonderful for the personal and national psyche. Service builds character in men and women, young and old. There can never be too much service. Service can be a major part of the way for America to regain and maintain its position in World leadership, and thereby avert the impending crisis and decline. And yet, except for some minor efforts related to environmental protection, almost nothing in current American capitalism (C20) favors love and service. Service is to be a key component in Capitalism²¹. Do not expect capitalist corporations to seriously embrace service until either a) the shareholders demand it (by their votes or their buy/sell decisions) or b) democratically-enacted laws require or reward service efforts, especially from those persons and companies that already have an abundance of money and assets. Service can do much to prevent the decline of America. Instead of the government providing those services, consider their execution by well-to-do people and corporations with assets, motivated by sticks (taxes) or carrots (meaningful recognition of service and allowed deductions). America should place service as a currency to balance the power of money. I present a few ideas in other Papers.

Section 3: Wealth in America (Postulates 10, 11, and 12)

10. Normally we speak of the lower, middle, and upper classes in America, realizing that a full range of classes actually exist through strata and combinations of education, income, net worth, family of birth, *etc.* But consider for a moment two classes at the extremes: sub-

lower and super-upper classes. Sub-lower is below the absolute minimum level of acceptable living: marginal food supply, miniscule health care, very poor schools, intolerable housing, unemployment, victimization by criminals, and generally despicable living. This is American poverty. For such poverty to exist in our affluent America is shameful! Helping these people rise out of the sub-lower class does not require uncontrolled welfare and handouts, and certainly not wealth redistribution. Receiving benefits also means these individuals accept some responsibilities, even entering into appropriately increasing contractual agreements.

11. At the opposite end of the monetary spectrum, the super-upper class has wealth beyond imagination, more tangible wealth than the World has ever seen. Accumulation of wealth is the symbol of masterful capitalism. To become a billionaire is an interim goal of the thousands of “centa-millionaires.” Even the “deca-millionaires” cannot spend their wealth except to try to make more money, try to influence legislation to make favorable rules for those who have capital, or spend it on absolute non-essentials. Many of the wealthy have life-styles characterized by self-indulgent extravagance and waste. With few exceptions, the super-wealthy who make donations actually give a very small percentage of their gross wealth and income to improving America, even including the taxes they pay.

12. The contrast between the previous two paragraphs tells us something about why America is facing impending decline. There will always be rich and poor people; capitalism does and should reward efforts, within reason. But allowing the existence of sub-lower conditions of one’s own fellow countrymen is a serious indicator of a society rotting from the inside and weakened against outside forces that would bring down everyone, rich and poor alike. Capitalism and democracy are still the best for America and the World, but significant revisions are needed. Welfare handouts cannot fix those sub-lower class problems; the people on the lower financial rungs need to become involved in improving America. Coordinated national programs are needed simultaneously at each needy location. No actions should be overly fancy or expensive. Just get the basics to everyone. The ten Nehemiah Proposals in Paper No. 10 address the inherent unfairness and outline ways to build a better America and a better World, including the basics of Capitalism²¹. Rest assured, the solutions will require more “backbone” than the World has ever seen. Perhaps that is why no great nation has ever escaped decline.

Section 4: Outreach to the World (Postulates 13, 14, and 15)

13. Now apply everything from the above twelve postulates to the World. The five Realms of Power remain unchanged and the affluent nations of Europe and a few other places are strikingly similar to America. But elsewhere in the World’s other great culture blocks, the expressions and currencies can be quite different. Some societies are unprepared for democracy; billions of people are at the edge or outside of any capital-based economy; non-Christian faiths have powerful followings; corrupt laws or virtual lawlessness ravage some nations; and service beyond one’s family is questionable in many locations. On a World scale, the sub-lower true-poverty class also includes “sub-sub-sub-lower” people that, by American standards, are below the imaginable existence levels. Destitution or massive true poverty conditions for hundreds of millions of people include near starvation, zero health care, illiteracy, no clean drinking water, shacks or tents, unemployment, child labor, forced labor, criminals in total control, and even genocide. This is intolerable and absolutely shameful in a World where people of modest-to-super-affluent means live wastefully and selfishly and willfully ignorant of those in astonishing need. These factors extensively contribute to why great nations have declined and fallen. The

dire poverty of others is a threat to America and affluent nations everywhere. Especially in the new “globalized” World, the problems of poverty abroad are rightfully our problems to solve.

14. Without question, the affluent societies of the World have the resources to rectify the conditions of the sub-lower classes in nations that would cooperate. That is, IF the affluent nations would do that same task in their own nations and also reach out to the cooperating others. Those that do help should be appreciated, gain international friends, and avert many of the dangers of the impending decline. America should show its leadership abilities (or follow any other nations with the decency to do what is fair for disadvantaged people). America could enjoy a controlled economic recovery and boom with a vigorous “peace and development initiative.” Proposals are provided in Nehemiah Paper No. 10, with details in later Papers.

15. America can avoid the impending decline by reviewing and revising its own democratic capitalism (that is, creating Capitalism21) and simultaneously implementing a worldwide initiative for true-poverty elimination. Such a worthy cause will not be accomplished easily. Ironically, such efforts can help sustain and even grow the economies of the participating affluent nations. The economic advantages of waging war (with increased employment, factory production, R&D, *etc.*) can also be received by pursuing peace, minus the destructive aspects of warfare. Some of the necessary tasks will take years. Others can be accomplished by enacting a few laws. But we must begin now.

Commentary:

A “postulate” (noun) is a statement that someone (in this case, the I. M. Nehemiah author(s)) claims to be true and upon which further discussion is based. I have provided fifteen postulates that are interrelated. If any of the Nehemiah Postulates are proven to be false, then the others are also suspect and the *Nehemiah Papers* possibly could be ignored. I expect the very first postulate (about the impending decline of America) is the one that will be attacked most. That postulate refers to the future, and therefore it cannot be proven false until the future has actually occurred. I mention several times in the later Papers the year 2050, which is close enough to be reached in the life span of most Americans under the age of 40 in 2011. So, the issue really is whether you are willing to risk your own well-being and that of your children and grandchildren by denying the postulate that cannot be disproved for at least two decades, not discussing them, and not doing anything suggested in the Nehemiah Proposals and other Papers. Even if several of the Postulates are incorrect or only partially correct, I prefer to seek major actions for correcting the problems of America and the World. To simply wait or do minor actions for what could be quite devastating to America is not advisable.

I am counting on many Americans to take up the battle cry and to actually participate. Beware of false prophets and the status quo. Please read and discuss the next Papers. Demand action. Better yet, be active. Join me for *Building a Better America and a Better World*.

I hope that I have your attention. I am not a prophet of doom. Instead

I. M. Nehemiah

Setting the stage for a better World