"The Inheritance of Wealth and the Commonwealth: 
The Ideal of Paideia in an Age of Affluence"

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PHILANTHROPY ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

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The inheritance of wealth and the commonwealth: The ideal of paideia in an age of affluence

Paul G. Schervish

THE TRANSMISSION OF PHILANTHROPY across the generations is the transfer of a spiritual agency of material capacity, care for others, and a process of conscientious decision making and choice. The intergenerational transmission of philanthropy is less a matter of shepherding heirs to become caretakers of existing philanthropic instruments and endeavors as it is a matter of guiding heirs to become agents who reconstitute for their own time and in their own way the relationship between wealth and the commonwealth. As such, the intergenerational transfer of philanthropy involves a

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particular method of teaching and learning that enables subsequent generations, like the disciples in all spiritual traditions, to become generative bearers and propagators rather than simple receivers and distributors of the moral citizenship of financial care. Our heirs are the descendants of our philanthropic prospects and purposes. And in short course, they will become the ancestors for a subsequent generation of descendants. It is our higher purpose not to make them mirrors of ourselves but discerning souls capable of charting a financial and philanthropic trajectory tailored to their times.

In this chapter, I make a case on behalf of the next generation rather than against them—as is so often done in content and tone by those of us who are eager to make our offspring responsible according to our lights. I consider our offspring to be agents and subjects like ourselves rather than mere objects of our training whom we are attempting to get to do what we think should be done. As I have found over the course of my years of research, we and our peers approach our own philanthropy from inclination and inspiration. But when it comes to our children, we scold and cajole in order to pass on philanthropic impulses. For many reasons, many of them noble, we engage in much pushing and shoving even of our adult children, trying to get them to do what we want them to do: be philanthropic, be involved in the family foundation, do community service.

Although we resist being told our specific duties in regard to wealth—temporal and financial—and the commonwealth, we still tend to tell the next generation what their duties are. Let me be clear, my approach does not remove obligation, duty, and responsibility from our heirs in regard to wealth and the commonwealth. What it does remove is our tendency to cajole and replaces it with a more abundant, deeper, and productive approach for passing on the sense and sensibility of care to those who follow us. Instead of telling our children the specifics of their vocation of care, we do better to teach them well about how to discern their own vocation. Passing on a philanthropic orientation to the next generation is at best passing on a method for conscientious decision making. Why

is this is so important? In the end, we will not be there to ensure that our heirs do what we wanted them to do, and so we need to do our best to help them be continuous finders and bearers of their duties, not just replicate ours.

In the first section of the chapter I draw on an essay by John Maynard Keynes to help us understand the material and cultural conditions of the early twenty-first century. In the second section, I summarize several elements of the material heritage we will leave our children, including a substantial transfer of wealth, and indicate the implications of these trends for the historical circumstances of wealth and philanthropy that our heirs will face. The third section examines the meaning of moral biography as the confluence of material capacity and moral compass, and how our calling today is to provide our heirs the opportunity conscientiously to shape their own moral biographies based on the distinctive characteristics of the future they will inhabit. In the fourth section, I explore two elements of how we might best go about helping our children and grandchildren form their own moral biographies. I focus especially on the communication of paideia, the Greek ideal of formative education and the meaning of culture, as the ideal of our teachings, and on discernment as a process of decision making aimed at clarifying philanthropic resources, purposes, and mode of implementation. In the conclusion, I exhort those of my generation to make it our vocation to help our children freely discover their own vocation.

A material and spiritual inheritance
In addition to the impending intergenerational transfer of wealth there will be a corresponding intergenerational transfer of philanthropic practice. Besides a material inheritance, we need to be concerned about a spiritual inheritance. In addition to charting the growing material capacity that our heirs will face, we need to reflect on the issues of character and character formation we want to teach our children and grandchildren.
John Maynard Keynes had something prescient to say about this spiritual inheritance in his 1929 essay "The Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren." According to Keynes,

The economic problem [of scarcity] may be solved, or at least within sight of solution, within a hundred years. . . . When the accumulation of wealth is no longer of high social importance, there will be great changes in the code of morals . . . [such that] the love of money as a possession—as distinguished from the love of money as a means to the enjoyments and realities of life—will be recognized for what it is, a somewhat disgusting morbidity, one of those semi-criminal, semi-pathological propensities which one hands over with a shudder to the specialists in mental disease. [1933b, pp. 366, 369]

I believe that despite the suffering wrought by recalcitrant world poverty, we, our children, and our grandchildren are in the midst of what Keynes characterized as "the greatest change which has ever occurred in the material environment of life for human beings in the aggregate" (Keynes, 1933b, p. 372). For the first time, we are arriving at the juncture when "we shall be able to rid ourselves of the many pseudo-moral principles . . . by which we have exalted some of the most distasteful of human qualities" (p. 369). In this new dispensation of material wherewithal, for the first time each human being will confront what Keynes says is "his real, his permanent problem—how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure which science and compound interest will have won for him, to live wisely and agreeably and well" (p. 367). In this new material dispensation we will find, says Keynes, that "the nature of one's duty to one's neighbor has changed. For it will remain reasonable to be economically purposive for others even after it has ceased to be reasonable for oneself" (p. 372).

There are in Keynes's reflections two connected topics. The first is his forecast of an unprecedented material wealth; the second is his speculation about the potential consequences of that financial advance for spiritual and cultural development. In some ways there is nothing else to speak about when addressing the intergenera-

**Material wherewithal**

Without going into detail here, I will note and briefly comment on ten empirical findings that are relevant to the financial trends Keynes speaks about and that are relevant to the potential change in cultural orientation that Keynes says will ensue from those financial trends.

First, according to calculations by John Havens from the Federal Reserve Flow of Funds, average annual real growth in wealth from 1950 to 2001 has been at 3.34 percent, despite a dozen economic recessions over this period. The implication is that Keynes's projection of growth in wealth over the one hundred years from 1930 to 2030 is reasonable if growth simply continues at the rate of the past fifty-one years.

Second, this fifty-one-year trend in growth of wealth sheds a new light on our wealth transfer projections. We have emphasized the five-decade projection of a $41 trillion transfer, which when updated to 2002 dollars totals $45 trillion, including $7 trillion in charitable bequests. But if the average real rate of growth in wealth is the same as it has been over the past fifty-one years (that is, 3.34 percent), then we are really looking at a wealth transfer of between $80 trillion and $150 trillion with charitable bequests totaling between $13 trillion and $27 trillion (in 2002 dollars)—in addition to at least $20 trillion in inter vivos giving (Havens and Schervish, 1999; Havens and Schervish, 2003). Moreover, all this occurs without making individuals more charitably inclined, but results simply from projecting forward the charitable dispositions of the population that were in effect around 1995—before the spurt of charitable giving in the late 1990s. In a word, these projections do not take into account the intensification of charitable proclivities that all of us are hoping to generate among ourselves and our progeny.
The third point is that there already exists a strong association between greater financial capacity and greater charitable giving. Whether measured by wealth or income, the 7 percent of households at the top of the distributions ($1 million in net worth or $140,000 in annual income) contribute 50 percent of all the inter vivos yearly charitable giving. Charitable bequests are even more highly skewed toward the upper end. The .07 percent of estates valued at $20 million or more contribute 44 percent of the value of all charitable bequests while the 5.1 percent of estates valued at $5 million or more contribute 66 percent of the value of all the charitable bequests (Havens and Schervish, 2003).

As strong as the general association between finances and philanthropy may be, it is even stronger among those who identify themselves as financially secure—those who, in Keynes’s terms, have “solved” the “economic problem” for themselves and their heirs. Perhaps the most important general contribution of sociology to the study of economic life is that assessment of one’s personal financial status is not simply a matter of objective criteria. Individuals always define their financial resources and aspirations relative to subjective values and norms and in view of comparative assessments with their reference groups. We have found (Schervish and Havens, 2001) that at every level of income and wealth, the higher individuals rate themselves as subjectively financially secure, the greater amount they give to charity, the greater the percentage of income they contribute, and the greater the percentage of wealth they give. There are direct implications of this finding for Keynes’s prognostication. One model about the relationship between wealth and care for others is that the more affluent one is, the more self-centered and uncaring one becomes. The opposite model is more akin to Keynes’s view, as we have heard: the more financially secure one becomes, the more one becomes “economically purposive for others even after it has ceased to be reasonable for oneself” (Keynes, 1933b, p. 372).

After interviewing hundreds of wealth holders and analyzing surveys, I subscribe to neither of these two polar models. In my view, wealth is Janus-faced. It proffers both opportunities and obstacles to care for others. Wealth does not automatically lead individuals to be either other-directed or self-directed. What it does in every instance is expand the horizons of choice and raise the questions: “What should I choose to do with my financial resources? Given the quantitative expansion of my choices, what should the qualitative content of those choices be?” Great wealth always leads to the great question: “What could I do, should I choose to do it?” It never automatically answers this question one way or another. But as the foregoing findings on financial security and charitable giving indicate, there is some reason to believe that wealth does create an opening for philanthropy.

Our explanation of why this occurs is that at some point the very wealthy, although they are always faced with a budget constraint, no longer experience a budget constraint around their standard of living. Such individuals are financially independent and have achieved financial transcendence—meaning that their stream of resources has exceeded the stream of their expenditures for the entire foreseeable future. For those who recognize that the difference between their stream of resources and their stream of expenditures is not only positive but permanent and even growing, there is an inclination to allocate the redundant financial resources to charity. As Thomas Murphy (2001, pp. 34–35), a self-reflective philanthropist, explains:

Given the generally accepted assumption that one provides first for oneself and one’s family and does so at some level of lifestyle, philanthropy enters into the decision-making process [in a more significant manner] when the difference between the expected level of income, current and future, and expected level of expense, current and future, to maintain and enhance one’s standard of living is substantial and relatively permanent as measured by the subjectively determined criteria of the decision maker. . . . The extent to which this difference (discretionary income) between income and expense is positive quantifies the financial resources available for philanthropic activities. The extent to which this difference is perceived as permanent strengthens the case for allocating some of the resources for philanthropy. The extent to which the difference is positive, permanent, and growing in magnitude enhances the philanthropic allocation.
For those who have solved Keynes’s economic problem for themselves and their spouses as well as for their children and grandchildren, what remains other than additional investment and business formation is philanthropy. Examining individual financial plans to discern the extent to which wealth holders actually act in the way Murphy describes and Keynes expects is part of our current research agenda. If financial security does in fact lead to increased charitable giving, the consequences are obvious for the forthcoming generations, which in all probability may be even more financially secure than their parents.

Another aspect of the material conditions undergirding the inheritance of wealth and the commonwealth is John Havens’s and my new findings on the positive relationship between estate tax repeal and charitable bequests. Virtually every analysis to date on the relationship of estate tax to charitable giving confounds those two groups. David Joulaiaian (2000) analyzes the effects of the estate tax on charitable bequests for a sample of estate tax filers in 1992. He concludes that “In the absence of the estate tax . . . charitable bequests may decline by about 12 percent” (p. 21). Other research indicates downturns in charitable bequests of 22 percent (Gale, Hines, and Slemrod, 2001) and between 24 and 45 percent (Clotfelter and Schmalbeck, 1996). The primary innovation in our analysis is to model the fact that the relationship between wealth, the estate tax, and charitable giving is dramatically different for estates where there is a surviving spouse (first estates) and estates where there is no surviving spouse (final estates). Although Joulaiaian does not pursue this analysis, he does provide the separate statistics on the estates of married and unmarried decedents. Our analysis uses his data to conduct our separate analyses of first and final estates. These results indicate that repeal of the estate tax would not reduce charitable bequests by 12 percent but would increase total charitable bequests by 35 percent.

We are not suggesting that our preliminary findings form the basis for policy at this point. We are claiming, however, that conventional wisdom about estate tax repeal reducing charitable bequests is not as certain as it is made out to be. Also, our findings suggest that if the repeal of the estate tax were to occur, two things would happen. More dollars would flow to charity at the death of final decedents. And because more wealth would also flow to heirs, those heirs would be more likely to receive or reach financial security and at an earlier period in their lives. This would also result in more dollars going to charity in inter vivos giving and in bequests.

Finally, there is the material consideration that repeal of the estate tax may lead to greater economic growth. Although most economists who study the impact of estate tax repeal do not support repeal because of equity considerations, negative effects on wealth distribution, and a negative impact on charitable giving, they generally conclude that repeal will rationa/e economic activity sufficiently enough to increase economic growth. Unproductive, economic-aimed tax-avoidance and lower, distorted investment incentives all reduce economic growth. Now, those familiar with our wealth transfer model know that we model wealth transfer based on separate scenarios of real annual growth in wealth of 2 percent, 3 percent, and 4 percent. The 2 percent scenario produces a $45 trillion transfer (in 2002 dollars) with $7 trillion in charitable bequests. At 3 percent growth the transfer is $80 trillion with $13 trillion going to charity. At 4 percent real growth the figures are $150 trillion and $27 trillion (Havens and Schervish, 1999). Recalling that the real annual growth in wealth between 1950 and 2001 was 3.34 percent, it is instructive to consider what additional increments in standard of living, employment, income, and philanthropy would ensue if repeal of the estate tax nudged the growth rate in wealth above 2 percent and ideally even above the historic level of the past five decades.

The spiritual inheritance of wealth and the commonwealth: Moral biography

I now turn to the cultural or spiritual side of John Maynard Keynes’s historical forecast. My interpretation of Keynes’s combination of economic and cultural destiny is that he is offering an
insight into the meaning of moral biography (see Schervish, Coutouskis, and Lewis, 1994; Schervish, 1994) in the first third of the twenty-first century. A moral biography is a life lived at the crossroads of material capacity and personal character, of empowerment and moral compass, of choice and wisdom. The account of Moses’ biography in the Book of Exodus is an example of a life told as a moral biography. His family has left him on the banks of the Nile so that he would be able to thrive outside the harsh conditions of an enslaved family.

Moses is brought into the household of the Pharaoh and becomes the heir apparent. He exercises capacity in the name of the Pharaoh and according to the moral compass of his vice regency. But in the view of his kin, Moses, despite his capacity, actually lacks moral compass until he learns of his ancestry, abandons his empowerment, and flees to the mountains. There, he regains his moral bearing but works as a shepherd with no singular capacity. In the manifestation of the burning bush, the Lord reconstitutes Moses’ moral biography, giving him a new moral compass and the worldly capacity to accomplish it. So equipped, Moses returns to the fray, going miracle for miracle with the Pharaoh, eventually breaking his resolve and demonstrating a nobler moral bearing. With moral compass turning into geographic compass, Moses leads his people through the Red Sea from the land of slavery to the land of milk and honey.

It is our goal, too, for our children and ourselves to be like Moses in the sense of finding and implementing a moral biography that links capacity and moral compass in all realms of daily life. Over the years, we have heard both wealthy and middle-class parents talk about four moral realms they wish to teach their children regarding financial capacity. One is the realm of accumulation. Parents want to make sure their children learn the value of work, gain an attitude of industriousness, and practice honest effort. The second realm is consumption. Here, parents strive to implant a non-materialistic disposition, to limit consumption, and to provide a rationale for not buying everything they can afford. The third moral bearing in which parents wish to instruct their children is social. They want their children to grow up without the elitist attitude that their financial privilege makes them better than others. Fourth, they are concerned with savings and investment. Finally, there is allocation of wealth to meet the needs of others among family and friends, and through philanthropy.

When it comes to forming a financial morality, I do not privilege the teaching and learning of allocation and philanthropy over the other four realms. Philanthropy is not necessarily a higher calling than care of family, making investments, starting a business that creates wealth and jobs, supporting one’s parents, or making personal gifts to friends in need. Attention to the relationship between capacity and character in all five realms makes up a moral biography in the age of affluence. Still, as I have said earlier, in such an age of affluence, philanthropy becomes more materially possible, and under the proper circumstances, more personally engaging.

Paideia: The formative knowledge of the spiritual inheritance

What do we teach our children so that they invite in and answer the foregoing array of questions with intelligence, empathy, and action? Werner Jaeger, the renowned Harvard classics scholar, proposes the notion of *paideia* (1943–1945, 1961) as the underlying content of all efforts of teaching and learning. Paideia is simultaneously a method of schooling, what the student learns and embodies, and the cultural consciousness of a people. Although today Jaeger is criticized in some quarters for being a Hellenocentric, his understanding of paideia remains profound. According to Jaeger, paideia in the Greek tradition is essentially formative teaching and learning. It concerns the communication and internalization not just of information, but of a corresponding personal formation and community culture. Paideia is the etymological and substantive root of pedagogy, the purpose of which is to produce “a conscious ideal of education and culture” (Vol. 2, p. 5). It is the kind of teaching carried out by God. “Lo Theos paidagogei ton kosmon” (“God formatively educates the
cosmos"), says Plato. Paideia is effective teaching and learning. In theological and literary language, it is sacramental and symbolic—it creates what it teaches. It begets "the wheeling around of the whole soul towards the light of the Idea of Good, the divine origin of the universe" (Vol. 2, p. 295). It generates a rich and integrated amalgamation of elements (krasis) rather than a simple physical mixture (mixture). In the end, paideia effects a human agent who is an active carrier of a living ideal; it is not the implanting of a static code. As such it is a breathing, working knowledge.

Paideia is both a way of choosing and deciding with wisdom, and the personal and cultural outcome of that choosing. It is a way of thinking, feeling, and acting—the trinity of human capacities that all the great theological, philosophical, and social-scientific traditions distinguish but view as three faces of an integrated practice. Eastern traditions refer to the chakras of path, oth, and kath—for head, heart, and stomach—as the three "brains" that are to be forged into an integrated and balanced union. The parallel Greek virtues are the true, the beautiful, and the good; the Christian virtues are wisdom, love, and justice. Auguste Comte and Ludwig Feuerbach repeatedly speak explicitly of the human essence as revolving around thinking, feeling, and acting. And in my view, the murky and inchoate notion of praxis used by Aristotle to mean practice as opposed to gnosis or abstract knowledge, and in more recent times used most frequently, but not exclusively, in the Marxist and Frankfurt schools, can be clarified as the dialectical practice of paideia in which thinking, feeling, and acting are mutually constitutive.

In addition to paideia being the trinity of practice that creates for the soul a humanism, as opposed to an individualism, paideia is also the trinity of thinking, feeling, and acting that forns the practices of home and culture. Just as paideia plays out in the microcosm of the individual heart, it also plays out in the mesocosm of home, and in the macrocosm of community and culture. It is the basis for what I call "the moral citizenship of care" (Schervish and Havens, 2002; Schervish, in press). These are patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting that constitute those realms of personal and social life as a free and voluntary social relationship of care. Com-merce and politics are at their best embodiments of paideia, but generally function under the sway of markets. There, individuals attend to needs mainly because the needs are signaled by a medium of dollars or votes that are necessary for the material survival of commercial and political agents. This is known in economics as responding to effective demand. It is effective because the suppliers are "caused" to meet a demand for the sake of their own survival. In civil society, which is the realm of philanthropy, needs of others are met to the extent individuals are sensitized to them and to their priority by virtue of being imbued with character-forming paideia. This I call responding to affective demand. It is effective because the suppliers of resources to meet needs choose to provide resources to the extent they are sensitized to do so on the basis of some empathetic connection to those in need.

**Discernment: How paideia is taught and learned**

As our children enter "the greatest change which has ever occurred in the material environment of life for human beings in the aggregate" (Keynes, 1933b, p. 372), something new will occur. "The nature of one's duty to one's neighbour is changed," says Keynes, and we become "economically purposive for others" (p. 372). How do we engage our children in fathoming "the nature of one's duty to one's neighbour," and specifically in regard to the prospects of philanthropy for their own era? It is not by getting them to do what we do or by imposing on them foreign obligations. Rather, the future of philanthropy will thrive to the extent that we educate our children to shape their own philanthropic vocation—that is, teach them a method of discernment by which they will freely make wise financial decisions not only in regard to themselves but in regard to others as well. In other words, the question is not how to communicate our directions to our heirs when we are present, but how to help them set their own directions when we are absent.

The process of discernment, which I consider to be the key to teaching and learning economic paideia, is a method of decision...
making by which individuals are helped to uncover for themselves, rather than be told, the prospects and purposes of their material capacity in the context of the prospects and purposes of their spiritual compass. The outcome of a discernment process is a spiritually attuned allocation of financial resources in which the needs of self, family, and world are attended to simultaneously. Clearly, when heirs are young, discernment is less self-directed than when they become more capable and responsible for their own decisions. But from the time our progeny are old enough to make free decisions, our best aspiration ought be to convert them from the execution of the moral biography we set for them to the moral biography they chart for themselves. Communicating how to make decisions in regard to financial production, consumption, disposition, and allocation is the key to ensuring that our children will make wise decisions about linking capacity and moral compass when we are no longer commanding their obedience, and when they are living in circumstances that will be uniquely their own and their era's.

Discernment is derived from Latin, "to sift apart." It is a process of gaining clarity, insight, perception, or sagacity by means of self-reflection in an environment of liberty and inspiration. When understood and carried out as connected to the ultimate goal of life, both financial practices and the decision-making process guiding them are not just moral but spiritual practices. Carrying out practices in the light of one's ultimate goal is not something foreign or alien to people. It can be described simply as happiness, in the Aristotelian sense; the realization of social-psychological effectiveness and significance in Maslow's terms; the unity of love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self, as Thomas Aquinas puts it; or being united to the soul to Christ, as Luther says.

When applied to philanthropy, just as when applied to every other sphere, discernment is the preferred path to moral biography. In the realm of philanthropy, discernment clarifies the capacity of charitable resources, the moral compass of charitable aspirations, and how capacity and compass come together in discerned or biographically or spiritually based charitable giving. The discernment of capacity concerns the process of clarifying and implementing decisions in regard to allocating material resources to charity. The discernment of aspirations refers to the process of clarifying and implementing decisions in regard to determining the donor's financial purposes and charitable care. The discernment of choice concerns the process of clarifying and implementing decisions about how to combine material capacity and moral aspiration in ways that are personally formative for the individual, while at the same time meeting the needs of others.

In the end, discernment results in conscientious answers to the following six crucial questions, which can be viewed as the curriculum of paideia generating the spiritual inheritance for culture, home, and heart.

- Is there anything you want to do?
- That is important to do as an act of care for others?
- With what type and amount of resources?
- According to what timetable?
- That you can do better through philanthropy than through government or commerce?
- And that enables you to identify with the fate of others, express gratitude for blessings, and achieve deeper personal happiness—that is, effectiveness and significance—for yourself and others at the same time?

The main implication of discernment for passing along the spiritual inheritance of philanthropic paideia is that when individuals are granted the opportunity to reflect on their material capacities and spiritual inclinations in an atmosphere where charitable duty is self-discovered, it is more wholeheartedly pursued and sustained. Philanthropy is taken up with fuller hearts and deeper pockets.

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**Bearers of paideia**

For Jaeger, as we have seen, paideia is “the wheeling around of the whole soul” into a self-chosen direction of transformation (1943–1945, Vol. 2, p. 295). Our children are going to have to live in a world with wealth we never dreamt about and in circumstances
we cannot predict. And so they will need to be not just hearers but bearers of paideia. A few years ago, I was asked by a reporter writing an article on Christmas giving to explain why the Salvation Army is so successful in its fundraising and in carrying out its work. The answer that came to me, I still consider correct. It was that each member of the Salvation Army is a minister and not just a messenger. They do not simply carry out a direction set by others or pass along a message. Rather, as ministers, they are generative bearers of the purposes at the heart of their lives. This is the gift we can give our children and, indeed, the next generation as a whole—to be generative bearers of paideia, not just receivers but discoverers of their duties in their times. A new era is upon us, one in which capacity is going to be dramatically increased and for which we will need new meanings and methods for instilling moral compass in our progeny. Primary among these new meanings is paideia; primary among these new methods is discernment.

My final point is to make a case for the relatively optimistic assessment we hear from Keynes that I have consciously woven through my comments. Is it indeed possible that conscientious discernment will be taken up and implemented freely, and that there will emerge “a new code of morals” whereby our financial concern more immediately extends to our neighbor? Is there a realistic hope that we, our children, and our grandchildren will be inclined to discern our moral biographies and will not resist it? Will paideia, once tasted, incline us to seek an ever- richer food? I cannot say for sure because inclinations are based on sentiments, and sentiments are caring and uncaring. Still, in the end, I suggest that when it comes to the regions of life with liberty and inspiration, there is an affinity between the deeper desires of the soul and the prospects and purposes of philanthropy. This also applies to the author of the Book of Deuteronomy, who counsels that set before you is “life and death, blessing and curse” and that you should “choose life, that you and your descendants may live” (Deut. 30:19). This commandment, he assures, “is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it” (Deut. 30:11–14).

Let us not make it far off for our children. It is not for us to go up to heaven or beyond the sea and bring it to them. But do let us help them find how it is already in their mouths and in their hearts, so that they can do it. Let them be attracted to and rewarded by the formative paideia that is cause and consequence of their making decisions in their time and place, with their skills and vocations, to chart their own way through the verdant yet precarious forest of great affluence that they will traverse in the early twenty-first century.

Conclusion

Communicating moral compass to accompany and command the material capacity with which we will endow the next generation is my definition of offering a spiritual inheritance. Most of us think that this spiritual inheritance means in large part passing on a caring tradition to our heirs, including some disposition toward, if not actual participation in, philanthropic instruments and endeavors. We wish our children to have a philanthropic moral biography. But we sometimes succumb to the temptation to tell them the purposes and procedures of their philanthropy. Instead of giving them a moral biography, we need to help them develop one. We need to offer our children what we cherish for ourselves: the ability to make conscientious decisions about how they will use their capacity in the service of care.

Although a moral biography of financial care has always been part of an ascetic way of life, it is an especially valuable element of spiritual life in our age of affluence. As personal and social wealth expand the horizon of choice for our heirs—Keynes’s grandchildren—it becomes increasingly important that we guide our heirs in developing a positive spirituality for affluent living and making wise choices.
among the obstacles and opportunities of affluence. For me, the key personal and cultural question of the twenty-first century for an increasing segment of the world's population is "How do I fashion my own, my children's, and my community's spiritual life in an age of affluence? How will the vast growth in the quantity of choice be translated into a deeper development in the quality of choice?"

To answer these questions requires an urgency about, and method for, clarifying the level of our financial capacity and how best to allocate it with moral compass. This, I believe, will increasingly include conscientious decisions about financial care in the form of charitable giving. This is best done within a broader moral biography of financial care that deals with accumulation, consumption, disposition, and allocation, including the giving and receiving of a material and spiritual inheritance. In order to animate such a spiritual inheritance for the next generation, the greatest gift by us to those that follow is that of paideia. Teaching and learning paideia is not automatic, but neither is it alien. The conscientious self-formation of discerned decision making in the light of one's ultimate end is the path to happiness for me, my children, and my neighbor. We do not need to admonish so much as invite our offspring to put behind them the spiritual confections of the "economic problem" and assume the prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of "the permanent problem of the human race" (Keynes, 1933b, p. 366, italics in original), namely, "to reap the spiritual fruits from our material conquests" (Keynes, 1933a, p. 354).

Let us teach our children well the responsibilities of their capacities but in a way that enables them to find their own array of aspirations and agendas. We do better to help our progeny find and respond to their own burning bush than route them to ours. For it is not just paideia, but self-paideia that we want them to develop. As Werner Jaeger writes: the Greeks "were the first to [formulate the notion] that education means deliberately molding human character in accordance with an ideal" (1943–1945, Vol. 1, p. xxii). "Education is the process by which a community preserves and transmits its physical and intellectual character" (Vol. 1, p. xiii). And Jaeger adds, "Other nations made gods, kings, spirits: the Greeks alone made men." Let us make discerning progeny. In the concluding paragraph of his book Early Christianity and Greek Paideia, Jaeger (1961) writes that by bringing the notion of paideia up to its usage in the fourth century, "it is evident that what we have been dealing with in this study is not only the last chapter in the history of the ideal of paideia in the late ancient Greek world but also the prologue to the history of its medieval Latin transformations" (p. 101). What I have been dealing with here is not only the last chapter in the history of the ideal of paideia in an age of scarcity but also the prologue to the history of paideia in an age of affluence.

References


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