

Published by  
The Foundation for Economic Education  
Irvington-on-Hudson, NY 10533

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Bound volumes of *The Freeman* are available from The Foundation for calendar years 1972 to date. Earlier volumes as well as current issues are available on microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

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## PERSPECTIVE

### Poverty and Freedom

Poverty is an uninteresting subject. Poverty has been, and continues to be, man's standard fate throughout his entire history. The reason is simple. People are poor because they cannot produce much that is valued by others. The intriguing question is why a *tiny* percentage of the world's population, for only a *tiny* part of man's history, has been spared man's usual fate. If we could answer that question, America's wealth could be readily duplicated throughout the world.

While nobody has the complete answer, there are some clues, hunches, and bits of circumstantial evidence. Freedom is the connection. Where we find riches, we tend to find freer people. An examination of Amnesty International's listings of human rights abuses shows a definite pattern where those nations with the least respect for human rights are also the poorest. By contrast, those with the greatest respect for human rights tend to be the richest.

—WALTER E. WILLIAMS

### The War on Words

Words—nasty or nice—are never more than passive sparks. Only when there's something to burn can there be a fire. The tantrums you threw as a child, the rage you feel when your expectations are unfulfilled, the angry outbursts that follow stress in your life—these are *learned responses to external events*.

Each of us is responsible not only for how we act, but for how we feel. Yes, as children we were slaves to parental schooling and guidance. Values on our moral menu were instilled in us with little choice or control on our part. But—we don't remain helpless toddlers. Humans have powerful, active centers of volition and reason in their noggins capable of discerning good from bad, better from worse. We are educable for life. Childhood emotions and behaviors can be silly, impetuous, and wrong—and they can be changed. We don't have to be jerks just