



BlackEconomics.org®

“Failure”

The first half of Generation Z and predecessors may recall the ABC Television Network’s Saturday afternoon television program “Wide World of Sports.” It aired for nearly 40 years from the early 1960s to the late 1990s. The program always commenced with a reminder that, in sports, there are prospects for the “thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat.”

Life is that way. The fact that we “cannot get out of life alive” makes the case.

But deep introspection and an assessment of history reveals that humans are prone to failure.

As a young adult, I recall listening to an important lecture by Malcolm X during which he mentions a book entitled “The Seven Cities of Troy.” Unfortunately, to this day, I have not pursued identifying and reading the book (a failure), but I can never forget Bro. Malcom’s point. He said that humans have been on the planet much longer than we suspect. He claimed that the evidence is that many years ago, scientist (archeologists) were searching for the City of Troy. They dug and found it. Then, by happenstance, they kept digging down and found a second Troy. Later a third. When the digging was done, seven Cities of Troy were found. Each one signified failure. Rises and falls. The people of multiple Troys could not ensure their perpetual existence.

Let us go deeper. Some say that humans invent our gods. Why? Not being expert in philosophy or religion, we can only suppose that humans have experienced so much failure that we know that we are going to fail. Hence, we create gods to save us—at least in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions.

In the case of Jewish History, Yahweh is always expected to be merciful and save the “Children of Israel”—if they would only avoid apostacy.

Christians structure their salvation differently. First, they say that we are born sinful, and that we must be saved from ourselves. Second, they predict that, whether interpreted from *Entos Humon*, *Ephthansen*, or *Parousia* perspectives, Jesus is expected to return at the end of the age to save the righteous; i.e., clean up the messy failures that evil has wrought.

In the Islamic tradition [Ramadan Kareem to fasters], Allah will appear at the “day about which there is no doubt” (requital) and save those deserving of Allah’s infinite grace and mercy.

All this means that we do not have the capacity to succeed: To see and correct our errors and save ourselves.

Economists do not help the situation much. We rest society’s “market economy”

(capitalism) on Adam Smith's "invisible hand" principle. As its most fundamental interpretation, the "invisible hand" principle infers that we all do what is in our own best interest to "succeed," and let the devil take the hindmost. But the "rugged individualism" implicit in the "invisible hand" principle defies wisdom expressed thusly: "If you want to go far, then go together." But economists' failures can also be seen in economic booms and busts. Either we are failures at managing market economies or the entire system, including the "invisible hand" principle, is faulty.

A perfect and most ridiculous example of failure is reflected in the most powerful country in the world; the good ole US of A. It is known ubiquitously that the ability to read is of uppermost importance and a fundamental tool for "success." (If you can read, then you can teach yourself almost everything.) Yet, we have found a million and one ways to fail to teach all our children to read well. Believe it or not, as Baba Rob Robinson (a co-contributor at BlackEconomics.org) and all good educators will tell you: "Children are learning machines." Yet we cannot ensure that 99% of our children learn to read proficiently?

Somehow, the "program" that produced societies throughout history include—by design or by default—a "bug" (faulty code) that produces failure.

However, in our infinite wisdom, we are moving at breakneck speed toward turning our world over to artificial intelligence (AI). We are counting on AI to discover how to identify (define) problems and develop strategies (methodologies) for solving those problems. Is it possible that we, who are prone to failure, can even conjure up a

solution of the variety just outlined that will not also be failure prone?

Archeologists and anthropologist keep assuring us that we are the latest and greatest iteration of animals that walk upright and have superior intelligence. But we still fail. Does it not stand to reason that our AI dream will also fail?

But this is not a sad tale for a very cloudy and rainy day. It could be reminding us that the reason we fail is not because we are incapable of succeeding. Rather, it may be that we are failing because we establish incorrect goals, and we place the wrong members of our society in charge of ensuring "success" and preventing failure.

Diamond experts will tell you that the perfect gem is rare: It seldom surfaces. However, the beauty of the perfect diamond is matchless. Therefore, we should be careful not to follow the traditions of the Great Pharaoh, King Herod, and the like and search the multitude to identify and destroy the diamonds that surface among us. Rather, we should consider that our best and final hope may be to use existing technology to identify among the billions the perfect diamond-like mind(s) who are most capable of saving our society and world from total failure.

Let us not be so intent on "being the greatest power;" the "greatest or most powerful leader;" or the "wealthiest entrepreneur." Rather, let us realize that the current system will fail unless we do something different. The fact that many of the world's truly wealthy and leadership reflect less than six degrees of genetic separation and long lineages may signal the cause of our failures. Given our global destructive capabilities and our proclivity to fail, we may be nearing our final failure—at least for this age.

B Robinson
031524

--