Charles Murray’s vision for achieving liberty

We are unlikely to see a pro-liberty revolution driven by ballot box results, acknowledges Charles Murray. But there are reasons to be very hopeful about the future of freedom.

Murray’s keynote address at the 2015 Freedom Dinner discussed three major trends that are creating an opportunity to reclaim “the original project of liberty as it was developed by the American founders ... to allow people to live their lives as they see fit as long as they allow the same freedom to everyone else. That kind of freedom, I think, is only going to expand,” Murray said.

The first transition is virtually over, Murray explained. “That is the transition from an intellectual consensus that central planning was the wave of the future, to an intellectual consensus that central planning doesn’t work and that markets do a job that could not be done, and can never be done, by central planners for reasons that Friedrich Hayek was one of the first to describe.”
CEO’S CORNER

Going to press as we close the books on 2015, this issue of Highlights provides an opportunity for me to say “thank you.”

Thank you for supporting work that is keeping freedom alive — and, increasingly, on the march — in many places around the world.

Thank you for making our 2015 Liberty Forum conference our biggest and best ever.

Thank you, not only for the generous gifts that sustain our efforts, but for your enthusiasm and optimism. When you look at the “Faces of Freedom” that we celebrated at Liberty Forum, and which appear throughout this issue, you will see that the freedom movement has new energy.

Certainly, we remain loyal to the time-tested values of a free society, and we honor those who blazed the way for our movement — not least among them Sir Antony Fisher, who would have turned 100 in 2015.

But we are also hungry for new thinking about how to achieve transformative victories for liberty. We are inspired by the innovators in our midst, such as those at Acton Institute whose Templeton Freedom Award–winning Poverty, Inc. documentary is changing the conversation on how to help the poor. We celebrate with enthusiasm the many experiments for liberty that are being conducted in nearly 100 countries. All this was on display at the 2015 Liberty Forum.

Join me in being proud of the freedom movement that is growing day by day. You helped build it.

ATLAS NETWORK WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Atlas Network is pleased to welcome two new board members: Kathryn Washburn, who also serves on the board of directors of the Niskanen Center and was previously the director of international affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior; and Scott Barbee, owner and president of Aegis Financial Corporation in McLean, Va.

“Having spent 30 years working in international affairs, I became more and more aware that the problem in developing countries is their statist approach to problems. Atlas Network is effectively countering this in its excellent training programs, which support and encourage free-market/liberty-oriented think tanks. The people on the front lines running these think tanks are often putting their lives at risk; they are my real heroes.” —Kathryn Washburn

“The worldwide promotion of the principles of individual liberty, free markets, limited government, and the rule of law is one of the most effective ways of working to elevate human economic conditions and raise the human spirit. When freedom flourishes globally, America, and indeed the world, is a safer and more peaceful place. Atlas Network has proven to be particularly proficient at nurturing these important ideals.” —Scott Barbee
Fred Fransen (Certell, Inc., United States) presenting at Un-Conference, which actively involved audience members in sharpening and improving projects to promote liberty.

John Chisholm, author of *Unleash Your Inner Company*, one of the special guests doing a book signing at Liberty Forum.

Canadian singer-songwriter Lindy Vopnfiðór welcoming guests to the John Blundell Elevator Pitch Reception.

John Mitra (Liberty Institute, India) and Tom Skinner (Free To Choose Network, United States) after a special screening of the documentary *India Awakes*, produced by Free To Choose Network.


“At Liberty Forum, I was struck by how important it is for all these groups to know they are not alone and to have a platform for displaying their accomplishments. These disparate groups create a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. I guess this is conveyed by the name Atlas Network, but it’s a revelation to see the dynamic first-hand.”
—Dawn Cloyd, Atlas Network supporter
ACTON INSTITUTE’S POVERTY, INC. WINS TEMPLETON FREEDOM AWARD

Grand Rapids, Mich.–based Acton Institute was awarded Atlas Network’s prestigious $100,000 Templeton Freedom Award for its documentary film Poverty, Inc., which is changing the culture of aid.

The West has positioned itself as the driving force of international development, giving rise to a vast, multi-billion dollar poverty industry. The results have been mixed — catastrophic, in some cases.

“Poverty, Inc. is a game changer,” said Brad Lips, CEO of Atlas Network. “While sharply critical of a corrupt status quo in international aid, the film provides a hopeful, joyful message about human ingenuity and dignity which is proving to have broad appeal.”

Drawing from more than 200 interviews filmed in 20 countries, this 91-minute documentary reveals the residual neocolonial power dynamics still embedded in modern aid. Poverty, Inc. challenges viewers to question fundamental assumptions and see people in the developing world in terms of their dignity and creative potential.

As Senegalese entrepreneur Magatte Wade says in the film, “If we really want to help, the poverty industry as we know it has to go.” Learn more at: PovertyInc.org

RANDY BARNETT PRESENTS THIRD ANNUAL LIGGIO LECTURE


Barnett has been at the forefront of the constitutional movement to secure inalienable property and contract rights for individuals since he published his groundbreaking 2003 book Restoring the Lost Constitution: The Presumption of Liberty. He played a leadership role in developing the constitutional challenge to Obamacare.

Barnett was the last Liggio lecturer to be invited to speak by Leonard himself, shortly before Leonard’s passing in October 2014. Barnett once compared Leonard to George Bailey of It’s a Wonderful Life — “surely the international classical liberal movement would be Pottersville were it not for you.” Watch Barnett’s Liggio Lecture at: AtlasNetwork.org/LiggioLecture
‘BALKAN LIBERTY FEST’ LAUNCHED VIA THINK TANK SHARK TANK

Congratulations to the winner of this year’s $25,000 Think Tank Shark Tank competition, Admir Čavalić of Bosnia and Herzegovina–based Multi, for the “Balkan Liberty Fest” project proposal.

The Balkan area has a long history of regional conflict, suffering under a half-century of communist rule and four years of brutal war. “Balkan Liberty Fest” will be an annual three-day event to discuss the ideas of liberty and the future of regional countries, with a strong message for change.

“Libertarians are winning the intellectual arguments, but we are losing on emotions,” Čavalić said. “We want to unite people of the Balkans for a better future. We can do this with Balkan Liberty Fest.”

Shark Tank judge Terry Kibbe said, “Admir’s experience running cost-effective student seminars gives me confidence he can scale up his efforts and reach impressive numbers at a reasonable cost with the Balkan Liberty Fest.” Learn more about the Think Tank Shark Tank competition, which is generously sponsored by the Rising Tide Foundation, at: AtlasNetwork.org/ThinkTankSharkTank2015

COSTA RICAN PARTNER WINS ELEVATOR PITCH COMPETITION

Think Tank MBA graduate Alvaro Salas of Democracy Lab (Costa Rica) won the John Blundell Elevator Pitch Competition at Liberty Forum. After returning home he sent this gracious quote about his experience with our team in November:

“I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Atlas Network for its support and for inviting me to be part of one of the most intellectual, fun, and fascinating experiences I have ever had. This road of being an ‘intellectual entrepreneur’ is lonely and not easy. However, after meeting you all, your network and the rest of my peers, I don’t feel lonely anymore. After attending the Think Tank MBA, Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner, and winning the John Blundell Elevator Pitch, I came back to my research duties with more energy, ideas, and, above all: inspiration. Inspiration to fight for a freer, more open, and transparent Costa Rica.”

Watch Salas’s pitch at: AtlasNetwork.org/ElevatorPitch2015
The Fraser Institute, an Atlas Network partner based in Canada, connects the dots between entrepreneurship, economic freedom, and economic recovery in its book *What America’s Decline in Economic Freedom Means for Entrepreneurship and Prosperity*, which has been named winner of Atlas Network’s 2015 Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award.

Edited by George Mason University economist Donald Boudreaux, the book contains five essays by U.S. economists: Liya Palagashvili of New York University and George Mason University; Russell Sobel of the Citadel; Robert Lawson of Southern Methodist University; Roger Meiners of the University of Texas at Arlington (with Andrew P. Morriss); and Clyde Wayne Crews, Jr., of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Instilling a new generation with a solid appreciation for the ideas of liberty is a crucial strategy for achieving greater freedom and prosperity in the future. Every year, Atlas Network recognizes the best student-focused project for liberty with the $3,000 Smith Student Outreach Award. The 2015 winner is European Students for Liberty (ESFL), for its outstanding impact in outreach to students in Europe. ESFL provides support to students in Europe, educating the next generation of leaders in the global liberty movement.

“The typically strategic Smith Student Outreach Award identifies and opens doors for potential stars, such as those involved in European Students for Liberty, which attracted 700 students from 45 countries to its highly successful 2015 conference,” said Atlas Network Board of Directors Vice Chair Linda Whetstone, who presented the prize at the 2015 Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner.
The second transition concerns the widespread understanding “that the government is no longer an extension of us. It is us versus them. The government is a thing apart, and no matter what its rhetoric might be, there is this uneasy recognition that all too often the government is primarily concerned with the health and well-being of the government. This crosses party lines. Why is it a good thing that we are now starting to look at the government as ‘them’ rather than ‘us’? Because it is enabling the emergence of all sorts of strategies for what I think will be the wave of the future, which is work-arounds. We enable people to live life as they see fit, not because the government gives permission, but because we simply make it that way.”

Within this context, Murray discussed the phenomenon of Uber and the sharing economy, as well as his own strategy for treating the regulatory state as an insurable risk as outlined in his 2015 book, *By the People: Rebuilding Liberty Without Permission*.

He went on to make a larger point about the obsolescence of so much government activity: “There was a rationale, in 1910, for the government to take a role in inspection of meat or in a lot of kinds of regulation. ... It really was hard for people to know what was in the products they were buying. It really was hard to get any redress if you ran into a shyster. ... That rationale is utterly gone. The availability of knowledge through the Internet is such that nobody ever goes to a government website to find out whether a restaurant is good. You go to your fellow Americans who, through the IT revolution, are giving us access to that kind of information.”

The third transition Murray described as the most important. “That’s the transition from the defense of freedom in terms of first principles, which is perfectly valid, to a defense of freedom, or perhaps more appropriately, an ‘offense’ for freedom based on human flourishing,” he said. Murray called on members of the freedom movement to push back against a paternalistic instinct that causes government to grow in order to “take care of” more and more members of society, as though they are incapable of solving their own problems.

“The biggest misunderstanding,” Murray said, “about freedom is: when we talk about people needing to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. That’s not the price of freedom. That’s the reward. We take responsibility for the consequences of our actions, and, in doing so, we infuse our lives with something more important than simply having spent the time here as pleasantly as possible.”

He discussed how satisfaction in life tends to come from four domains: family, faith, community, and vocation. “And whenever the government says, ‘Never mind, we’ll take the trouble out of that,’ it is, in effect, denuding the sources of satisfaction in human lives, and this is every bit as true of somebody who is working on a loading dock at a low-paying job as it is true of a hedge fund manager in New York, and actually probably maybe a lot more true. So, as we start to make that case — that the reason why we need freedom is not to enable people who already have a lot of money to make more, but ... to enable all people to pursue happiness in the ways that the founders had in mind — to the extent we can make that transition, we will have won the war altogether.”

Murray concluded: “That is why I’m especially glad to be speaking to this group, where we have so many people scattered throughout this room who are engaged in sometimes the very beginning efforts in your own countries to make these ideas come to fruition. Because even though we have the forces with us that will eventually enable us to achieve victory, it is not going to happen by itself. The task of doing it falls to you, the people in this room, and for that, for your willingness to take that upon your shoulders, I thank you, I applaud you, and I salute you. Thank you very much.”

Watch Charles Murray’s speech at: AtlasNetwork.org/CharlesMurrayLFFD2015
SCENES FROM FREEDOM DINNER

Peter Goettler, Debbi Gibbs, Xiaohong Sang, and Warren Lammert

Terry and Matt Kibbe, Roberta Herzberg, Julie Smith, and Dinny Fitzpatrick

Pina Templeton (center) and Atlas Network’s Alex Chafuen and Brad Lips (far left and right) join representatives of finalists for the 2015 Templeton Freedom Award: Scott Hodge (Tax Foundation, United States); John Roskam (Institute of Public Affairs, Australia); Kris Mauren (Acton Institute, United States); Rocio Guijarro (CEDICE, Venezuela); Lisa Knepper (Institute for Justice, United States); Temba Nolutshungu (Free Market Foundation, South Africa).

George and Marilyn Pearson with Todd and Erin Farha

Cici Wilkinson and Marlene Mieske

An attentive crowd watches Charles Murray on the global freedom movement’s biggest stage.

Ethelmae Humphreys makes her bid for *Atlas Shrugged*.
INAUGURAL GLOBAL BOARD LEADERS SUMMIT

As part of the annual Liberty Forum, Atlas Network hosted an inaugural Global Board Leaders Summit in New York offering board members of our partner organizations the chance to strengthen their own peer-to-peer network and to tackle strategic questions about the future of the freedom movement. Inspired by the shared vision of Atlas Advisory Council member Robert Boyd and Atlas Network board member George Pearson, founding board member of Cato Institute and current chairman of the Kansas Policy Institute, this inaugural event also engaged CEOs from participating organizations to provide their perspective on one of the summit’s key themes: the board/CEO relationship.

“I was encouraged to see that demand for a summit like this was high, even exceeding our initial expectations,” observed Pearson at the conclusion of the summit. “Atlas Network provides so many peer-learning opportunities for think tank leaders and staff, it just makes sense for us to start offering regular programming to board members as well.”

The summit format followed an audience-driven workshop model where the most popular topics were determined organically. This year’s topics also included fundraising, succession planning, constructing an effective board, and the future of the freedom movement.

LIBERTY FORUM 2016

In 2016, Atlas Network will hold its Liberty Forum earlier than in recent years — Sept. 24–25, in Miami, Fla.!

Make hotel reservations now at the Loews Miami Beach (1-877-563-9762) and get our special room rate of $239++.

Liberty Forum will follow the General Meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society. Learn more about this meeting of the MPS at: mps2016.org

Freedom Dinner will once again take place in New York City in November 2016. Stay tuned for details!
ANNOUNCING A NEW SERIES OF REGIONAL LIBERTY FORUMS

Atlas Network will host a new series of Regional Liberty Forums in 2016, in cooperation with local organizers.

The purpose of these events is to bring together Atlas Network partners in a spirit of collaboration and friendly competition. The forums will celebrate outstanding projects advancing liberty via a new Regional Awards program. They will also provide training opportunities, discussions of shared challenges, and opportunities to share best practices and thereby accelerate improvement and innovation.

“Our ambitious Regional Liberty Forum agenda will inspire greater ambitions, bigger achievements, and more collaboration among Atlas Network’s partners,” said Brad Lips, Atlas Network CEO. “It also presents a great value proposition for Atlas Network donors, who may enjoy seeing the world with Atlas Network and its friends who favor freedom.” The 2016 Regional Liberty Forum schedule includes:

**Latin America Liberty Forum (Guatemala) — January 17–19**
In partnership with Universidad Francisco Marroquín, Atlas Network invites you to a program that will feature freedom champions from Mexico, Central America, and South America at a time of exciting political change. The event features an address by Gloria Álvarez of Movimiento Cívico Nacional; the “Improve Your Project” Un-Conference; sessions on “Products You Can Replicate”; training workshops; documentary screenings; a special luncheon for CEOs of Atlas Network partner organizations; a guided walking tour of the campus of Universidad Francisco Marroquín; the inauguration of the Giancarlo Ibargüen Freedom Award; and much more. See below for a special Donor Tour opportunity that follows on Jan. 20–23.

**Asia Liberty Forum (Malaysia) — February 18–20**
The 2016 Asia Liberty Forum will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, thanks to our organizing partner Centre for Civil Society (India) and local host IDEAS (Malaysia), which will be celebrating its sixth anniversary. In addition to Speed Networking, an Elevator Pitch Competition, Un-Conference, and other Liberty Forum staples, there will be panel discussions on “Asia’s Private Schooling Revolution,” “The Impact of the Chinese Financial Crisis,” and “Liberty in the Muslim World.”

**Europe Liberty Forum (United Kingdom) — June 8–9**
Details to be unveiled soon by Atlas Network and its organizing partner Institute of Economic Affairs.

**Africa Liberty Forum (Ghana) — June 9–10**
Details to be unveiled soon by Atlas Network and its organizing partner IMANI Center for Policy and Education.

**Special Donor Tour!** From January 20–23 — immediately following Latin America Liberty Forum — Atlas Network and Universidad Francisco Marroquín will host a spectacular tour of Lake Atitlán, bordered by volcanoes and traditional villages; the market of Chichicastenango; the cobblestone streets of colonial Antigua; an optional climb of Pacaya, one of Guatemala’s three active volcanoes; and other exciting sights.

For information on future Donor Tours, call Stephanie at 914-484-1523.
Thank you to our Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner 2015 sponsors!

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Rising Tide Foundation

**Atlas Circle**
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