



The Value of Religious Organizations and Businesses to Society

Travis Weber, Esq.

For-Profit Businesses

America is made up of religious people. Many of those religious people are business-owners. When they go to work each day, they cannot check their beliefs at the door, but rather must let them infuse many aspects of their work.

The decision of businesses to adhere to, and affirmatively advance, the religious principles of their owners and themselves in the operation of their businesses reflects long-held religious tenets regarding the interaction between faith and work. Under a variety of religious doctrines, a person's participation in the economic activity of his or her community can involve just as full a part of exercising religion as solitary prayer, attending church, keeping the Sabbath, or seeking to bring one's faith to others.

For example, [the Christian concept of vocation](#) leads many to live a life of faith in the world by engaging in work that allows them to realize their God-given talents while at the same time improving the world, serving their community, and honoring God. The [Jewish Halacha, or Jewish law, creates an obligation](#) to conduct one's business dealings in a "holy" manner, with honesty and integrity, faithful to the Torah.

We must work to protect the rights of persons to adhere to and pursue their religious beliefs in all aspects of their lives, [regardless of the legal structures](#) they use to organize their commercial activities.

Indeed, we should celebrate religion in businesses, for religion motivates much good done through for-profit businesses, and through them many jobs are created and maintained, benefitting all of society. The truth is that many Americans believe that businesses should have a conscience – they know this matters for how a business treats its employees, and whether it operates with integrity. This issue cuts across political lines; conservatives believe businesses should have a conscience on marriage and sexuality, and liberals believe businesses should have a conscience when it comes to environmental issues. We all agree that businesses should have ethics. The [whole field of "corporate social responsibility"](#) has developed from the notion of ethical business practices. Numerous [lawsuits against large, for-profit corporations alleging human rights abuses](#) overseas are evidence that many *want* corporations to have a conscience. The fact is that profit making should not exclude a business from having ethical standards and a conscience, whether for large corporations or family owned businesses.

One database of Christian-owned businesses is maintained by the [Shepherd's Guide](#), which lists Christian businesses, including professionals, service businesses, and everyone in between. The site serves those who explicitly want to patronize a business that happens to share their faith, and thus is evidence of the fact that many Americans want businesses to exude the faith of their owners. The

Shepherd's Guide [lists 73,824 such companies](#) in the United States. Undoubtedly, there are many more business owners who infuse their work with their faith, but this number alone is significant. Such a large number of companies represents a significant impact on our economy.

Some Christian-owned businesses are themselves quite large, and *not only benefit the common good by job creation and economic contribution, but voluntarily offer benefits and programs to employees* precisely because their religious principles lead them to do so. We discuss some of these companies here.

Hobby Lobby

Hobby Lobby's [religious principles lead it to voluntarily contribute](#) in significant ways to its employees and others. The Green family, owners of Hobby Lobby, believe that "it is by God's grace and provision that Hobby Lobby has endured." Therefore, they seek to honor God by "operating the company in a manner consistent with Biblical principles."

Some of the ways its owners' religion causes Hobby Lobby to impact society and our economy for the better include:

- Paying full-time minimum wage employees more than 90 percent above the federal minimum wage, a rate it has increased by \$1 an hour for five years in a row.
- Allowing employees to enroll in a generous benefit plan including medical, dental, prescription drugs, and long-term disability and life insurance, and visit the company's on-site health clinic which is open daily, with no co-pay.
- Closing most nights at 8:00 PM so employees can spend time with their families and maintain work-life balance. Stores are also closed on Sundays for a day of rest.

In 2010, Hobby Lobby CEO David Green and his wife Barbara agreed to donate the majority of their wealth to philanthropy, for from their perspective, "[f]rom helping orphanages in faraway lands to helping ministries in America, Hobby Lobby has always been a tool for the Lord's work. For me and my family, charity equals ministry, which equals the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

All this benefit is made possible because Hobby Lobby is left free to prosper according to its owners' religious principles.

In addition, Hobby Lobby [currently employs 28,000 people](#), added thousands of jobs during a recent year of low economic growth, and had [\\$3.7 billion in revenue](#) in 2014. The very fact that it is left free to grow as its owners are left free to follow their religious beliefs makes this economic contribution possible.

Chick-fil-A

Chick-fil-A is a very successful family of restaurants that is driven by its owners' faith and [reflects this in its values](#).

Chick-fil-A has been [motivated](#) by its owners' faith since the day Truett Cathy began the company. Early on, he applied Biblically-based principles to manage the business. This also led the restaurants to:

- Close on Sundays
- Respect and love others, and

- Give back to people and their communities.

Chick-fil-A has:

- Given away millions of dollars in scholarships
- Gives away thousands of sandwiches each year to help those in need, and
- Pours millions of dollars into programs to support youth and strengthen families.

This is motivated by the business's corporate purpose to "glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us and to have a positive influence on all who come into contact with Chick-fil-A." Chick-fil-A owners believe marriage is between a man and a woman.

[Employing tens of thousands of people](#), and generating [sales of \\$6 billion](#) in 2014, allows the company to contribute to the U.S. economy in significant ways – which it would not be able to do if it was not left to operate freely according to its owners' religious beliefs.

Salem Media Group

[Salem Media Group](#) is a large radio broadcaster, Internet content provider, and magazine and book publisher for "audiences interested in Christian and family-themed content and conservative values." In addition to its radio holdings, "Salem owns Salem Radio Network, which syndicates talk, news and music programming to approximately 2,000 affiliates; Salem Radio Representatives, a national radio advertising sales force; Salem Web Network, a leading Internet provider of Christian content and online streaming; and Salem Publishing, a leading publisher of Christian themed magazines. Salem owns and operates 116 radio stations, with 71 stations in the nation's top 25 top markets – and 30 in the top 10."

Salem had [total revenue of \\$266,536,000 in 2014](#) – a figure which indicates its incredible contribution to the American economy. Besides the obvious benefit to its [1,230 employees](#) and others it directly impacts, Salem is but another example of a religious business which benefits the common good by contributing significantly to the economy and thus the many who benefit from economic health.

Interstate Batteries

Interstate Batteries is another corporation which is driven by Christian principles, explicitly stating as its [purpose](#) "[t]o glorify God and enrich lives as we deliver the most trustworthy source of power to the world."

The [current chairman Norm Miller](#) is "known for his strong Christian business principles," and his "faith defines who he is." Interstate [puts these principles into action](#), giving back through its [Corporate Chaplain](#) department and 10 different programs, including a program to [provide gifts to at-risk youth](#), a [Big Brothers Big Sisters](#) program, a [program reaching out to prisoners](#), one [caring for hospitalized children](#), using cars to [deliver food to the elderly and other community engagement activities](#), kids [enrichment programs](#), a program [caring for military servicemembers](#), religious growth [luncheons](#), [prayer events](#), and providing [food and shelter to the needy](#).

In [recent years](#), Interstate Battery had revenue in the billions of dollars, and [currently employs 1,500 people](#). Again, it is an example of a company with a massive footprint on the economy, and one that is made possible because it is left free to operate consistently with its owners' beliefs.

Nonprofit Organizations

Religious people also operate nonprofit organizations that contribute to the public good in ways that are almost immeasurable, both at home and overseas.

Religion has been shown to correlate to the willingness of individuals to [volunteer](#), [to give money to charity](#) and even to be [friendlier](#). These organizations can thus rely on donors who share their religious principles. This in turn allows them to stay in existence and keep doing work that the government would otherwise have to take on.

This spring, the Supreme Court will rule in [Zubik v. Burwell](#), and decide if religious organizations can adhere to their religious beliefs in the face of the ominous HHS contraception coverage mandate. There are 37 religious universities and 40 religious nonprofits implicated by that case alone. Depending on the Supreme Court's result this spring, those 77 institutions could be forced out of existence, and their contributions will no longer flow to the common good. This is obviously to say nothing of all the others implicated by such reasoning going forward, many of whom are represented by the numbers in this publication.

[For example](#), the 600 evangelical ministries represented in the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) provide more than \$9.2 billion in relief assistance, and the Catholic Church spends approximately \$97 billion on health-care networks, about \$47 billion on colleges, and \$4.6 billion on 'national charitable activities.' In 2009, overseas relief and development supported by American churches exceeded \$13 billion.

Such organizations driven by a religious mission conduct humanitarian work, feed the hungry, cloth the needy, and house the poor. They also provide education, drug rehabilitation, prison work, adoption services, and numerous other charity functions.

Drug Rehabilitation and Prison Work

Religious nonprofits have a successful track record in drug rehabilitation. For example, [according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops \(USCCB\)](#), one study by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago found that "67 percent of the graduates of a drug rehabilitation program sponsored by Teen Challenge," a faith-based network of Christian substance-abuse prevention and treatment programs, "were drug-free seven years after participating in the program..." That rate is "much higher than the 10 to 15 percent cure rate for other federally funded drug rehabilitation programs."

They have also been successful in working with prisoners. In 2005, Michigan instituted a program to provide services to prisoners and ex-offenders to facilitate their reentry into society. The program, which relied heavily on religious organizations, had reduced Michigan's prison population by 14 percent by 2010, the largest decline among the 50 states except Rhode Island. This saved millions and reduced recidivism rates.

These groups are heavily motivated by their faith. [Prison Fellowship](#), for instance, believes no one is beyond redemption, and "that a restorative approach to prisoners, former prisoners, and all those affected by crime and incarceration can make communities safer and healthier." Through a new relationship with Jesus Christ, "those who once broke the law are transformed and mobilized to serve their neighbors, replacing the cycle of crime with a cycle of renewal." [Prison Fellowship accomplishes](#) this "by training and inspiring churches and communities – inside and outside of prison – to support the

restoration of those affected by incarceration,” and supporting their reentry into the community. The group also ministers to the families of those who are incarcerated, equips “wardens, prison staff, and volunteers, including men and women serving time, to create safer, more rehabilitative prisons that prepare prisoners to return to their communities as good neighbors,” and also collaborates with those outside of prison to achieve these objectives. It operates in [over a hundred countries](#), has over 25,000 prisoners participate in Prison Fellowship classes each month, over 11,000 volunteers across the U.S., and over 330,000 children who received the Gospel and a Christmas gift on behalf of an incarcerated parent.

Adoption

Religious organizations are heavily involved in adoption, and especially contribute in helping find homes for special needs children who are often difficult to place. As reported by the USCCB, “[o]f the 3,794 completed adoptions by Catholic Charities agencies in 2009, 1,721 (45 percent) were of children considered to have special needs. In the same year, 541 of 1,716 adoptions (32 percent) provided by Bethany Christian Services, the largest faith-based adoption agency in the United States, were of hard-to-place older children previously in foster care.”

In addition to the quantity of their contribution, religious nonprofits contributing overseas add other value: they often have “existing, trusted, on-the-ground networks down to the village level that the American government and even the host governments do not have.”

Yet these groups may not be able to continue their work indefinitely. For example, governmental entities and officials administering child welfare services in Massachusetts, California, Illinois, and the District of Columbia have refused to work with Catholic Charities because of its refusal to place children in homes with two parents of the same sex. This has forced Catholic Charities to cease its work in those locations.

Education

The economic value of the contributions of religiously-affiliated schools is similarly compelling. There are roughly 29,000 religiously-affiliated pre-schools, elementary schools, and high schools in the United States. Additionally, there are more than 1,700 religiously-affiliated colleges and universities in the United States. And according to data compiled by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, Catholic colleges and universities (to take just one denominational segment within private higher education) enroll nearly one million students in 244 institutions of higher learning.

These schools have convictions that are integral to their mission, and they will go out of existence before compromising those convictions. This would be a travesty, especially in light of all the good these schools are able to do for so many young people. For example, students in religious schools are safer and perform better on standardized testing than students in public schools, as measured by fewer instances of violent crime and bullying, and standardized SAT scores. A higher percentage of students in religious schools report feeling safe from attack or harm in school compared to their public school peers. It would be tragic if these schools were no longer allowed to structure their programs (which are obviously very effective) as they see fit.

Healthcare

Many hospitals and healthcare entities are run with a religious mission, and provide invaluable goods to society – often with better quality than their secular counterparts. One [report](#) found that “[n]ot-for-profit church-owned hospitals save more lives, release patients from the hospital sooner, and have better

overall patient satisfaction ratings.” In addition, “[a]ll not-for-profit hospitals combined (both church-owned and other) have significantly better patient safety, fewer 30-day mortalities, and better overall patient satisfaction ratings.”

Religious hospitals often provide services that other hospitals do not offer. For instance, [Catholic hospitals](#), which care for one of every six hospital patients in the United States, “often provide more public health and specialty services than other health care providers,” including “some traditionally ‘unprofitable’ services.” These 639 hospitals employ 516,410 full time and 220,795 part time workers, and admitted 5 million patients in a one year period. One report [estimates](#) that the Catholic Church spent \$170 billion in 2010—57 percent of which occurred in such health-care networks.

In addition to hospitals, healthcare networks are run with a religious and benefit society tremendously. For instance, [Lutheran Services in America \(LSA\) is one of the largest health care and human services networks in the country](#), representing 300 Lutheran nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and the Caribbean—[organizations affiliated](#) with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or recognized by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The network is #20 on the Philanthropy 400, has aggregate annual revenues of close to \$21 billion, serves 6 million people in the U.S. each year, employs close to 250,000, and engages approximately 150,000 volunteers.

Many faith-based healthcare professionals would just as soon go out of business than violate their consciences. One [survey](#) of 2,865 faith-based healthcare professionals found that over 91 percent of faith-based physicians agreed that they would “rather stop practicing medicine altogether than be forced to violate [their] conscience[s],” 32 percent of faith-based healthcare professionals report having “been pressured to refer a patient for a procedure to which [they] had moral, ethical, or religious objections,” 39 percent of faith-based healthcare professionals have “experienced pressure from or discrimination by faculty or administrators based on [their] moral, ethical, or religious beliefs,” and 20 percent of medical students say they are “not pursuing a career in Obstetrics or Gynecology” because of perceived discrimination and coercion in that field.

Humanitarian Work

When most people think of religious nonprofits, they probably think of humanitarian aid organizations; the work that these organizations do is astounding and simply cannot be replaced. The following is only a select sample of such organizations.

Samaritan’s Purse

Samaritan’s Purse is a [nondenominational evangelical Christian organization](#) providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world. Since 1970, the organization has helped [meet the needs of people](#) who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease, and famine.

Domestically, Samaritan’s Purse has helped more than 28,000 families impacted by U.S. natural disasters since 1998 by quickly providing emergency supplies, repairing, cleaning, and rebuilding homes.

Overseas, the group develops sustainable agriculture programs, constructs buildings, provides clean drinking water, treats severely malnourished children, and meets critical needs for victims of war, disaster, and famine in the world’s most troubled regions, often working through local churches and ministry partners. Recently, the organization provided medical care, shelter items, shoes, warm clothing, heaters, food, and water for typhoon victims in the Philippines and Syrian refugees in northern Iraq.

Samaritan's Purse also runs medical operations, providing medical aid in disaster areas, and placing hundreds of doctors, dentists, and other medical professionals in voluntary, short-term service with hospitals and clinics in the world's least-developed countries and providing medical equipment where needed.

In 2014, the organization's [support and revenue](#) totaled \$520,416,152. This is a significant organization doing great work in all the areas listed above – which the U.S. government would have to shoulder if Samaritan's Purse was forced out of existence by a government unwilling to let the organization follow its religious convictions.

World Vision

[World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated](#) to working with all children, families, and their communities worldwide in nearly 100 countries, providing emergency assistance to children and families affected by disasters and conflict, partnering with communities for long-term solutions to alleviate poverty, and advocating for justice on behalf of the poor.

Some of the ways it accomplishes this are by providing food assistance, disaster relief (80 disasters and humanitarian emergencies responded to; 10.7 million disaster survivors, refugees, and internally displaced people received assistance), micro-loans, pro-business practices for farmers, clean water (2 million people reached with improved water access), protecting against malaria, working to improve sanitation and hygiene, enrolling vulnerable children in schools (including protecting children from child labor), training teachers, training people to respond to violence against children, and providing survivors of abuse, exploitation, and violence with support.

World Vision also works at home in the United States, providing school supplies to low-income areas, and helping with needs in post-disaster areas.

The organization [is the largest](#) U.S.-based international relief organization with total revenues in 2009 of nearly a billion dollars. Combined with its sister organization, World Vision International, these numbers climb to a total revenue stream of nearly three billion dollars. Both organizations are faith-based. WVI [has](#) "40,000 staff members in nearly 100 countries." World Vision "[spends roughly \\$2.8 billion annually](#) to care for the poor."

World Vision and World Vision International clearly do an incredible amount of work benefitting societies around the world – work that our government, or other governments, would have to step in to do if World Vision did not exist. Faith is at the center of what World Vision does, and for the organization to continue doing all its good work, its faith must be allowed to flourish and continue to motivate the organization.

Catholic Charities USA

The [mission of Catholic Charities USA](#) is to provide service to people in need, to advocate for justice in social structures, and to call the entire church and other people of good will to do the same.

Since 2005, the [organization has responded](#) to 470 disaster events of 25 different types, helping over 6,500,000 million people. Catholic Charities also has a big footprint domestically; in 2014, for example,

Catholic Charities agencies in the United States [served over 8.7 million people, with total expenditures exceeding 4.4 billion dollars.](#)

In that year alone, [Catholic Charities also:](#)

- Served over 524,000 people with some kind of housing service
- Provided more than 10,400,000 client services that strengthened food security, and also provided 3,676 sites and programs, 3,300,000 home delivered meals, and 286 summer feeding sites
- Benefitted over 875,000 people with some type of health service from Catholic Charities agencies
- Provided over \$105,000 in addiction care
- Provided 18,265 full time/client-earned job placements
- Served nearly 400,000 refugees and immigrants
- Provided adoption services to over 45,000 people
- Served over 1.2 million vulnerable people

Catholic Charities does much for the common good, and society would suffer if it cannot continue its work. But its faith motivates its work, and it will not be able to continue to function unless it is free to follow its convictions. Already, in several locations in the United States, Catholic Charities has stopped placing children for adoptions because of the government's mandate that it place children with same-sex couples in addition to homes with natural marriages. The children in these cases have lost out already. Hopefully more do not suffer the loss of Catholic Charities' good work.

Salvation Army

The [Salvation Army](#), an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

The [Salvation Army operates](#) 7,619 centers in communities across the United States. Services provided by the organization [include](#) food distribution, disaster relief, rehabilitation centers, anti-human trafficking efforts, and a wealth of children's programs. The organization reports that it offers services in virtually every zip code in the United States, and served more than 27 million Americans in 2014. That included nearly 57 million meals served, and nightly shelter for 10.6 million people. The Salvation Army cares for many and contributes much to the common good.

Compassion International

[Compassion International is a child-advocacy ministry](#) that provides care for children in poverty in order that each child become a responsible and fulfilled adult. The organization is motivated by and infused with the Christian faith.

Compassion [currently serves](#) 1.7 million children.

[In fiscal year 2014:](#)

- 1,461,116 children, babies, mothers, and students received life-changing care
- 1.4 million children are sponsored through the organization
- 29,084 babies and moms received lifesaving help
- 3,077 students attended college

- Child development program expenses totaled \$561,374,252
- In this year, babies, children, and college-age students living in extreme poverty received Christ-centered, life-changing care in 26 countries

[In fiscal year 2015](#), Compassion provided \$635,139,116 in program services, and supplied 19,113 children and families with its Water of Life safe water systems.

Compassion fills a need caring for underprivileged children overseas, and is motivated by faith to do so. If it were not able to engage in this work, much would be left undone.

Cross International

[Cross International is a 501\(c\)\(3\) Christian ministry](#) that serves the poorest of the poor internationally by channeling aid through existing church-based ministries and other faith-based organizations, cost-effectively helping the poor physically, while advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In 2014, the organization [provided](#) \$86,892,381 in aid to the poor. It distributes cash grants, goods, food, water systems, and provides orphan care, medical aid, education support, housing aid, livelihood investment, and disaster relief.

Operation Blessing Relief & Development

[Operation Blessing International](#) (OBI) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) humanitarian organization with a mission to demonstrate God's love by alleviating human need and suffering in the United States and around the world.

Beginning in 1978 and headquartered in the United States, Operation Blessing has made an impact in the lives of more than 261 million people in more than 105 countries and 50 states, providing goods and services valued at over \$3.6 billion. Operation Blessing provides strategic relief in 37 countries around the world on an ongoing basis, implementing programs that include hunger relief, safe water, orphan care, education, health and medical care, humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and community development.

For instance, [last year](#), Operation Blessing cared for more than 41,520 children in more than 23 countries, administered anti-trafficking programs in 10 countries – including extensive programs and outreach in Brazil to combat the surge in child sex trafficking during the World Cup. The organization [also](#) performed 3,848 life-changing surgeries, ran 1,150 medical clinics serving 351,099 total beneficiaries, and provided \$158,883,050 gift-in-kind medicines and supplies.

In the United States, the organization responded to tornado, flooding, earthquake and storm victims in Mississippi, Virginia, Florida, and California.

Catholic Relief Services

CRS was [founded](#) in 1943 by the bishops of the United States to assist the poor and disadvantaged outside this country – helping people in need for over 70 years. CRS touches more than 80 million lives in more than 101 countries, by addressing the root causes and effects of poverty, promoting human dignity, and helping to build more just and peaceful societies. CRS's relief and development work is accomplished through programs of emergency response, HIV/AIDS relief and prevention, health, agriculture, water, education, microfinance, and peacebuilding.

In [fiscal year 2014](#), the organization invested more than \$230 million for emergency programs, \$146.4 million for agricultural programming, \$108.4 million in health programs, \$57 million in education, \$14.5 million for water programs, and \$30.7 million for peace and justice programs.

Food for the Poor

[Food for the Poor](#) is an interdenominational Christian relief and development organization that works in 17 countries in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States. In 2014 alone, it distributed more than 52 million pounds of food and supported hundreds of food-generating projects. Since 1982, it has constructed more than 98,000 housing units for the poor.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

The [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee](#), a leading Jewish humanitarian assistance organization, impacts lives in 70 countries, with over a century of experience in confronting poverty. In 2015, it provided over \$185 million in grants, food, clothing, health care, education, and emergency and other assistance. The organization contributed assistance to [over 37 countries](#) and geographical areas around the world, not including other projects not tied to a geographical area.

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

The [Redlands Christian Migrant Association](#) was started by Mennonites living near an agricultural community in South Florida, in order to care for the families of rural, poor, immigrant farmers. The organization now has 71 centers [serving 6,733 children in 21 counties across Florida](#), with an annual budget of \$58 million. The association has now opened schools and new programs to care for infants.

Care Net

Founded in 1975, [Care Net](#) supports one of the largest networks of pregnancy centers in North America and runs the nation's only real-time call center providing pregnancy decision coaching. The organization envisions a "culture where women and men faced with pregnancy decisions are transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and empowered to choose life for their unborn children and abundant life for their families." It has a mission of "acknowledging that every human life begins at conception and is worthy of protection," and "offers compassion, hope, and help to anyone considering abortion by presenting them with realistic alternatives and Christ-centered support through our life-affirming network of pregnancy centers, organizations, and individuals."

Approximately [1,180 Care Net affiliated pregnancy centers](#) welcome those facing unplanned pregnancies with life-affirming compassion, hope, and help. Every year about 30,000 people volunteer at these pregnancy centers. In the last six years, Care Net has provided 579,322 free ultrasound scans, 723,597 people with parenting support and education, 1.1 million people with material resources, and 1.8 million free pregnancy tests.

Heartbeat International

Heartbeat International operates more than 2,000 pregnancy help locations that reach and rescue women and their precious babies from abortion around the world. The group operates on six continents, and in 2014 reached over 2 million contacts with people considering its services.

Conclusion

As is evident from the examples above, religious nonprofit organizations contribute immensely to needs the government would otherwise have to fill. These organizations often do it incredibly efficiently, and they do so because they mean it – their beliefs drive them to do what they do. Such organizations provide food, clothing, housing, water, medical care, and other basic needs at home and around the world. Their value to society cannot be underestimated, and if they were ever prevented from doing what they do, the contributions and assistance they provide to a needy world would be tragically and profoundly missed – they are ultimately irreplaceable.

In addition, many for-profit businesses are infused with the faith of their owners – and this is for the better. Profit making does not and should not exclude such businesses from having a conscience, whether small or large, family owned or otherwise. Just because someone wishes to make money and support their family does not mean they check their faith at the door. The owners and operators of these businesses must remain free to live out their faith at work, or we risk jeopardizing many great businesses which do so much for our economy. As seen above, faith-driven for-profits allow thousands of employees to make a decent living and often give back to their employees through generous benefits. Pressuring either nonprofit or for-profit entities to violate their conscience could threaten to close such entities, which in turn could cause a loss of jobs and economic benefits to society, and could also threaten to limit or eliminate the benefits such entities provide to others.

Travis S. Weber, Esq. is the Director of the Center for Religious Liberty at Family Research Council.