

LMR

BUILDING THE 10%

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PULSE ON THE MARKET

Fed Goes Corporate

Roach Disses Dollar

Conflicting Covid Trends

UNCERTAINTY IS WORLD WIDE

by L. Carlos Lara



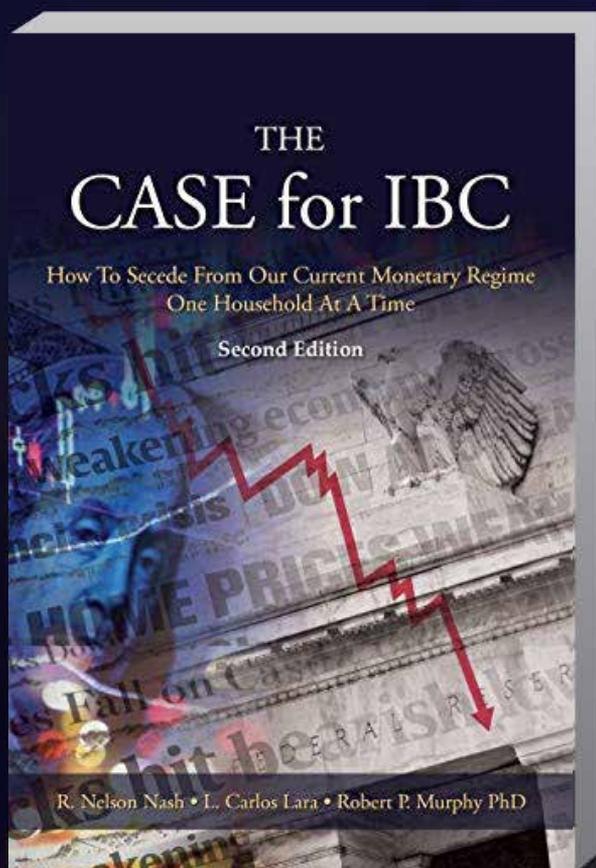
APPLYING AUSTRIAN BUSINESS CYCLE THEORY TO OUR CURRENT ECONOMY

by Robert P. Murphy

“CAN A CHRISTIAN BE LIBERTARIAN?”

Interview with Doug Stuart

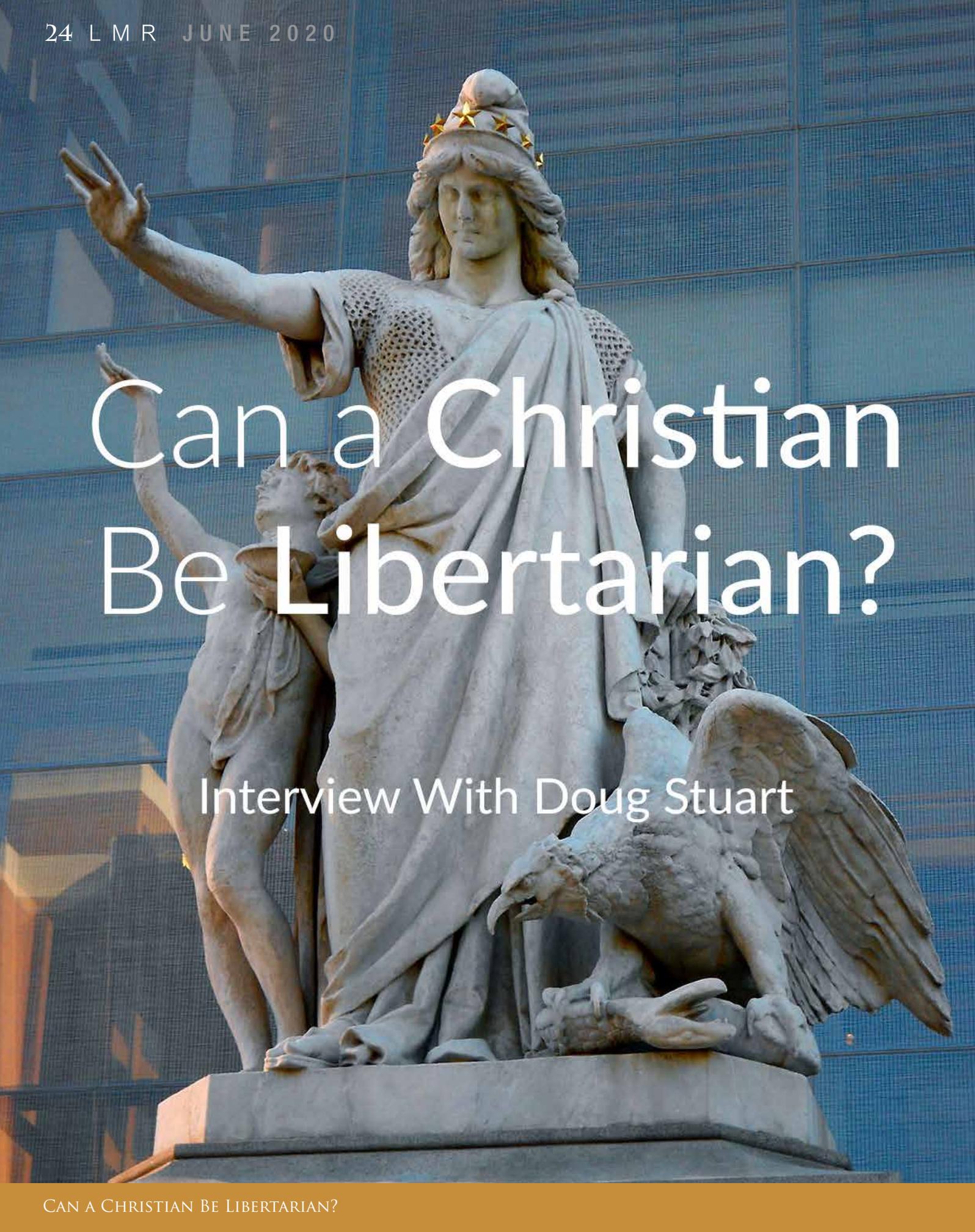
Something is FUNDAMENTALLY WRONG with our financial system.



R. Nelson Nash's Infinite Banking Concept (IBC) is a revolutionary method to take the banking function away from the "experts" and return it to the individual household and business owner.

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A large, detailed marble statue of the Statue of Liberty, standing on a pedestal. The statue is the central focus, with its right arm raised holding a tablet and its left arm raised holding a torch. The background is a blue-tinted, slightly blurred view of a modern building with a grid of windows. The text 'Can a Christian Be Libertarian?' is overlaid in large white font across the middle of the image.

Can a Christian Be Libertarian?

Interview With Doug Stuart



Doug Stuart is the CEO of the Libertarian Christian Institute, and holds a Master's Degree from Biblical Seminary. Doug became a full-fledged libertarian while studying economics and theology of social justice. Doug currently lives with his wife and three children in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he runs a video production and web design company. His family attends an evangelical church, where he has taught classes on film and culture, evangelism, faith and economics, and non-violence. His hobbies include cooking, aviation, and hiking with his family and their new puppy.

Lara-Murphy Report: How did you discover Austrian economics?

Doug Stuart: Sometime during seminary in the mid-2000s, I became enamored with the Christian origins and theology of social justice. But as much as I appreciated their theological viewpoints, I felt pretty queasy about the policy proposals favored by social justice advocates. I knew I needed to learn at least some basic economic principles in order to properly assess whether or not any particular policy would be efficacious, let alone remotely resemble what Jesus would advocate.

Among the first economic books I came upon was Bob Murphy's *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Capitalism*. At the time I was more conservative, so a book whose title said "politically incorrect" *just had* to be good, right? Concurrently, I was a Glenn Beck listener, who frequently had Ron Paul on as a guest to talk about the economy. So from there, both Bob Murphy and Ron Paul introduced me to the Mises Institute, and my economic education began in earnest. I listened to podcasts, lectures, anything I could get my hands on! I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Austrian school of economics for giving me a solid foundation upon which I can rest much of my economic thought.

LMR: You are CEO of the Libertarian Christian Institute. How did the LCI come about?

DS: Around the time I was learning Austrian economics and integrating my Christian faith and theology, I came upon libertarianchristians.com, founded by Dr. Norman Horn. (I jokingly tell Norman he beat me to the domain by a few months!) Norman founded libertarianchristians.com in

order to flesh out how libertarian politics and the Christian faith were not only compatible, but complementary to one another. The website was dedicated to explaining the connections between Christian theology and libertarian theory, and to promoting libertarianism to Christians. Many Christians still believe that libertarianism is incompatible with Christian faith, whereas we make the case that the most consistent expression of Christian political thought is libertarianism.

In 2010 I became a regular contributor to libertarianchristians.com, and by 2015, Norman's vision for his website started to become a reality when we became a 501(c)(3) non-profit and were now called The Libertarian



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Christian Institute. The gravitas of a non-profit institute meant that we could now make it easier for others to join our cause and expand our reach. I became CEO in February 2018 to be responsible for delivering high quality and relevant content that equips Christians to make the Christian case for a free society. We do that as an organization through a variety of ways. We've hosted conferences (both live and online), we have a weekly podcast, an academic journal, regular articles on our website, an audiobook, and even swag! While most of our supporters are from the United States, our reach is global and the analytics suggest the site has been read in over 90 countries.

LMR: In *Mere Christianity* C.S. Lewis cautions against subordinating Christianity to political or social movements (however noble they might be). How do you grapple with these difficult issues?

DS: This is such a difficult task, isn't it? On the one hand, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus is to announce that Jesus is Lord, which has manifold implications, many of which are socio-political in the best sense. Being a Christian, in my view, is more than a private matter – it means following the Way of Jesus in all aspects of your life. This is the tricky business of being Christian in a public way while staying true to our mission and vocation.

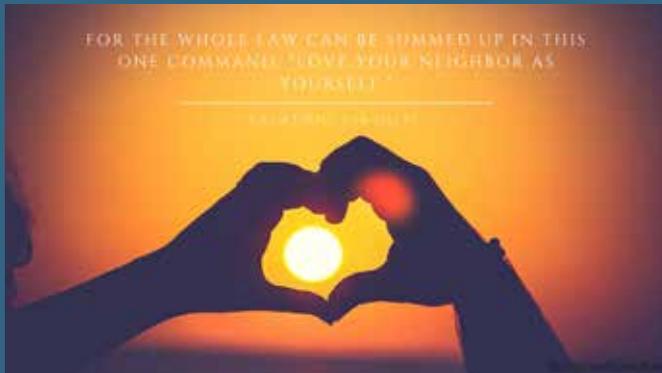
“Many Christians still believe that libertarianism is incompatible with Christian faith, whereas we make the case that the most consistent expression of Christian political thought is libertarianism.”



But too often our faith in Jesus becomes so entangled with the surrounding culture that we lose both our distinctiveness and our divine calling. In America in particular, both conservative and progressive Christianity has become so enthralled with power politics, it ceases to be “Christian” at all in any meaningful sense. I’m amazed at how many American Christians see the United States government as a tool for the Kingdom of God (sometimes the tool), when it was clear in the Scriptures that Jesus came to directly oppose Caesar (the state). Christians today clamor for their Caesar to give them any semblance of authority and power over the rest of society, all to enact their vision of what the world should look like. By contrast, Jesus showed us what loving our neighbors and our enemies looked like, and it is directly opposite to the way of the state. The Christian good news (what we call “the gospel”) is that Jesus is King, and that real power, lasting change, and true authority is from Jesus, whose way is of non-violence

(not aggression), forgiveness (not vengeance), restitution (not retribution), harmony (not conflict), and protecting the vulnerable (not enriching at the expense of others).

To be clear, there are many causes and social movements that should be part of the Church's mission as people of Christ. For example, the current protests over police brutality and racism are fights that Christians should be fighting! But we are always to be watchful and on guard because movements can become co-opted by the state for its own advantage. If we lack prudence and wisdom we will just continue the cycle of oppression the movements were intended to challenge. We accomplish more when we take the radical approach of Jesus.



“Jesus showed us what loving our neighbors and our enemies looked like, and it is directly opposite to the way of the state.”

LMR: Tell us about your forthcoming book on 100 questions.

DS: In a nutshell, it's a Q&A-style book with 100 questions answered in about 200 words, written as a collaborative project with four LCI authors. Advancing the viewpoint that libertarianism is the political philosophy that's the most consistent expression of Christian political thought brings with it some interesting challenges. Very rarely are people convinced by the mere articulation of a viewpoint. There are always objections to be dealt with and questions to be answered.

The book has a two-fold purpose. We write for libertarian Christians in order to equip them with solid and succinct responses to common objections so they can make the Christian case for a free society. And we write

for the unconvinced seeker, with the hope that our answers will lead them to a greater understanding of the libertarian Christian perspective.

We expect both the print and audiobook editions to be released in Fall 2020.

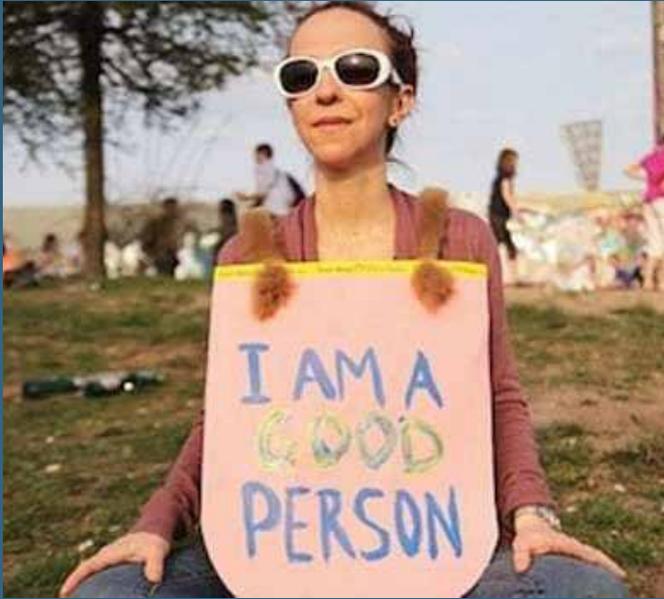
LMR: Has the LCI taken flak for its stances on Covid-19, even from other libertarians?

DS: What we've said about COVID-19 hasn't really been anything official per se. Still, what we share on social media is assumed to be implicitly endorsing or rejecting something. So, for example, we have irritated some of

“If we lack prudence and wisdom we will just continue the cycle of oppression the movements were intended to challenge. We accomplish more when we take the radical approach of Jesus.”



our followers because we refuse to stand against masks. I don't like wearing a mask any more than the next person, and I do realize why some people cannot wear them in public. At the same time, I've noticed some libertarians resort to what amounts to their own form of virtue signaling; it's like some are saying if you wear a mask, you're siding with totalitarianism instead of rejecting its agenda for mass control. There are good reasons and bad reasons to reject mask mandates (even if the evidence leans dominantly toward their effectiveness), but refusing to wear a mask as a symbol of personal rejection of authority isn't a particularly good argument and just makes a bad name for libertarians.



“I’ve noticed some libertarians resort to what amounts to their own form of virtue signaling.”

As a related aside, because many people find masks uncomfortable, the demand for better, more comfortable masks will likely result in the market delivering a mask that is comfortable and stylish, maybe even sexy. (Okay, maybe that’s too far!)

LMR: Finally, do you think more people would accept the libertarian approach to social problems if we lived in a more Christian society?

DS: I guess that depends on what it means to live in a more Christian society. So many Christians don’t approach politics much like Christ anyway, so that would need to change first. (Of course, that’s what LCI is aiming to do!) In a “Christian society,” where all Christians were passionate like Jesus about loving their neighbors as themselves, forgiving their enemies, protecting the vulnerable, and rejecting a top-down approach to social change, they’d be well on their way to something that looks a lot like the world libertarians want to live in.



Note: The economists and financial professionals interviewed in the LMR are given the freedom to express their views, without necessarily implying endorsement from the editors.



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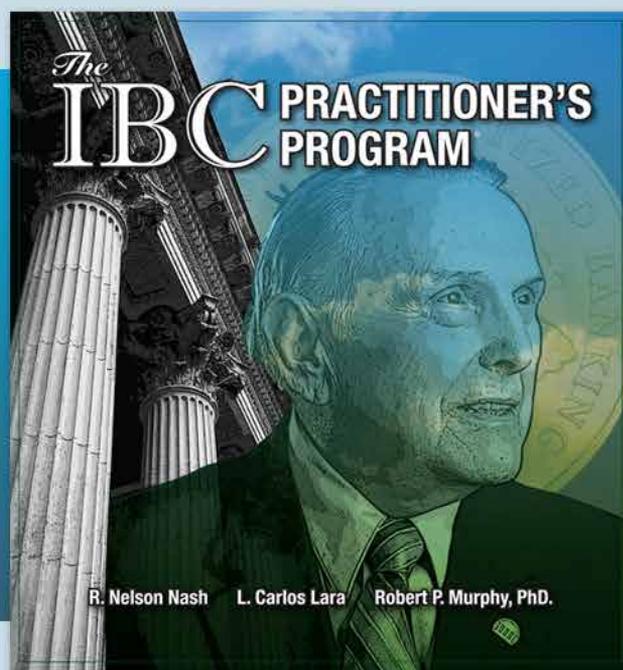
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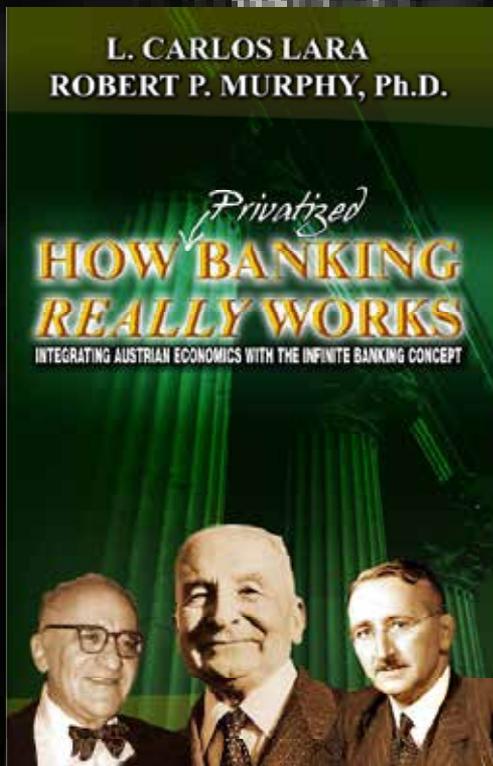
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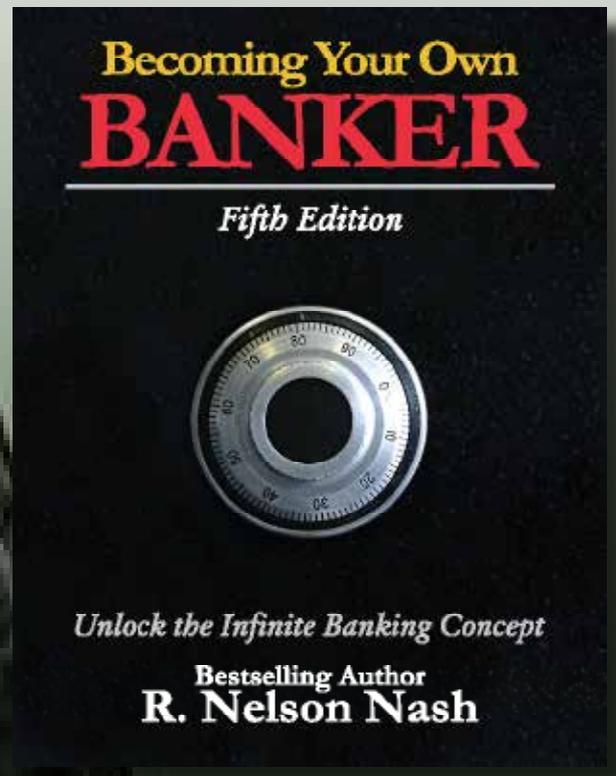
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