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Commentary from Design For Ministry™
Milwaukee - Philadelphia - Tampa

Global wealth and the generous Christian 30 June 2004

The June 2004 issue of *Wired* provides insight into the wealth of nations, using a nearly exquisite set of graphics and statistics.

- ***One graph shows which nations "own" patents of the human genome and traits of various crops.***
- ***One map shows which nations enforce control over digital data – whether intellectual property or privacy information, and which countries are open to piracy.***
- ***Still another graphic shows how long various workers must labor in order to buy a copy of Windows XP operating system (Japan = 9 hours, US = 13 hours, China = 390 hours, Malawi = 1,658 hours).***

Whether map, graph or graphic, the information is basically the same. The West is dominant.

The West once dominated in automobile manufacturing and nuclear fusion. Knowledge has a way of leaking, however, usually after the money to be made has been made.

Now these technologies are widespread.

Western societies preserve economic strength by using wealth to finance the pioneering of new scientific and technological fields. Money will be made in those new fields. The new knowledge will leak. The cycle will continue.

Combine the cycle with an ability to register real estate and borrow against it to start businesses, and you have a potent combination that gives Western countries incredible advantage over two-thirds of the world that knows neither with any consistency.

Generous Christians who want to make a difference must understand these dynamics that transcend politics and theology. They must begin there or they can never make a lasting difference. They will make pretty speeches about compassion and relief of suffering. They will donate money to feed the starving, but they will never get at the root.

--mark l. vincent