

Centennial Ruminations on Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

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Max Weber's sociological classic *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was published first in 1904-1905. In this book Weber argues that religion, specifically "ascetic Protestantism" provided the essential social and cultural infrastructure that led to modern capitalism. Weber suggests that Protestantism has "an affinity for capitalism" and something within Protestantism—by accident or design—creates the necessary preconditions that lead to the flowering of a just, free, and prosperous society. Weber also wonders if the economic backwardness of certain societies and regions of the world are somehow related to their religious affiliation. Weber's century old thesis challenges the erroneous core assumptions of many secular humanists, postmoderns, Roman Catholic traditionalists, and Islamists. In view of the threat of the War on Terror, and in the face of the inadequate response of secularist and post-modern intellectuals, it is vital that we understand and appreciate the profound paradigm shift that occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth century that led to the unfolding of modern capitalism. Despite a plethora of critics Max Weber's one-hundred year old thesis still stands. (Adapted from Amazon)

The Rev. Mark D. Isaacs is a Lutheran clergyman and an adjunct college professor. He earned a B.A. in Economics from Westfield State College (1980), a M.Div. degree (1992) and a S.T.M. degree (2005) from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. He received his Ph.D., Summa Cum Laude, from Trinity Theological Seminary in Newburgh, Indiana (2005). Pastor Mark worked as a research economist, business editor, and economics writer before attending seminary. Since June 1996 he has served as pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Wurtemberg located in Rhinebeck, New York. Since January 2000 Pastor Mark has served as an adjunct professor in several area colleges.