

PROMINENT EVANGELICAL MAKES PROPOSAL FOR NATIONAL REFORM



U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DEFICIT 1960-2011
The federal government has spent more money than it has taken in during most of the past five decades.

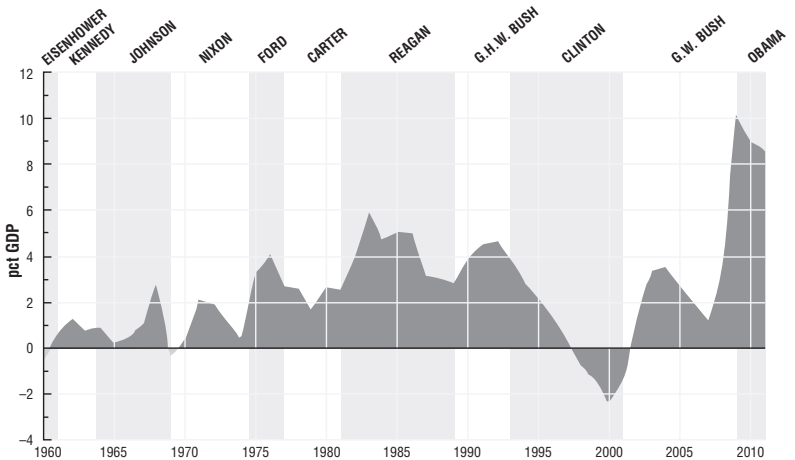


FIGURE 1.1. Source: “A Century of Deficits,” compiled by Christopher Chantrill at www.usgovernmentdebt.us/debt_deficit_history

ESA President Ron Sider Finds Moral Flaw in Battered U.S. Economy

WESTMONT, IL - With his new book, *Fixing the Moral Deficit: A Balanced Way to Balance the Budget*, Ron Sider enters the political fray with a response to the question on every American’s mind—what do we do about the budget? But the president of Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA) and noted author of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* is out to do more than propose a financial stopgap. He’s out to show that the crisis of dollars and cents is just one symptom of a social disorder that runs much deeper.

“America faces a historic choice,” writes Sider. “We have a deficit crisis, a poverty crisis and a justice crisis. And they are all interrelated.”

This means that a solution to the national deficit will not present itself until we acknowledge the moral deficit that fuels it. For Sider, such a principled diagnosis is one that policymakers ignore at their peril:

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keep borrowing. That is flatly immoral. That means putting current expenditures on our grandchildren’s credit cards. We want things now but refuse to tax ourselves to pay for them so we simply borrow more money. Our children and

Inside

JUSTICE CRISIS

How America’s debt has converged with historic poverty levels to create a crisis of justice. PAGE A2

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Anecdotal evidence that social programs can make a difference. PAGE A3

SOCIAL INSECURITY

Sider’s plea for intergenerational justice. PAGE A3

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grandchildren will have to repay the debt. That is intergenerational injustice.”

“Other politicians,” Sider continues, “want to balance the federal budget on the backs of the poor. They propose slashing effective programs that save millions of lives in poor nations and that provide opportunities for and

slipped further into poverty. That is also blatant injustice.”

Sider goes on to analyze the moral implications of the major proposals in Washington today, showing where they fall short and countering with an approach that honors biblical mandates for justice and preserves the dignity of all people:

“I believe there is a way forward that is both economically wise and morally just. I also believe most American Christians would choose such a path if they understood both the hard economic facts and relevant biblical principles.” With *Fixing the Moral Deficit*, Sider has thrown down the gauntlet: we *must* do both.

“There is a balanced way to balance the federal budget. Make no mistake. The nation faces a momentous choice. How we decide will determine whether America will journey on toward greater liberty and justice for all or descend into gross injustice and dangerous division.” ■

There is a balanced way to balance the federal budget. Make no mistake. The nation faces a momentous choice.

empower poor Americans to escape poverty. At the same time these same politicians want to give more tax cuts to the same wealthy people who have become vastly richer over the last thirty years—even as poor Americans have

WEALTH SKEWED TOWARDS THE RICHEST OF THE RICH
Average wealth by wealth class in 2009

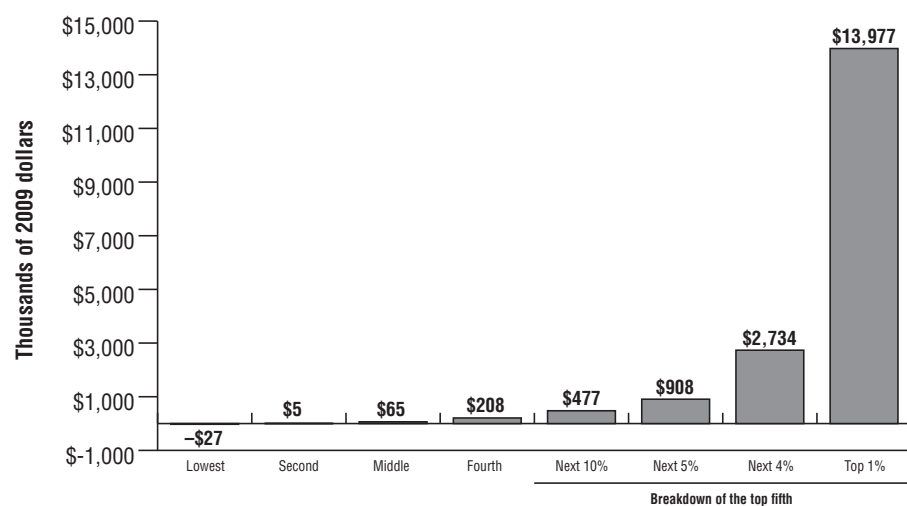
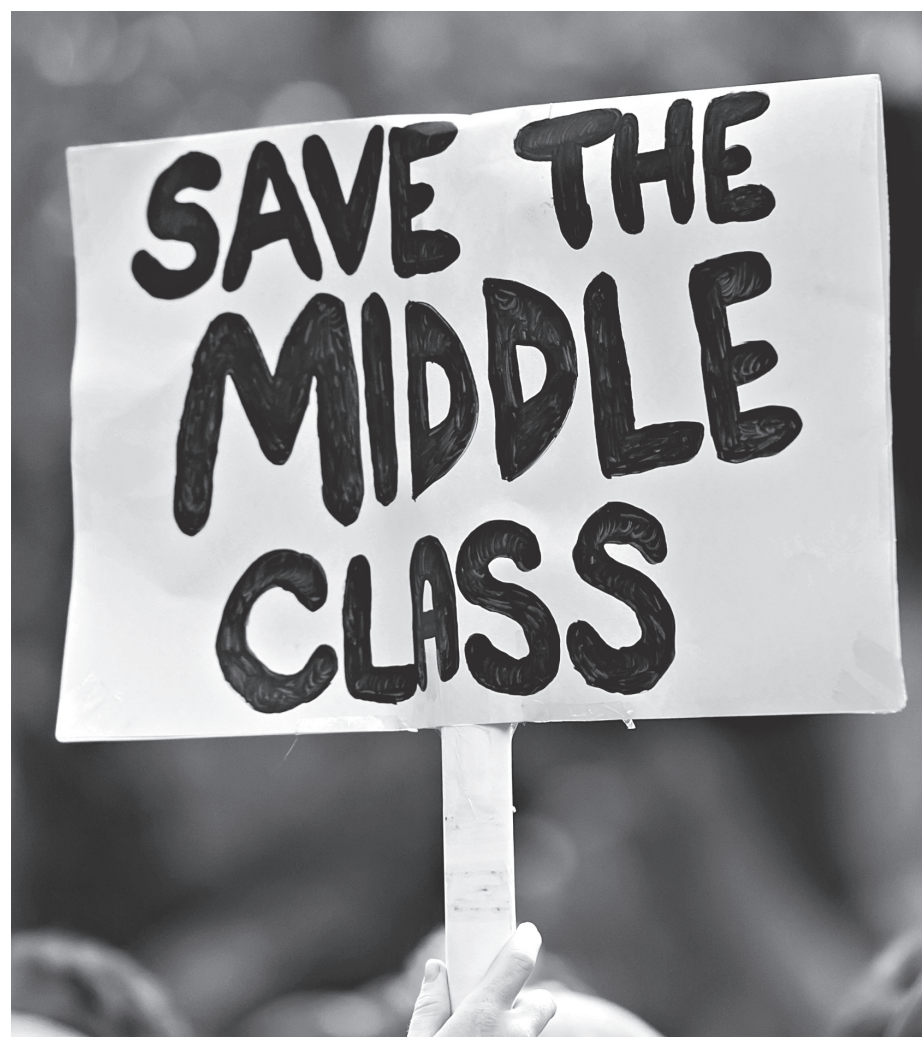


FIGURE 1.2. Source: Federal Reserve Board, Survey of Consumer Finances and Flow of Funds. www.stateofworkingamerica.org/charts/view/22.



Demonstrator signals alarm over growing economic divide.

Sider: Concern for the Poor Is Not Enough

The biblical God measures societies by what they do to the people at the bottom.

By RON SIDER

From one end of the Bible to the other, we hear a powerful summons to have a special concern for poor and needy persons. But simply having a concern (even an intense, abiding concern) for the poor is not enough. We also need to know how properly and effectively to empower poor people. Without that, our vigorous efforts may be ineffective or even destructive. To avoid that, we need an answer to the question: what is justice?

Three elements emerge. First, justice is not only procedural but also distributive—it includes outcomes as well as procedures. Second, justice does not require equal outcomes (of income, wealth, etc.) but it does demand that all have access to society’s productive resources so that if they act responsibly, they can earn their own way and be dignified members of society. Third, in the case of

those unable to earn their own way (children, the elderly, the disabled) justice demands that society provide them with a generous sufficiency.

In every society at every time we must use prudential wisdom to evaluate the level of economic inequality and decide whether and how it must be changed. ■

Adapted from Chapter 3: “The Big Questions in the Debate”

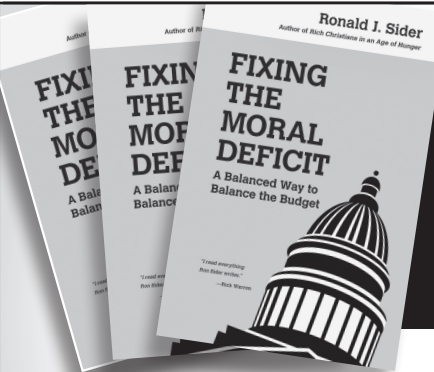
Signs of the Times

At the current rate, we will add one trillion dollars to the federal debt every year for the next ten years.

The richest 1% own more of the nation’s wealth than the bottom 90%.

More than 1 out of 7 Americans are living in poverty.

In 2010, CEOs at Fortune 500 companies took home 325 times that of the average American worker.



Questions?

To schedule an interview with Ron Sider or to request a review copy, contact:

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Initiatives that Get It Right

WIC - Tina first walked into a Women, Infants and Children (WIC) office when she was the young mother of a two-year-old son and pregnant with a little girl. She and her husband were not in poverty. But she was in college and her husband's work on a ranch did not pay enough for them to afford health insurance. WIC provided the nutrition and health care they needed for their two little children. The little boy got married last year and the curly haired little girl is now a junior in college. Tina herself graduated from college. "WIC was there for us when we needed it most," Tina says.

EITC - Anna is a single mother of six who had to flee to another state to keep her kids and herself safe from an abusive husband. As a graduate student she only earned \$17,000 a year—not enough for her and her six children. But the extra \$4,300 from the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has helped her pay for school supplies, credit card bills and school loans. She will soon graduate with a master's degree in public administration with a focus on domestic violence. And she hopes to open a residential treatment facility for those convicted of domestic violence. She is making it thanks to the EITC. ■

POVERTY HAS BEEN RISING FOR MUCH OF THE LAST DECADE Change in the percentage of people in poverty

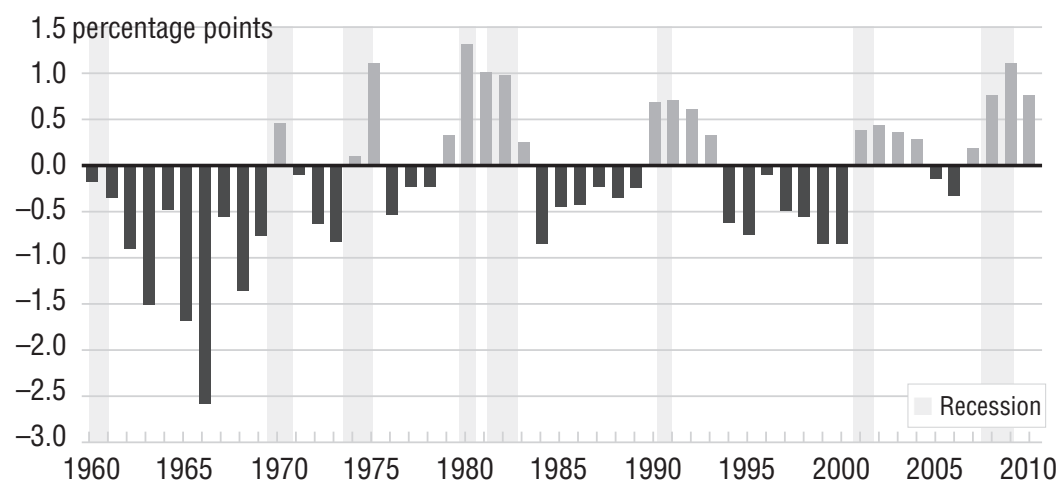
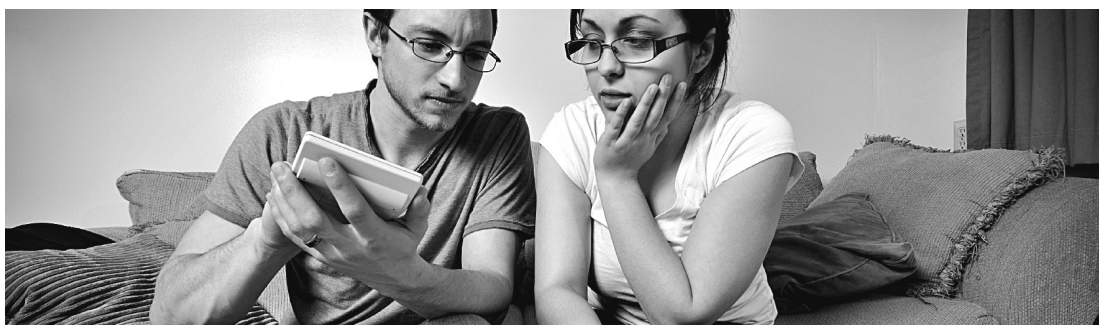


FIGURE 1.3. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Bureau of Economic Research. www.offthechartsblog.org/today%E2%80%99s-census-report-in-pictures.

Social Security in Question



By **RON SIDER**

There is no instant crisis. There is no disaster lurking in three to six years. Nor is the problem insurmountable. But there is a problem that dare not be ignored. In about 2037 the Social Security Trust Fund will be exhausted. After that, income from the social security payroll tax will only be enough to pay 75% of promised benefits. The longer we wait to fix it, the harder it will be. The longer we wait, the more drastic will be the necessary tax increases or benefit cuts. ■

Adapted from Chapter 5: "A Better Way"

TAXPAYERS SUPPORTING EACH SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENT

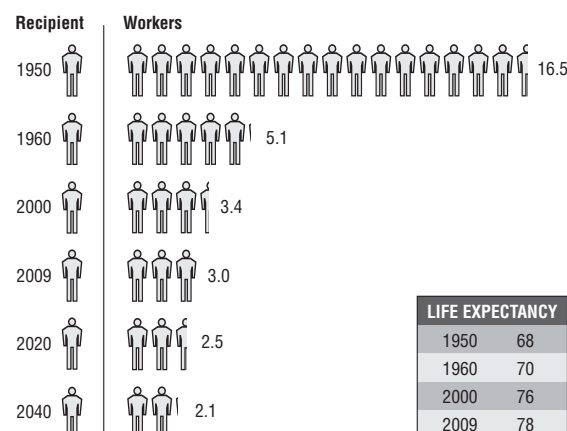
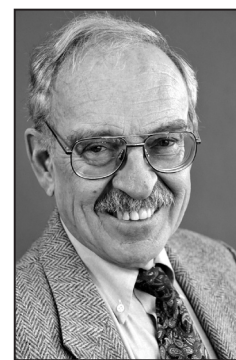


FIGURE 1.4. Source: 2010 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds, p. 53.

Meet the Author



RON SIDER

Ronald J. Sider is a respected leader and passionate advocate of holistic biblical faith. As the founder of Evangelicals for Social Action, a movement committed to connecting, educating and equipping Christian leaders to work for social transformation, Sider's leadership shapes and influences North American Christian thinking on issues of biblical justice, holistic mission and basic Christianity.

A prolific author, Sider has published more than thirty books and has written over one hundred articles in both religious and secular magazines. His groundbreaking book, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, was hailed by *Christianity Today* as one of the one hundred most influential books in religion in the twentieth century and has sold more than four hundred thousand copies.

Sider is a professor of theology, holistic ministry and public policy at Palmer Theological Seminary in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, publisher of the award-winning magazine *Prism*, and a contributing editor to *Sojourners* and *Christianity Today*. He received both his M.Div. and his Ph.D. in history from Yale. He is the father of three and lives in Philadelphia's Germantown section with his wife, Arbutus. ■

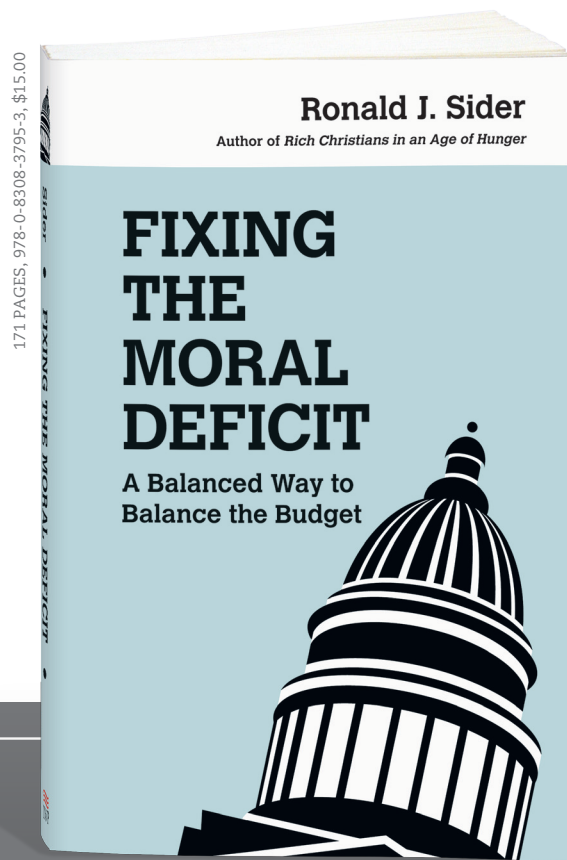
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A Circle of Protection:
A Statement on Why We
Need to Protect Programs
for the Poor

For more information, visit
CIRCLEOFPROTECTION.US

A BETTER TOMORROW ?



“[Ron Sider] believes that Christians and other people of goodwill can work together to end the crisis in a way that is both economically sound and morally just. I agree, and commend this book to anyone who shares Ron’s passion for a healthy future.”

JIM WALLIS, president and CEO, Sojourners

“I read everything Ron Sider writes because he makes me think through angles and issues that I might not consider. He’ll do the same for you.”

RICK WARREN, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*