

Written by Bobby M. Reyes

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Ideas for Using the Bloomberg's "Zacchaeus-like Venture Capital Or Seed Money"
"Unsolicited Advice" Column

Part II of a Series Called "Bloomberg and the Bible"

By Bobby M. Reyes

This is my take of a Sunday sermon or homily -- if I were a man of the Christian cloth.

Many Christians in the United States do not know Zacchaeus. He was a Jew and a rich tax-collector of the Roman Empire in Jericho at the time of Jesus Christ.

Here is what biblical scholars say of him: "Zacchaeus was a chief tax-collector at Jericho, mentioned only in the Gospel of Luke. A descendant of Abraham, he was an example of Jesus's personal, earthly mission to bring salvation to the lost. Tax collectors were despised as traitors, and as being (allegedly) corrupt" (lifted from Wikipedia).

Almost all tax collectors at that time did not believe in the redemptive powers of Jesus Christ. Zacchaeus did and he earned immortality by following the teachings of the Redeemer.

The story of Zacchaeus is used by some scripture scholars to personify the saying of Jesus: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8)

. Why?

B

ecause the name

Zacchaeus

has come to be associated with

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pur

ity" of good intentions, as well as of the heart

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Zacchaeus

also becomes a contrast of character with the "Rich Young Ruler" (Luke 18:18-23

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Here is the scripture reading about Zacchaeus the Tax Collector (As found in Luke 19:1-10 of the

New International Version

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(1) Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. (2) A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

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3)

He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd.

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4)

So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

(5)

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."

(
6)

So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

(7)

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

(8)

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord,

"Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything,

I will pay back four times the amount."

(9)

Jesus said to him,

"Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

(
10)

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

In my honest opinion, there are three coincidences between Mike Bloomberg and Zacchaeus. The first is that both of them were not tall men (although Mr. Bloomberg has been called by Filipinos as "like a dime", while his coming Republican opponent is "like a nickel"). Both were/are Jews and rich (although Zacchaeus was not as rich as Mr. Bloomberg). But in no instance does this writer believe that Mr. Bloomberg was ever corrupt in his private-business life and in his public service as an elected mayor of the biggest city in the country.

Now all of the Democratic presidential aspirants have a net worth of at least a million U.S. dollars. How many of them have given "half of their possessions to the poor" -- possibly with the exception of Tom Steyer? Or to contribute for proactive reforms in the gun industry and

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firearm-possession regulations? Or to the advocacy of addressing Climate Change? Or scholarship grants to their respective alma mater? Or to any pro-poor causes and concerns? This columnist bets that if Jesus Christ was still with mankind, he would have endorsed the causes and concerns of Mike Bloomberg, who is not even a Christian. (But it is okay for the Bible copied Jewish traditions and oral history -- as documented in the Torah -- for its Part One called "The Old Testament.") Because like Zacchaeus, Mr. Bloomberg is presumably following the teachings of the founder of Christianity. Now honestly speaking, who -- among his rivals -- has his or her house even come close to "salvation" and charitable giving -- using the "Zacchaeusian parameter", as this journalist has coined?

Ideas on How to Use the Bloomberg's "Zacchaeusian-like" Venture Capital or Seed Money During the Democratic Party-sanctioned debate in Las Vegas, Nevada, on February 19th, Mr. Bloomberg said that he intended to give away his wealth. According to many sources, Mr. Bloomberg has given -- through the Bloomberg Family Philanthropies -- more-than \$8.0-billion (spelled with a "B") so far and counting. Some also say that he has given more-than \$2.0-billion to political parties, political-action committees (PAC) and funding for their platforms since the time he ran for public office in 2001.

But reports say that Mr. Bloomberg has still a net worth of some \$61-billion, give or take a few hundred-million dollars. This was the result of his pioneering-and-visionary ideas, hard work, the genius of inviting good partners and hiring model employees. So, for Mr. Bloomberg to attain Zacchaeusian-like immortality, it will be easy for him to give about \$30.5-billion -- not as mere handouts but as venture capital or seed money.

Mr. Bloomberg and almost all successful businesspersons and entrepreneurs know what is wrong with capitalism. It is "the lack of capital" among those that want to start their own enterprises. He does not even have to give (or donate) the \$30.5-billion but invest them (and put his holdings in a Blind Trust) in new ventures that will address the current issues of our time (that are also his personal issues, if not crusades to lead and succeed in). Because actually good people want to earn the a modest form of financial independence the hard way (by working for it and not relying on dole-outs).

This columnist wishes to suggest respectfully that perhaps Mr. Bloomberg should ask the 23-million poor and low-income voters to form cooperatives or community-based public-benefit enterprises (PBE) in all the 50 states and in American territories. And invest in them the entire \$30.5-billion as "SEED MONEY." The PBEs could be aided by chambers of commerce and government agencies like the Small Business Administration of the federal government and state-and-local agencies.

If God wills that Mr. Bloomberg is elected the next President, then he could be in an excellent position to persuade, prevail on, pressure and/or prod with all the moral authority all the other billionaires and millionaires in the country to invest also in the PBEs perhaps at least 25%-to-30% of their net worth -- as may be found tenable.

And in the matter of solving the homelessness problem of the country, a President Bloomberg can also persuade, prevail on, pressure and/or prod all the states and their counties, cities and towns to come up new "Municipal Bonds" to match what have been raised from the private sector (from the billionaires and millionaires and other investors). The combined financial resources will then proceed to construct viable and affordable housing on unoccupied public land or government-owned buildings and in the parking spaces of public places, parks, churches, post offices, malls, shopping centers -- with new underground parking built ahead (that would even triple the number of the present number of parking slots).

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This proposal will fly. Why? To use an oft-quoted phrase uttered allegedly by some members of the U.S. Congress, "When we are talking of billions of dollars, we are really talking about money."

Literally, the sky is the limit when it comes to creating more-than Zacchaeusian-like SEED MONEY even for the repair of the country's aging infrastructures such as roads, bridges, railroads, airports, school buildings, etcetera, etc. -- ad infinitum -- if a President Bloomberg duplicates the ideas as expounded in the immediate preceding paragraph. Because Mr. Bloomberg has another \$20-billion to \$30-billion in additional venture capital.

Perhaps Jesus Christ -- in all his wisdom, goodness and godliness -- chose Zacchaeus to deliver a sermon that wealth is not bad if one uses it to promote the public good. And in the final analysis, when Mr. Bloomberg (God forbid) goes to the Great Beyond, God, Yahweh, Allah and Jesus Christ would more-than welcome him to Paradise and tell him, "Salvation has come to humanity, because this man, Mike Bloomberg, too, is a son of Abraham ..." # # #

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