



Less with More

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I was raised with capitalism, which always sought to do more with less, to increase supply chain efficiency and increase profit. I now know relentless pursuit of increased profit results in human and ecological exploitation and devastation. I have internalized this mantra, “Do more with less,” in my daily life and am working to overcome it because it is deeply at odds with the ethics of love and beauty I find in the Gospels.

AI, the latest “do more with less” opportunity, is already in everything. I’ve been using it for years in that it has been correcting my grammar in word processing apps, like the one I’m using right now. I can ask Siri to look up a random piece of information that comes up as I talk to my daughter. Now generative AI can write books, produce songs and movies, and create art (all by stealing the material of other people mind you). It is also generating billions of dollars (for a few people). Now, the struggle against AI data centers is revealing what is at stake: air, water, health, life. I have heard it called an extinction level event. Given the [reports from Memphis](#), the astonishing scale and speed with which data centers are being proposed especially in rural and poor areas and [in Native communities](#), it might be.

We must fight exploitation of the poor and vulnerable, and the destruction of creation, everywhere and always. We must also examine our own ethics, in daily life and in society. Have we internalized “more for less” as good? The two words most commonly translated as “good” in the New

Testament are *agathos* and *kalos*. *Agathos* is useful and functional and can transform a situation through provision and service. However, *kalos* often connects to and transforms through the heart and spirit, revealing beauty that surpasses what might be measured by usefulness or function.

Jesus was extravagant in love and action. It could be said Jesus did less with more, because people and beauty were a part of his economy. And, while the dominant global economy runs on limited resources, especially minerals and fossil fuels, the economy of Jesus runs on beauty and love, which are more than renewable—they are abundant and everlasting.

To liberate myself from the internalization of “less is more,” I am asking myself, “is this good,” and the better question, “Is this beautiful and good.” Beautiful and good often mean more output, time, care, creativity, intention, but I believe acting in this way is more in alignment with the way of Jesus. I am also engaging in collective work to protect the vulnerable and creation and my own community. The Gospel demands it.

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