



Christian Right, Libertarians, Objectivists Should Unite to Save Capitalism, 'Atlas Shrugged II' Producer Says

By Napp Nazworth , Christian Post Reporter - 9/25/2012

John Aglialoro, one of the producers of "Atlas Shrugged" and the soon to be released "Atlas Shrugged II," wants libertarians and social conservatives to unite to promote their shared principles of free markets, limited government and individual rights. The Christian Post spoke with Aglialoro and Harmon Kaslow, another producer of the films, Thursday before viewing a premier of the second part of the Atlas Shrugged trilogy, which is based on libertarian philosopher Ayn Rand's book of the same title. The film opens Oct. 12.

Aglialoro, like Rand, described himself as an atheist and an objectivist. (Rand called her philosophy objectivism.) Nonetheless, Aglialoro said, he will "run to engage an alignment with Christianity because we need our country back and we need to be friends and get this done."

Aglialoro specified an alignment on the issues of free markets, limited government and individual rights. While he believes such an alignment is necessary to "reclaim America" on those issues, he disagrees with social conservatives on other issues.

"Frankly, I'm a liberal when it comes to sexuality and drug laws," Aglialoro clarified.

Rand's philosophy has been a subject of scrutiny recently because of the selection of Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) to be Mitt Romney's running mate. Ryan is a fan of Rand's fictional works but, as a Catholic, disagrees with her atheism.

"I think Paul Ryan, rightfully, because it's his beliefs, said, 'hey I am a Catholic, I am not an atheist, I reject Ayn Rand's philosophy relative to atheism, but I endorse her sense that there's a moral basis for capitalism,'" Aglialoro said.

Aglialoro also noted that his step-son, Mark Henderson, is an evangelical Christian who has written about where he believes Rand's philosophy overlaps with Christianity. His blog is called "The Soul of Atlas: An Objectivist-Christian Conversation."

"Everybody knows that Paul Ryan believes there is a moral basis for capitalism and it has made this country work," Agliandolo explained. "It has made the world work. What about India? What about Brazil? What about China? ... It's unbelievable, in 50 years the people who are living longer lives, being prosperous. Why? Because of benevolent politicians? It's truly laughable. It's happened because of capitalism and [Rand] wrote the bible on capitalism."

"Atlas Shrugged II" is adapted from part two of the 1957 novel. After the government enacts the "Fair Share Act" (the name is original to the book, so it is not an intentional mocking of President Obama's frequent use of the phrase, "fair share"), the economy worsens as businesses must limit the degree to which they trade with each other. In response, the government enacts "emergency measures" to gain further control over the economy.

Some scenes from the film seemed intended to suggest a relationship between events in the book and current events. One scene shows a protester carrying a sign that reads, "We Are the 99.99%," satirizing the Occupy Wall Street's "We Are the 99%" slogan.

A scene in which a government bureaucrat calls a meeting of business executives demanding that they support his "emergency measures" may recall, for some, the meeting between then-Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and bank executives during the height of the 2008 financial crisis. Paulson demanded that they support his efforts to prevent the crisis from spreading. The actor playing the bureaucrat, Paul McCrane, even has a Paulson-like half-moon bald head.

The film also has some surprise cameo appearances. Some of them are media figures playing themselves.

"Our hope and aspiration for part two is that these films really are a celebration of Ayn Rand's message of smaller government, individual achievement and free markets," Kaslow told The Christian Post.

Agliandolo and Kaslow were in Washington, D.C., last week to show premieres of the film at The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, and Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

"We're great admirers of Ayn Rand. Her commitment to individual rights and principled politics inspired a lot of the people at Cato. So we've been waiting 50 years for a movie to be made," David Boaz, executive vice president of Cato Institute, told The Christian Post.

The target date for part three of "Atlas Shrugged" is July 4, 2014, to coincide with Independence Day festivities.