

Trump Drags World Back Into The Dark Ages



The Paris Accord is the politician's dream. The U.S. could simultaneously align itself with developed and emerging countries and capitalize on one of the biggest economic opportunities driving the future. The Accord offered the U.S. the ability to strengthen global alliances, to capture market share in the renewable energy sector, and to act as a leader in navigating the global climate crisis. It was a *both/and* opportunity for the US — the Paris Accord served both the economic interest of the U.S. and global interests.

The Trump Administration operates via zero sum, *either/or* thinking. There can only be one winner. We only win if the rest of the world loses. This is a return to pre-enlightenment, Dark Age thinking. It is categorically dogmatic, dismissive and even suspicious of data/facts, authoritative, and fear-based.

When we started [Big Path Capital](#) 10 years ago, we had to fight this same *either/or* mindset. Any discussion of doing good in deploying capital was seen as philanthropy, charity. Most investors believed you either made money or did good. But due to the collective efforts

within the impact investment community, today this new path, conducting business for profit and impact, represents the largest investment opportunity of our era and is the best tool for addressing the world's most pressing problems.

That is why shunning the Paris Accord is a reversal of Enlightenment and a return to Dark Age thinking. The Dark Ages and the Enlightenment are an interesting backdrop for today's events. The Enlightenment brought about an intelligent and self-aware civilization. The amount of new knowledge that emerged was staggering. Just as important was the enthusiasm with which people approached the Period - intellectual salons popped. People who hadn't read were consuming books and passing them around. The mindset was contagious—and the world flourished. A new seed that had been forgotten, sprouted ... that thought had the power to spark real change.

Explorers like Columbus, Da Gama, Diaz, Magellan created a new mindset, call it a *blue ocean* mindset, which was infectious. Explorers forged new paths and reports came back of new lands, new plants, new animals. This flow of new ideas and conceptions not only challenged and undermined the accepted reality, it gave people an imagination for something new. People imaginations opened, "What, the earth is not the center of the universe? How big do you think the universe could be?"

This mindset prepared the soil for the Enlightenment and scientific revolution to bloom. It had the unintended effect of challenging the status quo and opened new ways for seeing reality. We here in the impact investment community are in our own age of discovery bringing back maps of new lands, new foods, new ways of investing. If it weren't for the pioneers impact investors like Trillium showing the way, how would mainstream investors know that investing for financial, environmental and social returns was even possible. If it weren't for investors like the Sorenson Impact Center, how would others know that capital markets can be leveraged to address the world's most pressing problems. If it weren't for foundations like F.B. Heron, how would we know that foundations could align their investments with the foundation's mission and not against it.

Will there be loss of ships and equipment and supplies as we map the new terrain? Of course. Will we find treasures? Yes, we already have. Make no mistake our work like the explorers is challenging, undermining the status quo.

We are mapping new lands, showing proof that the current financial thinking is not reality. The Earth is not the center of the universe.

Financial return in isolation (call it *blind return*) is disconnected with the physical world we live in. The status quo of our financial system ultimately undermines the life enabling systems that support us and our economy. There will be a time in our life when the idea of blind return – that is financial return at all costs or maybe better said financial return w/ no consideration of costs will seem as silly as the notion of the Earth being the center of the universe.

We are living a dark irony... it was the discovery of the Americas that helped pull the world out of the Dark Ages. Now it seems the United States of America will snuff out the light that has come, dragging the world back into an age of darkness, marked by ignorance, unconsciousness, greed, and arrogance.

At Big Path Capital, we are committed to the light. We will stay to this path, for it is the smartest business decision to make. Let us all redouble our efforts, add more sails, stock more provisions and deploy capital in the New World that we've seen with our own eyes but others may not yet have. Let's bring back our treasures to excite people's imagination of the higher possibility of capital.

By Michael Whelchel & Shawn Lesser, Co-Founders of Big Path Capital

About Big Path Capital

Founded in 2007, [Big Path Capital](#) is a leading impact investment bank assisting impact & sustainable companies and funds in mergers, acquisitions, and capital raises. Big Path is a conduit between companies, funds, and investors focused on impact and return. It has established one of the largest networks of Impact Investors and has worked with more impact & sustainable companies and funds than any other firm in the sector. Big Path was founded on the premise that this *BOTH/AND* way of investing is the new standard. We call it [SmarterMoney+](#): Maximize Impact + Maximize Return.

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