{enclose http://dev.ksco.got.net/podcasts/2009-11-27.mp3} The following is a KSCO commentary. Here is Kay Zwerling: This is called 'satan, the great motivator?. Let us study the intriguing relationship of economics and religion, and see how the second controls and stimulates the first. What makes economies grow? It is a question that has occupied thinkers for centuries. Here is one you might not have considered: HELL. Yes, HELL makes some economies grow. A pair of Harvard researchers recently examined 40 years of datum from dozens of countries trying to sort out the economic impact of religious beliefs or practices. They found that religion has a measurable effect on developing economies ? and the most powerful influence relates to how strongly people believe in HELL. That HELL could matter to economic growth might seem surprising since you cannot prove it exists, let alone quantify it. It stands as one of the most intriguing findings in a growing body of recent research exploring how religion might influence the wealth and prosperity of societies. In a sense, Religion and Economics long have been intertwined. There are more verses on money and finance in the Bible than there are verses on Prayer. The New Testament states it clearly in contradictory positions: On the one hand is the admonition that a rich person has little chance of getting into Heaven; on the other is the parable of the talents, which praises the servant who got the biggest return on his money. This is interesting. Islam to this day outlaws the charging of interest. Wow ? that is one positive aspect of Islam. Buddhism instructs its followers to abjure or repudiate the desire for material goods.In the Middle Ages, studies showed that the states run by monks outperformed those that used serfs thanks to religiously-inspired cooperation. The Quakers of 18th century Britain, renowned for their scrupulous honesty, came to dominate British finance. Ultra-orthodox Jews similarly dominate New York's diamond trade because of levels of trust based on religion. Modern religious kibbutzim, which are small self-contained Jewish communities in Israel, on average outperform their secular rivals, in part because of trust built through engaging in communal religious rituals. The Protestant work ethic is a driving force behind modern Capitalism in the West. So, what is it about religion that creates how these economies are affected? All the major religions like Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism extol virtues like self-discipline, sacrifice, and thrift. Some even preach that earthly success translates to good things in the Afterlife, a kind of gold-plated stairway to Heaven. I would like to add ? if one really wishes to cut to the chase, one can put it bluntly, like if one does not believe in Hell, one need not be scared of retribution, and one can often and up to a point get away with cheating, etc. Conversely, if one believes honestly and fervently in the existence of God, one will be good, and never be tempted to cheat in business or otherwise. Kudos to Erin Farquhar for suggesting we delve into this unique theory of Michael Fitzgerald's recent article on Commerce and Religion. Though we did condense it, we see that economies and Religion do indeed support and complement each other. For KSCO, this is Kay Zwerling. copyright 2009