



WHY NATIONS PROSPER

A PERSONAL EXPLORATION BY
HENRIK EKELOUND

Why Do Some Nations Thrive While Others Struggle? New Documentary, *Why Nations Prosper*, Searches the World for Answers

Available November 1, 2026 through NETA for broadcast on public television stations nationwide

ERIE, PA (November 1, 2026) — Why do some nations create widespread prosperity while others remain trapped in poverty? *Why Nations Prosper, A Personal Exploration by Henrik Ekelund*, a new one-hour public television documentary from Free To Choose® Media, Ekelund travels across five continents to explore the forces that allow people, businesses, and entire societies to flourish.

The program will be available to public television stations nationwide beginning November 1, 2026 through the National Educational Telecommunications Association's program distribution service.

Hosted by entrepreneur and author Henrik Ekelund, *Why Nations Prosper* identifies and examines three forces that consistently distinguish prosperous nations: Freedom, Order, and Innovation. He travels to Vietnam, Botswana, Chile, the Netherlands, and the United States to see those forces at work and what happens when they are weakened or abandoned.

"Prosperity is ultimately about whether people can build good lives," says Robert Chatfield, President and CEO of Free To Choose Media. "This film introduces viewers to people whose lives have been transformed by freedom, sound institutions, and the opportunity to create. At a moment when those principles are being questioned, *Why Nations Prosper* asks what we can learn from the countries that have succeeded."

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Vietnam's Đổi Mới reforms opened the country to trade and private enterprise, turning a former rice importer into one of the world's largest exporters and fastest-growing economies. Botswana built one of Africa's most successful economies through democracy, property rights, and sound management of its diamond wealth. Chile emerged from dictatorship in 1990 and embraced open markets, driving rising living standards and steep declines in poverty, with market-driven innovation now helping its wine industry compete globally. The United States still leads the world in entrepreneurship and innovation, yet Detroit's automobile industry shows what happens when protection from competition removes the pressure to adapt. With growth slowing and debt rising, Ekelund asks whether America will continue building on the principles that made it prosperous.

"We've come a long way since the days of kings and castles, nobles and peasants," Ekelund says in the film. "But we still have far to go. The path forward lies in harnessing the drivers of prosperity that have proven their power throughout history and will continue to shape our success in the future."

Why Nations Prosper is a production of Free To Choose Media. The program is directed by Jim Taylor and produced by Barbara Potter. Henrik Ekelund, Jim Taylor, and Thomas Skinner are the writers. Thomas Skinner and Robert Chatfield serve as executive producers.

Major funding for the program is provided by the Sarah Scaife Foundation. Additional funding is provided by Ron and Connie Muhlenkamp and Elizabeth Rose.

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About Free To Choose Media

Free To Choose Media produces award-winning documentaries and series for public television, offering diverse voices, powerful stories, and fresh perspectives on important global and national issues. For more than 35 years, Free To Choose Media production teams have traveled the world to explore topics that stimulate thought and cultivate conversation. Recent acclaimed productions include *The True Cost of Defense*, examining the human and financial impact of America's military commitments; *Free To Speak*, a three-part series on free speech hosted by former ACLU president Nadine Strossen; *We Hold These Truths*, exploring the global quest for liberty with Judge Douglas H. Ginsburg; and *Thomas Sowell: Common Sense in a Senseless World*, a biography of the influential economist. For more information, visit FreeToChooseMedia.org.

About the National Educational Telecommunications Association

The National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) is a professional association representing 294 member stations in 48 states, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. NETA provides leadership, general audience content, educational services, professional development, and trusted financial management services, including human resources and benefits administration, to individual public media licensees, their affinity groups, and public media as a whole. For more information, visit netaonline.org and follow them on Twitter @NETA_Tweets, Facebook @NETAstations, Instagram @NETA_grams, and LinkedIn @NETAbusiness.

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