CHRISTIANS CONFRONTING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

1974 Christian Life Commission Seminar PROCEEDINGS

$2.50

Foreword

No subject in the field of Christian social ethics has been as neglected as economics. There are obvious reasons for this neglect: the subject is complex, difficult, and unexciting to most people. Yet everybody is seriously involved every day in economic issues; and there is great need for Christians to seek to bring Christian insights to bear in this vital arena where all human life is deeply affected. The Christian Life Commission therefore developed this conference for church leaders on "Christians Confronting the Economic Crisis."

The conference was held in Houston, Texas, March 24-26, 1974. Three hundred and eight registrants from 25 states and the District of Columbia heard speakers and dialogued with program leaders who brought professional expertise and Christian insights to bear on topics of special concern in the whole area of economic life.

The addresses from "Christians Confronting the Economic Crisis" are provided in this printed form primarily as a reportorial service to the seminar registrants. Since the speakers prepared these addresses for oral presentation to a live audience, this material should not be judged as if it had been carefully written for formal publication in book form. It is hoped, however, that these printed addresses will enable even those not attending to learn from these authorities and profit from their insights.

Special acknowledgement is due to the entire Christian Life Commission staff, who worked long and hard to prepare for and conduct this seminar.

It is the Christian Life Commission's hope that these printed *Proceedings* may substantially enlarge the usefulness of this innovative seminar and give substantial help to "Christians Confronting the Economic Crisis."

Foy Valentine, Executive Secretary
The Christian Life Commission of the
Southern Baptist Convention

Table of Contents

Proceedings of the 1974 Christian Life Commission Seminar "Christians Confronting the Economic Crisis" held in the Shamrock Hilton Hotel Houston, Texas, March 25-27, 1974

First Theme Message

Ernest T. Campbell

Houston is a very prosperous city and I believe it is significant that you chose to hold this conference here.

I am very deeply pleased that Southern Baptists should bring this conference together on economic crisis. Traditionally, Southern Baptists have been what church historians call "salvationists," and salvationists, as a rule, have not addressed themselves to structured evils in society. The interpretation prevailing is that sin is basically individual failure which can be resolved by individual redemption. So, I feel that those who conceived this program are to be congratulated.

The best minds in the church all over the world, not just the United States, need to be aware of the evils resident in systems and structures. Perhaps this is what Saint Paul referred to when he spoke about "principalities and authorities," "dominions and powers."

It is my aim, if not my job description here, to provide some biblical, theological, and practical legitimacy for Christians trying to improve the economic scene. It has not been a foregone conclusion in the great ranks of the Christian church up and down our land that economics belongs in the church's curriculum. The reasons for this are many and varied. I hope during these days that we can discover the areas of resistance. I wish I could have had the time to make a fresh go at this subject for many days and perhaps, after sitting back and taking another run at it, have covered the subject more orderly and more systematically.

One reason the Christian church has not been more vigorous in its attention to economic injustices is that over the years the church has been strapped with a gnostic theology. Gnosticism is very difficult to explain. I know what it is until somebody asks me to describe it. Then, frantically, I try to think back to that course I took many years ago called New Testament Introduction so that I might come up with a snap analysis and answer. There are many kinds of gnosticism which plagued the early church—Corinthian gnosticism and ascetic gnosticism to name two. All of these have been examined with fine scholarship in recent years. Those of us who have been in the ministry more than fifteen or twenty years had better not reach back into seminary notes to try to understand what gnosticism is. The subject is very much alive and very much the subject of research. It is sufficient for our purposes today to say that gnosticism represented a false spiritualization of the Christian message.

Cleverly Ford has given us a summation of what he takes to be the main tenets of gnosticism. Language about Jesus Christ is no longer concrete. He has no flesh and blood. He does not dwell among men. Second, man becomes the battle ground between flesh and spirit. He is not a unity. This is because the biblical, Hebraic understanding of man is abandoned. Three, biblical realism is replaced by symbolism. Four, the Old Testament is rejected, and with it the notion of God as Creator, as one who has dealings with man. Finally, there is no community of faith on earth. The *ecclesia* is an aeon pre-existent, and heavenly. In my time, I have known of a number of evangelists whose view of the Christian church was precisely as gnostic as that.

To put the matter more simply, gnosticism fundamentally represented a dualism in which the Old Testament was separated from the New Testament, God from the world, the super-mundane Christ from the historical Jesus, man's spirit and man's body, and redemption was conceived of as a separation of the spirit from matter. The first Epistle of John was written, as you know, to counter this heresy right at the start. One verse there has meant a great deal to me over the last two years of my ministry. I stumbled upon it one day while working on a sermon in another direction. I John 4:2b-3a, ". . . every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not of God" (RSV). I was taken by an amended version of that text. Having been trained at Princeton to be very wary of alternate readings, I had to look at this two or three times. The more I looked, the more I examined the credentials of this alternate reading, the more the Spirit convinced me that this was what was intended at the outset. "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God and every spirit that does not confess *solvit Jesum*, or severeth Jesus, annulleth, or unmaketh, or destroyeth Jesus." This particular emendation was accepted by Tertullian and Irenaeus and it is the version that is found in the Vulgate translation. Indeed, there was an ecclesiastical historian by the name of Socrates who claimed that this was the primitive reading and that it was altered by those who wished to separate the Deity from the Man of the Incarnation. And that is precisely where the theological issue is joined, whether or not we reckon seriously with the historicity of Jesus Christ.

A few weeks ago I read a book by William Stringfellow that I commend to you, *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land.* If Stringfellow were a pastor, he would have given it a better title than that. In this particular work, he makes this point (try to ask yourself out of all the teaching and preaching you have heard and done, whether or not this kind of Christ is not the one that we so frequently communicate): "Jesus is demeaned to become a nebulous, elusive, spiritualized figure, a sacred vagueness, severed from his own historical ministry, separated from human experience and bereft of living relationship with either history or the God of history. He is levitated out of time, though time be the only context according to the Bible in which humans have or ever have had knowledge whatever of Christ."

"Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God and every spirit that does not confess *solvit Jesum.*" The historicity of Jesus, and the perpetual relevance of Jesus for history belong I believe at the very heart of our faith. Now in the light of this dictum from the New Testament, I want us to consider two aspects of our common life: One, the participation of the church in any form of social activism (in which I include political and economic activism as well); two, the menacing growth of civil religion in America. First, let us look at a social activism.

I am committed to the belief that the church has a legitimate role in social action. I am careful to distinguish here between social service and social action, though some churches involved in social service rechristen it social action to justify a rather feeble gesture as being relevant in our kind of world. Our social

services are vital, of course; such as, taking care of orphans and the elderly, and all manner of other ways in which we have organized and structured our concerns. But social action attempts to move with a sense of political savvy and power to remove the causes that generate people's needs that social service eventually attends.

Many have a view of the church (and this is the understatement of the hour) that does not include social action. They believe that worship, fellowship, and education summarize what the church ought to be about. If there is to be any penetration of the world, it will be by a kind of osmosis, where one Christian holds his light up and illumines another with the hope that some kind of geometric progression will develop. Thus, in due time, life will be "Christ-ified" because of the multiplicity of those who believe in Him. In fairness, we should also say that people in this camp also believe that the general activity of the official mission boards and agencies will take care of whatever generalized penetration is required.

It is my conviction that solitary ethical action, which is what most of us in the ministry really are trying to generate week after week, is ineffectual in trying to deal with collectively or systemically inflicted hurts.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Even as we gather in this elegant room, there are thousands of engineers who are out of work in the city of Seattle, Washington. They are not out of work because they are lazy or because they had a pattern of absenteeism. They are not out of work because their skills have been rendered antiquated by new breakthroughs in technology. They are out of work, as you know, because 2,500 miles to the East, a large collectivity called the Congress voted down the future of the SST. In my judgment, it was a wise vote. The point I am trying to make is that the lives of thousands of those people (presumably some of them Baptists and Presbyterians, Episcopalians and whatever) have been directly impinged upon by a collective systemic decision which was made somewhat impersonally many, many miles away. When the White House announces, somewhat glibly, in a palace speech that the Administration can tolerate a five percent or six percent rate of unemployment, this translates very quickly in New York City to the obvious fact that multiplied thousands of blacks and browns will be unable to find work. This happens in your city as well as in mine. No matter how often they come to Riverside Church and pray about it, no matter how often they are faithful in their morning devotional life, no matter how much they try to hold themselves to those virtues that belong to Christian living, one decision made somewhat bureaucratically at a distance has a direct, telling and numbing effect on thousands of people in our city.

Another instance would be the declaration in Washington that the rate of mortgage interest is being raised from this percent to a higher percent. This translates out to mean that the number of housing starts possible in Texas, New York, or California will be limited, which in turns means that many young couples in your church and mine will have to have a sharply revised life schedule together.

My point is (and I shall not labor it any further) that if we are simply equipping ourselves with a concept that individual Christian action is all that is required—letting our light shine, letting our leaven work, trying in various ways to be salt, working in various forms of isolation from one another—what we are really saying is that we are not taking history seriously. Isaiah told us that we had to learn to do good, which means that all forms and patterns of doing good can become dated. More seriously, while we continue in the old forms and patterns, we may be becoming less and less relevant. And so, if we are to take seriously the meaning of the Incarnation, which is that within history we do what is possible to do on behalf of the other constituency of the church (those who are in prison, sick, hungry, naked, estranged), we must learn how to move *corporately* to involve ourselves in social action.

It is terribly important that we learn how to couple our anger, passion or concern with wise political perception. I commend to you a book that was published just last week called *Political Organization,* by James Wilson. He deals with the very interesting question of why it is that the NAACP is now going on into its seventh decade while SNIC was scarcely able to survive its seventh year. Or again, why it is that the YMCA has survived all manner of administrations in Washington, all kinds of economic weather, while the followers of the Townsend plan flashed for a while and then disappeared.

"Why is it," he asks, "that the Red Cross and the National Council of Churches, to name two that are aging with considerable relevance, are able to continue while others have come and gone?" God must give us the wisdom to know how to structure our passion. Part of Wilson's answer is that these groups learned how to be flexible, how to adapt to change, and how to provide continuing incentives for membership over a long period of time in which conditions altered day-by-day and year-by-year. This, then, is a plea for us to recognize the validity of social activism, because surely out of some of what we hear in these days, we will want to do something ourselves with our people, and perhaps as a denomination.

It is interesting how we act politically when our own interests are involved. About this time a year ago there was a meat boycott. You remember that! The housewives of America, more or less by inspiration, decided that they would boycott the meat counters. I was impressed by the fact that Republican women and Democratic women alike were involved in this and women in between as well. We didn't seem to mind that we were applying a form of political and economic pressure in that action. I know the migrant farm worker movement rather well. Caesar Chavéz is trying to say, "Why can't you begin to mobilize a little bit for us? If you can move when your own pocketbook is involved, why can't you move when the future of our people is involved?" "Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess *solvit Jesum.*"

Now the other issue that I believe impinges upon our meeting here, and will impinge upon it at virtually every session, is that of civil religion. Where the aims and values of the state are confused or interchanged with the values of religion, there is civil religion. There is really a fourth religion in America, is there not? It is interesting that when some event of a civic nature is scheduled in our communities, those who put the

occasion together want to be sure to have a priest, a minister, and a rabbi present. It is most unfortunate that three clergymen are a must, since there are really only two parts—the invocation and the benediction. Three into two always produces an odd number! But, actually, the number is four. The other religion in this country is "Americanity." It might be well for those who are staging events just to line up four representatives of religion for alternate events—two one time and two the next. Americanity is a strange malange of Jesus, George Washington, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the cross, and the flag all bafflingly thrown together and placed upon us as a test of loyalty and patriotism.

Yes, Virginia, there is such a thing as the Religion of the Potomac. Sometime I should like to preach on "The Religion of the Potomac As Seen from the Banks of the Hudson" (were it not for the fact that the Hudson is also polluted). Those who are even slightly familiar with the life of the Riverside Church would probably presume that the most hectic time we had over the last six years had to do with the visit of James Foreman. But they would be wrong in surmising that! Even at the time it happened, I had the feeling (which was later substantiated) that James Foreman did more *for* us than *to* us. We had our greatest difficulty in Riverside, in my six years at any rate, over the read-in of the names of the Viet Nam war dead. It is a somewhat long story. Maybe later on I will have occasion to come back to it. But suffice it to say for now that we had people reading the names of the war dead from the *Congressional Record* on half-hour breaks from nine in the morning until nine at night, day after day, week after week, month after month. A sizable core of people in our church (even with its reputed liberal reputation) felt that this activity was an affront to patriotism. I argued that if young people came to me and wished to perform an action which had been derived from the documents that we have given them, namely the Old and New Testaments, that I would be in an indefensible position as a pastor to deny them that expression. Others may read these same documents and come to different conclusions.

The point here is that Americanity, this belief that somehow the church ought not to have any distance between itself and the state, is very much alive and well in our society. Howard Schomer, a very able churchman who keeps an eye on the world mission of the United Church of Christ, made a study recently of the various attitudes toward the state to be found in I and II Corinthians. In the Corinthian church there was one group known as the ecstacists. This group couldn't care less whether they were in Ephesus, Philippi, or Corinth or Rome; they would do their thing anywhere, because their faith really had no outer reference at all. They were able to get on to a religious high simply by coming together, by steaming up each other's glasses with what they took to be the joy of the Holy Spirit. Also within the Corinthian experience was a group called the Sadducees. These were the Quislings of their time, the collaborators. If you saw some of them going by in a horse-drawn cart, you would notice on the rear of the cart a bumper sticker reading: "Always Support Your Local Government." In their judgment whoever was "in" was right. A third party defined by Schomer within the Corinthian experience was known as the Zealots. If you saw a Zealot whiz by in a cart and glimpsed the legend on his bumper sticker, you would read the words, "Never Support Your Government—Whoever Is 'In' Is Wrong." There was also the Pharisee party who assumed that nothing critical was wrong; a little papering over of the cracks here and there would be sufficient. Into all of this a fifth option was dropped—namely, the body of Christ. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself . . . and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation"—not identifying with the ecstacists, who believed it sufficient to enjoy God in a suffering world; not identifying with the Sadducees or Zealots, much less the Pharisees, but there under orders of the Spirit of God to be a reconciling, healing force.

What I am saying is that the church has a destiny to be a prophetic community, and to be a prophetic community the church must have some distance. It cannot allow itself to be absorbed. On the other hand, it does not seek domination. The peril there is clericalism which has aroused the anger of the world in many places against the Roman Catholic Church. We are to be prophetic—that is, to live in tension with the established order—to keep the distance that is proper to prophetic possibilities.

Every once in a while I comfort myself when I don't get a hearing with the thought that it was very common in the Old Testament for people "not to hear the prophets." When the Scriptures tell us that a certain generation would not hear the prophets, this does not mean quite literally that people stopped their ears with their fingers saying, "We're not going to listen to whatever you are going to say." Not to hear the prophets really means not being willing to understand the problems of the state in moral or spiritual terms. Not to hear the prophets means that we leave the matter of war to the generals, that we leave the matter of impeachment to the lawyers, that we leave the matter of the poor to the economists. It is very interesting that with all of these major problems, the category is constantly being switched from anything spiritual or moral to some more manageable order, at least in the eyes of men. My plea is that as we look at the injustices in the economic system, we will do so with prophetic courage, understanding that the faith we are about cannot be nationalized or otherwise domesticated.

Some years ago, I used to get a sheet called "Christian Economics." I am inclined to agree with George Buttrick that the word "Christian" is always more safely used as adjective than noun. There are Christians in economics and Christians have economic theories. But in my understanding of life and scripture, there is no such thing as "Christian economics." There are Christians in economics or Christians with economics, but no "Christian economics." What God wants us to do, it seems to me, is to address ourselves to whatever system prevails, whether it be relatively right or right in a magnificent way, so that the system might be brought from where it stands to where it ought to be in the interest of a fuller humanization of life.

"Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess *solvit Jesum.*" I close with one line that I

subscribe to with all my heart. It comes from that same book by William Stringfellow that I alluded to earlier. "Biblical faith merely concentrates upon events as they happen in the world as it is." To think that our faith is expressible in some other kind of world, real or imagined, past or future, is to become a gnostic in fact and to sever Jesus.

Second Theme Message

Ernest T. Campbell

One of the bright new faces in homiletics these days is Professor William Muehl of the Yale Divinity School. He has a book entitled *All the Damned Angels.* If I had the time it would be interesting for me to tell you how that book got its title. Why don't you buy it yourself, though, and you will find that out and also some other things about this man. In this book he has a message called "The Cult of the Publican." He allows as how it is a salutary thing for a man to go into the Temple, to keep his distance from the high altar, to keep his eyes cast down toward the ground, and to speak in humility about God being merciful to him, a sinner. But, says Muehl, I would like to know what effect that had on the man. The record says that he went down to his house justified rather than the other. It would be interesting to know the effects of this man's justification on his wife and children, and perhaps on those with whom he would work the next day.

In other words, it is possible to be obsessed with beginnings, to be interested in being born again and again and again and again, almost to thrive emotionally on the dynamics of guilt and forgiveness and never get on with the end of salvation, which is the restoration of individuals to their true vocation as co-workers with God in this creation. Muehl is quite whimiscal as he goes on to elaborate this story. He says that sometimes in his mind's eye he can see the Publican raising his children to follow in his steps, saying, "Now, kiddies, when you enter the Temple you must on no account approach the altar. Stand at a humble distance and for pity's sake, don't raise your eyes. Bring your arm up in a full swing and strike the breast just below the collarbone. Now, all together, let's take it once more from the top and this time make your daddy proud of you."

There are ways in which our beginnings have become stylized and predictable. They generate their own language and they seek out their own assurances in those communities where the beginnings take place. Salvation is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. There is something sick about a man screaming through the city, "I'm born. I'm born." You say, "Good, what now?" There is something pathetic about a man running through the streets saying, "I'm a released prisoner, just got out. I'm pardoned! I'm pardoned!" "Great. Praise God. What next?" I remember seeing a cartoon one time in which a rather sorely taxed father turns to his son saying, "Son, this is the third fatted calf we have killed for you. When are you going to settle down?" Just imagine the effect on the older brother and the father and the servants and others around if this prodigal, upon his return, just went around the place saying, "I'm back. I'm back." Somebody eventually would say, "So, you're back!" In time he would have to pull his weight, wouldn't he? He would have to milk the cows, press some olives, or get the barley in. The end of salvation is to reconnect us with our true vocation, which is to be a co-worker with God, attempting to align the world with the Galilean vision.

I also want to say a word about eschatology. Perhaps even more critical to our inability to recruit people for the meaningful work of the church is the eschatology that we are hung up with. Christians have a way of seeing the end as cancelling out history rather than fulfilling it. To put it somewhat theologically, we confuse the apocalyptic with the eschatological. The return of Jesus, which is a very precious and meaningful hope, is seen as being disruptive and disjunctive of history. This came home to me from a person in the camp of Jehovah's Witnesses. Every so often these people will hire out Yankee Stadium and have one of their huge rallies, jamming that place with 60 or 70 thousand people. This young man was asked whether he or his followers did anything at all towards the social amelioration of the ills of the world. He said, "No, there is no point to that. If a house is under condemnation, there is not any point to putting in new windows or screens; it is marked for death anyway." The implication is that this world is marked for death, so why bother. I saw a bumper sticker a little while ago (reportedly printed in Indiana) that read: "If Jesus returns today, somebody grab my steering wheel." That's a very cavalier way, isn't it, to speak about the *eschaton,* as though somehow what happens to a careening vehicle is nothing to God. I realize that it was done in a flippant mood, but I am suggesting that there is a very serious way in which people look upon the *eschaton* in that fashion.

To put it somewhat differently, the ultimate hope of the Lord's return is so understood as to render man's penultimate hopes unworthy of his energy. That is to say, all of the hopes that are precious to humankind are relativised into insignificance under the blazing light of the ultimate hope of the return of Jesus. Since Jesus is coming back and since, when He does, all of history will be disrupted, disbanded and judged, what difference does it make whether blacks have their garbage collected on time in Memphis? What difference does it make whether migrant workers can overcome the pressures of the Teamsters Union? What difference does it make whether the prisons in Texas or New York are primarily custodial rather than rehabilitative?

To tell you the truth, I have more respect for worldly hopefulness at this point than I do for much of the so-called hopefulness of the church. About a year ago last month, a lot of young people gathered in the Commodore Hotel in New York City because of a common affection for the science-fiction television series "Star Trek." I consider myself one of the world's great authorities on "Star Trek." I have two teen-age children, and I believe they have seen every episode many, many times. By an osmotic process, I feel that I have absorbed a great deal of "Star Trek," much to

their delight. But these people were gathered there, convulsed into a kind of grief that this program had been discontinued. The surprise exhibit at the Commodore was a 25-foot-wide model of the bridge from the Star Ship Enterprise. It was built by two young men from Poughkeepsie, New York. A reporter asked them why they built the bridge. The answer: "Basically we did it because it was a lot of fun. But it is also a way of saying there is hope for the world, for it is the 23rd century and the world has survived." One thinks of the woman who said the thing she likes most on television with the 11th hour news was the weather report because it gave promise that at least there would be a tomorrow.

Now my friends, a right reading of the end means that the coming of our Lord does not cancel history. It fulfills history. There is both continuity and discontinuity in our eschatalogical hope. The end comes into history, which means that we don't produce it. We are not necessarily with those who believe in automatic evolution. But the end comes into history; that is to say, it comes to judge and to fulfill. In my judgment, Reinhold Niebuhr is still our greatest teacher here, as in many other points. He says in his *Magnum Opus: The Nature and Destiny of Man*, "Against utopianism the Christian faith insists that the final consummation of history lies beyond the conditions of the temporal process. Against other-worldliness it asserts that the consummation fulfills rather than negates the historical process." No good is ever lost in the economy of God. No struggle is ever in vain. Surely our Lord would not have counseled us to pray an unanswerable prayer, and so for thousands of years the faithful have prayed that the will of God should be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven. And this, I take it, is what Percy Dearmer was saying for us in one of his hymns:

Not for us to find the reasons
Or to know the times and seasons,
Comes the Lord when strikes the hour.
Ours to bear the faithful witness
Which can shape the world to fitness,
Thine, O God, to give the power.

Third Theme Message

Ernest T. Campbell

In my presentations I have been pleading for the church to take history seriously. Pleading for the church to relate creatively and helpfully to political, social, and economic reality. Pleading for the church to see salvation realistically not as a privatized transaction between God and the soul. But those who resist such involvement by the church are frequently found with Bible in hand. So the question is, "Does the Bible tell us so?" What do the Scriptures tell us explicitly or implicitly about the sort of thing that this conference is designed to help us with?

I will speak on three rather obvious chronological headings: First, from the Old Testament point of view; second, from the life of Christ himself; and third, from the New Testament letters.

It is fitting to begin with the Old Testament. I chose to major in Old Testament figuring that I would be sufficiently drawn by instinct and desire to the New Testament when I was out of school. In the course of graduate study in Old Testament I discovered that I had been trained in my earlier years to plunder the Old Testament for moralistic texts which would suggest a Christian veneer and also prooftexts for certifying the genuineness of Jesus. As I looked back I saw that I had gained little respect for the integrity and significance of Old Testament people. I regarded the Old Testament as a preamble primarily to the New and in some cases a dispensable preamble.

Gnostics always had trouble with the Old Testament. Marion was condemned for heresy for trying to eliminate the Old Testament from the Scriptures. Once he had his knife out he whacked away most of the Pauline letters and much of the gospels, save for the Sermon on the Mount. When he was finished he had a wafer-thin edition of the Scriptures! With that as background, let us realize that the economic order in the Old Testament is of grave concern to God. It is exceedingly important that we remember that the Old Testament economy represents God's intention for the whole human family. As God prescribed for those people, he was also suggesting to us very strongly what a corporate entity committed unto him would be. What do we find in the Old Testament?

For one thing, we find three categories of people who are constantly commended to the Hebrew conscience—the widow, the orphan, and the afflicted. It is interesting how often those three categories are found, especially in the prophets. In fact, it sounds almost like the tolling of a gigantic bell—the widow, the orphan, and the afflicted. Obviously what these three have in common is their relative defenselessness. The widow could be an easy prey for some sharp business practices. The orphan, of course, could be victimized by those who wished to exploit his labor. The afflicted could be the person in the community without any rights to be there.

To put it differently, the Hebrew religion was not judged by how things went in the well-paneled dining halls of the rich, but by how life was moving in the hovels of the poor. You will recall that when instruction was given to the agrarian society concerning the harvest of their fruits and vegetables, the warning was sounded that the fields should not be gleaned too clean. Ayn Rand would not have agreed with that since she worships at the shrine of maximum economic efficiency. The Hebrews were to leave a bit of the produce here and there purposefully that those who did not have food might come at evening time and gather some. *Yahweh* is related to his people as an ethical demand not as a mere inner experience. When we try to privatize or excessively spiritualize the relationship between Yahweh and the people, we ignore the fact that the Hebrews knew him as both inner presence, "The Lord is my Shepherd," and as an ethical demand.

I will read one passage which I believe can be accompanied by many, many others, speaking of this ethical quality of religious devotion. Reading from Isaiah 58:3-6: "Wherefore have ye fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of

your fast ye find pleasure, and exalt all your labors. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day to make your voice heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fact that I have chosen? to loose the hands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

There is a very decided correlation between the worship of Almighty God and the degree of oppression that prevails in the land. Very exciting to me is the fact that God instituted a year of Jubilee for the Hebrews. Each seventh year, the Sabbath year, was to be observed as the year of Jubilee. This was to remind the Hebrews in part that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." They were not to use the land as though they owned it, but to see themselves primarily as temporary tenants and stewards of the land. Every seventh year the land was to be put to rest. No sowing or harvest was allowed. And more interesting, every seventh times seven years (49 years), the year of Jubilee was to be celebrated. During this year not only was the land to rest but all exchanged property had to be returned to the original hands and all who had come into slavery during the intervening years had to be released.

Being fair, I will have to say there is no record that I have seen of the Jews ever observing the year of Jubilee. But that doesn't take away the argument that in God's mind there was to be no place for conglomerates of wealth, people adding field to field, vine to vine, gold mine to gold mine, and all the rest within the Hebrew commonwealth. At the end of the forty-ninth year, property was to revert back. This was a deliberate breakdown of any attempt to pyramid wealth. It is interesting to see what the Church has done with the year of Jubilee, especially the Roman Catholic Church. The custom of indulgences came into the church and so many of the crusades to the Holy Land were financed by money gained through indulgence sales.

What the church did was to "spiritualize" the year of Jubilee. They took these Christian years (a certain year might be the year for the assault on Jerusalem) and called them *Jubileous Christianorum* meaning Christian Jubilee. The argument being that material indebtedness was done away in the year of Jubilee for everyone not just the Jews; also that spiritual indebtedness should be done away with. Of course, that is very bad theology. God's forgiveness is not withheld until the seventh year, or seven times seventh. The point is that the Church spiritualized away the year of Jubilee and all of us have done that to a greater or lesser degree!

When a passage has great material implications, we have a way of saying, "Well, we're talking about spiritual bondage here," and on we move. It may be a better interpretation to understand that Jesus came to inaugurate an ongoing year of Jubilee. The Holy Year started with him! In the synagogue in Nazareth, he took for his own job description those massive words of Isaiah (6:1-2a): "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because he has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are found; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

So the question is whether we are right in spiritualizing away the announcement of the King. I am inclined to agree with Eugene Carson Blake when he reflected negatively on a system in which a man can make more money in a day by dabbling in the market than a husband and wife can make working full-time in a month to support their children. It was a good instinct on the part of the Roman Catholic Church years ago to ban usury—the thought that one's money could make money rather than one's expenditure of energy. The whole history of usury within and outside the church is one of the root causes of anti-semitism.

Christians were not allowed to practice usury. When the Jews felt they could, they became somewhat despised—just as you and I have a way of despising our creditors.

In the Old Testament we read: "Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" (Isa. 40:4). Those words taken metaphorically, as well as geographically, point in the direction of equalized wealth and opportunity.

Jesus, of course, was heralded by his mother, Mary, in some of the most revolutionary words anywhere in our Bible. I speak, of course, of Mary's Magnificat. Now, what we have done with the Magnificat is unconscionably bad. For the most part, we use it in the Latin. Our choirs show forth their cultural ability occasionally by rendering an anthem in which Mary's words become quite nicely embalmed and de-thorned. "He has shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away" (Luke 1:51-53).

It is not very often that we speak to a Chamber of Commerce from a passage of the sort I have just read. It might be good during the Advent season to deliberately choose to preach on Mary's Magnificat.

Jesus was not a crusader. He did not give specific advice on evils, either economic or political. How could he? If he had spoken, for instance, to the Baptists in Texas on pari-mutuel betting, then his own hearers in his time would not have understood because gambling forms then existing were different.

A very serious principle, I think, is that we understand that Jesus was not *just man,* but *a man.* My Christology is undergoing a sharp revision these days because I am coming to see more and more that I understood Jesus in Grecianized or neo-Platonic terms while not really dealing with the authenticity of his manhood. I suggest that you look at John A. T. Robinson's book, *The Human Face of God,* in dealing with this. That book is the finest thing that Robinson has written in a long and distinguished career.

We tend to concede that Jesus was man, but in saying that we so generalize what we take man to be that we forget that *he was not simply man; he was a man.* He was either right-handed or left-handed; he was either tall or short; he was either fair or dark;

some things bothered him more than other things. *He was not simply a man; he was a man.* As he went about his ministry, he had his own mission. He was to make God transparent to us as no other would or could.

Karl Barth has an interesting comment on Jesus' cleansing of the Temple. He says, "Nor does Jesus seem to have a proper understanding of trade and commerce. When we consider the story recorded in all four gospels of the expulsion of those who changed money and sold doves in the Temple, 'a den of thieves' is rather a harsh description for the honest, small-scale financial and commercial activities which had established themselves there. These detailed signals only give warning of the real threat and revolution which the Kingdom of God and the man Jesus signify and involve in relation to this sphere. But they are signals which we ought not to overlook." Highly significant is the fact that those who were closest to Jesus chronologically held all things in common when they formed their own community. Now, we are pleased to be able to rush in and say, "But it was a failure." There are a lot of economic and social reasons why it failed. The pooling together of resources was a good instinct—that they should hold all things in common. It could hardly be more tragic that the Communists have taken as their adage this part of our faith from each according to his ability to each need. Jesus did not do these things. He laid the groundwork. He said, "When he, the Spirit is come, he will guide you into all truth." I don't believe we have to be "locked in" to Jesus' own particular vocational limitation. He left some things for us to do; that is why he was silent on many subjects.

I confess readily that the New Testament letters indicate some eschatalogical confusion. They thought the end was nearer than it really was. Those people in the earliest churches in Ephesus, Philippi, Rome, etc., really did not have the opportunity to shape society. Daniel Day Williams, whose death is still very much a loss, wrote his master work about three years before his death, *The Spirit and the Forms of Love.* In that book he discussed why Christians are so hung up on the question of sexuality when we already have the answer in our faith—the idea of oneness of spirit and flesh. How is it that the Church became ascetic toward the flesh and suspicious of sex? The fact is that the early Church never had opportunity to structure its views on sex. Therefore, under the impact of Grecian and other strange ideas, the Church drifted into a dualism. I suggest that somewhat the same is true of the Church and its economic instincts. During those early years, it did not have the opportunity to shape. Most of those early Christians were literally slaves. They had no vote; they had no influence; they had very little money. . . . It really is unpardonable to draw analogies between their situation and our own. We say of oppression, "Well, we can't do anything about that! After all, they didn't do much about it in Phillipi either." The fact is that 62-65 percent of the people in this country are part of the Judaeo-Christian community. We have the franchise. We have enormous chunks of power. The question is not whether we want it or like it but at whose disposal we will place that power. We are responsible for the arrangements under which we live, how income tax scales are developed, how national budgets are drawn up, how we understand the city, and all the rest.

In conclusion, I think we will come to what the Bible is about when the poor and oppressed are laid upon our hearts. I have done a fair amount of reading in liberation theology and it is very exciting stuff. The third world people are beginning to sense that indeed they have a Saviour and a Messiah in Jesus. Whatever may seem excessive in liberation theology, the goal is the conviction that God has a special place in his heart for the oppressed, the poor, and the deprived. We can come to see this by an openness to grace, or we may be driven to see it by historical necessity. I suppose in God's sight it doesn't make too much difference how we come to see it—whether we grow, whether we voluntarily learn to divest ourselves of power and wealth and influence on behalf of others, or whether it is taken from us by the sheer necessities of history. Now, most of the crime in New York City, and I would presume in Houston also, comes from the fact that the oppressed are telling us that they can no longer comply. We need to learn this by openness to grace or we will learn it by historical necessity.

Pope Paul VI generally seems more conservative than John XXIII. At least he is more conservative in his espousal of Roman Catholic doctrine, but he is a very liberal, "forward looking" Pope in matters of social justice. In his Papal Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (The Progress of People), Pope Paul VI made a highly revolutionary statement which deserves more attention: "No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use that he does not need when others lack necessities." When I think of some wealthy, well-known people who have two, three, four, and five addresses, tying up land on many different continents, I hear Pope Paul's statement. When I think of a major corporation tying up much land in Eastern Cuba for an executive golf course while people there are huddled together in overcrowded space, I hear again Paul VI's statement: "No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need when others lack necessities."

Now I am usually very partially to the vocabulary of William F. Buckley, Jr. and the workings of his mind. However, I am not too partial to some of his ideas. Yet one night he and Kenneth Galbraith were discussing poverty. He asked Galbraith by what right a society could take from those who have (through taxation) to give to those who have not. Now Galbraith, who is usually "my man," bitterly disappointed me that night. He smiled, trying to whimsey his way past the issue and said, "Bill, Bill, come on! I wouldn't want to live in a society that didn't really care for its poor." Buckley rightly answered, "I'm not interested in what you would prefer. I am asking you by what right taxation can take from the top in order to help those at the bottom." Galbraith had no answer!

Now whether or not we develop an answer on the grounds of natural law is a good question. But we can find an answer to that question within the church. The answer comes from Jesus: "Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40, KJV).

Fourth Theme Message

Ernest T. Campbell

Having spoken in the briefest way of the theological and biblical rationale for the church's involvement in matters economic, political, and social, I would like to move on today to one area where a bundle of challenges come together; namely, the city.

I ought to warn you at the outset that I am somewhat prejudiced. I have a growing love affair with the city. I was born in the city in which I now serve. I am there not by necessity but by choice. I am drawn to the range of a city's life. I like the tempo and I like a city's promise.

Let me begin by calling attention to the common temptation to ruralize God and urbanize the Devil. Perhaps this comes about because we continue to be influenced by those Currier and Ives images of the church. It seems that every time we see one of those drawings, we see the church set in a rural, bucolic atmosphere. Perhaps it is because in childhood we liked to sing about the "little brown church in the vale" and "the church in the wildwood." One thinks of Willa Catha's novel of many years ago, *Sister Carrie,* which tells about the trials and tribulations of a young farm girl who went into the city of Chicago. Jacques Ellul has given us a very grim book on the meaning of the city—far too grim for me to approve, though I am an admirer of his. Perhaps his two terms as Mayor of Bordeaux influenced his judgment about the governability and future of the city. There are times also, I confess, when I have my moments—wondering about the city's usefulness to God and its human viability. My mind sometimes drifts to a text from Jeremiah: "For your gods have become as many as your cities, O Judah." And one can think about the cities of the United States and think about the deities they represent —San Francisco and its worship of the gods of frontier pleasures; Washington with its worship of statecraft; Las Vegas with its worship of the god of chance; Pittsburgh showing Vulcan at his forges, the god of production; Detroit, representing the great gods To and Fro; New York representing the god of mammon; and you can add your own. My feeling is that Jacques Ellul is far too grim. Harvey Cox was far too high on the city when he gave us that work (of which he has recently repented) called *The Secular City.* But to ruralize God and urbanize the Devil is in fact to indulge in a religion of nostalgia.

There are stubborn problems, of course, that one identifies with a city. Many of these problems come from the fact of density. The quality of life always suffers when the quantity soars too quickly. Let me give you a staggering statistic: 60 years ago, 43 percent of the American people lived on the land. Now less than five percent of the American people live on the land. By and large this has been an unheralded development, but surely when historians write up the life of this century, that fact will be given due notice. No matter where we live now, we are in fact in an urbanized society. Moreover, many of the problem people who come to our cities have been exported from other areas. These people have a great need for supplemental income, and one hopes that the day will come when churches and other enlightened bodies recognize that we simply cannot regionalize these problems. It is unfair to states like Florida and California to expect them to bear the financial brunt of caring for the aging; and it does seem to me to be unfair to cities like Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia that they should bear the brunt of people who for a variety of reasons have been exiled from their rural background—from the south, west, north, or wherever.

And, of course, it is this density and lack of adequate income that is responsible for a great deal of crime. Most crime in this country is committed by young men between the ages of 18 and 25. George Jackson was sent to prison in California for stealing goods worth something under $80. When these young people find themselves with their wants stimulated by television and all manner of advertising, and then search their pockets and realize that they do not have the wherewithall to be satisfied, or when they are hungry or thirsty, they cannot simply go out and pick some berries or shoot a rabbit. The only thing for them out there is people; so, they rip people off—either their persons or their property.

Nothing would justify that sort of activity, but it would indicate that density carries with it its own particular box of problems. Much is required of us who operate within cities. There is, to be sure, a ministry to the inner man. All of us have need for space. No one has spoken with greater effect on the question of man's need for space than Paul Tillich. He says in his *Systematic Theology,* "to be means to have space. Every being strives to provide and preserve space for itself. This means above all a physical location, a body, a piece of soil, a home, and a city, a country, a world. It also means a social space, a vocation, a sphere of influence, a group, a historical period, a place in remembrance and anticipation, a place within a structure of values and meaning. Not to have space is not to be." Every being possesses a space which is definitely its own, and this is where Tillich becomes poignant as he tries to analyze our relationship to space, that we all live with a sense that the space we occupy has no necessary relationship to us.

I confess in a personal way how deeply I was aroused in soul when I went back to New York from Ann Arbor some years ago to do a little Lenten preaching. Since I had some free time, I took a bus up to the old neighborhood where I was raised. Literally the street on which I grew up is gone because giant housing developments have been built over it. I couldn't help but think of those words Tillich also touches upon from one of the great Psalms: "as for man the place thereof shall know it no more." There is this ministry to man's inner needs, and I wouldn't want us in our concentration on economic necessities to forget it.

The church in the city has a great role before it if it can come to understand itself as an extended family. There are enormous pressures on the nuclear family anywhere in the United States these days, but in the city the nuclear family is under tremendous pressure. The nuclear family includes mother and father, brothers and sisters. It is an enormous pressure on a father in a city family to feel that he has to represent all maleness to his sons. The extended family of earlier times included uncles and grandfathers in the home. The

father didn't have to represent all of maleness to his sons. The uncles or grandfathers could help do that. But in a city, the nuclear family is more or less cut off from kin and the pressures come. At Riverside Church we are going to move increasingly toward a consciousness of ourselves as the extended family, which I think is a worthy vocation for a church in a metropolitan center. There are other initiatives, also, that are more congenial to this conference that also ought to be forwarded by the church.

The banner under which most of us live in the United States, with all of its pluralism, is "live and let live." My feeling is that we have centered on the second and not the first part of that adage—perhaps out of an apathy that is unjustifiable. We have decided to let others live, but we haven't sufficiently lived ourselves. By living I mean putting our own initiatives into the mix. It is frustrating, especially in the city, to realize that no one group's initiative can bring anything off. The temptation, then, is to withdraw and say, "Well, what's the use?" But, we have about as much as any other group has, don't we? The important thing is to be confident and not bluffed out of our right or capacity to offer initiatives.

We have to reckon with demographical data, but we don't have to accept the prevailing sociological interpretation of those facts. I was delighted awhile ago to come upon the 151st Psalm as found in Paul Ramsey's helpful book, *Nine Modern Moralists*. Incidentally, there is some talk now in Old Testament circles about there being an authentic 151st Psalm; so, this may be the 152nd, if that should be substantiated.

"O come, let us sing unto sociology. Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our good consciousness. Let us come before her presence with thanksgiving, and show ourselves glad in her with projects. The sociology is a great hope with a great light above all hope. In her hand there are all varieties of experimental methods and the strength of statistics is hers also. The social group is here, and with her hands prepared the charts thereof. O come and let us study and fall down, and let us do case studies before sociology, our guide. O worship sociology in the beauty of the group spirit. Let both the privileged and the underprivileged stand in awe of her, for she cometh to evaluate the earth, even with statistical measurements to judge the world, and the people with an intelligence test. Glory be to sociology, to statistics, and to the group!"

Now, I do not feel all that that Psalm feels toward sociology. I quote it because I think the church must have some sense of scale. It must not be faked out of the right to interpret or respond to the facts of life as they occur in the city. There are many ways in which we ought to be caring in a city context. I mention just a few. I hope to speak later about how we try to set up our own particular congregation to respond to the needs of the city. One thing we are very much concerned about is housing—at two different levels. We are concerned about middle-income housing which is one of the unspectacular needs of any city. The spectacular concern for the church is for the housing needs of the oppressed. Unless a city has a substantial middle-income base, it will not be able to do for anyone that which it wishes to do.

We try to divert at least some of our attention to middle-income housing and to encourage the kind of life within the city that will render New York attractive to middle-income people. The other side of it has to do with a rather exciting development in housing called Sweat Equity or Homesteading, which has broken not only in New York but in other cities as well. I think it is quite obvious from a review of our own experience and history that one reason why people don't take care of what they have is because, in many cases, they have no equity in property. The Chock Full O'Nuts people have had marvelous relationships with their employees over the years through a profit-sharing plan in the enterprise. Through this housing development people who do not have sufficient funds to hold financial equity in a house or an apartment can—by donating their sweat, by painting, by wiring, by plumbing, by cleaning, whatever—develop sufficient equity over a given period of time so that they can say, "This apartment is mine." In those houses or apartments where sweat equity has been tried, vandalism goes way down. Neighborhood kids know that if they spray paint on a house or apartment complex like that, they may be jumped on by some of the tenants who have poured out their own energies into the project.

We have a gang of young people in Spanish Harlem called the Renegades, who decided they were tired of ripping off their own people. They went to the authorities and said, "We want to do something constructive." I heard just the other night that there are two apartment houses in the Spanish area of East Harlem that will soon have been almost entirely refurbished by the sweat of the Renegades.

Another concern of mine, which may be debatable and contentious, is the conviction that Civil Service jobs within the city ought to be offered to those who live in the city. Increasingly the policemen, policewomen, and firemen who serve New York do not live in the city. I think this is a bad situation! First of all, city people need the jobs. In the second place, since these policemen and firemen are suburbanized, they bring a different kind of mind-set to the problems of city people. In a burst of Solomonic wisdom I feel the ideal way to resolve the problem would be simply to replace them when they leave with people from the city.

I could tell you for hours of incidents about people in New York who show disrespect for both policemen and firemen because of feelings that are generated when people drive in, do their work, and drive out again. They do not have a residential stake in the municipality that they serve.

Also, just let me touch on prisons quickly. In New York State we suffer from some very embarrassing statistics. Eighty-five percent of the prisoners in our state prisons are either black or brown (Negro or Chicano). I am enough of a Calvinist to believe that we have all sinned. I am enough of a Calvinist to believe that if 85 percent of the people in our prisons are black or brown, then only certain conclusions can be drawn. One of them is that those people do not sin more, but they might not have enough "bread" to get decent legal aid. Another might be that society is unduly sensitive to their crimes and misdemeanors. It may be, also, that there are some prejudices at work, not to mention economic deprivation.

In the dominant crime age of 18-25, consider that 85 out of every 100 are either black or brown. When they are incarcerated, they go upstate. There their keepers and wardens and guards have what a friend of mine called a "rod and gun club" mentality. Most of the keepers are white and you can imagine that just the racial tension alone would be enough to predict other Atticas.

When you add to that the fact that these youngsters are transplanted out of a city to places as far away as Attica (365 miles from Manhattan), you can understand why we have the makings of catastrophe. One church in New York, aware of this, decided it would try to get a bus together whereby family members could be taken to Attica for a visit. This is one of the really beautiful stories that never got published. The pastor called his United Church of Christ counterpart in Attica and said, "We would like to have a base" [you know, it's not like the Hilton up there]. There is no nice lobby where people can wait. There is just that massive wall and iron bars. Visitors are taken in; you talk through a screen, and you are out again. The church in Attica sat down and asked itself whether it could indeed be host to weekend trips like this. Because Attica was still fresh in people's minds and because the prison was the main livelihood in Attica, the people decided, "We can't do this." Some of them were still wearing black armbands, having lost husbands in the riot. My friend, Dr. Lawrence Durgin, was discouraged. But he got a call from one of the officers who said, "Don't be too hard on the church people. They have scars. But our home is open to you." So, those buses rolled and that home became the base from which family members went over to visit their loved ones in the prison. Good things happened on the bus. Exchanges of concern and love were made, and gradually these people from some of the most deprived areas in Manhattan had that instinct to do something themselves. They began bringing some cakes and casseroles. Eventually the church itself was opened.

There is a way in which a church can minister in a situation of that kind. I believe we have an opportunity wherever we live to try to help urban centers acquire the political power they need. Almost anywhere you go in this country, there are problems of tension between the city and out-of-state interests. All of Georgia is not like Atlanta, to put it mildly. All of Michigan is not like Detroit. All of Illinois is not like Chicago. All of New York State is not like New York City. Wherever we go, we have this tension; much of it good. I am not suggesting that it should be overcome entirely. One thing that our out-of-state pastors and people can do is to help various legislative bodies, usually rurally dominated, to think regionally and unselfishly about the problems that belong to us all.

Rivalry at this time can be exceedingly unhealthy, possibly even fatal.

I wonder whether America is not in danger from its own most excesses: self-initiative, drive, hustle, free enterprise, individual rights, etc.

I picked up a small book on the recommendation of a friend. It was John Robinson's book, *The Body*. I commend this book to you. It is a book in which, many years ago, Robinson berated the Western World for its inability to understand life corporately. Many things in the world of science are getting us to understand that we must feel the universe organismically—that is, life in the universe is so interrelated that there is really no room for independence. It becomes an anachronism to talk about individual rights and assertiveness. Robinson's point was that when the medieval world collapsed, those who were freed determined that they would never be under domination again. They would never have any "they" over them, whether "they" was the state, the church, or some feudal lord. But, says Robinson, they made the fatal mistake of assuming that the antonym of "they" is "I" when the true antonym is "we." On the strength of Robinson's insight, I dashed off in a weak moment these lines of blank verse: [After I read it I will stop and run!]

Here we sit wondering where it all went wrong;
Our gasoline supply at partial mercy of distant lands
We scarcely knew were there;
Our vaunted Capitol in scandal,
With candor now a synonym for truth,
Selectively revealed or not;
Our ghetto-cancered cities coping gamely
With incipient demise,
While out-of-state dominated legislatures
Coyly deal with sorely needed funds.
Our prisons disproportionately peopled—
With broken lots of blacks and browns,
Their spinning doors taking back seven of each ten let go.

How did we come to such a pass?
Oil interests unwilling to probe for fresh supplies
To bless the common good,
Unless the price is right.
Migrant workers hustled off their hard-earned turf
By union zealots out-housed as pups in the kennels of the underdog.
Firemen, policemen, sanitation people, and the like
Marching with predictable regularity on the public till.
Intent on getting theirs or else;
Pulpits up and down the land bending the steel of prophets
And the mind of Christ to fit the contours
Of a mammon-centered faith.

Back yonder when the shackles of the medieval world were snapped,
All "theys" were on the wanted list.
Never again would autocratic church or state,
Much less the fuedal lords,
Impress an iron heel upon the upright neck of man.
I was now king
The "I's" have it.
Passing from "they" to "I."
The word left unpronounced was WE!

Fifth Theme Message

Ernest T. Campbell

Just when it appeared that this republic would die of consumption, God sent us an energy crisis. That's one way of looking at it, isn't it? Preachers aren't the only ones who are looking at it that way either.

Journalists and television commentators have been rushing past each other to speak of the uses of adversity, of what I prefer to call "in praise of leanness." As we seek to relate our people to what is going on in the world economically, one of the ministries we pastors have is the ministry of interpretation. Amidst all of the vexation of "Why can't I get gas?" and "How come my lights go out, but the lights in some of the large buildings downtown stay on?" it seems to me that God speaks a word of loftier interpretation.

The "lean life" is certainly not the "good life" for most Americans. We are driven by round-the-clock advertisements. The needs of the system keep egging us on to the cluttered and encumbered life. There is no use squeezing an orange when you can push a button and have it done for you; no use brushing your teeth by hand when you can employ a motorized brush; no use riding public transportation when you can come and go as you please in your own car; no use putting up with the inconveniences of heat and cold when you can avail yourself of year-round air conditioning; no use developing the disciplines of the inner life when you can skim the surface of many places through the luxury of travel; and no use being limited to three or four suits when you can buy large closets and fill them with clothing to match your every mood and fancy.

Clearly the "good life" is not the "lean life" in America. I think it should be obvious by now that I am not speaking of "leanness of body," although as an aside, one could inject the idea that obesity is a symbol of the meaning. It is not the theme itself. I was somewhat amazed the other day to discover that excessive weight is clearly a physical liability in some occupations along with being a drag on life physically. A chap by the name of Robert Hall (not the man of clothing, piperack fame), who makes a living finding jobs for executives, claims that out of a survey of 15,000 executives, some fat people pay a penalty of $1,000 per pound in annual salary. In the higher brackets of such management, only nine percent were ten pounds or more overweight. In the lower brackets, forty percent or more were at least ten pounds overweight. So *there is* a penalty for it!

I had the pleasure of visiting Australia this past summer. In a rather sedate church there, modeled after the British style of decorum, I was amazed when a man got up to announce from the pulpit that they were trying to raise money for a good cause in Melbourne by having people lose weight! The "sponsors" would pay the overweight so much a pound for needed weight loss. Now, this is a new wrinkle in stewardship which I have never come across before. The names were drawn up of those who wanted to lose weight. The supporters would come and say, "There's old Sally Smith. I would like to see her lose about 20 pounds. I'll pay $2.00 for every pound Sally loses." And, of course, there was a Weight Master. I'm sure his life was insured because it would all be over if he ever told. I told the good people at Riverside this and went on to say that I really did not want them getting too thin—we have a hard enough time having a semblance of a full church as it is.

But seriously, I use the term "leanness" to speak of a new life-style that is slowly being forced upon us by the energy crisis. The word "crisis" may be misleading because it does suggest a temporariness. There is a kind of rubber-band version of what is going wrong now. The rubber-band is being unduly extended because of the nasty Arabs or the oil barons in our own country. However, with a little patience, a little diplomacy, the rubber band will snap back into place and presently the 55 mile per hour limit on the road will be lifted; the lights will go on again over New York City, and life will be packed up just as we knew it before. In my judgment, this is wrong. The truth is that our affluence has been supported by international and domestic arrangements that will never be the same again.

St. Paul on one occasion told us that he knew how to be abased. He said, "Not that I complain of want, for I have learned in whatever state I am to be content." "I know how to be abased and I know how to abound." My judgment is that Paul was thinking of the way fortune swings, sometimes a little high, sometimes a little low. Some days you eat the bear; some days the bear eats you. But I am speaking about our own ability to know how to be abased, to come down from where we have been for the foreseeable future, not just for a day, a week, or a season. I speak therefore "in praise of leanness" for it performs certain valuable services for us, not because I am an optimist by nature. Leanness can help us come to terms indirectly with the death of colonialism. Where your money buys more than it does at home, you are in a colonial situation. I enjoy taking the odd freighter ride now and then. Every once in a while freighters that I have been on go into places where the American dollar gets bigger and bigger. This is a colonial situation.

As a nation, we've been in a colonial situation for a long time, *vis-a-vis*, most of the nations of the world. But colonialism is dead. It is dead in India. It is dead in Africa. It is now dying in South America, and in the Near East. This is really the over-riding factor of our time. To state it positively, the insurgence of the third-world people is the most remarkable development of the last two decades. We Americans had a rather direct role in unseating the Allende' regime in South America by withheld credits, capital, and other forms of interference. Then just months later, we had the temerity to wonder why the Arabs should use *their* weapon of oil to teach us something about the facts of life.

The oil crisis, I believe, must be seen in this light. After all, as six percent of the world's population, we have been consuming an alarming 40 percent of the nonrenewable materials of the world. It doesn't go down too well!

The second day after Christmas last year, the Shah of Iran put it to us straight. He has not been too popular with this administration, and he wasn't that day. He isn't now. He said, and I think he spoke the truth, "The industrial world will have to realize that the era of their terrific progress and even more terrific income and wealth, based on cheap oil, is finished. They will have to find new sources of energy, and tighten their belts. If you want to live as well now, you'll have to work for it."

Now we are not sufficient in ourselves, and we never will be. We would hope to be delivered soon from

any adolescent prattle about looking forward to being independently supplied of oil in five, ten, or twenty years hence. Along with that, one would hope that we would lay aside the juvenile talk about a nation being number one. Such ratings befit the finals of a collegiate championship basketball game, not a family of nations. People in families don't talk about who is number one or number two; they simply try to do their best living with each other.

The facts of life are rather stark. At present, there is a shortage in this country of aluminum, copper, zinc, and oil. There are also rumored shortages in bauxite, lead, magnesium, and iron ore. Other nations of the world no longer feel obliged to support us in the style to which we have grown accustomed. General Motors has a larger gross profit than any country in Africa, and yet General Motors is only 16th among the corporate entities of the United States. Once backward nations are coming forward and demanding a better share. Colonialism is dead. Who would dare to say that its death is not an act of God.

Another thing, leanness can help us to temper our commitment to the profit motive. We mentioned earlier today that one way of understanding our problem is to recognize a besetting incapacity to say "we." In moving from the days of the middle ages, we have been pronouncing a very hard consistent "I," not stopping to learn to say "we." Some of our rugged individualism has been far too rugged. The casualties and fallout of the system are becoming appalling.

How can we go on with a blind allegiance to an ever-rising gross national product, or even a gross personal product? In our own country, we see people making astronomical and unconscionably high profits, while perpetual poverty is the destiny of others. Much of this profit has been achieved by reckless endangerment of our natural resources that can best be described as ecological rape.

I think the church must open up again the easy alliance that it has entered into with the general economic orientation of this country. Certainly on the strength of the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Mary's Magnificat, the tenor of the Beatitudes, the example of the life of Jesus, and the indifference to property of the earliest Christians, the church has no business giving its uncritical blessing to the manic pursuit of wealth.

I believe that leanness can re-connect us with that austerity of life that really belongs to Christian experience. Now we have a clever way of trying to get monkeys off our back by relativizing them. A chap a while ago said the phase the church had been in for the last 15 years was social activism, and asked what the next phase would be. But social action is not a phase, it is an on-going part of the Christian experience. When it comes to the dimension of austerity, we write it off and say, "Well, that is a puritanical strain." There aren't too many people except perhaps at Harvard and Yale who are saying anything good about the Puritans these days. The idea being that we have recovered from that early misgiving, that we are now liberated, and we now understand better than they. But I would like to say that in a world of such overwhelming need, austerity will always be a vital Christian life-style. We should expect to be rewarded only for our toll. We should waste not that we may want not. Those who know such things intimately talk about the distinction between labor intensive industry and energy intensive industry. In energy intensive industry when you want power, you simply pull a switch or push a button. In labor intensive industry, you roll up your sleeves and through your own body power, you achieve it.

This is part of what the Shah of Iran was saying to us. If we want to enjoy the rewards of our toil, we will have to rely less on energy intensive industry and more on labor intensive industry, giving our attention more to what life means rather than what life can provide. Most of the problems troubling us these days are problems of too much—too many cars, so we have highway and parking lot congestion; too many planes, so we have airport congestion; too much food, so we struggle constantly with over-weight; too much money, so we have inflation; too many clothes, so there is wrangling in your family and mine about who is to get a proper share of the closet space. Is it not so?

I want to share with you as we come to a close, something that I discovered by way of serendipity. Like you, there are certain hours of the day when I try to read the heavy stuff, and certain hours of the day when the book I pick up has to be of a somewhat lighter vein. My wife took a summer course one time in a college in the Poconos, and her textbook called *A Guide to Clearer Writing Style* was lying around. I figured maybe she left it out for me to pick up. As I began to leaf through it, toward the back I saw some random selections. The name E. M. Foster, the famous British novelist, and the title "My Wood" attracted me. Now we Americans don't speak about a wood, unless one is golfing and says, "Hand me my wood." But Foster was talking about a little plot of ground that he bought. Listen to how Foster delightfully introduces the subject:

"Just a few years ago, I wrote a book which dealt in part with the difficulty of the English in India. Feeling that they would have had no difficulty in India themselves, the Americans read the book freely. The more they read it, the better it made them feel, and a check to the author was the result. I bought a wood with the check. It is not a large wood. It contains scarcely any trees, and it is intersected, blast it! by a public footpath. Still, it is the first property that I have owned, so it is right that other people should participate in my shame and should ask themselves in accents that will vary in horror, this very important question: What is the effect of property upon the character?

"Don't let's touch economics, the effect of private ownership upon the community as a whole is another question, a more important question, perhaps. Let's keep to psychology. If you own things, what is their effect on you? What is the effect on me of my wood?"

Then he names four effects. I want to list them in reverse order and then amplify the first one. He says:

"My wood made me intensely selfish. I had the urge to put a fence around it and keep it to myself. Secondly, my wood made me pseudo-creative. I would say one day, we must put a tree here, and another day, we must take this tree out. There wasn't really any design or artistry. It was pseudo-creativity.

"Third, my wood made me feel that it ought to be larger. I spotted a bird one day on a limb, and as I

drew near it, it flew over to Mrs. Hennessey's property, and the thought occurred to me that if I owned her property, the bird would still be mine to approach.

"But in the first place, my wood made me feel heavy. Property does have this effect. Property produces men of weight, and it was a man of weight who failed to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. He is not wicked, that unfortunate millionaire in the parable. He was only stout. He stuck out in front, not to mention behind, and as he wedged himself this way and that in the crystalline entrance, and bruised his well-fed flanks, he saw beneath him the comparatively slim camel passing through the eye of a needle, and being woven into the robe of God.

"The Gospels all through couple stoutness and slowness. They point out what is perfectly obvious, yet seldom realized, that if you have a lot of things, you cannot move about a lot. That furniture requires dusting, dusters require servants, servants require insurance stamps, and the whole tangle of it makes you think twice before you accept an invitation to dinner or go for a bathe in the Jordan.

"Sometimes, the Gospels proceed further and say with Tolstoy that property is sinful. They approach the biblical ground of ascetism here where I cannot follow them. But as to the immediate effect of property on people, they just show straight-forward logic. It produces men of weight. Men of weight cannot by definition move like the lightening from the east to the west, and the ascent of a 14-stone Bishop into a pulpit is thus the exact antithesis of the coming of the Son of man."

"My wood makes me feel heavy."

"I know how to be abased." Leanness can be a Godsend. The energy crisis rightly interpreted can work for the well-being of our people. It can make us, God willing, more creative citizens of the world, more humane at home, and more decidedly Christian in our personal aims and values. I pray God it may be so!

Sixth Theme Message

Ernest T. Campbell

Last year the National Radio Pulpit celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The man who started it was Parkes Cadman, and one of the things that made Dr. Cadman's ministry so exciting, I am told, is the fact that he had a question-and-answer period very frequently in which he would handle queries that had been raised by correspondents. On one occasion a letter came to him from Iowa with the question, "Dr. Cadman, is it possible to live the Christian life in New York City on $19 a week?" To this Dr. Cadman replied, "On $19 a week, the Christian life is the only life you can live in New York City." This is a way of saying that the high prices in New York help to keep sin down, which ought to make our city more inviting for you who might be looking for a good place to come on vacation.

I've enjoyed these days. I wish they had not been so tightly packed for you or for me, but this is the way it goes these days. We hit and run, we meet and part, and hope to meet again. I would be honored indeed to see some of you. I don't want you all to come at the same time. I don't have enough tuna fish in the pantry for that, but I would love to have you stop by when you are in the city. Give us a ring, and if we can't get together we'll tell you so honestly, and if we can, we will tell you how to get up there, and guarantee that you won't get mugged, seriously—maybe lightly roughed over a little bit. There's a question of what that word "seriously" modifies, isn't there?

I want to talk about doing it on location. I believe that the local church is still the critical component of the Christian enterprise. And our aim at the Riverside Church (and when I say "our," I am speaking of the staff and boards, and hopefully a majority of the people) is to combine the vertical and the horizontal, the personal and the social. We believe that this combination represents something of the fullness of the Gospel, and that we are duty-bound to so represent our faith.

I want to talk rather personally about how I see my own role in this situation, especially as regarding outreach, or perhaps a better word would be inreach. It is possible for churches to be outreaching without really inreaching the community in which they are set. There is, of course, the predominant responsibility in my situation for preaching. With regard to penetration of the so-called secular world, I understand my preaching to attempt to biblically ground and theologically find what we are doing in the city, in the nation, and in the world. It does seem to me that the social action that is not biblically grounded or theologically funded peters out rather soon, and can easily fall victim to one of a variety of ideologies that might seek to capture it.

The pulpit is free. Your pulpit is free. I do not feel that any church boards ever confer freedom of the pulpit on us. I think we were given freedom to preach at the point where we were called by Jesus Christ. But I will say that the Riverside Church has been very consistent in guaranteeing the freedom of the pulpit. Harry Emerson Fosdick was a pacifist during World War II, which was hardly a popular position to espouse, and the church stood behind him in his right to that position, even though there was not too many in the church who joined him in that position.

We came out for reparations many years ago. There aren't too many of us in the country who have tried to approach the question of corporate reparations towards minority people. These sorts of sermons do cause a certain fluttering of the dovecot, but nothing too serious, and we go on loving each other and continuing to be the church. Back in November on that grim Sunday where we were all just waking up from the shock of three people having resigned who were involved in one way or another in trying to provide investigative help on Watergate, I felt a very strong urging in my own boat to announce just as a private judgment that it was for the good of the country we should work for impeachment. That happened to be the morning when we were receiving our pledges for the coming year. I did not, I think, endanger that. In fact, there were many who felt that it was a good

thing to maintain our freedom even in the face of fiscal need. I might say that that was one of the most dramatic Sundays we ever had. We offered private prayers and corporate prayers for the nation, not in any partisan way, and there were people actually weeping all over the congregation. I found it necessary to change the last hymn from a stewardship theme to "America the Beautiful" and there were hundreds of people that couldn't even bring themselves to sing it. Let us not underrate the tremendous feelings that people have about the future of their country and their desire to see it right.

Now, I think it is possible, if not necessary, for a minister also to maintain some of his own individual rights as a person. After all, the church does not own his whole life for every hour of the day. And so, on my own I have become rather vigorously involved in the work of Caesar Chavez and the farm worker cause. I participate regularly in a group called the New York Interreligious Clergy Coalition. I was able to work on my own time with considerable zeal but with little success for the election of George McGovern. I think ministers have this right. If there are pastors here who feel constricted about their own personal rights to such involvement, whether it be left, right, or center, I would ask you to take another look at what your reasoning might be.

I want to get to the heart of what I wish to share by saying that a minister is also an administrator. He is automatically an administrator; the only question is whether he is a good one, zealously doing it, or whether he is simply administering by default. People ask these days, "Where are the great pulpit princes that we used to know?" It used to be that you could think of St. Louis and a given preacher, or Chicago or New York or whatever. It seems to me that there is still great preaching in the country but what is happening today is that ministers who are really serious about their preaching are trying to bring their congregations with them. They are trying to deliver their congregations. It isn't enough to have a mere homiletical excursion, and find it exciting. To have people say, "That was tremendous!" and see them back home to the same old lock-ins. So, many of us (I almost said "of the younger generation," but I forget that I am no longer a child evangelist) are really trying to deliver our congregations. I hear ministers up and down the country say in one way or another that they feel like dynamos discharging into non-conductors. That is, they are laying down some very heavy track. They are saying some very weighty things, but the people drift out to the parking lot, the husband looks at his watch to see what time the game comes on, and that is it.

I believe that is an impossible situation for one to endure for very long. William Temple was right when he said that the minister moves the congregation and the congregation moves upon the world. Too many of us in the ministry have not sought to share the vision or the work. Thus we feel over-burdened, and our congregations feel out of it. This then is to say that there is the promise of more effective preaching if ministers will look more to administration to set up ways by which a congregation can become a conduit for the convictions that he is trying to share, so that those convictions when they are expressed do not dead-end with the benediction that morning. And this makes for a very lively situation. It cuts the congregation in on the action. Why should we have all the fun? And it is exciting to be out there on the cutting edge.

Now, having said this, let me go on to say that over the last eight or nine years, I have learned just a few things about this. I am a convert to it. I used to play homiletical solo all the time, and enjoyed it, and so I have something of the zeal of the convert in sharing these reactions that I have learned in recent years.

Very critical to my understanding of how a church should be structured is the principle that we should program up and not down. Most of the churches play it safe. They are always programming down to a low, innocuous level where nobody really, left, right, or center, can have any trouble relating. They rally around such things (to be a bit facetious), as the virtue of motherhood, or the beauty of flowers—all safe, manageable topics. And the result is that whatever else our churches may or may not be, let us be honest to say that most of them tend to be very dull. People come within the orbit of the church. They can't fault the minister, he's all right. The congregation is friendly and all that. But in a world in which so many demands are made upon us, the question is: Why should a person of considerable vision and talent identify himself perpetually with such dullness? And so, I am a somewhat belated convert to the principle of programming up, not down.

Now I mentioned a day or so ago that James Foreman did not give us our most hectic moments at Riverside, but over the last six years the thing that really disturbed the congregation more than anything else was the read-in of the names of the Viet Nam war dead. Two young men came to see us, both of whom had a relationship to the Riverside Church, one a psychiatrist at St. Luke's Hospital, the other an assistant manager of the New York Philharmonic. They came and said it was their judgment that the people of the United States were not actually registering enough concern about the death count in Viet Nam—North, South, American, or native. They felt we ought to have a raised consciousness about the awful toll that war was taking. So they proposed that there be a read-in of the war dead. Names would be taken from the *Congressional Record* state by state. It was a very grim proceeding: "John R. Thomas, Newark, New Jersey, dead in Viet Nam; Harry L. Walters, Atlantic City, New Jersey, dead in Viet Nam." No comment—just the names, state by state, alphabetically. These names were read by people who volunteered for 30-minute cycles from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. the next day, and this went on for months. Practically, we might have made a mistake by giving this group a very small chapel near what we would call the Times Square part of the Riverside Church. It was that place that people are always passing as they make their way to go to a gymnasium, or a banquet hall, or the bowling alley, or an arts and crafts program, or a Bible study or whatever, and they would hear these intonations, steadily coming without letup.

Finally a group within the church asked to meet with me on a Sunday afternoon. We met in one of the high rooms in the tower of the church. We had

some exchanging of pleasantries. There might have been 100 people there. When it came time to get down to business, a woman got up and said, "My question to you is, what can we do to stop the read-in of the Viet Nam war dead?" I said, "I think there is another question that is prior. Do we wish to stop the read-in of the Viet Nam war dead?" And then I went on to say that these young people who had come with this initiative were doing so on the strength of documents the church had given them, especially Matthew 5, 6, and 7. I went on to suggest that it puts a minister into a very difficult situation when he has to try to reduce the action that people have entered upon as a result of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Then I went on with my major point. "Why should I penalize a group that has had initiative to satisfy a group that has shown no initiative? What would you like to see the church say or do or be *vis-a-vis* Viet Nam?" And they bought this principle on the sheer logic of it. I said, "After all, these people have had a certain passion, a certain concern. Where has yours been?"

They caucused over the next ten days and came back with something very modest. I told them that if they wanted to bring in an American Legion Post Commander who thought that we really ought to bomb Hanoi, we would feature this person as speaker, and we would, or whatever else they felt would be a worthy initiative. They came back and said they would like to have a gift pack program for the young men in Viet Nam, a program whereby their rather modest rations could be supplemented. So we had cards distributed in the church and for $10, a member could sign up and provide one gift pack for a young fighter in Viet Nam. Incidentally, I got a little mail on that from some people who said that it was unpatriotic to suggest that the United States didn't take adequate care of its service men. So you're in a kind of "can't win" situation.

But this is the principle that we believe in, and I think it is far more exciting to program up than to program down. We had Caesar Chavez in our pulpit about two and a half years ago, and I think I mentioned that the next morning I got a call from the Arizona Farm Bureau, wondering whether what they felt about Chavez and the migrant issue could be brought to Riverside, and we said, "of course." In two weeks, they had a representative flown in from Texas to present the position of the Arizona Farm Bureau. Unfortunately for him, there were some authentic migrant workers present in the crowd who challenged constantly what they took to be the extravagance of some of his statements. But nonetheless, he had his opportunity untrammeled to speak his point.

A few weeks ago, we preached on homosexuality and a group has now been formed, almost spontaneously, whose aim is to try to relate to that sermon and, more importantly, to the whole subject of how one's sexuality, whether it be homo- or hetero-, relates to the Christian faith. I realize that homosexuality is a loaded question, but where do we send people with their loaded questions? By what kind of Christian logic do we tell them to go somewhere else with these concerns? And it goes without saying that there are multiplied thousands of people all around us who are being hurt by bad social attitudes against them because of their homosexuality. What is the mind of Christ on this? And so this group is going. I have very little to do with it. They just carry on Sunday after Sunday. We have a New Priorities group in our church which has gone national. One of the things they are about right now is the review of Riverside's portfolio with a thought towards noticing the social consciousness of the various corporations whose certificates we hold.

There are some limits to what a church can do. But basically the Riverside attitude is that if there is any passion that you feel that works for the humanization of life, we will try to give it housing. We are fortunate that we have a lot of space. We may give you budget, and we may actually make you part of our official program, but at least if it is a humanizing interest that you have, a passionate thing with you, bring it to us. One day a woman came to see me from one of the churches "on the Avenue," as we call it. She said her pastor wasn't interested in what was bothering her but she had heard that Riverside might be.

Her concern was humane slaughter and anti-vivisection laws. I confess that I have a very weak stomach on this subject, and when I see those ads of animals being cruelly mangled, etc., I confess I just move on. I just can't take the emotional overload that all of that would involve. But it bothered this woman. I started out by thinking that it was the kind of thing a wealthy woman would be dabbling in to justify perhaps her extravagances in other ways, but the more she talked, the more I thought how worthy this vision was. Humane slaughter gets you involved with the Jewish community. Jews are unwilling to see an animal numbed before slaughter because of Jewish law. It is not just a simple little matter like going up to Albany or some other place and asking for some new laws. One discovers a whole series of pressures and counter-pressures. Now in this instance all she wanted was to know whether we had anyone in Riverside that would like to join her small group in this concern. For her sake we ran a small article in the Rivergate house organ called "The Carillon," and she picked up I think seven or eight people who responded to an address that she had given.

All of this is by way of illustrating that we believe in programming up and not down. The second thing (and I will be briefer on the last two) is that we have learned to try to take the initiative where possible. When we are talking about controversial or semi-controversial subjects, we are always aware that the church tends to play it back on its heels. That is, we will look if somebody really comes and bangs us hard, which in part is what Foreman did for the churches of the United States. But there is a lot to be gained if the church will recover the initiative, and actually seek out the pained and the oppressed and bring them in. Not only does the church gain psychological advantage in this, but it also bears a stronger witness to its courage and its care.

A while ago there was a group of Hispanic Americans called the Young Lords operating in East Harlem. What came through in the press was that these young people were basically marauders trying to rip off the community, that they were mad at society, mad at the United States, etc. Well, through one of our Spanish-

speaking staff members, we invited the Young Lords to come in right at the very heat of their opposition. I might say that we do a lot of this right after church on Sunday because our people do come from distant places, and we try to make that one trip worthwhile for them. We had an announcement that the Young Lords would make a presentation at 12:15 that day, and some people trembled because they had visions of these people being thugs. I have to say that I went myself with some misgivings, wondering whether it would be just a spasm of anger thrown at a church. But they made a marvelous presentation. We had a vice-president of Price Waterhouse there who was a member of our Board of Trustees who came, I think, out of some shock and prepared to criticize. He was won over by the sincerity and the genuineness of their complaint. I could tell you more about their presentation, but time does not permit.

We had somebody in the other day giving a five-minute message for mission on the Haitian refugee problem. There are some 500 Haitian refugees at the moment in this country, most of them in Florida or New York City who have tried to get away from the right wing dictatorship that prevails in Haiti, and the United States is now seeking officially to round them up and have them deported. They are asking for asylum here. We have their group come and tell about it, rather than wait for them to throw up picket lines in front of the church, asking us to care. Initiative is important.

And wherever you live, whether it is a city or a smaller town, there are people with grievances against society, smoldering grievances against the church. I am simply suggesting that you find out where they are. Don't be satisfied if they haven't raised cain as yet. Surely we have other motivations than the motivation of fear. Be also sure that there is a grapevine among the oppressed. News travels very fast. These people know where they are befriended, and where they are resisted better than you think.

My last word has to do with learning as a church to accept differences as a sign of life, to welcome differences and not shun them. This was very hard for me as a Presbyterian because there is in the Presbyterian mystique a very strong commitment to the peace, unity, and purity of the church. When an elder is ordained for service in the church, he pledges himself to work for the peace, unity, and purity of the church. Those were always very noble terms in my mind. Then it occurred to me that very frequently our peace is purchased at the price of our purity. Thus these three goals are sometimes in tension with each other. I thought back to some of the tranquility that I had known here and there in the church, and actually in retrospect saw that much of that peace had been purchased by compromise and failure on vital issues. Or to put it differently, we are frequently crying "Peace" where there is no peace.

At Riverside over the last six or seven years, I think there has been a new understanding right across the board—minister, staff, and people—that in a pluralistic society nobody is going to have his or her way all the way. Why don't we just relax a little bit and learn how to welcome differences as a gift of God to the church for troubled times. Now what we try to do when we understand there is bad feeling or misgivings or tension is first to identify the issue. In the case of Mr. Foreman, the case was not hard to identify. Riverside, which has prided itself on its inter-raciality, discovered many pockets of latent racism present with Foreman's visit. This was the identifying issue. There were some who said the man should have been canonized for courage. Others wanted him jailed. Anyway, the issue was joined. The position we took was basically one of moderation between those two extremes.

The second thing we did was to set up discussion possibilities for people to air what bothered them. I had nothing to do wtih this, but there were groups of seven and eight that met for five or six times in the summer of 1969. They met one time all together, and when I looked in at the church and saw the groupings and couplings going on around those tables, I could not believe my eyes. Some people there were avowedly disposed to despise Mr. Foreman; others there, perhaps black people, saw him as something of a champion, and there they were, a little group of six or eight, planning when to meet again. They met Tuesdays and Fridays all across the summer, and the result was that people began to know where each other was coming from, and eventually there was reconciliation. It doesn't mean that everybody was converted to a single point of view. It does mean that we learned to understand that there were different perceptions of the mind of Christ on that issue.

These are exciting times to be a part of a local church unless the local church is so homogenized that there is no room for difference. If we want it homogenized, we'll have it that way, and it will be dull. But if we want it pluralized, it can be that way, and it can be exciting. We have some 800 black members in the Riverside Church, another 150 Hispanic members, another 100 Asians of different kinds, and we have a lot of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants as well. It is a very exciting mix, and we are trying to continue to find our unity in not our color or culture, but in our Christ. It is exceedingly important that these two dimensions be kept together—the vertical by which we are related to God, and the horizontal by which we are related to the world around us.

I close with a story of a young lady in our church who has always been a thorn in the flesh for the establishment. She is the kind of person who would get up at an annual meeting and ask the most embarrassing questions. There are some people who make a life out of this, going to corporate meetings around the country, asking embarrassing questions. I have seen our trustees anticipate this person by meeting quietly an hour before saying, "What if . . . what if she asks this? What if she asks that?" She's that kind of person. In the Presbyterian system, I used to moderate the congregational meetings, but this is beautiful—you Baptists have it made. I just sit back there as one of the crowd and the laymen take over. It is what you call distributing the objects of wrath more evenly. Our chairman was a very dear person on the faculty of the Columbia School of Business. It was not his bag, though, to deal with this kind of on-the-spot heat.

As the meeting wore on, I could see this young lady twitching a little bit. I knew she was ready to make her move. Thank God again I wasn't a Presbyterian

any longer, because I was just sitting there watching the action. Finally the man couldn't resist recognizing her any longer, and he called her by name and tried to smile as graciously as he could and said, "Now what do you have on your mind?" The place went stone quiet. We didn't know what she was going to raise this time. She had one question: "What ever happened to the trumpets on Easter Sunday morning?" Somehow, we weren't able to pay for trumpets that year, and she was concerned about the vertical. She wanted God to be big, and she missed the majesty that was accentuated by the trumpets.

People ask me about the future of the church in the city. I usually answer in this way: There will always be a mess of people in that part of the world, and God will always love those people. It only remains to be discovered whether He will be able to love them through us.

Confronting the Economic Crisis

William M. Dyal, Jr.

At the top of everyone's list of worries and issues in 1964 was war. Only ten years later in 1974, the key issue is the cost of living and the whole panoply of economic crises.

The economists have learned that sudden and unforeseeable developments such as the disappearance of anchovies off the west coast of South America, the terms and timing of the massive Soviet wheat deal, the outbreak of war in the Middle East, and the sudden plunging home of the Arab oil weapon can spoil the nicest piece of economic analysis.

Why did the economists and policy makers not see the writing on the wall? Economists have tended to underestimate the impact of increased affluence on the demand for goods. As a profession, they have arrogantly tended to think of their discipline as being the over-arching discipline under which others are subsumed. Thus, they have tended to ignore what ecologists were saying and have forgotten that economic growth is dependent on the availability of fresh water, living space, and fuels. The economists have tended to think in terms of substitution when the scarcity of one good occurs. They predict that others will replace the scarce one, but scarcity is infectious. Finally, they have not worried about scarcities because of their fundamental belief that rising prices will lead to increased production. Not much thought is given to who gets hurt in the price rises. Ultimately, the chief problem is that economists and planners do not see man as the focal point of concern.

W. H. Auden captured the current scene unusually well. He wrote of the anxiety caused when the techniques a society has invented for coping with life, hitherto successful, no longer work. "The Roman Empire had evolved legal, military, and economic techniques for maintaining internal law and order, defending itself against external enemies, and managing the production and exchange of goods; in the Third Century these proved inadequate to prevent civil war, invasion by barbarians and depreciation of the currency. In the Twentieth Century, it is not the failure but the fantastic success of our techniques of production that is creating a society in which it is becoming increasingly difficult to live a human life. In our reactions to this, one can see many parallels to the Third Century. Instead of Gnostics we have existentialists and God-is-dead theologians; instead of Neoplatonists, humanist professors; instead of desert eremites, heroin addicts and Beats; instead of the cult of virginity, do-it-yourself sex manuals and sadomasochistic pornography. Now as then, a proper balance between detachment and commitment seems impossible to find or to hold. Both lead to evil. The introvert hides his head and cries for help. The extrovert, intent upon improving the world, pinches his neighbor (for his own good, of course) until he cries for help. We are not, any of us, very nice."*

The economic bill of complaints is a long one. Are you ready? The richest one fifth of the U.S. population owns 77 percent of personally-held wealth. That same one fifth also owns 97 percent of personally-owned corporate stock. The richest 1.6 percent of families in the United States own 82 percent of personally-held corporate stock, 90 percent of all corporate bonds and virtually all of the tax-free state and municipal bonds owned by individuals. In spite of the fact that in the last 30 years the nation's output has doubled, there has been no significant change in the distribution of income.

From 1959 to 1969, the number of people designated as poor, that is, unable to afford the government's definition of minimal necessities, declined from 39.5 million to 24.1 million; but, then as unemployment rose, so did the number of poor people to 25.6 million in 1971. Among the poor, more than 5 million people in the United States do not have enough income even to purchase the governments' lean definition of a minimum food diet.

Talk of a taxpayers' revolt is more serious than ever. The allegations and investigations surrounding the President's tax situation add fuel to the fire. In fact, the picture is a sorry one. Philip Stern's *The Rape of the Taxpayer* points out the anomaly and inequity of families who receive millions of dollars of corporate dividends and pay no tax while millions of wage earners get no tax break, the special dispensations to a favored few whose principal claim for tax relief is their access to a lobbyist or a member of Congress; the waste of energy and talent and the urge to dishonesty to "beat the game," and the helplessness of an uninformed public to understand the chipping away of the tax system that goes on behind an impenetrable screen of technicalities.

The welfare state in the United States may add some meager blessings to the poor, but the real bounty of welfare goes to the rich.

It is no wonder, then, that the whole system is seen to be an enemy of the poor. At the Bull Elephant Club in Washington a few days ago, Ronald Reagan, referring to the food distribution activities in connection with the Hearst kidnapping, said, incredibly, "sometimes you wonder whether there shouldn't be an outbreak of botulism."

How affluence can blur and distort the issues! Affluence is increasingly counter-productive. The rele-

vance of Marx's prophecy is seen in that private decision-making is no longer capable of regulating technology as social consequences become more and more destructive. We already see the lead indicators of revolutionary change: a decreased sense of community, an increased sense of alienation and purposelessness, an increased occurrence of violent crime, an increased frequency and severity of social disruptions, an increased use of police to control behavior, and an increased loss of trust in leaders.

Everything has happened too long as if St. Peter when receiving souls in Heaven to send some to Paradise and others to Hell asks only one question: "What have you done on earth today to increase the gross national product?" But today's facts are that economics is a burnt-out case. The discipline has not yielded a fresh theoretical idea of consequence in nearly 40 years. The policy makers seem to be adrift. Large unions, large government agencies, and large corporations mutually support one another. Their "conflicts" are usually carefully staged public ballet. So the once touted countervailing power now has little meaning.

Readers of most newspapers are under the misapprehension that the West has been suffering from international monetary crises. The readers have been understandably puzzled because they notice that jobs, incomes and even international trade—the sole end of an international monetary system—have all been expanding during these "crises." The fact is that the real crisis has been for the finance ministers and central bank bureaucrats. They have been unable to hold the prices of currencies, one with another, and have been forced to yield to the market, letting supply and demand order these things. In other words, they are about out of a job. They have lost control. That is the "crisis."

Everything once nailed down is coming loose. All natural resources will be in increasingly short supply in relation to escalating demand. The deficiency will be evidenced therefore also in intermediate and finished products. The era in which the buyer was King is over and we are moving overnight into an era in which the seller is King. There will be a major shift of emphasis from problems of growth to problems of distribution. There will also be a shift in global political power from those nations which control capital and technology to those that control raw materials. The impact will be worldwide. It is essential then that we develop the means for a growing interdependence between the industrialized nations and with the developing world.

There must be new multilateral approaches which will assure rational and equitable allocation of resources and finished products. Neither the survival nor the prosperity of any of us need be gained at the sacrifice of the other. Actually, economic interdependence could provide a far happier insurance policy against war than does the present nuclear stalemate. Let your imagination fly with the possibilities of the interdependence between the U.S. with its agriculture plant, the Soviets with their hydrocarbon resources, and the Chinese with their huge market potential.

For the Third World, the keynote should not be competition but cooperation in assistance. The prospects of peace cannot be advanced by seeking to co-opt these nations into competing camps, not in exploiting their resource wealth in ways that favor only the industrialized nations. Aid and trade policies must be revamped to make them instruments of, rather than barriers to, the economic development of underdeveloped countries. Interdependency will be a happy replacement of the dependency patterns of the past decades.

The fact is that the time is here when developing countries, acting in concert, may be able to veto the wasteful use of minerals, food and other resources. The "politics of oil" is only the visible tip of an iceberg.

In potential reaction to such politics and to more adequately control the world market, there is emerging a coalition of dominant governments, international corporations, bureaucracies, and communications and knowledge industries and institutions. The size, power, and wealth of such a coalition leads credibility to the Orwellian *1984* prophecy of "Big Brother."

The most significant actor in the coalition is the multi-national corporation. By size (exceeding many nations), competitive strength, breadth of operations, and access of material and human resources, the multinational corporation will be the most powerful ingredient on the world economic stage for our lifetimes.

Indeed, the question is raised everywhere: how much of the energy crisis, or the currency crisis for that matter, is the result of international cartels. Was the fuel crisis rigged?

The pro and con answers spill out in rhetoric lava flows. But the fact is *we do not know!*

And therein lies the harshest fact to be confronted in the economic crisis: Mr. Average Citizen in the United States and in most of the world has access to too little information and cannot or does not demand accountability of the powerful and of the decision-makers.

To confront the economic crisis is to be committed to *accountability* and *responsibility.*

Michael Harrington expresses a clear viewpoint worth hearing when he states:

> The conclusion of Marx's analysis is also utterly germane to the present situation. It is, indeed, a matter of economic necessity to create the good society. For as long as the fantastic creator of wealth, socialized man, is trapped within private and anti-social institutions, his cooperatively developed but antagonistically organized genius will threaten him. And the point of socialism . . . is that man, having socialized almost everything else, must now socialize himself.

In the U.S. our mass social democracy is nearly invisible because its socialistic aims are phrased in capitalistic rhetoric.

A key characteristic of the future of this society lies in the way in which we handle this fundamental dilemma. Humanistic and transcendental values have come to be a luxury superimposed on economic values, rather than being the measure of the appropriateness of economic values. The result is that, rather than reinforcing the best we know, the economic institutions of the society are at odds with society's highest values. Alienation, economic decline and social disruption result.

Indeed, we are entering a period of major historical discontinuity when great changes will occur in the way we live and think. The whole economic decision-

making process will break down unless we embrace the values of caring for fellowman, for future generations, for nature, and for the whole planet Earth.

These are values inherent in a responsible society—one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it.

We have hopefully travelled a long way from the equation of virtue with money-making preached by the Baptist Russell Conwell in 1890. He sermonized: "To secure wealth is an honorable ambition. . . . Money is power. Every good man and woman ought to strive for power, to do good with it when obtained. I say, 'Get rich, get rich!' "

The climactic and summary moral law we seek in this new and revolutionary time is both personal and communitarian, at once pluralistic and organic. It prescribes in advance no specific pattern of culture or society. In itself it is neither centralist nor decentralist, socialist nor capitalist, and it decides for no one political instrument. Yet it confirms and emphasizes under God, as best evidenced in the person and ethic of Jesus Christ, the supremacy of man's worth, and the idea of a responsible society of man, seeking love and justice for all.

I believe there *is* hope for a new responsible coalition to confront the crisis:

—The grandchildren of the prisoners of starvation,

—The technicians,

—And the liberally educated children of the affluent could come together in an alliance to transform both the quantities and the qualities of life.

It is not yet too late.

**Forewords and Afterwords,* "Heresies," Random House, 1973, p. 48.

Economics: A Theological Overview

William M. Pinson, Jr.

Anyone who knows anything about economics or theology realizes "Economics: A Theological Overview" is a tremendously complex subject. Those who know something about both economics and theology are aware anything less than a lifetime is too short a period to deal adequately with the theme. Before I finish, you may feel you have endured a lifetime of talk; but I assure you I realize the time limitations and have tried to whittle this mammoth subject into a manageable size.

Most discussions of technical subjects begin with definition of terms. I am not going to begin that way. There is little agreement concerning a definition for either theology or economics. We all bring to these words a general understanding of what they mean. I refuse to drown us in a sea of semantics. Further, I am going to avoid technical discussions of either economics or theology. This is not so much for your benefit as because of my inadequacy. I am not an economist. And I am really not a theologian, except in the sense that all Christians are. From training, background, and study I know something about both economics and theology in a general way, and that is all I bring to the subject. It is important for some to bridge the gap between ethics and economics. I would like to. And I am gathering some of the necessary materials. But I confess I don't have what it takes to construct the bridge.

The Relation of Theology and Economics

A number of "Keep off!" signs circle the turf of economics. Some are intended for well-meaning but heavy-footed theologians and ethicists, persons whose hearts may be right but whose heads are devoid of technical training in economics. Some economists and business persons realize how stupid we religionists can be when it comes to technical issues and practical matters—or less harshly put, how utopian, idealistic, and unrealistic we can be. They fear we will do more harm than good if we come clomping into the technical, mathematically oriented, statistics saturated realm of business and economics. Some of their fears are warranted. Most of us professional religionists don't know enough about economics—in a technical way—to speak with understanding, much less with authority.

"Keep out!" signs are also put up by some churchmen. Their resistance rests on certain truisms which need to be examined. For example one often hears, "Religion is purely personal and shouldn't have anything to do with social issues; theology and ethics have nothing to do with economics." This is true if by theology and ethics one means a definite Christian program of economics. It is false, however, in terms of general goals, values, and ideals.

Another common truism is, "Economics is too controversial an area for churches." Economics is indeed controversial—perhaps the most controversial of all social issues. When you deal with a person's pocketbook, you touch a sensitive nerve. Paul's experience in Philippi indicates this. As long as he busied himself with prayer meetings by the riverside, Bible study, and sermons no one paid him any attention. But when he began to deal with economic issues, especially the misuse of a human being in business practices, the whole town erupted in a riot which resulted in Paul's being thrown into prison (Acts 16:12-40). Much of the resistance to the gospel recorded in the New Testament was rooted in economics, not religion, or perhaps more precisely stated, was a reaction to a faith that threatened certain economic activities. The whole nature of the gospel is controversial. Anyone who follows Jesus must expect controversy. Christ's life was filled with it. So were the lives of his first disciples. We should not stir up trouble for trouble's sake, but when we try to bring life into harmony with God's will, we can expect resistance and struggle. Controversy is no reason for us to avoid dealing with any issue.

Some insist Christians should avoid economic issues and concentrate on converting individuals. The rationale is this: The only way to change society is to change individuals. The best way to change individuals is through evangelism. Thus evangelism is the best way to improve the economic structures of society. That is an appealing position. We must never under-

estimate the impact of evangelism. But an "evangelism only" approach fails to give any guidance as to what we are to do about economic injustices while we evangelize individuals. Nor does it speak to the problems of why many so-called "converted individuals" contribute to injustices in economic systems. And it offers no clue as to how these changed individuals are to change economic patterns.

Another objection to theological intrusion into economics is that we really can't have any effect on the economic order. It is too sinful, too far gone, too complex—we just waste time and energy discussing economic issues. This viewpoint is expressed in various ways: "Only the Lord's return will bring in a perfect world." "Only God can overcome man's sinfulness." "We cannot make a perfect economic system." All these expressions may be true, but none is reason to cease worship for a more just economic scene. Our calling as Christians is to be faithful in doing God's will, not necessarily overcoming all obstacles to His will in the world.

In spite of these objections Christians must deal with the realm of economics. This conviction rests squarely on the Bible. The biblical material shows how interested God is in economics. As Emil Brunner wrote, "Work is the Divine order of creation. It is significant that the Divine Command: 'Make the earth subject unto you,' preceeds the curse on labour."[1] The Old Testament deals with economic issues—business and agricultural practices, work, wealth, poverty, interest, laws pertaining to trade, land, cattle, and the like. The New Testament also speaks to economic matters—the proper perspective of possessions, ministry to those in need, the danger of wealth, the importance of work. The early Christians were urged to work, to earn their own bread honestly, to use their possessions to care for the poor. Only through sinful selectivity in reading the Scriptures could one conclude God is not interested in man's economic life. The passages dealing with economic issues are an integral part of the biblical message; they are not tacked on. For example, in Leviticus 19 the injunction is given. "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." And holiness is defined largely in economic terms. Man's responsibility for economic justice is related to the nature of God.

Economic activity is also a matter of Christian concern because of its effects on human life. Every aspect of the economic process has ethical repercussions because it affects persons. Although the fundamental purpose of the economic order is to provide food, clothing, and shelter, it does more than enable mankind to survive. It affects every dimension of life—physical, emotional, and spiritual; family, race relations, politics, education, churches, recreation, art, medicine. Both Christian theologians and economists have realized the importance of economics to life. Alfred Marshall, the great Cambridge economist, said: "For man's character has been molded by his everyday work, and the material resources which he thereby procures, more than by any other influence unless it be that of his religious ideals; and the two great forming agencies of the world's history have been the religious and the economic. . . . Religious motives are more intense than economic, but their direct actions seldom extend over so large a part of life. For the business by which a person earns his livelihood generally fills his thoughts during by far the greater part of those hours in which his mind is at its best; during them his character is being formed by the way in which he uses his faculties in his work, by the thoughts and the feelings which it suggests, and by his relation to his associates in work, his employers or his employees."[2] As Christians we must be concerned about anything which affects human life in such an extensive way. "The duty of thinking out what obedience to God within the economic order really means has been laid upon us, and cannot be evaded."[3]

As T. B. Maston has said, "The great moral principles of the Christian faith are germane to economic life and are of profound economic significance when properly understood and applied."[4] It is not surprising that from the beginning of the Christian movement theologians have dealt with economics. The earliest Christian writers discussed economic matters. For example, Clement of Alexandria wrote an interesting treatise on "Can a Rich Man Be Saved?" His answer was a qualified "yes." Succeeding leaders such as Augustine, Thomas of Acquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Walter Rauschenbusch, and scores of others preached, wrote, and taught concerning economics. Many took part in explosive economic controversies. Concerning this close historical relation of economics and ethics, Howard R. Bowen, an economist, writes, "In view of the intimate connection between ethics and economics, it is not surprising that during most of recorded intellectual history economics has been treated as a branch of ethics."[5]

Norman J. Faramelli, speaking to the American Society of Christian Ethics in 1971, commented, "The quest for economic justice has deep roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The church, despite its frequent legitimization of exploitive economic power, has championed ambitious ventures into social action and provided useful theological and ethical analyses. With the exception of the church in the black communities and the third world, however, the substantive issues of economic justice have been dormant for over a decade."

Bowen agrees that within this century there has been a separation of ethics and economics. But he does not place the entire blame for this cleavage on the churches. He says that "this has been due in part to the process of academic specialization by which communication among scholars in different fields of study—even in closely related fields—has become progressively more difficult. But, to make the separation more complete, many economists have consciously sought to convert their discipline into a 'science.' They have tried to banish normative questions from their purview."[6] "The separation of ethics and economics can be explained also by the marked fragmentation of life itself, which has become one of the characteristics of modern civilization. . . . Thus a person many be a church member, a citizen, a father, a sportsman, a Rotarian, and a businessman, and in each of these roles follow different behavior patterns, seek different values, and accept different moral codes."[7] Clinton Gardner points out that "the impersonal character of the relationships which dominate our modern technological economy and the one-sided individualism which has characterized much modern social thought since the Renaissance have also contributed to the

separation of economic activities from considerations of ethics."[8]

Bowen insists, "The final blow, by which economics was all but cut off from ethics, was the ascendancy of the doctrine of natural order or *laissez faire*. Under this theory, which is still influential, private self-interest and the general social interest were considered to be miraculously in harmony. It was thought that there would be no need for ethics (beyond the elementary rules of honesty), because the 'invisible hand' would look out for the common wealth while each individual was busy looking out for himself. The more thoughtful advocates of *laissez faire,* of course, never intended to throw ethics out of economics. But in its actual effect their doctrine diverted attention away from ethics."[9]

As a result of this separation of economics and ethics, little careful attention has been given in recent years to the question of ethical values in economic systems by either theologians or economists. Many religionists have been concentrating on signs of the Second Coming of Christ rather than on economic responsibility in light of His abiding presence; on being filled with the Spirit rather than following the Holy Spirit's leadership in the workaday world; on demons, devils, and the occult rather than on evil and injustice in the economic order.

For practical purposes, most economists measure values in terms of money or goods. Thus an economic system is judged by the amount of goods produced—the gross national product. As long as the GNP is increasing, it has generally been assumed the economy is functioning well. This does not mean all economists have been insensitive to other values, such as the quality of human life. But the inability to measure the more intangible values in any precise way has lead to a neglect of these values by economists.

The Christian should know man cannot live by bread alone and, therefore, demand consideration be given to more than mere product. Yet he should also remember the economic order was instituted by God to provide for the maintenance of life and the quantity of goods produced cannot be ignored. The role ethics should play in economics is not at all clear. But one thing seems certain, Christians have a responsibility to raise basic ethical questions such as: "What are the ultimate values of human existence? And how may economic activities and institutions contribute to the achievement of these ultimate values?"[10]

As the Christian attempts to relate ethical values to economic life he should beware of easy answers to complex problems. Simplistic panaceas do more harm than good: "Get everyone saved and they will do what is right in economics." "Let the free market system work and all of our problems will be solved." "Don't worry about conflicts, theories, and statistics, just do what is right." Others feel that fixing the blame and "getting the scoundrels out" will bring in the economic millennium.

Such approaches are wrong for several reasons. First, they undermine the kind of careful, disciplined thought which brings about progress. Second, they discourage persons already working hard to solve the problems by making them feel their efforts are not worthwhile. Third, simplistic approaches support the belief that a solution once found will always suffice. This is not true. As circumstances change, new approaches will have to be developed in economics. For example, "as much of the world's population moves from predominantly agricultural to industrial and on to increasingly automated industrial economics, the forms of economic organization must be radically changed. Land, water, disposal of waste, transportation, media of exchange, property of many kinds, the roles of the young and aged, the relations between education and production all take on new meanings with these changes. We do not know what demands the future will place on the economic order, although we must foresee and plan as well as we can."[11]

A related but opposite type pitfall is forever asking questions or pointing out problems to avoid making changes in economic activity. The Christian must not take an obscurantist position, always raising issues and never acting. We should steer a course between being foolishly simplistic or constantly paralyzed in the face of complex economic problems.

What characterizes the proper approach for the Christian dealing with economic issues? Emil Brunner insisted the first concern for the Christian is not how to change an economic order but how to live within it. He of course did not maintain the Christian should not try to right wrongs. He did stress that since it is impossible to build a perfect economic system, we must learn to live within an imperfect structure.

A second task is to set forth ethical guidelines, not specific techniques, for economic practice. Theology has little to do with the engineering knowledge required for building machines to fabricate products. Just as there is no Christian chemistry or mathematics, there is no Christian economics. There should be ethical guidelines for the use of chemistry and math, however, and for economics. Those in the best position to relate faith to economics are Christian workers—businessmen, labor leaders, farmers, and others.

A third responsibility of Christians is to make moral judgments on the effect economic practices have upon persons. The Old Testament prophets and the New Testament writers did this as they called down judgment on the idle rich who lolled in luxury while the poor were ground by oppression. The Christian may not be able to pinpoint the cause of a problem or outline a solution. Those may be tasks for specialists. But he can serve as a conscience protesting practices which seem to be wrong.

A fourth task for the Christian is to keep the realm of economics from becoming autonomous. We must forever insist that economic practice is not a separate category apart from moral considerations. Again and again the Christian must raise ethical questions in regard to economics.

Theological Guidelines

What theological guidelines should the Christian follow in dealing with economic issues? The basic theological insights of the Christian faith apply to economics. There is not adequate time to mention all of them nor to discuss any extensively, but some of the more important ones can be touched on, especially those related to God, man, salvation, the Christian life, and the church.

The biblical concept of God as creator is definitely linked to economics. God created the planet we inhabit

and all that is on it, including man. The creation belongs to God, the Creator. Man, fashioned in the image of God, has a unique relationship to the rest of creation; he is to exercise dominion. This does not mean absolute ownership nor the right to do whatever he pleases. The role of man is subordinate to God; man is a steward, holding in trust all that God has entrusted to him. No one can claim absolute ownership of anything—land, tools, raw materials, or talent. Everything is a gift from God. Although the Bible assumes the ownership of property, it also clearly holds that no property is owned absolutely. We possess property only in the sense that we have access to it to use it; it belongs to God. Our use of possessions is to be guided by God's will which includes the well being of others and preservation of resources for future generations. "It's mine and I will do with it what I want to!" is not a Christian statement.

Since the earth has been given to us by God as a trust, we are to use responsibly the fragile resources of land, air, and water. Economic activity can result in the pollution of these. It is shortsighted and un-Christian to participate in the destruction of natural resources. To turn the earth into a floating cesspool is immoral. Yet, we have built an economic order which has contributed to a massive increase in population. Supporting this population requires vast amounts of foodstuffs, clothing, and shelter, plus the transportation needed to distribute them. Apparently the only way to support life for these billions is through some kind of technological society, the by-product of which is pollution.

With a finite amount of space and resources the population must be limited. An ever expanding population can lead only to catastrophe. The one command of the Creator which we have amply carried out is to multiply and replenish the earth. We have now populated the earth sufficiently. It is time to curtail population growth and work toward an ecological stance which will provide future generations a decent environment.

God is not only Creator, He is also Judge. God sets forth standards for His creation and judges us according to how we live up to them. The standards for conduct are linked to the nature of God. Man, created in God's image, is to be like God. As David Moberg states it, "God is righteous, generous, good, and just. . . . He calls upon His children to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. . . . Christian social concern imitates God's concern. His love is a model to copy."[12] The individual or society which refuses to pattern its ways after those of God will suffer. Valuing things more than persons and failing to meet human need call forth God's wrath. In the incarnation, God's nature is most clearly seen; Christ displays God's concern for man's economic life.

According to the Bible, man and woman were created in the image of God for fellowship with God. But they sinned, turning away from God's will. Sin has had a baleful effect on all generations, on social as well as personal life. The economic order is a clear example of the effect of sin. The Scriptures indicate man was created for useful work. Work itself is not the result of man's Fall. However, the Fall has affected the order of economics, bringing into it selfishness, toil, and conflict. "Having lost the security of belonging to God, man grasps for security in things. In disappointment he grasps for more and more and begins to grasp from his fellowmen things they need which he cannot use. This is fallen existence."[13] Mankind's incorrigible selfishness corrupts all economic systems making a perfect economic order impossible. As L. H. Marshall put it, "The vitally important thing is not the system, be it autocratic, democratic, socialist, or communist, but the spirit in which it is worked. The social problem will last as long as selfishness lasts, whatever the political and economic changes that are introduced."[14] This selfishness requires laws and their enforcement to curtail man's greed and lust for power but means that even the laws and those who enforce them in the economic order will be corrupted by sin.

Human selfishness is magnified in economics. The desire to gain, to possess, to control is clearly seen in economic systems whether they be capitalistic or socialistic. Sin has so thoroughly corrupted the economic order that it is impossible to live and work within it apart from sin. In the world of work we are constantly involved in activities which are short of God's ideal. Even in our theoretical discussions we display our selfishness: All of us are able to think up reasons why we and our group should have special privileges, why an existing condition which benefits us is permissible, although of course not the ideal. During the Middle Ages, theologians defended the existence of both great wealth and poverty on the basis of the argument that without poor people there would be no one to give alms to and this must not be allowed since the Bible commands almsgiving. We somehow find it possible to justify our status in almost all circumstances.

Church leaders have our economic inconsistencies too. Some protest poverty yet live in affluence. Others pass resolutions concerning the energy crisis but drive large automobiles. Many protest pollution while enjoying the fruits of our technological, polluting society. Some of us have combined our religious position with sharp trading techniques to get automobiles at cost, suits at a discount, and household appliances wholesale, ignoring the fact the automobile dealer and the store owner must make a profit in order to stay in business. If we buy "at cost" or at a "ministerial discount" then they must recoup the loss from someone else, perhaps the poor and underprivileged.

Man's personal responsibility in the economic order is set forth in the Bible. Our basic calling is to follow Jesus Christ. Within that calling our main task is to bear witness to him through words, ministry to human need, and a fellowship of Christians who love one another. One of the channels through which we express this calling is daily work. Work is a means of serving and loving others. Unemployment, therefore, is a theological as well as an economic issue.

Work is a divine command for mankind, but so also is rest. Denying a person either work or rest violates God's will. The person who refuses to rest ignores not only a divine commandment but displays anxiety and lack of faith in God. As the New Testament points out, greed is idolatry; the refusal to rest may be an expression of greed, the desire to accumulate things inordinately. Play and leisure can be as much an expression of our freedom from idolatrous greed as worship of the true God. In stressing rest and play

we must not soft pedal the biblical emphasis on man's responsibility to work. In fact, Paul bluntly stated "If anyone does not work, they should not be fed." The Christian is to work diligently, honestly, and with an eye to God who is his ultimate master. Our work is done as unto the Lord.

The Bible tells us we were created to live in community, not in isolation. One theological test for an economy is "Does it enhance or weaken genuine community?" The Christian community results from God's love for us and our love for one another. Such love sees that the needs of all are met, as was the case in Jerusalem when the early Christians shared what they had with one another. Self-sacrifice to aid others out of love is the basic guideline; the specific actions will vary. Outside of the Christian fellowship there is also to be community. In fact, the entire economic order is built upon mutual interdependence. No one is self-sufficient. We are all terribly fragile, dependent upon one another, and vulnerable to the acts of irresponsibility by others. No one is self-made. No one stands alone. The economic order portrays vividly how much we need one another. Irresponsibility in a fast moving technological world can bring tragedy to thousands—a jumbo jet crash, poisonous canned goods, a polluted water supply.

Salvation, the Christian believes, comes to us through the grace of God. We live in the world, participate in a less than perfect economic system, and therefore sin. Yet we have confidence that through faith in Jesus Christ we have ultimate healing and wholeness. We do not deserve or merit redemption. We are justified by faith, not by works. This is not an excuse for placidly accepting sinful conditions. In fact, justification by faith ought to have the opposite effect. We are freed from concern about our past sin and future destiny in order to concentrate on present problems. Knowing that God accepts us through Jesus Christ even when we sin, we are liberated from a fear of failure or making a mistake to wage war with gusto against economic wrong.

Salvation is supposed to lead to responsibility. The Christian being made new in Jesus Christ is to live a life of courageous love. But how the child of God is to relate in specific ways to a sinful world is a complex problem. Christians resolve the issue in several ways. Some protest the sinfulness of the world by withdrawing into isolated existence, trying to achieve perfection. In so doing they may sin more thoroughly than those who continue to live in the world for they ignore Christ's command to be salt and light. Others conduct revolutionary activity to alter the world, trying to make it conform to God's standards. Unfortunately they often confuse their standards with God's and thus try to make the world conform to their will instead of His. Even if they are correct in assessing what God's will is, they again and again meet failure because the world will not be molded into God's ways. If the death and resurrection of the Son of God did not bring in a perfect world, certainly our actions cannot. This fact does not relieve us of the responsibility of trying, but it ought to make us more realistic about what we can hope to achieve.

Others simply give up, adjust to the world, and baptize its practices. Phrases such as "Christian socialism," "Christian capitalism," or "God honors the American way" indicate such a worldly approach. Interestingly enough some of the most worldly people—those who identify with the world's standards—claim to be the most pietistic and fundamentalistic. Others living in holy tension with the world find inner peace through Jesus Christ. Striving to transform the world, realizing they will fall short, doing the best they can, they live out their days faithful to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

No single position of the Christian in regard to the world of economic strife is without its problems. Each must find his own way. But whatever position we take, we are obligated under God to strive to bring love and justice to bear upon the economic order. In spite of staggering complexities and bewildering circumstances we hold to our belief that love is better than hate, justice is better than injustice, liberality is better than greed, honesty is better than dishonesty, service is better than selfishness.

In almost all theological ethics, the chief virtue is love. But how can we express love through the economic structures? It isn't easy. Perhaps its clearest expression is in justice. But we must learn to love corporately as well as individually if we are to love effectively in the modern world. Agape may seem out of place in the secular economic order, but the Christian must strive to follow the dictates of love. He must learn that love is not the same as sentimentality or utopianism or romantic idealism—it can be tough, realistic, and effective. Agape calls for giving ourselves sacrificially for the benefit of others without expectation of reward. That is unnatural, but it is what Christ indicated we are to do.

About the church, what should be its role in regard to economics? What stance is organized religion to take? Thoughtful Christians differ on what they feel the role of churches ought to be in respect to economics. But most agree churches should make a significant contribution. John Bennett suggests four major contributions: (1) "To improve the moral and spiritual climate in which economic institutions function." (2) "As the community of worshiping people from all social groups [it] can help in the overcoming of the most stubborn economic conflicts"—not only of classes but of ideas, ideals, motives, and purposes. (3) It "can give guidance concerning the ends of economic life and concerning the temptations against which Christians must continually guard themselves." (4) "The most concrete activity in the economic order will be the daily decisions of its members as citizens and in their various occupations."[15]

Emil Brunner, after a lengthy examination of economics and ethics, sets forth the task for churches along a different line: (1) "The first task of the Church, even in view of actual economic distress and sin, and indeed for this very reason, is the proclamation of the gospel of the creation, reconciliation and redemption of the world through the God who was revealed in Christ. For it is the gospel, and not any kind of 'social gospel,' which is the salvation of the world, even in view of the economic situation. . . ." (2) "As a community the second task of the Christian Church is that of service, that is, the obligation of taking an interest in the victims of the economic struggle by a generous philanthropy." (3) The Church "must exercise and demand prophetic criticism, just as she has to proclaim

the gospel of the grace of God in a prophetic manner." (4) "The Church, as a community of those who believe, must also bear witness to the fact of a different spirit and a different life for her actions. 'See how these Christians love one another'—this saying of the pagans points to the strongest missionary force, and at the same time the strongest force of economic transformation which should and could go forth from the church."[16]

Churches can also influence economic patterns by their own economic practices. For example, churchmen can stifle materialism by putting less emphasis themselves on things. Churches can pay employees just wages, including secretaries and custodial staffs. Church funds can be invested in socially-responsible ways. Churches may need to rethink their tax exempt status in light of the current economic crisis.

Specific Economic Issues

Keeping in mind the relation of theology and economics plus the basic theological insights which inform the Christian as he deals with economic issues, let's examine a few of these issues. Some aspects of our economic system are obviously immoral: discrimination and prejudice against racial and ethnic groups and women; unduly dangerous working conditions; boring, degrading work; loan sharking; unhealthy housing for many; damage to the environment; waste; profiteering on scarcity and vice; theft; deceitful marketing; hoarding. These are not unique to the American scene, of course.

Most economic problems are not clear cut from a theological-ethical perspective. For example, what kind of economic structure is desirable from a Christian perspective in today's world? Is our modified capitalism the best for America? Is there some other approach we should pursue? Most ethicists agree there is no Christian economic system. All approaches to economics have flaws, degrees of injustice and untruths which Christians can't approve. Present-day patterns of economics oscillate between rabid individualism that destroys community and militant collectivism that destroys freedom. Rather than being devoted to slogans or labels, we should struggle to see which type of economic pattern under various conditions best advances the quality of human life. Approaches to economic activity will vary according to a people's raw material, geography, access to markets, skills, amount and sophistication of tools, and other similar variables.

Many issues relate specifically to the operation of our own modified capitalistic system. Values and standards of oughtness—ethics—enter at every phase of the economic process—raw materials, tools and facilities, labor, products, distribution, sales, taxes, and government regulation. For example, in the use of raw materials, we are confronted with ethical issues: What right have individuals to claim ownership of nonrenewable resources such as coal, oil, minerals, and metals? Should nonrenewable resources be used for the benefit of a few with little benefit accruing to the many? What responsibility have we for the environment such as the land, the air, and the water? What standards are to be used in the distribution of scarce raw materials?

In the United States 6 percent of the world's population consume from 35 to 40 percent of the world's nonrenewable resources used each year. Up until recently we have been fairly self-sufficient. But our reserves of energy items and other raw materials are being rapidly depleted. As we become more dependent on sources outside of our own borders, how will we continue to acquire the needed materials for our economic system? What if the suppliers of raw materials in other nations organize and increase prices to such a degree the whole economic process is thrown seriously off balance? What if nations with raw materials demand that plants and industries be built at the location of these materials, thus depriving the present industrial nations of their chief source of income? With our economy and security threatened, will the United States attempt to take absolute control of the nations with the raw materials? If we try, what will other industrial nations do in response?

We increasingly will be faced with critical ethical issues centered in raw material: the possibility of the domination and exploitation of other nations for our own self-interest, massive war, a declining standard of living in the United States, and possibly even mass unemployment with economic collapse. Will American Christians support or protest open and blatant moves to take over Arabian oil fields, Canadian mines, and South American resources? The story of the Exodus reveals that God judges harshly those who exploit others for personal, selfish gain. Amos made clear that God does not take lightly persons growing luxuriously fat at the expense of the poor. What applies to ancient individuals and nations certainly applies to us.

The ethical issues related to the use of raw materials only touch the hem of the economic garment. Similar extensive questions concern human labor, tools and facilities for manufacturing and distributing goods, types of products, prices, distribution of income, and many other factors in economic life.

Inequities in the distribution of material goods exist in America. The American poor live in a nation of unprecedented affluence. Few theologians make a case for equality of income and possessions, but most insist the present poverty in the midst of great wealth is immoral. But what sort of approach should we take to the problem both within the United States and throughout the world? The American way of life has raised expectations not only among our own people but among other nations about a materialistic standard of life which is impossible for everyone to enjoy. Not enough raw materials exist to enable all people to have all the things we have. For example, there is not enough metal to produce enough automobiles for everyone to have the number owned by Americans. Furthermore, even if natural resources were not the limiting factor, the pollution emanating from a world population of three and a half billion consuming at the present American level would endanger the life support systems of the planet. In such a case, the global pollution would increase 200 fold. The present American way of life, ecological responsibility, and global economic justice cannot coexist. What ought we to do?

One suggested cure for poverty is to divide up the nation's resources—take from the rich and give to the poor. Aside from problems of implementation, the plan isn't a good one because the possessions of the

wealthy when shared with the poor really wouldn't help the poor very much. The Rocky Mountains look huge, but spreading them over the continent would not raise the average height above sea level appreciably. A sounder theory is that poverty is eliminated as the entire economy expands—as the economic pie increases in size the slices, though proportionately the same, will become larger. But this theory is based on the assumption of a continuously expanding economy, and there is reason to doubt infinite growth can be maintained with finite resources. Of course, an economy can be made to appear to expand by inflation. Income and GNP can go up. But this is cotton candy expansion, bulk without substance. Although a person's income increases, his purchasing power remains constant or decreases. Furthermore, inflation is immoral in that it hits hardest the poor, the aging, and those on fixed incomes.

One of the main ethical-theological issues in our economy concerns motives and incentives. The profit motive and competition in a free market have been hallmarks of capitalistic economies. Although profit and competition tend to stimulate materialism, rivalry, and selfishness, most capitalists insist that by harnessing individual selfishness it is possible to gain corporate good. Since an economic order must supply the necessities for human survival, it is important that it function well. There is little evidence that an economic system built basically upon love and cooperation would work efficiently, especially on a large enough scale to provide for the world's billions. Many inequities in our present system can be regarded as necessary concessions to human sinfulness in order to maintain a highly productive economy. For example, government tax structures and subsidy programs generally favor the wealthy. Many moralists object to these benefits. But it can also be argued these benefits make capital available to expand the economy for the benefit of all. By helping the wealthy become wealthier government programs supposedly aid the poor to become less poor. This entire matter of incentives is very complex from an ethical point of view. We must neither be blinded by the arguments of the rich nor the plight of the poor but give careful thought within the guidelines of Christian theology and sound economics to what the best course should be.

The nature and influence of corporations also calls for careful ethical and theological evaluation. Enjoying legal immortality, corporations can amass huge amounts of capital without interference from inheritance taxes. These sums are invested in ways which affect the future of the nation and indeed the world. The effect of corporate life on government, the economy in general, foreign policy, and the welfare of millions of individuals is immense. The wealth in America is centered in the largest corporations. Who controls these corporations? Stock in them is owned by thousands or even millions of persons, but few corporations are effectively owned by anyone. They are controlled by management. And management often functions more for the benefit of itself than for either stockholders or the nation as a whole.

From the point of view of goods produced and marketed we are involved in a technological nightmare. Many economists insist we must consume in order to keep the economy going. Some economists contend demand creates the market and business merely follows the demands of the public. This is half truth. The fact is businesses can create demand. Through development of new products, advertising, and marketing techniques they can develop a want where none existed. There is serious question about the kind of want which is being produced in the American consumer. What we consume is often frivolous, self-indulgent, and even immoral. Abundance leads us to be wasteful; buy, use, throw away, buy more. Clearly this trend must be reversed. But how? Should we wear clothes until threadbare, buy second-hand cars, and never spend money on luxury items such as dishwashers, air conditioning, and color television? But what will happen if everyone followed that pattern? Will frugality cast the nation into a severe recession or depression? Or will it lead to a saner economy? Our technologically-dominated economy, like a runaway train, plunges on taking us with it. There seems to be no turning back, no slowing down, only hanging on and hoping that somehow, sometime, someway, we can gain control.

Issues of various kinds center in particular aspects of our economy and raise ethical issues. For example, we are a warfare as well as a welfare state. Is there any hope of moving toward a peacetime economy? How should we deal with the military-industrial complex? with the highway-industrial complex? What should be the relation of freedom and security, order and justice. There is no absolute security without loss of freedom nor freedom without loss of security. There can be law and order without justice but there apparently is no justice without law and order. How can we gain justice in an economic system without inordinant policing?

A number of other economic issues clamor for attention. What ethical guidelines ought to be brought to bear on tax issues? or problems of consumer credit? on the energy crisis? on inflation? on the welfare systems? on the increase in leisure time for millions? on the effects of automation and cybernation? on the use of economic power? on government controls on prices, profits, wages, and rents? The list seems endless. But we have a responsibility in Christ to give the matters our thoughtful concern.

Christians face problems in regard to economics not shared by unbelievers. For example, should Christians amass wealth? If so, what kind of wealth should they have? We cannot ignore Jesus' warning about wealth, his instruction to not lay up treasures on earth, and the New Testament criticism of the wealthy. The real New Testament issue seems to be on where one puts his trust, not on what one possesses: Do we possess things or do things possess us? A person can be very wealthy, yet live frugally, and use wealth for the benefit of others through various programs and investments. A poor man can be more materialistic than a wealthy man.

Should Christians take interest on money? It is forbidden in the Old Testament to do so and has been frowned on by church leaders through the centuries. If interest is accepted, how much is legitimate? From whom and for what purposes should it be received?

What should be the Christian's relation to the poor? Some Christians today seem to detest the poor. Poverty is associated with laziness or a sign either of sin or

God's disfavor. Jesus' statement that the poor are with us always is used as an excuse to do little about poverty. Actually, Jesus' words are an incentive to minister to the poor. He set the example for such ministry in his own life and taught that judgment is related to meeting the needs of the poor. One of the ways to care for the poor is to work to eliminate poverty.

In summary, we have examined the relation of theological ethics and economics, some of the basic theological insights which apply to the order of economics, and a few of the specific economic issues which need theological attention. We move on now to hear experts provide input concerning various aspects of the current economic crisis. The approach taken by this conference—bringing together theologians with economic theorists and practictioners from various schools of thought to discuss the economic crisis—seems to offer the best hope for progress. Realizing our limitations we each have our unique contribution to make.

I'm aware that much economic change is not planned, it happens. Factors beyond human control or planning cause the changes, or unexpected developments or discoveries (the invention of the cotton gin) alter the flow of economics, or conflicting forces evolve a particular pattern. But we nevertheless have a responsibility to correct what we can, plan as much as possible, and garner standards to guide us. The values of a society are as important—maybe more so—than its technology and system. The tug of human nature is heavily down, to crass materialism, to lust for power, to greed. Some must point the way to a better way—love, justice, generosity, faith in the living God. Prophets are just as vital as profits for a people's well-being. Without a vision the people perish. The Christian can help supply these values, standards, and ideals—holding them high and criticizing economic practices that don't measure up.

Throughout this address I've refrained from proof-texting and quoting Scriptures. The subject was too large to particularize so I summarized and generalized. But in conclusion let me read some basic biblical passages which speak far better than I to God's standard for economics: Genesis 1:28; 2:15; 3:17-19; Deuteronomy 5:13-14; Isaiah 1:16-20; Amos 5:11-12, 14, 24; Matthew 5:19-21, 31-33; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; 1 John 3:16-19.

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[1] Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), p. 386.

[2] Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (London: Macmillan, 1920 (8th ed.), pp. 1-2.

[3] Brunner, *The Divine Imperative*, p. 396.

[4] T. B. Maston, *Christianity and World Issues* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 119.

[5] John C. Bennett, et. al., *Christian Values and Economic Life* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1954), p. 192.

[6] Ibid., pp. 192-93.

[7] Ibid., p. 193.

[8] Clinton Gardner, *Biblical Faith and Social Ethics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 272.

[9] Bennett, et. al., *Christian Values and Economic Life*, p. 194.

[10] Ibid., p. 104.

[11] L. Harold DeWolf, *Responsible Freedom* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 261.

[12] David Moberg, *Inasmuch* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), p. 32.

[13] J. Morris Ashcraft, "A Theological Rationale for Christian Stewardship," *Resources Unlimited* (Nashville: Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1972), p. 13.

[14] L. H. Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1960), p. 165.

[15] John Bennett in A. Dudley Ward, ed., *Goals of Economic Life* (New York: Harper, 1953), p. 428 as cited in Maston, *Christianity and World Issues*, pp. 145-46.

[16] Brunner, *op cit.*

Moral Dimensions of Taxation

Vester T. Hughes, Jr.

"The tax system should be as fair as possible, as simple (and certain) as possible, and impose minimum restraints on economic growth, at the same time fostering maximum economic stability."[1] There probably would be general agreement that a proper objective for this country's tax system could be so phrased. But here simplicity in dealing with the concept of a fair tax system ends. Initially, an examination of this statement of purpose may be useful, notwithstanding the difficulty in making any analysis meaningful.

What is fair? Who determines fairness? Is fairness a long-term or a short-term deal?

"Tax laws like criminal laws should be certain." Can tax laws which are certain be simple? Is simplicity a possibility in a complicated society and in a complicated economic system? Do simplicity and certainty override some or all of the need for fairness?

Economic growth is a social desideratum of the highest order—or is it? At what level is current consumption given priority over economic growth? At what level is poverty neglected for long-range economic growth? At what level is education neglected for long-range economic growth?

Should the tax system be neutral insofar as possible with respect to its impact on taxed businesses and business pursuits? If it is not neutral, should its sole aim be stability or the avoiding of wide swings, or should it be used to accelerate activity or diminution of activity?

To the French politician—or statesman—depending on one's point of view, named Tallyrand is attributed the statement that, "The art of taxation is like the art of plucking the goose. The object is to obtain the maximum down with the minimum squawk." Certainly Tallyrand's views of morality can be classified as liberal, if not loose. On the other hand, one tends to admire the skill of any individual who could survive the difficult last days of the French monarchy, the uncertain times of the French Revolution, the rise and fall of Napoleon, and the rise of the new French monarchy and the ascendancy of Louis Phillippe—and leave his mark on all eras of those troubled and changing times. Thus, while the temptation is to smile at his pragmatic statement on the nature of the tax process, one feels compelled to accord his approach more than a smile.

It could be argued that most tax policy questions have no moral dimensions. This theory would result

from a view that tax rates and tax policies related to various transactions, ownership of property, and social activities are merely the outgrowth of the political stresses brought to bear at a given point of time. It has been suggested that the political process which resolves these questions is essentially a substitute for violence among competing interests.

Another view of taxation would say that a tax system is moral or immoral depending on who bears the economic burden and how the system is administered. In other words, a fabricated morality would be based on Marxism theory of "to each according to his need and from each according to his ability." The Council for Christian Social Action of the United States Church of Christ states:

> "Taxes are an investment in an enterprise—government—which has been established for the common security and welfare. In a democracy we use government to do those things we cannot do as well individually or through voluntary private groups. When we pay taxes, we are buying streets, police protection of people and property, recreation, prevention of disease, highways, regulation of private groups that may exercise their power in dangerous ways, diplomatic representation, military defense on a world scale, assistance to underdeveloped or needy groups at home and abroad, membership in international organizations, and thousands if programs promoting the welfare of the entire community."

But the foregoing statement in setting forth its lofty ideals is not particularly more helpful than the statement made at the outset as to the characteristics of a good tax system. Certainly if everyone felt as did Justice Holmes, who indicated that taxes "are what we pay for civilized society. . . . I like to pay taxes. With them I buy civilization," we should have no problem. Unhappily, most taxpayers feel they are either getting too little or too much for their tax purchase price, and as Louis Eisenstein said in *The Ideologies of Taxation*, "Holmes' aphorism on civilization is more quotable than meaningful."[2] Eisenstein goes on to make this interesting observation: "Taxes, then, are a changing product of earnest efforts to have others pay them. In a society where a few control the many, the efforts are rather simple. Levies are imposed in response to the preferences of the governing groups. . . . As political democracy comes upon the scene, complications soon emerge. Taxes can no longer be imposed without public consultation and debate. Those who have less property have more votes. Since heads are to be counted, they must first be persuaded. Reasons have to be given for the burdens that are variously proposed or approved. . . . Of course if an ideology is to be effective, it must convey a vital sense of some immutable principle that rises majestically above partisan preferences."[3]

So, then, what are the moral dimensions of taxation? Are there any moral dimensions to taxation except the platitudes that are used to rationalize the result a particular speaker wants to achieve?

I shall suggest certain commonly invoked standards of fairness which may be also equated with a moral dimension:

(1) A fair tax system will tax like cases alike. Conversely, it is wrong to tax people differently on the basis of irrelevant or suspect criteria, i.e., the taxpayer's political views, race, religion, etc. However, beyond the simplest examples of unfair discrimination, it is difficult to determine on any objective standard when cases are alike and when differences and distinctions exist that do or do not justify different tax treatment. In my view, there are no clearly immoral tax levies by this standard currently in the U. S. today, although undoubtedly specific examples in the administration of property and other taxes do exist.

(2) A tax is not fair unless those subject to the tax play a part in authorizing the measure. "No taxation without representation" is a familiar part of American history and is firmly embedded in our moral consciousness. Again, like the fairness standard, there seems to be no problem with this aspect in America today.

(3) Luxuries and doubtful items—perfume, alcohol, tobacco, machine guns—bear a heavy tax; and desirable activities—financing of hospitals, colleges and churches —are the recipients of tax benefits. Here the overlap between social policy and moral principle is not clear but in large measure seems to come out the same place. Both because of the problems of delineation and of complexity so introduced, many have objected to the exercise of judgments of this kind through the tax system. But right or wrong, these considerations are a significant part of the American tax system.

(4) The taxing authorities should announce in advance what transactions, events, and things shall be subject to tax. Again, our current tax system seems to come out pretty well on this score.

(5) Perhaps one of the most difficult problems relates to progressivity. In other words, how does the impact of the tax fall? Do you determine that the government needs a specific amount of money and divide it up equally among the citizens? Adult citizens? Or families? For the most part, the head tax approach has never been an important factor in this country. Another approach is to impose a tax equally on property in relation to its value, and income in relation to its amount. This was the theory of the time. Finally, we can proceed, as has been the case in recent times with respect to the income tax, on the basis of a "proportional ability to pay" concept. Within this framework you can have the "minimum aggregate sacrifice"[4] theory which means that no tax is imposed until the minimum aggregate sacrifice has been determined, and then the tax becomes confiscatory. This was the theory of the New Deal proposal in the mid-forties to place a $25,000 limit on income. Finally, the approach adopted in the income tax is the "equal marginal sacrifice"[5] theory which escalates the rate in some attempt to recognize that a larger percentage of tax on an increased increment fairly reflects the marginal sacrifice attributable thereto.

Squawking Geese

In recent years, many have been offended by the incidence, or more appropriately non-incidence, of tax in the U. S. system. My own view is that through something akin to a dialectical process, this country has evolved the fairest overall approach to taxation in history. This is not to say that either the state and local property, sales, and in some states income tax and that the federal income, estate, gift and social

security taxes are by any means perfect. It is rather to say that the push-pull of competing forces has produced, in my opinion, a reasonably balanced system which must be constantly surveyed, modified, rethought, and changed. Everything from the February 18, *Newsweek*[6] story entitled "Diary of a Mad Housewife" to the recent book by Philip M. Stern[7] called *The Rape of the Taxpayer* complains about some aspect of the current federal tax system. And many outstanding and not so outstanding thinkers have come up with more rational and less demagogic and unthinking emotional suggestions for reform. Dean Galvin[8] suggests that simplicity can be achieved by broadening the tax basis and greatly reducing the rates. Obviously this approach is going to be attractive to anyone whose tax would be lessened but very unattractive to anyone who by reasons of denied deductions would have their tax increased. More recently, Professor Surrey[9] has suggested that a theory of tax expenditures for certain types of deductions will bring the matter of reform into focus. In oversimplified summary, in his new book entitled *Pathways to Tax Reform,* Mr. Surrey indicates that a "tax expenditure" is a loss of revenue as a result of a tax allowance if the purpose of the allowance is to provide governmental financial assistance by a specific application of the tax impact. Included in this category would be tax-exempt interest on state and municipal bonds, the allowance for accelerated depreciation, reduced tax rates applicable to long-term capital gains, percentage depletion, etc. The theory is that many such items could better be handled by direct federal grant or subsidies than through tax advantage, but that in any case, such items should be identified and the choice between direct assistance and tax benefit assistance should be made consciously. And Professor Surrey maintains that the delineation between "tax expenditures" and normal business expenses which would not be subject to the same type alternate treatment can easily be drawn. But, as Professor Bittker[10] points out in his review of the book in the January 6, 1974 *New York Times* Book Review, "Finally, tax expenditure analysis suffers from an internal conceptual weakness, which can be illustrated by a few questions. Why is a $750 exemption a 'tax expenditure' if granted because the taxpayer is blind or over sixty-five, but not if granted because he has a dependent child? . . . Why is it a 'tax expenditure' to allow real estate dealers to delay reporting profits on credit sales until they collect the sales price in cash, but not a tax expenditure to allow salaried taxpayers and farmers to delay reporting their income until they get paid in cash? . . ." Thus, there is no lack of reform notions represented by those who approach the subject of reform as one of a theory that can be practically applied to improve the system.

Expenditures, Inflation, etc.

So far I have not dealt with the important aspect of taxation that is its reason for being—the expenditures by government. It is clear that the good effects of wise government expenditures should more than offset the bad effects of the taxation which pays for the outlays. Taxes by their very nature are bad in the sense that they seldom have any directly productive economic aspect and they discourage economic activity and investment. Nonetheless, we have been fortunate in this country that many, if not most, people feel that tax fraud is morally reprehensible even though there has been a lessening of this view. Perhaps equally or more important is the fear of tax fraud prosecution. But assuming the presence of a working tax system and with a high tax burden as we have today, it is very important that the tax structure be critically reviewed in order to keep its inequities, its repressive effects, and its complexities at a minimum. Perhaps even more important is making certain that the expenditure programs be really justified. Rich countries like rich families still have limits, and priorities must be assigned. In the course of the assignment of these priorities, good judgment as to relative merit winds up directly affecting the tax system imposing the burdens. If the requirements are too great, the need for money has some tendency to lessen consideration of fairness.

This brings into focus a related question. In a progressive tax rate structure, inflation has the effect of raising tax rates since additional dollars generate more tax because of higher brackets. At least some control in inflation is required for the benefit of the fixed income members of the society—particularly retired people—as well as for the integrity of currency and the indirect imposition of increased rates. More than a passing comment on this subject would be out of place in a paper of this scope, but certainly the phenomenon should be noted.

Conclusion

The foregoing has not dealt with the social and moral aspects of inheritance, estate and gift taxes and their implications. Much can be said about the right to transfer wealth as being an incident of the right to own property and arguments tending toward a different result emanate from the view that unearned wealth begets decadence and unjustifiable power perpetuation. Direct property taxes have been traditional and seem to be justified. Sales taxes or taxes on consumption frequently are viewed as regressive, but a good case can be made for these as an impetus to saving, investment, and capital growth. The income tax has come to be the most important tax, and in my opinion properly so. I do not believe that there are strong moral reasons why most tax provisions should be one way or another; however, this statement is made within the framework and context of the American tax system, which has been a reflection of other aspects of our democratic institutions. I think that most pronouncements on tax matters which are denominated as moral are really the speaker's shorthand way of saying he favors one approach or the other because, it seems to me, very seldom can the competing individual and national effects be said to rise to a moral level. In a less affluent society perhaps this would not be the case. And this is not a statement indicating that there should be no attempt to improve what is here. Rather it is a statement that a loophole is ordinarily someone else's benefit (which the speaker does not think he will have available to him in the proximate future) and that arguments and attempts to persuade based on isolated and out-of-context examples give rise to the same kind of distortion that such an approach does in other fields of thought and endeavor.

One final note on the personal morality of taxation. It has been said that, "Where there is a free bridge

and a toll bridge, patriotism does not demand that the taxpayer take the toll bridge." Nor, in my opinion, does morality demand that the taxpayer take the toll bridge, but there is a vast difference between taking the free bridge and stealing one's way across the toll bridge. Certainly the impetus to private morality in taxation has not been pushed forward by the questions raised with respect to the President's tax return. But fortunately none of us is required to account for the President's actions, and I suggest that three weeks before the individual tax returns are due, a critical examination of our own personal morality in dealing with the tax system is a useful endeavor.

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[1] Dan Throop Smith, *Federal Tax Reform*, p. 9.
[2] Louis Eisenstein, *The Ideologies of Taxation*, p. 5.
[3] *Eisenstein*, pp. 11-12.
[4] For elaboration, see Smith, *supra*, p. 14.
[5] For elaboration, see Smith, *supra*, pp. 14-15.
[6] *Newsweek*, February 18, 1974.
[7] Philip M. Stern's interest in tax reform began in the 1950's when he researched the subject for a Senate Committee. Mr. Stern's views must be read against the background of the fact that he is an heir to a substantial fortune based on Sears-Roebuck stock.
[8] Charles O. Galvin is Dean, School of Law, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. In connection with the work done by Dean Galvin, see *Reforming the Federal Tax Structure*, Commission to Revise the Tax Structure, Fund for Public Policy Research, Washington, D.C., 1973; *Studies in Substantive Tax Reform*, published jointly by the American Bar Foundation and Southern Methodist University, 1969; Charles O. Galvin and Boris I. Bittker, *The Income Tax: How Progressive Should It Be?*; for an interesting comparison, see Richard Goode, *The Individual Income Tax*.
[9] Stanley S. Surrey, Professor of Law, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Tax Policy during the administration of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.
[10] Boris I. Bittker, Professor of Law, Yale Law School, New Haven, Connecticut.

The Elderly in the Economic Crisis

John B. Martin

The problem which most older Americans face today is that available income after retirement is not sufficient to enable them to maintain a standard of living comparable to the standard enjoyed by them before the time of retirement. This is true even though Social Security protection now covers 91 percent of all our population 65 and over. Private pensions are an important supplement for some of these retirees but many have no private pension; and, even including both private and public pensions, some 40 percent are below or close to poverty level figures.

Continued earnings, therefore, are and will continue to be much needed for substantial numbers of older people if post-retirement living standards are to approximate pre-retirement standards.

Improving the income posture for America's aging is a challenge confronting every level of economic and social policy-making. For millions of older citizens, the income crisis is now acute. Population trends portend an even greater crisis unless more effective policies and programs are developed now. In only ten years, for example, from 1960 to 1970, the "very old" (70 and over) increased in America by 27 percent, while the total population 55 and over increased by only 13 percent. Americans of all ages increased by only 22 percent.

The most recent dramatic example of the kind of crisis that can occur is in the railroad industry of America. Today 600,000 employed railroad workers—along with their companies (with government subsidies)—are required to finance the retirement income of 900,000 retired railroad workers.

If we ask about the income status of the elderly, we are immediately faced with the fact that median income for households headed by persons 65-and-older is $3,813 compared with households headed by persons 55-64 in which the median level is $9,344. More than 80 percent of all couples 65-and-over appear to fall below the Department of Labor's Lower Level Budget for an urban retired couple. Aged family heads make up an increasing proportion of the bottom fifth of family income, a declining proportion of the bottom fifth of family income, and a declining proportion of the highest fifth.

Departure from the work force of older workers means that the proportion of workers to over-60 non-workers is steadily decreasing. Coupled with the fact that older non-workers as a group are increasing at a percentage rate greater than the total work force, we can conclude that the under-60 working group is being asked to bear an increasing burden for support of the non-working elderly. At some point, perhaps not soon but eventually, resentment is likely to build up against a healthy elderly population living on the efforts of a financially and family burdened younger group of workers.

We need to take account of the fact also that workers reaching 65 today are probably in better health than those of the 30's when the retirement age of 65 was fixed by passage of the Social Security Act. The 65-70 workers today have generally had better health care, better diets, and the advantage of medical knowledge about antibiotics and other newly-developed medicine.

Many of these 65-70 elderly are not only vigorous and healthy but have a strong desire to continue in the work force. Government has a responsibility to help them to do so. The Emergency Employment Act could help in this connection, but to date not more than one percent of those placed in jobs by the operation of the program have been 65 and over, and not more than four percent for those 55-64. The Age Discrimination Act can be of some help but does not protect beyond age 65. The newly enacted Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and Title IX of the Older Americans Act may, if properly funded, directly influence the situation for those low-income elderly who have poor prospects of employment. These Acts recognize that the choice for men employed under the Acts is a choice between constructive, useful work on the one hand and enforced unemployment on the other.

Instead of forcing older workers out of the labor market, we ought to be encouraging them to stay in

the labor force and offering them incentives to do so. Why, then, do we encourage early retirement at what are often very inadequate pensions and provide disincentives to defend retirement? The answer is that we conceive of the job market as having only a limited number of jobs to be handed out on a preference basis to younger workers with families. Older workers have a lower preference, or none at all. Instead, we should be thinking of the job market as having at all times more jobs that need doing, public and private, than we have workers to do them. At any given time the ratio of public to private jobs may vary but the total will always exceed available manpower. Need for government aid in providing public employment will vary as the public-private job ratio varies. But government must of necessity be an employer of last resort for those older workers who would otherwise be permanently unemployed and on public assistance. Public employment at constructive work ought always to be preferred to forced idleness at public expense.

I believe that government has a responsibility to do more than it has done in the past. I believe we are approaching a time when government will guarantee an opportunity to earn a decent living to every able-bodied man and woman who wants to work, either in private industry if a job can be found or in public service if the private sector cannot supply the job.

I would go further and say that government has a responsibility to remove disincentives and to provide incentives to work for those who are able and willing to do so. This leads me to consider three elements of the Social Security Act which serve to discourage or encourage continuation in the labor force:

1. The retirement test which penalizes those earnings more than $2,400 per annum.

2. The Social Security payroll tax which burdens the worker who continues to work beyond age 65 since it does not permit him a fair increase in his deferred Social Security benefits and serves as a disincentive to the employee and to the employer to retain the older worker in the work force.

3. Increased Social Security benefits for late retirees which now increase only one percent per year for each year's delayed retirement.

The retirement test has been recently liberalized. It permits earnings of $2,400 before benefits are reduced by $1 for each $2 earned. This is an improvement; however, it operates as a work disincentive and is the object of continued attack by those who refuse to accept the fact that bond interest and dividend income may be received in unlimited amounts without penalty while small amounts of earnings trigger the penalty provision. The argument that eliminating the test would cost the system $3 to $4 billion and that this would go to more economically advantaged persons who prefer to work has obviously carried weight with Congress in the past. I believe the retirement test should be further liberalized—at a minimum to $3,600. Ultimately, I believe, it should be eliminated.

The payroll tax, which is designed to finance Social Security payments, has been discussed at great length in the literature on Social Security as respects its regressive nature. I am not concerned about this problem here. However, a question of equity does arise insofar as the tax is applied after age 65 without allowing more than a miniscule increase in benefits. The present one percent per year increase in benefits was apparently included as a partial offset to the tax but is small compared with a true actuarial increase based upon the shorter period during which we can expect benefits to be paid to those retiring after age 65. Again the tax acts as a disincentive to work for the worker who must pay the tax without a comparable increase in benefits and a disincentive to continue to employ for the employer since it increases his cost of doing business. It ought to be looked at from both standpoints and from the point of view of equity since at present, for those over 65, it serves as a penalty for working.

The conclusion is inescapable that earnings will continue to be an important part of total income needed to maintain living standards for our older population. If we are really seeking to encourage our older people to continue in gainful employment instead of driving them out of the labor market, we should be seeking to develop incentives for continuing to work. The Federal Government does this with its employees. The mandatory retirement age is 70 rather than 65. The employee is given the option of continuing to work at full salary and the chance to build additional pension rights by continuing over a longer period. Salary received while employed up to age 70 and the prospect of a substantially better pension in retirement are both powerful incentives for longer employment. On the other hand, workers in Civil Service are given the option of retiring as early as age 55 with 30 years of service. An employee with 41 years and 11 months service may draw an annuity equal to 80 percent of his highest three consecutive years of service. These options give the worker a choice which fairly balances the possibility of earlier retirement at a reduced pension against later retirement with a substantially more adequate pension.

I believe that the need to maintain an adequate living standard comparable to the individual's preretirement standard is great. It will not be met by the Social Security benefit alone and probably not with an added pension, in most cases. Consequently, I believe that careful consideration should be given to providing an actuarially increased Social Security benefit for each year beyond 65 and up to age 70 just as the benefit is actuarially reduced for retirement prior to age 65. The present increase of one percent per year recognizes the principle I would like to see adopted, but this is only token recognition. A question of inherent fairness appears involved. Why should those who want to work and who continue to contribute to the Trust Fund not benefit from such contribution to the Fund?

Let me say in concluding what seems to me to be the church's role in this matter. I have dealt with a rather specific legislative change that seems to be necessary. The church could help us in this regard. The older people in the country now have several organizations that have a strong voice in Washington and in state legislatures. We would welcome the help from churches in promoting those things which we can agree upon as being in the interest of older people, not just the selfish interests of older people and not more than their share. But their fair share, we think, is due them and that is what we are working for. I have worked with the churches in the past and I know that

they have a commitment to the problems of the elderly. I think it is quite natural that their commitment is, first of all, to their own parishioners, and that is to be expected; but I know many church homes, for example, which make no distinction as to whether an occupant comes from their denomination or not. I think the church's general approach on this matter is an ecumenical one.

I want to call your attention to the fact that throughout the country, area agencies on aging are now being formed. There will be about 300 of them by the end of this year, and ultimately about 600 that will cover the country. They will be financed in the major part with federal money, but they will be local in character and they will have local advisory committees. Church members ought to be on them—not as church members representing a church but church-oriented citizens. They will be directing their attention to a need for social service programs in every field. They will be pulling together the resources that are needed in the community to meet the needs of the older citizens in that community. They will need the support of the community in doing what they need to do and in getting these programs developed and getting them into operation. There ought not to be any better place for them to look for recruits for this kind of work than in the church community. So, I commend them to you as a place where your work can begin, if it has not already begun, and one which would be of great value to the older citizens of the country as we move forward in the last half of this century.

Choice in the Economic Process

Carl H. Madden

It is not often these days that a spokesman for business in our society is given the opportunity to discuss ethics and our existing economic system. For the privilege of doing so, I am grateful to you and to your wisdom in organizing this conference.

It is no secret that business shares with other major institutions, including the church, a significant loss of credibility with the American public. The Harris poll shows that five years ago, 59 percent of the people had a lively confidence in business. As of last September, the figure was 29 percent. Even worse, among young people 18 to 20 years old, only 15 percent—one in seven—expressed confidence in the way business is run.

The declining confidence in business cannot be explained by the old doubts about capitalism of the classic Marxists. Fears that capitalism would impoverish the majority while concentrating wealth and income encounter the stubborn post World War II facts of mass prosperity and the maturing of the welfare state.

Throughout the past quarter century, United States family income has risen, poverty has dropped to only 10 percent of Americans, and today the welfare state is here. The federal government now spends nearly 40 percent of its receipts plus borrowings on human resources, only 29 percent on national defense, and state and local governments spend 59 percent of their budgets on health, welfare, and education.

Predictions that depressions would become deeper and more endemic have been proven wrong by a record of stability: since 1945 there has been no 1930s- type depression in any major industrial country.

The old Marxist doctrine that capitalism was imperialistic has toppled down for all but the most doctrinaire minds before the facts of crumbling empires, the explosive growth of world trade and investment, increasing economic interdependence, and the postwar miracles of West Germany and Japan, far more prosperous now than earlier, when armed to the teeth.

How then do we explain the new doubts about our economic institutions? How do we explain the title of your seminar, "Christians Confronting the Economic Crisis?" What economic crisis?

A Brace of Crises

The Crisis of Expectations

One crisis the industrial world confronts is a crisis of expectations. Inflation signifies that the people of the world unrealistically want to spend more now than the world can produce now. When we say that inflation means too much money chasing too few goods, we mean that the world's political leaders authorize more monetary promises than the world economy can fulfill. At bottom, United States inflation—whether guns-and-butter Johnsonian or food-and-energy Nixonian inflation—is a form of untruth in government. Worldwide inflation, at higher rates than in the United States, in other developed countries and at still higher rates in many underdeveloped ones, shows how capital-short the whole world finds itself in the wake of soaring expectations.

It is no accident that people lose faith in political leaders throughout the Western industrial democracies. They lose faith because political leaders curry favor with promises that cannot be delivered except diluted by the hidden tax of inflation.

Christians should know that inflation is a hidden tax, and the most regressive of taxes, falling far heavier on the poor than on the rich. It works by allowing governments to capture resources from people by (1) forcing people into higher tax brackets and (2) paying for—financing—government deficits with cheapened money, used by deficit-ridden governments to commandeer resources from citizens who are often deceived.

It is some kind of commentary on the ethics of government in the United States and Europe that the Arab oil sheiks are forced to admonish the western governments to keep their currencies stable if they want to use them to pay for Arabian oil.

The economics of inflation are well understood, but the politics and sociology should be of mounting concern. When asked about the cause of weakening support of Western governments in the face of the energy shortage, the great English historian Arnold Toynbee explained that we live in "the Age of Greed." Christian humility should acknowledge the possibility that voters themselves help create political leaders who win elections by outpromising one another and who lose them from voter cynicism at their failure to deliver.

Inflation plays a big part in public loss of confidence in business. Consumers must choose how to spend limited budgets. If prices keep rising and quality is

cheapened through cost-cutting, then consumers blame business. Inflation is not the only reason, but it is a big one, that people are unhappy with business.

The Crisis of Growth

Another economic crisis centers in new doubts about economic growth. Taken for granted for generations, the goal of economic growth is now questioned because of its impact on the environment, the depletion of resources, and the growing income gap between the have- and the have-not nations. Indeed, there is the paradox of have-not nations desperately seeking growth while other nations question it.

For at least the past few decades nearly all the nations of the earth have sought economic growth. Science and technology, as they spread around the world, seemed to offer the key to ever-expanding material prosperity. Indeed, nature seemed to offer unlimited abundance, if humankind would merely fashion the tools to seek out, process, and distribute the material goods for the comfort of all.

And however one might judge it on moral grounds, the single-minded pursuit of growth has not been without social and even ethical benefits. Only in the twentieth century, for example, have governments generally begun to assume responsibility for the health, welfare, and economic security of those they governed. However, concern with growth preoccupies us with the quantitative aspects of our lives. Most of us unquestioningly believe that more is better. And we tend to focus our attention throughout society on short-term, day-to-day affairs, hardly looking ahead five years, let alone to the next generation.

Steady economic growth in developed countries has improved health, diet, and education for large numbers. In our country, most people can live without ever knowing poverty. Our high personal incomes and consumption have brought comfort, longevity, mobility, leisure, and entertainment.

But as we approach our third century, the paradoxes of growth become more evident. Technologies we once thought were to free us now threaten to enslave us. The automobile may be one example, giving us both mobility and decaying cities, convenience and foul air, personal choice and urban congestion.

The less-developed areas of the world face even more paradox. They have more people living adequately, but more starving; more literate but more illiterate; more children going to school, but more denied education; more health, but more dying of disease.

Now the environmental issue forces upon us all some new questions: How much is enough? How much production, energy, consumption, population do we need? Are there limits to the growth of material production?

Certainly, it seems clear that today's cause and effect relationships in economic activity are global in scope. If the biblical doctrine holds that all men are brothers, the insights of ecology, space travel, meteorology, the geology and chemistry of the earth, paleontology, anthropology, and modern economics all depict a globally interacting human process, in which local actions can at times reinforce themselves to achieve effects global in scale.

World population increases virtually unchecked. It took humankind two to four million years of life on the planet to reach a population of one billion (1850); it took only 112 years to reach an estimated three billion (1962); and it will take, at present growth rates, hardly more than 30 years to reach five billion (2000).

The history of humankind, when relating population ceilings to stages of technology, has seen three major periods: food gathering, farming, and industrial. The world population ceiling for man as food gatherer, reaching through the 600,000 years of the Old Stone Age or Paleolithic period, was about 20 million, based on two square miles per person needed in the limited areas needed for hunting and gathering. The second stage, beginning about 6000 B.C., brought the farming revolution, which raised the population ceiling to one billion.

The highest estimate of a population ceiling for the third stage, that of industrial technology, has been made by geo-chemist Harrison Brown, and stands at 50 billion. It assumes worldwide industrialization, nuclear and solar power, and all technology now foreseen. Brown concludes the 50 billion people would live in a worldwide megalopolis, and eat food supplied mainly by algae farms and yeast factories. They would use vast amounts of energy to process mostly air, water, and ordinary rock. At present growth rates, the ceiling would be reached in only 150 years.

The Ethics of Allowing Choice

Does the ethics of our political and economic system allow the choice on people's part to respond to the challenge of world inflation and perception of limits to growth? In my view, it does allow the choice, but whether right choices are made remains uncertain. That is, our system allows for the existence of free will in human beings, to do what they will, right or wrong.

First, our system is not perfect. It was Churchill who said, "Democracy is in many ways the worst of political systems—except for all the others." Neither the market system nor democracy is perfect. But surely, among the most powerful ideas in human history have been those of human rights, the scientific spirit and method, the market economy, individual responsibility, and the brotherhood of man. These ideas, however imperfectly, are built into our political and economic system.

Critics of our system claim it is "too materialistic." Well, we who live under it may well be too materialistic. But the system is not philosophically built on a doctrine of materialism, implacable materialism such as is classic Marxism. We do not erroneously believe that people can be molded by "social discipline," or wheat and corn by the "environment." So, we have had no mass efforts at socially disciplining Americans that compares with Stalinism or Hitlerism. Nor have we had aberrations in biological doctrine such as Lysenko's politically-derived view of the inheritance of acquired characteristics in lowly wheat and corn.

Hand-wringers among us caution against making too much of Solzenhetsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, and their views have some merit. But even the greatest historic American dilemma, that of human slavery and race discrimination, violated our ideals and constitution, formed a large part of the basis for our Civil War, and

lie as burdens on the shoulders of individual Americans, Christians among them, as much as if not more than on our institutions as such.

As Justice Brandeis said:

> "The makers of our Constitution undertook to secure conditions favorable to the pursuit of happiness. They recognized the significance of man's spiritual nature, of his feelings, of his intellect. They knew that only a part of the pain, pleasure, and satisfaction of life is to be found in the material things. They sought to protect Americans in their beliefs, their thoughts, their emotions, and their sensations."

The ultimate test of democracy is not material possessions. Nor is it the condition of the economy or the state of technology, important as these are. The ultimate test of democracy is the quality of its individuals. The grand, leading principle and end of the free society is the individual and his development, in all its rich diversity—his awareness, his personal powers, and the richness of his life.

The political and economic structures of society are so closely related that they are ultimately little more than aspects of the same organization. The free market by no accident protects the intellectual as well as the businessman.

As George Stigler of the University of Chicago has said, "The immense proliferation of general education, of scientific progress, and of democracy are all coincidental in time and place with the emergence of the free enterprise system. . . ."

Critics of competition, however, sneer with Anatole France that "in a capitalistic society both rich men and tramps are free to sleep under bridges." They should not forget that throughout our history as a nation, we have tempered the harsh winds of competition against many shorn lambs.

Even in the nineteenth century heyday of *laissez-faire* policy, government acted positively to protect and develop people. Our "infant industry" manufacturers and their workers enjoyed a century of protective tariffs. There is our grand public education system begun with Jefferson's Northwest Ordinance of 1787, expanded to public high schools, low-tuition state universities, state land-grant polytechnic institutes, and now public technical and community colleges. There were the Homestead Acts, that gave any citizen (except Blacks and Indians, sad to say) the capital for a fair start in 150 acres of almost free land. And in the nineteenth century there were the inland improvements financed by government, the land grants for railroads, and the state and federal public parks for ordinary people.

Twentieth century counterparts to temper the competitive winds are also impressive. Today, the welfare state is mature and set in place. No one knows how much industry spends on education and training, since no one keeps statistics. One corporation alone, though, spends more for this purpose than is spent by any university in the nation. Nearly every major industry and corporation offers in-house training, tuition rebate for technical or college education and sometimes for graduate school education, and most have self-conducted training and management development programs.

In short, while ours is the ethics of the marketplace and of choice, with rewards that rise with performance, it is very hard to sustain the argument today that either the society or the corporation short changes people broadly for lack of opportunity or lack of protection. It could be better, yes. But is it cruel or heartless, no.

The Consequences of Choice

Thomas Jefferson pointed out long ago, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

Jefferson believed that knowledge, whether of science or politics, was a key to preserving freedom in a civilized society. The crises of inflation and doubts about growth place a premium on understanding as a basis for ethical choice. At the level of personal behavior, goodwill can easily be equated with human kindness. But at the level of human understanding needed to deal with economic crises, good intentions are not enough.

The existence of choice in our society poses for us all grave problems of understanding. We are living through a period when old economic dogmas are being questioned by the infusion of new scientific truth. We need to recognize that the output of goods and services is inevitably accompanied by the depletion of resources and by waste and pollution that grows faster than useful output grows.

Recognizing this truth, we can see that no-growth is a non-issue. No one who seriously thinks about it advocates no economic growth. The concern is about environmental and social costs of growth and about how to pay them. Science itself tells us that pay them we must, if we wish to remain free and in a state of civilization.

We need to recognize that our far-ranging desires to use wealth cannot for long exceed our limited ability to produce wealth without inflation.

Business recognizes the validity of people's desires in using wealth. As Richard C. Gerstenberg, Chairman of General Motors, wrote recently in the *New York Times*:

> As a nation we have launched ourselves on a most ambitious social agenda. We want to achieve even higher standards of education, health, and well-being for all our people. We want to abolish poverty. We want to preserve and restore the beauty of our great resources; our land, our waters, and our skies. We want to give every American—of whatever color, religion, or background—an equal opportunity to become all he is capable of becoming. We aim for full employment, and even more—the full opportunity for everyone to participate in all that America has to offer.
>
> These tasks are inherent and they are right—right for our country and for our time. . . .

However, the truth of knowledge is that we must as a nation be willing to pay the price in real terms—the full price—that goes along with these objectives.

We have to pay for more education by willingness to use great new technology that would allow us today to create, for example, a nationwide TV university. Are our scholars and teachers willing to make the readjustment we need of them, to achieve our goal by learning to use fewer materials and more electronic resources?

We have to improve the productivity not only of

education but also of health care. Are we being ethically honest to dump into our economic system a huge new monetary demand for health care through governmental financing without taking the measures needed to increase the supply of health care? We need more medical and health care training facilities. Today fully one of every two wholly qualified medical school applicants is turned down. We need more para-professionals, more community planning of health care needs, more peer review by doctors of each other's work, more personal care better organized for poor and rural populations, better health education. Otherwise, new health care laws will only lead to rapid further rises in health care costs and a sad disappointment of the American people.

We want to preserve our environment, but are we willing to pay the cost? In general, if we do pay the cost in the price of the products and services we buy, then the price of those that heavily pollute will have to rise. We must pay, when we use coal, for the cost of restoring strip-mined land. We must pay, when we use cars in the central city, for the congestion and pollution. And we must pay, when we use increasingly precious oil and gas, for their increasing security and rising cost.

Choice based on knowledge makes a people free and civilized, but not necessarily a people whose personal consumption of scarce goods and services must always be rising. If waste and pollution rise faster than useful output, then the relative prices of heavily polluting goods and services must rise. But in our economic system of profit and loss, the lure of profits brings on the market substitutes that pollute less and are relatively cheaper. Our economy gives producers incentives, if they are allowed to exercise them, to substitute one industry for another, one process for another, across a wide spectrum, depending on relative prices.

If, however, business is so regulated that it cannot shift capital from the old to the new industries and processes, because some groups are temporarily disrupted, then the larger issue of ethics facing the world economic system is frustrated. Some among us who would limit imports of cars, textiles, steel, or chemicals or would take away the freedom of business to relocate because of threats to existing local jobs, or would in many other ways put business in a straitjacket of regulation, in fact frustrate needed change to the mode of post-industrial growth required of a world facing threats of world overpopulation and environmental damage.

Indeed, the great economic task facing the world is for rapid shifting of capital investment, based on long-range factors, to new industries and processes designed to protect the environment. We want economic growth in harmony with the environment.

Consider the scope of these tasks and the need for cooperation both at home and throughout the world. First, population must be stabilized throughout the world. To do this cooperatively may require new investment in knowledge resources, such as the TV satellite now set in position over India that beams new knowledge of farming, family planning, and health care to the Indian villages. But it means much more investment of other kinds.

Second, there must be a worldwide program to conserve scarce resources. Consider the investment funds needed to achieve such a shift in world priorities, and the savings needed to match such funds. Today, in this country, the investment of business firms in pollution abatement equipment is wholly unrequited. That is, such investment does not add to the output of products or services which bring revenue into the firm. We do not count the output of "clean environment" or "restored land" as wealth, though it surely is.

Third, we need new models and understandings for both social and economic development in the industrial world. It is time to apply real science to social affairs, as we learned to apply science to industrial affairs a century ago. New wealth lies in reducing material inputs to production, improving energy efficiency, and changing life-styles. We need to realize that more need not be better, that quality use is better than quantity consumption, that wealth iself can be produced to be conserved, not consumed.

We need to learn how to decide on long-range grounds, not merely for next week, next month, or next year. We need to realize that growth is hardly desirable if it means depleted resources, foul air, damaged streams, threatened wildlife. We need to know that growth need not mean such damage. But we also need to learn how to balance environmental concern and economic growth, so that neither destroys the other.

Fourth, there must be a larger flow of trade and investment between rich and poor countries. Such a cooperative policy by the developed countries is not charity but world security, essential to a workable and safe world community.

Finally, science and technology itself have to be mobilized on a world scale to reduce ignorance, contribute to both freedom and civilization, and aim our knowledge toward global understanding and management of resources.

Choice: Ethic or Human Survival

In our cynical age, politicians and other leaders at times avoid telling people the hard choices. Our major worldwide crises of inflation and concern about growth can be easily obscured. Some argue business is too concentrated. But today's huge United States corporations compete in world markets, and non-United States corporations are growing faster than ours. Others call for tax reform that would push up consumption when the desperate need of the whole world is for investment. Still others cry "profits windfalls" though inflation eats away funds corporations set aside for capital replacement, creates illusory profits when inventory prices rise because of inflation, and pushes investment into quick turnover activities instead of basic shifts in capital to new processes.

All our major institutions are coming under pressure from the demands of a knowledge explosion. We often describe the growth of knowledge itself as a "crisis." Knowledge itself, some would have us believe, is dangerous, the cause of "future shock." We live partly in a period of reaction against new knowledge and of nostalgia in taste.

But if God is love, to seek and celebrate knowledge of God's creation is a form of worship for Christian men and women of understanding. The greatest danger to the ethics of choice is fear and ignorance; it is a far greater danger now to our civilization than ever before. Our religions should celebrate both love and knowledge; of such is the ethics of civilized choice.

Toward a Christian Understanding of Enough

Elmer S. West, Jr.

I have a pressing dilemma. I stand between the plain teachings of Jesus, the needs of destitute people, and the soft seduction of my affluent world. I am like millions of others who, in relating to things and people, have a tendency to get priorities misplaced. We are inclined toward a way of life which makes people work for things rather than making things work for people.

My thought on the subject "Toward a Christian Understanding of Enough" began to incubate several months ago when I read an article in *The Christian Century* entitled "Small Is Beautiful: Toward a Theology of 'Enough.'" The gift of the article was that "The idolatry of wealth has molded us and our thinking. It makes us think absurdities" [*The Christian Century*, 7/27/71, p. 900]. The author, E. F. Schumacher, who is a director of the Intermediate Technology Group of Great Britain, warns his readers about what we are doing to ourselves and to others in our mad rush for more than enough, and he points out the grave risk of ecological suicide.

These insights have struck a sensitive spot inside me—covered over by years of striving, getting, and spending. My reaction is rather natural for a middle-class, middle-aged man, born in the early 1920's with the sharp sting of financial insecurity lying deep in my psyche, injected by the hypodermic needle of the Great Depression.

The thought-responses spinning off from that eight-minute reading experience have continued to bounce around, first on the "back roads of my memory" and more recently in the forefront of my brain. How much is enough for me? How much money, how much property, how much of the stuff money can buy—how much is enough?

When I have more than enough, who suffers? Do I? My children? Those who have less-than-enough? Is there any connection between my more-than-enough and their less-than-enough? Is there anything I can do about it? At the same time I am criticizing the dependence of poor people on public welfare, am I setting up a private welfare system for my own children, perhaps causing them not to know the value of a dollar? What does all of this have to do with being Christian?

During these months, this type of struggle-thinking has dominated our family's conversations. Our son-in-law gave it a name when he sent me a newspaper clipping with a note attached which read, "Here's something else for your 'enough-stuff.'"

This is not a new issue for Christians. It is one to which the church has returned many times since the first century. Moral choices with reference to economic life underscores the seriousness with which we must consider it. It is difficult to think of any area in personal life or in society which is not affected directly or indirectly by economic considerations.

Christians have no choice but to face this dilemma. Old Testament prophets demanded it and Jesus' call to discipleship lays a claim upon this area of our lives. There are no easy answers. The temptation to be legalistic is as strong as it is dangerous. But the complex question for the Christian remains, "How much is enough?" Answers are highly personal; they are also inescapably social. St. Augustine wrote, "He who possesses a surplus possesses the goods of other." Was he right?

Money is amoral—like water, or wind, or fire. It is as powerful for good or bad as they are. How we get money, how we spend it, how much we hoard and how much we share—all of these conditions have profound moral implications for the Christian.

The Pressures of Society

Let's face it, we are infected by a love of things. The disease has reached epidemic proportions. Even children are susceptible. Two years ago, our six-year-old had his bicycle stolen. A month later he was still experiencing sharp bereavement. In trying to explain his utter sense of loss, he said with deep feeling, "But, Daddy, you don't understand. My bike was the only thing that has ever *really* belonged to me."

Children make materialistic comparisons. Our friend's young daughter was afraid that her father wasn't keeping up with the neighbors. "Why is it," she asked, "that all our neighbors have black-topped driveways and we don't have one?"

Too often, we have let a concern for things dominate our daily conversations. One large insurance company lays it on the line in a sales pitch: "What you own owns you." A competitive society places indescribable pressure on all of us, rich and poor, to keep up the rat race of materialism.

The red flags of danger are flying. Arnold Toynbee in an article he called "The Failure of Affluence" becomes a prophet of doom. He writes, "We shall bring upon ourselves lethal tribulations if we do not make a radical break with our present paramount aim in life. The now paramount aim is economic expansion for every individual, every social class, every nation, and all mankind. The aim of limitless economic expansion and enrichment has to be abandoned for two reasons, each of which is decisive in itself. This aim is immoral and it is also impractical.

"To make economic expansion the paramount purpose in life is immoral because it is a glorification of greed. . . . Extinction is the ultimate penalty for an unlimited appetite for economic expansion because the resources for satisfying this appetite are limited" [*PHP*, October 1972, pp. 6-11].

More recently, reflecting on the energy crisis, he said, "But now I feel there is something incorrigible about us . . . , a scramble for oil among the nations, each looking out for itself. We are measuring everything by money," he writes, "and the irony of it is that even our money is melting away."

We need to mix with our sense of gloom a little bit of humor to make life bearable. We now have come full circle on our automobile merry-go-round binge. Having spent upwards of $100 billion on the interstate highway system and billions more to buy huge cars with 400 horses under their hoods, we now are privileged to move from place to place at 55 mph. I was doing that well thirty-five years ago in my grandfather's Model A Ford that cost $580 when new and gasoline that cost 15 cents per gallon!

Can society help us understand what is enough? Listen to a bank president answer, "No, money can't

go out of style. The urge to spend money has always been part of the human condition. Insofar as we can project, it always will be. How much money is enough? Enough money is enough to buy all the things you want—and I don't know anybody who ever stops wanting."

Poor people can't help us, for their resources have not even begun to catch up with their basic needs—to say nothing of their wants. They have been duped by the system, for materialism has not only to do with what one has, but with what one fervently wishes he had.

Can tax laws help us with our problem? Hardly; tax laws have always been slanted toward the rich. Jesse Jackson said at our 1969 seminar in Chicago, "There is a golden rule in our country all right. Them that's got the gold makes the rules." And the rich get richer! Today, those making up one percent of our population own forty percent of our national wealth, having doubled their percentage in 45 years.

Citizens at every level of economic life are caught in the trap of materialism. Aggressive advertising through the mass media has created a nightmare of frantic desire for the poor. Middle-class people are knocking themselves out, literally—out of health, out of marriage, and out of touch with their children—just to do what they think is necessary to "make it." Millions of wives and mothers in this country work outside the home, not for necessities but for luxuries. In its survey on American family life, *Better Homes and Gardens* found that 37 percent of the respondents felt the greatest threat to family life in America today is materialism.

Even the rich are trapped. Psychiatrist James Knight of Tulane Medical School repeats the humorous but sobering words of a wealthy patient who moaned, "By the time I discovered that money did not buy happiness, I already had five million dollars. What do I do now, where do I go from here?"

Biblical Understanding

When we turn to the Bible for some light on personal possessions, we see a significant progression of thought and teaching. The basic principle of the Old Testament is that all property belongs to God who created it; man has no absolute ownership—only stewardship. Along with the affirmation that all wealth belongs to God are numerous warnings against pride of possession. It was an assumption of the Old Testament writers that property, being God's gift, is good. Prior to the prophets, when Old Testament writers spoke of a righteous man being blessed, it was understood that many of his blessings were material in nature, though the Book of Job repudiates this.

When we come to the preaching of the prophets, we find strong statements against the rich who violate the property and personal rights of the poor. The prophets thunder out against selfishness, greed, and injustice.

In the New Testament we find that some of the most radical statements Jesus made had to do with possessions: (1) He told a rich man to sell all that he had and follow him (Matt. 19:16-22); (2) he said that a widow's two coins represented the greatest gift because she, out of her poverty, gave all that she had (Mark 12:41-44); (3) in his parable of the last judgment, Jesus indicated that one's destination after death would depend on concern for his brother—giving water to the thirsty, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked (Matt. 25:31-46).

Jesus made no general demand of his disciples that they give up all their possessions in order to follow him. Only one time did he give such a command—to the rich young ruler. Evidently Jesus understood that, despite all protestations of morality, this man was addicted to money abuse. In such a situation, as with an alcoholic, there is no half-way point. Jesus said, "Give it up. Get unhooked from your money and follow me!"

Jesus assumed that people should have enough to meet their basic needs and to help meet the needs of others less fortunate. His teaching in Matthew 25 carries this implication.

Jesus was not out to get rich people. He was concerned primarily about man's relationship with God and with his fellowman. He saw love of wealth, or covetousness, as the greatest enemy of true religion. Paul went so far as to say ". . . the love of money is the root of all evil things" (I Tim. 6:10 NEB). But Jesus did remind his hearers, ". . . where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:20 KJV). It is not money as such but one's growing preoccupation with getting it, protecting it, investing it in order to get more, and spending a prodigious amount of time viewing, selecting, buying, using, and paying for the things that money buys—this is what concerned Jesus. A person becomes preoccupied with gathering more possessions than he needs which makes him less sensitive to the presence and needs of persons in his family and in the larger community.

In his family story about Lazarus and the rich man, Jesus was making the point that when one's life is characterized by an affluence which is unresponsive to the misery and needs of his fellowman, then that person's life-style is immoral and he must eventually suffer the consequences. Certainly, the rich man did not think he had more than enough. He, no doubt, felt that he deserved to live as he did. A preacher friend of mine some thirty years ago bought his first big luxury car. His justification for it was that it seemed to fit his position in life; therefore, he just felt he belonged in a big car.

We take for granted that a person wants to get ahead. Therefore, it is expected, though lamented, that a professional person may charge increasingly high fees although he really doesn't need that much money; that business' percentage of profit will be continually expanded so long as the product sells; that every loophole in the tax structure will be exploited though it means that those less able to pay taxes will pay more of them.

Man is basically an acquisitive animal and enough is never really enough. But, Jesus' call to discipleship involves a new direction and a reordering of priorities. He said, "Beware! Be on your guard against greed of every kind, for even when a man has more than enough, his wealth does not give him life" (Luke 12:15 NEB).

Jesus seems to be saying that there is a limit beyond which a Christian should hesitate to go in the hoarding of possessions. If money in reasonable quantities is used responsibly for needed projects in family and community and church, such action deserves respect

and admiration for it serves the future of society. But, if acquisitiveness is for its own sake—beyond any possible basic need, simply to pile money upon money, house upon house, to get bigger things and greater quantity—then the teachings of Jesus raise a serious question for the Christian.

When does one pass the point of having more than enough? The answer is highly personal, having to do with one's understanding of the nature of the gospel and the call to discipleship. One problem today is that we have been so drugged by materialism that not many Christians are even raising the question.

Jesus was concerned about persons and their potential as children of God. He had friends who had enough and more—Zachaeus, Joseph of Arimathaea, Mary and Martha. To those who had enough, he emphasized restraint, modesty, brotherliness, generosity and justice—even as he would to us today.

The Church and Materialism

Early in its struggling life the New Testament Church sought to come to terms with the thrust of materialism, and from then until now, as the church has grown wealthier and has identified more and more with the establishment, the struggle with materialism has continued.

After the Civil War, Southern Baptists began to express themselves in the economic arena. John L. Eighmy, whose penetrating book entitled *Churches in Cultural Captivity,* documents some of the instances when Baptist editors "accepted uncritically the ideology of business success that made material prosperty evidence of divine favor and poverty the just reward of imprudence. *The Religious Herald* [Virginia Baptist paper, May 2, 1878, p. 2] defended inequality of wealth as the result of 'natural and immutable laws' and advised the poor, lacking the virtues of industry, perseverance and economy, not to envy the rich, but to accept the state for which God has chosen them" (pp. 43,44).

During the intervening years the church has continued to become more wealthy. For the most part, it has kept a conservative, middle-class posture concerning materialism. Through it all, the church has been more and more inclined toward larger budgets and bigger buildings. Shailer Matthews rather cynically summed it up a generation ago when he wrote, "The preaching of the church against wealth has been equaled only by its zeal to obtain it" (Matthews, *Jesus on Social Institutions,* p. 91).

Herbert Torr, writing in *Heaven Help Us,* pointed up a paradox: "Last week he attacked Communists for being atheistic materialists. In a three-million-dollar church full of millionnaire parishioners whose vestry has just appropriated four-hundred-thousand dollars for a new entrance and pipe organ, a thirty-thousand-dollar [a-year] priest denounced Communists for worshiping Mammon. Other times he has preached that Negroes must never flaunt any law whatsoever and that Americans should send spiritual resources abroad instead of more foreign aid" (p. 27).

I still remember the profound frustration created for me as a college student attending a Baptist church where wealthy owners of coal mines were the kind and generous spiritual leaders, then sharing in midnight dormitory bull sessions with the sons of the miners. The hostility of the students was almost beyond control as they talked about the dangerous, subhuman conditions under which their fathers worked and the poverty level at which their families eked out an existence.

Churches in America have great wealth and, therefore, great power. So churches have to face the dilemma of what is enough for an institutional standpoint. Churches are stewards too! This means that a church has to make financial decisions in keeping with its understanding of the mission God has for it in the world. This might mean a choice between a more person-centered ministry in the community instead of an additional building to be used one or two hours per week. Or, it could mean a much broader utilization of building space already available to serve various groups in the community. At the denominational level, it may involve a continuing scrutiny of staff and program commitments in an attempt to be as faithful and efficient as possible in the use of the tithes and offerings given for Christian witness.

We preachers have to accept a considerable amount of responsibility for the scale of financial priorities which churches adopt. Churches hardly ever build another building or raise the pastor's salary if he *really* doesn't want it. One honest, well-paid preacher summed up his philosophy on the subject of compensation and gifts by saying: "I've always had a consistent attitude about money. I've accepted it in whatever amount and from whatever source it comes." Another preacher, equally honest, confessed to having developed a talent with reference to laymen in his church. He said, "I have learned the fine art through many long years of practice; when eating out, to reach for the check, but never quite get it."

Members of a local church could become more sensitive to the enough level consistent with Christian discipleship by taking steps to break through the money taboo. Seward Hiltner says that up to a generation ago the great taboo was sex. But he says that has now been replaced by money. Hiltner says he longs for the day when we will talk as freely about money as we now talk about sex.

The Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., asks each adult candidate for membership to obtain a personal loan form from a bank, fill it out in detail, and share a financial autobiography with at least one member in the church. This attempt to explode the money taboo has created openness among members in a sensitive area where usually there is secrecy and suspicion.

Someone should make a study of church budgets to ascertain what causes the finance committee to withhold specific information on staff salaries from members. I believe this is a fairly recent development in most churches. There may be some good reasons for not making this information available, but I haven't heard them. It seems we have come a far distance from the early church where "they had all things in common."

The same point can be made, I believe, regarding salaries of Southern Baptist Convention denominational leaders. What does it say about our concept of church when a citizen may be able to find out the salary of any public official in his city or state with relative ease but finds it difficult or even impossible to

obtain similar information concerning one of his own denominational leaders?

Another area of economic concern for the church related to our question of "How much is enough?" has to do with taxation. Again, this is no new issue, but it is one which we need to face.

Within the past few weeks statistics have been made public which indicate that approximately one-sixth of all tax-exempt property in the state of Maryland is owned by churches. This is in a state which has a large concentration of federal installations because of its proximity to the Washington, D.C., area. But mark this, the churches own property worth $125 million more than the State of Maryland itself owns!

In our own Southern Baptist Convention churches and agencies, our property and investments are well in excess of $4 billion, most of which is tax free.

Now my question is this: At what point does the "enough level" of the church infringe upon the general welfare of the citizenry? Is it right for a citizen who has no church affiliation to have to pay more property taxes because the churches pay none? I believe that when the founding fathers wrote the laws which exempted churches from taxation, they had in mind only a place of worship. Therefore, I favor leaving the actual house of worship tax free and paying taxes on all other church-owned property.

A related matter has to do with the minister's housing allowance. Why should a minister be favored with a tax loophole on his housing expenses? Housing allowance for ministers run anywhere from a few hundred dollars annually up to many thousands of dollars.

Many ministers have fought the depletion tax writeoff for big oil companies, and rightly so. How about the housing tax writeoff for ministers? Actually, this is a loophole for the church, for it allows them to pay their minister a comparably lower salary due to his saving in income taxes.

The church's battle with materialism is never-ending. Jesus continually warned against acquisitiveness. The only time he resorted to anything approaching violence was when he drove the money changers out of the Temple.

Two years ago at Southwestern Seminary, Ernest Campbell made the point that the church is forever asking other institutions to change while refusing to face its own need for change. There are some encouraging signs that many churches are facing up to their own materialism and becoming much better stewards.

Authentic Life-Style

Jesus' call to discipleship is an invitation to a new life-style. It includes accepting the good news about liberation from addiction to money abuse and thing-obsession. For money abuse, like drug abuse, is dehumanizing personally and tempts us to treat others as less than human.

This is no narrow stewardship of which Jesus speaks. It goes far beyond some legalistic tenth of our income. It involves the whole scene—our gettings, our spendings, our savings. For when we salt away too much in savings, we can't share it with those in need, when we drop a few hundred or a few thousand on something which spells luxury, it means somebody goes without necessities—bread, water, clothing—and a chance to be a person.

How can we alter our life-style to produce a healthy balance between using things and loving people?

One procedure is through the deliberate cultivation of a mental attitude toward the material world which neither exalts things to the level of deity nor debases them to the position of devil.

Theron Rankin, executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, SBC, shortly before his untimely death in 1953, was giving the charge to a group of new missionaries as they prepared to embark on their first tour of service. He reminded them: "Just now, you are having to be concerned about all the things you need to take with you for your overseas mission. Let me make a suggestion. Take all of these things in your hands, not in your heart. Our family has lost all of our things more than once during our years in the Orient and I can testify that we came out all right in each experience. Keep things in your hands and love in your hearts."

John and Lela Hendrix are struggling with the authentic Christian life and, in the process, are developing a philosophy about things. The following guidelines they have developed are revealing:

- A thing has value if you make it—clothing, furniture, or whatever; if it has personal investment in it—time, thought, energy, personal gifts. A house should have things that are made by adults and children.
- A thing has value if it is a gift. The primary transaction of the Christian fellowship is giving and receiving. A home that has things received as gifts has deeper meaning than if those things were bought selfishly.
- A thing has value if it has personal and family history in it. Antiques have value only if they have been owned by people whom you know and love. Is it possible for something new to have value? Only if it has careful investment of time and thought with plans for retaining it over a long period of time. An "old" car has value because your life is in it—trips, camping, rushing to hospitals, carrying friends.
- A thing has value if it frees you from nonpersonal transactions to personal ones. Therefore, a dishwasher might have value if that time saved is taken for personal or interpersonal renewal.
- Money has value if it is invested in persons through gifts, education, books, and worthwhile causes.

As I contemplate what the Hendrixes see as qualities which give things meaning, I begin to think about all the things I have accumulated which have little or no real value. Ernest Collenbach has written a book, *Living Poor with Style* (Dell, 1972), which he dedicated "to all the beautiful losers who have lost things that really don't matter." Collenbach's words lead to a logical question—"What are my 'survival things'?" If we learned today that we were to be invaded within twenty-four hours and our family had to flee with whatever we could carry, what would we take? Or, to put it another way, suppose our family was going overseas for five years and we had to reduce our belongings by 80 percent, what would we include in the remaining 20 percent?

Playing family games, along the lines of the above questions can help develop a sensitivity to the value

of things. There are other such questions. Rather than approach this matter from the "survival things" standpoint, turn it around and ask, "What could we do without?" We are told that Socrates strode into the marketplace in Athens one day and, looking all about, cried out: "Ye gods, that there should be so many things in this world that Socrates doesn't want!"

Some other thing-oriented exercises for individuals and families might include the game, "What Do I Want? Why? What Do I Need? Why?"

These little games can have deep meaning. Just as simple exercises tone the muscles and change the appearance and health of the whole body, so these and similar exercises can have a profound bearing on what we consider to be enough, running all the way from fads and foods to fashions and factories.

Here are a few very specific considerations which might be pondered. Do we need as much money as we are now making? How about planning to stay at the present salary level or even request a reduction in salary? Some of us might be twice as free if we had half as much to live on. How about moving to a smaller and more modest house? This would cut expenses considerably and free money for other purposes.

The oil shortage has forced thousands of people to reevaluate their automobiles. How about going to a smaller car with fewer gadgets just for the good of humanity?

What about clothes? Probably half of us in this room could go without any major expenditure on clothes for two years and be just as well off though perhaps not quite as stylish.

No one will accept all the suggestions which I or anyone else would make about such matters, nor should he. Art Gish in his helpful book, *Beyond the Rat Race,* makes this point well when he writes, ". . . we are not discussing rigid and unswerving observance of any principles or rules. We are not setting up any absolute standard to be followed, but rather giving suggestions which point to freedom and the good life. We will not all live on the same plane. How much we consume will depend somewhat on age, occupation, health, climate, and location of residence. We do not all have the same tastes."

In talking about a liberated life-style related to things, Gish makes the important point that it can't be "practiced for its own sake. Otherwise it leads to self-righteousness. It can become a powerful witness, however, if combined with a life of service to others. It can give courage and hope to others to break out of their slavery and it can give power and authority to our own lives. In a new way, we can recapture the best vision of the Roman Catholic orders. If we are free of financial worries, we can use our lives for meaningful purposes. We save time by not wasting it on trivia. By reducing our needs we can get a long-term loan from ourselves at no interest to be used to do what we consider important."

Making Things Work for People

Attempting to develop new Christian attitudes toward things requires dialogue, reading, and contemplation about the nature and purpose of life in an affluent society. Through a revelation of Jesus' teachings about "enough," we open the door to liberation from the multitude of possessions which have claimed us and, in some ways, chained us. Being compulsive and puritanical about sacrificing our more-than-enough offers little reward. It only results in a joyless, judgmental approach to life. But as we substitute the use of necessary things for the love of unnecessary things, we become free at last to shift the balance of our intentional love to persons.

The impetus could come as well from the other direction. As we become more involved with persons, we will become less preoccupied with things. It doesn't matter which source of motivation causes the change; the important concern is that the shift take place. People must come before things.

There are many ways to make things work for people. At the personal level there is the thought gift, the sharing of something we have made, or the catalytic effect of planning and executing a joint project for the common good. Another approach is the investment of time and ability in assisting other persons to gain new knowledge and skills for acquiring the necessary things of life and using them more productively. Job training for the unemployed or underemployed, consumer education, and financial counseling are some other ways we can help make things work for people.

Social Stewardship

What can we do to honor God and help our brothers and sisters? We can shift our own priorities to seek out those qualities which contribute to true humanity. It may not be too far-fetched to say that the "too muchness of affluence" tends to dull some of the better human qualities of those above-the-enough level even as the too littleness of poverty blunts the potential of those beneath that level.

We Christians can begin to practice what Joseph Fletcher calls an updated social stewardship. This is not to replace our own personal stewardship spelled out by Jesus in his call to "dollar discipleship." Such discipleship means that we seek seriously to ascertain what is enough for us economically and then set about to share our surplus in ways that will be helpful to other individuals or organizations working for economic justice. We do this not as charity but in acknowledgment of God's ownership of all we have, affirming the desire that justice be done to those who have less than they need.

By practicing social stewardship, we Christians accept responsibility for helping to change the system of our community and nation which for too long has favored the rich and penalized the poor. We can work for a more equitable tax system—for income tax laws with a minimum of loopholes and for repeal of regressive sales and property taxes. We can work for quality education, open housing, equality of job opportunities, adult education, and training for the unemployed. We can get out and work for the election of those political leaders who will support our convictions about social stewardship.

Conclusion

Finally, let us recall the problem and the purpose in our pursuit of a "Christian Understanding of Enough." The problem is that too many of us have more-than-enough while too many of our brothers and sisters have less-than-enough. Both groups are de-

humanized to the degree that they are captured—one group by plenty, the other by poverty. Part of the purpose is to understand more clearly how Christ's call to discipleship offers us release from slavery to money abuse and the "too much" syndrome. Another part of the purpose is to see how to live as liberated persons, free to extend justice and enhance love by making things work for people, not against them.

Some Immoralities in Prevailing Economic Morality

Harvey Seifert

Habitual murderers normally do not sit in church pews. An unrepentant killer who keeps on murdering people is clearly not enjoying full fellowship with God. Neither is he welcomed by civilized society. There is also another way of forcing death on people, by paying so much less than the prevailing wage that they are forced to live under physically substandard conditions. Lack of nourishing food and adequate medical attention can be just as deadly as a bullet. One can deprive families of decent housing just as surely by throwing them out of work as by burning their homes. Arson might even be kinder, since they could at least collect the insurance and rebuild. Again, there are comparatively few such accessories to marauding and murdering who attend churches. We ordinarily are not so rapaciously selfish as to contradict the accepted decencies of our time. Most employers pay something fairly close to the prevailing wage. They are ethically about as sensitive as their average contemporaries.

But it is now becoming clear that there is a third level of responsibility for human suffering. What are commonly regarded as decent humanitarian standards also contribute to the physical or spiritual deaths of thousands of people. Our pews are filled with people who are implicated in that kind of killing. Some things highly regarded among us are actually grossly immoral. Continuation of this kind of immortality in the name of morality will lead to doom. As the prophecy of Isaiah put it, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness. . . . As the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom go up like dust" (Isaiah 5:20, 24). Most of us lack something of full fellowship with God so long as we do not repent of our customary standards for success, our apathy about grave inequality, or our insensitivity to those who cry for freedom. We cannot continue economic practices which perpetuate war, pollution, or waste without such catastrophe as the world has never experienced.

The Bible is clear that our treatment of other persons is related to our fellowship with God. To translate into modern terms, Amos had God saying that he hates and despises our organ preludes and prayers and offerings, so long as justice does not "roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream" (Amos 5:21-24). Similar words from Jesus are, "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). In the parable of the sheep and the goats, the basis for entrance into the kingdom of God is benevolent treatment of needy humanity. "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:40). The two great guidelines of Jesus are tightly joined; we are to love God and to love neighbor. Or, in the words of I John (4:20), "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."

Indifference to human need is rebellion against God. It blocks our own growth and at the same time destroys the full possibility of our social life together. Humankind was created and is loved by God. Every person is to be given an equal opportunity to develop his full potentiality and to have full access to the resources of God's creation. When we neglect that, we are fighting against God, and we are not living the life of Christian love.

Biblical teaching also makes it plain that priority is to be given the needs of the poor. As Karl Barth put this for the church, "Casting all false impartiality aside, the Church must concentrate first on the lower and lower levels of human society. The poor, the socially and economically weak and threatened, will always be the object of its primary and particular concern" (*Community, State and Church.* Doubleday, 1960, p. 173). The prophetic judgment is particularly severe toward the rich and the powerful. Amos proclaimed woe "to those who lie upon beds of ivory" and "trample upon the poor" (6:4, 5:11). The more we have the more is expected of us (Luke 12:48). Our gospel is one that brings liberation to the poor, the captives, and the oppressed (Luke 4:18). This is not to say that the rich are to be neglected, or that they do not have needs also—but it is to say that among the major needs of the rich is precisely that they should begin to share with the poor. Saul Alinsky once said that if I have bread and my brother has none, he cannot eat and I cannot sleep—for fear he will kill me and take the bread. It might be added that we should not be able to sleep because of our anguish of conscience.

The moral problem of the rich would be agonizing for each one of us if we had the kind of love which Bishop Gore described as "the capacity to read statistics with compassion." The statistics about distribution of wealth in the United States can be portrayed in a representation of Uncle Sam's dinner table. The distribution is so arranged that at one end a single person feasts from something over ten plates. The next two people reach out to approximately four plates. The next eight eat from five plates, while at the lower end of the table, nine chairs are clustered around half a plate. We all know what interpersonal relationships within a family would be like if dinners were divided in that way. How then under these circumstances are we to build into national life something of the qualities of a family, at least to the extent of common goals, lower crime rates, and fuller cooperation?

The situation is even worse on the international scene. A distinguished economist, Robert L. Heilbroner,

has sketched the changes which would take place if a typical American suburban family were transformed into a typical family in the underdeveloped areas—that portion of the world inhabited by two-thirds of the world's population. First the family's house would be stripped of all furniture, except for a chair, and a kitchen table. All clothes would disappear, except for each member of the family his oldest suit or dress, shirt or blouse. The head of the family might have a pair of shoes; the others would not. Along with all kitchen appliances would go the contents of all cupboards, except for a box of matches, a small bag of flour, a bit of sugar and salt, some moldy potatoes, a few onions, and a dish of dried beans. All utilities would be shut off, including running water. Then the house itself would be taken away and the family moved to the toolshed. If the radio remained, the family would be raised above the typical. There would no longer be a newspaper or books, a postman or fireman. The two-classroom school would be three miles away and the midwife-operated clinic ten miles distance (*The Great Ascent*, Harper & Row, 1963, pp. 23ff.).

For two thirds of the world's population the number one nutritional problem is malnutrition. Our major nutritional problem is obesity. We get too fat. Perhaps we should amend our version of the Lord's Prayer to read, "Forgive us this day our daily bread." We should be particularly repentant since our standard of living partly depends upon exploitation of the mines and plantations of the poorest part of the world, on their low wages, and upon low selling prices for their products. The United States, with about six percent of the world's population, consumes about 40 percent of the world production of natural resources. How can we possibly defend the consumption of so much by so few? How can others hope to have anything like an equal opportunity without quickly mining out the planet and leaving it in an uninhabited wasteland spinning through space? Where in that is the will of God for his creation?

The ethics of distribution does not require completely equal wealth or income. The guideline for the use of the earth's resources is equal opportunity for fulfillment of one's highest potentialities. This may require some differences in income since different persons have different needs. Giving a family facing costly illnesses the same income as others receive is actually to provide them with less opportunity. Equal access to what is necessary to actualize the purposes of God for every life will require some inequality of income, but it will not justify the great inequality now existing! Our present pattern of distribution is both a private tragedy and a public scandal.

Existing inequality violates the universal intention of God. In desiring opportunity for his children, God does not play favorites. He causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45). Amos represents God as saying to those who regarded themselves as a chosen people, "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me?" (Amos 9:7). In the parables of the laborers in the vineyard and the prodigal son, love is seen to go radically beyond the requirements of formal justice. The needs of others define the duties of the self. The parable of the good Samaritan tells us that need anywhere constitutes a claim on resources everywhere. "If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (I John 3:17).

On this matter of economic distribution, what we widely regard as commendably moral is actually grossly immoral. The disproportionate material accumulation which we make the mark of prestige and the measure of success is in reality a moral failure. We have called the evil good, and the good evil. We are the wealthy of the world. Thereby America's number one spiritual problem becomes "how may a rich man enter the kingdom of God?" (Matt. 19:24, Mark 10:25, Luke 18:25).

Before turning to what Christians might do about this, I want to discuss another major current immorality, the domination of the powerless by the powerful. This has economic ramifications. It is the political counterpart of economic domination and exploitation. The freedoms of many are being threatened by the privileges of a few.

Human freedom is also a grant from God. We are not jerked about like puppets on strings. Rather God desires with us such a relationship of fellowship as is possible only with free beings. God has granted us the possibility of either responding or rebelling. He moves us by his love rather than by using thunderbolts as a totalitarian dictator might use machine guns. Such a genuine liberty for choice is necessary if human beings are to fulfill the purpose of their beings. The full realization of our potentialities require making responsible choices. When any society denies the maximum possible liberty to any of its citizens, it not only obstructs the purposes of God, but also desecrates the essential worth of its citizenry.

To be sure, freedom can never be absolute. The liberties of one are always conditioned by the equal claims of others. Seriously destructive acts of a minority must be restrained in order to protect the freedom of the majority. But such coercion is to be kept to the essential minimum. There is no justification for many current practices of coercing majorities. In both individual and social relationships we highly prize authority over others, and we aspire to controlling power as one of the aims of a successful life. The man in the street calls this "advancement" in the business world. (At the same time it must be noted that a considerable section of business leadership is adopting new methods of participatory decision making.) In international affairs we commonly define a "great power" in terms of its ability to compel other nations. Here again we often confuse the evil with the good. What we regard as right is often highly immoral.

Our political freedoms are strained by concentrations of economic power. A few have disproportionate access to the propaganda media for "engineering consent." The influence purchased by campaign contributions has become so ominous that both parties now propose remedial legislation. Around the world millions of persons remain apparently powerless against exploitation by tyrannical groups. Within the United States democracy is endangered by a resurgence of political extremism. It is to this aspect of the larger problem that I now want to direct attention.

The Watergate scandals illustrate how many widely-respected and highly-placed persons were accepting as good, and as socially desirable, basic evil. This reversal of values was largely shared by the American people

who kept such officials in office by strong electoral support. Public revulsion is now serving notice on politicians of the future that we will not tolerate certain grosser kinds of graft and corruption which we often winked at in the past. But the American people do not yet understand the even more ominous threats to liberty involved in the total Watergate syndrome. The wide ramifications of this complex mess go beyond presently illegal acts to a refinement of the kind of extremist strategies found in both the radical right and left, in both political parties, and in totalitarian groups abroad.

One of these tactics is the misuse of propaganda to distort and destroy the truth. This goes beyond the politician's common attempt to show himself in the best possible light to blatant concealment of essential facts and grossly exaggerated claims backed only by inconsequential episodes. This is purchasing silence with a sop while behind the scenes something quite different is going on. Reporters are given daily trivialities but the real news is denied them. With respect to opponents, the extremist attempt is slanderously to identify them with whatever is unpopular at the moment. Once, this was communism. In more recent days it has been violence and disorder, or leftist radicalism. The "dirty tricks" in the last presidential campaign were illustrations of such attempts to deceive and stampede the voters. Access to the truth by the people is essential to the democratic process. Yet the electorate has not believed this deeply enough that descent to deception has become self-defeating for clever candidates. Will we in the future send into economic and political oblivion anyone who uses manipulative public relations techniques to sell either presidents or soap? If churches really believe in honesty and integrity, they presumably have a responsibility in this matter which goes beyond our practices in the past.

A second extremist tactic is the attempt to silence opponents by intimidation. This is not as openly a totalitarian tactic as is assassination or arrest, but it aims at the same result. By making it uncomfortable or costly enough for the opponent, one may gain a monopoly of expression for himself. Threatening a television station with loss of license, or threatening a person with harrassing investigation or loss of his position can have a "chilling effect" on political participation. The "enemies list" recently exposed recalls Joe McCarthy's notorious, "I have here in my hand a list. . . ." This once introduced a "nightmare decade" of silencing opponents and ruining careers which will long live in infamy. This can again undermine the processes of a free society. The democratic way for dealing with opposition is to speak against it. The totalitarian way is to silence it.

A third device of the extremist is to discredit institutions which are essential in a free society. Democratic decision on complex modern issues requires a high level of education and the ability to evaluate rapid change in the light of adequate norms. Sufficient education is impossible without strong schools, and usable norms are unlikely without vital, prophetic churches. Yet, extremists on both the left and the right find it to their interests to weaken the university and the church. On local, state, and national levels this has involved reducing financial support or planting enough doubts in peoples' minds so as to create a vague distrust of such agencies. When a vice president of the United States accuses a major ecumenical church body of casting morality and theology aside to make its goal on earth "the recognition of Red China and the preservation of the Florida Alligator," we had better begin to do some hard thinking about who is attacking and who is defending the democratic way of life.

A fourth ominous omen is the making of administrative decisions serving powerful economic interests friendly to the administration, rather than serving the interests of the public. Some of this has been going on for a long time in American public life; but when the perversion becomes persistent, or when means are found to circumvent or ignore congressional legislation, some Paul Revere's cry of alarm had better arouse the citizenry. When the public is distracted by the modern equivalent of "bread and circuses" while others plunder the economy, what is happening to God's purposes of freedom?

The dangers of dictatorship in the United States should be neither exaggerated nor minimized. We have strong resources, even now in motion, to safeguard democratic procedures. On the other hand, it is well to remember that totalitarian governments came to power in other countries often with surprising rapidity, particularly in times of economic collapse, political confusion, and widespread feelings of helplessness. It is not hard to imagine a set of circumstances in the United States which would put to a severe test our popular understanding and support of democracy. What would happen after long, continued depression or serious inflation, ecological collapse, or external threat to our being as a nation? Even now, stubborn major problems and rapid changes are undermining the status and hopes of large numbers of people. If the crisis became deep enough, there would be all too much support for a charismatic deliverer—if not the traditional "man on horseback," perhaps a general in a jet or a demagogue at a microphone.

The church is one of the very few mass-based organizations which can speak a strong word for freedom —and back it up with a specific-enough analysis to carry conviction. We church persons need especially to heed the words of Franklin Littell, American minister and scholar with long experience in Germany. Speaking of the triumph of Hitler in that technologically advanced country, he said, "There was a time in the history of the Weimar Republic when just a few hundred preachers and teachers could have saved the constitution and reduced the Communists and facists to ineffectiveness. They waited tentatively, however, convinced that the best educated and most Christian people in the world (as they saw it) would never follow the demagogues who were polarizing the public opinion and destroying the middle ground of reasonable politics. They waited, objectively, until too late" [*Wild Tongues: A Handbook of Social Pathology*. Macmillan, 1969, p. 65.]

I have faced two major problems of our time, growing out of widespread confusion between good and evil. Economic inequality and the accompanying threats to liberty are moral issues, having to do with the destiny of man and the purposes of God. In addition to the general directions which have already been

suggested, can we be more specific about what is demanded of us?

For one thing, those of us in the rich part of mankind need to share more than we have done in order that others may have a better opportunity to help themselves. More loving attention to human need in our own country might well mean setting less flexible ceilings for top incomes and providing a rising floor for low incomes. This might be accomplished by more progressive rates, taking higher percentages from larger incomes. In addition we might provide more free or low cost social services of the types that are a particular help to the poor, like education or parks or low-cost housing. Raising minimum wage rates or guaranteed family incomes might be considered. A goal of equal opportunity does not make much difference to those who suffer until it is translated into this kind of concrete action.

In the light of its religious faith and world realities, every Christian family needs to review its own standard of living. In God's production schedule stark necessities for the underprivileged have priority over frivolous luxuries for the overprivileged. In a finite universe with limited mineral resources it becomes both silly and sinful to put electric motors in cars to save the muscular exertion of rolling windows up and down—and then manufacture chrome plated equipment for gymnasiums in which to exercise our muscles. Why do we need electric carving knives while others lack meat to carve? Some gadgets we should refuse to buy in a righteous boycott by conscientious consumers asserting the right of choice allowed in a free economy.

Justice for abysmally poor nations requires from us a much more liberal support for various assistance programs including monetary and trade policies, population stabilization, international cooperation, and development funds. We invent all kinds of rationalizations to allow us to live as rich men while Lazarus lies at our door (Luke 16:19-31), but our excuses are a compounding of moral depravity and economic ignorance. There are studies showing that American public opinion is against "foreign economic assistance," but favors "helping the hungry in other nations." Do we live with this contradiction partly because churches have remained so general in their teachings about compassion to the hungry that congregations never understood what this concretely meant? For example, capital is indispensable for increasing productivity for human need. If capital is accumulated from inside a developing country, this requires depressing already low living standards under the coercion of a Communist-type dictatorship. External sources for capital may well include individual or church philanthropy, but this is limited in amounts—and private business investment, but this brings external control and is not attracted to necessary nonprofit projects like basic education. Such cold hard facts of economic analysis make it quite clear that substantial additional amounts must come in economic assistance funds from other governments. Short of perpetuating starvation and guaranteeing violent explosion, there is no other way. Effective proclamation of the ethical meaning of the gospel now requires a blending of theology and economics in a major campaign to change public opinion.

A redistribution of privilege is what the world economic revolution is all about. The rumbling thunder of discontent rolling around the world may become a global holocaust. But there are also lightning flashes of the Spirit within our own souls revealing to us that equal opportunity for all God's children is impossible without basic readjustments. One of the modern gifts of the Spirit is surely empowerment for scathing words of judgment and specific acts of justice.

In addition to sharing more, a second demand on our society is to do more together. Many of the complex problems of an interdependent society can be solved only by the action of organized groups, including government. Freedom requires elimination of the disproportionate influence of a few which means electoral reform. In rural times a good Samaritan might well stop and give limited personal service to a neglected neighbor. However, for accidents on a modern freeway it may be more benevolent to speed past on the other side of the road to the nearest telephone which will quickly bring specialized services provided by modern government, such as radio-equipped police or emergency ambulances from public hospitals. Parents could try to teach their children by daily lessons in the living room. Ordinarily they better discharge their parental responsibility by banding together to provide schools and then joining the parent-teacher association. How are we to deal with multi-national monopoly, or unemployment, or the threat of war, or the danger of dictatorship? Not to support appropriate government action on such matters is actually to show less concern for neighbors.

Another way of saying this is to emphasize that Christians need to get over their prejudice against politics. After all, politics is simply the process by which population-wide decisions are made in a democracy. And religiously motivated people had *better* be in on those decisions. Political activism is one way of giving meaning to *koinonia,* or the deep concern of brothers and sisters for each other. If the church is to nurture persons with active love, it will train its people both in the goals and the processes of effective political action.

God is constantly producing the unexpected and the new. There was Exodus and Easter. Now there can be deliverance beyond our crises. God is preparing a new heaven and a new earth. His perfection stands far beyond the noblest act of the finest person. He calls us to improve even the best procedures of the most developed society. The church then must stand with God out ahead of what now exists. In times when men are bound, love means breaking the chains. When multitudes are hungry, compassion means changing the system of food production. Church people should be saturated with compassion, filled to overflowing with love. If economic and political leaders object to that, if journalists and publicists are critical, they should be invited to join the church, rather than the church being asked to conform to the world.

For us as individual Christians there are two wings by which we rise toward God, one of personal piety, the other of social action. Both of these have the same prerequisite—openness to the new, acceptance of change. Worship or piety requires repentant receptivity before the vastness of God. Social action means embarking on a new, non-conforming life-style. No matter how widely common immoralities are applauded, it is for us to stop defending iniquity. Now is the

moment to stop rationalizing in our puny arguments to make the good seem evil and the evil good. It is only by throwing ourselves into the struggle for social justice that we can have fuller fellowship with the God of an unprecedented future.

The Protestant Work Ethic

George K. Schweitzer

It wasn't too long ago that I stood on a very, very cold street corner in Louisville. The wind whistled around me. It was January. I was scheduled to make a series of lectures at the University of Louisville and the first lecture was at 9:00 in the morning. As I stood waiting for the bus, I caught sight of a little old lady. I estimated her to be 70 to 75. She wore a very tattered, torn coat and was hunched up in the cold January wind. As I waited there myself, cold to the bone, I knew she was even colder. I began to cook up in my imagination various things about her. I wondered how long it had been since she had eaten. I noticed her worn shoes. I wondered how deep in poverty she actually was. Finally, unable to stand it any longer, I reached in my pocket, folded up a dollar bill, eased over to her, and slipped it in her hand. Just as the bus came I said, "Chin up!" and got on the bus and was gone. Well, the next morning I was at the same spot going down to give my second lecture. The pattern was much the same, bitter cold, and she stood off to my left. "Oh, no. Now I've made a mistake," I thought. "She'll be here every morning for her dollar." But no sooner had I made that judgment than she eased over to me. She slipped a folded up twenty-dollar bill into my hand and said, "Congratulations, buddy. Chin Up paid twenty to one!"

Now, the point of this little anecdote is that things usually are not what they seem to be. That is very much so with this intriguing idea of the Protestant work ethic. The idea of the Protestant ethic has rippled through American sociological and religious thought ever since Max Weber and R. H. Tawney wrote their famous works on it. It has been a very important idea, though I think badly misconstrued and badly understood because there is this common question and oversimplified, if not erroneous, answer that ripples through our society: What is it that makes America so great? It is the Protestant work ethic. I want to say, "Hogwash!" Usually when those two phrases have been uttered, you think you have a perfect understanding of the whole socio-economic configuration in this country. Well, I want to see if I can remake our thinking in the few brief moments before us.

I am going to oversimplify, of course, which I must do in a brief treatment of this sort; but I hope I can give you an overall panoramic view of the Protestant work ethic which will assist us in our various ministries and which will allow us to see some sources and some roots which will, I hope, refresh and give some new ideas that can bring a sort of reorientation of some of our attitudes. Everything that has to do with this economic crisis eventually comes back to attitudes. If we can have a fuller understanding of the past, I think we may be in a little better shape to know what it is that we are dealing with.

Each of you should have in your hand a little outline that will assist you in following me as we wade our way through some materials and attempt a renewed understanding. Now, I must remind you at the outset that I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. I am not divinely inspired. Anything and everything I say is subject to your comment and your criticism.

The Prologue

Well, let's talk a minute about the prologue of the Protestant work ethic. One of the most important aspects of any person's life is the work he or she does. It takes most of his time; it shapes his life-style; it interacts influentially with every other aspect of his existence. Work is a necessity, of course, because we are all creatures of this earth. We drink, we eat, we eliminate, we need clothing, we need shelter. None of these necessities is available without work, either ours or somebody else's. Hence, every grouping of persons, every society rests on an inevitable foundation of work, a foundation of productive effort and of cooperative toil.

When we go way back and use the scant materials that are available to us when we look at primitive societies, we understand almost immediately that work was an absolute necessity for everyone for survival. Everyone had to do a large amount of manual work; therefore, at first primitive societies may be thought of as requiring the labor of all persons just barely to keep alive. Gradually as primitive society began to develop, as the hunting techniques began to be more efficient, then some free time began to be released in the society. There was some time between the dawn and the darkness that was released and gradually some specialization began to develop. As the work became more efficient and as the free time was released, we see shamans and healers and astrologers and some labor specialists arising. These labor specialists caused more free time to be released because work was again more efficient. Those people who were freed from manual labor contacted and appeased the gods, ministered to the ill, studied the weather and the fertility cycles, and organized the community with laws and regulations and operating procedures. All of this again caused a bit more free time to be released and the hierarchy began to arise. A hierarchy arose in practically every ancient society that we learn anything about, with the priests and the rulers and the shamans and the regulators at the top, and the manual laborers at the bottom. Of course, in order to move and promote the society, those at the top used various (and most of the time what we would construe as devious) devices to keep the manual laborers doing their job. So the manual laborers, recognizing that labor was a necessity for survival, also often experienced work by coercion. In the early texts of the Bible there are many examples of this. We think mainly of the Hebrew children under the Egyptian oppression. The lowly people, who worked with their hands according to the structures of these societies, were often taught that work was a curse set upon them by the gods; and, often

as not, they were taught that work was a way to placate the gods and/or to avoid any kind of future punishment. And so this wort of structure was characteristic of almost all primitive societies.

By the time the Greek city-states had risen, by the time we had evolved far enough along in human society for these city-states to arise, a sharp separation—even sharper than the one we have talked about—of roles had occurred. Enough free time had been released in representative ones of the Greek city-states, such that the role of the thinker, the mediator, the philosopher, the guy who entered into the depths of the universe with his mind had developed. At the bottom of the scale were the slaves and the laborers and the mechanics and the builders, the chaps who worked with their hands, who manipulated, altered, and changed the matter of the world. They were the servants, so to speak; they were the bondsmen, the slaves. I conjecture that the strong separation of those who worked with their heads and those who worked with their hands was the reason the brilliant Greeks, men of tremendous intellectual acumen, failed to develop modern science. They had a tremendous culture going for them, but they failed to bring together the head and the hand which is required for modern science and blew a great opportunity.

The God of the Hebrew tradition, as we turn to that root of our Western culture, was not just a thinker. He thought some but that was not the major role he expressed. He was a creative doer. The God of the Hebrew tradition, Yahweh, was represented as a worker who, out of His great infinite unconditional love, worked to create the universe and continued to work in it. Having created man in His own image, He created man also to be a worker. You see, the view a culture has of its god largely determines how it looks upon the members of the culture. In the Hebrew culture man was given skills, he was given his head, and he was given his hands. Why? To subdue the earth and to use that earth in the service of his fellow-beings and, therefore, to the glory of God. In short, the biblical view of man is that he is to be a co-worker with God in bringing the universe to glory. As is the case with all other aspects of human existence, the biblical message very carefully and critically and quickly shows us in the early Genesis myth that man fouled up work. Work in which he is meant to express his relationship to the Creator has become under man's rebellion a source of difficulty. The biblical message, I think, is trying to say that this work arena which was meant to be the joyous sphere of glad cooperation with God for the common good, this sphere has become the scene of bitter rivalry, of fratricidal quarreling—as in the Cain and Abel story—of drudgery, and of wretchedness. All of this has come about as a consequence of man's lack of trust in God, his self-seeking, self-service, and self-adulation—his turning away from God, as Dr. Campbell just said, the turning away from the "we" community back to the "I" community. The biblical view of work is the utter opposite of the Greek outlook. The Greek outlook held manual work, you remember, to be low and demeaning, fit only for slaves. In the biblical tradition work was the appointed means by which a person could enter into joyous cooperation with God to bring about the redemption of a troubled, disturbed, groaning, agonizing universe, and to restore it under God's hand to cosmic unity and harmony.

It is, I think, very notable that Jesus was a carpenter, a craftsman, a manual laborer, a worker with His hands. I have never seen this developed. I have never seen the idea that Jesus went against the Greek tradition developed as possibly part of the hostility among scholars of his day toward Him. The point is that in the Christian tradition we have learned more about God in this craftsman than from anyone else we know of. We make the audacious claim that when the great worker took the form of a servant, it was in the form of a carpenter. Jesus, of course, goes further. Not only does He exemplify the character and the glory of this manual laborer, Jesus goes further and represents work for material gain as a peril to the soul. There are no more incisive statements of the New Testament than those in which our Lord is coming down terribly hard upon work for material gain for ourselves only. The purpose of work, He clearly says and shows, is as a service toward God. All else is evil. Now, that is pretty revolutionary.

With these two views, the Greek view of work and the biblical view of work, we see an interesting event. No sooner is the first century of the Christian tradition over than these two ideas of work begin to flow together in the Mediterranean Basin. The biblical view of work as service to God with no distinction between hand workers and head workers, was the idea that was held in the early church. All men or women were essentially equal in their work tasks in the early church. Very quickly as the Roman Empire began to decay and collapse—which it showed signs of doing almost immediately following the Christian era—the Greek idea of distinctions set in. As the Roman ideas, which were largely saturated with Greek thought, seduced the church and, therefore, seduced the Hebrew view, the Greek view of distinction between workers set in. Very quickly there developed a rank order. The contemplatives were at the top, the pure thinkers; then the religious scholars, those who illuminated the manuscripts and copied and thought and studied; and next the secular clergy, those who went out and served the people; then the skilled artisans; then the skilled trades; and at the bottom were the manual laborers. This is typically Greek.

The Principles

This persisted for quite a long time. We see it in the feudal system. You can think about it very readily. The Hebrew view could not be kept down; it began to reassert itself along about the sixth or the seventh century in the monasteries. In the monasteries the monks again under pressure, I believe, from the biblical view of work, were required to combine prayer and study and manual labor. These things were for sustenance, for penitence, for discipline, and for charity. So, in the midst of the decayed Roman Empire with the cities all shot to pieces, with the land littered with the stones of the once glorious buildings all over the then known world, an interesting thing began to occur. As the Hebrew idea of work as service to God began to emerge again, particularly among the Benedictines, they began to make establishments all over the world and the monastery would crop up. Out of that monastery in this wild, rugged territory, we could watch strange things occur. If you and I could look in on the

monastery, we would see the monks clearing woods and starting farms and beginning to keep animals again and establishing mills and grinding wheat and making cloth and setting up kitchens for the poor and establishing hospitals and alms houses and libraries and beginning to revive the crafts and teaching the laity all these skills. So, as the Benedictines spread and as the monastery movement under their auspices revived the idea of work, we began to see life again. Still in spite of all this thrust of the biblical view of work, a hierarchy remained with the contemplatives at the top and the manual workers at the bottom.

You can even go back and look at many of the great cathedrals and see it there. Down low on the cathedral carvings you will see the manual workers. There they are chipping the stones, rolling the various materials, farming the land, hunting. If you lift your gaze just a little bit, about medium high, you see the clergy, the secular clergy ministering to the people, holding mass, going out among the sick and healing. Then lift your eyes way up high to the spires: there you will find them with their hands folded in holy meditation and contemplation. It is all there.

The monastic movement, by bringing the biblical idea of work again to the fore and by teaching these skills to the people, brought about the Renaissance. By the late 1400's, arising out of the skills taught by the monasteries, cities were beginning to form again. Exploration was beginning. Building was flourishing. The craft skills were forming. Good, strong, effective work was showing results in many, many places. This gave rise, in Italy under the Medicci and on the North Sea in the Hunsiatic League, to commercial enterprises and widespread trade organizations. Profit making began to set in and this, of course, led to capital accumulation which was plugged back into the enterprises, which caused them to be products of re-investment; therefore, even greater expansion occurred and even more work and even more workers were brought into the stream. As a result of all these rising things, the total society at the end of the Renaissance began to loosen up tremendously. The Roman Catholic Church began to lose control in many, many places because of the new vistas and the new explorations and the new ideas and the new tendencies and the new trends; and these new break-outs which occurred included the Protestant Reformation.

In this movement and following it, also, strong affirmative boosts were given to the idea of work, moving it back toward the Protestant ideal. Among the most influential men, of course, who talked about work were Luther, Calvin, Fox, Wesley, Baster, and Bunyan. *Pilgrim's Progress* is a magnificent expression of what I am talking about. What were the chief ideas that were taught? They were simply these: all men are equal in God's sight and all vocations are to be engaged in to the glory of God by subduing the earth for the benefit not of oneself but for the benefit of all mankind. Further, these men almost universally taught that the only way a man or woman could evidence that he or she had been saved was to show it by good, hard, frugal, dedicated work to make a better society and, thereby, to bring in the Kingdom of God. The way you could assure yourself that you were saved was just to say, "Am I really slugging it out?" In other words, a man was to work sacrificially, accepting deprivation if necessary, using the fruit of his labor for others, taking a bare minimum for himself and for his creaturely comforts. They were massively guilty about the slightest scrap of creaturely comfort, taking nothing for pleasure, driving hard against recalcitrant environment to prove to himself that he had been accepted by God. Every type of work, they claimed, benefits mankind and has equal spiritual dignity.

Finally there ripples through the sayings of all these men the teaching that man must renounce the selfish use of the fruits of his labor. He must resist the temptation to collect money, to own much goods, to be extravagant, or to gain riches. Work is to be with diligence, with thrift, with restraint, with dedication, and with benevolence. All the fruits of work are to be plugged back into the work structure for the expansion and the good of all people. They are not to be siphoned off into individual interests, because idleness, luxury, the dislike of work, extravagance were all evidence that you had not been elected to eternal life.

So, the Protestant work ethic existed long before there were Protestants—in a sense this is a misnomer. The Reformation gave the idea (as I have just expressed it, in brief, to be sure) a tremendous boost. Now what happened? A tremendous boost brought a tremendous result. Out of all these trends in the European culture there came an utter, absolute, literal explosion. This explosion I may express to you by using terms like the Scientific Revolution, the rise of capitalistic economy, the Industrial Revolution, and technological advances galore, plus the explosive expansion of trade and exploration. The work ethic very rapidly had produced products, comfort, health, trade, transportation, science, and many of the things that were to give you and me the modern technological world which we have today.

So, once again, as in the days of the Benedictine monastic movement, for one bright shining moment the biblical principles emerged. As they always do when they emerge and are applied, they save, they redeem, and they transform society.

The Perversion

The modern Garden of Eden was not long for this world. The seductions which the prophets and Jesus and the church fathers, as well as the reformers, warned against were to bring the Adam of this new Jerusalem to his downfall because the lures of riches and comfort and pleasure were too strong.

As the modern era has emerged, workers have switched from serving God to serving themselves. They switched from self-sacrificing stewardship to the greed for goods and the lust for pleasure and a massive unconcern for the health of society and the needs of the unfortunate. The perversion of the work ethic occurred very quickly not only among individuals but also among many large organizations which began to oppress and underpay the workers. As business enterprisers engaged in monopolistic practices, they accumulated unwarranted profits which ran precisely against the whole Protestant work ethic. Profits were not used for the public benefit. They employed large sums to bribe government and other vested interest groups. They entered into international cartels, which often were unholy alliances with colonialism, further perverting the principle known as the Protestant work ethic.

Look, we can sum it up very quickly. God was worshipped first and work was for Him. Then, as work began to produce—wow, the seduction got tremendous! Then God and mammon were worshipped and as quickly as you can imagine, God was equated with mammon. Under the influence of success, wealth, trade enterprise, investment, and economic speculations, the priests and the preachers jumped on the bandwagon and hailed capitalism, investors, the wealthy, the traders, the speculators, and the exploiters as the elect of God, what a turn-around! And it happened in less than a hundred years!

And what are the results? You know what the results are. The net result of the worker is a life-style based on overproducing, overconsumption, and over-indulgence—all undergirded with the semi-conscious realization of the meaninglessness of the whole thing and the impending doom of the false gods of materialism, hedonism, and opportunism. You know what's the matter with our society today? You know why every quiver in its structure scares us to death? Because we are witnessing the fall of idols, and it is shattering. This is precisely what is occurring. This aggravates the situation for the worker even more because the repetition, the mechanization, the monotony, the depersonalization, and the anonymity of being an instrument grossly subject to something vaguely known as the corporation can be frightening. The net result for the corporation is also what we see today. There is massive distrust by the young. There is suspicion by the older people. There is hostility by the workers. There are regulations and laws and structures enacted by an overprotective, invading governmental control brought on by a desperate attempt to redress the perversions of what was once a glorious Utopian possibility. Plus a crisis—the energy crisis; this is the second episode in a series of almost inevitable shocks we will suffer in the future because of our greedy exploitation of God's good earth and its resources. The first, of course, was pollution. We are in the second one now, energy.

The Old Testament talks a great deal about the wrath of God. If you ask the average Baptist what the wrath of God is, he will tell you it's his belief that if he is a bad boy, God is going to hit him. Not at all. The wrath of God, in my judgment, is what happens. It is the inevitable result of society's failure to practice the integrity and love of God in its relationships. When a society turns loose of the integrity and love of God in its relationships, it is shot; it is gone. The inevitable results are what our Old Testament forebearers have called the wrath of God. The biblical work ethic of service to all neighbors as the means of forwarding the Kingdom of God has turned into work for self-serving, work for luxury, for comfort at the expense of our neighbors, thus, to the frustration of the coming of the Kingdom of God of unconditioned compassion.

The Prospects

Now, where are we headed? Well, we are at the last rubric in our outline. What is the prospect? What is the prognosis? Let us take a crack at a little review. Let's get our heads screwed on right now so that we can move forward just a little bit. The character of a society is largely determined by what it most loves, most cherishes, most values, and most honors. So, the character of recent Western society has therefore been molded by its quest of pride, pleasure, profits, possessions, and prestige; and we shouldn't be surprised. The biblical Protestant work ethic in this country has been perverted and has been corrupted into the American gospel of work, acquisition, and wealth.

What are their beliefs? The first belief of the so-called American gospel of work is this: it is an anthropological belief. It is about the nature of man. It believes this: everything a man does and thinks is eventually guided by his selfish desire to acquire material goods. The frightening thing about it is that it is probably right with regard to most people.

The second belief of the American gospel of work is that a man's total personhood can be completely fulfilled by a continuing acquisition of material goods.

Further, there is the belief that society's long-range stability and the long-range health of society are best served if every member of the society goes out and gets what he can for himself—this would grind out in the long run to give our society the best possible future.

Further, there is the belief that the primary function of government is to promote, foster, enhance, and protect such self-seeking pursuits; and that the laws need to be structured on the basis of that function to make the acquisitive society a sure thing.

Finally, the worker is treated in acquisitive terms. He has to be treated as a materialistic commodity offered for sale to the employer as part of the production cost leading to profits. This is done either individually or collectively in group bargaining units. The net result is that the worker experiences a loss of freedom as his activities, his work time, his work functions, his work roles, his work motivations are all predetermined, limited, delineated, prescribed, and regulated by organizations, computers, machines, paper work, and profit-structure guidelines. The work process becomes massive; it becomes complex; it becomes impersonal as the worker tends to find himself not doing his own work. He is not doing his own work! "Is that your work you're doing, Jim?" "No, no, it's corporation work." "What *are* you doing?" "I don't know." He finds himself subordinated to profit, to production and to paper and metallic machinery in a complicated, remote, unequal relationship to his employer, subdivided and standardized in the hierarchial structures with responsibilities so diffused that it can find no focus at any particular point. In medieval society, if you got a pair of shoes and there was a flaw in them, you walked down the street and you clobbered the cobbler! But, if you buy a pair of shoes now with a defect in them, who do you hit? That is what I mean by the diffusion of responsibility.

What can we do? Some suggestions: What we in our own particular and peculiar positions of leadership can do, I think, is to reeducate people as quickly as possible by re-emphasizing the biblical Protestant work ethic and by showing how it is in dire, absolute, fundamental contradiction to the American gospel of work. They simply do not and cannot co-exist because one is self-seeking and the other is other-seeking. We need to point out clearly to ourselves and to others that true Christian profession does not stop at grateful recognition of God's glorious bounty; but that it auto-

matically seeks an outlet in devoted work in which service to our neighbor is the chief motive. Work which may be endlessly varied—it may be manual, it may be intellectual, it may be social—but all work, if it is to be fit for the service of the God for whom our Lord Jesus Christ called Father, must embody the integrity and compassion that this God of truth, love, light, and goodness embodies in His own varied being. In short, work is to become an act of worship, a medium in which God is acknowledged as the glorious, redemptive, creative, transforming Spirit of this universe.

Further, we need to encourage all those with whom we have any influence to grapple with the tangled, technological, depersonalizing, and mechanistic character of much work and to attempt to remake and reform it by all means—personal means, political means, sociological means, and psychological means.

Now further, it would appear to me that we need to recognize that the working of God in human history, apart from those who verbally acknowledge Him or from those who knowingly try to adhere to His will, is an important factor. You say to me, "Man, this is so futile. I just can't get to enough people to make a difference." You may be surprised. This attitude so often stems from the idea that God can only work through us. The theological doctrine of the cosmic Christ assures us (at least assures me) that in all places, though society has fallen into disrepair and disruption because of loveless forces, a reaction sets in. This reaction sets in to redress the perversions and the dishevelment. Part of our fear today is that we do not trust God. Some reactions are setting in in our society. This banner right here proclaims it [reference to seminar theme, "Christians Confronting the Economic Crisis"]. These reactions are alive and viable means for the movement of the Holy Spirit among us. We are seeking some of these reactions today as workers are rebelling. They are expressing their discontent. Corporations are being driven to the remaking of policies and activities because the promised fulfillments of materialism have proved to be false, unsatisfying, and corrupting. They are stirring in our society the winds of change, a recognition on the part of many that wherever men band together—primarily in the quest for possessions, profits, pleasures, and power—the deadly toxins of societal destruction are at work. Some young people have seen this for some time. Some young people have a sort of proto-nausea about our affluence. Some young people, beginning about seven or eight years ago, found it necessary to demonstrate to society that they could live with a lot less. I have a teen-ager who has lived for three years in one pair of jeans! And he is almost saying to me, "Dad, why can't you?"

These reactions can be the winds of God blowing. There is setting in a realization by many that when the activities of organizations and institutions and corporations become self-centered, when those activities turn away from justice and concern and service, they're doomed. And they will carry down into ruin with them all those who have made acquisition of material goods their chief aim, goal, and value.

So, do we despair? No. No, because we are inheritors of the Exodus and the Resurrection faith. Something is cooking! Something is brewing in our society—the winds of change are blowing. The main fear I have about us oldies is that we will balk when we need to ride with the wind a little more. Most changes in a society occur because small groups of people with a fresh idea or a revised concept or renewed emphasis stimulate activity which works itself out in and through society to produce vast large-scale changes.

I don't know where those new nuclei are being born today. Ladies and gentlemen, that is the Bethlehem syndrome. I don't know where God is moving today, but that He is moving I am quite confident. The Bethlehem syndrome says you never know where God is going to move next or how except that it will be in the most unlikely way and in the most unlikely place. You know why God doesn't tell you where He is going to move next? Because if He did, the Baptists would go down there and take charge. It won't be organized. It won't be organized. This is the idea of the leaven in the loaf. That is what I think our Lord was talking about. It is the idea of the salt in the meat which Jesus spoke of in several of His parables. Thus, it would appear to me, we are to work hard to attempt to generate such groups, to foster them, to be spiritually sensitive to their character and to their outworking—small groups sensitive enough to the gospel to act upon the biblical doctrine of work. As the society gets its equilibrium, it will be easy to change. When society gets into this equilibrium, there will come a time (and it may be now) when a small group can proclaim to the society the biblical doctrine of work to the glory of God and it will catch again. If it does, we will have another bright, shining moment like that at Camelot; another bright, shining moment like that of the Benedictines; another bright, shining moment like the one at the origin of the Protestant work ethic—and redemptive work will enter into the society.

Oh, yes, we will foul it up quickly! But the world of redemption will have rippled through us once again. We will have caught the passing glory of the worker of Israel, Yahweh Himself.

So, we are not to despair. Especially we are not to despair if the change does not come about in the way we think it should occur. It is well to remember that God most frequently works in ways and places and times we least expect. Are we in line with the biblical doctrine of work? All of us are to be filled with gratitude for the glory of God we have glimpsed in Jesus Christ; and out of that gratitude we are to set ourselves to work in whatever vocation we find ourselves so as to maximize the possibilities in this world that the integrity, the love, and the concern of God are made concrete in all areas of human life. This is what I think our Lord meant when He talked about the coming of the Kingdom of God among men. We need to hit for the possibility of another bright, shining moment.

Toward a Fair Distribution of Income, Wealth, and Power: The New Populism

Fred R. Harris

It was mentioned that I'm a populist, which means that I do not believe corporations ought to run the

economy and the government as they do. It also means that politicians and political parties and governments ought to be required to speak up rather bluntly and plain spokenly about what is on their minds. That is what I intend to do. Some of it you will like, maybe; some of it you won't like.

The first United States Senator from my state was a blind man, Thomas P. Gore. He was elected first to the territorial legislature as a populist. Old man Gore was a blunt-spoken, crusty, tough old fellow. At one time the late Senator Richard Russell of Georgia served in the United States Senate with Senator Gore almost before I was born. In those days they didn't have microphones on the floor of the Senate so that Senators could speak to each other under their breath and you couldn't hear them in the gallery. He said one day that Senator Gore was involved in a very heated debate with another member of the Senate. The other Senator said to Gore under his breath where he couldn't be heard in the galleries, "If you weren't blind, I'd thrash you within an inch of your life." And old man Gore wheeled around and said, "Blindfold the rascal and point him in my direction!" We could use a little more of that.

I could have begun by saying, "My fellow Baptists" (which is true). We politicians always try to ingratiate ourselves with whatever group we are with; but I have been broken of that habit. I am glad to be here and simply compliment you on the kind of balanced and provocative program that you have put together this year, as you have in former years. There are a lot of different ways I could get into what I want to talk about, but let me tell you about this experience.

Several years ago I went to the stockholder's meeting of General Motors in Detroit, which is a kind of weird thing to do. I went to Detroit as a member of a group called Project on Corporate Responsibility, which represents minority stockholders. We had several proposals to present. One was that General Motors simply announce the relative pay scales and relative promotion schedules and positions of blacks and whites in their operation in South Africa—but they have yet to do anything about it. The proposal which I presented was (it didn't require action) that General Motors set up a commission to study the impact on the stockholders if the corporation voluntarily complied with the law and broke themselves up into five or more competitive companies. You have to understand that that wasn't the most popular proposal; and, of course, the rich people owning General Motors voted it down. The top management voted the proxies for the absent stockowners against that proposal and every other minority stockholder proposal about 99 to 1.

This business of widespread capitalism in America is a myth. There are large numbers of stockholders but only two percent of the households in America own 80 percent of all individually-held corporate stock and 90 percent of all individually-held corporate bonds. Two percent (this is a little different statistic, but it is about the same) of the people in America own 80 percent of all productive assets in this country. Two percent! It is simply wrong to say that if the economy keeps growing, everybody will be better off. Economic growth in America is corporate growth, internally generated, either from profits or borrowings that have to be paid out of internally generated profits. In the economy growth, few people become richer and richer and the rest of us simply work for them. General Motors is not a human-size institution. It has more revenue every year than the gross national product of all but nine countries in the world. It is typical of a great deal of the industry in this country, particularly the basic industry that affects all our lives. The top 200 corporations in America account for 60 percent of all manufacturing. That is compared with 45 percent as recently as World War II, now it is 60 percent. Thirty-five percent of the industries in America are industries in which four or fewer firms control 70 percent or more production in that industry.

Senator Phillip Hart's Anti-trust Subcommittee has shown that prices would come down by 20 percent, not with these hodgepodge wage and price controls, without controls. Prices went up more under controls by a great deal than they did without the so-called controls, while wages were held at a level of around five percent increase. As we have just seen with these newest figures, workers' real pay has actually gone down at a time when we have had almost unprecedented sky-rocketing profits, particularly in these kinds of shared monopoly industries. Thirty-five percent of the industries in America are industries in which four or fewer firms control 70 percent or more of sales. When you get to 50 percent, it is what the industrial organization economists call collusion index. Where four or fewer firms control 50 percent or more, several things begin to happen. First of all, prices are set too high. As I said, these studies by Hart's committee, borne out by Michigan State University studies and others, show that prices would come down by 20 percent if there really was competition and free enterprise, which we rightly profess to believe in. They don't stay up with innovation; they don't stay up with quality. The last time we had any development, for example, in the automobile industry which is one of these shared monopoly industries, was the automatic transmission in the 1930's. They don't compete on price, for the last time there was any competition on price in automobiles, for example, was in 1954 when Chrysler and Ford set a low price on one model automobile and GM came along with a higher price. Then Chrysler and Ford raised it back up. These kinds of monopolies—oil and gas, automobiles, breakfast cereals, farm machinery, containers, soup (Campbell Soup Company produces 90 percent of all the canned soup used in America)—that's some kind of system but we fool ourselves into thinking it is a free enterprise system. You do not get quality in return for administered prices because there is no competition.

What happened in that General Motors stockholders' meeting, as I said, was that the top management voted the proxies for the few people who had voted down every minority stockholder proposal about 99 to 1; and then they voted up one proposal about 99 to 1 and that was the proposal of top management to raise management's incentive pay by 25 percent. This was in the time of wage and price control. I found several things rather intriguing about that. Richard Gerstenberg is the head of General Motors; and prior to this incentive pay increase he was making a base salary of $250,000 a year, and on top of which every year he got a cash incentive bonus of $250,000

a year, on top of which he got a stock incentive bonus of $250,000 a year, which totals $750,000 a year. That is typical of what you find in shared monopoly industries because, since they set prices they can pass them right along to us.

Hal Geneen, head of IT&T, for example, makes $812,000 a year. This is exclusive of investment income. Henry Ford voted himself a salary about a year ago of $864,000 a year, exclusive of investment income. Not to be outdone, General Motors raised Mr. Gerstenberg to $864,300; so, he is still the highest salaried one.

I found two or three things rather intriguing about that. One is that a man like Mr. Gerstenberg, making $250,000 a year base salary, needs some incentive to come to work. I wondered to myself what he would do if he didn't get it. Would he call in sick a lot or take too long on coffee breaks? The other thing I found intriguing about that was that Richard Gerstenberg makes 90 times what the average worker out in the GM plant makes. He doesn't have to turn the same screw 107 times an hour or hold up his hand to go to the toilet or slip around to take a smoke. He makes $864,300 a year salary exclusive of investment income, and has plush offices, rather good working conditions, company-paid limousine and driver, company-paid corporation jets to fly him around, company-paid country club membership, and all sorts of tax loopholes which are not available to the average taxpayer. My friends, that kind of system drives people mad!

Governments are more than their basic documents. If that were not true, we would have some of the best republics in the world in Latin America. Take Brazil for example. One time I went to Brasília, a sort of 1984 interior capital of Brazil, as some of you know. They were showing me the marvelous parliament building and I said, "Is the Parliament now in session?" "Oh," they said, "it's been dissolved." There isn't any Parliament anymore; they just neglected to mention that. Brazil has a wonderful Constitution on paper. It has excellent tax laws on paper. But nobody pays any attention to them.

Governments are more than their basic documents. What holds our society together, or any kind of society together, is a kind of implied and underlying social contract. We have agreed in a sense to live together in the same house and share equally in duties and responsibilities. If some of us don't wash the dishes when it is our turn, or some of us won't put up our money for the groceries, or some of us won't do the clean-up detail when it's our turn; then, the thing falls apart. And that is exactly what's happening in America. This social contract is based on inherent rights. It is a social contract at least based upon mutual self-interest and the only way I can serve my interest is to serve your interest. There isn't any way to have a stable and secure society of self-esteem where there is not a fair distribution of the burden and the privileges. I don't believe you can make it hold together.

We concentrate on things like law and order, for example. The Internal Revenue Service of the United States is the marvel of the world because it works. A lot of them don't work. Ours works! It works because people voluntarily comply! If people did not voluntarily comply with the Internal Revenue laws in America, you couldn't put on enough examiners to make it work. Law and order is that way. Law and order is not a question of how many policemen you have. Law and order is the function of people who see the law as their law—a law that they helped make and enforce.

We have to begin to think about basic things and make politicians face up to basic things. We may come out with different answers, but we've got to begin to ask the right kind of basic questions. Instead, we often concentrate on symptoms. I was out in Oakland and visited a Chicano-run Narcotics Referral Center run by ex-addicts. One fellow told me that he had become a heroin addict in San Quentin prison. He said that heroin was a good deal more available there than it was on the streets of Oakland—and it was fairly available on the streets of Oakland. Well, we talked about the usual things and the prison people agreed you couldn't have that kind of massive heroin practice without some official corruption. We talked about where it comes from and how the traffic could be cut off, and so forth. One of them said, "That's for you politicians to do. That's your business. We are not so much interested in the supply," he said. He said, "There's been heroin or something on the streets of Oakland ever since I can remember. And there's going to be heroin or something on the streets of Oakland from now on." He said, "People somehow get themselves motivated [147 that month] to come in here to the referral center. We send them to the detoxication center and they go through the hell of detox and come out clean. Then they are back on the street again. Still no jobs, fewer than there were. Most people and minority people have come from criminally ineffective school systems where often they are hassled by the police." And he said, "The first thing you know, whatever first got them taking heroin gets them onto heroin again. When their habit builds back up to $75 a day or $100 a day, then eventually the prison will see them again." He said, "We're not so much interested in the supply as in the demand."

That is where our focus needs to be. I don't know if we have ever figured out a way to cure heroin addiction or alcoholism—or insanity, for that matter. We do not know how to cure it. There are a lot of things we don't know how to do. We don't know how to cure a criminal. You have criminals in a place totally under control and you feel you ought to be able to do something about curing them, but you find that most of them come out of prison better trained in crime than when they went in. That ought to make us wonder.

I talked to a young friend who heads up an alcoholism program for American Indians in California. I asked him what he did. He began to tell me about how they identify alcoholics and how they get them into the program, and so forth. I wanted to question him further except that he was a close friend. I wanted to know what he did to cure them.

My guess is that people shoot up heroin or drink whiskey because they feel a whole lot better when they're on that than they do when they're not. If you are not going to deal with that part, you are going to have a hard time with it, it seems to me. Most people feel better when they're sober and not on drugs. I think we have got to deal with that. What

is it that makes some people feel so much better on drugs or drinking alcohol than they do the other way? You have to begin with causes. Now, I believe the basic thing America believes in is a "fair" distribution of wealth, income, and power. That is what we are all about! If that works, though, why do we have a graduated income tax, supposedly? Why do we have health programs, welfare programs, and housing programs? Obviously, with all the civil liberties and civil rights and restraints in the Constitution, we should have some kind of fair distribution of wealth, income, and power; but we don't do very well at it. Basically I think we don't do very well because we don't say straight out that that is what we are up to. If we did, then every year politicians would have to answer up when people ask, "Well, how are we doing this year?" They would have to answer, "Well, not so well; a little worse than last year." The top one-fifth of the population in America now has 41 percent of the income, the lower one-fifth has about five percent of the income. That is a little worse than it was in Roosevelt's day before we passed all these government programs.

But we go on passing programs! Take poverty, for example. Poverty by definition means lack of income. We have passed a subsidy program to help the poor farmers but nobody sees the distributive effect. It really takes from the working class and gives to the rich. The wealthy and rich farmers, and big corporate farmers get the bulk of that subsidy. We pass housing and medicare and other kinds of programs without thinking about the distributive effect. We do two things: one, we draft the program in such a way that the purveyors who are the sellers of services benefit a whole lot more than the intended beneficiaries. Secondly, we often make the problem worse.

My wife and I visited one of those high-rise housing projects for the elderly in Miami. An elderly fellow with cataracts on both eyes there says, "I can't shop anymore for myself. I can't cook my food anymore." He says, "Why can't I take these food stamps and go down here to the restaurant and buy prepared food?" Well, why can't he? And better than that, why couldn't he just have the money? That housing project was built with government subsidy and maintained with government subsidy. The main problem with old people is that they don't have any money, but the second things is that they are lonely. I also talked with an elderly woman there who said, "That's my main problem. This is a nice place, but," she said, "there is no shopping center or any interesting place around here where you can walk to. And I'm lonely. I just feel like we are segregated here." And they are! Our money built that place and our money primarily keeps it up. Why couldn't she have money? Rich people didn't build that place. Why couldn't she have it? If she had money, she might live at home, have somebody come in from time to time. She might live with her son or daughter and pay her own way. Or she might decide to go into that housing project, but that would be her choice. But instead we have passed a program where loneliness is one of the big problems. We have passed a program which reduces the options and further segregates on the basis of age. We didn't intend to do that, but that's how it often turns out. We don't think about problems; instead, we try to treat symptoms.

Here is another example. Westchester County, New York, is a fairly well-to-do suburb north of New York City. What's happening to all of these cities in America, as you know, is that jobs are leaving the central city and moving out to the suburbs. The new jobs primarily requiring lower threshold of education and skills are being built in the suburbs. Why should a company want to build out there? Well, it's cheaper. Why is it cheaper? The taxes are less. Why are the taxes less? Westchester County and every suburb around here or anywhere else gets the benefit of the tax assessment of that new plant. They zone tighter and tighter all the time on how many acres one must build a house on and how many square feet the house must have so the workers can't afford one. Then the county or the suburb doesn't have to put up the money for sewers, law enforcement, schools, and the streets, but they do have the new plant. The liberal solution to that is: let's subsidize those poor city-dwelling workers who can't get jobs and subsidize the suburb for its problems. In the last ten years the number of new jobs in Westchester County has gone up five times. The population potential of Westchester County has been cut in half by increasingly restrictive zoning. The government approves that. We also approve this business of putting low-income housing where low-income people are and better-income housing where better-income people are and never the twain shall meet. So, the number of jobs has increased five times in Westchester County in the last ten years, but the population potential has been cut in half. Every morning 100,000 people get up in Westchester County and go into New York City to their relatively good paying jobs and every morning somewhere else 100,000 get up in the morning and go into Westchester County. They go home at the end of the day. Here we have twice a day 100,000 people crossing each other going back and forth to work. We liberals look at that and say, "We're sure got a tough transportation problem here."

We have got to begin thinking about basics. I don't think the government should set Richard Gerstenberg's salary. I don't believe the government ought to be involved in trying to set prices except in those non-competitive industries and even then it ought to be short-range until the competition will begin to take care of it. What the government should do is act rather than program. It ought to think in terms of distribution and in making those natural competitive free enterprise forces work.

In Hungary, for example, nobody is smart enough to manage the whole economy even in a small country much less in a country the size of ours. The Soviet Union people know this too, but they won't say it out loud. Who is intelligent enough to decide how many straw hats or galoshes should be made and at what price they should be sold? They are moving more toward greater reliance on the market, on what's produced and at what price and where people work. Hungary is a country which does not believe in free enterprise. If Hungary can do that while bound by the rigid Marxist Leninist dogma and fearing invasion by the Soviet Union, I don't see any reason why the United States can't move towards greater reliance on the market.

The laws are there. This reliance on the market does not require changes in our traditions or changes in what we say we believe in. The anti-trust laws, for example, against monopolies have been on the books since Teddy Roosevelt's day. We say the tax laws ought to be graduated. We have allowed these loopholes to come in and now *they* are graduated. The richer you get, the better deal you get. It doesn't require any wrenching change. America needs to live up to what it believes in. The laws and the Constitution are already there. We need to get back to basics and put them into effect. Black people understand a little quicker than white people do. Jesse Jackson said, "I don't blame a white trade unionist for not wanting a black person to get his job. And I don't blame the black person for wanting to get his job." He said, "What I'd like to see is a society where they could all have jobs." We must begin to organize around that kind of common sense.

Maynard Jackson of Atlanta says that if you're an old person in America having to give up breakfast or lunch in order to buy essential medicine (as millions of old people do in this country), it's beginning to dawn on you that it's not enough in America anymore just to be white. Or, if you're a young couple just getting started and you can't pay your baby's doctor bill, it's beginning to dawn on you that it's not enough anymore in America just to be white. These kinds of things transcend the lines of race, sex, age, and region. These issues of economic class offer us an opportunity to get back to fundamental ideals and principles. We need to take this opportunity to get at the basic unanswered question of race in America which has always been with us and is still with us. We have tried to compromise off and on but it has cost us enormously in blood, treasure, and self-esteem. It can't be compromised.

A fellow who went to Yale Divinity School, Will D. Campbell, works down South. He went South in a Civil Rights movement of the 1960's. About the mid-sixties, blacks began to say to him, "Why are you over here talking civil rights to us? We're already for civil rights. You white people are the majority. Why don't you go talk to your own people?" Well, Campbell said that first of all that kind of hurt his feelings. There are still a lot of white liberals who think that civil rights was a lot more fun before the blacks got in it. Then Campbell said, "Listen, I come from redneck background. You want to get me killed talking civil rights to my own people?" One black guy said, "Well, that sort of means you're the problem then, doesn't it?" He said the more he thought about it, the more he realized that it was true. Now he works in that area.

Years ago we found out there's at least as much "redneckism" in Long Island, New York, as there is in Jackson, Mississippi. It isn't just confined to any particular area of America. Will D. Campbell says, "I may not know much, but I do know that whatever has held the black person down in America is very much akin to what's held the redneck down. In many ways it was easier on the black." The way he put it, it never got to the black person's head. He or she knew what was happening. The redneck, on the other hand, thought he was a part of the system. All the time Standard Oil of New Jersey was ripping them both off. Will says that ought to offer some way by which we can reach out to people and see common interests. We don't have to love each other—but I wish we would! It's not absolutely essential, though. As we begin to work together on some of these common interests we might also begin to see ourselves more as human beings rather than women or men, black or white, South or North, or whatever. I hope that may be true. You can begin to organize around these kinds of economic self-interests. He says the trouble with that is that we don't know. Study old populism, Will Campbell says. Every time working class poor blacks and working class poor whites begin to get together around their own economic self-interests, they make the politicians awfully nervous. They begin to say, "Look out! They're going to marry each other and they will be running the school rooms." So they divide the people up again.

People like yourselves in America have got to begin to face up to these kinds of basic facts.

If you are going to have a whole economy run by a few very large corporations that won't just mean high prices, bad quality, and these other things. It won't just be economic power. Economic power translates exactly into political power too, which the lesson of Watergate. We can get rid of the John Deans and the John Mitchells and all those others but we ought to be thinking about who put up the money! Common Cause now says it was around $60 million; it was carried around in shopping bags to prevent its being traced. At one point hundred dollar bills were shredded because they had so much money. Who put up that money? That's what ought to be on our minds. Well, we begin to see now that it was outfits like Gulf Oil Corporation, American Airlines, some of the biggest corporations in America. That information is coming out little by little.

My daddy was a proud old cowboy kind of fellow. One time when I was a kid there was a hardware dealer harassing Dad about an unjust bill. The situation embarrassed Dad and he went down to the store, called the dealer out on the street and slapped him. The police then took Dad down to court and fined him $10. Well, Dad went back down there and slapped the man again, saying, "It was worth ten dollars!" Don't you imagine that's the way Gulf feels? Five thousand bucks; my goodness, it was worth five thousand! Look at the kind of unprecedented profits these oil companies got. Look at the mergers they have allowed. Look at the vertical integration and the monopoly and look at the tax privileges—all these things aren't even in the law. They're not asking something new out of the government; they just want to keep what they have.

I don't believe it does us any good to talk about charity to people if we are not going to put under it a base about people's rights. Folks by and large are not going to let you give charity to them any more. And I think that is an awfully good development. That is the American way. People are entitled to some kind of basic and decent life in this country. We had rather take around a turkey at Christmastime than pay enough decent wages so that people could buy their own turkey all the year around. Now, we are going to have to get out of that. We are going to have to talk about people's rights—their economic rights

and political rights—that is fundamental in our tradition. I won't promise it can be done. I won't say for sure it's going to be done, and I won't promise it will be easy to begin to make this a people's government again. If it can be done, it depends on two assumptions: One is that people are smart enough to govern themselves. They see what's happening in the country and they want to do something about it. The other assumption is that you can make democracy work. But some people don't believe that. Look at the level of confidence in the President and in the Congress and in politicians. Virtually every institution has plummeted in popular approval. It is really an alarming thing just to look at what has happened, say, since 1969 in the way people feel about institutions, particularly about political institutions and politicians.

I believe we can make democracy work. I think we can offset money with the power of the people. But it requires that assumption to think we can do something about it. It won't be easily done. But I believe there is value for each of us in the struggle itself and that each of us must do whatever he or she can do.

Economics, Morality, and Consumerism

Ralph Nader

The subject of my remarks this evening will vary according to very different standards of evaluation. Some of them will be general. Some of them will be specific, because I think it is very necessary to extend some sort of nexus between general principles of ethics and specific applications of these principles to the real life problems that confront us all too frequently around the country and the world.

The most telltale sign of society's deterioration is the violation of basic norms. It is the repudiation of the norms themselves that signals deterioration. For example, Watergate was a violation of norms but the norms themselves apparently still have enough strength to rebound and judge the violations. In a situation where the norms themselves are violated and the norms themselves are repudiated, then we really not only have corruption but the corruption of the victims. I think it is ominous that we have been experiencing in this country not just a violation of certain standards and norms, but an increasing response to the norms' reassertion to judge the violation in the form of "so what?" The importance of this, I think, is quite apparent to the various denominations in the country. If that vague phrase, "moral authority," has any meaning, it is that reservoir of evaluation of human behavior of the other individuals in the society must remain unchallenged, however it may be readapted and brought up-to-date. For instance, New York City perilously borders on that final deterioration of the corruption of the victim where not only has there been widespread crime in the streets and crime in the executive suites in the buildings that tower above those streets, but also crime by the law enforcement officials—we are waist deep in this crime to an epidemic degree where the police themselves are aiding and abetting if not committing these crimes whether it is the heroine, the numbers, the extortion, the car theft, the burglaries—where a move attains great popularity because it focuses on an honest cop. When that type of process spreads so that more and more people who are the victims of the first stage of corruption begin looking upon themselves and saying, "Well, it is each one for himself or herself, the law of the jungle," then you have, of course, that breakdown of the last line of defense for any kind of moral authority.

I think that one of the most important questions that we have to ask ourselves is to what extent have we admired the standards or the norms which come from religious and ethical teachings, yet have failed to apply these standards or norms to the institutional and individual behavior that often dominates our other lives. Now, we all know the division between the Church and Caesar and the justification for it. It has institutional justification. It does not have moral justification. The boundaries, I think, should be maintained institutionally, but it is nonsense to extrapolate from that and say that the involvement of the moral teachings in such areas as government, pollution, consumer exploitation, and now the so-called energy crisis, and many other issues have somehow to be considered off limits. If I were to surmise what is the main obstruction over the years to a proliferation of the application of these norms to specific behavior in our towns and cities, villages and counties, capitals, it would be that the church has never come to terms with the need not to come to terms with power. There is this other dimension of the institution of the church in our society—the need for realistic thinking about economics, the need for the treatment of the powers in the community with an excess of deference because they in turn support the institution—I think that the church has tended to compromise very heavily the development of evaluative norms from which proceeds all progress, especially when it is based on such fundamental verities as the Commandments, the Golden Rule and all the diverse proliferations of those general principles as they relate to human behavior.

One example that illustrates this point is the extent to which ethics or religious principles are seen overwhelmingly in individual terms, not organizational terms. Obviously many centuries ago there weren't many organizations, although there certainly were states and business entities; but in our society more people behave and have their impact on other people through organizational mechanisms, not on a person-to-person basis, certainly not for what we call the public issues of the day. It is interesting to know that while we judge our neighbors on the basis of some pretty traditional standards of decency, friendship, care, we do not judge our corporate neighbors with those same standards. To illustrate: if a neighbor threw garbage from his roof onto other people's lawns, we would have no trouble applying certain standards to our behavior. But a nearby steel plant, belching enormous and much more serious pollutants into the air and water, does not receive that kind of evaluation. Somehow it is seen as if it were something of another genre, something of another dimension, which is either not susceptible to this kind of evaluation or not susceptible to the intrusion of lay commentary; that is, what

does the citizen know about the oxygen process or the Bessemer process or the accounting realities of U. S. Steel or Bethlehem Steel?

Now, this is where we, I think, are sinking very rapidly into becoming a society of means without ends. A complex society is usually a society which expends more and more of its energies and assets in means, and these means become so complex we forget the ends. One of the ends we forget is the victims; for example, a corporate pollutant who is, in effect, limiting the health and safety of innocent individuals who have done nothing to that pollutant and owe nothing to that pollutant. The standard must begin not from the accounting sheets but from the victims themselves and then proceed step-by-step from the devastation toward the various rationalizations and options that the company puts forth by way of defense. If we start from the viewpoint of the victims in all our problems, I think we will always stay relevant, meaningful, empirica; and we will require our ethical precepts to be rooted in the crucible of reality which tends to test whether they are applied genuinely or withheld hypocritically.

Let me illustrate a number of features of our economy as they emphasize an impact on the consumer. Focusing on the consumer in all of these problems is focusing on the victims—people who are maimed, subjected to disease or the silent violence of radiation or other pollutants; people whose purchasing power is depressed; people who in effect are forced to make many involuntary expenditures arising out of accidents, injuries, inefficiencies, misery at the expense of more voluntary expenditures which they might make in other fields such as housing, education, furniture, recreation, and what have you; people who can't get even the necessities of life, the hard-core poor, of which there are all too many in this country; or people who can get the necessities but who have been deprived of the value, such as food deprived of its basic nutrition for which has been substituted dubious chemical additives.

Our economy has always been criticized as having too much wealth and income concentrated in too few hands. Obviously, while there are economies around the world which are worse, I hope we do not judge ourselves by the standards of India or Brazil or Pakistan, but by the standards obtained from our own conscience and our own capabilities here in this country. Judged against both our standards here and capabilities here, not only is there too much concentration of wealth and income but the economy itself has achieved an ability to grow and grow and grow in real terms without meeting very real needs of our society.

Now, this was supposed to be theoretically impossible in the earlier days of the century and the last century, because in theory an economy grew because sellers responded to the demands of buyers, consumers. In direct proportion to their successful response, there were gains in employment, income, and profit. In the last few decades our economy has attained a new dimension which has escaped the attention of most of our economists, largely because they have succumbed to the quantitative law of econometrics, measurements at the expense of qualitatively evaluating our economy. Thus, for example, economic progress is judged in terms of the growth of the gross national product. It is not judged in terms of the needs that have met or not met, for the rights of consumers that have been met or transgressed. It has not been judged in terms of the intangibles. Six more steel plants may be built, but several thousand people may prematurely die from pollution through respiratory diseases. The six steel plants register on the gross national product scale but thousands of people who are ill or had their property damaged or who died prematurely are not registered as debits under the gross national product. So, we need to jetison this exclusive reliance on the gross national product and begin asking ourselves the question: What are the predominant sources of economic growth in the United States? We know, for example, that armaments have been a source of economic growth. Few, indeed, would support armaments on that basis alone. We know that expanded population has increased economic growth. Few, indeed, would constantly promote expanded population just to keep the economy growing. What we haven't paid much attention to at all is that waste and misery have become powerful sources of economic growth. When that occurs we have before us an economy that has no motivation to eliminate the basis of which this waste and misery proliferates.

Let me illustrate. We are now in what we have seen lately as an energy crisis. It is an energy crisis in the following sense: A man who consumes four turkeys at a Thanksgiving dinner asks for a fifth. The waiter refuses, saying there are no more turkeys, and the man stands up shouting, "Turkey shortage!" We need not be thrifty to reduce our energy problems. We only need to prevent gluttony and, in terms of our energy consumption, the word is gluttony. Our automobiles consume two to three times more than they would have to had there been decent care in the design of the internal combustion engine to be efficient. There are cars now which go thirty miles on a gallon, such as the English taxi in London. The American car averages thirteen miles on a gallon. Thirty miles on a gallon does not require exotic technology. There is the overlighting in our society, massive amounts of overlighting primarily used for decorative purposes. I ask you only to look around you! In fact, ophthalmologists have noted that in our supermarkets, office buildings, and schools the lighting levels are very often three times more intense than is necessary for visual adequacy and comfort. Instead of 30 to 40 foot candles, we are building in 110 to 120 foot candles because the illuminating engineers and the electric utilities and the architects profit by over-illumination. They sell more fixtures, the base on the architect's fee is larger, and the electric utilities sell more electricity.

In terms of the silent form of violence of consumer products, they may not always be silent, for example a defective automobile or an automobile that has no business being on a 1974 highway with 1935 technology. It is an impersonal type of violence; it may not be silent. One may be able to observe it; but, if we just looked at our own experience, we could see how absolutely necessary it is to apply the basic ethical framework of our beliefs to taming and humanizing the devastating effects of technology. We may think drinking water is harmful because the many pollutants that go into our rivers and lakes are not adequately screened

by purification systems, which are either too limited or antiquated. As recent tests have shown, levels of cadmium, mercury, arsenic, lead, and virsues have been found in drinking water in New Orleans; Evansville, Indiana; towns near Boston, Massachusetts; and many places elsewhere. Yet, none of us picks up a glass of water and looks at it and says, "Oh, cadmium level is up today!" and throws the water down the sink because cadmium does not offend our sensory responses of pain and anguish. That is true for much of the industrial pollution or consumer violence, for example radiation, which doesn't immediately provoke pain because one can't feel or see it or taste it, smell it; yet it is deadly. That is true of the chickens now being disposed of in Mississippi because they contain a cancer-causing pesticide; but, if people had eaten those chickens, they would never have tasted the pesticide.

Now, when our technology transcends our historic ability to alert ourselves to dangers by virtue of our sensory capacities, you can see what a challenge it is to increase the comprehensiveness of our ethical precepts to cover companies like General Motors, Allied Chemical, or the governmental agencies that are not doing their job in fostering and preserving human rights. When it is so obvious and so meaningful to apply the Golden Rule to General Motors, it is important to ask ourselves: What is it that keeps us from so doing? I think that the lack of development of the concept of organizational ethics dealing with institutions (now affecting our lives far more than individuals do) is the problem of secular or religious ethics compromising or surrendering to secular power. Until we resolve that issue, the application of this basic consensus to the new institutions and the new technology (I am saying "new" in the historic sense) will not be realized. When I see hesitancy on the part of people, it is a hesitancy, I think, born of nothing less than the fear of offending secular power in the United States, the kind of power that is often co-opted or compromised or controlled, the bastions of ethical power in this country. It is not a new problem, but it is still very real.

There have been a number of rather impressive developments to restore the moral authority of the church. They have been very controversial but I think in retrospect they have proven their role. The approach to the war in Vietnam is one; the approach to hunger is another; the approach to civil rights is a third; and now in a very interesting way some of us await the approach toward government corruption. Why has it been so tardy? Is it again the Church-Caesar separation? Is it again the feeling that entering into this area somehow would be too partisan? Well, I think it is obvious that both the Democrats and the Republicans are so afflicted that they prevent any accusations of partisanship from being deployed.

One has always to look at how current events affect children. More than any other group in our population, if they are not given the opportunity to root their observations of contemporary events in a moral-ethical structure, they will lose the greatest opportunities of their lives to develop a living operational ethics. When we make a decision as to the extent to which we are going to be inhibited or we are going to compromise or we are going to defer, we shouldn't only ask ourselves how this affects adults but how this affects children. Much of the apathy is a reflection of powerlessness. Powerlessness is a reflection of the reluctance for people who are outside these systems to make judgments on these systems. The rendering of judgments on these systems articulates issues. Issues attract constituencies. Constituencies invite citizen strategies. And citizen strategies beckon action. It is only action that illustrates the true stamina and the true sincerity upholding these beliefs. One remembers Oscar Wilde's clever little aphorism about himself when he said, "I can resist everything but temptation." It is when these beliefs are tempted, tested, threatened, confronted that they really display whether they mean anything in terms of the greater extension of justice and love on earth.

We come now to the kind of citizen action which is important to discuss. If we take always as our concern the standpoint of those who are victimized or transgressed, we will see that citizen action is not to be viewed as a privilege; it is to be viewed as an obligation, not an externally opposed one but an internally motivated one. If one were sitting in a cottage fifty yards from a cliff on the front porch in a rocking chair and witnessed two blind people taking a stroll, unknowingly heading for the cliff, would citizen action be a privilege or an obligation? There are many people in this country who are in various kinds of situations similar to those blind people, people who unknowingly consume products that are harmful, people who unknowingly find themselves subjected to serious malpractice and there are many tens of thousands of such people who die every year, as even *The Journal of the American Medical Association* has permitted its pages to detail—over-prescribing or misprescribing of pharmaceutical products such as antibiotics. Of course, the examples are legion, as a more complex society means that people are affected more seriously by more things beyond their control. They parallel this little imagery of two blind people taking a stroll and heading for the cliff.

One of the most ominous such developments which is enveloping almost everybody in this country is the development of nuclear fission power plants. It is a spectacle of such technological arrogance that it perhaps will take several disasters in historical perspective to etch it in its enormously tragic form. Based on no demonstrated need for nuclear power, prevention of waste, reliance for the short-term on fossil fuels and for the long-term on solar and geothermal—each of which is within our grasp and can be developed from now on on a gradually incremental scale—nuclear power is being promoted by a combination of government subsidy, government promotion, utility investment, and reactor manufacture promotion. Yet, although more and more facts are coming out to the public, the vast majority of the population have no idea that for the first time in the history of our country we are being told to rely on a technology which has to be perfect forever, or that the alternative is the biggest peacetime disaster in this country's history. People are not being told that they are expected to live well within the lethal range of a single atomic power plant accident, called the melt down accident, releasing deadly radioactive gases forming a radioactive cloud killing tens of thousands of people now

and later many of cancer, leukemia, genetic deaths, stillbirths—over an area 200 miles in radius, contaminating an area the size of Pennsylvania and bequeathing the most serious abuse of trust that ever extended from one generation of human beings to another. Very few people realize that there are more radioactive materials beneath that spherical reactor structure than exists in 2000 Hiroshima-size weapons. These materials will not explode but are subject, however, to the necessity to be safeguarded from environmental contact forever while they are in the reactor, while they are being transported for reprocessing by rail and vehicle, and while they are being deposited. They have to be kept from human contact and the environment for a long time—250,000 years! Plutonium 239, which is one of the wastes, is one of the most cancerous man-made agents ever. Five to ten pounds dispersed with cruel efficiency could give lung cancer to everyone on earth. Yet hundreds of pounds every year will be developed out of these nuclear plants. They are subject to sabotage. They are subject to nuclear blackmail. They are subject to theft of weapons-grade materials. Thousands of trucks and rails every day in the future will transport these materials. We are told that nuclear fission is only a forty-year span before other kinds of energy come into play. Picture the scene if the ancient Egyptians, who, in order to power their lawnmowers and their air conditioning systems for a forty-year period, had inflicted on the earth such devastating waste that safeguards were needed for over a quarter of a million years, and I think you will see the way future generations will look back on us.

The government says it will never happen; that there will never be a nuclear accident; there will never be any sabotage; there will never be a nuclear accident; that there will never be a major theft or nuclear blackmail. The government has also said a lot of things about the technology being perfect where it has not been. The most careful technology deals with the space race. We have had disasters in the space program. The Atomic Energy Commission itself said, when it sent up its satellite in the early sixties over the sub-Indian Ocean, that there was a one out of a billion chance that it would abort. It aborted on the first flight, showering plutonium 239 over the sub-Indian continent. There are hundreds of documented and now published cases of near misses, breakdowns, operational failures in nuclear plants now operating. There are 42 plants in the country and 1,000 more are scheduled by the year 2000. As a prototype of what might come, the thermal plant 30 miles south of Detroit in 1966 almost had the disaster. One of the engineers was heard to say after the accident (that closed the plant down for four years), "My God, we almost lost Detroit!" The disaster occurred because two pieces of metal, which weren't even on the blueprints for the plant, got into the wrong area. Had those metal pieces been larger, the deadly radioactive waste—the gasses, rather, of which the gases represent 20 percent of the materials in the reactor—might have been released over Detroit. A University of Michigan study noted that a big accident from that plant could kill immediately 135,000 people, not to mention later deaths from cancer and leukemia. There are growing numbers of scientists who are openly opposing the proliferation of nuclear power, some are based at MIT in Cambridge, others are based in the University of Massachusetts, some are Nobel Prize winners, others are grouped into the Federation of American Scientists, and other entities.

There is a point here. It is a statement one of the scientists once made opposing nuclear power. Dr. John Gofman, an extremely eminent scientist who used to be at Berkeley, said, "Nuclear power is not just a technical issue. It is overwhelmingly a moral issue." That is probably the most perceptive commentary that a scientist could ever make about a technology whose risks are expected to be accepted without participation or decision on the part of the people. If we look at technology, not simply from the sense of how we can comment on it when we are not nuclear engineers, if we look at technology in terms of its moral ramifications, and of the right of every individual to ask and have answered basic questions concerning risk, then we will open the arena of decision to a much broader input by citizens throughout the land.

Now, judging the way the citizen movement on nuclear power is spreading, there is little doubt in my mind that nuclear fission will be stopped in about five years, after endless billions of dollars of taxpayers' money have gone down the drain. Indeed, there has been more energy expended than returned—coal burned, for example, in getting nuclear power to the present state where it can contribute a little over one percent of our energy, five percent of our electricity, and a little bit more than wood. What needs to be done, I think, is for people who are very concerned about developing a living relationship between ethical standards and human behavior, organizationally or individually, to focus on concrete issues. Not only does this test the stamina of the belief but it also affords the opportunity for creative applications of it to make it strong by making it more meaningfully related to human beings' concerns and needs of the day; and to make it so imposing that it is accepted as a matter of course by those people in government, industry, and elsewhere who have excluded these concepts and who have developed a curtain of secrecy upon what they are doing in order to further exclude the public.

We have tried to go beyond mere disclosure in our work—we, being very various groups, small groups who work in Washington on consumer, environmental, energy, tax reform, and other issues. We are now trying to develop action manuals or articles that tell people how they can overcome their inhibitions, the unknowns, in getting involved in reform; and how they can develop the techniques that will start them with the momentum with which they can then carry on themselves and begin teaching teachers after a while. We put out a small manual, with which some of you may be familiar, *A Public Citizen's Action Manual.* We have put out profiles—20- to 40-page profiles—detailing the record, performance, energies, beliefs, constituent-handling policies, and many other aspects of every member of Congress standing for re-election in 1972. This was the first time this had ever been done. We were collectively shocked to learn that there was more information available in libraries and book stores in this country relating to birds than to the contemporary Congress, which manages to spend almost $300 billion a year and affects everybody in

the United States. We, together with many other groups in Washington and around the country, are becoming extremely specific in the kinds of recommendations we make as to how people can get involved and how they can extend their inherent feelings for what is neighborly behavior, for what is just and what is right, and for the ways in which they spend their time as citizens.

So, I like to ask people to answer the fourth question. They can answer the first three. How much time do you spend on your work? How much time do you spend with your family responsibilities? How much time do you spend on your leisure? How much time do you spend on your civic obligations? We have a long recognition in this country of civic rights but not very much of a recognition of civic obligations. What is necessary, I think, is to have people feel that they simply are not citizens in our society unless they apply some of their energies and time to the problems of their choice which plague the community or the state or the nation or the world. Once people begin allocating just modest amounts of their time—a few hundred hours a year—they will discover the power that they have to do good. They will lose the feeling that you can't fight City Hall. They will begin overcoming these feelings of alienation, disillusionment, drop-outism, boredom, lack of self-confidence, and replace them with the feeling of community and true neighborliness. They also stretch their own talents, become less gazers endlessly of television soap operas and become creators of the kind of practicing citizen philosophy which was so well articulated in the Athenian pledge of citizenry, which asked a citizen of Athens to leave Athens in a better way than he or she found it.

You will notice that in almost every institution the metabolism for that kind of objective is very weak, whether it is students in universities leaving their universities better than they found them instead of just waiting for their time to pass, or in government agencies, or in many other institutions. I think it is encouraging, however, to know that although the press tends to describe today's student as one who is returning to the attitudes of the fifties, that there are now 500,000 students in the United States who are assessing themselves from $4 to $5 a year to establish under their direction, on a statewide or part of a state basis, their own fulltime citizen research and action groups; namely, their own scientists, health workers, lawyers, organizers, writers, who take policy direction from an elected board of student directors and study, analyze, investigate, disclose, propose, litigate, connect up with the institutions of government and business to try to get them to perform better. These groups are now operating in Oregon, Minnesota, New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Michigan, Iowa, and many other areas—and there is a struggling one here in Texas. What is so important about this is that it is involving students in a new kind of educational experience which challenges their analytic skills and their normative development in tandem, a sure formula to overcome the boredom, listlessness, and apathy that has so plagued campuses over the years. With these opportunities opening up, they are overcoming some of the prolonged adolescence that is imposed upon them by their society and are beginning to develop a kind of self-confidence which we have found students working with us develop. They can do highly responsible, highly original work before they are twenty. They can also involve themselves in highly creative thinking about citizen strategies and citizen involvements and citizen commitments. In a society that requires young people to defer and defer and defer as they prepare and prepare and prepare, these students have managed to combine learning and citizen involvement in such a way that both are nourished from one another.

I would be, indeed, very pleased in addition to our discussion period to discuss more concretely how these kinds of efforts can be extended. You know, in times of great moral deterioration, we tend to go back to our basic principles and, if these basic principles are not connected up with a capability to apply themselves, they are going to be endangered themselves. And that is, I think, what is occurring all too often in this country; and, like anything else, the challenge, the crucible of testing tends to strengthen the commitment. I think we would do well to very clearly clarify what the obstacles are, what the obstructions are, what the rationalizations are that keep acknowledged verities from being applied to acknowledged problems in our society.

The Evils of Inflation

Arthur A. Smith

The nation's greatest economic problem is inflation. Simply but accurately stated, inflation is a condition of generally rising prices. Or if one prefers, it is equally correct to say that inflation is a condition of declining buying power of money.

Much can be said about inflation; its causes and effects; its snares, delusions, and its insidious functioning. Unfortunately economists have been inclined to confuse and befuddle more than clarify and reveal in their treatment of the subject, often unnecessarily moving it to a theoretical level beyond popular comprehension. But to the average person there is nothing theoretical about inflation; it is a very real problem for him.

History teaches us some valuable lessons about inflation, if we could only learn. Serious inflation is always a man-made condition resulting from decisions of the government's monetary authorities to create excessive amounts of money and credit. And since monetary powers are sovereign government powers, government must be held responsible for inflation, and in a republic (a representative democracy) the people in the final analysis, because they are responsible for the government.

Inflation is inherent in the economic and political philosophy that has dominated official and popular thinking in this country for at least a quarter of a century. The people themselves, wittingly or unwittingly, have bought the theory that inflation is good (even necessary and essential to reduce unemployment and promote growth of the economy) without examin-

ing carefully the long run validity of the idea or pausing to consider how inflation can be controlled under our political system.

Let no one tell you that the causes of our inflation are mysterious or unknown and that we do not know how to stop inflation. Neither is true. We do know the causes, and we know the cure.

Inflation is the result of the way the government manages its fiscal affairs. It spends more than it collects in revenue and then uses the banking system (via the Federal Reserve) to finance the deficit. The effect of this is to create money or its equivalent which the government spends. The created money increases bank reserves: and in our fractional reserve banking system, reserves enlarge the lending power of banks several fold.

What happens is that this process creates purchasing power that is not derived from production. Yet when the government spends the purchasing power, it comes into competition with purchasing power that is generated by production. Result: inflation.

Now, if the government collected in taxes enough to equal what it spent, no new money would be created. What the government spent would be taken from the rest of us, thus reducing our purchasing power. Result: no inflation.

Or if the government did run a deficit but borrowed directly from the rest of us instead of borrowing through the Federal Reserve, there would be no created purchasing power. What the government borrowed would reduce the purchasing power of the lenders. Result: no inflation.

It is unfortunate, indeed, that many people, even many of our leaders, fail to understand that what we do not pay in taxes to balance the Federal Budget, we pay in higher prices for the things we buy, because the whole process is inflationary. Actually, inflation in its effect is the worst of all hidden taxes because the resulting burden falls heavily and unfairly upon the people who are least able to stand such a burden.

Although there have been many examples of bad inflation in world history, none was ever worse than Germany's following World War I.

The German government borrowed heavily through the central bank which in turn issued paper money. In fact, our inflation process in the U.S. almost exactly duplicates what Germany did.

Very few persons in Germany escaped the inflation's destructive consequences. True, there were some astute individuals who correctly foresaw what would inevitably happen, and they transferred much of their capital to Switzerland, Holland, the U.S., and other places where money was stable. But the vast majority of Germans suffered severely.

Thrifty persons saw their lifetime savings wiped out. In fact, those who held assets either in cash, in savings, or in bonds, mortgages, or any fixed dollar obligations lost everything. In other words, creditors saw their claims paid off in marks whose buying power was only a small fraction of the buying power originally loaned.

Large debtors, particularly the industrialists whose companies had used long-term debt in great amounts to buy land, erect buildings, or buy equipment, gained handsomely by inflation. They were able to get inflated prices for their products, yet pay fixed debt obligations with greatly depreciated marks.

Small individual debtors did not fare so well chiefly because in most instances living costs went up so much faster than income that meeting debt payments was difficult even with inflated money. Also persons who were obliged to go into debt had to pay incredibly high interest rates, particularly in 1923 when inflation was galloping. In October and November of that year when the mark was depreciating at cyclonic speed, interest rates went as high as 20 percent per day.

The workers who made up the largest segment of the population endured great hardships from inflation, more especially the unskilled, nonunion workers whose wages fell way short of keeping up with the prices. For awhile, strong unions were able to maintain wages abreast prices but when inflation began to accelerate, they too found themselves losers.

Perhaps the greatest suffering from inflation was borne by Germany's once strong middle class, the professional people, merchants, salaried officials and clerks, and retired individuals depending upon pensions earned over many years. On the whole these were people least able to defend themselves, and ironically, too, they were loyal citizens who almost until the last retained confidence that somehow inflation would be overcome and the nation's currency restored to its old value.

The old people who had saved to take care of themselves in their advanced years saw their savings, pensions, and annuities melt away, and their insurance policies virtually become worthless. The sons who might have supported them had all too commonly been killed in the war.

Hundreds of thousands of educated men and women, too old or feeble or untrained to earn their own living, were abruptly faced with starvation. Many died. The others, passing from day to day without hope, survived only by the sacrifice of treasured books, furniture, jewelry, and all their saleable possessions, and at the end by domestic and foreign charity. Their suffering is one of the most genuinely pitiful effects of Germany's inflation.

History shows that the Nazi movement which spawned Hitler and ultimately led to Germany's destruction in World War II is directly traceable to the widespread desperation caused by the inflation.

People tell me that this cannot happen in the United States. I say it can and will happen, if we continue to pursue the same economic and political doctrines that have brought us to where we are now.

A nation addicted is like a person addicted to a drug. The longer a person is on dope the more difficult it is to quit the habit. Similarly, the longer a nation is on inflation the more difficult it is to restore price stability.

In fact, the analogy can be carried further. There is a tendency for an addict to take larger quantities of a drug as time passes. There is a like tendency for a nation to yield ultimately to greater rates of inflation.

This can be demonstrated by numerous adjustments intended to reduce the hardships of inflation suffered by various segments of the economy. For example, almost all wage contracts between union labor and employers now contain escalator clauses which automatically raise wages when the cost of living rises. Real estate lease contracts also have escalator clauses which advance rents as the price index goes up. Since wages and rent are costs of doing business, they con-

tribute to still higher prices.

Other examples are increases in the legal minimum hourly wage passed from time to time by Congress and increases in Social Security benefits, all supported by the argument that the cost of living has gone up.

Perhaps worst of all is the behavior of many individuals and businesses seeking to hedge or even to profit from inflation by economic decisions which are made in anticipation of more inflation. These speculators seek to buy ahead of rising prices and in most instances do so with as much credit as they can borrow.

Finally, when the forces of inflation seem to have exhausted their stimulus and the economy shows some signs of turning down, new inflation forces are generated by government through fiscal and monetary policies, and we continue as before.

So, inflation is a vicious circle that in time begins to spin faster and faster and ultimately causes the economy to collapse into a depression.

Inflation works subtly and insidiously, often producing secondary ill effects that involve values far more precious than mere material values.

Let me mention a few of these, not in order of their importance because there is no way to rank them.

Inflation has caused many families to feel the need for more than one income, and married women who might otherwise have remained out of the labor market have been obliged to take jobs or have sought jobs. U.S. Department of Labor figures show that from November, 1972 to November, 1973 the number of women 20 years of age and over in the civilian labor force increased 1,375,000, while the number of men in the same age grouping who entered the labor force increased 921,000. Never before in the history of the country had such a great reverse ratio occurred. Undoubtedly, inflation is mostly responsible. The cost of living increased about nine percent in 1973 and continues to rise.

Similarly there is widespread amount of moonlighting for the same reason by both men and women. Family life is certain to be altered by these developments and where there are children in the family, various social problems of concern to the Church are bound to emerge.

The nation's crime rate has reached record proportions, and inflation must share some of the blame for this.

Costs of operating state and local governments have become so high because of inflation that there is need for new taxes to relieve the burden on old tax sources. Racetrack enthusiasts are now mounting a new campaign in Texas to legalize pari-mutuel betting. They are saying that the state will derive from horse racing large revenues to support schools and other public functions.

Privately supported colleges and universities, many church related, as well as hospitals and charitable institutions, are financially strained today because operating costs have gone up faster than endowment income and contributions. Many will have to close, unless they can find relief somewhere.

Tuition in church-related schools has been raised so much that enrollment is discouraged, and students are turning to state-supported institutions.

So, you see, inflation is a cruel monster who can destroy our social as well as our economic values.

Who is going to stop him? The best answer is nobody until enough people understand what has been happening and what the eventual outcome will be. Here are some folks (rather large in number) who ought to be very concerned:

(A) Over 125 million life insurance policyholders owning in excess of $800 billion in life insurance.

(B) Over 20 million persons drawing federal old age, survivors, and disability insurance payments (Social Security).

(C) About 30 million workers covered by private retirement plans.

(D) An undetermined number of millions of workers; such as, schoolteachers and other public employees whose wages and salaries tend to lag behind rising prices.

(E) Also an undetermined number of thrifty people who have saved for retirement and invested in fixed income obligations, including Uncle Sam's savings bonds, only to see inflation eat away year after year at the real value of their savings.

Certainly all of these people, if they understood and would, could demand through the ballot box that inflation be brought under control.

The principal hangup, however, is that there are too many citizens who have been duped into believing that inflation is necessary to keep the economy always moving ahead. They have been misled into believing that inflation is necessary in order to keep unemployment down.

When the bust comes, as it surely will, the masses of people robbed of their fruits of labor, like those in Germany in the early 1920's, will succumb out of desperation to the siren appeal of a dictator and will forfeit their freedom.

Loss of freedom under a totalitarian state is the dearest of all costs of inflation.

Woman's Changing Economic Impact in the Marketplace

Julia Montgomery Walsh

Today we tend to forget what some of the aspects of life are all about. We have found that working the process of law to protect the rights of human individuals is a very important task. The time, effort, and cost of protecting people's rights is really pretty inspirational. I am very glad I could come to this conference to leave with you my thoughts about women, because I feel it is my civic duty.

Among the many things we all have to cope with today are the tremendous changes evolving. We talk about economic crisis, but I don't think of what's happening in the economy as a crisis. It is simply a "dramatic" change and our seeming inability to cope with that change is the crisis. Change has been the theme of our way of life in the United States since the beginning. There is no crisis when one copes with change. The inability to cope is the crisis. This is the problem I want to discuss with you today—looking

at the change taking place in women's lives as related to the marketplace and the economy in general.

The "liberation movement" is not a social or political thing at all. It is really the women of our population responding to change. Fundamentally, most of that change has to do with the way we respond to economic demands and the way we meet them in our families and homes.

Now, a lot of things have happened and it is well to look at them realistically. Sometimes this is hard to do. One's historic economic background determines pretty much how he will respond to all this chaos. Women in the field of education have not made the kind of progress we had hoped. Let's get down to facts. In 1900 about 19 percent of all bachelor's degrees in the U.S. were earned by women. By 1970 only about 30 percent (I say "only" comparatively, since the number of degrees had so increased) of the bachelor's degrees were earned by women. So women have about doubled that position in higher education. In doctor's degrees in 1900, six percent were earned by women; by 1970, 12 percent. This just about doubled again—but still pretty small in numbers. Percentages are more meaningful here. Where we really made progress is through high school education. In 1900, only 7 percent of women finished high school but in 1970, 78 percent finished high school. This is some eleven times an increase, instead of just double. Society is beginning to feel this impact. Women had to work up and through the system.

Now, the second thing that helped is that women left the home for work or for other reasons. And this is where your church groups can be of great service—in recognizing the worth of today's woman in the world.

One of the most important segments in today's world are women who work in the marketplace without pay. They are referred to, unfortunately and sometimes not too respectfully, as volunteers. Church groups, women's groups, and social groups should generally be finding ways to reward these women with prestige, recognition or whatever since they choose not to accept pay. When one looks at the economical basis of social service in this country as related to hospitals, welfare centers, child-care centers, etc., the economic ability of society to perform these services is based on a very large segment of volunteer workers. I would wager that 99 44/100 percent of these workers are women. This input is very greatly overlooked when value is placed on women in the marketplace. It probably is most noticeable in the hospital structure.

I have the great honor of serving on the board of one of the big universities in our town, Georgetown; and one day I pinned the administration down when they were talking about economics and I said, "At the next board meeting I would like for you to give me a budget figure on replacing the women volunteers in Georgetown Hospital." The figure was overwhelming! Amazingly, no one had ever looked at this economic factor before.

Let's think about women in the work force. There are a great many women who choose to work. Some women choose working in terms of personal fulfillment; others choose it for basically economic reasons. The revolution taking place in women's work habits has an economic base. There are now some 33 million women in the work force. This group primarily comes to the marketplace to earn wages for supporting families. There has been too much publicity given to those of us who are "doing our own thing." But in the case of nine out of 10, women's "own thing" consists of contributing to the family budget. Of this 33 million women workers, there are about 7.2 million who are single. They are usually their own sole source of support. There are 6 million women who are heads of households. I believe this is the second most important group in terms of economic impact in this country. Now, these statistics are slightly old because the Labor Bureau makes a report every two years; so, I am using 1971 statistics. There are about 52 million family formations in this country and six million of those are headed by females. The tragic thing about the group is that the vast majority of these households headed by females are existing below the poverty level. This is a very sad thing, indeed. A woman doing the same work as a man across the board receives $3 pay for every $5 a man receives. Whereas the mean wage of males in this country is $9,000, the mean wage (and I do mean *mean*) is $5,500 for women. Most of these women have dependent children and perhaps others in the household also; but almost without exception the vast majority of these fall below the government's description, however bad that is, of the poverty level.

This important factor should not be allowed to happen in a society like ours. It is a very serious problem. Of the 7.2 single women and 6 million working women heads of households, this group almost entirely is at the low level of the pay scale. Of the remaining 20 million who are working, 7 million have husbands earning less than $7,000 per year. So, you can readily see that a vast majority of women workers work for bringing a reasonable standard of living to already created family units. The age groups of working women are interesting: 10-24, about 62 percent; group age 24-44, about 45 percent; but interestingly enough, in group 45-54, almost 53 percent of those women are working today. You may say, "Gee, that's interesting." But is it really after we look at the higher cost of higher education? Most women who work beyond the age of 45 are financing higher education for their children. I did a survey of my own on this. The Department of Labor has done one and found that higher education for children is the most important economic thrust of women over age 40 who work.

Now I have been a widow for several years and I am one of those six million female heads of households. In 1963 I married a widower who had seven children. I had four children. Then, just to prove something—I don't know what—we added a twelfth child, a little girl. Now, if anyone is qualified to speak on the economics of family life, you have her! You've heard that old saying (which couldn't be further from the truth), "They're cheaper by the dozen." Well, forget it!

We had four children in college for a series of almost five years. I need not have told you this personal data except to prove why a woman in her forties is still working very hard. During the last decade, at least two of our children have been in college every year; sometimes three or four of them at the same time. So I know whereof I speak! And this type of situation isn't likely to change much, unfortunately.

Concerning education, there is an example of another problem which I will tell you of from our town. When I went to Akron East High School, Akron, Ohio, a private high school education never entered my mind. Yet social change in our community today has made it almost imperative for children to go to private high school in order to qualify under the rules and regulations established by the educational community for entering good colleges and universities. We now have to begin worrying about quality education at a much earlier stage in a child's development. If you belong to the older generation as I do and you have a large family, you really have to have a real financial input to meet that kind of challenge.

Let's go on now and talk about some of the myths surrounding the woman in the marketplace. First of all, you hear that women shouldn't work because they are always absent. That just isn't true at all! There is about one-tenth of one day's difference concerning absenteeism between men and women at work: the average absentee rate for women is 5.2 days a year; the average absentee rate for men is 5.1 days a year. So, that is just a myth.

Since women in the work force doubled after 1960, statistics show their work life is about 25 years. Now, that is a shorter time than men because women have to take time out for increasing the family. But women's longevity figures are much better per job than the male figures. Interesting enough, society has labeled the concept of women's work versus men's work. In a study of twenty-two skills over the last ten years, this label has been discarded by experts. They found that 14 of the 22 skills are sexless, meaning that men and women can do them equally well. Six of these skills, women can do better; two, men can do better. So the idea that women can go only into certain kinds of work, such as nurses or teachers, has also been disproven scientifically.

The next thing I think is a myth is that juvenile delinquency is associated with the children of working mothers. This has also been completely disproven! In fact, statistics now being accumulated indicate that the working mother more often than not raises more responsible children than the mother who stays and works at home.

Finally then, the real concern should be that the six million women heads of households should get "equal pay for equal work." These women should have available to them the same kind of work scales and training as do men. The question of why women are sole heads of households is irrelevant to this discussion. This group in terms of economic liberation should be the most important since over half of them live below the poverty level. It is one of the greatest needs of our economy to give the female worker, who has to work, the same kinds of tools as her fellowman worker head of household.

One of the interesting experiences I had after losing my husband in the service was trying to buy a house to make a home. My husband had been in the Army and we had lived seven places in ten years so that our home became wherever we hung our hat. It was a very secure and happy home, wherever. Yet when there were no longer Army associations I decided to put down roots. I chose Washington, D.C., and I think I made a good choice. I was already a good wage earner, had a good credit rating, etc. But when I went to my local bank I found that written in the federal law of the U.S. was the fact that I, Julia Montgomery, was not legally allowed to take out an FHA loan. Why? Because I am female. Now, I was 34 years of age, supporting four small children, and also a partner of a New York stock exchange. Now, we just can't continue to tolerate that kind of inconsistency and discrimination. And we didn't! We girls have changed all that now.

Another group in the economy which we must not overlook is the female homemaker. People have somehow gotten the impression that women workers have some kind of disrespect for the homemaker. Nothing could be further from the truth! The woman who has the luxury of deciding to make homemaking her career is a most valuable, if not the most valuable, woman. But she does have the luxury of choice. The homemaker should be given every single bit of credit due her. In no way should she ever be discriminated against. She is just fortunate enough not to need to choose to work outside the home. What a blessing! A girl has the opportunity to stay at home and raise her children. But these women are in need of economic background and management capability just as the woman in the marketplace because she is running a small business—the home—and she usually runs it quite well. She hires her own staff—usually herself and the children, if she can get them to work. When a woman works in the marketplace, she can usually more easily get the children and her husband to work in the home than homemakers can. The homemaker needs a good economic and business management background to run an American household well. She needs to understand how to market, budget, and finance. All of these things women should have available to them at every level of education in their early days; if not then, in adult education later.

Another thing we have to face is inflation. Nobody talks about economics today without talking about inflation. When you live in Washington, D.C., inflation and Watergate are the *only* two things you talk about! More serious than inflation of costs is the inflation of tastes. Fundamentally we now accept as routine economic necessities what indeed in our generation of youth were luxuries. Before, we felt high school education was a necessity; now it has become a college education. No one back in those days hardly thought once of a master's degree. Now it is becoming a routine part of educational planning. None of us then thought of private schools. All of us had one car, and perhaps one telephone. Television was first seen at the world's fair in 1939. Most important in the problem of inflation is what we have come to consider the necessities to maintain a minimal, acceptable standard of living for our families. This puts a heavy burden on the women head of household. Her standards, of course, will prevail. She then has some very difficult judgments to make relating to economics and the whole general structure of our world about materialism and values, etc.

Anyone who lived through the depression now thinks primarily in terms of money, economics, material goods —all influenced by experiences of the early and late 1930's. This very interestingly comes to light in the investment business. There is a great deal of difference

in the attitudes toward economics of those from the 30's and the younger group who have entered our business in the fifties and sixties who are products of the post-World War period.

In 1940 there was one out of every ten women in the United States with children working; by 1960 this figure was up to about 50 percent, and now it is up to about 60 percent. There seems to be a flag waving saying: "Women are being freed." Women haven't been liberated; they have been given economic responsibility. I wish "Women's Lib" did mean the sense of "being free." We have not been freed! We have been pretty much enslaved by an economic system which demands our input. Back in the 1930's mothers didn't work because there weren't any jobs to be had. You might say, "Well, there's unemployment in the country today. Why don't women stay at home and there will not be any unemployment." That is not true either. If half of the working women today stayed at home, the whole country would be at a standstill. Employment figures show a group of men who could not do the jobs women are doing. Many of these men are unemployable and many women working outside the home are from households with incomes under $3,000 and have men as their dependents. On the economic impact side, women are very much responsible for redistribution of wealth in this country on every level.

We are in a great state of economic change, not economic crisis. Women in the work force are responsible citizens in the redistribution of wealth, taxation, and other areas. Most households in this country are raising their standards more on education than in terms of living conditions.

This rising standard passes a higher education level and more opportunity on to the next generation. As working mothers or mothers of any category, heads of households, homemakers, or volunteers, we need to really get some handles on our values. We have imposed upon our children a very serious economic challenge. Some children I know now who are considering marriage have concluded that the husband and wife both must work to maintain the standard of living. We have imposed on them as necessity what was luxury a generation ago. Women need to make sure they don't offset economic achievement with moral value changes that are not necessarily constructive.

Females have great contributions to make to the general betterment of the world—socially, spiritually, and economically. I honestly feel that a female can bring to the political scene, the public scene, and the church community—wherever they go—a different value judgment and point of view than a male from the same background. This is particularly true in relationship to the international picture, to wars, and the rest. The more a woman is out in the marketplace the more she is aware of what is happening and the more she competes across the spectrum of life's activities for input. Look at these women in the work force a bit differently. The pressure society puts her under is pretty intense. Well over 60 percent of the children of working mothers are cared for in the home through family arrangements, etc. These kinds of things we need to look at rather carefully.

After I lost my husband and went back into the marketplace, his mother became my housekeeper. This was one of the cleverest ideas we ever had. We became partners in economic endeavor—not servant-master. She and I had a ball. We did a lot better than we actually anticipated when we first made the arrangement. Both of us were able to enjoy the fruits of our labors. We need to keep these kind of values alive, bringing out the best of everyone in the family unit.

Finally, I believe very strongly that the objectives of church groups—like yours—government groups, and the rest should be building for those with needs at the poverty level the kinds of skills and capabilities to aid in distributing the wealth of this great land. You can see this need evolving as you look at woman as an economc unit. She must be well informed to handle her responsibilities carefully. She must be well supported in social and family structures. And most of all, she must be appreciated in whatever role she has.

The Church Challenging the Marketplace

Jimmy R. Allen

I pastor in the heart of the poorest city in the United States and, therefore, economics to us is not an academic matter; it is a matter of survival of life and death for the gospel and I find myself confronted, as you are, with frustrations. But as we try to speak the mind of God to the minds of men about these trickiest of all, most complex of all problems in the field of economics, I find myself listening to you as you grapple with it, trying to figure out what to do with it—weighing the good news and the bad news, and the bad news seemingly outweighing the good news. There is a whole series of jokes going around about good news and bad news these days. One of my business friends told me the other day the story about Moses coming out of Egypt with the Red Sea before him. He went away to talk to God about what to do, and he came back to the people and they said, "Well, what did He say?" And he said, "I've got some good news and some bad news." "Well, give us the good news first." He told me that He is going to open up the Red Sea; it's going to roll back and we are going to be able to walk through on dry land. They said, "Oh, that's wonderful. What's the bad news?" "Well, before He can do this He has to have an ecological study on the impact of that act. And we have to have it in triplicate before it can happen."

We are in a real tough time figuring out the complexities of how you get things opened up and what you do with them in our kind of world. I felt very much like the men who were standing around trying to figure out what to do about the fat lady that fainted. Everybody wanted to do something but they didn't know where to take hold. I feel like we are in that kind of situation these days in this kind of field.

Before I get into this sermon, I want to give you two or three ways to go home and to handle these very emotional laden problems without getting fired. You know, I think that's important, at least economically. Some years ago an Arkansas preacher put in the

Saturday Evening Post a series of points about how to handle the race problem without getting fired. There were about eight points—about five were not rememberable but three of them were because they had been a real lifeline to so many preachers. He said the first way for you to handle these emotional problems as you go home without getting fired is to discover and describe the complexity of the problem. If you can just do that well enough, eloquently enough, you never have to come to the solution; but you do get rid of a great burden of conscience that you have now addressed the problem. If you will discover that it is complex and you will describe it in great detail, then you will be able to walk away, nobody will be mad, everybody will be amazed, and you will be able to relieve your conscience without getting fired.

The second thing you can do. You can speak to the right to speak. You can go home and say, "If I decide to speak to the economic crisis of our day, I believe this pulpit ought to be free for me to speak to it." Now, you don't have to say anything but you have established the right if you decided to, and it does relieve you of a great deal of tension to have done that—just speak to the right to speak.

And the third is the one that we have had some dealings with in this conference, it is to obfuscate. If you don't understand the meaning of that word, you understand the meaning of the point. What you do is that you obfuscate, you say things in such a complex way that nobody knows that you really told them about it that day except you and your wife, and you can go home feeling greatly satisfied.

I would like during this closing time to do none of those things. I would like for us to examine the question of "Can the Church Challenge the Marketplace?" Now, I realize that the subject that was given to me was "The Church Challenging the Marketplace." The subject I sent in was "Can the Church Challenge the Marketplace?" and after the conference I have decided that my subject was better than theirs. I want to deal with whether or not we can, and if we can, how can we as a people of God challenge the marketplace of our world.

Two Scripture passages as a backdrop, not exegetically to be dealt with nor are they necessarily related to each other, although they are on the same page in my version of the Bible. It is Matthew 10, where the Bible says: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (v. 16). And then it goes on to give them the warnings and the counsels, and then says: "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (v. 20). The other one is in Matthew 11, just across the page: "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented" (vv. 16-17). The marketplace Scripture speaks of fickleness of the crowd about Jesus and John the Baptist. I want to take it totally out of context and say that what we are really doing as people is seeking to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves in allowing the Father to speak through us in our day to the marketplace, and that we have very often been like children that played in marketplaces, piping and lamenting without ever really affecting the marketplaces of our world in any kind of significant way. Some rhetoric captures the imagination. Public speakers, preachers especially, with sensitive verbal radar hone in on it and use it for their own communication; for, we are incurable collectors of phrases. They become our stock in trade. I guess the most beautiful rhetoric is the challenge in recent days, used by so many of us of George McCloud's beautiful statement on the cross in the marketplace. You remember that he said, "I simply argue that the cross be raised again in the center of the marketplace as well as on the steeple of the church, and recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles but on a cross between two thieves, on the town garbage heap at a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek; or, shall we say, English, Bantu, and Afrikaans, in the kind of place where cynics talked smut and soldiers gambled because that is where he died and that is what he died about and that is where churchmen should be and that that is what churchmanship is all about." Now, that is a beautiful description of the challenge to the church in the marketplace.

But the question that we have to deal with is can the cross be effectively raised again in the marketplace? We have become aware of the labyrinth of competing values, emotionally heated positions, vast power systems, greed, secularized idiological defense mechanisms —the question of whether the cross can be raised in the marketplace is more than rhetoric, it is real. I am reminded of Reinhold Niebuhr's statement, "Lament," in his first book in 1929 entitled *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tame Cynic,* in which he said: "Beside the brutal facts of modern industrial life how futile are all our homiletical spoutings. The church is undoubtedly cultivating graces and preserving spiritual amenities in the more protective areas of our society, but it isn't changing the essential facts of modern industrial civilization by a hair's breadth." The judgment in 1929 was harsh and the life of the man who made that statement helped to alter the picture somewhat in the ensuing years. The churches directly furnished or indirectly influenced persons in the atmosphere in which an economic justice is a far more living issue than it was in American life in 1929. But the basic impact of organized religion in the mechanics of a vast economy is still minimal.

Now, I want us to look at the challenge of the marketplace to the church, and then see the challenge of the church to the marketplace, and then see some ways in which the church can relate to and affect the marketplace of our world.

One of the challenges that the marketplace has to the church that will help to keep the church's message and ministry alive and vital and real is the challenge to us to be realistic in our idealism without becoming cynical about our directions. The challenge of the marketplace is that in the midst of that kind of hard-nosed atmosphere, the genial platitudes that often pass for preaching don't come up to muster. If you are serious about the gospel, the place to find out about whether it works or doesn't work is the laboratory of human life between Sunday and Saturday especially within the workaday world of the factory and the

farm and of the office place and of the salesman's automobile—in those kinds of worlds you discover whether the gospel really makes a vital difference in the individual's life-style, his attitudes, and his values. So that the marketplace challenges the church to be realistic about what we are talking about, not just to mutter our idealisms and go off in some kind of meditative fashion, separated from the world like old Simon on top of that post several years ago. We are supposed to be in touch with our world, and the marketplace challenges us, challenges the best metal in us. One of the things that has made this conference so uncomfortable to us is that we have the feeling that we really take seriously what we are hearing, that some of the things that we say as if they are truths that have not been tested and challenged will be tested and challenged; for the marketplace does provide the laboratory of realism and demands of us that we not be unrelated to the fact that the people who people our pews every Sunday are having to grapple with decisions that have been handed down to them in a system in which they are caught up and in which they—some of them—are selling themselves a piece at a time so that their integrity is gone before they really know that they don't belong to themselves any more. In the midst of that kind of twisting of conscience, we have the task of speaking to people who have to make those decisions, respond to those kinds of pressures, and the marketplace becomes one of the cleansing, purifying laboratories to test whether or not the gospel really does work. We who are in this conference are committed to the fact that it does, that we really do in a very real sense speak to the word of the Father. If that is true, the Father is dealing with His children in the torturous kind of pressures they are facing, and we who are to deal with them are to give them the kind of resources which will help them to deal with those things realistically. We do very well describing the glories of daily work.

I remember how I got challenged on that in one of the early conferences I was planning in Christians and the workaday world. I had talked about how marvelous it is to work all the time by taking the long look, by realizing that whatever you do, you really are contributing to something down there. Just keep your eye on that that you may be able to do it better. The guy who followed me was a labor man who said, "You know what I used to do before I became the labor union man? I used to work in a little factory that made toys. At that time we worked sometimes 12 hours a day, most of the time 10. You know what my job was? My job was to take a little whistle and set it in top of a little toy train engine. I fitted it in and tapped it in. I fitted it in and tapped it in, fitted it in and tapped it in. You know, I could have been sitting there thinking, 'Man, won't those children be happy when they get this little whistle! You know, when Christmastime comes they are really going to be so pleased.' You know, about the ninth hour of that I got to thinking if I see another one of these damned whistles, I'm going to go crazy." What he really did for me was that he took the preachments of my idealistic viewpoint about happy children getting nice toys and put it back into the reality of what he was having to do with himself ten hours a day. That is the kind of challenge that you and I really must have if we are going to deal wtih needs of our world.

The fact is, though, that part of that point was to be realistic in our idealism without becoming cynical. That is where the gospel of Jesus Christ needs to do its work in our lives. Sometimes when we get very wrapped up in seeing the forces, the economic forces of systems, possessed as they are with separation of men from God and turning them and hurting them, we become cynical about the motives and the abilities of any person to stay anywhere near where the gospel is guiding him.

We begin to look for phoniness in every place because we have found phoniness in so many places. Before long we begin to shrug our shoulders and we begin to join those who with their cynical kind of spirit feed (?) out acids that destroy and twist what the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ is really supposed to be. Idealism nurtured by the spirit of Christ in our lives, nurtured by the discovery that the Father does indeed speak and work is an idealism that doesn't have to be unrealistic, but it is also out of that kind of nurture of God that we are able to keep them from becoming cynical about the very work we do, about the very task we have as Christians called to the marketplaces of our world.

The challenge of the marketplace to the church is to become and be prophetic without becoming simply abrasive. I think we have a task to stand over against every economic system, as we have heard in this conference, and speak the prophetic word. But we need to do so without simply becoming abrasive, bitter kind of voices. We are to do so with the realization that there is another note, a note of salvation, that we are supposed to be dealing with, not simply the note of judgment. Judgment and salvation go hand in hand. We are supposed to be the prophets of God without simply becoming abrasive. There are some folks who are so identified with the prophets that they are not going to be satisfied until they get stoned, you know (that's a bad word!). They are not going to be satisfied until they get killed. (I have dealt too much with the drug culture for that to slip in!) They are not going to be satisfied until like the guy who looked a lot like Abraham Lincoln—he dressed like him, wore a big tie like him, grew a beard like him—somebody said, "He's not going to be satisfied until somebody shoots him." There are some people who become prophets who just have to be abrasive about all that they say and do. We are going to talk about the radical witness in a moment but let me just make this point that if we are going to be the kind of prophets God wants us to be, then our prophecies must come out of a flow of concern for humanity. These are concerns not simply for the masses of men but for men. We are concerned with the persons with whom we are dealing. It is out of that kind of thing that we become the kinds of prophets that God can use. T. B. Maston said that there are some tender souls that say that the Christian church should not deal with economic issues because they are so controversial and, hence, divisive. If a church avoids issues simply because they are controversial, it will not make a very reflective contribution to the lives of the individuals to whom it ministers or in the shaping of a world. It will become an appendage to the body politic. It may

be a refuge for disturbed souls but it is not a restorer of men's souls, which is the major function of prophetic religion.

I have the task of having this as a goal of my own ministry, and I take on an issue a week in "The Moral Side of the News" which impacts the city of San Antonio on television every Sunday night. There is joy in trying to speak to the conscience of the city in this kind of way. In the column that I write, I try to do issue-discussion, to try to say my piece as I understand my task as a prophet. I am constantly surrounded by questions from folks who want to know what you do about the people you make mad. We have the role of the pastor who is supposed to be pouring oil on troubled waters all the time as if we are not supposed ever to make anybody mad. The fact is that one of the tests of whether or not we are being an authentic witness of Christ is whether or not there are people who do respond to us in a disturbed kind of way. They do respond in that way and the test for us is whether we can smile our way, love our way, discuss the thing in such a way as to be the teachers, the people who exercise leadership. I don't do that very well, but that is the goal of what I would like to be and do.

The challenge of the marketplace to the church is also to be priestly without becoming puppets. It seems to me that the task of our becoming tools of other folks is a constant danger for the people of Christ, the preachers of the gospel. The freest man in any community really ought to be the pastor of the Baptist church. I am convinced that he has the closest thing to the opportunity of becoming the Renaissance man, he can do anything he's a mind to, if he has the strength of leadership to do it. You see, the fact is we build our own prisons, we fashion our own jail cells, we usually are timid about tasks because of what we think might happen, not because of what we have experienced. You let one of us get in trouble some place in the nation and the shock wave runs down the body politic as quickly as pain moves from part of the body to another. We begin the sympathy kind of pain which says, "Man, I don't want to do that, I'll really get in trouble"; so, we live a life afraid of what's going to happen. Mark Twain said he lived a long life full of trouble, most of which never did happen to him. We find ourselves living troubles that don't happen so that the priestly function ought to be performed without becoming puppets. We have to let the Spirit of God speak through us to the people that we minister to. Some of these people are people who are managers and they are owners and they have very strong opinions about anything that happens in the field of economics because they feel threatened by it. Some of these people are labor people and they have very strong opinions about the things that happen in economics because they feel threatened by it. And our task is to have a loving kind of spirit that lets us speak the mind of God as we understand it with a loving spirit so that we become priests who comfort and support and help without becoming puppets of anybody except the Spirit of God. That task is the challenge of the marketplace to the church.

I had my heart warmed about that the other day. I pastor a church that has a good number of management people and a whole lot of the common people. I had a lady who is a part of the Welfare Rights organization come to me and she said, "I am angry. I am one of the angry poor." As we listened and as we talked she said, "Now, I want to know why I am not angry with you. You are sitting here in this plush office. You drive a nice car, you live on the north side of town; and I would like for you to explain to me why in my anger I am not angry with you." I didn't have any explanations, but it came to be a very thoughtful kind of thing with me to wonder why. That lady joined our church not too long after that. She is very much a part of the life of our church. It is an interesting thing to watch her sitting down on the same pew with a millionaire lawyer or the banker down the way. To see those kinds of folks coming together in the singing of the gospel of Christ and in the communication within the body of Christ is one of the things that I want us all to find as a pattern for some ways we can affect the marketplace.

Let us move to the challenge of the church to the marketplace. It seems to me that we have the challenge as churchmen to make men the most important element in the picture. I like what Dr. Maston said when he said that the test of any economic practice, program, or system is what it does for and to men, women, and little children. The human person is worth more than all things material. This from the perspective of the Christian ethic, incentives, motives, work, wages, profit, and wealth must be of value in the light of what it does to people. The test of the economic institutional system itself is not the quality of goods but the quality of life it produces and sustains. It is that kind of test. And it is that kind of message that we must bring to the economic world, to the marketplace. We must do it not in piping and dancing tunes as if that were not important, for this is the very staff of life; but the most important thing that is going on in the marketplace is what it does to human beings. It is at that point that we have a task, that we have a voice. If we do not raise that voice, who will raise it? Somebody who has been influenced by the spirit and message of Jesus Christ must raise it, for that is the basic insight that Jesus came to give us about the Father, that every person —the crippled person—is as important to God as any other person, that there are no folk who could be written off and passed by. The challenge of the church to the marketplace is to make men the most important element in the picture. We do that in many kinds of ways but that is the message we are trying to get through in this whole conference.

And, then, the challenge of the church in the marketplace is that we challenge it to strive towards justice on a higher level with the ideal of love taking that kind of tension toward justice. Niehbur has great insight into the fact that justice is always rough hewn. It is always competing with ego needs or ego drives any time you are dealing with justice. There is no perfect level of justice, not in this evil, separated kind of world. But there is the perfect level of God's love as the principle, as the goal, as the magnetic pull and tug; and every concrete situation must be judged in the light of that principle of love and pulled in its justice as close to it as we possibly can get. Our task is to speak the word for love in our world. Our task is to speak the word for higher levels of justice, to be aware

of the fact that nothing ever comes out perfect; therefore, we have to deal with trying to improve it. And that is our task as a challenge of the church to the marketplace in our world.

And, then, our challenge is to establish integrity and honesty in the lives of people who are caught up in a world which chips away at that integrity at every level.

Now, let's see some ways in which the church can affect the marketplace. John Bennett has some words for us about this as he names the kinds of ways that churches might be able to function. He says among the major contributions that the church could and should make in the economic area are four ideas. One is to improve the moral and spiritual climate in which economic institutions function. Two is as a community of worshiping people from all social groups it can help in overcoming stubborn economic conflicts not only of classes but of ideas, ideals, motives, and purposes. Three, you can give guidance concerning the ends of economic life and concerning the temptations against which Christians must continually guard themselves. And, fourth, the most concrete activity of the church in the economic order would be the daily decisions of its members as citizens and in their varied occupations. These are the tasks that Dr. Bennett sees that the church ought to be doing.

Now let me talk about these for just a moment. I think we have the task as the church in the marketplace to sensitize the conscience of individuals. We have the task to speak the truth in love and to sensitize the conscience of individual persons. There are any number of ways that we can do this in the economic way. I think one of the ways to do this kind of thing is through the pastor's pronouncements within the community, in a community of acceptance of ideas. What this does in our particular congregation is that it makes the pastor fair game for the halls of conversation. It makes a fair game to go ahead and talk and disagree about the particular specific decision making processes that are going on in a community. I think the pastor has a responsibility to speak his own judgment in such a spirit as to allow his people to have that as a sign of an educational task for sensitizing conscience. One of the things that we are finding very useful in our church is a group of young business men that I meet together with about once a month in a kind of informal dinner—we call them the Pilgrims. We just invite them and we have a freewheeling conversation about issues in the Christian life in our community or our state or our nation, a kind of time that they get together with the pastor in talking about the things that they want to discuss. We try to sensitize conscience. They bring to that meeting very complex decisions that they are being faced to make at that stage of middle management. It is a very difficult stage where you've got to produce to please the guy up there and the guy up there may not be in any manner the way you want that decision-making process to be. We have developed in these multi-national industrial complexies ways in which nobody makes the decision. You get finally to the point where everybody and his neighbor can say, "I didn't make it. I don't know how that happened." So many people were involved that nobody makes a decision, nobody becomes responsible; so we go through the whole group of middle management people who are used to making a piece of the decision but not really feeling responsible for it; for, all I did was to initial it as it came by, you know. We make decisions in such a way as to absolve everybody from the responsibility.

I was in a meeting on international affairs sometime ago with a fellow from the State Department. At that time the issue was whether or not to withhold food from India in order to get their particular judgment done over there. We were banging around about that and one of the guys said, "You know, after all none of us can really make this decision." And one of the men just exploded. He said, "Bob, somebody's name has got to go on the bottom of that blankety-blankety paper." Somebody has got to sign his name somewhere and when you do, you participated in that decision. What we need to do in our fellowship is to sensitize the "somebody's" who have to initial the memos as to what the Christian questions are about initialing the memos. We've got to find ways in which we become sensitized of conscience. What better place than within the Christian fellowship to talk about those kind of values and to see if there is a difference that I can make and to see if I want to sell myself a piece at a time until the slavery is already established before I know that I am gone. So, this kind of sensitizing of conscience needs to be done.

One business man told me one day, "What I need is a pastor who will come and kick me in the pants every day and remind me that I am a Christian, that I am supposed to make my decisions in Christian ways." Now, of course, I tried to tell him that was what the Holy Spirit was supposed to be doing, but he said, "That's too ethereal for me! I need somebody to call me up and do it to me." The fact is that in this kind of atmosphere we do need that kind of sensitizing role played by somebody. Who will it be? The church certainly ought to have their spot in the marketplace.

Then, we need to minister to the victims of the system. One of the things that we could do is to proclaim the grace of God to the victims of the system, the people who have been ground under. One of the tasks is the social ministry task that we were told about in the first session about social ministry. Social ministry is not the only task of the church but it is as essential ingredient to what the church does. And in so doing the sensitizing processes that I have just been talking about happen with the people who get involved in facing raw human need on an individual basis. It doesn't do any good to tell me how many poor people are in San Antonio. When you talk about Mary Gonzales that does something to me because I know Mary Gonzales, and I know her need, and I know that she is trying to get a job and that it is hard for her to do it. I know that we've got to help her with the skills with our leadership programs and other things to get plugged in somewhere productively in the system. I know she has children that she has to go to the Robert B. Green with and we've got to do some things to help her. You know, when you get people in touch with human need and that kind of hand on the spot way, you get a sensitizing of conscience and indignation that builds about any kind of system that deals in human misery with the victims of the system.

It is an interesting thing how Jesus in his miracles seemed always to be helping people to take up their task. Read some in the New Testament sometime and realize that the help that Jesus was bringing as the physician wasn't just to make people feel good, it was to make them quit—you know, to live—the man with the withered hand, for instance, whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath. They were all talking about the institution of the Sabbath but the man had a hand to heal. Amos Wells says it beautifully when he says, "Praise God! Praise God! Give me my tools again. I'm a man again, a man for work, no more bandaged cumberer. Did you hear the murmuring about Him? Did you see them looking at Him and at me for a long time? They'll cast me out of the synagogue perhaps, but I have a hand, a hand, a hand. And ah, to think He goes about so quietly and does such things as making poor half-men whole. I have a hand." We saw the Christ who went around finding folks who couldn't walk and gave them the ability to walk; and folks whose withered hands couldn't work and gave them ability to live and breathe as full human beings. That is the task. To minister to the folks who underneath are being ground down. It does something for the man who needs a ministry to his whole life through the healing of his hand.

But it also does something to the instruments that are used. Some time ago when we were doing a sensitizing process in our church, we had a group studying the economically disadvantaged and we assigned some young women to go and just sit in the waiting room of the County Hospital for a day and come back and report what happened. Go early, stay late. We told them not to do anything for any body. Just go and sit and watch, take notes, and come back and tell us what's happening. Well, they couldn't do that. You just can't sit in a waiting room and watch a poor little lady come in with three children because one is sick. [She learned a long time ago that if she came at eight o'clock, she just might get in by ten]. And you watch her wait until twelve or one trying to take care of two while holding onto to one—you just can't sit there and watch that without reaching out to help. You know what that did to those folks? They saw and began to feel, and they became indignant about the kinds of things that go on with the poor people in our world. If we are going to do our task and sensitize folks, one of the best ways to do it is to be God's instrument to touch the withered and to help them in their function to be able to work.

And then we need to protect the right of dissent. That's what the church can do. There is a place for the radical witness. We need to protect that place because it speaks judgment against those of us who have chosen to walk a more compromising kind of path. The fact is that there are evils in the economic system that need to be called to attention in dramatic and radical ways. There is a place for that kind of Christian conscience to speak. I have a kind of feel for that and a kind of wanting to do it, but I found myself also being the sort of man in the middle, a person who is much more pragmatically turned in my personality. So, I thank God for the radical witness that keeps me from being comfortable with my position. And I ask God to help him also to be a little uncomfortable with his because it takes that kind of tension if we are going to get anything shifted and changed in the whole system.

We need to protect the right of the radical witness to write his books. But we need to protect the right of the radical witness to say his words and to listen to him and discuss it so that in the radical word there is a sensitizing process for us that we might exercise leadership with the groups that we are dealing with in our Christian ministry.

And then there is the place for us as Christians to influence within our denominational structures to the use of capital as levers in the economic process. We have had a lot of headlines about a little money in some of the denominational investments, but we have had a lot more excuses about why we can't do it than we have had real reasons for not doing it. It seems to me that we have a responsibility with the money that we do touch and that we do influence to use portions of it in high-risk ways for economic levers to do things to help forward meeting the needs of the people who are at the bottom of the economic ladder, and that there is a positive possibility there for us if we put our minds to it. So, one of the things that we can do is to do that. Now, what we don't want to do is to go lobby for that to the denominational circles and then apologize for it when we get home.

Then, the other thing that we can do is that we can create a climate for political action and for group action that would make the public a participant in the process. A great deal of what happens in economics that we have been hearing during these days happens politically. The fact is that the political mechanisms have been basically the arms of economic mechanisms in our world. In fact, that may not be all bad because the whole concept of coming together as a world may come together far quicker in the multi-national kind of industries than they will ever do around political tables, because everybody has his own place to protect but there is in this whole economic picture that communication of oneness that the gospel has been talking about for a long time without many people listening to it, even within our own cities. So, this whole oneness concept of humanity may come through economic channels much more quickly than it would in other ways. But to offset that there is also a great deal that politics and political action can do to affect economic decision making. Somewhere we need to put the public at the table. Somewhere we need to get the consumers at the table and the processes that you were hearing about last night—I missed the session last night because of a conflict; so, I don't know all that was said but some of what I heard said was that there is a possibility that we can get the common folk together that we could be another part of the formula in economics. We are not trying to blow up the machinery. We are simply trying to get it to work in a more just and righteous way. So if we can use the political leverage that we do have, the access to people that we do have, conscience that we do have to put the consumer at the table, to put them in form and more useful in the process, we can have some chance of affecting the whole process of economics.

Now, we started with a question of whether the church can challenge the marketplace. It may not be the right question. Well, the church can or cannot challenge the marketplace—it must challenge it. The

aeronautical engineers, you know, will prove to you that bumblebees can't fly. The problem is it is in the nature of the bumblebee not to have read any aeronautical engineers' reports. Therefore, they fly. It may be that you and I as the people of God are in our very nature driven to be in the marketplace like bumblebees who fly. I kind of feel like saying, let's hear it from the bumblebee because that's where we are and that's what we've got to do.

To paraphrase an old sports poem,

When the one great scorer comes to mark against your name,
It may not count whether you won or lost
But whether you found the right game.

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